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# THE BANNER.

[WEEKLY.]

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**Advertisements**  
WILL be conspicuously inserted at 75 cents per square for the first insertion, and 37½ cents for each continuance—longer ones charged in proportion. Those not having the desired number of insertions marked upon them, will be continued until ordered out, and charged accordingly.  
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(Correspondence of the Banner.)

FORT MELON, (Fla.) May 4, 1846.

Friend Allen:—I intended to write you from St. Augustine, but concluded to visit the country east of the St. Johns river before writing. We left Savannah on Saturday, the 25th ultimo, at 4 P. M., and passing down the river, below Bonaventure, took an inland passage, leading to Darien.

Bonaventure, is a beautiful residence, 4 miles below Savannah, on the right bank of the river, formerly the residence of Governor TATNALL. On Sabbath morning, at 8 o'clock, we arrived at Darien, which is situated on the left bank of the Altamaha river. We had scarcely touched the wharf before we were boarded by an innumerable number of pirates, who commenced operations on our persons immediately. I, at first, made most powerful efforts to resist their attacks, but found my efforts vain, and being overpowered by numbers, I yielded, in sullen silence, to be robbed of my blood. I had often been attacked by gnats and mosquitoes, but never before had I yielded, to an armed occupation of my person, to an invincible army of sand flies.

Darien is situated on a sandy bluff, gently rising from the river, and but a few feet above the water. It is a place of but little business, having but a thinly inhabited back country to support it, and is evidently on the decline.

After a detention of half an hour, we bade adieu to Darien, and her sand flies, and were on our winding way for St. Marys. On our way to St. Marys, we passed Frederica, one of the first preaching places of the great JOHN WESLEY. This place is almost obsolete; I think there are but two dwellings left. We also passed the humbug city of Brunswick, where may be seen the stake marked boundaries of several city lots, and the foundations of several splendid houses that were to be built. O Diamond Spring! O Morus Multicaulis!!!

At 5 o'clock, P. M., we arrived at St. Marys, on the St. Marys river, where we remained until the following morning. St. Marys is an interesting place, laid out in regular squares, each side of which is 130 yards wide, and the crossing at right angles, are 40 yards wide. At the junction of every street is a public pump, and the streets are all beautifully shaded with ornamental trees. In site, is a medium sand bluff, gently rising from the river for the distance of half a mile. The buildings are neat, very few of them expensive, and none of them very elegant. Almost every citizen has an orange grove in his enclosure. The place contains 14 stores, 4 churches, besides other public buildings for various purposes. There are about 60 dwelling houses. Judging the inhabitants by the number of their churches and the neatness of their receptacle for the dead, I should pronounce this people distinguished for their taste, their morality and religion.

On Monday morning, at 4 o'clock, we left St. Marys, and after passing the bar, were, for the first time in the Atlantic Ocean. We had but 27 miles to sail before entering the St. Johns river. Twenty-five miles up the river we hauled up to the wharf at Jacksonville. This seems to be a place of considerable business, having several stores, and the inhabitants seem to be possessed of business-like habits. The shallowness of water on the bar at the mouth of the St. Johns, and the want of a commodious harbor, will probably prevent this from becoming a place of much commercial importance.

On leaving Jacksonville, we sail nearly due south, up the St. Johns river—perhaps the only river in North America running any great distance due north. St. Johns river, for the first 150 miles, will average from 2 to 5 miles in width, and has, at this time, a current of from 2 to 3 miles per hour.

About 5 miles from Jacksonville, we pass the elegant plantation of Captain SADDLER, formerly a student of Dr. WADDLE, in Abbeville, but now, a very intelligent, wealthy, and highly respected citizen of Florida. He very politely invited me to spend a few days with him on my return. Three miles above Capt. SADDLER'S place, we pass the plantation of Colonel McINTOSH, the brother-in-law of Capt. SADDLER. This is one of the

most desirable places of residence, in the whole State of Florida. It is on the west bank of the St. Johns on a beautiful high bluff, and evinces great taste in him who planned, and who inhabits, that beautiful spot. There are several bluffs on this part of the river yet unsettled, and several others already settled, but without much taste.

