From the New-York Evening Post.

COMMERCIALLY INTERESTING.

Extract of a long letter just received from an intelligent and respectable correspondent.

St. John, Porto Rico, Jan. 20, 1806.

The opening of the ports of this island to neutral vessels, was at the time regarded by the American merchants, (ever too eager to grasp at any thing that seems to offer an extended field for commercial enterprise,) as a very favorable circumstance. Those, however, who have had much to do here, have been completely undeceived. Whatever benefit the voyage might otherwise have produced, has, but too generally, been absorbed by those in whom their ignorance of characters, united with the unfair preferences of the government, induced or compelled them to place confidence. Whether our vessels come here voluntarily, or are brought in by cruizers, little is to be met with but delay, vexation and loss; unless in the former instance, the shipper is aware of the regulations of the port and provides against them before the vessel sails. For my own part, I would prefer being at once a prize to one of their piratical privateers, whose business is open and barefaced robbery, than to be, by the force of the present regulations, thrown into the power of a scoundrel factor, who, by repeated larcenies, lches from one the property it is his duty to protect. A man is less chagrined at having his purse taken from him by a professed highwayman, who boldly tells him to deliver, than at having his pocket picked by the hand of a pilfering, cowardly rascal, who at the time, perhaps, entertains him with the language of friendship This is as near a parrallel as I can draw; and I shall now proceed to exemplify the treatment we receive in this place, both on account of the public and private thief.

The treaty between Spain and France, and the common cause in which they are at present engaged, of course, throw open the ports of Spain and her colonies to the cruizers & privateers of the latter as well as of the former power. The consequences of this have been severely felt by Americans in the ports of Cuba; & if its effects have not been equally prejudicial here, I cannot suppose that it is owing to any superiority of the institutions of this government over those of Cuba; or to any superior virtue in the people or in the rulers, but rather to the locality of the place itself. Some examples we have of the treatment our citizens and property experience when brought into these ports as prizes; and from those we have sufficient reason to rejoice that they do not more frequently occur. I allude particularly to the cases of the schooner *Iris*, Pearson, of Fredericksburg; the brig *Catharine*, Seaward, of Norfolk; the ship *Patty*, Loughlin, of New-York; the brig *Polly*, Tripp, of Tiverton, and the schooner *Mary-Ann*, Anthony, of Boston.

The *Iris* was captured in April last, by a French state vessel, called *Le Mosquito*, commanded by Lieutenant Brouard, a few days after her departure from this port for Norfolk, and bro't into Moyagnez, a port in the west end of this island, where her cargo, worth per invoice (besides a quantity of cash) $ 7,000 and the vessel worth about 4 000 dollars, were sold by Brouard, as they entered the port, for 4.000 dollars. There can be no doubt that it was the duty of this government to have interfered, to have prevented the sale, and even, knowing the pretext for capture (that she had been trading with the brigands, and was last from Cape-Francois) to be false to have liberated the prize. This was not done. The vessel was afterwards, say in June, adjudged at Santo Domiogo, and the capture declared illegal. In consequence, the agent of the underwriters, who is now here, demanded that the ship and cargo should be restored in the same condition, and with the same value, as before the sale. A decree to this effect was rendered by the judge and confirmed by the governor, on the 28th of November, and ordered to be executed in 5 days at Mayaguez; the purchasers of the cargo, who, it is supposed, had a perfect understanding with the captors, were also sentenced to pay to the king a fine of three times the appraised value of the vessel and cargo. This decree has been in the hands of a notary ever since; and the agent, notwithstanding his daily applications, cannot have it ratified by the necessary formalities. In the mean time, opportunity is afforded to those against whom it is given, to traverse and render it in effect nugatory.

