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VOL. 6. CONWAYBORO, S. C., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1874. NO. 40.

A Thrilling Narrative.

In the fall of 1856, I was traveling eastward in a stage coach from Pittsburgh over the mountains. My fellow-travelers were two gentlemen and a lady. The oldest gentleman's appearance interested me exceedingly. In years he seemed about fifty, in air and manner, he was calm, dignified and polished, and, the contour of his features was singularly intellectual. He conversed freely on different topics, until the road became more abrupt and precipitous; but on my directing his attention to the great altitude of a precipice, on the verge of which our coach wheels were leisurely rolling, there came a marked change on his countenance. His eyes, lately filled with the light of intelligence, became wild, restless and anxious—the mouth twitched spasmodically, and the forehead was beaded with a cold perspiration. With a sharp, convulsive shudder, he turned his gaze from the giddy height, and clutching my arm tightly with both hands, he clung to me like a drowning man.

"Use this cologne," said the lady, with the instinctive goodness of her sex.

I sprinkled a little on his face, and he became more composed; but it was not until we had entirely traversed the mountain, and descended into the country beyond, that his fine features relaxed from their perturbed look, and assumed the placid, quiet dignity that I had at first noticed.

"I owe an apology to that lady," said he, with a bland smile and a gentle inclination of the head to our fair companion, "and some explanation, and to my fellow-traveler also; and perhaps I cannot better acquit myself of the double debt than by recounting the cause of my recent agitation."

"It may pain your feelings," delicately urged the lady.

"On the contrary, it will relieve them," was the respectful reply.

Having signified our several desires to hear more of the traveler thus proceeded:

"At the age of 18, I was light of foot, and I fear (he smiled) light of head.

A fine property on the banks of the Ohio acknowledged me sole owner. I was hastening home to enjoy it, and delighted to get free from college life. The month was October, the air bracing, and the mode of conveyance, a stage like this, only more cumbersome. The other passengers were few—only three in all, one old gray-headed planter of Louisiana, his daughter, a bewitching creature about seventeen, and his son about ten years of age.

They were just returning from France, of which country the young lady discoursed in terms so eloquent as to absorb my entire attention.

The father was taciturn, but the daughter was vivacious by nature, and we soon became so mutually pleased with each other that it was not until a sudden flash of lightning and a heavy dash of rain against the windows excited an exclamation from my companion, that I knew how the night passed. Presently there came a low rumbling sound, and then several tremendous peals of thunder, accompanied by successive flashes of lightning. The rain descended in torrents and an angry wind began to howl and moan through the forest trees.

I looked from the window of our vehicle. The night was dark as ebony, but the lightning showed the danger of our road. We were on the edge of a frightful precipice. I could see at intervals huge, jutting rocks far away down its side, and the sight made me solicitous for my fair companion. I thought of the mere hair breadths that were between us and eternity; a single little rock in the track of our coach wheels, a tiny billet of wood, a stray root of a tempest torn tree, restive horses or a careless driver, any of these might hurl us from our sublimity existence with the speed of thought.

"'Tis a perfect tempest," observed the lady as I withdrew my head from the window. "How I love a sudden storm! There is something grand about the winds when fairly loose among the hills. I never encountered a night like this, but Byron's magnificent description of a thunderstorm in Jura, recurs to my mind. But are we on the mountain yet?"

"Yes, we have begun the ascent."

"Is it not said to be dangerous?"

"By no means," I replied, in as easy a tone as I could assume.

"I only wish it was daylight so that we might enjoy the mountain scenery. But what's that?" and she covered her eyes from a sheet of lightning that illustrated the rugged mountain with

brilliant intensity.

Peal after peal of thunder instantly succeeded; there was a heavy volume of rain coming down at each thunder burst, and with the deeper agony, breaking upon our ears, I found that the coach had come to a dead halt.

Louise, my beautiful fellow traveler became pale as ashes. She fixed her eyes on mine with a look of anxious dread, and turning to her father, she hurriedly remarked:

"We are on the mountains."

