

# The Abbeville News

"LIBERTY AND MY NATIVE SOIL."

VOLUME IV.

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(FOR THE ABBEVILLE BANNER.)

## INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL.

LETTER IV.

The Virginia Military Institute is another object of interest in Lexington. As yet, this is in its incipient existence, having been established only eight years. The circumstances which led to its organization are the following:—For the protection of Western Virginia against servile insurrections, a State Arsenal of 30,000 stand of arms, &c., was located here; and guarded by a captain and 30 men, who were not only a great expense to the State, but also a great nuisance to society. At the solicitation of certain influential individuals, this miniature standing army was disbanded, and the Arsenal transformed into a military school, regulated agreeably to the principles of the United States Academy at West Point. There are now four Professors in the Institute, and the *modus operandi*, in several respects, resembles the peculiarities of the Virginia University, which you know differs from all other literary institutions. After the elementary course, Latin and French are taught; then, perhaps, a more extensive course in Mathematics than is usual in Colleges. The cadets are particularly disciplined in drill and camp exercises, and the application of Mathematics to the various preparations for offensive and defensive warfare. The Institute is under a most thorough and complex system of regulations, and yet they are most rigid and technically enforced. It is almost a paragon of perfection in discipline. Here gratitude compels me to acknowledge my numerous and weighty obligations to Major Preston and Capt. Williamson for their kindness and trouble in pointing out and explaining all the minutia of their complicated system. Maj. Preston is a cousin to South Carolina's distinguished adopted son. The library is small, but contains many interesting and valuable works. The cadets have only one Literary Society, and this accounts, in part, for a want of full development, in some instances, of the oratorical organs. We should never contemn and disrespect that silver voice and perennial stream of transparent, pure and enrapturing eloquence, of which, Cicero makes such frequent and honorable mention. The Institute is handsomely situated on a commanding eminence, and is, of course, the Acropolis of this Athens of the Virginia valley.

The Professors are entitled to great credit for the ability and fidelity with which they have discharged the various and laborious duties the board of Visitors has imposed; but when we contemplate the tendencies of such institutions, do we not perceive some cause of alarm lest these may become engines that will operate deleteriously to the health and perpetuity of our civil liberty. The reasonable presumption is, the peculiar education of these young men will inspire them with a restless ardent thirst for military glory; for no man can become an adept in the principles of his favorite science without an incessant and indomitable desire to reduce these theories to practical experiment, so that some reward may accrue from his arduous and prolonged labors. Individuals, then, may leave this nursery of martial ambition, with their minds thoroughly imbued with the science, and their imagination revelling in all the

triumphs and glories of the battle field. Now suppose this martial band to diverge from the focus of formation, and locate in the peaceful fruitful plains of our republic: will not the tendency of their influence be to infuse their spirit into those with whom they are associated? We have not otherwise learned social influence. Thus the whole community will be decidedly partial to war the law of violence. And our nation at petty insults, and insufficient grounds, will be ready to take up arms against neighboring kingdoms and sister republics; and thus our government may be perpetually embroiled in war—the greatest national curse that ever befel a confederacy. And when neighboring republics do not incur our martial displeasure, the sword of ambition will be turned in upon ourselves, and the country will be embroiled in civil dissension and internal insurrections. Victorious generals, with their invincible myrmidans, as our distinguished Senator so graphically delineated last year in Congress, will march from the Northwest, the Northeast, and the Southwest to the Capitol to take possession of the *sella curulis* by violence and blood. Thus our government, instead of being a representative republican, will become a military despotism. The Palladium of our civil liberties has more to fear from the dangers of a military despotism, than any other opposing principle. Our nation, by nature, is too warlike; and it is the height of impolicy to cultivate and develop an organ already too prominent.

