

THE LOCAL NEWS.

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Manuscripts of an Old Bachelor.—No. 4.

REMINISCENCES OF ALEXANDRIA.

Lex loci—LAW LAT.

The LAW of the place.—TRANS.

Pardon the conceit of the motto. In walking through the Market Square, a few days ago, I looked up at the Old Court House and remembered the men who once figured there, and were prominent as citizens and lawyers—most of whom have gone to their last homes, and are no longer here to partake of the prosperity or share in the adversity of the old town. I went up the steps which led to the Court Room, and cast a glance at the deserted and dilapidated appearance of what was once the seat of justice. All is changed!

In my day, the BAR of Alexandria was scarcely behind that of any town in Virginia. The resident practitioners were, some of them, very able men, and the most distinguished lawyers were frequently employed in cases argued and determined in the "Circuit Court of the District of Columbia for the county of Alexandria." Judge Cranch presided, and the associate judges were Thruston and Morsell—the latter of whom, I believe, is still alive and still a judge of the Court in Washington. Judge Cranch was an excellent, upright, and impartial judge, attentive and industrious.—He was esteemed and respected by the bar, and the citizens generally—and, having been, for many years, a resident here, was a favorite. He was, I always thought, cold and formal in his bearing—but in all the domestic relations of life a model man.—Grave and dignified in his manner, his very presence commanded order, and ensured decorum. Thruston had the quickest and liveliest parts of any one on the bench; and though not a student, was originally well grounded in the law, always seized the strong points of a case, and came at once to correct conclusions. He was somewhat irascible and impatient, and did not always show the "suaviter in modo" though no one ever accused him of wanting the "fortiter in re."—Whenever a judge acts upon the principle of Sir Thomas Parker, in the reign of Queen Anne, that it is "one of his duties to render it disagreeable to counsel to talk nonsense," it is difficult for him altogether to escape the imputation of discourtesy. Nevertheless, Judge T. was really kind hearted and friendly. Morsell was a quiet man, never ambitious of being prominent, but by those who knew him acknowledged to be well read in his profession, and a sound and safe expounder of the law. The Clerk of the Court was Mr. Edmund I. Lee, an esteemed gentleman of the old school, precise and methodical, but so much, on that account, the better officer of the Court. He was himself an excellent lawyer, and thoroughly acquainted with all the duties of his office, which he performed with scrupulous fidelity, and with unobtrusive adherence to the proper forms. Studiously correct himself he desired and required the same attention from others, in all judicial matters. When a criminal was arraigned, an oath administered, or any other official act performed in open court, it was done with solemnity and never failed to be impressive. Mr. Lee was universally respected. The Marshal, or as we say in Virginia now, the Sheriff, was Mr. Tench Ringgold, of whom our people saw but little, but his Deputy, Mr. Daniel Minor, lived among us, had a host of friends, and still lives, as I am informed in the county of Fairfax, retaining the regards and good wishes of all who ever knew him. The crier of the Court, when I first recollect, was Mr. Campbell, an elderly Scotch gentleman, with a strong burr on his tongue, a deep, sonorous voice, and always to be found at his post, opening and closing the court, and commanding silence, if any one outside the bar presumed even to whisper.

Mr. Thomas Swann was the first District Attorney I recollect. He was eminently fitted for his position—and had an honest, persuasive way of addressing the jury, which told strongly against offenders whom he prosecuted. There was but little of "quip or quirk" in Mr. Swann's course, but he accomplished as much by discarding the subtleties of the profession, and relying upon facts and the evidence, as others do, by resorting to stratagem, or seeking success in the intricacies of the written as well as the unwritten law. Mr. Francis S. Key succeeded Mr. Swann—a man of genius, and of learning. He was always strong when he chose to exert himself—and was to the criminal when he was aroused to a sense of duty, and a belief in the guilt of the accused, to call for his conviction.

The old belief that it will never do for a lawyer to be a poet, prevailed even in the case of such a lawyer as Mr. Key. I was standing near an intelligent gentleman, who had been listening to a very able speech delivered by Mr. Key in a criminal case, and observing, as I thought, the delight of my friend, asked him what he thought of that?—"Thought of that," said he, "why I was all the time thinking of the Star Spangled Banner!"