"I reckon we are," was the unconcerned reply.

With instinctive activity, I put my head through the window and called to the driver, but the only answer was the moaning of an animal, borne past me by the swift winds of the tempest. I seized the handle of the door and strained in vain—it would not yield. At that instant I felt a cold hand in mine, and heard Louise faintly articulate in my ear the following appalling words:

"The coach is moving backwards."

Never shall I forget the fierce agony with which I tugged at the coach door, and called on the driver in tones that rivaled the fierce blast of the tempest whilst the conviction was ringing in my brain that the coach was being slowly moved backward!

What followed was of such swift occurrence, that it seems to me like a frightful dream.

I rushed against the door with all my force, but it withstood my utmost efforts. One side of our vehicle was sensibly going down, down, down. The mourning of the agonized animal became deeper, and I knew from his desperate plunges that it was one of our horses! Crash upon crash of thunder rolled over the mountain, and vivid flashes of lightning played over our heads. By its light I could see for a moment the old planter standing erect, with hands on his son and daughter, his eyes raised to heaven and his lips moving as in prayer. I could see Louise and her ayah check toward me as if imploring assistance; and I could see the bold glance of the boy flashing irridant defiance at the war of elements and the awful danger that awaited him. There was a roll, a desperate plunge, a harsh, grating jar, a sharp piercing scream of mortal terror, and I had but time to grasp Louise firmly with one hand around her waist, and seized the fastenings attached to the coach roof with the other, when we were precipitating over the precipice.

I can distinctly recollect preserving consciousness for a few seconds of time, how rapidly my breath was being exhausted but of that tremendous descent I soon lost all further knowledge by a concussion so violent that I was instantly deprived of sense and motion. The traveller paused. His features worked for a moment or two as they did when we were on the mountains; he passed his hands across his forehead as if in pain, and then resumed his thrilling narrative.

On a low couch in a humble room of a small country house, I next opened my eyes in this world of light and shade, my joy and sorrow, mirth and madness. Gentle hands soothed my pillow, gentle feet glided across my chamber, and a gentleman voice for a time hushed all my questionings. I was kindly tended by a fair young girl of about sixteen, who refused to hold any discourse with me. At length, one morning, finding myself sufficiently recovered to sit up, I insisted on knowing the result of the accident.

"You were discovered," said she, "sitting on a ledge of rocks amidst the branches of a shattered tree, clinging to the roof of your broken coach with one hand and the insensible form of a lady with the other."

"And the lady? I grasped, scanning the girl's face with an earnestness that made her draw back and blush.

"She was saved, sir, by the means that saved you—a friendly tree."

"And her father and brother? I impatiently demanded.

"We found both crushed to death at the bottom of the precipice, and we buried them in one grave by the clover path down in our meadow."

"Poor Louise!—God pity you!" I muttered in broken tones, utterly unconscious that I had a listener.

"God pity her indeed, sir said she, with a gush of heart felt sympathy. 'Would you like to see her?'" she added.

I found her bathed in tears for her kindred, and she received me with sorrowful sweetness of manner. I need not detain you by describing the efforts I made to sooth her grief, but briefly acquaint you that at last I succeeded, and twelve months after the dreadful occurrence which I have related, we stood at the altar man and wife. She still lives to bless me with her smiles, but on the anniversary of that terrible night she secludes herself in her room, and devotes the hours of darkness to solitary prayer.

"As for me," added the traveller, while a faint blush tinged his noble brow, as for me, that accident has re-

duced me to the condition of a physical coward at the sight of a mountain precipice."

"But the driver," asked the lady passenger who had listened with much attention, "what became of the driver, and did you ever learn the reason of his deserting his post?"

"His body was found on the road, within a few steps of the place where the coach went over. He had been struck dead by the same flash of lightning that blinded the restive horses."

And thus ended this thrilling and remarkable story of life.

GENERAL ELECTION LAW.

An Act Providing for the General Elections, and the Manner of Conducting the Same.

