

The Sumter Banner.

DEVOTED TO SOUTHERN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, NEWS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS.

W. J. FRANCIS, Proprietor.

"God and our Native Land."

TERMS—Two Dollars Per Annum In Advance.

VOL. VII.

SUMTERVILLE, S. C., AUGUST 16, 1853.

NO 42.

THE SUMTER BANNER
IS PUBLISHED
EVERY TUESDAY MORNING
BY W. J. FRANCIS.
TERMS,

TWO DOLLARS in advance, Two Dollars and Fifty Cents at the expiration of six months, or Three Dollars at the end of the year.
No paper discontinued until all arrearages are paid, unless at the option of the Proprietor.
Advertisements inserted at SEVENTY-FIVE Cents per square, (12 lines or less), for the first, and half that sum for each subsequent insertion.

The number of insertions to be marked on all advertisements or they will be published until ordered to be discontinued, and charged accordingly.

ONE DOLLAR per square for a single insertion. Quarterly and Monthly Advertisements will be charged the same as a single insertion, and semi-monthly the same as new ones.

MISCELLANEOUS.

From Gleason's Pictorial.

THE GREEN CHAMBER;
OR,
The Midnight Visitor.

BY FRANCIS A. DUBIVAGE.

In my younger days, 'ghost stories' were the most popular narratives extant, and the lady or gentleman who could recite the most thrilling adventure, involving a genuine spiritual visitant, was sure to be the lion or lioness of the evening party he enlightened (?) with the distasteful details. The elder auditors never seemed particularly horrified or terror-stricken, however much gratified they were, but the young members would drink in every word, "sipping full of horrors."—After listening to one of these authentic narratives, we used to be very reluctant to retire to our dormitories, and never ventured to get into bed till we had examined suspicious looking closets, old wardrobes, and, indeed, every nook and corner that might be supposed to harbor a ghost or a ghoul.

Fortunately for the rising generation, these tales have gone out of fashion; and though some attempts to revive that taste have been made—as in the 'Night of Nature'—such efforts have proved deplorable failure. The young people of to day make light of ghosts. The spectres in the incantation scene of 'Der Freyschutz', are received with roars of laughter, and even the statue in Don Giovanni seems 'jolly,' notwithstanding the illusive music of Mozart. We were about to remark that the age had outgrown superstition, but we remembered the Rochester knockings, and concluded to be modestly silent.

One evening, many years since, it was a blustering December evening, the wind howling as it dashed the old buttonwood limbs in its fury against the parlor windows of the country house where a few of us were assembled to pass the winter holidays, we gathered before a roaring fire of walnut and oak, which made everything within doors as cheery and comfortable, as all without was desolate and dreary. The window shutters were left unfastened, that the bright lamplight and ruddy firelight might stream afar upon the wintry waste, and perhaps guide some benighted wayfarer to a hospitable shelter.

We shall not attempt to describe the group, as any such portrait painting would not be germane to the matter more immediately in hand. Suffice it to say, that one of the youngsters begged Aunt Deborah, the matron of the mansion, to tell us a ghost story—for in those days we were terribly afraid of counterfeits, and hated to hear a narrative where the ghost turned out in the end to be no ghost after all, but a mere compound of flesh and blood like ourselves.

Aunt Deborah smiled at our earnestness, and tantalized our impatience by some of those little arts, with which the practised story-teller enhances the value and interest of her narrative. She tapped her silver snuff box, opened it deliberately, took a very delicate pinch of the Landy Foot, shut the box, replaced it in her pocket, folded her hand before her, looked round a minute on the expectant group and then began.

I shall despair of imparting to this cold-pan and ink record of her story the inimitable conversational grace with which she embellished it. It made an indelible impression on my memory, and if I have never

before repeated it, it was from a lurking fear that—though the old lady assured us it was 'not to be found in any book or newspaper'—it might have found its way into print. However, as twenty years have elapsed, and I have never yet met with it in type, I will venture to give the outline of the narrative.

Major Rupert Stanley, a bold dragoon in the service of his majesty George III, found himself, one dark and blustering night in autumn, riding towards London on the old York road. He had supped with a friend, who lived at a village some distance off the road, and he was unfamiliar with the country. Though not raining, the air was damp, and the heavy, surcharged clouds threatened every moment to pour down their contents. But the major, though a young man, was an old campaigner; and with a warm cloak wrapped about him, and a good horse under him, would have cared very little for storm and darkness, had he felt sure of a good bed for himself, and comfortable quarters for his horse when he had ridden far enough for the strength of his faithful animal.

