

Wednesday Morning, April 12, 1865.

## \* Woodlands.

Sundry mistakes and mis-statements having been made in respect to the destruction of "Woodlands," the plantation and country seat of W. Gilmore Simms, a brief account of the real facts may be proper. The particulars we gather from a letter written to the author, by Mrs. H. Pinekney, a lady who, with her family, a friend and two children, occupied the dwelling during his absence; and partly from circumstantial details furnished subsequently from other and trustworthy sources. When the enemy reached the neighborhood, Mrs. P. addressed a letter to Gen. Blair, requesting protection for the dwelling and library, and suggesting the enormity of the crime which could destroy books, especially such a collection—some ten thousand volumes—made with great care, during a period of forty years, and constituting, perhaps, the most valuable library, to a literary man, to be found in the Confederacy. Before an answer could be received to this application, bands of stragglers had penetrated the house and begun the work of robbery. The trunks and bureaus were at once broken open. In the midst of this scene, the guard sent by Gen. Blair made its appearance, and relieved the house of the plunderers. The General himself, with Gen. Howard and other officers, visited the estate, and spent some time in the examination of the library. They took away a collection of maps, including Mills' Atlas of South Carolina, and perhaps a few other volumes. They also carried off a couple of double-barrelled guns and a rifle; but nothing besides of any importance, and their deportment was courteous and becoming. They left a sufficient guard behind them, and the building was saved while this guard remained on the premises. But, with their departure, frequent attempts to burn the house at night were made, and the ladies became so much alarmed and wearied with night watching, that they fled, and sought refuge for themselves and family at the neighborly hamlet of Midway. With their departure the felons succeeded in their design. The house, a very extensive, newly built one, and only partially finished, but with six habitable rooms, besides the library, was fired at four several quarters, and when the flames were discovered by the servants, at day-break, they had reached a degree of height and intensity which made all efforts impossible to save. The library, in a separate wing, connected with the main dwelling by a corridor, was the first to burn. Not a volume was saved. From the other wing, and the centre building, the servants rescued some of the bedding and furniture. Some idle stories have imputed the destruction of the property to the slayers of Mr. Simms, and one of these, his body servant, who was the chief laborer and the most indefatigable in his efforts to save the property—who did, in fact, save the most of those things which were rescued from the fire—was arrested, on some vague conjectures, and actually tried for his life before a court of freeholders. He was unanimously acquitted. The slaves,

themselves, all testify that the incendiarism was due to small squads of white stragglers, following in the wake of the main army—miserable bands of plunderers, who usually lurk behind with this very object—creatures not brave enough for fight, but eager enough to steal. Successive bands of these came by hourly, for several days after the army had passed—the jackals following in the wake of the lion: These miserable miscreants have thus, for a few hundred dollars' worth of portable plunder, destroyed the accumulations of forty years, and such a collection of literature as has rarely been made in our country, and such as is not likely to be made again. The larger and better portions of the furniture had been previously sent off to other places. The library shelves were left full, and sixteen large boxes of choice books besides had been packed away by the author, and would have been sent away, could transportation have been obtained. This was found to be impossible. In addition to the dwelling, the incendiaries destroyed the kitchen, the carriage house, gin house, threshing house, stables, barns and various other buildings; carried off four or five horses, and three oxen, with wagons and buggy. They also carried off some twenty-eight or thirty negroes. These particulars may be all relied on. Mr. Simms has no reason to doubt that the work of incendiarism was wholly done by straggling squads of the enemy. He has no reason to suppose that the negroes were criminal, and the investigation has so decided. They had no motive for the crime. They knew—what the Yankees did not—that, save the library and a very few bulky articles of furniture, there was no plunder to provoke their own or the cupidity of any other parties. Had the house been thrown open wide to the plunderers, it might have been the wiser measure; and yet, in the case of such profligates as we have had to deal with, the mere wantonness of mood which moves men in the exercise of an unwonted privilege of license, and stimulates to mere excess even in the absence of all considerations of sport and profit, would have sufficed for mischief—even as the wild colt, in a sudden spasm of exulting animal life, leaps and bounds and rollicks, trampling down the fields upon whose lush grasses he does not care to browse.

