The Sumter Banner.

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"God—and our Native Land."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

A Page from A Sad Book.

In the winter of 1851 I left Philadelphia, at that time my place of residence in the United States, to make a short stay in Boston. My acquaintance with Boston is but slight; for I visited it during a period of cheerless cold, heightened by the constant prevalence of east winds; and my own engagements prevented many wanderings. One excursion, however, which I took in its vicinity, put me in possession of a document which I think may prove not uninteresting to the readers of "Household Words."

About fifteen miles from Boston stands Salem, which will now be known to many through Nathaniel Hawthorne's introduction to the "Scarlet Letter." In this story, allusion is made to the belief in witchcraft, which, nearly two centuries ago, spread like an epidemic not only over portions of England and the European continent, but also in these far off colonies; and, most virulently of all, in the now unimportant little town of Salem. Hearing that in the court-house of Salem a few records of the examination of some of the victims of a wild and destructive superstition were permitted to be seen, I was glad to have the opportunity of accompanying a friend on a short visit to the town.

Our first visit was to the Custom House. We found it exactly as described by Hawthorne—a dreary-looking brick building, very much out of repair; the paint-work worn and dingy, and the grass growing in the chinks of the stones around it, rather conveying the idea of a deserted mansion of faded gentility, than an office in which some little segment of national business was daily being transacted. We first entered a room on the ground-floor, in which a number of official-looking personages were assembled, at that time apparently not very actively employed; and, in one or two of whom I fancied I recognised some resemblance to those very respectable fixtures of Government service Hawthorne unceremoniously introduced to the public. As in his days of surveyorship, the floor was thickly strewn with grey sand; but, in place of a stove, an immense pile of wood logs was blazing and crackling on the hearth; casting around the most cheerful and inspiring glow. After warming ourselves for a few moments, we ascended to the second story.

The room we entered was a large, unfinishment, covered with the dust of years, and serving no other purpose than that of a lumber-room. It was a strange, suggestive place; a chamber for ghost revels, in which you could not long remain without raising mental ghosts for yourself. In one corner several barrels were piled, in which had been stowed papers filled with curious records of the judicial and business doings of past generations. Scattered over the floor, with a heterogeneous collection of odds and ends from all parts of the world; boxes, the mystery of whose dust hidden contents I vainly endeavoured to penetrate; veritable Turkish pipes; canes from the wide canebrakes of the Southern States; a bag of dates and some bottles of sweet Eastern wine (to the good quality of both which I can testify); several beautiful sea-shells; a large square of tapestry; one of Raphael's cartoons, which had been brought over from Palermo. Lastly a strange-looking musical instrument, now, for the first time for a long period, opened for us to inspect. It was broken into one or two pieces, was otherwise woefully damaged, and was covered with dust. It had been the property of a poor Frenchman, who had spent many years in conceiving and working out what was now a melancholy wreck; but which, in its perfect state, had been an ingenious piece of mechanism, in which a number of little automaton figures appeared to be the active agents in producing the music. The Frenchman accomplished his labour, had just begun to exhibit it to the world and to reap the harvest of his patience and skill, when he died; and by some chance, it had been sent to fall to pieces in the obscure lumber-room of the Salem Custom House. Here was the tragedy! The barrels in the corner might excite speculations as to their contents; but the results of a man's life of thoughtful effort, passing to decay unseen and unappreciated, suggested many a sad and profound reflection; and, with a tender pity, I laid my hand upon this neglected child of the poor Frenchmen's toil, along whose wooden frame and wire nerves the living spirit of his thoughts had passed.