Mandarin, on the east bank of the St. Johns, contains six or seven houses, and those in a dilapidated condition. I once thought that Mandarin would be my future home; but it has no attractions now. It is situated in a deep bay of the river, with a northern exposure, and its back ground is made up of sandy pine barren, with but little hammock on either side. Its orange groves, once the source of easily accumulated wealth, are almost entirely destroyed by the insect, and Mandarin, poor old Mandarin, must go down.

From Mandarin, we passed up the river to the mouth of Black Creek, 16 miles to Garey's Ferry, an important station in the Indian war. The water of the St. Johns is of a brownish tinge, and that of Black Creek of a much darker hue. Black Creek is from 50 to 100 yards wide, running very nearly east, from Garey's Ferry, to its junction with the St. Johns. On either shore, at but short intervals, through our whole route, up and down this creek, we could see alligators of every length, intermediate, between 3 and 10 feet.

It has been recently discovered, that the oil of the alligator is equal to sperm oil for burning in lamps, or for greasing machinery; and a company is now forming on the St. Johns, for killing them and procuring their oil. The oil sells at \$1.00 per gallon.

After leaving the Black Creek, we sailed up the St. Johns to Picolata, when at 8 o'clock, P. M., I took the stage for St. Augustine, where we arrived at half past 12. Distance, by stage, 18 miles.

St. Augustine is evidently but the shade of its former self. Through every part of the town, are to be seen the ruins of what were expensive buildings; some of them were elegant in their day. But few buildings can be seen here of modern origin. Here stands the oldest church in North America. It is built of shell limestone, not compact, but every shell retaining its particular shape and location, and so cemented, by nature, as to remain strongly coherent, thus forming a coherent rock. All the buildings in the city, except those of wood, are built of this material. The walls of the very strong fort, at the entrance of the town, on the water side, are built of the same rock, as also the walls on each side of the north gate of the city.

This was once a strongly fortified city, having an embankment nearly surrounding the town, and a mart, outside of the embankment, filled with water. Our government is now building a sea wall, at a great expense; and we have one company of infantry stationed at St. Augustine; their barracks are not out-ranked, in elegance, by any other buildings in the city.

The orange groves of the city are all destroyed by the insect. They have, however, a rich profusion of ornamental shrubs and plants.

While in St. Augustine, a citizen killed a bear, six miles from town, weighing 404 lbs. And on the morning that I arrived in St. Augustine, I saw a fish cut up which was 7 feet long, 7 feet and a half in circumference, and weighing upwards of 400 lbs. The flesh, of which I partook at dinner, was very good, but as coarse in the grain as rapid growth of white oak.

I expect to write you next from Fort King, or Micanopy, when I will give you an account of my travelling in the "people's line," east of the St. Johns.

Yours truly,  
B.  
P. S.—Capt. DUVALL has just furnished me with a roasting ear from his corn field.

**TOOTHACHE.**—Put a piece of lime, about the size of a walnut, into a quart bottle of water; with this rinse the mouth two or three times a day, and clean the teeth, dilute it; for it should be just strong enough to taste the lime and no stronger. I was tormented with the toothache for some weeks, till I used this mixture, but have never had it since.

(FOR THE BANNER.)

## MEXICO AND THE MEXICANS.

As hostilities have actually commenced between the United States and Mexico, the public mind is necessarily excited, and inquisitive concerning our opponent. It may not be uninteresting to your readers, to have laid before them, a few facts, relating to the social, and moral condition of the Mexicans, by one whose residence amongst, and acquaintance with them, has enabled him to form unbiassed and unbigoted opinions. There is no error more dangerous, and in its consequences towards those entertaining it, more disastrous than that very common one, both with individuals, and Governments, of despising and undervaluing their foe. Had not the British, at the commencement of the Revolution, so thoroughly despised, what they were pleased to call, the "miserable Yankee rebels," our noble and sainted forefathers, would have found infinitely more trouble than they experienced, in freeing our beloved country, from the yoke of English tyranny. It was a commonly received opinion, in their army then, that one John Bull, was equivalent to half a dozen Yankees; and it was not until they had been driven from the country, that they began to believe, that man, wherever found, was formed after the image of his maker; and that if the patriotism of a nation, was once thoroughly aroused, their love of liberty really awakened, they were not to be conquered, though they might be exterminated. This fact is plainly illustrated, even at the present time, by Russia and Afghanistan, and the unavailing attempts of France to conquer ABDEL EL KADER. Not that the Mexicans are equal to the Americans, either mentally, morally, or physical; nor is there any doubt, of the possibility of Mexico's being conquered by this government: it is an universally accredited opinion, throughout the United States, that the Mexicans are commonly, weak, ignorant and unskillful soldiers, without a spark of patriotism, and devoid of every other virtue; and that the general, who commands the American Army, will have nothing more to do, than march to the city of Mexico; plant the Star Spangled Banner, and send to our capital, as brief a despatch as Caesar's, "I came! I saw!! I conquered!!!"