Intelligence and virtue are the two stately pillars on which rests the mighty superstructure of our social compact. But these pillars cannot be reared and improved amidst the confusion and excitement of war. War is the corroding canker that is ever secretly undermining the foundation of the supports of our confederacy. It is an irreconcilable enemy of intellectual improvement—a moral gangrene that diffuses its noxious and deleterious humors throughout every member and organ of the political body. Peace is the hand-maid—the nursing mother of intelligence and virtue. And in the world's history a single case cannot be instanced, in which the government has been injured by cultivating peaceful habits. But the faithful chronicler of passing events is compelled to crowd and blacken the historic page with specifications of the deleterious consequences of cherishing belligerent principles. I feel the greater freedom in expressing my sentiments on this subject to you, as our own beloved Carolina is now cherishing in her own bosom two of these deadly vipers, whose ungrateful and venomous pangs may one day pierce her breast, and send the mortal poison to her core. You must not understand me as declaring a war of extermination against the existence of war of any kind; for this would be highly impolitic in the present state of society. My idea is, to transact all our national affairs peacefully if we can; and forcibly if we must. It is to check and restrain, rather than strengthen and encourage a dangerous disposition already too formidable.

A military education does not inspire an individual with a spirit of *bravery* to encounter accumulating dangers, nor *fortitude* to withstand impending perils; but imparts an ambition to wear in clustering profusion the blood-bought laurels of the battle field. If, then, it does not make a man more courageous in fighting the battles of his country, it is not needed for the private, who fights in the rank as a common soldier. We may safely and composedly rely on the untutored, but tried yeomanry, who proved so efficient at Bunker Hill and Brandywine. Then, the only plea that can be urged for a military education, is to furnish the army with competent officers. This, then, can be done at the shortest notice, and in the neatest and most fashionable style at the United States Academy at West Point. And the funds disbursed for this purpose, by individual states, would be employed more profitably both to government and citizens if expended in improving their intellectual and moral condition.

**LIFE'S PENDULUM.**—At every swing of the pendulum, a spirit goes into eternity. The measure of our life is a hand-breadth; it is a tale that is told; its rapidity is like the swift shuttle or the flying arrow; it is brief as the fading flower, or the transitory rainbow, or the dazzling meteor; it is a breath. At every swing of the pendulum a spirit goes into eternity. Between the rising and setting sun, forty-two thousand souls are summoned before the Creator. Death is very busy, night and day, at all seasons, in all climes. True, as well as beautiful are those lines of Mrs. Hemans:

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
And stars to set—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh Death!

He is supplied with a boundless variety of darts and arrows with which he accomplishes his work. Could all the forms in which death comes to man be written together, what a long and fearful catalogue would it make. Think of the innumerable number of diseases at the command of death. And, as though these were not sufficient, see how man is exposed to fatal accidents on every hand, and at every moment. It was a saying of Flavel, that "the smallest pore in the body is a door large enough to let in death." The leanest gnat in the air, says the same writer, may choke one as it did Adrian, or the Pope of Rome. A little hair in milk may strangle one, as it did a counsellor in Rome. A little skin of a raisin may stop one's breath, as it did the lyric poet Anacreon. A little ogonail on a finger recently proved the avenue of death to a physician, who was in the vigor of life and health. Even the food we eat to nourish us, and the air we breathe, may introduce death into our systems.—And though every thing else should fail to harm us, we might fall beneath our own hands, should God permit a cloud to pass over our reason. Oh, how insecure is life!—how near is death! What has been said of the mariner, in respect to his ship, that "he always sails within four inches of death," may be said of the soul in relation to the body. If the ship split, then the sailor sinks; if our earthly vessel break, the soul is plunged forever into the shoreless ocean of eternity. Were our senses not benumbed and deadened, we should read a warning in every sear leaf, and hear an admonition in every wind that sighs. Even sleep would be a mighty monitor of death—an ever present emblem of mortality.

**TEXAS—DERIVATION OF THE NAME.**—The Camanches claim to be the lineal descendants of the empire of Montezuma, and the only legitimate owners of the whole Mexican country. The Chiefs say that when Cortes landed in Mexico, he found the country torn to pieces by internal factions and was enabled, by employing the disaffected chiefs, to raise a force to seize upon their capital. Those chiefs believed if they could destroy the power of Montezuma, they could easily despatch the Spaniard, and have the control of the country in their own hands. But too late they ascertained that they had introduced a harder master, and that unconditional servitude was all they had to expect. They were required to change their ancient religion, and thousands of them were sent off to work in the mines from which they rarely ever made their escape. A great proportion of them bowed their necks to the conqueror, and became serfs and slaves to the Spaniards; but a few, the noblest and best, preferred exile to servitude, and set out on a pilgrimage to the north, in hopes to find a land where they could enjoy their ancient institutions in peace.