Quitting the chamber, I accompanied my friends to the Court House; where we were soon busily occupied with the object of our visit. Most eagerly did we turn over the sheets of yellow, time-stained paper, patiently decipherings records written in a cramped and ancient hand. Here we read depositions as to the most extraordinary bewitchments of cattle, the casting of divers persons into grievous fits by the appearance (as the supposed demon was termed) of those accused, the torturing them with pins, and many other diabolical appliances of the black art. We were shown a large bottle full of the very pins, now rusty and discoloured, which had been taken from the bodies of those afflicted. Of the occurrence of all which I saw chronicled here, I had heard, read, and believed; but in things which partake so much of the supernatural and improbable, until confronted by their positive evidences, we are scarcely able to feel their actuality. But here, in my sight, were the very pages recording words that had sworn away lives which, in these days of our better knowledge, we must pronounce to be guiltless of their alleged offences. and many were the thoughts and questions they irrestibly forced upon me. Who, in those mixed assemblages of judges, witnesses, and the accused, were the deceived parties? Were all alike resting under the same dark shadow of superstition? We find men holding responsible positions,—amongst whom we expect to meet with some of the best intelligences of their time—solemnly conducting examinations, issuing committals, and women, as well as young persons down to fifteen or sixteen years of age, making depositions of a character so absurd, that we should call them laughable did we not remember human lives were staked on them. We cannot think that so many people, from malice or conscious ill-intent, could invent such statement; neither can we understand how they could possibly have believed what they say; or, if they did, by what process of the imagination they were wrought to such a pitch of fantastic illusion. It is all a troubled mystery.

We ascertained that these pages consisted of fragments of many examinations, besides of the death-warrants of the unhappy so-called wizards and witches; but we did not find anything very distinctive to fix our attention for some time, as the evidence and accusations were for the most part the same in all. At last we took up a paper headed "The examination of Sussannah Martin, May 2, 1692." The replies of this poor woman, stand up for her life against a terrible array of ignorance and superstition, surprised us by the evidence they gave of the clearest prudence and self-possession in a moment of such imminent trial. My friend remarked to me, "This paper corroborates the opinion I expressed a few minutes ago:—that the men and women who suffered during this period, were those whose higher mental gifts and greater breadth of character, placed beyond the understanding of the common natures around them." The document ran thus—

The examination of Susannah Martin, May 2, 1692:—

As soon as she came into the meeting-house many persons fell into fits.

Judge. Hath this woman hurt you?

Abigail Williams said, "It is Goody Martin; she hath hurt me often."

Others by fits were hindered from speaking.

Eliza Hubbard said she had not hurt her.

John Indian said he never saw her.

Mercy Lewis pointed to her and fell into a fit.

Ann Putnam threw her glove in a fit at her.

The examinant laughed.

Judge. What! do you laugh at it?

Susannah. Well I may at such folly.

Judge. Is this folly to see these so hurt?

Susannah. I never hurt man, woman, or child.

"Mercy," Lewis cried out, "she hath hurt me a great many times, and plucks me down!"

Then Martin laughed again.

Mary Walcot said this woman hurt her a great many times.

Susannah Seldon also accused her of hurting her.

Judge. What do you say to this?

Susannah. I have no hand in witchcraft.

Judge. What did you do? Did you consent these should be hurt?

Susannah. No, never in my life.

Judge. What ails these people?

Susannah. I do not know.

Judge But what do you think ails them?

Susannah. I do not desire to spend my judgment upon it.

Judge. Do you think they are bewitched?

Susannah. I do not think they are.

Judge. But tell us your thoughts about them.

Susannah. My thoughts are mine own when they are in, but when they are out they are another's.

Judge. Who do you think are their master?

Susannah. If they be dealing in the Black Art you may know as well as I.

Judge. What have you done towards the hurt of these?

Susannah. I have done nothing.

Judge. Why it is you, or your appearance.

Susannah. I cannot help it.

Judge. That may be your master that hurt them?

Susannah. I desire to lead my life according to the Word of God?

Judge. Is this according to the Word of God?

Susannah. If I were such a person. I would tell you the truth.

Judge. How comes your appearance just now to hurt these?

Susannah. How do I know.

Judge. Are you not willing to tell the truth.

Susannah. I cannot tell: he who appeared in Samuel's shape, a glorified shape, can appear in any one's shape.

Judge. Do you believe these afflicted persons do not say true?