A good horseman cares as much for the comfort of his steed as for his own case. To add to the discomfort of the evening, there was some chance of meeting highwaymen; but Major Stanley felt no uneasiness on that score, as just before leaving his friend's house, he had examined his holster-pistols, and freshly primed them.—A brush with a highwayman would enhance the romance of a night journey.

So he jogged along; but mile after mile was passed, and no twinkling light in the distance gave notice of the appearance of the wished for inn. The major's horse began to give unmistakable evidence of distress—stumbling once or twice, and recovering himself with difficulty. At last, a dim light suddenly appeared at a turn of the road. The horse pricked up his ears, and trotted forward with spirit, soon halting beside a one-story cottage. The major was disappointed, but he rode up to the door and rapped loudly with the butt of his riding-whip. The summons brought a sleepy cotter to the door.

"My good friend," said the major, "can you tell me how far it is to the next inn?"

"Eh! it be about seven mile, zur," was the answer, in the broad Yorkshire dialect of the district.

"Seven miles!" exclaimed the major, in a tone of disappointment, "and my horse is already blown! My good fellow can't you put my horse somewhere, and give me a bed? I will pay you liberally for your trouble."

"Eh! Goodness zakes!" said the rustic. "I be nought but a ditcher! There be noa place to put the nag in, and there be only one room and one bed in the cot."

"What shall I do?" cried the major, at his wif's end.

"I'll tell 'ee, zur," said the rustic, scratched his head violently, as if to extract his ideas by the roots, "There be a voine large house on the road, about a mile further on. It's noa an inn, but the colonel zees company vor the vun o' the thing—'cause he loikes to zee company a-bout 'un. You mus' t' a heard o' him—Colonel Rogers—a' used to be a soger once."

"Say no more," cried the major. "I have heard of this hospitable gentleman, and his having been in the army gives me a sure claim to his attention. Here's a crown for your information, my good friend. Come, Marlborough!"

Touching his steed with the spur, the major rode off, feeling an exhilaration of spirit which soon communicated itself to the horse. A sharp trot of a few minutes brought him to a large mansion, which stood unfenced, like a huge caravansary, by the roadside. He made for the front door, and, without dismounting, plied the large brass knocker till a servant in livery made his appearance.

"Is your master up?" asked the major.

"I am the occupant of this house," said a venerable gentleman, making his appearance at the hall door.

"I am a benighted traveller, sir," said the major, touching his 'hat' and come to claim your well-known hos-

pitality. Can you give me a bed for the night? I am afraid my four-footed companion is hardly able to carry me to the next inn."

"I cannot promise you a bed, sir," said the host, "for I have but one spare bed in the house."

"And that?"—said the major.

"Happens to be in a room that does not enjoy a very pleasant reputation. In short, sir, one room of my house is haunted; and that is the only one, unfortunately, that I can place at your disposal to-night."

"My dear sir," said the major, springing from his horse, and tossing the bridle to the servant, you enchant me beyond expression! A haunted chamber! The very thing—and I who have never seen a ghost! What luck?"

The host shook his head gravely. "I never knew a man," he said, "to pass a night in the chamber without regretting it."

Major Stanley laughed, as he took his pistols from the holster-pipes. "With these friends of mine," he said, "I fear neither ghost nor demon."

Colonel Rogers showed his guest into a comfortable parlor, where a sea-coal fire was burning cheerfully in a grate, and refreshment most welcome to a weary traveller, stood upon a table.

"Mine host" was an old campaigner, and had seen much service during the war of the American Revolution, and he was full of interesting anecdotes and descriptions of adventures. But while Major Stanley was apparently listening attentively to the narrative of his hospitable entertainer, throwing in the appropriate ejaculations of surprise and pleasure at the proper intervals, his whole attention was in reality absorbed by a charming girl of twenty, the daughter of the colonel, who graced the table with her presence. Never he thought, had he seen so beautiful, so modest and so lady-like a creature; and she, in turn, seemed very favorably impressed with the manly beauty and frank manners of their military guest.

At length she retired. The colonel, who was a three bottle man, and had found a listener to his heart, was somewhat inclined to prolong the session into the small hours of the morning, but finding that his guest was much fatigued, and even beginning to nod in the midst of his choice story, he felt compelled to ask him if he would not like to retire. Major Stanley replied promptly in the affirmative, and the old gentleman, taking up a silver candlestick, ceremoniously marshalled his guest to a large old-fashioned room, the walls of which being papered with green, gave it its appellation of the 'green chamber.' A comfortable bed invited to repose; a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth, and everything was cozy and quiet. The major looked him with a smile of satisfaction.