They travelled for many weeks, and at last came to the great river of the north—the Rio Grande—where they encamped, and sent out twenty chosen men to examine the adjacent country. They crossed the great river, and ascended one of the highest peaks of the mountain, which overlooked the adjacent plain. The prairie was covered with buffalo, deer and antelopes, and they thought they had reached the happy hunting-ground, and the word "Tehas! Tehas! Tehas!" burst from every tongue. It was decided unanimously that it should be their future home, and that the country should go by the name apparently furnished them by the Great Spirit.

Tehas is the Camanche name for the residence of the happy spirit in the other world, where they shall enjoy an eternal felicity, and have a plenty of deer and buffalo always at hand. By taking the sound as they pronounce it, and giving it the Spanish orthography, it gives us the word "Texas," which is the "happy hunting-ground," or the "Elysium," of the Camanches. This is the true history of the name as derived from Isowacuny himself.

**MEXICAN MOONLIGHT.**—"Meet me by moonlight alone" can be practiced in Mexico with beautiful effect, we should think, judging from the following extract

from an army letter which was published not long since in a Southern paper:—"Perhaps you will not believe me when I tell you that I am writing this by moonshine—yes, the beautiful bright moonlight of Mexico. Heaven help those in the U. States who think they know what moonlight is! They know nothing about it.—Moonlight in Mexico is moonlight—pure, beautiful, magnificent, beyond description. It is the essence of noonday rarified.—Every object stands out in bold relief, and so clear and pure is the atmosphere that the stars and the broad unclouded sky, seem within reach. I have enjoyed this enchanting moonlight a hundred times while sitting with my mess in front of our tent, or sometimes we take a promenade around the camp as if the guard will permit us; and at other times we pass out and wander through the beautiful streets of the city and listen to the chatter of a thousand Mexican tongues, jabbering to one another across the streets. It is at such times that we inhale the sweet odor of the now ripening fruits that grow so plentifully in this city—such as orange, lemons, limes, figs, dates, and almonds; and then that best of all fruit, the juicy peach, grows here to its greatest perfection. All these things combined will ever give a soldier some happy hours."

**THE BLACK HOLE IN CALCUTTA.**—The dreadful tragedy at Calcutta, many years ago is often referred to by physiologists as a fearful illustration of the fatal effects resulting from an impure atmosphere. The details of the tragedy are thus given in Howitt's Journal.

The most fearful instance on record of the sacrifice of human life from confinement in a limited quantity of air occurred in the year 1756, when a hundred and forty-six English taken in Fort William at Calcutta, by the native prince Suraj-u-Dowlah, were imprisoned by his orders in the common dungeon of the garrison, known as the Black hole. This apartment was not twenty feet square, and had two small windows and these were partly obstructed on the outside by the projecting veranda. It was the very hottest season of the year, and the nights unusually sultry even for that season. The wretched prisoners soon became mad with thirst and the craving for air; they shrieked for water in the most furious tones, and fought each other with manic hands, feet, and teeth, for possession of the ground nearest the windows. When water was brought, they battled with each other like demons for the first draught, and they consequently spilled and wasted more than was drunk. The constant crowding to the windows, by obstructing the entrance of air, destroyed all chance of life for those who were furthest removed from them; and many thus perished whose lives might possibly have been saved if all had been content to remain tranquil, taking their regular turns in the more airy portions of the apartment. Many more perished from the violence of the conflict in which they had been engaged; and by two o'clock in the morning, only fifty (but little more than one-third of the original number) remained alive. These, by making the best of their dreadful condition, might have perhaps been all saved notwithstanding the rapid decomposition of the bodies of the dead gave a new and sickening taint to the air of this terrible dungeon; but one after another continued to sink, until at eight o'clock, when an order arrived for an enlargement of the survivors, only twenty-three were found alive, and these so dreadfully changed in appearance as scarcely to be recognised even by their nearest friends.

**GOOD ADVICE FOR THE YOUNG.**—Every youth should early learn the importance of self-reliance. If he would make any advancement upon the rugged hill of Science, or climb the steps of Fame—he has got to make himself. You may have affectionate parents and powerful friends—they will be of but little avail if you do not help yourself. You may have money and wealth at your command—but they, of themselves, can do but little in the accomplishment of your great objects. You have the advantages of the best schools, and of the most valuable libraries, but if you do not bring into requisition and active service the native energies of your own mind, you will fall infinitely short of the ends sought for. Remember that industry, application and energy can accomplish almost any and every thing—without them you can do comparatively nothing.