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the senate and house of representatives of the State of South Carolina, now met and sitting in general assembly, and by the authority of the same, That the general elections in this State shall be held, pursuant to the constitution thereof, on the third Wednesday in October, eighteen hundred and seventy, and forever thereafter on the same day in every second year, and shall be regulated and conducted according to the rules, principles and provisions herein prescribed.

Sec. 2. Every male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, not laboring under the disabilities named in the constitution, without distinction of race or color or former condition, who shall have been a resident of the State for one year, and in the county in which he offers to vote for sixty days next preceding any general election, shall be entitled to vote: Provided, That no person while kept in any almshouse or asylum, or of unsound mind, or confined in any public prison, shall be allowed to vote.

Sec. 3. That for the purpose of carrying on such election, it shall be the duty of the governor, and he is hereby authorized and empowered, at least sixty days prior to any such election, to appoint in and for each county three commissioners of election, whose duty it shall be, and they are hereby authorized and empowered, to appoint three managers of elections for each election precinct of the county for which they shall respectively be appointed. The said commissioners of elections and said managers of elections shall take and subscribe, before any officer authorized to administer oaths, the oath of office prescribed by section 30 of article II of the constitution, and the same shall be immediately filed, in each instance, in the office of the clerk of the county in which said commissioners and managers shall be appointed; and if there be no such clerk duly qualified by law, then in the office of the secretary of state.

Sec. 4. That the managers are hereby authorized to appoint a clerk to assist them in whatever duties may be required of them, who shall take the oath of office prescribed by section 30 of article II of the constitution before the chairman of the board of managers.

Sec. 5. That the commissioners aforesaid and the managers aforesaid, at their first meetings, respectively, shall proceed to organize themselves as a board; by appointing one of their number chairman of the board; and such chairman, in each instance, shall be empowered to administer the necessary oaths.

Sec. 6. The polls shall be opened at such voting places as shall be designated at six o'clock in the forenoon and close at six in the afternoon of the day of election, and shall be kept open during these hours without intermission or adjournment, and the managers shall administer to each person offering to vote an oath that they are qualified to vote at this election, according to the constitution of this State, and that they have not voted during this election.

Sec. 7. Representatives in the house of representatives of congress of the United States shall be chosen at such election in the several congressional districts by the qualified electors therein.

Sec. 8. The State constables and other peace officers of each county are hereby required to be present during the whole time that the polls are kept

open, and until the election is completed; and they shall prevent all interference with the managers, and see that there is no interruption of good order. If there should be more than one polling place in any county, the State constable of such county is hereby empowered and directed to make such assignment of his deputies and other peace officers to such polling places as may, in his judgment, best subserve the purposes of quiet and order.

Sec. 9. All bar-rooms, saloons, and other places for the sale of liquors by retail, shall be closed at six o'clock of the evening preceding the day of such election, and remain closed until six o'clock in the morning of the day thereafter, and during the time aforesaid the sale of all intoxicating liquors is prohibited. Any person duly convicted, before a competent court, of a violation of this section, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

Sec. 10. That every person who shall vote at any general election who is not entitled to vote, and every person who shall, by force, intimidation, deception, fraud, bribery or undue influence, obtain, procure or control the vote of any elector to be cast for any candidate or measure, other than intended or desired by such elector, shall be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred, nor more than one thousand dollars, or by imprisonment in jail not less than three months, nor more than twelve months, or both, within the decision of the court.

Sec. 11. The voting shall be by ballot, which shall contain written or printed, the names of the persons voted for, and the offices to which persons are intended to be chosen, and shall be so folded as to conceal the contents; and such ballot shall be deposited in a box to be constructed, kept and disposed of as hereinafter provided.

Sec. 12. There shall be one general ticket, on which shall be the names of the persons voted for as representatives in congress, and State, circuit and county officers.

Sec. 13. The commissioners of elections shall provide one box for each election precinct. An opening shall be made in the lid of such box, not larger than shall be sufficient for a single ballot to be inserted therein at one time, through which each ballot received, proper to be placed in such box, shall be inserted by the person voting, and by no other. Each box shall be provided with a sufficient lock, and shall be locked before the opening of the poll, and the keys retained by the commissioners, and shall not be opened during the election. Such boxes shall be labelled as follows: "Congress," "State," "circuit" and "county officers."