This, they will certainly find to be an erroneous opinion. First, however, let us examine the present condition of the Mexican army; the way it is recruited; the material of which it is composed, and the inducements held out to the soldiers to behave valiantly. The number of the regular standing force, amounts to thirty thousand men; on paper quite a formidable array, but with the exception of a few regiments, they are most miserably armed, equipped and officered. In Mexico, though nominally a Republic, political influence and wealth, governs the appointment of all officers, both civil and military, more even, than in the most despotic governments of Europe. Under the present system and government, talents, courage, or ability, are of no avail to the aspirants after honor or fame, unless aided by the influence of powerful connexions, or great wealth. Such being the fact, it ceases to be a matter of astonishment, that so many effeminate, ignorant, cowardly, and inefficient officers, should be mustered in their army. Nor is it a matter of surprise, that a regiment, having for its Colonel a child, some twelve years of age, who, perhaps, was never away from his mother, until he is sent to the field of battle, should disgrace itself in action, the more particularly, as it is invariably the habit of these brave carpet Knights, at the commencement of an engagement, to retire to the rear, and after having snugly ensconced themselves in some safe place, tell their soldiers to go on and fight. This is not exaggerated, but is sober truth; I have myself seen several boys, scarce higher than their swords, Colonels, in actual command,

and at the head of regiments, in which were many old men, of known and tried bravery, though poor, who had been second Lieutenants for twenty years and upwards. I was told by an American officer, in their service, (Captain Carter of Louisiana,) who was Aid d'Camp, to the commander in chief, during the campaign, in Yucatan, where he highly distinguished himself and died from the effect of his wounds, shortly after his return to the city of Mexico; that the most difficult, and unpleasant part of his military duty, was that of finding the higher Mexican officers during an engagement, being invariably obliged to go from half a mile, to a mile, in the rear of the army to find them. The effect of this conduct in the officers, must be pernicious, and most disheartening upon the soldiers. Having such miserable officers, is one great cause of the disgrace, that has so often overwhelmed the Mexican army. But what else could be expected? no one looks for virtuous actions, or noble sentiments emanating from a man whose mind is deranged; and as the mind is to the body, and the actions of a mortal, so are the officers, the mind and governing power of the army; and it is as reasonable, to hope for wisdom in a maniac, as it is for valor in an army, commanded by cowards. Another reason for their inefficiency and want of spirit, is readily found in the way they are enlisted, and their ranks kept full.

Getting into the army as they do, instead of its being astonishing, that they fight so badly, it is a source of wonder, that they fight at all. Men are wanted to fill up vacancies, or to form a new regiment; recruiting parties are sent into the country, and mountains, not with music playing, to inspire ardor, and martial spirit, into the breast of the industrious and affectionate Indians; nor with money, potent deity, to excite cupidity in the rustic hearts; but, with lariats, and short pieces of rope, they go prepared to hunt, against these orderly, peaceful and hard working agriculturalists. Wherever they see an Indian, there they spy a soldier; no matter where they find him; if he is in the field tilling the ground, that from its bosom he may extract sustenance for his family, spurs are clapped to their horses, and away they go, helter, skelter, until one of them is near enough to cast the unerring lasso, over the poor creature's head, and he is fast; if he is standing by the couch of a sick wife, or child, 'tis no matter, the government wants him, he must go; and without time being allowed him, even to bid adieu to his family, he is bound to the arm of some other poor devil, and marched off with the party, until the hunt is up. After having in this way, collected as many men as are wanted, and binding them together by ropes, going round their arms just above the elbows, a cordon of soldiers, is formed around them, to prevent all possibility of escape, and they are marched off to the rendezvous; upon their arrival, flaming paragraphs appear in the newspapers, announcing a recruit of so many brave and gallant volunteers!! ready and willing, to die, in the defence of the Republic, or for the advancement of her glory. After being thus forced into the service, it is but reasonable to suppose, they are thinking more about deserting, and the chances of getting back to their families, than of advancing the glory of the government. I have been eye witness to this manner of recruiting; have seen the men Lassoed, bound, brought into town, and had the privilege, next day, of seeing in the Gazettes, these very patriotic and bombastic paragraphs. We will suppose however, the new recruit endowed with a large share of that pliability, and power of adopting itself to present circumstances, so conspicuous in the human constitution, and that he has made up his mind, cheerfully to endure the hardships of his situation. He has no inducement held out to him to behave courageously. The government allows him twenty-five cents a day, and his clothing. Very often Government forgets, or is unable to forward the funds; then he has to find his food the best way he can; but full or fasting he is compelled, strictly and rigorously, to fulfill his duties. But if the government does its part towards the soldiers, the money is sent to the Colonel of the regiment for distribution, and he being