"I am deeply indebted to you, colonel," said he, "for affording me such comfortable quarters. I shall sleep like a top."

"I am afraid not," answered the colonel, shaking his head gravely. "I never knew a guest of mine to pass a quiet night in the Green Chamber."

"I shall prove an exception," said the major, smiling. "But I must make one remark; he added seriously. 'It is ill sporting with the feelings of a soldier, and should any of your servants attempt to play tricks upon me, they will have occasion to repent it.' And he laid his heavy pistol on the light-stand by his bedside."

"My servants, Major Stanley," said the old gentleman, with an air of offended dignity, "are too well drilled to dare attempt any tricks upon my guests. Good night, major."

"Good-night, colonel."

The door closed. Major Stanley locked it. Having done so, he took a survey of the apartment. Beside the door opening into the entry, there was another leading to some other room. There was no lock upon this second door, but a heavy table placed across, completely barricaded it.

"I am safe," thought the major, unless there is a storming party of ghosts to attack me in fastness. I think I shall sleep well."

He threw himself into an arm-chair before the fire, and watching the glowing embers, amused himself with building castles in the air, and musing on the attraction of the fair Julia, his host's daughter. He was far enough from thinking of spectral visitants, when a very light noise struck on his ear. Glancing in the direction of the inner door, he thought he saw the heavy table glide backwards from its place.—Quick, as thought, he caught up a pistol, and challenged the intruder. There was no reply—but the door continued to open and the table to slide back. At last there glided

into the room a tall, graceful figure, robed in white. At the first glance, the blood curdled in the major's veins; at the second, he recognized the daughter of his host. Her eyes were wide open, and she advanced with an assured step, but it was very evident she was asleep. Here was the mystery of the Green Chamber solved at once. The young girl walked to the fire-place and seated herself in the arm-chair from which the soldier had just risen. His first impulse was to vacate the room, and go directly and alarm the colonel. But, in the first place he knew not what apartment his host occupied, and in the second curiosity prompted him to watch the demouement of this singular scene. Julia raised her left hand, and gazing on a beautiful ring that adorned one of her white and taper fingers, pressed it repeatedly to her lips. She then sank into an attitude of repose, her arms drooping listlessly by her sides.

The major approached her, and stole the ring from her finger. His action disturbed but did not awaken her. She seemed to miss the ring, however, and, after groping hopelessly for it, rose and glided thro' the doorway as silently as she had entered. She had no sooner retired, than the major replaced the table, and drawing a heavy clothes press against it, effectually guarded himself against a second intrusion.

This done, he threw himself upon the bed, and slept soundly till a late hour of the morning. When he awoke, he sprang out of the bed, and ran to the window. Every trace of the storm had passed away, and an unclouded sun was shining on the radiant landscape. After performing the duties of his toilet, he was summoned to breakfast, where he met the colonel and his daughter.

"Well, major,—and how did you pass the night?" asked the colonel anxiously.

"Famously," replied Stanley. "I slept like a top, as I told you I should."

"Then, thank Heaven, the spell is broken at last," said the colonel, "and the White Phantom has ceased to haunt the Green Chamber."

"By no means," said the major, smiling, "the White Phantom paid me a visit last night, and left me a token of the honor."

"A token!" exclaimed the father and daughter, in a breath.

"Yes, my friend, and here it is."—And the major handed the ring to the old gentleman.

"What's the meaning of this Julia?" exclaimed the colonel. "The ring I gave you last week!"

Julia uttered a faint cry and turned deadly pale.

"The mystery is easily explained," said the major. "The young lady is a sleep-waker. She came into my room before I had retired, utterly unconscious of her actions. I took the ring from her hand that I might be able to convince you and her of the reality of what I had witnessed."

The major's business was not pressing, and he readily yielded to the colonel's urgent request to pass a few days with him. Their mutual liking increased upon better acquaintance, and in a few weeks the White Phantom's ring, inscribed with the names of Rupert Stanley and Julia Rogers, served as the sacred symbol of their union for life.

SATURDAY NIGHT.—We are indebted to the local of the Sandusky Register for the annexed happily conceived and beautifully expressed extract. There is poetry as well as true genial feeling in it.

