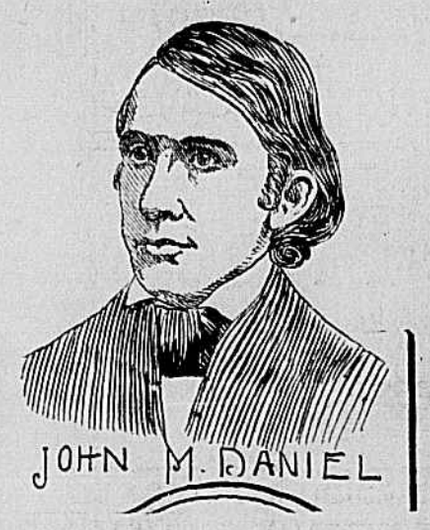
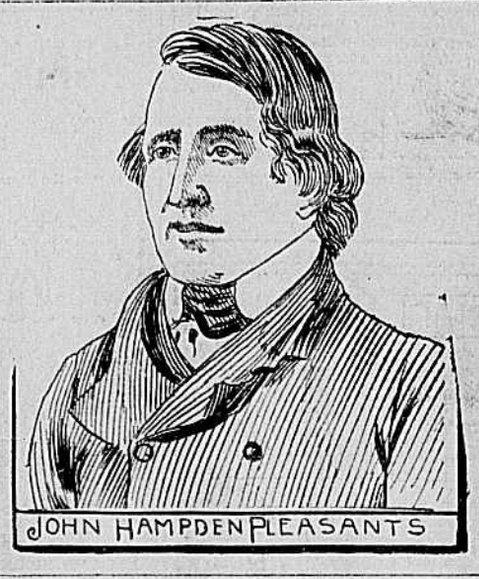
RICHMOND IN BYGONE DAYS

Dr. George W. Bagby in "John N. Daniel's Latch Key," a duo decimo in pamphlet form of sixty-eight pages; Judge Robert W. Hughes, in six long columns of the Baltimore American; and ex-Governor Cameron, in a column and a half of the Richmond Dispatch have published some exceedingly interesting memorials of our dead editors. Dr. Bagby's little book is taken up mainly with Daniel's career after his return in 1861 from the Italian Court, when he resumed the editorial management of the Richmond Examiner. He knew nothing of that editor before this period, and very sensibly tells us only what he knew. The "Latch Key" is a tell-tale of many a fable of his new-made friend, how in and out of the editor's dwelling (on Broad street, opposite the African Church) he had been as one privileged; how no spirits ever touched the lips of the thunderer who sipped instead of it Madeira; what various curios were to be seen, now in one room, and now in another; the book heaps, the discarded fiddle, the precious gem given him by the Princess De Solms, possibly a love token, which he gave finally to Walker, his foreman. The "Latch Key," with a charming garrulity tells us also how he loved Floyd, how he had resented an imputation uttered by another on Floyd's honour, how he unbosomed himself when peeing his floor. He said, "I would like to bear an honorable scar," or more ambitiously, "I like to command men, I love power—had I stayed in the field to the end, I might have become a brigadier, a major-general."





In his editorial sanctum, says Bagby, he edited everything down from the lofty leader to the humble advertisement.

Threw Out Advertisements.

He was the only editor who ever threw out advertisements to make room for paragraphs of his own, and of his assistants. He hated slovenliness, and stamped it out whenever he met it—slashed and cut, and amended the editorials of his associates mercilessly, and sometimes rewriting one he liked four or five times, as "Ohe jam satis," before allowing it to go into his paper as a leader.

All this, and much more, has Bagby written of his fast and loose friend, John M. Daniel, an editor par excellence.

Judge Hughes' notice of Daniel is accompanied with a likeness of him which looks a little older than another in profile, which appeared in the Democratic Review shortly after the young Virginian, withstanding many hindrances had fought his way up to the leadership of a great party. His preamble to that paper discusses at length the political condition of the Republic and particularly of Virginia, before the advent of the sectional war of 1861-65. His acquaintance with Daniel goes further back than Bagby's, and was of a more intimate character. Hughes in the early part of the year 1846 had become a member of the Patrick Henry Debating Society, whose sessions were held in a building that formerly stood on the southeast corner of Main and Eleventh streets.

