

THE WEEKLY UNION TIMES

Devoted to Agriculture, Horticulture, Domestic Economy, Polite Literature, &c.

VOL. IX.—NEW SERIES.

UNION C. H., SOUTH CAROLINA, AUGUST 3, 1877.

NUMBER 30.

Written expressly for the Times.

A TRIP TO TRYON MOUNTAIN.

It was a party of thirteen highly respectable people, who might have been seen three weeks ago climbing the steep ascents of Tryon Mountain. We left with many assurances from those who stayed behind, that the trip could not be made by tender ladies; while some of us feared that the delicacy of frame indicated by such beautiful faces would not take their fair possessors to so great an altitude. But brave hearts were there, determined to succeed.

About 8 A. M. we started; that is to say, two mules started, drawing a wagon in which were seated the two Misses H. of Union, (Union comes first, of course,) Miss F. of Spartanburg, the two Misses M., Miss K. and little Miss W. of North Carolina. The mules, no doubt, thought that load enough, but there seemed to be a different opinion entertained by Messrs. L. I. and C. of Spartanburg, H.—n, of Virginia and H.—s and S. of Union, (last this time) who crowded in, too. However, pity or discomfort (for mountain roads are rough and rocky) induced the gentlemen to jump out, as we crossed the North Pacolet, and walk up the hill on the other side; while some of them never got in any more. Two miles of walking and trotting, talking and laughing, an occasional scream in acknowledgment of a breakfast-settling jolt, views of magnificent mountain and valley scenery, and we are at the base of Tryon. Although no man of our party is longer permitted to ride, and Miss B. M., the heroine of the expedition, has gone on ahead, the other ladies keep their uncomfortable seats in the wagon, and soften the noise of the wheels rattling over rocks with most musical shrieks, and greet the commingled echoes on their return down the mountain slopes with hearty peals of laughter. And so on to the farm of Capt. Williamson, where may be seen a patch of cotton, ahead of anything we have seen elsewhere. The thermal Bath, of which our host is wont to relate the wonders, as he hospitably welcomes at his gate the weary travellers on the "new schedule." But although Capt. W. is really a most clever gentleman, who could not raise good cotton from land where frost never forms. Hence cotton-picking in December, tomato blooms in January, and unfailing crops of luscious peaches. (Virgil).

At this same farm the ladies were ordered to their feet—the wagon could go no farther. The line of march was now taken up, Gad and Paek bringing up the rear, with three lunch baskets. We cannot describe that straggling, toiling party; to be appreciated it must be seen. In front marched the heroine, with her escort, leading the party easily, and only resting as guide posts to those behind. Miss — would dash frantically at the steep ascent, and having accomplished it, fall exhausted on the first flat rock or grassy tuft, questioning in her mind whether Macbeth's advice was of universal application: "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."

Just behind her would rush up Miss S. M., who protested her inability to climb slowly, tread like a plantigrade, or keep her lips closed, as she was told to do. The engineer of the party, tough as a whalebone, ascended readily the slopes, assisting his fair companion, who seemed exhausted ere we had gone far on our way. Miss F. stood it like a woman, tired, no doubt, and glad of every halt, but determined to reach the mountain top. Mr. H.—s, passed from group to group, now helping here, now encouraging there; and Mr. I., with a friend, prettier than himself, acted as rear guard to all, mounting slowly but surely the cliffs of Tryon. Climbing and walking, running and halting, sighing and laughing, we have now pulled our straggling band up to the top of the gap; but misery! the goal looks as far off as when we crossed Pacolet River. The guides tell us, however, that it is only a half mile; but oh! how steep!