Susannah. They may lie for aught I know.

Judge. May not you lie?

Susannah. I dare not tell a lie if it would save my life.

Judge. Then you will speak the the truth, will you?

Susannah. I have spoken nothing else: I would do them any good.

Judge. I do not think you have such affection for those whom you just now insinuated had the Devil for their master.

The marshal who stood by her said she pinched her hands, and Eliza Hubbard was immediately afflicted.

Several of the afflicted said they saw her on the beam.

Judge. Pray God discover you if you be guilty!

Susannah. Amen, amen! A false tongue will never make a guilty person.

"You have been a long time coming to the court to day," said Mercy Lewis; "you can come fast enough in the night."

* * * * *

A few lines of the manuscript were here rather unintelligible.

* * * * *

John Indian fell into a fit, and cried it was that woman. "She bites! She bites!"

And then said Martin was biting her lips.

Judge. Have you not compassion on these afflicted?

Susannah. No; I have none!

They cried out, there was the black man along with her; and Goody Bibber confirmed it. Abigail Williams went towards her, but could not come near her. Nor Goody Bibber, though she had not accused her before. Also, Mary Walcot could not come near her.

John Indian said he would kill her if he came near her, but, he fell down before he could touch her.

Judge. What is the reason these cannot come near you?

Susannah. I cannot tell: it may be that the Devil bears me more malice than another.

Judge. Do you not see God evidently discovering you?

Susannah. No; not a bit of that.

Judge. All the congregation besides, think so.

Susannah. Let them think what they will.

Judge. What is the reason they cannot come to you?

Susannah. I do not know; but they can if they will; or else, if you please, I will come to them.

Judge. What was that the black man whispered to you?

Susannah. There was none whispered to me.

Here ends this fragment of examination. We carefully turned over all the papers in the hope of finding some further account of it, but met with nothing more respecting Susannah Martin save her death-warrant, of which I much regret I did not also obtain a copy. The glimpse we had had of her, however, had sufficed to arouse our warmest sympathies, and to leave in us a strong desire to learn more of a woman, whose truthful soul, in the midst of pearl, shone out so calmly superior to its dark and malignant surroundings. A few days after this visit I quitted the neighborhood of Boston, carrying with me two distinct remembrances, at least—the poor Frenchman's musical instrument, and the replies of the martyred Witch of Salem.

The Bear and the Boar.

A PRACTICAL JOKE.

The following amusing scene was related to the author of 'Passional Zeology,' by one who took a part in it:

"We were crossing,' says he 'the vast pine forests of California, so remarkable for the absolute silence which reigns under their vaults. One day as we approached the edge of one of those immense glades with which these sombre forests are pierced, and where the resinous trees yield to other fragant scents, we heard quite near us a growling, which seemed to come from above our heads, and which my companion, a Western hunter of the old stock, recognised at the first note for the voice of a bear; and we forthwith made ourselves small, and glided through the bushwood to try to discover the place where the animal was perched.

'A second growl of anger, deeper toned than the first, and which seemed to be followed by another growl of interior satisfaction, calls our eyes towards a gigantic persimmon, situated about twenty yards from us, and whose boughs and shade are the scene of a comical drama.

'The two personages whose conversation we have caught a few phrases in our passage are a bear and a wild boar. The first, a gentleman of the largest size, is perched on a great branch of the persimmon, and is eargerly occupied with gathering the persimmons. But the fruit being perfectly ripe, and adhering quite loosely to their stems, it happens that the most delicious delicious fall like hail on the ground at the least shake that the heavy animal gives the bough, which greatly discomfits the bear and provokes from him oaths of impatience, but for the same reason charms the wild boar epicure, posted at the foot of the tree, and who at each shower of persimmons, manifests his satisfaction by a very decided grunt.

