

The Sumter Banner

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"God—and our Native Land."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

Our Militia System.

If there be any one moment at which the grown-up individual experiences a melancholy satisfaction in sighing forth the familiar strain, "would I were a boy again,"—surely it is when, called away from more congenial pursuits, he is summoned to mount a weapon and "tramp" through the drumbless, fifeless, uncouth manoeuvres of a militia beat company. However much we may venerate the law and love to lend a willing obedience to its high behests, we shall always object to the obnoxious and outrageous clause, which commands "the sovereignty" to "fall in line" (which line by the way, is usually about as straight as the Indian's tree, which bent considerably over the other way,) and to execute motions for the sport of sensible men and the admiration of the multitude of the rising generation—without the slightest incentive to spur him onward in the path of duty save that administered to his heels by his door neighbor, and without even the sweet consolation which always springs from a consciousness of self-improvement, of serving one's country, or of conferring a benefit upon humanity.

But seriously, these are only frivolous and childish objections to the militia system of our State; which we, at the risk of being considered presumptuous, must hold to be a most consummate humbug, unmitigated by the slightest semblance of utility or of reason, unworthy of the wise legislation which has unusually marked the counsels of our State, and entirely behind the spirit and temper of the age in which we live. And we rejoice, therefore, to perceive, in several quarters, well defined indications of a desire on the part of the people for its essential nullification or entire abolition. Although it may be thought a gratuitous waste of time and space to consider a question, the right decision of which appears so palpably evident and of such easy access, yet its real importance would seem to demand at our hands more than a passing notice.

The South Carolinian, in commenting upon the subject, uses the following plausible language: "Whilst admitting that reform is necessary, it should be remembered that our present system has heretofore worked well, and that South Carolina has sent to the battle-fields of the country as well-trained and disciplined troops as those from any other State in the Union." Now, we are proud to admit that the citizen soldiery of South Carolina has done bravely and well in her service, and, with a rare devotion, borne her flag triumphantly through the perils of the conflict; but we are not ready to grant that this effect is to be ascribed, in any the least degree, to the influence of a military training at home. On the contrary, we would rather regard the briar-patch lessons inflicted by the drilling of a beat company, as better calculated to inspire a disgust and contempt for everything military or war-like; and it surely affords a superficial and incorrect knowledge of the true system of tactics, which must itself be unlearned and entirely obliterated ere the simplest movement of the real soldier is begun to be learned. In truth, the successful heroism in battle, which has won an enviable character for the citizen soldier of the Palmetto State, is the boon left by a gallant ancestry—an inheritance of the spirit which animated the patriot fathers of the Revolution, and which will always nerve the sons to deeds of noble daring, while a memory of the past holds a place in the consciousness of the present.

We are well aware that the preservation of a complete military organization is important, as well for the ordinary purposes of internal police, as for the contingencies which may at any time arise, requiring the employment of force and arms. This end, however, can be much more effectually subserved by the adoption of the system which is of force in Virginia, and several other States, and which embodies all the advantages of the present organization, without the glaring evils resulting from its imperfections. The law in these States provides for the enrollment of every one liable to do military duty, and the levying upon each of a small capitation tax instead of the actual service;—the money thus obtained to be appropriated to the complete equipment of properly organized volunteer companies, either cavalry or infantry—one to each regiment.

By the enactment of such a provision in our State, and the consequent abolition of the beat company, battalion and regimental parades, much better drilled and organized companies and a more effective police would be produced. We venture to say that almost every one would choose to pay a small tax rather than perform the irksome service now required; while those, who of their own accord become

members of the volunteer companies, would be actuated by a real pride and a true spirit of emulation, which would be exhibited in the evolutions of a well-drilled band,—ready at a moment's warning to answer to the call of danger, and wholly competent, if required, to put to flight an entire regiment of beat companies.