Some device must be adopted to help these frail ladies, who keep up only from pride—the heroine always excepted. Mr. I. proves equal to the emergency, pressing—felt by his fair companion; and he invents the means. Look at Mr. S., marching bravely up with both hands behind his back, holding on to a stick, at the other end of

which, resting on a cloud, is Miss H. the younger, weighing—ever so many pounds; perhaps on account of the rarefaction of the atmosphere. Mr. H.—s was pulling up in like manner Miss F., fragile enough on a level, but as heavy now as a like size of lead. If the reader ever finds himself in like predicament, we advise him to do as we did: hold on to the stick with one hand, pick whortleberries with the other and offer them to the lady behind. As she releases her hold to take the berries and put them into her mouth, you will experience a slight relief. This may not be gallant, but it is comfortable.

The halts become more frequent, the talking less animated, the heat more intense, the climbing more perpendicular, the party more scattered—the desire for water universal. A miserable little spring appears, which we are told is the highest on Tryon—Too shallow for use, we send Paek (gentleman of color) up the steep path with orders to greet South Carolina's Governor with a cheer, if he finds any more water. The engineer gets a switch, which is converted into a miniature trough, and so arranged that water may be dripped out below into a cup. But just as it is fixed, we hear Paek shouting, "Hurrah for Hampton!" So up we pull, and—without a word mountain spring, with our heroine sitting complacently by, who twits our engineer with his ignorance of Tryon's topography.

Fortunately for our party, (and our reader) we are very near the top, and with a few long, hard pulls, a few recuperating halts, we rest our limbs upon the highest point of this very high mountain. And oh! how grand! Hazy as it is, we still see enough to compensate us for all our toil.—Off to the left lies Columbus, with its really fine Court House, its brick jail, and its dearth of other buildings. In front is our host's farm and dwelling house, visible to the naked eye; and with our glass we can see for miles, by the mountain side, as it winds along the mountain side on its ascending course from Bird Mountain to Paces Gap. With the imagination we may distinctly trace the handsome house tops of Tryon City, its fine hotel, and even recognize the features of friends from South Carolina, as they saunter along the paved streets. Back of us, mountain range rises behind mountain range, as far as the eye can see, while the brain is bewildered with the names which are repeated, and located upon the various peaks. Farms spread out far below in the valley, and North Pacolet, with its silver thread, makes the landscape complete. Painters or photographers may reproduce that view; pensmen never can.

To every romance there is a reality, and mountain scenery was now forgotten in the tempting display of a bountiful lunch.—The beaux seemingly most lost to things terrestrial—i. e. in their judgment, for some of us knew that ladies were terrestrial—came down sledge-hammerly to that mundane lunch, and contributed wonderfully towards emptying those baskets. However, all got enough, and felt in good humor, and whiled away an hour with seven-up, mumble-the-peg, and other highly dignified amusements. But we are called to come down below to the other side of the mountain; and we—i. e. all except the lazy ones—hasten to obey. And oh! how magnificent was the view which burst upon us! Cæsar's Head may equal it—it cannot be surpassed. No trees to obstruct the view, we look down over a precipice for a thousand feet, and see the valleys below, like a rich green carpet covering spread out before us, for miles upon miles. Near at hand is the Peake farm, where the children playing looked like ants, the father no larger than a beetle, and a dog ran along like a mere dot upon the earth's surface. Nothing was ugly—nothing was plain—nothing was pretty—it was all grand, majestic, magnificent. We have seen the ocean lost on all sides in the dip of the horizon; we have climbed various peaks of the Blue Ridge; we have stood on Maryland Heights and admired the grand scenery for which it is noted—mountain ranges spreading out north and south, with the valley below, bounded by waters of the Shenandoah and Potomac visible for miles, and the blue waters of the latter boiling through the gorge which its own current had worn; we have enjoyed all the beauties which expand before your eye from Mt. Washington; but never have we been

more impressed with the grandeur of nature, than while sitting on those rocks down the side of Tryon Mountain. Too grand to leave, even now the subject tempts the pen to stay.