About the moment we appeared upon the scene, the irritation of the bear had already risen to cherry red, and it was easy to perceive that it would not be long in reaching a white heat. 'Oh! an excessively pleasant idea,' whispers the spiritual child of Tennessee into my ear. 'Suppose we profit by the cordial ill-will that these two beasts bear each other, to set them on a death fight.' 'How?' 'Let us see: the method is very simple; one of your two barrels is loaded with small shot—just put it for me in the fleshiest part of that fellow's body;' and he pointed with his finger through the leaves at where I should hit.

'I knew the bear,' added he, 'when he has got one idea in his head, he has not got it any where else, and as he has been wishing much harm to that boar for the last quarter of an hour, no one will persuade him but what it is the wild boar that has shot at him, and then you will see him jump upon the supposed aggressor, and take vengeance for the bloody joke.'

'I tell you we shall have a laugh.'

Quick done as said, I tickle the hairy beast in the right spot. The beast has hardly felt himself stung, then he gives himself up to his fury, and falls like a bombshell upon the unfortunate boar, not less innocent of the fault than surprised at the aggression. The duel did not last long. The conquering bear prostrated his rival and set about tearing him to pieces, but affected not to perceive that his enemy, before dying, had opened his side with a terrible gash of his tusks. His strength soon deserts him however, and he totters and double up on the body of the slain boar. 'And it is thus,' modestly concludes the narrator, 'that I have acquired the right to boast of having killed a black bear and a wild boar at one shot, and with No. 7!"

A Quarterly Return.

The papers have teemed for weeks with repeated accounts of disasters by field and flood. The frequency of these so-called accidents has not diverted attention from the causes which induced the catastrophes, but the interest centring in one even has hardly arrived at its climax before the occurrence of something else, even more terrible in its nature, brings up a new subject for painful meditation. The results of the numerous collisions, burnings, and explosions which have taken place during the quarter are frightful. The causes of the disasters, doubtless, are mainly attributed to carelessness. In the coses of the Independence, the Jenny Lind, the William and Mary, and the Tennessee, on the water; and in those of Few Haven, Erie, and Michigan railroads, the negligence of captains, engineers, and agents was very clearly indicated. In one or two of these instances an attempt has been made to hold the parties responsible, and this is particularly the case with the railroads in Michigan. In far too many of them, however, the blame has been affixed to no particular individual; the officers are still retained in their positions in the service of the companies, and are again at liberty to put in peril the lives of passengers who may hereafter be entrusted to their care.

In order that the real extent of these calamities may be fairly presented for consideration, we have prepared a summary statement of the disasters to vessels, and on the railroads of the Union, of which t dings were received here between the dates of April 1 and May 18. The exhibit is painfully interesting:

VESSELS.

Steamer Independence.—Wrecked and burnt, Februarp 16, near Margarita Island, in the Pacific, 167 miles north of Cape St. Lucas; 129 lives lost.

Steamer Tennessee.—Went ashore March 16, near San Miguel, on the Pacific. Six hundred passengers on board; all rescued.

Steamer Jenny Lind.—Exploded, April 9, while on the way from San Francisco to San Jose; 31 lives lost, 19 persons injured.

Steamer S. S. Lewis.—Went ashore in the Pacific, near Bolinas Bay, April 9. Four hundred and forty passengers on board; all saved.

Steamer Albaiross.—Lost in the Gulf, while on her way from New York to Vera Cruz, April 10.

Steamer Ocean Wave.—Burned on Lake Ontario, Saturday, April 30; 27 lives lost—passengers 21, and crew 16.

Barque William and Mary.—Wrecked on reefs in Bahama Channel, May 3; 170 lives lost.

RAILROADS.

Camden and Amboy Railroad.—Afternoon train from Philadelphia, Saturday, April 23—ran off the draw bridge at Rancocas Creek.

Michigan Southern and Central Railroads.—Collison t athe crossing, April 25; 16 lives lost, many persons injured.

Boston and Maine Railroad.—One man run over and killed, April 28, at Reading depot.

Reading Railroad.—One man killed near the Falls of the Schuylkill May 5.

New Haven Railroad.—Morning express train from New York, Friday, May 6—ran off draw bridge at Norwalk; 45 lives lost.