Besides presenting a scheme which we think of sufficient weight to overbalance the presumption in favor of the present organization, we might enumerate many and serious objections which are of themselves strong arguments against it. Not the least of these is founded in the fact, that the frequent company battalion and regimental reviews which are now required by law, subtract an enormous amount of valuable labor from the channels of Agricultural production,—a labor much more profitable than any other employed in this branch of industry. We are sure that if the aggregate value thus lost to the wealth of the community, and thrown away for no good purpose whatever, were ascertained, it would be sufficiently great to startle the wise men of our State. At certain seasons of the year, this may be a matter of very trivial importance; but during the working season, when the whole force of our farmers is concentrated upon the growing crop, it becomes the source of serious and burdensome annoyance, and a harassing impediment to the successful prosecution of their useful pursuits.

It has been taken as a valid argument against giving to the people the election of Governor and of Electors of President and Vice President, as well as other and minor offices now filled by the Legislature, that such a policy would divert men from the pursuits of industry, and cause them to assemble frequently in large crowds—affording thus ample opportunity and great incentives to the exercise of the stronger passions of our nature, and a prolific source of riot, disorder and crime. If this be a strong argument against these reforms,—and that it is no one can doubt,—with how much greater force does it apply against the present military organization in our State; which calls together large bodies of men, and especially young men, "armed and equipped as the law directs," often ready and willing to join a hand in fomenting disturbances, and encouraging, by their presence at least, those scenes of tumult and confusion so destructive to social and domestic harmony,—all for the purpose of wading through a few simple and unimportant *step-and-fetch-it* evolutions, a profound ignorance of which would be a bliss unutterable.

We have already given to this matter more space than we had intended, and are reluctantly compelled to omit several considerations which appertain to its proper discussion. We will, therefore, dismiss the subject with the hope, that our Legislature, in its wisdom, may think proper to abolish the system as it now exists, and substitute another in its stead, more consistent with the interests of the people, and better conducive to the end in view.

Chester Standard.

A Sea Sketch.

When our ship was in Marseilles we took on board a considerable amount of specie, that was mostly in five-franc pieces, and was put up in small canvass bags, containing five hundred pieces each. When brought on board it was stored in a small room, next adjoining the spirit-room, below the orlop deck, and upon the larboard side. The entrance to the specie was by means of a small hatchway which was secured by a strong padlock. Ahaft of this hatch was the bulkhead of the bread-room, and abreast of it were the rooms of some of the passed midshipmen. Directly opposite, upon the other side of the deck, was the walk of a sentry, whose duty it was to take charge of the lantern that was constantly kept burning there, and also to keep the after-part of the deck free from all persons who had no business there.—Directly amidships, and upon the starboard side of which the large lantern was secured, was a small store room, occupying a space of some ten feet square; consequently, when the sentry's attention was called to the lantern, which was often the case as he had to light the candles for the officers, the view of the opposite side of the deck was shut off.

One afternoon, while the ship was on her passage from Toulon to Gibraltar, the Purser came on deck in a state of intense agitation, and sought the captain in the cabin.

"What's the matter, Purser?" asked the Captain, who was just looking over the "day's work" of the midshipmen.

"Good heavens! there is matter enough," returned the Purser, sinking in to a seat and dropping his cap upon the floor.

"What is it? a deficit in the stores? spirit-cask sprung a leak?"

"No, sir. There's money gone!"

"Some mistake of yours, then."
"No, no, captain. It's been stolen!"
"Stolen!" reiterated the Captain, opening his eyes and leaning forward "What money?"

"Part of that we took at Marseilles."
"But that is safely stored under lock and key, and directly under the eye of a sentry."

"Yes,—but still some of it has been stolen. There are four bags gone—nearly two thousand dollars."

"Are you sure of this?"
"I have just come from the room, where I went to make an exchange for the gold we got at Toulon. I wanted the five-franc pieces to pay off the grog-money to the men. I missed four of the bags. They are numbers six, nine, twenty-eight, and thirty. I know just how I placed them."

The Captain sat some time without speaking. Once or twice he seemed to be on the point of bursting forth into a passion, but he gradually calmed his feelings, and the cool judgment which was one of his leading characteristics came to his aid.