The *Catherine* was captured by a French privateer brig Le General Blanchot, captain Jean Baptiste Michael Debruix, in August last, on her passage from Antigua to Norfolk with a valuable cargo of 211 puncheons of rum, and carried into La Aguadilla, an open and unsheltered port in the west end of that island. The captain (Seaward) was obliged to go to Martinique to defend his rights; in his absence the cargo was landed and plundered to the value of about 5000 dollars. On the 2d inst. he returned with a decree releasing the prize, and restoring the vessel and cargo, *without damages or interests*. The agent immediately petitioned his excellency the governor to put him in possession of his property, & demanded justice for the illegal disposition made of a part of the cargo. To this petition no answer has yet been returned; and it remains to be proved whether the intendency will, as a certain great orator would say, *vindicate* the injury. If justice is rendered, I may venture to remark, that it will be an agreeable surprize.

The cases of the other three vessels are infinitely worse and apply more particularly to the bad regulations which prevail in this colony, and to the corruption of some of the magistrates. I shall succinctly state them, and leave you to form your own judgment.

The *Patty*, a Philadelphia-built ship, was purchased at St. Thomas, for account of merchants at New-York, and having gone to Santo Domingo to load with mahogany and dye woods, was there at the time of the siege by the *emperor* Jean Jacques. General Ferrand compelled captain Loughlin to take on board as many women as his vessel would receive, with whom he proceeded to Porto Cavello, on the Spanish Main. Having his funds with him, he obtained permission to vest them in the produce of the place with which, returning to N. York, he was captured, in the month of May last, within soundings on our coast, by a Spanish privateer, and sent into this port. After a delay of two months from the time of his arrival, in which captain Loughlin a man of intelligence and respectability, made the utmost possible exertion for the defence of the property, both vessel and cargo were condemned and sold as lawful prize. Since then five months more have elapsed, and it is but two or three days ago that the captain has got the legalized copies, although obliged by law to lodge his appeal in Madrid within the limited number of months. This case is the more atrocious as the vessel was not only coming from a Spanish port, with every paper requisite for a vessel in her condition, but as the capture was actually made within the acknowledged jurisdictional limits of the U. States, or at least so near as ought to have made it a matter of peculiar delicacy on the part of the tribunals, who should have weighed the affair more maturely, before they confirmed by a sentence so inquitous, the conduct of a pirate. It is also, in my opinion, a subject well diserving the notice of our government.

The cases of the *Polly* and *Maryann* are nearly similar to each other. They sailed from their respective ports, with mixed cargoes, and also some horses, on board of each; the one bound to Barbados, the other to Guadaloupe. They were, on the same day, captured by a Spanish felucca of two guns, coming from Cadiz, and brought into this port on the 7th of September. The captains were detained on board as prisoners thirteen days; during which time the captain and agent of the felucca made every necessary arrangement with the judge, &c. &c. for their condemnation. This fact is so notorious that, in a conversation with the governor, I offered to prove that the auditor of marine had accepted a bribe for condemning them. I could have proved by the second officer of the felucca, that this bribe was five hundred dollars in specie, a horse, and a pipe of wine.

The Spanish law says, that in twenty-four hours after a prize is brought into port, a decree shall be rendered by the first tribunal, and if there is an appeal to the second, that that appeal shall be tried and decided within fifteen days. This provision, in the present, as in almost every other instance, has been totally overlooked. Every art was first tried to entrap the captains and make them the instruments of their own defeat; and no means, however fraudulent, were left untouched, by which a corrupt judgment could be secured. One of these means is worthy of notice. Our treaty with Spain says, that horses *with* their furniture, are contraband. On board of these vessels were neither saddles, or bridles. *Luckily*, however, a vessel from Rhode-Island came in with a supply of both, which were immediately purchased by the thrice-worthy agent, *Senor Don Josef Xavaeir de Arangzimendi*; and the captains, Tripp and Anthony, having certain information that it was intended secretely to convey them on board their vessels, and afterwards to call a search, represented their fears to the governor, and petitioned to have the hatches sealed, which was done accordingly. In a few days after, in consequence of this suspicion, or rather of expressing it, they were arrested, and, as they would not betray their informant, imprisoned during fourteen or fifteen days.