New York and Erie Railroad Ramapo Branch.—Collision on Monday, May 9; 2 lives lost.

Old Colony Railroad.—Freight train thrown off near North Braintree, Massachusetts, May 11; cause, misplaced switch.

Taunton Branch Railroad.—Train thrown off Saturday, May 7; 15 persons injured—cause, a broken axeltree.

New York Central Railroad.—Collision near Syracuse, May 3, between passenger and cattle trains; engineer hurt.

Hudson River Railroad.—Child killed in this city, Monday, May 9.

Total.—Loss of life during three months on sea and river steamers, 367. On railroads, 66. Aggregate loss, 433.

From this statement it will be seen that upward of four hundred persons have lost their lives, during the transit from place to place on our various routes of travel, in the short space of three months. Beside the wrecks of sea going vessels attended with loss of life, no less than three first-class steamships have foundered, such containing a large number of passengers, varying from one hundred and fifty to six hundred persons on each vessel.—These were rescued by strenuous exertions; but, under less favorable circumstances, they might have been added to the list of dead. These results indicate a lamentable laxity of discipline, a want of energy, and an absence of foresight, which demand the most vigorous investigation.

New York Times, 19th.

HAPPY MARRIED WOMEN.—Fanny Fern's text and sermon in the last Olive Branch, are as follows:

"Well, Susan, what do you think of married ladies being happy?" "Why, I think there are more Aint that is, than is that Aint."

Susan, I shall apply to the Legislature to have your name changed to "Sapphira." You are an unprincipled female. Matrimony is another name for Paradise, at least in the Fern Dictionary.

Just imagine yourself Mrs. Snip. It is a little prefix not to be sneezed at.—It is only the privileged few, who can secure a pair of cordutoys to mend and trot by the side of; or a pair of coatflaps (alternately to darn, and hang on to)amid the vicissitudes of this patchwotk existence.

Think of the high price of fuel, Susan, and the quantity it takes to warm a low-spirited, single woman; and then think having all that found for you by your "sleeping partner," and no extra charge for "*gas.*" Think how pleasant to go to the closet and find a great boot-jack on your best bonnet; or "to work your passage" to the looking-glass every morning, through a sea of dickeys, vests, coats, continuations, and neck-ties; think of your nicely-polished toilet-table spotted all over shaving suds; think of your "Guide to Young Women," used for a razor strap. Think of Mr. Snip's lips being hermetically sealed, day after day, except to ask you "if the coal was out, or if his coat was mended." Think of coming up from the kitchen, in a gasping state of exhaustion, after making a patch of his favorite pies; and finding five or six great dropsical bags disembowelled on your chamber floor, from the contents of which Mr. Snip had selected the "pieces" of your best silk gown, for „rags" to clean his gun with. Think of him taking a watch-guard you made him out of Your Hair, for a dog-collar! Think of your promenading the floor, night after night, with your fretful, ailing baby hushed up to your warm cheek, lest it should disturb your husband's slumbers; and think of his coming home the next day, and telling you, when you were exhausted with your vigils, "that he had just met his old love, Lilly Grey, looking as fresh as a daisy, and that it was unaccountable how much older you looked than she, although you were both the same age."

Think of all that, Susan, and see if you dare tell me again, that "there's more *aint* that *is* than *is* that *aint*"—happy married women. I came very near bursting my boddice withe indignation, at your impudent assertion.

VIRGINIA GIRLS.—A correspondent of the Richmond Despatch writing from Hanover Co., Virginia says:

I see from the Savannah News, that the Georgia girls are felling trees and getting shingles. We have in this county two girls following the same occupation. I send you a sample of their workmanship. They get six thousand per week by their own hands, at $4 50 per thousand. They supply the whole demand in that region of country, and many are sold in the Richmond market. They have by dint of industry purchased an excellent piano. They are most excellent performers. Their task is six thousand per week. They shorten their task by working at night in the fishing season, thereby gaining Saturday, which they devote to pleasure. They go to the Pamunky River and hual the seine, regardless of the depth of water.—They can dive deeper, stay under longer, and come out dryer than any other girls in the United States.—Now let the Georgia girls cut and come again.