Back to toil, and back to the mountain-tops. Some had gone; others awaited us. New muscles are now brought into play, and going down we find less fatigue, but a greater strain upon the tendons. Now we walk, now we run, now we stop at the berry bushes. One couple fell on a steep descent, through the slip of one of them, and the top great haste of both; and it was the only thing worth recording on the downward trip, except this, that some people are such slow coaches—sometimes. At any rate, they got down safely to the wagon, and the wagon, with its contents got safely to its shed, in spite of the screams which outcried the rattling of its wheels.

And do you know, gentle reader, that you can now get to the very base of the mountains, for less money and in less time than you would expend in going to Glenn's or West springs, which have always seemed to be at our very doors! Do you know, that you can take the train after the day's work is over, spend a night in the mountains, and get back in time for the next day's work? But so it is, thanks to the Spartanburg & Asheville R. R. We have to get use to things, and these are facts which need yet to be realized. The time will soon come—perhaps not this year, but come it will—when advantage will be taken of these conveniences; and when you have run up to the mountains for a rest and a cool change, be sure to go to the top of Tryon and to the rocks down its side; and may there be in your party as many interesting ladies, as many fascinating belles, as there were in ours—but fewer gum-arabic beaux. *

THE STOCK LAW.

THE THEORY OF THE NO FENCE SYSTEM.

We publish by permission the following letter from Rev. A. Ranson, of North Carolina, formerly of this County, which gives at length the benefits derived from the change of the fence system in parts of North Carolina. The letter is well worth reading, and we hope the friends and opponents of the proposed change will give it their calm and candid perusal.

HUNTERVILLE, N. C., July 9, 1877.

B. F. Crayton, Esq.:
DEAR SIR—Your request through my brother, William Ranson, for my "observations and experience in the matter of fencing up the stock," has been duly received. Feeling a deep interest in the welfare of South Carolina, my native State, I hasten to reply. This is the fifth year that I have had an opportunity to observe the working of the system, and the third that I have been experiencing its benefits. They are, I am fully persuaded, as follows:

- 1st. It saves a heavy expense.
- 2nd. It brings valuable land into cultivation.
- 3rd. It improves land and enhances its commercial value.
- 4th. It is favorable to renters.
- 5th. It enables men to retain small untimbered farms, and others to obtain farms for the first time.
- 6th. It promotes the cultivation of the grasses.
- 7th. It facilitates the improvement of stock.

Now, each of these points I propose to illustrate:

(1) My interest in land comprises one hundred and fifty acres. It had through it a long lane and a short one. While we were canvassing for the stock law, I often said I would rather have it than a present of five hundred dollars. But now I go up upon that. Were it possible for no one to be affected by it but myself, I would not go back to the old system for one thousand dollars! That will sound extravagant to many, no doubt. But consider this: besides my present pasture lot fencing two thousand panels of new fence would be required.—But would one thousand dollars build that and leave a sum whose interest would be sufficient to keep it in repair from year to year? I reckon not. Then, why should I be willing to go back for the consideration of one thousand dollars? Thus, in a financial point of view, I regard the change as being practically worth to me and my children at least seven dollars per acre on our land.

In a few weeks we will have finished a neat, substantial and convenient barn, forty feet square. Began it a year ago. Did most of the work ourselves, and worked at it only when farm work was not needed, or could not be done. Fifty dollars will cover the whole amount paid out for hired labor, nails and the sawing of plank. But under the old system we could not have touched it at all; we would have been kept in a continued strain to renew our fences. And thus, it gives all farmers a better opportuni-

ty to make improvements—to drain land, to make compost heaps, and to give their sons a better education.

(2) On this point I need only remark that the best land in your State is under your fences. Now, were they all removed and the ground they occupy in wheat and corn, would it not bread all the people of your State? All through the old fields, too, are many rich spots. Our people have hunted up all these, and are letting the poorest of the land they had been cultivating lie and rest. Besides, it is a nice thing to be rid of the briars and brush in the fence corners, and drive out in the clean road to turn.