Mrs. O'CONNELL'S remains are to be exhumed at Cahirciveen, and placed alongside those of her husband at Glasnevin Cemetery.

The present commotion in Europe is curious—Protestant England supporting Papal Rome against Catholic Austria and Catholic France.

**ON MAKING AND PRESERVING BUTTER.**—Butter is an important article in household economy; and as upon its quality depends very much the profits of the farmer, as well as the comfort of the consumer, I send you, Mr. Editor, a few hints on the process of making and preserving it.

The art of making butter consists in separating, with skill and neatness the oil from the serum and curd with which is combined in the milk, and of seasoning it to suit the palate. The art of preserving good butter lies in keeping it as to have it retain its rich sweet flavor. The best method I know of effecting these objects, is embraced in the following rules:

1. In the first place, see that your cows are supplied with plenty of nutritious food. This is the raw material from which butter is made; and unless this is good and abundant, the manufactured article will be scanty and poor.

2. Let the milk be set in shallow, broad pans, of wooden, tin, or stone earthenware, to facilitate the separation of the cream, in a cool, clean apartment. Red-glazed earthenware is bad; and lead is often poisonous. I think the best temperature is about fifty degrees of Fahrenheit.

3. Let the cream or milk be churned before it has become rancid or bitter, as at this stage it has lost its finest qualities for butter.

4. The operation of churning should be moderately and regularly performed. If too slow and at intervals only, the separation is tedious and uncertain. If violent, the cream is too much heated, and yields a white insipid butter.

5. Put no water with your cream nor with your milk. The flavor, I may say, aroma, which gives the butter its high value, is extremely volatile, is disengaged by heat and materially dissipated by water. Work the butter thoroughly with the butter-ladle in a wooden bowl, which may be set in water to cool the mass; and while this operation is being completed, mix pure, fine salt enough with the butter to season it for the table, and set it by in the bowl in a cool cellar till next day—at which time the salt will be completely dissolved, when it is to be thoroughly incorporated by again working the butter with the wooden ladle until every particle of liquid is expelled.

The making process is completed. To preserve the rich flavor which this process secures, pack the butter nicely down in a perfectly tight, sweet vessel, and none is better than a stone earthen jar, without a particle of additional salt; smooth the surface, and cover the top two inches with a strong cold brine, which has been made by boiling and skimming the materials. If a pellicle or scum is seen to rise upon the pickle, turn off the liquid and replace it by fresh pickle.

I am accustomed to eat butter of May, June and October, made and preserved in this way, when it is from six to twelve months old, without perceiving any material difference between it and that which is fresh made.

**KEEPING FARM ACCOUNTS.**—Let any farmer make the experiment, and he will find it an interesting as it is useful, to know from year to year the actual produce of his farm. Let everything therefore, which can be measured and weighed; and let that which cannot be brought to an exact standard, be estimated as if he himself were about to sell or purchase it. Let him also as near as he can, measure the ground which he plants, the quantity of seed he uses, and the manner in which he applies it. The labor of doing this is nothing compared with the satisfaction of having it, and the benefits which must arise from it. Conjecture, in these cases, is perfectly wild and uncertain, varying often with different individuals, almost a hundred per cent. Exactness enables a man to form conclusions which may most essentially and innumerable ways, avail to his advantage. It is that alone which can give any value to his experience. It is that which will make his experience the sure basis of improvement; it will put it in his power to give safe counsel to his friends; and it is the only ground on which he can securely place confidence in himself.—*Norristown Herald.*

**SUICIDE.**—We are informed that on Sunday last, a Mr. Mason, who resided in the lower part of Pickens District, committed suicide by shooting himself through the head with a rifle; the ball entering under the lower jaw, and coming out at the back part of the head. Insanity produced by intemperance, is supposed to have been the exciting cause of this rash act.

*Anderson Gazette.*

Isn't it a very queer thing that a man, by penning his ideas lets them out.

A gentleman praising the generosity of his friend, observed that "he spent his money like water." "Then of course he liquidated his debts," rejoined a wag.