Among our own lawyers whom I best knew, and whose memory I still cherish with affectionate remembrance, was Mr. Robert I. Taylor. No written or published tribute to the worth and talents of Mr. Taylor that I have seen, has ever done justice to the man or the lawyer. Here, in this community, where he had lived from his earliest childhood, he received that confidence from his fellow citizens which is the highest compliment that can be paid to a professional man, and which was bestowed upon him in a spirit which enhanced its value. His name was itself here in Alexandria "a tower of strength" in any cause in which he was engaged, because of the implicit reliance placed upon his virtue and honesty. He would never carry a case into court if it could be amicably settled between the parties out of doors; he would give no advice in favor of litigation, if he did not see reason to believe in success; he would resort to no artifice to gain a triumph, and no subterfuge to escape defeat. With no pretensions to oratorical display or mere forensic eloquence, as it is called, he was a most convincing, able speaker—his style formed after the best English models—his sentences flowing and rounded—his voice sweet and well modulated—his air and manner conciliatory and prepossessing. I called him then—and still think him after the lapse of near thirty years from the days of which I write—in most respects, the best lawyer in Virginia. His modesty—innate, delightful as it was—prevented him from seeking fame or notoriety abroad—he was content with the quiet honors bestowed upon him by his friends and neighbors. But he made his mark wherever he appeared, and the more difficult the case in which he was engaged, or had to manage, the more were his professional brethren and the public satisfied of his ability. There was always so much sound sense, cogent argument, and knowledge of the law displayed in his addresses to courts and juries, that it was a real pleasure to listen to him. Often have I heard him in court, leaning negligently over the back of his chair, discussing the most intricate questions connected with the laws of real property, pouring a flood of light upon the matter in issue, illustrating his arguments with ready and apt references to authorities, and all in that easy, familiar way which was natural to him, and which, while it made plain the most abstruse points, seemed more like the earnest conversation of an intelligent gentleman, than the studied effort of a learned counselor. And yet I have also heard him when, seemingly unconscious to himself, he was truly eloquent—moving a jury to tears, or exciting them to share his feelings as well as to follow his judgment. He will be remembered by the Alexandrians who still survive him, as an honor to their community, and, had he lived, there is no post of distinction at the bar or on the bench in Virginia, to which he could not have attained.

I have already said so much of Mr. T.—for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"—that I cannot do more than refer to the names of some of the other lawyers, now deceased, who in my time flourished with him—such as Thomson F. Mason, quick, acute, ready; and Thomas W. Hewitt, zealous, indefatigable, intrepid and determined; the younger members of the bar at that day I must pass over for the present, but may recur to them again, and give some "reminiscences" of their talents and acquirements.

A constant attendant and practitioner at our bar was Walter Jones, then in the height of his fame. This profound and accomplished lawyer always was "at home" in Alexandria. He had formerly lived here much, and knew all our people. He was constantly employed in important cases. On two occasions I heard William Wirt speak in the old Court House. The place was crowded, I remember, and on both occasions his efforts were able. And this calls to mind the fact, that when interesting cases were expected to be tried, the officers of the court saw that props and beams were placed in the market-house, under the floor of the court-room, to prevent an accident from the weight of a crowded audience. Once, a long time ago, at the trial of Burfoot, for shooting and robbing Peters, the court adjourned to the the-

tre, and the trial was held in the latter building.

The Court House is now in another place—out of town, in the northern suburbs—I am told not as convenient, or even as safe as the old one. Other men fill the places of those of whom I have spoken. There are not many of us left to remember what was in the days of which I have written.

GENERAL NEWS.

The Philadelphia News, referring to the attempt to induce, in these times, extortionists to desist from oppressing the poor and needy and asking high prices for food and fuel, by quoting to them the words of the Bible, that "extortionists shall not enter the kingdom of God," seems to think the reminder is superfluous. Extortionists do not set a great value upon property so much above tide water. If you could convince them that speculating upon the wants of poor people would cut them off from the possession of all real estate, as well as personal and mixed property, they might be deterred from the exhibition of their avaricious propensities; but any prospective inheritance which is at so great an altitude as to have no market value, will have very little influence upon them.