Daniel was a librarian there. As the debates of the fledglings, with winged words proceeded, the recluse sat apart intent on his book, and seeming not to hear, heard all. Upon the conclusion of an oratorical display by Hughes, the librarian offered his congratulation, and from that moment the two ambitious youths were locked in a close embrace of friendship which knew no jar or parting till the end. The kindhearted Judge, by way of excuse for much of the others conduct that repelled a time his best friends, says, "I am conscious in my own editorial career of having often been unjustly severe upon persons; though generally confining my censures to conduct. But whenever I have reflected harshly upon men, the recollection of the act has caused myself more affliction than they could possibly have felt."

I will say that Mr. Daniel was impartial in these assaults; not at all sparing his own blood relations. And he was often repentant. A prominent kinsman was at one time a member of the Legislature. He was a Whig. He had been unmercifully ridiculed and criticized by the Examiner. During the course of the session it was the duty of the Legislature to elect a member of the Executive Council of the State. The members of this body of three, were then voted for rather more on personal than on political grounds.

Imagine the surprise of Mr. Daniel to find that his kinsman, with some complimentary remarks, cast his vote for him in the election. The generous act brought the following letter:

"My Dear Sir,—You have heaped the living coals of fire on my head with an unsparing hand. I may say to you, in reply, without inconsistency even in that which I have written frequently, though always in levity, that you have set me an example of good taste, courteous manners and kindly feeling, which I have followed, alas! too little.

"I would tell you this through my next issue, did I not think it most proper for me to say nothing about my election in my editorial capacity. I, therefore, take this means of assuring you that the contrast in our tone this morning is to me most mortifying.

Your sincere well wisher."

The kinsman alluded to by Judge Hughes was Raleigh T. Daniel, one of the brightest leaders of the Old Line Whig party of Virginia. A young brother of the penitent editor was living at that time in the household of the lampooned gentleman.

Governor Cameron's discourse takes up a little over a column and a half of the Dispatch of 1894, and is entitled "Sketches of our Journalists." His editors come after those of Bagby and Hughes, with here and there a notable exception, and his treatment of them is not so partial as general. He makes some handsome compliments to his contemporaries. "The Times, a new venture [1865-'6], owned by Charles H. Wynne and superbly edited by Patrick Henry Aylett, fell a speedy victim to a scale of expenditure out of all proportion to the field of enterprise." "Superbly edited" is justly applied to one of the most versatile men that Virginia has ever produced. Judge Hughes had previously, in 1885, expressed his good opinion in this passage of his paper: "Daniel did [in the Examiner] the fierce writing, Aylett the humorous, and I the argumentative or didactic. Mr. Aylett's humor was pecular, but I think the finest of its kind that ever appeared in English or American journalism. It was not humor suitable to standard literature, but humor adapted to politics, and employed for the route and ruin of political antagonists. It was crushingly effective."

The Dispatch was the first newspaper in Richmond to sell its issues from the counter. All the others for a long while afterwards adhered to the old scheme of the subscription. It had no politics. Its business manager was John D. Hammersley, its editor James A. Cowardin. Among the associates the latter called to his aid none stood higher as paragraphists than Oliver P. Baldwin and Hugh R. Pleasants. Governor Cameron's pencil-sketch of the veteran editor is given in his liveliest vein:

JAMES A. COWARDIN.

"As I write the vision comes before me of a genial old man, with shrewd, twinkling eyes, whose head had habitually the sidewise inclination of a cheerful robin; a dapper figure, clad always in the neatest of old-fashioned apparel, and jauntily nimble in movement, even under the burden of threescore years and ten; a delicately chiselled mouth, perpetually touched with a lurking smile, as though the humor within were always watching for an opportunity to break out. That was Mr. Cowardin as I first saw him.

Up to the garret sanctum I had climbed, and opening a swinging door which bore upon rust tin the hospitable inscription, "Come in," my ears were greeted with the sound of merry music. Loking down the low, long room, I saw the source of it. With flute to mouth, cheek reposing lovingly on the instrument, the old gentleman was gently blowing the sparkling notes of some old-fashioned tune, meanwhile sedately capering about the floor in time with the lilting measure. It was a pretty sight, and I paused to enjoy it; but the sharp eyes soon detected an intruder, and a hearty, laughing welcome was the beginning of a friendship intimate and lasting."