"Have you spoken of this to any one?" he asked, raising his eyes from the floor.

"Only to my steward."

"Send for him at once."

As the Captain spoke he rung a small bell at his side, and the orderly entered the cabin. The Purser's steward was sent for, and so was the captain of marines. To them the subject was opened.

"Now," said the old Captain, "there is need of caution here. Not a breath of this must get to the men, or the money will most assuredly be thrown overboard, and all the traces of the thieves lost. It seems almost impossible that any body could have entered the specie-room without detection, even with the connivance of the sentry; but yet the thing must have been done, and some of the marines must have been in the plot. The officers whose rooms are on the after-part of the orlop deck shall be placed upon the watch, and if everything goes on as usual we may yet catch the rascals, for in all probability they will go after more of the money."

The thing was discussed freely in the cabin, and when the arrangements were all made, it had been decided that the orderly sergeant should detail four of the marine, whose honesty and keenness could be confided in, as sentries for the post at the spirit-room—that they should relieve each other as usual, and that they should be silent on the subject of the theft. Matters were thus arranged, and things went on as usual.

It had been some time the practice, in serving out the bread to the cooks of the messes, for the bread-bags to be brought down and left at the door of the bread-room, and as the steward and his assistants filled them they were set on the outside, for the cooks to get them when they pleased, by simply a pass from the midshipman of the deck. Sometimes the bags remained upon the orlop-deck over night. It was proposed by the Purser that this order, or rather disorder of things should be stopped, but the Captain thought it better not to meddle with it, for if any of the cooks were implicated this would surely prevent any further developments. The sentries, however, were strictly enjoined to keep their eyes upon the cooks when they came after their bags, and also to look out that no one was secreted among them.

The next day the Purser went to the Captain with the astonishing intelligence that another bag of money was missing! The sentries who had been on post during the night were called in to the cabin and questioned, but they took solemn oaths that nothing had gone amiss during their several watches, that they could do test; and after much threatening on the part of the Captain, he was forced to believe them, for the officers who had taken it upon themselves to be on the lookout were equally at fault. It was a strange affair at best. The small hatch was found securely locked, but yet another bag was missing! How to account for it they knew not; but the captain determined upon another trial.

Three days passed without any further development. Those who were in the secret were still upon the watch, and the whole thing had as yet been kept from the men. Even the master-at-arms knew nothing of it.

On the night of the fourth day there were some fifteen bread-bags, newly filled, set outside of the bread-room door, ready for the cook to take in the morning. At midnight a marine named McGuire was placed upon the important post. He was a quick-witted, keen fellow, a Scotchman by birth, and one who could be trusted. As soon as he had taken his post he went over to the larboard side of the deck and ran his eye around among the bags.

They appeared all right, and as he poked his fingers into the mouth of each, he found they were filled with bread.

Half an hour had passed away, and at the end of that time, as McGuire stood leaning against the stanchion at the after-corner of the small square room before mentioned, it appeared to him that one of the bags, that had before been open to his present line of vision, had been somehow moved further forward, as it was now more than half hidden by the intervening corner. He knew that no living soul had descended either of the ladders since the officers of the first watch came down, and that no one could have passed along the deck. As he stood and gazed upon the bag as he saw it move.

In a moment McGuire had guessed the secret. He sprang across the deck, and found that the bag stood exactly over the edge of the hatch a position which it must have assumed during the fifteen minutes last passed. He united the lanyard, but the mouth was full of bread; and he gave the bottom of the bag a kick with his foot, and a sharp cry came forth. It was but the work of a moment to throw the bag upon its side, and while McGuire was stooping down to examine the bottom, two of the lieutenants, attracted by the noise, had come from their rooms.

The bottom of the bag was already off, and a small boy, one of the ship's apprentices, named Quigley, was dragged out. There was a little partition in the mouth of the bag, and while that had been filled with bread the main part had been occupied by the boy.