(3) Our most observing people are now convinced that the injury they did their fields by pasturing them was far greater than all the benefit to their stock. If turned in for only a few days to glean the wheat, oats and corn left, and not suffered to remain in when the ground is wet, the damage would be small. But not one in a hundred would be so careful. Forty-five years ago I heard men discuss the question, why is it that a field cleared now will not produce more than half of what the same kind of land in an adjoining field produced when the country was first settled? Some young men were disposed to deny the fact, and hint that the old men had forgotten, or had fallen into the habit of telling big stories. But Mr. James Hamilton Lowry, of Laurens District, who was then an old man and a close observer, explained it thus: "When I was a boy the unfenced land was every where so loose that a walking stick could easily be run down twelve or eighteen inches. Perhaps for hundreds of years growing roots had been raising the ground, and as they died and rotted they left it very open. It held the most of the rain, and slowly supplied the crops as needed. But by the time the cattle men had destroyed all the pea vines and caues, the ground was trampled hard, and ceased to produce as I know it had done before." I believe he was right. And if you could see the crop of vegetation on our old fields, which were formerly clipped bare by everybody's stock, you would think so, too; for vegetation growing and decaying—the tops above and the roots beneath the surface—is what enriches land. But when it is cropped off, just when starting to grow, and the ground trampled hard, there is no chance for the land to recuperate. Let no hog go on it, only to haul out manure, till the land and gather in the crop; then far less subsiding will be necessary to maintain the primeval looseness of the soil.

(4) While canvassing for the stock law some asserted that the enclosed region would soon be without laborers; that renters would have no place for their stock and would move out. But, as some of us believed, the thing works just the other way. With us, and I suppose with you, renters had to repair fences to protect their crops. But they soon saw that it was much easier to move old rails and fence a pasture than to repair fences around all the fields. Nobody has ever thought of refusing them a pasture any more than a house. Nor are the rents any higher than when they had fences to repair. Take a case illustrative of many: Mr. C., a renter, was much opposed to the proposed change. He and his son went to an election and helped to defeat it for a time in our township. He boasted that he and his son could kill the votes of the land-owner and another tenant as often as they wished to try that thing. But the law provided for it, and it was convenient to take that and a few other farms, where owners were willing, within the enclosure of another township. Mr. C. was furiously mad, and threatened to leave, though it was the first of April. By moving about sixty panels of old fence he got an excellent and convenient pasture, much better than the land-owner had. Still, he grumbled; he did not like to be beat in that way. Towards the close of the year it was signified to him that he might go out to where he could find things as he liked them. But he made a contract to rent over in the township which had voted for the stock law. However, before he moved he and his man disagreed, but not about a pasture. Then he had to move out on a large old place, where he could repair fences to his heart's content. Now, guess what he did! He and an adjoining land-owner, who had also been opposed to the change, resolved on having a little fence law between themselves. Accordingly, they put up gates, threw an outside fence around both places, and made them a pasture. A mighty revolution of thoughts and feelings in one short year was that.—But this year they are happy in having the great enclosure extended far beyond them. And many such cases have we.

(5) When moving for the change, many of us held it as a theory that the stock law would enable not a few to hold on to farms from which the old fence law was about to drive them. Now, we are happy to know that we were not mistaken. Almost every neighborhood furnishes one or more cases to the point. Take one as a fair sample. Mr. H. owns about sixty acres. He had cut his last rail tree to repair his fences. His neighbors, the brothers G., had talked the matter over, not very recently, that he could not "hold the fort" much longer; that the place would be of very little use to any one who did not have ad-

joining land; that they would take it at last and divide it between them in a certain manner. But the stock law came to the rescue of H., and the brothers G., who favored the law, have candidly acknowledged that "that game is spoiled."

