

THE LOCAL NEWS.

Manuscripts of an Old Bachelor.—No 9.

REMINISCENCES OF ALEXANDRIA.

Demetrius Tigellii
Discipulorum inter jubae plorare cathedras.
HORACE.
Demetrius and Tigellius, know your place;
Go hence, and fret among the school boy race.

In my walks along the streets during my present visit to Alexandria, I often pass by the old school houses—and if I have with me "Demetrius or Tigellius," or any one of my school fellows of the olden time, we always have a talk about the friends of other days, our former teachers, and the incidents of our boyhood. The reminiscences, are only sad, because they bring home to us forcibly the fact of our advancing years—and the reflection that we too must soon follow those with whom we started in the career of life, most of whom have already passed away, and many been forgotten. In all else, they are cheerful and pleasing.

A modern essayist has written an ingenious paper to prove, that, as happiness is relative and comparative, the common idea that our childhood, is, in general, the most agreeable portion of our existence, is erroneous. Every man must judge and speak for himself; but, it is most unnatural to me to tell of youth as laboring under cares, or misfortunes, or distresses, or as being a time of sorrow or complaint. The brightest and merriest hours of my life have been those of my school and college days; at least, it was then I could adopt the motto on the Italian sun dial, and say, "non numero nisi horas serenas."

I well remember that upon my return home, after I had been to college for a year, I went to see the old school house—and how my eyes filled with tears as I stood and looked at its dingy walks, its battered door, its broken windows, and its dilapidated fence! And that same feeling comes over me now. Neither change of residence, nor lapse of years, has obliterated a single recollection that then crowded upon my memory. The pictures are as vivid as ever—the incidents as fresh as if they had but just occurred. I can call over the names of all the boys—tell who was the best scholar—who the "crack" bandy and marble player—who the strongest, and most expert wrestler—who the quickest at foot ball—who the swiftest runner—the most graceful skater—and the most fearless swimmer. And as the line is passed in review, oh! the gaps that time has made! oh the bright faces that are missing and are no more upon earth!

The Alexandria Academy was in the building at the corner of Wolfe and Washington streets. The teachers, in my time, were Leary, Allison and Fifield. It was designed that the boys should enter with Mr. F., and when they were advanced sufficiently in the English branches, they were to be sent down to Mr. A. The classical department was under the direction of Mr. L. The latter was an excellent Latin scholar. The Academy had a Board of Trustees, who were faithful in their attention—and the institution was in a flourishing condition for several years. The Mechanics' Hall—owned by the Mechanics' Relief Society, one of the best societies ever organized in Alexandria, and which ought never to have been suffered to go down—was rented to Mr. A. G. Bonner, a very enterprising teacher, who, for four or five years, had, probably, the largest school in town. He was rather eccentric in some of his ways, but had the faculty of interesting his pupils in their exercises, and was quite successful in his method of teaching. Mr. James Caden, also, had a large school, which he kept up, until his removal to Washington. He was considered a very good teacher. Joseph Cowing, an elderly English gentleman, presided over a large school at the Brooke Lodge. I remember him as a tall, thin, white haired man, reputed to be a strict disciplinarian—and the terror of bad boys, upon whom he, in accordance with the old fashion, would use the strap freely. Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Waugh, Mr. Wheat (now a distinguished Episcopal preacher) also taught school here at different times—and the latter, had more pupils under his instruction than any other preceptor in town, whilst he lived here. There were other schools, besides these I have mentioned—amongst which I must not fail to record that of Mr. Wilbar's, who was famous as a writing master, he himself, though crippled in one of his hands, using his pen with skill and grace, and always anxious that his boys should excel in chirography.*

* Previous to the time of which I write, Archibald McLean had a large male and female school, kept in a brick building, yet standing, back from Water street, in the Southern part of the town. This property was exchanged by Mr. McL., with Gen. Washington, for lands in Western Virginia; and there are yet living in Alexandria, some scholars of the old gentleman, who remember seeing Gen. W. when he called at the school house, to arrange about the deeds.

