

THE BASTILE.

Among the multitude of anecdotes to which the Bastile has given birth, there is one that has been told with such assurances and circumstances of truth, as to merit relation.

A gentleman and his servant, newly become inhabitants of that gloomy fortress, were often awakened from their reveries by a rapping against the vaulted floor of their dungeon from their cell beneath. After some time, they remarked that the number of strokes was invariably four and twenty.

They had wearied conjecture in endeavouring to divide the meaning of this regularity, when at last it struck the gentleman, that twenty four being the number of letters in the French language, it might be intended to indicate a mode of communication, by rapping the number of strokes, corresponding in the series of the alphabet to each letter wanted.

Immediately availing himself of the idea, he asked *QUI ETES VOUS?* (Who are you?) and was answered, *VOUS M'AVEZ DEVINE*, (you have discovered my meaning,) From that time they continued to communicate their sorrows to each other as far as so tedious a way of conversation would admit, till one day the prisoner beneath gave the one above to understand, that being tired of his existence, he was at that instant going to hang himself.

It is easy to conceive with what anxiety the gentleman and his servant waited for the approaching visit of the keeper. When he came, they begged him to go down, and if in time, prevent the person below from being his own executioner. He directly went away, but instead of returning, as they hoped, to tell the event, he sent a guard to conduct them to another part of the prison; nor could all their entreaties ever prevail on their sullen guardians to satisfy their country as to the fate of their fellow prisoner, so great was

the silence systematically observed in that sepulchre of the living.

ORIGIN OF COPPER PLATE FURNITURE.

Among the letters and memorandums of a Gentleman, who was President of the Royal Society in the reign of George the Second, his executors, found a bit of linen cloth, the size of a card, with the impression of a flower stamped on it, and on the paper to which it was pasted, the following memorandum:

“ This little scrap of linen happening to lie in the reach of an engraver, who was proving a copper plate for a drawing book, at a time when he had no paper at hand, he took this in its stead, and finding the impression so clear, it occurred to him that he could stamp upon a white gown of his wife's similar ornaments.” To this trifling circumstance we owe the invention of copperplate printing on linen, now carried on to such a pitch of elegance, and become so important an article in the commerce of this country.

INGENIOUS MECHANISM:

A Mr. Oliver Evans, an ingenious American, has invented a model of a Flour Mill upon a curious construction, which, without the assistance of manual labour, first conveys the grain deposited to be ground to the upper floor, where it is cleaned; thence it descends to the hopper, and after being ground in the usual way, the flour is conveyed to the upper floor, where by a simple and ingenious contrivance, it is spread, and gradually made to pass to the bolting hopper. The whole contrivance does the greatest honour to the inventor, and is likely to be of some pecuniary advantage to him, as he has obtained from Congress an exclusive right to the profits of the invention for 14 years. A number of mills have been already constructed on this plan, which are found to answer perfectly in practice. To make inanimate nature thus yield to

the power of man's inventive faculties, and produce what manual labour would otherwise be obliged to effect, must be of the greatest advantage to a young country where hands are wanted.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 12.

Two English Companies, with large capitals, intend soon to establish manufactures for coarse woollens, blankets, and carpets, the one in the neighbourhood of Dundee, and the other near Peebles, a circumstance which must prove of considerable advantage to those parts of Scotland.

The East India Company, who have in a great degree monopolized the Cotton and Indigo trade, will doubtless turn their attention to the Sugar Trade, also to the great detriment of the West India Islands.

The price of labour in the East Indies, is comparatively small to the expences attending a regular plantation in the West Indies, and if the freight be not exorbitantly high, the East India Company may considerably undersell the West India dealer. Large quantities of East India Sugar are annually imported into America and the Dutch West India Islands, and some hundred of tons have lately been imported into France.

The capital musical clock, which cost 2000 guineas, and was presented by his Majesty to the Emperor of Morocco some time since, was lately landed at the Custom House quay, being sent by the Emperor to England, to be repaired, there being no artist in his dominions capable of doing it.

The keepers of the several prisons both in town and country, are very busy in preparing lists of all the prisoners in custody for debt, at the first of October next, pursuant to an order from the Committee of the House of Commons on the late insolvent act, which there was not time to get through last Sessions of Parliament.

The Crown Debtors, last week, were all discharged from the several prisons in London and Westminster, which is in general construed to be the first step towards the general insolvent Act, which was so far proceeded upon last Session of Parliament, and has been so many years expected by the numerous and distressed prisoners for debt both in town and country.

The last insolvent Act was just after the riots in the year 1780. This is the longest period that ever this country has been without such necessary and proper jail delivery in these enlightened days.