The mystery was soon out, for the boy was easily frightened into a full confession. One of the mess-cooks, named Walton, and both of the steward's assistants, were in the plot.—Walton, an ingenious fellow, had made a key to fit the lock from an impression he had obtained of the original.—The bag he had prepared so that the boy could be concealed inside, and at the same time easily let himself out.—Several small holes in the sides served him to see when the attention of the sentry was directed from him. The boy was easily smuggled into the bread-room by the two assistants, placed in the bag, and then set out in the other bags, but as near as possible to the hatch of the specie-room, from whence he found but little trouble in making his way to the money. He had taken but one bag at a time, which he hauled up after him into his narrow quarters, after which he would lace on the bottom of the bread-bag again, and in the morning his cook would come and carry him up to the berth-deck.—During the two weeks previous, the boy had been on the "sick list," so he was not of course expected in his watch on deck at night.

The implicated men were secured, and the money was found in Walton's mess-chest. They had laid their plans for deserting when the ship arrived at Gibraltar, and getting the money off with them. They owned that they had calculated upon securing five thousand dollars.

The three men were court-martialed, sentenced to two hundred lashes apiece, and then to be set on shore at the first port made, while the boy was subjected to such reformatory process as shipboard afforded, he being only a tool in the hands of the older thieves.

The sentences were carried out to the very letter, and the Purser felt much easier after his money-bags were secured, and the adroit thieves disposed of.

GEN. JACKSON'S LAW OFFICE.

It may not be generally known among our distant readers that the office in which Gen. Jackson read law in this town, is still standing. It is a small frame building, and seems to have been once painted red; but its color, present would be hard to describe. The hand of time is visible on it. We visited it a few days ago; it stands upon the lot of Nathaniel Boyden, Esq., and in front of his elegant dwelling. A stranger would wonder that it was permitted to remain a decaying and unsightly structure in the midst of taste and elegance; but there are associations connected with it—be it said to the honor of the proprietor—that preserves it from the ruthless hand of progress. Its former tenant, after a career among the most brilliant in the annals of history, now moulders in the grave, leaving behind him a name as lasting as time. From this humble and insignificant office he went forth, raising step by step, encircling his brow with fresh laurels, and extending the circle of his fame at every advance, until he at last reached the proudest heights, the most honored station in the world. Living, he was his country's pride; and dead, his memory is shrined in every heart.

Salisbury (N. C.) Banner.

"This world's a wilderness of we," as the omnibus horse said when the driver stopped at every corner.

LAFAYETTE.

Who can read the history of Lafayette's youth without discerning early developments of a superior intellect, and of uncommon strength of mind? Before attaining the age of twenty years, he had refused the tempting honors of a splendid court, and embarked in the cause of those principles which he carried with him through life. Had he, in a fit of desperation, and when fortune frowned, crossed the Atlantic and entered the service of our country, as a refugee in distress, we might feel grateful for his timely aid, but could not extol his magnanimity.—But how different was the spectacle!

At home he was honored and beloved, and enjoyed the brightest prospects. A thousand difficulties beset his undertaking. The wishes of his enemies, the powerlessness of those who represented the American Cause, were all combined against him, but all failed to repress his ardor. How strikingly was the native energy of his character displayed in the events of his flight from the shores of France, and his appearance on the theatre of our revolutionary struggle! His military talent in the field, his political sagacity in the council, during his eventful campaigns on our American soil, his exertions in our behalf at the French court, and the esteem with which he was uniformly regarded by Washington, bear honorable evidence to the good qualities which adorn both the head and the heart of the youthful disciple of liberty.

True to his principles, he renounced even the hereditary honors of his family. Had he sought for personal aggrandizement by worshipping the rising star of Napoleon's fortune, he might have realized his most boundless desires. Had he accepted the presidency of a republic, he might have assumed a dictatorship, and moved in the dazzling orbit of absolute command. If Lafayette ever really aspired to the highest office in the government, we cannot doubt, relying on the testimony of his whole public life, that his aspirations were consecrated by the purest and most patriotic motives. Struggling Greece, enslaved Poland, Spain and Portugal distracted and convulsed, as well as oppressed America, and his native land, participated in his sympathies, and engaged his exertions in the cause of liberty.