We had just penned the preceding, when we received, through the *Augusta Constitutionalist*, a long narrative, contained in the *New York Herald*, giving a narrative of the progress of the Yankees from the Savannah to the Congaree. From this we extract the following account of "Gen. Sherman's visit to Woodlands." At Woodlands, about one mile South of Midway, is the residence of the great novelist, Mr. Simms. It is an old-fashioned brick building, with massive, ungainly porticoes. It is a strange castellated appearing affair, with something of a weird look about it. Our skirmishers and foragers paid a hasty visit to Mr. Simms, and as he was not at home, they thought they would do the honors of the house themselves, and fell to helping themselves liberally. On hearing this, Maj. Gen. Frank Blair placed a guard over the place to protect the house, furniture and fine library. Mr. Simms is a thorough, rabid secessionist, full of Southern prejudice, and a fierce calumniator of Northern character and institutions.

Mr. Simms' plantation is a good type of the

low-land plantations of South Carolina. Since we left Savannah, the country was one vast low-land plain. In front of Mr. Simms' house are some venerable trees, beneath which the vine and cypress have formed fantastic bowers, with their delicate foliage and garlands of hanging moss. Not far from the residence is a dark, solemn swamp, formed by the expansion of the Edisto over the low-lands. This is full of fallen trees, Gothic arches of cypress and vines interlacing their branches in strange shapes, while the ever-pending moss waves its funeral-looking pall over the miasmic, poisonous air of swamp lands. Here revel in secure enjoyment wild fowl, serpents and alligators.

Such dismal swamps are frequent in Carolina, but chiefly abound along the sea coast from Savannah to Charleston.

A loyal demonstration has been gotten up in Charleston on the 21st ult. The committee selected for this purpose, consisted of the following named parties, who may be very remarkable and leading people in the good old city, but we confess never to have heard of them before, viz: John Bonan, A. Foster Farrow, Joseph Quash, John Steedman, Sam. Dickson, Archibald Wriggs and Peter Wells. By their resolutions, they thank the United States authorities for saving them from confiscation and ill-treatment; express their gratitude to General Hatch, Admiral Dahlgren and others, for yielding them more saving and some creature comforts; and the fourth resolve—but we give that entire:

"4th. That to his Excellency Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, we return our sincere thanks and never-dying gratitude, for the noble and patriotic manner in which he promulgated the doctrines of Republicanism, and for the consistency in not only promulgating, but invariably conforming his action thereto, and we shall ever be pleased to acknowledge and hail him as the champion of the rights of freemen."

This, in sooth, is very rare fooling. Are not these people, Bonan, Farrow, Quash, &c., negroes? We suppose so. It seems to be very like nigger talk, in Yankee English.

The Charleston Hotel has been opened under the management of Stetson, of New York, formerly keeper of the Astor House. We are told that, at the opening feast, "a number of prominent citizens of South Carolina" were among the loyal and exulting partakers. Who are they?

The Yankees have constructed splendid wharves at Port Royal, but the amount of business is entirely confined to sutlers and themselves.

## OBITUARY.

Departed this life, in this city, February 25, 1865, of typhoid fever, WASHINGTON M. ALBERGOTTI, after an illness of nearly four weeks, in the thirty-seventh year of his age; leaving a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn his untimely end.

COLUMBIA, APRIL 11, 1865.

At a meeting of the Joint Relief Committee, held this day, the following resolution was passed:

*Resolved*, That as a change will be made in the plan of issuing rations, that four days' rations be issued on to-morrow, after which the distributing stores will be closed until Wednesday, 19th; and that notice of the same be made public through the *Phoenix*.