On the same principle the law facilitates the dividing up of large old farms, now unwieldy and unprofitable to their owners. Many of these have several hundred acres of cleared land and all in one body; and skirting around this, in one place thirty, in another forty, in another fifty, in another seventy, and in another a hundred acres of wood land. These, with some of the old field, could be readily sold under the no fence law system. But the owner cannot do that, because it would render more than half of his land practically worthless. The stock law, however, has begun a change already. There are men who prefer an exhausted old field, that is pretty level and clear of stumps and stones, to the best heavily timbered forest. There they can use the improved implements of culture.—And they claim that with the same outlay of labor they can pay for their fertilizers, and lay up more money than they could clearing land, rolling and burning logs for a dozen of year's hitching on roots and hoeing around trees and stumps. Hence, there is arising a class of enterprising farmers who, if not able to buy a plantation, will buy a field, or what will make a field. Far less importance is now attached to a road from one place to another.

(6) As to the grasses, I have this to say: I have rode about a little this spring and summer, and being one of the pioneers in the grass business, I have noticed carefully the clover, millet and lucerne (which is the best of all the forage plants) that have been sown, and I feel that I hazard nothing in saying that for every acre five or six years ago there are twenty now. It is true, the stock law has made it a necessity. But human nature is a curious thing. It is hard to get up out of old ruts. When our judgment is convinced that it would be to our interest to make some change, we still need something to push us a little. Ten years ago there were very few among us who did not say that we ought to sow clover, and peas, and corn, and such like; that we ought to clear our stock and treat it better. But now, however, since the change has forced them out of it, no one regrets having made a grass lot of any kind. All say it is the best investment they have, and many wonder why they did not get at it before.

(7) As to the improvement of stock, it is too soon for marked results. But even those who opposed the change unite with others in the opinion that as the matter is now completely under control, it will be as easy and far more profitable to have good stock than bad.

There are yet many things which I would like to say; but this communication is already so long that you will never read it, unless you are an enthusiastic stock-law man. I would say, however, don't be discouraged; you will be sure to get it, though you may be defeated the first trial. We were the first election, and in some of the townships at the second trial. I never knew anything to be more unpopular when it was first mentioned; never anything to make friends so fast. Were it at all practicable, I would be much pleased to spend a few weeks in the old State, and canvass for this thing. I was identified with the movement here from the first. I studied the subject, and wrote several articles for the country papers. I think I understand it. If you cannot carry the State, go it by counties; if you cannot carry any county, go into it by townships. Take old rails and enclose a single township, if two or more cannot go together. You will never have the fence to repair. Having seen the working of it for one or two years, the adjoining townships will come in. It worked so here. Yours truly,

A. RANSON.

NARROW ESCAPE.—Wednesday afternoon, the 4th, a party of eighteen or twenty gentlemen went out to Mendinall's pond, on Bush River, to swim. Mr. Robert Moorman, in attempting to swim across the pond, became exhausted and sank. Dr. Pope swam to his rescue. When Mr. M. rose he seized the Doctor round the neck, and both sank. Rising to the surface again he seized him around the waist and they sank again. Dr. P. was scarcely able to reach the bank. Meanwhile Mr. Stoddard was swimming toward Mr. Moorman, but before he could get to him he sank the third time. Mr. S. dived for him, seized one of his hands and brought him up; Mr. John Harmon then caught the other hand, and they swam with him to the bank.—The water was over fifteen feet deep. Mr. William Johnson, who is not much of a swimmer, got into deep water and was pulled out by Mr. Harmon. So there came near being four drownings on the "Glorious Fourth."—Newberry Herald.

It is not known yet where she lives this year, but don't let us worry; she will surely appear in the newspapers within the next three months. We allude to that farmer's daughter of seventeen who plows twenty acres of ground, cuts fifteen acres of grain with a reaper and mower, threshes all the wheat, cultivates one acre of cabbages, milks twenty cows every morning before breakfast, and does nearly all the house-work, while her father lies abed with inflammatory rheumatism all summer.