When we view Lafayette's influence during the first days of the French revolution; when we see him, in the public assembly, demanding from the Count d'Artois that the rights of the French people to personal security, personal liberty, and private property, should be considered inviolate; when we look at his wonderful organization of the National Guard, and witness his capacity to command; when at Versailles he preserved the royal family and his own life from an armed and infuriated mob; we see only another development of that character so nobly stamped during his services in our struggle for independence—and that impress was as deep and well defined in the last stage of his life, as when it appeared fresh from the plastic influence of the revolution.

We freely admit that, if there was any error in Lafayette's political course, it was that his patriotism sometimes blinded him to the faults and frailties of his countrymen; that he sometimes indulged the hope of seeing his most ardent desire for France accomplished in the complete adoption of American principles of government. Of his consistency, the well-known declaration of Charles X. that he "knew but two men who had always professed the same principles—himself and Lafayette," is sufficient evidence. With the mob, his popularity did, indeed, fluctuate; but he was always beloved by the nation.

Yet his talents and life were never truly estimated and rewarded by the French people. France never paid the debt of paternal love which she owed to a son whose proudest boast was that of pure filial affection. Lafayette died a good old age; but his reward, though embittered by the untoward issue of his labors, was emphatically the reward of the patriot!

American Union.

"This world's a wilderness of we," as the omnibus horse said when the driver stopped at every corner.

From the Dublin Irish American.

Mrs. Stowe in Cork.

Skull and Skibberbeen—Blarney lane and Blackpool—have invited the female Barnum—the princess of humbugs—to that beautiful city called Cork to an abolition oration!

Uncle Tom's Cabin! Father Pat's Hut!

Uncle Tom well fed, well clothed, well housed, well doctored, and, in many instances, well educated!

Father Pat dying in a ditch, after being thrown out of his birth-spot—raging in a spotted fever—without a drop of water to cool his burning tongue—without food, raiment or medicine—without sympathy or aid—save from his penniless peers—rotting, rotting away out of existence!

Uncle Tom decently confined and interred!

Father Pat thrown, like a piece of carrion, into the red earth, a shrivelled remnant of skin hanging about his bones, without a shroud, a coffin, a sigh, or a tear—the hungry dog howling after and tearing him from the earth at night, and holding a carnival over his putrid body.

Aye, inhabitants of Cork city, your white brothers lying upon your waysides, the steps of your hall-doors, in our streets, covered with vermin, fever maniacs, with parched lips and cancerous stomachs, how dare you interfere with American institutions—institutions fostered, fed and supported by the cotton, rice and tobacco lords—selfish and knavish hypocrites that they are—of England!

Aye, take Mrs. Barnum Stowe to Skibberbeen and Skull. Show her the spot where the bones of your kindred lie bleaching—women and men, honest, better and purer than you—where the 'mere Irish' have melted into the earth, 'having been told, (according to the eminent and philanthropic Everette,) in the frightful language of political economy that at the daily table which nature spreads for the human family there is no cover laid for them in Ireland; and that they have crossed the ocean to find occupation, shelter and bread on a foreign soil!"

Aye, take Uncle Tom's historian to Father Pat's grave—that spot of red damnation—remind her of the blood hound banquet, the festering corpse, the howls of the famine stricken, the blasphemous ravings of the insane—and ask her should you intermeddle for the black while you have white slaves by the millions, whose condition you have done nothing—you do nothing—to alleviate!

Father Pat starves in a hut not fit for an aristocratic hog; give him a human dwelling.

Poor Pat is without food; give him to eat from 'the daily table which nature spreads.'

Father Pat is ignorant, unenlightened; educate him, and you will be blessed of God.

Do this—perform these duties—contribute to free your own white slave—(called, by a mockery, a delusion and snare, a free man)—and then you may fetter Mrs. Stowe, Lucy Stone, or Abby Folsom, and sympathize with American bondsmen, whom you propagate by purchasing that cotton which they, and they only, can produce.