"Saturday night! How the heart of the weary man rejoices, as with his week's wages in his pocket, he lies him home to gather his little ones around him and draws consolation from his hearthstone for the many hard hours he has toiled to win his pittance. Saturday night! How the poor woman sighs for very relief as she realizes that again God has sent her time for rest; and though her rewards have been small, yet is she content to live on, for even her heart builds up in the future a home where 'tis always Saturday eve! How the careworn man of business relaxes his brow, and closing his shop, saunters deliberately around to gather up a little gossip ere he goes quietly home to take a good rest! How softly the young man pronounces the word, for a bright-eyed maiden is in waiting, and this Saturday night shall be a blessed time for him—there will be low words spoken by the

garden gate, and there will be a pressure of hands—perhaps a pressure of lips! blessed Saturday night! To all kind heaven has given a little heaven which works in the heart to stir up the gentle emotions, and Saturday night alone the meet and fitting time for dreaming gentle dreams. Blessed Saturday night! and we can but pray that through life we may bear with us the remembrance of its many holy hours now gone into the far past—memories which every Saturday eve but recalls like a benediction pronounced by one loved and gone."

From Abbeville Banner.
Militia System.

There is no concealing the fact that our present militia system is becoming very unpopular; and however strong our inclinations for promotion in the military, our desires must yield to the convictions of reason, and we are forced to confess that we think it deservedly unpopular.

Yet there are many who would advocate militia mustering, though it would accomplish nothing; not because they believed any benefit would result therefrom, but because of their strong hope of winning a military title, and an ardent wish to

"Sink their shanks knee deep in leather, And shelter their craniums under caps with a feather."

Now we do not address our remarks to this class of persons whose reasons is somewhat obscured by their military aspirations—by their ambition to put on the dignity, wear the laurels and enjoy the honor of being a militia Captain or Major; because they would fall like unmeaning words upon their brains. But we address ourselves to the sensible and reflecting part of the community who are not aspirants for militia office, but are content to be called by the familiar name of Jack or Tom, with out the title of Major or Colonel.—The propositions that we take are these:

1st. That all the mustering done by our militia does not effect anything in the way of preparing them for the duties of war.

2nd. That it only serves to keep a kind of militia organization, which could be done with one half the labor and expense now employed.

3rd. That, therefore, we should make some alteration or revision of our system.

As to the truth of the proposition, we leave that to the decision of every honest militia man, and would ask him, in the name of honesty, although he may have performed militia duty for the last twenty years, whether he could shoulder arms, about face, or perform the most simple evolution with that skill and precision that would be required of him if he were mustered into actual service?

We presume that there are none so vain as to conceive that, by our militia system, they are rendered capable, when called upon, of becoming better and more efficient soldiers; therefore we shall say nothing further under this head.

Knowing, by experience and observation, that our present system fails to drill and instruct our militia, this fact forces the conclusion of our second proposition, that it only keeps up an organization.

Now if you conclude that the keeping up of the organization, and patrol duties, are the only benefits arising from our system, indeed we cannot see how you could conclude otherwise; then if we find out a better and cheaper way of doing this, there can be no reason why we should not adopt it.

Suppose you make a clean sweep and abolish militia mustering altogether, (though we do not advocate such a total extinction of the militia,) could you not still keep the organization by passing a law that the Magistrates in each beat should keep a list for the enrolment of the militia—putting a fine upon any one who should fail or neglect to enrol his name?

The cost of this would be comparatively nothing when compared with the heavy tax that we pay under our present system.

But, says one, how can you make it appear that we pay a military tax? Well, here is to the proof of it: Every one must admit that wealth is originally acquired by labor and industry, and that labor is the lever or means by which wealth is accumu-

lated; then, if the State takes away the means by which our money is obtained, by taxing our labor, she does the same thing as to take away our wealth by taxing our purse. What would be the difference to you if the State were to pass a law requiring you to work exclusively for the public, or a law requiring all the proceeds of your labor as a public tax? There could be no difference. Then you see to tax a man's labor, is to tax his purse.

Now let us calculate what amount of military tax the people of this District pay—and not having the militia rolls before us, our calculations must be based upon supposition.—We may reasonably suppose that there are sixteen hundred men liable to do militia duty. Now, rating every man's labor and attention on his farm to be worth, on an average, one dollar per day; then one day would be sixteen hundred dollars, and six times that amount, would be over nine thousand dollars, nearly equal to one half of the whole tax paid by our District.

It seems very clear to me, that with even one fourth of this amount, judiciously expended, we could do more towards building up the military, and rendering our soldiers efficient, than is now done with the whole amount.