Governor Cameron touches but slightly on the feud between the Whig and the Dispatch, which was never composed during the life-time of the scolding editors. "Neither could see in the other the good which was so patent to every one else, and when both were sore stricken with age and infirmity they exchanged verbal assaults with undiminished relish. For this species of warfare Moseley was the better provided, for he was a better hater than Cowardin, and he was by nature and practice a master of invective; but though his quiver bristled with poisoned arrows—and he used them freely—it was his more temperate opponent who at the end remained master of the field."

In concluding his paper, Governor Cameron alludes to the affair he had with Colonel Hughes, who edited the Evening Journal. Cameron was then a Democrat, and his antagonist a Republican. They were both what are called game men, and each acquitted himself on the field of honor with credit to himself and satisfaction to his partisans.

The most of the duels which occurred prior to and after the war, 1861-'5, were between our newspaper editors. It is not to be inferred from this that they were more sensitive to the call of honor than other gentlemen. Public sentiment was their master, often a brutal master, who said to one and all, either fight or step down and out.

Hughes and Cameron became good friends upon the disruption of the Democratic party in 187—, when each found the other on a friendly stump, or sitting cheek by jowl at the councils of the Readjusters.

None of the foregoing sketches go back to the early days of the Richmond press, when there were but two newspapers in political opposition, the Inquirer and the Whig.

Thomas Ritchie, of the former, was an exponent of the political opinions of a majority of the Virginia people, John Hampden Pleasants in like manner of its minority. The issues of either journal did not exceed one thousand copies when the city's population numbered but twenty-five thousand souls.

Three Great Editors.

In this, and possibly in a subsequent paper, I shall have to do with but three Richmond editors—Ritchie, Pleasants and Daniel—or, incidentally, with one or more of their contemporaries. Whenever, in Virginia or outside of the State, our politics becomes a theme for discussion, the name of one or other of the abovementioned trio comes first to the speaker's lips. Hugh Rose Pleasants, Oliver P. Baldwin, Alexander Moseley, Robert Ridgway, Patrick Henry Aylett, E. A. Pollard, Robert W. Hughes, Obediah Jennings Wise, Roger A. Pryor, all editors or associate editors of our early press, are no more heard of unless in the eclipse of greater lights. This must be because of their temporary reign as party leaders, and of the longer reign, fitter opportunities and possibly greater rhetorical power, of Ritchie, Pleasants and Daniel.

A circumstance not so remarkable as suggestive of possibilities, is the appearance of Daniel in Richmond a little while after the elder Ritchie had gone to Washington upon the invitation of President Polk to edit a party journal there, and but a few days before or after John Hampden Pleasants had fallen in a duel by the hands of Thomas Ritchie, Jr.

Suggestive, indeed is the circumstance, for had not the elder editor of the Enquirer left it in charge of his sons, William Foushee and Thomas, Jr., he and Pleasants might have fired paper bullets at each other to the end of their days, and John M. Daniel, for lack of opportunity, might have died undistinguished as a writer in some private or public institution.

Thomas Ritchie.

Thomas Ritchie was born in one of the Tidewater counties of Virginia in the year 1778, and being without a patrimonial estate, took upon himself in early manhood the vocation of teacher in a common school. He came to Richmond during the administration of the elder Adams, so we are assured by a contemporary writer, and began his editorial labors towards its close. Under his skillful management the Enquirer became the political oracle not only of the Virginia Democracy, but of that of the South and Middle West. Mr. Ritchie's influence upon the mass of his countrymen was a power such as is seldom acquired by a newspaper man. He made and unmade statesmen. He was their Warwick. His promotions were all made in the belief that they would redound to the credit and advantage of the great party whose tenets he had early espoused and unswervingly maintained. He never flinched in the most critical periods of his party's career—its darkest days. When the proclamation of Andrew Jackson had forced some of the brightest men of his party out of its ranks, Mr. Ritchie, though not approving, yet stood firm.

In the memorable case of William C. Rives, one of his dearly beloved protoges, who was about to display the white feather of surrender to the Whigs, the editor of the Enquirer perturbed inwardly as he must have been shown outwardly the most forbearing temper.