Amongst the boys at the different schools there was always much jealousy, and each stood up manfully for the honor and courage of the school to which he belonged. This was exhibited frequently in actual and severe contests, especially when snow was on the ground, and the missiles to be used in the battle could be picked up in the streets and on the side walks. You would sometimes see Bonner's scholars, numbering fifty or sixty, proceeding down King street, (each one with a snow ball under each arm and one in his hand,) after school hours in the afternoon, to Caden's school, and ranging themselves before the door. Then the taunting song would be raised, in full chorus,

Caden's boys are in the pen,
They can't get out but now and then;
And when they're out, they sneak about,
Afraid of Bonner's gentlemen."

This would be too much for flesh and blood to bear! Down the steps would rush Caden's infuriated boys, and frequently the invaders would be driven back to their own castle, the victorious party taking up the song, reversing its application, and shouting at the top of their lungs—"Afraid of Caden's gentlemen." Whilst the battle lasted, street pedestrians had to keep a sharp lookout, to prevent being knocked on the head by a snow bomb, or shell, from the belligerents. Mr. I. G., a flour merchant up King street, was accidentally caught in the rush, one afternoon, thrown from the pavement, and being enveloped in his cloak, and not known, but supposed to be one of the enemy, was covered with snow, before he could claim protection or cry for quarter! He used to say, it was, next to the battle of the White House, the severest encounter that had ever taken place about Alexandria.—The Mayor afterwards interposed, and put a stop to this kind of warfare. The boys obeyed orders promptly. In general, however, the sports and plays of the schools were carried on, outside of the town limits—where constables did not come to interfere, nor magistrates trouble themselves about looking. The field for bandy was at the North end, near what was then Mr. Jonathan Swift's residence. Here, a large open space afforded "ample verge and room enough," for this healthful and exhilarating exercise, in which I have seen near a hundred engaged at one time. The game was conducted under the leaders, with all the regularity of army movements. We had our scouts—our main body—our reserve. The ground was chosen with a view to all advantages, and the inferior players stood aside when the heaviest blows at the ball were to be given, to secure the victory.

I stood, a few evenings ago, and looked at this field—"now still and bare"—then so often dotted all over with the eager and expectant crowd. I remembered the spots where the ball was "bucked," and the limits to which it had to be carried before the contest was over. The scenery all around was so familiar to my eyes! The buildings in the neighborhood—the very depressions in the earth—the wooded heights—the few shade trees near a fence—were all there—not much altered in their appearance, and I could have, I believe, gone to within a foot of the place where J. C. was severely injured by an accidental blow, where S. J. made his famous hit which sent the ball home and secured him so much praise from his party, and to where the victors, gathering in a circle, gave three cheers in honor of their triumph!

"Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade,
Ah, fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring."

I have mentioned some of the "rough sports" of the Alexandria boys in my time, but, "as one of them," I do not choose that an honorable trait in their general character should be omitted. I refer to their almost universal respect for age, and their obedience to the orders of those in authority when they were made known. Nothing is more creditable to youth, than the reverence which it shows to grey hairs and venerable forms. I made a contrast yesterday between then and now, by observing the conduct of the boys in the streets. The contrast was every way favorable to my old school companions, and, in some respects, highly discreditable to many youngsters who are now allowed to roam about, without parental discipline, or even the fear of punishment for bad conduct. Some of these incipient rowdies—segar smokers in the bud—tobacco chawers in the blossom—likely to ripen into the full fruit of drunkards and vagabonds, should be taken in hand by your police, and if their fathers

will not bind them out as apprentices to a useful trade, they should at least be sent to the work-house. There was none of this in the Alexandria boys, even the poorest among them, in the olden time. Those whose parents could not afford to send them to the schools I have mentioned, or similar ones, were either placed at the free schools for proper instruction, or usefully employed in learning some respectable mercantile or mechanical business.

