

To the Editor of the British American.

Mr. Editor,

The compiler of the Statute of 1827, to establish an Assize of Bread at Charlotte-Town, followed the Nova Scotia Statute of 1796, which followed the British Acts c 31, Geo. 2, and 3, Geo. 3. John Bull is fond of a bite of Bread and a drink of Beer, and so he set a price on both, and by equal right he could have set a price on Meat or Milk, and indeed in 1780, we passed a statute here by which Justices were empowered to regulate the prices of all sorts of provisions,—this being a land of liberty, notwithstanding all which I cannot approve of an Assize of Bread. I would fine public Bakers heavily for adulteration, and make their bread to be of the same weight as in England; namely,—quartern and half-quartern loaves, let the price vary but not the assize, Bakers in Charlotte-Town increase in number, and there is now quite sufficient to arouse competition—let them charge their own price and not sell light bread. Every person can chip a stone, or run a lead weight of 4lb. 5 1-2oz. or 2lb. 2 3-4oz. but a varying weight puzzles the poor to ascertain; the Statute here is a very good one, as far as it relates to the quality of the bread. According to the 10th clause of the Act “no preparation of damaged or musty flour, or ingredient, or mixture whatsoever (except the genuine meal or flour, which ought to be put therein, and common salt, pure water, eggs, milk, yeast and barm, or such leaven as shall be allowed by the Justices) shall be put therein—penalty from forty shillings to three pounds.” The 13th and 14th clauses of the Act have not, I fear been attended to,—by the former clause the Clerk of the Market shall visit the Bakers every week and seize and give away all Bread not made of genuine flour—so may Magistrates &c. I have not heard of any such visitation taking place. By the latter clause the Grand Jury and Supreme Court, are to appoint two inspectors, annually, who are to be sworn to do their duty, and fined Five Pounds for negligence or refusal. I should like to ask whether this clause has been complied with? We have a species of Cholera Morbus among us which is not at all wonderful when we consider the stuff which is consumed under the name of Bread here—well may we say, we ask for Bread and they give us a Stone.

If the Salary of the Clerk of the Market is not sufficient, make it more, but make him do his duty. As to the Justices of the Peace, &c. they have all some other business to do, and pray to be excused, but I am happy to see by the general tenor and spirit of your publication we have at last a chance of being heard.

Yours respectfully,

A POOR MAN.

September 28, 1852.

same actions for which you are thus infamously sentenced: and we will repent and commit them until we have obtained redress; yet we are unpunished! Either therefore the law is unjust towards you, in inflicting punishment on the exertions of virtue and talents, or it ought not to deprive us of our share in the glory of the martyrdom.

“We again, therefore, pledge ourselves to you, and to our country, never to cease demanding our rights from those who have usurped them, until, having obtained an Equal Representation of the People, we shall be enabled to hail you once more with triumph to your native country. We wish you health and happiness; and be assured we never, never shall forget your name, your virtues, nor your great example.

“The London Corresponding society,
“John Lovett, Chairman,
“Thomas Hardy, Secretary.

“The 14th of April, 1794.”

Considering the advanced age of Mr. Muir's parents, they parted with him under the conviction that they could not survive the term of his sentence, or meet him again in this world. Neither they did. But he anxiously endeavoured to soothe their feelings, and to elevate their thoughts, by pointing like Anaxagoras, to the heavens.

This trying scene broke down the constitution of his father. He was struck with a shock of palsy, from which he never recovered.—And his poor mother, so powerful was her affection for her devoted son, periled her own life, by making frequent excursions to sea in an open boat, in the winter of 1793, in order that she might again catch a glimpse of him, and give vent to her agonizing feelings.

During the last of these excursions, but before she could approach near enough to recognise him, the vessel in which Mr. Muir was, got under weigh. And if the agony of mortals could have any effect on the elements of the air, the individual of a very different description, had stood motionless on account of Thomas Muir.

One of the last requests he made to his parents was to furnish him with a small pocket Bible; and we mention that circumstance, because it will be seen how highly he prized that precious relic, and how miraculously it preserved his life under the extraordinary vicissitudes that afterwards befell him.