When every thing was prepared and prefectly ripe, about the beginning of December, a decree of condemnation was pronounced by the *corrupt* and *bribed* don Manuel Garcia, auditor or juge of marine, against both vessels and their cargoes, without reserve. When this decree was presented to the governor, he, sensible of its injustice, and previously apprised of the venality of the judge, wrote on the margin, "I can by no means confirm this sentence; I, therefore, refer it to the auditor of war, in order that a judgment may be given more conformably to the principles of justice and equity." The auditor of war condemned the horses, but liberated the vessels and the remainder of their cargoes, throwing on each party their own cost. Of this sentence I shall endeavor to procure a copy and send you a translation. Thus they now stand; their voyages destroyed; their vessels detained near five months and not yet put into their possession, exhibiting the appearance of perfect wrecks; the state of the cargoes, or the plunder committed, unknown, but however great the loss, without any hope of redress or remuneration.

Let these few instances stand before the eyes of our countrymen, as striking examples of Spanish justice, and as proofs of that I said above, that if we have not suffered as much in Porto-Rico as in Cuba, we have neither to thank the supperior excellence of the laws, nor the superior virtue of those who administer them.

It is not merely against the result of the adjudications in Spanish tribunals, that we have to complain, but against the slow and deleterious nature of their proceedings. With them every thing must be done in writing, and must originate with the governor. No oral testimony is received; no oral pleadings permitted. The accused is never confronted with the accuser; the defendant never heard at the same time with the plaintiff. The first step is always a petition to the governor intendant in which the case is stated and justice demanded. He seldom decides himself, but refers to the auditor of war, or of marine as the case may be. Perhaps, after a detention of a fortnight, or three weeks, the judge may decide upon it; perhaps he may refer it to the other party, who applies by another petition, which is proceeded upon in a similar manner. Each however, or each decree, produces a new remonstrance: and thus memorial follows memorial, answer follows answer, and decree follows decree, until documents are multiplied to a countless number and the proceedings in a trifling cause swelled into an immeasureable volume. The process in the case of the *Patty* would make a volume larger than Coke upon Littleton.

Having mentioned some of the effects of the Spanish colonial laws, as they operate upon strangers in this island, I shall, in as few words as possible, notice the magistrates whose duty it is to execute them.

Don *Toribio de Montes*, knight of Santiago, &c. &c. at present governor-intendant and captain-general of Porto-Rico, with whom, as I have already observed every legal process must originate, is a man whose intentions are, I believe, always good; who wishes to do right in all cases; but unfortunately, he has hitherto been surrounded by a set of men, who, with very few exceptions, are utterly unworthy of his confidence; who abuse the trust reposed in them, in other respects, and seem to consider it as a part of their duty, and as a privilege of their office, to deceive and lead him astray. He appears either to want resolution to cast them off, or penetration to discover their real characters; and has consequently the air of being insensible to the injury they are likely to do to him, should he long continue to support their acts with his authority. I believe I may safely say that there is but one truly worthy person among the whole collection of those who fill the civil departments; that is, only one who has proved himself really honest. The governor has the power of deciding on whatever matters come before him; but as this would be incurring considerable responsibity, it is what general Montes very rarely does, and in no case within my view has done. His manner is to refer to the auditor of war or of marine, or sometimes to the party, who, as observed, replies by another petition, which, with the first, is handed over to one or other of the judges; upon whose decision he possesses the right of imposing his negative. This right, as in the cases of the Polly and the Mary-Ann, he will exercise when the necessity is apparent; and it is only to be regretted that he has not more frequently manifested his prerogative; for I am well persuaded that were the meanings of his heart seconded by a sound and acutely-discerning judgment, injustice would not with so much reason be charged against his government.