What was this old man's reward for so much unselfish service?—neglect, poverty, and if such a thing be possible, a broken heart! He died in harness and found rest at last under the sod of the State, he loved wisely and well.

I knew Mr. Ritchie at a very early period of my life, when he appeared to be a very old man, though not then sixty years of age. I used to bear to him from time to time frequent messages, and sometimes communications from an esteemed friend and favored correspondent. A timid knock at his door was answered by him in person. A tender grace as of father to son, an habitual urbanity and condescension put the lad immediately at his ease. The dwelling-house in which he and his family had lived for many years before I knew him still exists with slight modification, and may be two or three doors west of the Northwest corner of Grace and Sixth streets. Here he was always to be found when not sitting at the Clerk's table of the House of Delegates during its sessions, or in other public assemblies of the State, or, of his party. I doubt if he was ever a half dozen times in the little brick building on Bank street, where the foeman, John S. Cook, ruled the apprentices and the pressman, W. W. Dunnavant had charge of the hand press.

Old Enquirer Office.

The Enquirer office was a basement of two rooms in a building of brick which stood upon the southwest corner of Main and Eleventh Streets. It was in charge of Claiborne W. Gooch, Mr. Ritchie's partner, who in any emergency that might have called his senior away could have stepped to the front without occasioning surprise to the Enquirer's readers. Upon Gooch's retirement from the management he was appointed by President Jackson postmaster for the city of Richmond.

I shall take from the Black Book of Mrs. Anne Royall, author of "Sketches of History, Life and Manners in the United States, etc.," a passage which throws additional light on the character of Thomas Ritchie. The queer old lady, whose likeness, taken by Mitchell, of our city, in a silhouette, I have seen, was a born Virginian, who had lived a long while in Boston. There she had become a disciple of Abner Kneeland and Fanny Wright, and here in the South she vented their crude notions with such an audacious tongue as to horrify all but the most tolerant of our people. She was exceedingly gracious to those who bought her books, but venomous of tongue and pen to all who cared not to touch them. In short, she was the terror of the politicians of her day, and of the Big Bonnets, as she was pleased to call our Richmond ladies. "I stepped over," she says, "to see my friend Ritchie, of the Enquirer. But, alas! he has fallen into the hands of the Blue Skins. This ought (if anything can) to alarm our country. If such a man as Richie could not keep out of the vortex no one can. I saw a decent, plain man, with a black eye of uncommon keenness, sitting in the office. I asked for Mr. Ritchie. "He does not come here at all, madam. He goes to the Convention at 10 o'clock A. M., and stays there till 3 P. M. He then goes home and writes all night, and takes a nap from daylight till 10 o'clock in the morning, when he rises, breakfasts, and goes to the Convention."

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Behind the Times.

"In Russia it is illegal for a person to marry more than five times," said the man who knows things.

"That just shows how unprogressive the Russians are," declared the man from St. Louis.—Houston Chronicle.

Likely to Be Expensive.

"Well, Lent is approaching. I suppose you'll go into the usual sackcloth and ashes?"

"I'll go into sackcloth all right enough, but with coal going up in price I don't know that I can afford real anthracite ashes."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Can Cancer Be Cured? It Can.

Without the use of the knife or X-Ray we cure Cancers, Tumors and Chronic Sores, charging nothing for examination. Our patients are our best friends. Come and see the cancers we have removed and cured from our now happy patients, and are daily curing. They are wonderful. If then you are not satisfied, we will pay all your expenses.

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Our Once-a-Week Sale!

TO-MORROW we inaugurate the first of a series of sales, the character of which is easily discernable by the accompanying prices. The goods selected are such as we have in quantities, so that the sale may be extended throughout the week, or at least so long as the supply will satisfy the demand. The object of this sort of advertising is to demonstrate beyond a doubt that it pays to trade at Pettit & Company—where your credit is good.

Bargain No. 1

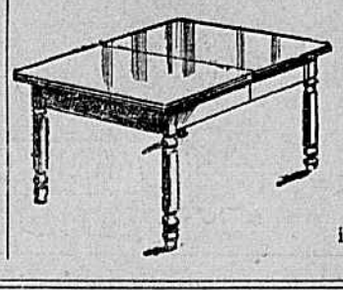
Solid Quartered
Oak Dresser,

Sale Price, **$16.75**

Where in this wide world have you ever seen its equal at the price? Is there another store in all America that can duplicate this bargain? And, what's more, you need not have the cash—a little down will do.