'Vat you make dere?' hastily inquired a Dutchman of his daughter, who was being kissed very clamorously.

'Oh, not much just courting a little dat's all.'

'Oh, dat's all, ho! py tam, I thought you vas vighting.

THE FLOGGING OF A PRINCE.—The London correspondent of a North German paper relates a story with regard to the way in which Prince Albert disciplines his children, which the Tribune translates as follows:

"The young prince stood one day in his rooom in the royal palace at Windsor' at the window, whose panes reached to the floor. He had a lesson to learn by heart, but instead was amusing himself by looking out into the gardens and playing with his fingers on the window. His governess, Miss Hillyard, an earnest and pious person observed this, and kindly asked him to think of getting his lesson.—The young prince said: 'I don't want to.' 'Then,' said Miss Hillyard, 'I must put you in the corner,' 'I won't learn,' answerd the little fellow resolutely, 'and won't stand in the corner, for I am the Prince of Wales.' And as he said this, he knocked out one of the window panes with his foot. At this, Miss Hillyard rose from her seat: 'Sir, you must learn, or I must put you in the corner,' I won't said he, knocking out a second pane. The governess then rang, and told the servant who entered to say to Prince Albert that she requested the presence of his Royal Highness immediately on a pressing matter connected with his son.—The devoted father came at once, and heard the statement of the whole matter, after which he returned to his little son, and said, pointing to an ottoman, 'sit down there, and wait till I return' Then Prince Albert went to his room and brought a bible 'Listen, now,' he said to the Prince of Wales, 'to what the holy apostle Paul says to you and other children in your position' Hereupon he read Galat. iv. 1 and 2: 'Now I say that the heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be beloved of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.' 'It is true,' continued Prince Albert, 'that you are the Prince of Wales, and if you conduct properly you may become a man of high station, and even after the death of your mother, may become King of England But now you are a little boy, who must obey his tutors and governors. Besides, I must impress upon you another saying, of the wise Solomon, in Proverbs xiii. 24: 'He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chastiseth him besides. Hereupon the father took out a rod and gave the heir to the throne of the weightiest empire of Christendom a very palpable switching, and then stood him up in the corner, saying 'You will stand here and study your lesson till Miss Hillyard gives you leave come out. And never forget again that yon are now under tutors and governers, and that hereafter you will be under a law given by God" This adds, the correspondent, is an excellent Christain mode of education, which every citizen and peasant who has a child may well take to his heart as a model.

It may be proper to add that the younster who is represented to have received this paternal admonition is but 11 years old.

WHO DAR.—The papers say that 'Ten Thousand a Year' is the best novel of the season.—With equal propriety we may say that the following is the best negro story of the season.

Gumbo was a wicked negro, who had witnessed the ravages of the cholera in 1832, with indifference, but seeing his best friends dropping off by dozens, in negro valley, Gumbo began to leave some fears of giving the last kick himself in pretty much the style he was wont to 'fro dat next brick bat,' in a row. Gumbo then for the first time thought of praying, to use his own phrase, 'to de angel ob de Lord,' declaring dat if he could only be spared dis time, he would be ready next year to be taken up and lib foreber, in Massa Abraham's bosom. Some wags having access to an adjoining room separated by a board partition, hearing him at his devotions knocked.

'Who dar?'

'De Angel ob de Lord.'

'What he want?'

'Want Gumbo.'

Blowing out his candle with a 'whew,—no such nigger here. Dat nigger dead dis two three weeks, dat the trufe—de fac.'

'Tom, whom did you say our friend B—— married?' 'He married forty thousand dollars, I forgot her other name!" was the answer.

Dick, I say, why don't you turn that buffalo robe t'tother side eout?—hair side in is the warmest.'

'Bah, Tom, you get out. Do you suppose the animal himself did'nt know how to wear his hide? I follow his style.'