Montes came to the administration of the affairs of this colony when they were very much deranged by the malversation of the former governor, *don Ramon de Castro*, whose imbecility and venality were coequal. The finances were in utter disorder; and the recommencement of hostilities, by preventing the receipt of the expected and necessary supplies of money, has contributed to the continuance of the embarrassments in which he found himself, and forced him into measures which he would not otherwise have adopted. The exchequer of the intendency is exhausted, the troops are neither fully paid nor fully watched, for want of the means; there is now owing to them half pay for four years. This absolute want of money, and the urgent necessity of deriving it from some source or other, was the true motive for opening the ports of the island to foreign vessels; from the duties on whose cargoes was hoped the only supply that could be obtained without forced contributions. To the same source may also be traced, in a considerable degree, the tardy and oppressive operations of the tribunals in prize causes. When a prize is brought into port, the first motion of the captor is to petition that the cargo may be sold; and as the king wants money, this petition (provided the captor is a Spaniard) is readily granted, because, when sold, the proceeds go into the royal treasury, and remain there until the final decision on the appeal, should any be made. In the mean time, his majesty having the benefit of the cash, his representatives are seldom in haste to take it out of his hands.

The next person of consequence in the administration of justice is the *auditor of war*; who has the right of passing judgment in all subjects not relating to the department of marine, upon which the governor does not assume the previous right of deciding in virtue of his prerogative; to this judge there also lies an appeal from the marine tribunal in particular case. *Don Francoisco Diaz Ynguanzo*, who fills this important office at present, is a man well advanced in years, and may be regarded as a kind of wonder or phenomenon, inasmuch as there never has been alleged against him a single culpable action; nor has it ever been said that any decree of his bore the silghtest tincture of corruption. Indeed, he is supposed to be that strange animal, a man above all price. He is retired and somewhat harsh in his manners, tho' he wishes to seem polite; in his judicial proceedings he is regular; and is said to be well read both as a scholar and a lawyer; but however profound and erudite he may be, it is certain that he is not gifted with quickness of perception, or vivacity of intellect; things which perhaps can be better dispensed with in a judge than in any other public character; as it is not so requisite for him to see things instantaneously as to see them correctly.—Don Francisco Diaz is slow in his judgments, but when they are pronounced you see in them the result of a reasoning and pure mind anxious alone to know and confirm the mandates of truth. The only failing which I know him to have, is a species of antipathy against foreigners, more especially Frenchmen, whom he cordially dislikes; and against whom, I believe partly through his suggestion, a decree of banishment from the island was sometime ago pronounced and partly executed.—I cannot much censure this decree; for what reason has a Spaniard to like, but how many has he to make him hate a Frenchman! Besides, the majority of French here are even worse than the Spaniards themselves—are idle, insolent, and, as far as they dare be, turbulent; they are in very few instances men of respectable characters; most of them in the last war, and many of them in the present, having no other occupation than that of privateering. Therefore, although the French cry out against Ynguanzo, & abuse him, so long as I know this decree to be the only cause, I cannot join my voice to theirs, nor can I rank this among the crimes of that respectable and upright magistrate.

[*To be continued.*]

SALEM, Feb. 24.

The ship John, Farfield, of Salem, arrived at the Vineyard on the 17th inst. in 5 months from Mocha. The ship Susan and Rising Sun sailed from Mocha, Sept. 10, for Calcutta.

Capt. F. arrived at the Cape of Good Hope Dec. 11—On the 13th, the French privateer Napoleon, of 28 guns, arrived there, from a successful cruise, having taken an English East-Indiaman, from Bombay, called the Harcules, loaded with coffee and cotton, and a large ship loaded with oil from the isle of Desolation.

American ships left at the Cape of Good Hope.

Atlantic, Doughty, New-York, for Batavia; Calumet, Trivet, Boston, for isle of France; Eliza, Horton, Newburyport, for do.; Elizabeth, of Philadelphia, sailed for Saldanah Bay, to repair.