The correspondent of the N. Y. Herald, thus writes concerning the Confederate Batteries on the Potomac River:—"The batteries, as far as they are known to exist, and without counting such as may remain masked, now begin at Opossum's Nose, that line extending four miles, to Chapawmistic creek. Below this there is a gap of eight miles to Aquia creek, where, as is well known, another line of batteries begins, extending to Potomac creek, a distance of six and three-quarter miles. From Potomac creek to Mathias Point is a distance of fifteen miles, in a straight line, or, following the curve of the shore, seventeen miles. From the former place, nearly to the latter, is a chain of earthworks, but no guns are believed to be mounted. These distances were pricked off with the dividers on Phelps' chart this morning, and have not been guessed at. With regard to the batteries, I repeat, I have seen them, and more than once came near feeling them to some purpose."

The Wheeling ordinance for dividing the old Commonwealth of Virginia, and erecting a new State of the counties west of the Alleghany mountains, has been adopted by a majority of nearly, if not quite, one hundred to one, and a new Convention, the members of which have just been chosen, will assemble at Wheeling on the 26th inst. to ratify the action. The new State will be called Kanawha, and will contain a population of two hundred and eighty-two thousand, including about eight thousand slaves.

The Catholic Mirror for this week says: "We understand that Archbishop Hughes sailed from New York, for Europe, on Wednesday last. A letter was received from him in this city, in which it is said he stated that his errand was neither one of health, pleasure, private or ecclesiastical business. The only inference left is that his mission is of a political character."

The Monrovia correspondence of the London Times, under date of September 14, gives an account of the visit of a Spanish war steamer to Monrovia, and her attack upon the Liberian war vessel the Quail. The Spaniard attacked the Quail without a word of warning, but was vigorously fired upon by the latter vessel and the Fort Norris battery, when she turned about and sped away to sea.

D. E. Somes is out in a letter to the President, asking him to recommend to Congress the division of all the remaining public lands among the soldiers at the close of the war.

The places where the two steamers were recently lost, with horses, munitions of war, &c., on the coast of North Carolina, are called Kill Devil Shoal and Rogue's beach.

The bagging factory of John Bull, in St. Louis, was destroyed by fire on the 7th inst. Loss \$120,000.

Df. Payne, (Union) has been elected State Senator in Prince George's County, Md.

A steam transport was burned at Chicago on the 7th. Loss \$40,000. Twenty persons were killed.

An explosion took place at the Watervliet Arsenal, N. Y. on Wednesday, and four men were fatally injured.

A dispatch in the N. Y. Tribune from Beaufort, South Carolina, says that, as far as heard from, in the bombardment, one of the Federal gun boats was disabled by the cannon of the Confederates, and that another was aground.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A CARD.

DURING the suspension of my regular School Exercises, I am willing, for the sake of congenial employment, to receive a few students, to whom I will give thorough daily instruction in all the solid English branches, together with Composition, Book-Keeping, Mathematics, and the Physical Sciences.

This will afford a rare opportunity for improvement, to such young men and youths, as desire the quiet, order, and refinement of a SELECT SCHOOL, together with the personal instruction of an experienced Teacher.

TERMS \$12.50 per quarter—Drawing \$2.50. No extra charges whatever. Hours of instruction from 9 A. M., to 1 P. M. Exercises to be commenced on the 2nd of December.

11 no 7—1m CALEB S. HALLOWELL.

NOTICE.

ALL PERSONS transacting business in the city of Alexandria for which licenses are required, and who have not obtained such licenses, are required to call at the Mayor's Office without delay, and comply with the law in procuring the same.

Given under my hand, this, the 31st day of October, 1861. WM. B. PRICE, Mayor.

HEADQUARTERS, ALEXANDRIA, VA., }
October 31st, 1861. }

THE city authorities of Alexandria, Va., by their corporate powers are authorized to assess revenues, impose taxes, fines, licenses, &c., to collect the same, and appropriate them, for the just and necessary expenditures of the Corporation—in which they are not to be obstructed by military or other persons, unless—otherwise ordered by competent authority.