I am not half through with my reminiscences of the school boys and school houses of "forty years ago" in Alexandria, and have not space on the sheet of paper on which I am writing to tell what my friends "Demetrius and Tigellius" gave me, in our last walk, as their recollections. But enough for the present.

SOUTHERN NEWS.

The Norfolk Day Book has dates from Pensacola to December 3. There was no further fighting. Gen. Bragg hourly anticipated a renewal of the attack from Pickens. The Federal vessels were moving in and out of the harbor. Sometimes there would be a dozen in the evening, and all but two disappear in the morning.

At Richmond and Norfolk, there is much excitement in relation to war movements.—Further defenses to the harbor of Norfolk are recommended.

New Madrid is now fortified. It is rumored that the contemplated attack on Cairo has been abandoned. The iron ram "Manassas" arrived at Columbus on Sunday.

The Norfolk Day Book speaks of an important arrest there of a number of slaves in the act of making their escape to the North. They had fifteen hundred dollars in stolen money about them. An examination had been had before the Mayor.

There is a rumor at Montgomery, (Ala.) of the death of Gen. Brown, at Fortress Pickens—but this is doubted.

On the 9th several U. S. vessels were off Charleston harbor. Also a Swedish bark, bound in, supposing there was no blockade; and the Courier thinks she will be seized.

No news at Norfolk, or its vicinity, on Thursday.

The loss at Fortress Pickens, during the bombardment, was one killed and seven wounded. This was previous to the bursting of the shell.

It is understood, says the Richmond Examiner, that the sense of the Confederate Congress has been determined, on the test question made in secret session, to be in opposition to any legislation for the relief of the planters. There is nothing, however, to prevent the planting interest from having recourse to the State Legislatures. The States of Georgia and Alabama, as we learn, have already taken into consideration the subject of relieving the necessities of the planters.

We take the following extract from a letter dated at Pensacola, on the 4th inst, from the Mobile Evening News of the 5th:—"There was a great accident at Warrenton camp yesterday. Two corporals and one private lately, whilst playing, (as they thought,) and hammering away on the cap of a loaded bomb shell, it exploded, killing the two corporals instantly, and severely, perhaps fatally wounding the private.—The shell was one of those thrown by the enemy during the recent fight."

The act of granting a bounty of \$50 to soldiers has been adopted in the Confederate Congress. It includes musicians, and all troops that have volunteered or enlisted for twelve months or more in the service of any State, and who may hereafter volunteer in the service of the Confederate States.

On Monday last a military execution occurred at Shepherd's Hill, near Centreville. Two members of the New Orleans company known as "The Tigers" were shot for mutinous conduct and an assault upon the officer of the day. We are unable to ascertain their names.

A physician, living at Charlotte Hall, in Southern Maryland, has been arrested for forwarding intelligence to the Confederates in Virginia.

The Nashville Banner urges the passage of an act by the Legislature, providing for the payment of Tennessee's proportion of the Confederate tax, by the State itself, without calling on the tax payers to meet it, at this crisis of general financial difficulty.

Gen. Lee, says the Charleston Courier, has made a requisition upon South Carolina for six regiments for the war. He is ready to arm and equip this additional force so soon as they shall be mustered into the Confederate service.

"A Union man," in the Washington Star, recommends "to parties about Alexandria who have suffered by the theft and the destruction of property by soldiers—and who should be satisfied, by this time, that they have nothing to expect, in the way of prevention or redress, from officers in command—that they prepare, without further delay, to present their claims to Congress, accompanied by details of facts and loss, with such proofs by respectable neighbors as can be obtained. He also recommends a like course in cases where property (such as land, buildings, timber, &c.) has been taken or used by competent military authority for forts, camps, &c." He complains that some persons have been compensated for damages and others can get no satisfaction.

An arrival from St. Thomas says indignation was expressed among the American residents at the escape of the Sumter from Port Royal, Martinique, and the Captain of the Iroquois is censured for having refused to pursue the privateer.

Mr. Opydke has been officially declared as legally elected Mayor of New York city.