Feb. 6, was boarded by a boat from the Driver sloop of war, captain Simson, who took out all the letters and papers of every description, and after overhauling them on board the Driver, took them on board the Cambrian, captain Beresford, where every letter was broken open, and we were detained for 9 hours; after furnishing us with 3 bags of bread, permitted us to proceed. Feb. 13, spoke the sch'r Maryland & Mary, 5 days from Norfolk, for Bermuda. Feb. 17, spoke a schooner from New-Providence, for Boston.

Arrived at the Vineyard, ship Margaret, Elkins. Sailed from Mocha, Oct. 14, and from Bourbon, Dec. 8. Left at Mocha, the Two Sons, Ruce, Salem; *Augusta, Sandford, Baltimore*; Pembroke, Dix, Boston; brig Julian, Williams, Cape-Ann; brig Reward, Williams, of Salem; *ship Nancy, Williams, of Baltimore*, at Aden. At Bourbon, Dec. 3, *brig Augusta, Higinbothnm, supercargo, of Baltimore*. Ship Reliance, Elwell, of Boston, sailed from Mocha, Sept. 28.

The brig Telemachus, Frye, of Salem, passed Bourbon for Mocha the last of November.

The brig Hind, Brace, of Salem, passed the Cape of Good Hope the 25th of November.

The brig Aurora, Ropes, of Salem, from the West-Indies, is on shore at the Vineyard Sound.

BY THIS DAY's MAILS.

PHILADELPHIA, March 3.

On Saturday last, between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock, A. M. a fire was discovered in a building contiguous and belonging to the brewery of Messrs. ROBERT HARE and Son, in Callowhill-street, near Front-street; when the information was conveyed to the interior of the city, (which was not for a considerable time—an additional proof of the necessity of alarm-bells), the engine and hose-companies repaired to the place of conflagration with their usual alacrity, and notwithstanding the wind was remarkably strong from the N. W. no other injury was sustained than the destruction of the contents of the upper story and roof of the building in which it originated.

A bill has passed both houses of the legislature, extendin the charter of the Philadelphia Bank ten years, and authorising the governor to subscribe, on the part of the stste, for stock in said bank to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars.

Arrived, brig Commodore Barry, Meade, St. Thomas, in 15 days.

Cleared, sch'r Hannah, Rawson, Charleston.

Brig Minerva, from St. Pierres, to New-London, and schooner Antelope, from Richmond to Boston, are ashore near Sagg Harbour,

Captain Meade, from St. Thomas, left there, the sch'r Clarinda, Paddock, of New-York, to sail in six days for the City of St. Domingo; brig Martha, of Salem, captain Simons, to sail in 15 days for Turks Island; sch'r Adams, Hall, of Duxbury in 12 days—leaky and main mast injured; sch'r Thomas Jefferson, M'Greggor, of Philadelphia, to sail in six days for Turks Island; Sea Flower, Baker, of Wilmington, (Del.) to sail for Porto Rico in 8 days; brig Havana Packet, Cotton, of Middleton, arrived the 10 Feb.; brig Jane, of New-York, to sail in four days for St. Croix; Eliza, Stotesbury under repairs, expected to sail in 10 days for the City of St. Domingo; Sally, Pratt, of New-York, to sail for New-York, in 30 days; Farmer, of New-York, sailed in co. for do. We left St. Thomas the 12th of February, 13 days to the Capes. The same day arrived the brig Jupiter, of and from N. York, in 23 days; and a brig from North Carolina, name unknown. Sloop Jersey Swain, from Philadelphia, arrived under jury mast.

Captain Meade informs, that the French fleet was spoken in the Mona passage by a brig that arrived at St. Thomas, who reported, that they had several American vessels in their possession.

LOUISVILLE (Ken.) January 30.

Arrived at this place last evening, the ship *Western Trader* burthen 410 tons, captain M'Cutchen—she is owned by Mr. Jas. Berthoud—was built at Pittsburg, and is said to be the finest vessel that has descended the Ohio.

RALEIGH (N. C.) Feb. 10.