Bargain No. 3 — At Pettit & Co.

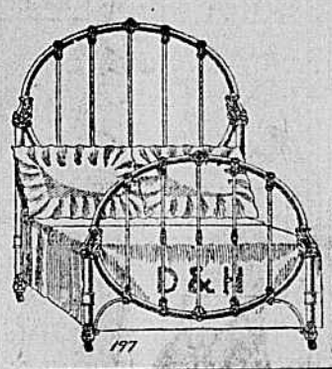
A Five-Foot Extension Table



Sale Price, **$2.48**

A Good, Substantial Table, as illustrated.

Bargain No. 2



At Pettit & Co.

Enameled Metal Bedstead,

Sale Price, **$7.85**

It is practically as illustrated—continuous circular post effect. The Bed shown in various tints; a Bedstead you would never expect to buy under $10.00 or $12.00. There are many bargains equal to this among the higher priced Bedsteads.

Bargain No. 4

At Pettit & Co.

Solid Golden-Oak Rocker,

Sale Price, **$1.98**

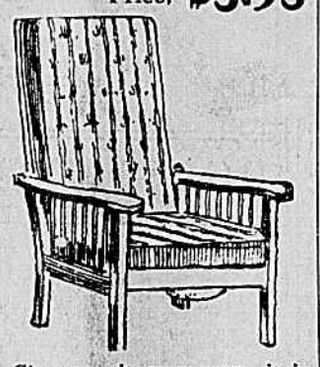
It is shaped saddle-seat, broad bent arms, convenient, commodious, cheap but good, and on easy terms of credit.

Bargain No. 5

At Pettit & Co.

Solid Oak Substantial Morris Chairs,

Sale Price, **$3.95**



Cheap as it may seem, it is only one of the many Morris Chair bargains we are offering. It has broad arms, reversible velour cushions, and would be cheap at $7.00.

Bargain No. 6

At Pettit & Co.

Golden Quartered Oak Buffet

Sale Price, **$18.75**

So much below the general quotations that we will not attempt to give the regular values; quarter-sawed oak, polished, with French plate bevel mirror.

Women's Spring Model Apparel Displays Exceptionally Interesting!

Exceptional in that each new model, as it arrives from the hands of our manufacturers, seemingly transcends in style and effectiveness the preceding ones.

Our entire line is fast coming to its full strength.

This may be a bit early for some buyers, perhaps, but it's never too early to get an idea of the correct new fashions.

We Invite You to Look.

A Description of Three Jaunty Models

At $20.00 A Chic Eton or Pony Suit, made of mannish gray materials. Some are small mixtures, others solid colors. The seams are neatly corded, and the entire coat trimmed with wide braid to match. They have imitation shawl collars of sharkskin moire, with turned-up cuffs to match. Body-fitting girdles, trimmed with braid. The coats are satin lined throughout. The skirts are full circular and are finished with a neat fold at the bottom. An extraordinary attractive suit this at the price.

At $25.00 A Toppy Eton Suit, made of light and dark invisible checks, in chiffon, Panama, and paon broadcloth, trimmings of novelty braid, effectively blended with taffeta or moire to form fancy vests and collars. Short and long sleeves with body-fitting girdles. Skirts are circular, finished with broad hem at bottom.

At $35.00 A Jaunty Eton or Pony Suit, made of solid colors or neat checks, in a new combination of trimmings, prominent among which are coats trimmed with braid, finished with piping or lace edging; vest effect. Three-quarter length or elbow sleeves, finished with cuffs. Deep-fitted girdles, and full circular skirts. The colors are black, blue, reseda, hello, Alice blue, cream, old rose, and neat combination checks.

Spring Jackets

Nothing nobbier has ever appeared than the Covert Coats being shown for spring. Styled in the corset coat, loose back, either lined or unlined; all made with the mannish swagger, and as such have corded or strapped seams with either deep side or center vents.

WE HAVE A PAGE IN OUR LEDGER FOR YOU