The grand argument in favor of our militia system is, that it keeps up the patrol duties; but it would be sheer nonsense to say that we could not accomplish this end by other and different ways. We would answer the argument by saying that there is generally a Magistrate in each beat, and there could be no inconvenience in giving them the management of the patrol business, even if we had to give them a small compensation for their trouble. It would certainly be cheaper and better to do this, than to drag out a thousand men from their farms for the purpose of putting out patrol warrants, and of going through the mock semblance of military evolutions.

Another argument is, that we should sustain the present system, in order that when the brazen notes of the war trumpet shall be sounded in our ears, our militia men could be drafted, dragged and compelled to march to the defence of their country. Such an argument is a slander upon the courage and patriotism of our citizens. It is just the same as to say that they would not fight for their country without being compelled by law. But such is not the fact; when our country is invaded—her rights endangered—they need no compulsory laws to compel them to march to her rescue. No—the spirit that animated our grandsires to fight for the cause of freedom, is not so degenerate in the bosoms of their children as that they should need the authority of law to force them to maintain its blessings.

Let but our country's flag be hoisted in defence of our liberty, and thousands of willing soldiers will flock from all quarters to her standard. Let but a hostile enemy plant his foot upon our seashore, and you will find hardly volunteers sufficient to fall upon them, like hungry wolves upon a sheep-fold, and scatter them to the four winds.

We come now to what we said in our third proposition, viz: that our system should be revised. Here lies the difficulty. Every one sees the necessity of a change, but it is not an easy task to frame a new plan to supersede the old. We are inclined to think that the late plan adopted by Virginia, of appropriating funds to defray the expenses of volunteer companies, and doing away with militia drills altogether, is as good as any we could offer. But as this plan would kill off the necessity of so many officers, and some of the military aspirants might be left in the back ground, we propose, for the accommodation of all that are ambitious that line, that the Legislature should issue three of our petty drills—

one petty drill battalion and parade—and that it appropriate a portion of the fund for building up our education of young men, and that it encourage the formation of volunteer companies.

Say we would have half of the cost of

education of officers, we would have, according to our calculation, over two thousand dollars, which would be a sum sufficient to keep annually, at our citadel, six or seven students from our District, free of charge, instead of the one or two that we are now allowed to send there.

By so doing we would place the facility of education within reach of the poor, which they are not able to enjoy under our present free school system, and raise a host of officers who, in the hour of need, in the time of war, could do more in drilling and instructing our soldiers, in the short space of one week, than is now done in twenty years.

At our citadel, the young men would not only receive a military, but a substantial literary education—be qualified for civil engineering and navigation—and thus, instead of employing Northern Yankees upon our railroads and steamboats, we could give employment to our own Southern citizens.

Having said much more than we expected, we conclude with earnest hope that some man of large calibre may fire his opposition gun against the system, and spread terror and confusion in the ranks of its advocates.

With due respect to the opinions of those who consider innovations and changes as dangerous things, I subscribe myself

AN ADVOCATE OF REFORM.

WORK FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST.—THE PLANTATION.—Finish all your arrangements for picking, ginning, and packing cotton, and as soon as the bolls begin to open freely set the hands at work gathering. Have your seed cotton hauled from the field to the ginhouse, and do not require your negroes to waste their time and strength by carrying or "toting their heavily laden baskets. Where cotton is late—as it is in many sections the present year—keep your plows and cultivators still going to destroy the weeds, encourage a late growth, and prevent the forms from falling off. Corn may now be laid by, in all favorable localities. Turnips (Ruta Bagas, &c.) may be sown from the 1st to the 25th of the present month; freshly plow and harrow the land, and sow thickly in drills, from two to three feet apart—manure highly and cover the seed lightly. After picking over your cotton once, pass the cultivator or sweep through the crop, and sow some Rye for winter pasture. Sweet Potato "draws" may be set out during the early part of this month, but it is late for them. This is a good time to ditch and drain low wet lands—to clean up underbrush—to make fish ponds, prepare strawberry beds—commence woods-pastures, &c. &c.

THE GARDEN.—Set out all plants on hand of the Cauliflower, Broccoli, and Cabbage family. Continue to transplant Celery. Sow seeds of Salsafy, Turnips, Beets, Carrots, &c., for winter use—giving the seed some shade or protection from the sun. Full crops of the different kinds of Turnips should be sown during the month; at two or three different periods. Spinach, Lettuce, and Radishes may still be sown. Snap Beans may be planted for pickles. "Draws" of the sweet potato may be planted very early in the month. Melons and cucumbers may be planted for pickles. Peas, for fall use, may be planted; but they need well mulched, and occasional watering with liquid manure.

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