Passed through Morganton and Ashville, in this state, in November last, from South-Carolina, on their way to the western country, a father, mother, and twenty-four sons, all in good health. What is very extraordinary but no less true, is, that they were all born at nine births; twelve at three births, and twelve at six births. To the honor of the gentlemen of Morganton, we are told that a subscription was made up, and the 24 sons clothed in uniform; the eldest not more than 17, and the youngest not under six years old. It was said that the government of the United States had made them a donation of one hundred acres each; and that they were then on their way to enjoy it. The correctness of the latter we doubt, as we have seen no act of Congress making such a grant.

WASHINGTON CITY, March 3.

Our readers must have noticed, for some time past, strong animadversions in several of the public prints on the conduct of gen. Armstrong, our minister in France, in the case of the New-Jersey; which has likewise produced a remonstrance to the president from the insurance-company of New-York Of the communication of this remonstrance, Dr. Mitchill, of the senate of the United States, was some time since made the organ. An answer was made through him at an early day, by the president, expressive of confidence in the integrity of our minister, and intimating that as soon as information had been received of the opinion ascribed to him a letter disapproving it had been written to him, the reply to which, it was expected, would comprise the necessary explanations. The president added, that having no doubt of the right of insurers to stand in the place of the insured, that right would be asserted and maintained on every proper occasion.

An explanatory letter having been since received from gen. Armstrong, and communicated to Dr. Mitchill, is now published, with the view of elucidating a subject which has excited so much sensation among mercantile men.

Extract of a letter from gen. Armstrong, minister plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, to the secretary of state, dated Paris, November 26, 1805.

"I had the honor, within the last week, of receiving your letter of the 25th of August expressing the solicitude of the parties interested in the ship New-Jersey & cargo, "lest their claim should be rejected on the idea that the rights of the insured did not pass to the insurers;" and communicating also the opinion of the president, that "American underwriters, who had paid the loss to the original owners, citizens of the U. States, were entitled to the benefits of the treaty of 1803."

In my next dispatches, I shall furnish you with documents from which you will see, that the difficulties in this case, have in no stage of it, arisen from the causes to which they have been ascribed; that its admission by the American board was long suspended under col. Mercer's objection, that "no evidence had been produced of the insolvency of the captors;" that its rejection, by the council general of liquidation, proceeded from the belief, that "the ship and cargo were partially, or altogether, British property; and from certain other causes"—and that when this belief concerning the national character of the property was done away by the production of certain policies of insurance, which had been effected in different parts of the United States, (but which till then had been carefully kept out of sight) the claim so far from being opposed on the principle that "the rights of the insured did not vest in the insurers" or indeed on any other principle, was on my suggestion sent back to the council, relieved from the first and apparently the principal objection, and left the subject only to the "other causes" mentioned in the rejecting arrete of the 28th of Frimaire. These "other causes" are fully exhibited in the report of the director of the 4th division, dated on the 15th Germinal, and may be digested into the following heads:

1st. That the judgment of the 27th Prairial, year 6, pronouncing the confiscation of the New-Jersey and cargo, is still subsisting, inasmuch as it has not been annulled by the decree of the council of prizes, which directs only, the restitution of the sum deposited by the owner with gen. Hedouville.

2d. That the claimants having neglected to prosecute their appeal within six years after the capture, were precluded, by the laws of France, from a right of appealing.

3d. That the New-Jersey not having a role d'equipage, as provided by the treaty of 1778, was excluded from the provisions of the 4th article of the treaty of 1800.

4th. That the captain and agent of the privateer not having been heard in their defence, nor even summoned to appear before the tribunal, the decree of council of prizes was illegal.

5th. That the evidence having been produced of the abandonment of the ship and cargo to the underwriters, and the agents having even denied the right of either government to question them with regard to an abandonment of the property, and having besides acknowledged that the original owners, or a part of them, had acquired the New-Jersey by a new title; by yielding to the