THE WAY THE PARIS MILLINERS DO IT.—The milliners of Paris adapt the style of their fashions to the changes of the seasons. At the close of March they trim with budding imitations of foliage; with the close of April they use the nearly full blown rose; this during the month of May is combined with its buds and leaves and other May flowers. The children too have their new fashions. Dresses in toffia of Italian rose, lilac or light blue, entirely covered with light flourees, are now the rage for little girls. Fifteen little flourees, festooned in very deep cockscombs of white silk from one ruffle of light enlivening freshness.— This is said to form a beautiful rosette, surmounted by the head of a pretty child. Place on this a nice straw hat, with garlands of tiny roses, let these braids of hair escape on a white neck, and the tout ensemble is said to be delicious.

EFFECTUAL PREVENTIVE.

There exists in some parts of Germany a law to prevent drinking during divine service. It runs thus: "Any person drinking in an alehouse during divine service on Sunday, or other holiday, may legally depart without paying."

THE MIDNIGHT JOURNEY.

A farmer in one of the Western counties of England was met by a man whom he had formerly employed, and who again asked for work.— The farmer, rather with a view to be relieved from his importunity than with any intention of assisting him, told him he would think of it, and send word to the place where the man told him he should be found.— Time passed on, and the farmer entirely forgot his promise. One night, however, he suddenly started from sleep, and awaking his wife, said he felt a strong impulse to set off immediately to the county town, some 30 or 40 miles distant; but why, he had not the least idea. He endeavored to shake off the impression, and went to sleep again; but awoke a second time with such a strong conviction that he must start that instant, that he directly rose, saddled his horse, and set off. On his way he had to cross a ferry, which he could only do at one hour of the night, when the mail was carried over.— He was certain he should be too late, but nevertheless rode on, and when he came to the ferry, greatly to his surprise, found that though the mail had passed over a short time previously, the ferryman was still waiting. On expressing his astonishment the boatman replied:

"O, when I was at the other side, I heard you shouting and so I came back."

The farmer said he had not shouted; but the other repeated his assertion that he had distinctly heard him call.

Having crossed over, the farmer pursued his journey, and arrived at the county town the next morning. But now that he had come there, he had not the slightest notion of any business to be transacted, and so amused himself by sauntering about the place, and at length entered the court where the assizes were being held. The prisoner at the bar had just been to all appearance, proved guilty by circumstantial evidence, of murder; and he was then asked if he had any witness to call in his behalf. He replied that he had no friends there, but looking round the court amongst the spectators, he recognized the farmer, who almost immediately recognized in him the man who had applied to him for work.— The farmer was instantly summoned to the witness-box, and his evidence proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the very hour the prisoner was accused of committing murder in one part of the county, he was applying for work in another.

The prisoner was of course acquitted, and the farmer found that, urged on by an uncontrollable impulse, which he could neither explain nor account for, he had indeed taken his midnight journey to some purpose, notwithstanding it appeared so unreasonable and causeless.

MINDING ONE'S BUSINESS.

It is usual to say that only women gossip; but we are sure, in Cincinnati, the men do a little, too. Does a person move into a large house? Instantly his business neighbors begin to wonder if he can afford it; implying, of course, by the question, that he cannot. Does another buy a horse? There are ominous shakes of the head, and sage remarks, in whispers, about spendthrifts. Does a third beautify his store, or enlarge his stock? Dark hints are heard respecting people that go too fast, and who are certain always to end in ruin.— Has a fourth made a fortune? As people cannot now abuse him for spending money, they say he has grown haughty; so that unless he is twice as affable as before, he is sneered at for being "proud." A fifth, a sixth, a seventh, and so on endless, has some other pretended fault, over which his acquaintance talk behind his back, or hint of, winking as they smoke their cigars.—There is a good deal of this minding other people's business to be found among even men in Cincinnati, and we suspect elsewhere also. Sensible people, however, find their own affairs as much as they can attend to properly. Depend upon it, he who is always minding the business of other persons, is very apt to neglect his own till it gets into a hopeless tangle.