MISCELLANEOUS.

WANTED—A FURNISHED HOUSE, of moderate size, for a small family, in a central location in this city; or a conveniently furnished ROOM, with board, for a gentleman and wife. References given if required. Address, stating locality and terms, Box 380, Post Office. dec 11—t

TO RENT—A very substantial FIRE PROOF WAREHOUSE on the wharf, near Mr. George D. Fowle's Warehouse, secure from any damage of the lower floors being overflowed by the highest tides. dec 11—1w* JOSIAH H. DAVIS.

WOOD! WOOD!! WOOD!!! AN EXCELLENT ARTICLE OF SEASONED OAK WOOD can be had on application, at the depot of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad. dec 10—1w*

JOHN H. DEVAUGHAN'S AMBROTYPE GALLERY, No. 111, King Street, OPPOSITE THE MARSHALL HOUSE. nov 29—1m*

JULIUS DINELT, DENTIST, OFFICE, No. 17 Washington street, above King. WHERE HE CAN BE FOUND AT ALL TIMES. nov 22—1m*

JOB PRINTING, HANDBILLS, CARDS, BILL HEADS, CIRCULARS, &c., &c., neatly and expeditiously printed, on the lowest terms, at the Alexandria Gazette Office, near the corner of Prince and Fairfax streets. nov 6—1w

DRUGS, CHEMICALS, &c.

DRUG STORE. HENRY COOK & CO., 89 King st., Alexandria, KEEP a constant supply of Drugs, Chemicals, Patent Medicines, Spices, Perfumery, Fancy Articles, Coal Oil, Ethereal Oil, Lamp Oil, Lard Oil, Alcohol, Dye Stuffs, Paints and Paint Oil of all kinds, Window Glass and Putty, Coal Oil Lamps, Stove Polish, Paint Brushes, and every article usually found in a well regulated Drug Store. oct 11—t

PORTLAND KEROSENE. 400 GALLONS of the above, which is universally acknowledged to be equal, if not superior, to any other, received and for sale at a reduced price. HENRY COOK & CO., nov 9 Sarepta Hall, King street.

OIL! OIL!! OIL!!! LARD OIL, Machine Oil, Linseed, both raw and boiled, Ethereal Oil, pure Neatsfoot Coal Oil, Train and Tanners' Oil, received and for sale by nov 9 HENRY COOK & CO., Sarepta Hall.

GROCERIES.

NEW BUCKWHEAT, HAMS AND CITRON. THE SUBSCRIBER has just received the following articles, and invites the attention of customers and citizens. 2,000 lbs. new Buckwheat, in large and small packages; 1,000 lbs. small Family Hams and Breast Pieces Raisins, Currants and Citron; also, an assortment of small family cakes and crackers, to wit: Jumbles, Johnny Lind Cakes, Ginger Cakes, Ginger Snaps, and Tea Cakes, Soda, Water and Sugar Crackers, all of which will be sold at low prices for cash. JOHN T. COOKE, dec 13 Corner below Post Office.

BOOTS AND SHOES.

HENRY C. FIELD, BOOT AND SHOE MANUFACTURER, No. 74 King street, Alexandria, KEEPS on hand, and is prepared to manufacture BOOTS and SHOES of all kinds. MILITARY BOOTS or SHOES made at the shortest notice, and of the best material. Persons in want of a good article in his line, will do well to give him a call. oct 7

WOOD.

PRICE REDUCED. OAK WOOD! OAK WOOD!! I AM AUTHORIZED to take orders for OAK WOOD, to be delivered at \$6.75 per cord. Call at Wise & Co.'s Coal Office, King street. nov 15—1m* B. T. PLUMMER, Agent.

DRY GOODS.

DRY GOODS. BRYAN & ADAMS, AGENTS, No. 76, King street. oct

JEWELRY, &c.

W. W. ADAM, DEALER IN WATCHES, JEWELRY, AND SILVER WARE. All kinds of WATCHES and CLOCKS repaired.