There were 83 convicts on board the Surprise transport, which carried him from England. His fellow Reformers, Palmer, Skirving, and Margaret were among them. But there was another individual of a very different description, in charge, in whose society Mr. Muir at one time little thought he could sojourn for a single hour. This was a man of the name of Henderson, belonging to Glasgow, who had been tried there by the Circuit Court of Justiciary, about two years before for the Murder of his wife. And strange to tell Mr. Muir had been his counsel. He pleaded successfully for him; as Henderson's Jury, instead of a verdict of Murder, brought in a verdict of Culpable Homicide which saved the culprit's neck, and now he was going to expiate his crime under a like sentence of transportation for fourteen years!—Oh temporez! O mortales! What a commentary on the different degrees of punishment!—What a lesson to philanthropists on the classification of prisoners.

After a tedious voyage, the Surprise arrived at Sidney on the 25th Sept, 1794. It was alleged that symptoms of mutiny had broken out during the voyage, on the part of some of the convicts; but nothing of the kind was imputed to Mr. Muir, or to Palmer, Skirving, or Margaret, who conducted themselves with the utmost propriety.

appear, at least we have not been able to discover, that Mr. Muir committed to writing his observations, or remonstrance either the subject of his trial or the treatment to which he was latterly subjected. He seems to have submitted to his fate with calmity.

“A Roman with a Roman's heart, can suffer.”

His venerable parents were permitted to visit him before he sailed from Leith Roads,—such a visit. Their hearts were “wringed” —not in consequence of any moral torture, or disgrace which he had brought in them, for a worthier and more affectionate son never breathed. But surely the bare fact that he in whom all their earthly hopes were about to be torn from them, and to exile for a length of years, was of itself sufficient to fill their cup of affliction, without the above appalling fact that he was placed in chains, and treated worse than the vilest slave, in the land too, where we have been exultingly told, no slave ever trod?

That man should thus encroach on fellow man, bridge him of his just and native rights, Eradicate him,—tear him from his hold upon the endearments of domestic life and social, nip his fruitfulness and use. And doom him for perhaps a headless word, To barrenness,—and solitude—and tears.

How indignation—makes the name of power so dreadful as the Manichean God—suffered through fear—strong only to destroy.”

The Reformers of England—through their responding Society in London—transmitted Mr. Muir, and to Messrs. Gerald, Palmer, Margaret and Skirving, the following animated ADDRESS.

We behold in you, our beloved and respected friend and fellow citizen, a martyr to the glorious cause of the Equal Representation. We cannot permit you to leave this desolated country without expressing the infinite obligations the people at large, and we in particular, owe to you, for your very spirited exertions in their cause upon every occasion, but none more conspicuously, than during your sitting of the British Convention of the people of Edinburgh, and the consequent proceeding (we will not call it trial) at the bar of our Court of Justiciary.

We know not what most deserves our admiration, the splendid talents with which you are so eminently distinguished, the exalted virtues by which they have been directed, the perseverance and undaunted firmness which you so nobly displayed in resisting the wrongs of your insulted and oppressed country, or your present manly and philosophical sufferings under an arbitrary, and till late, unprecedented sentence.—a sentence, one of the most oppressive and cruel that has been pronounced since the days of that most infamous and ever to be detested Court of Star Chamber, the enormous tyranny of which cost the first Charles his head.

To you and to your associates we feel ourselves most deeply indebted. For as it is, that you are deemed to be the inalienable shores of new Holland, where, however, we doubt not you will experience considerable alleviation by remembrance of that virtuous conduct which it is imposed on you, and by the sincere regard and esteem of your fellow citizens. The equal laws of this country have, for ages past, been the boast of its inhabitants, and whether are they now fled? We are animated by the same sentiments, are daily re-echoing the same words and committing the

Since writing thus far, we have discovered an interesting letter written by Mr. Muir to a friend at Cambridge, which is printed in the Appendix.