W. R. MONTGOMERY,
Brig. Gen and Military Governor of Alex'a., Va.
oct 31—2w

I. LOUIS KINZEE,
ATTORNEY AT LAW,
ALEXANDRIA, VA.

WILL ATTEND to the prosecution of Claims for damages sustained by citizens of Alexandria and vicinity, by the use and occupation or destruction of their property by the U. S. troops.
oct 15—4w*

GROCERIES.

DRIED APPLES—A large lot on hand, and for sale at \$1.25 per bushel.
nov 7 JOHN T. COOKE.

SWEET CIDER—A nice article, just received, and for sale by JOHN T. COOKE,
nov 7 Old Post Office Corner.

NEW BUCKWHEAT, just received, and for sale in large and small packages, by JOHN T. COOKE.
nov 6

NEW MACKEREL—Nos. 1, 2, and 3, on hand, and for sale by JOHN T. COOKE.
nov 6

JOHN T. COOKE,
CHEAP FAMILY GROCER,
Corner of Prince and Pitt Streets,
(OLD POST OFFICE CORNER.)

ALWAYS on hand a large and well selected stock of FAMILY GROCERIES, which will be sold on terms to suit the times.
nov 5—1m

DRUGS, CHEMICALS, &c.

LEADBEATER & CO., DRUGGISTS,
STABLES' OLD STAND, ESTABLISHED 1792,
Nos. 5 and 7, South Fairfax Street,
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA.

HAVE in store a full stock of Drugs, Chemicals, Paints, Oils, Acids, Genuine Patent Medicines, Dye Stuffs, Surgical Instruments, Perfumery, Soaps, Sponges, Congress Water, Medicine Chests, Spices, Coal Oil Lamps and Chimneys, Pocket Medicine Cases, and all other goods usually found in a well conducted Drug establishment.
10 no 29—eolm

WOOD.

OAK WOOD.
I WILL take orders for OAK WOOD, delivered at \$7.25 per cord Apply at the office of Wise & Co., on King, between Water and Union streets.
nov 5—6t* B. T. PLUMMER, Agent.

HARDWARE, CUTLERY, &c.

HARDWARE, CUTLERY, HOUSEKEEPERS GOODS, FANCY ARTICLES, IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC SEGARS, CHEWING AND SMOKING TOBACCO, &c., &c.—

JOHN T. CREIGHTON, at his old stand, No. 88, King street, has on hand the best assortment of GOODS in the above line to be found in the market. To suit the present demand he has added many things to his usual variety, such as—Imported and Domestic Segars, of various brands—Chewing Tobacco in bars, tin foil and paper packages

Imported and Domestic Smoking Tobacco Fancy Pipes and Pipe Stems, in great variety Tobacco Boxes, Pouches and Wallets Tooth and other Brushes, fine Tooth and Pocket Combs

Pens, Pen Holders, Blue and Black Ink Ink Stands, Lead Pencils, Pencil Sharpeners Pocket Mirrors, Shaving Soaps and Cream Razors, Razor Strops, Emory Paper, Sweet Oil Chamoin Skins, Leading Lines, &c., &c.

Special attention is asked to a variety of ARMY TELESCOPES, of extra quality.

The above GOODS were purchased for cash, and will be sold wholesale and retail, at a small advance.

Any article of TINWARE furnished at short notice. For sale, a second hand CYLINDER STOVE for coal—a first rate Stove for a store.
Call at 88, King street. oct 14—4w

DRY GOODS.

NEW GOODS.

HARPER & BRO.,
ARE now in receipt of the following goods, viz:

Black French Cloths and Cassimeres
Velvet and Silk Vestings
Cassimeres, Woollen Shirts and Drawers
Silk and Linen Cambric Handkerchiefs
Stocks and Neck-Ties, Suspenders
White and colored Flannels
Canton Flannels, Brown Drillings
Brown and Bleached Cottons
Calicoes, Bleached Jeans, Pins and Needles
French and English Merino
Mouselines, Corsets, Merino Shawls
Carpets and Rgs. Floor Oil Cloth
Alpacas, Carpet Chain
Blue Domestic, Irish Linen
Black Muslin, White and Col'd Cambric
Cloth and Silk Mantles
6-4 Filled Cloths, Linseys, &c., &c.
Also on hand a lot of Silks which will be sold very low.

oct 7—f