a man of influence, and connexions, of course is above suspicion; availing himself of which power, he only distributes to the poor privates, six cents per diem, barely enough to keep soul and body together, and appropriates to his own benefit, the other nineteen cents. This is a well known fact, but dishonesty in office, is so general a thing, amongst the higher classes, that it excites neither surprise or enquiry. In regard to his clothing, the soldier is sewed very much after the same fashion; unless he be fortunate enough to get into one of the few crack regiments; the Commissary who has control of the funds for the purchase of clothing, thinking with Falstaff, that ragged and bare-footed soldiers, make as good food for gunpowder, as well dressed ones, and that it is much more comfortable to him, to keep the money, than to spend it for them. But if the soldier is fortunate enough, to escape starvation in barracks, look at his situation on the battle field; he has no pleasant prospect to look forward to; if he is victorious, and escapes unwounded, after performing prodigies of valor, he is no better off than before. The officers who were out of danger, during the action, now come forward, receive all the honors, and emoluments; and he returns to his former hard lot of starving and freezing. But if he is unfortunate enough to be wounded, how pitiable then, is his situation; his only hope is death. The Mexican surgeons being few, careless and inattentive, their whole time is consumed in attending to the sore fingers, and head aches, of the lady officers,—without tent, hospital accommodations, or surgeon, the wounded can die, in the field, or recover, as Providence may ordain; if he recovers without being disabled, he is compelled to remain in the army; should he be maimed he is driven off, without pay or pension, to find his way back home, or starve on the road side, and so ends the career of the gallant volunteer. The arms now used by the Mexican army, are very inferior; the muskets are nearly all English ones, that have been condemned; the sabres are generally brittle; and the powder in use is very weak, the grain coarse and large. This, with the exception of a few Danish and German officers of bravery, skill and education, is the material of which the present Mexican army is composed. To drive these back into the Mexican territories, will give the United States but little trouble, and if our government is content with so doing, and keeping them there, the Mexican war will be soon ended. But should the war be carried into the enemy's country, then will be discovered the true character of the Mexican people, and also that they are possessed of bravery, patriotism, love for their homes and children, and are gifted with the powers of endurance and hardihood, in no common degree. And here it is that the Mexicans are so much underrated, by those who have judged of the whole people, by the actions of their armies and officers, during the last few years. Forgetting the spirit of patriotism that pervaded the whole land, the deeds of heroism performed by these same people, the general rising of the whole population, old men, women and boys; whilst struggling to free themselves from the power of Spain, and which resulted in the ejection of the Spaniards in 1821. Notwithstanding they had been in possession of the country three hundred years, and had large garrisons of veteran soldiers in every village, town and city, throughout Mexico; and these same Mexicans are descendants of those Incas and Indians, who, though conquered by CORTEZ, displayed the most indomitable courage to the last. It is true, they are ignorant and superstitious; but this, instead of weakening them, in a cause where their personal feelings are interested, only makes them the more dangerous foes: all being from their births Catholics, they are taught, and firmly believe, they will all go to Paradise thus robbing death of its stings and the grave of its terrors. Though the people generally are poor, they are warmly attached to their country, its climate, its manners, and their rags; for knowing no other condition, they desire not to alter their state. That the people are personally brave, I am confident; for they, being piqued with jealousy, I have time and again seen two of them stand toe to