Sec. 14. Each clerk of the poll shall keep a poll list, which shall contain one column headed "names of voters," and the name of each elector voting shall be entered by the clerk in such column.

Sec. 15. At the close of the election, and within three days after the day thereof, the chairman of the board of managers, or one of them who may be designated by the board, shall deliver to the commissioners of elections the poll list and boxes containing the ballots.

OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ELECTIONS AS CANVASSERS, AND THEIR PROCEEDINGS.

Sec. 16. The commissioners of elections shall meet at the county seat, as provided in the last preceding section, and shall proceed to organize, and shall form the county board of canvassers.

Sec. 17. They shall meet in some convenient place at the county seat on the Tuesday next following the election, before one o'clock in the afternoon of that day. They may appoint some competent person as secretary. The chairman shall then proceed to administer the constitutional oath to each member of the board, as canvassers; and shall administer the constitutional oath to the secretary, and the secretary shall administer to the chairman the same oath

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that he shall have administered to the other members of the board.

Sec. 18. They shall then proceed to count the votes of the county, and shall make such statements thereof as the nature of the election shall require, within ten days of the time of their first meeting as a board of county canvassers, and shall transmit to the board of State canvassers any protest and all papers relating to the election.

Sec. 19. Duplicate statements shall be made and filed in the office of the clerk of the county, and if there be no such clerk, duly qualified according to law, then in the office of the secretary of state.

Sec. 20. They shall make separate statements of the whole number of votes given in such county for representatives in congress; and separate statements of all other votes given for other officers. Such statements shall contain the names of the persons for whom such votes were given, and the number of votes given for each, which shall be written out in words at full length.

Sec. 21. There shall be prepared by the commissioners three separate lists of each statement, besides the lists to be filed in the office of the county clerk or secretary of state, and each list shall be certified to as correct by the signatures of the persons subscribed to such certificate.

Sec. 22. After the final adjournment of the board of county canvassers, and within the time prescribed in section 17 of this act, the chairman of the board shall deposit in the nearest post office, directed to the governor, secretary of state and comptroller general (the full postage paid), each, one of the certified copies of the statement and certificate of votes, prepared as provided in the last preceding section.

An Act to Amend an Act Entitled "An Act Providing for the General Elections, and the Manner of Conducting the Same."

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the senate and house of representatives of the State of South Carolina, now met and sitting in general assembly, and by the authority of the same, That all general and special elections held pursuant to the constitution of this State shall be regulated and conducted according to the rules, principles and provisions herein prescribed.

Sec. 2. The commissioners of election shall provide one box for each election precinct. An opening shall be made in the lid of the box, not larger than shall be sufficient for a single ballot to be inserted therein at one time, through which each ballot received, proper to be placed in such box, shall be inserted by the person voting and by no other. Each box shall be provided with a sufficient lock, and such box shall be publicly opened and inspected to see that it is empty and secure, and then locked just before the opening of the poll, and the keys returned to the managers, and shall not be opened during the election. Each box for such precinct shall be labelled as follows: "Congress," "State," "circuit" and "county officers."

Sec. 3. At the close of the election, the managers and clerk shall immediately proceed, publicly, to open the ballot-box and count the ballots therein, and continue such count, without adjournment or interruption, until the same is completed, and make such statement of the result thereof and sign the same as the nature of the election shall require. If, in counting, two or more like ballots shall be found folded together compactly, only one shall be counted and the others destroyed; but if they bear different names, the same shall be destroyed and not counted. If more ballots shall be found on opening the box than there are names on the poll list, all the ballots shall be returned to the box and thoroughly mixed together, and one of the managers or the clerk shall, without seeing the ballots, draw therefrom and immediately destroy as many ballots as there are in excess of the number of names on the poll list.

Within three days thereafter the

(Continued on fourth page.)