

# THE STAR.

Vol. I.]

RALEIGH, MAY 11, 1809.

[No. 28.]

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY, BY THOMAS HENDERSON, JUN. FOR SELF & CO. AT THE UPPER END OF FAYETTEVILLE STREET, NEAR CASSO'S CORNER.—PRICE THREE DOLLARS PER ANNUM, PAYABLE HALF YEARLY IN ADVANCE.—SINGLE PAPER 10 CENTS.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

### Taxes.

The inhabitants of this city are desired to settle with the Subscriber their State, County, and Parish taxes for the year 1808, without delay. He is also authorised to collect forty shillings from each of those who have, without Licences, retailed Spirits by the small measure.

WILLIAM SCOTT, Deputy Sheriff.  
Raleigh, May 11th, 1809.

### WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

### A Journeyman Hatter,

ONE from the Northward, who is a good Workman would be preferred, and will meet with generous wages.

RICHARD R. READING.  
Nash county, April 20, 1809.

### University.

THE annual examination of the Students of the University of North Carolina will commence on the 22d of June next. The committee of visitation appointed to attend the examination will be composed of the following Trustees, viz:

Messrs. William Gaston,	John Moore,
Arch'd D. Murphy,	Israel Pickens,
Walter Alves,	Benjamin Smith,
John D. Hawkins,	Jeremiah Slade, and
William Hawkins,	William Williams.

As the necessity of a due attendance on the part of the committee must be obvious to every member, and as the duties they have to perform devolve on each class only once in five years, the board of Trustees hope that a proper regard to the welfare of the Institution will induce every gentleman to attend with punctuality.

GAVIN ALVES, Sec'y.

Hillsborough, April 21, 1809.

### Raleigh Academy.

THE semi-annual Examination of the Students of this Institution will commence on Tuesday the 30th of May, and will continue three days. The evenings of each day will be occupied by the Speeches of the young orators, and by Theatrical performances. It is expected that two plays will be exhibited.

The next Session will commence on the 12th of June. It is desired of those who intend to enter for that session to attend early, that the classes may be advantageously arranged at the commencement.

WILLIAM WHITE, Sec'y.

April 24, 1809.

### All Persons

INDEBTED to the Subscriber are informed that the payment of their accounts is extremely desirable, and the immediate settlement of them indispensably necessary.

CALVIN JONES.

Raleigh May 4, 1809.

### Bank of Newbern,

#### RALEIGH OFFICE.

THE President and Directors having established an Office of Discount in the City of Raleigh, under the Agency of the Subscriber, notice is hereby given that the business of it will be transacted under the following Rules.

1. Bills, Bonds and Notes made negotiable at the Bank of Newbern and payable at its Office in Raleigh, at or within sixty days, in which two solvent individuals shall be bound, will be discounted at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum.

2. Three days of grace will be allowed and interest taken therefor.

3. All paper to be offered for Discount will be expected to be left with the Agent on Wednesday before 10 o'clock, A. M. and the Discount will be declared and payment made at 3 o'clock, P. M.

SHERWOOD HAYWOOD,  
Agent.

March 30, 1809.

### Deserted,

From my company of Artillerists, on the night of the 19th inst. JOHN HINSON and WILLIAM COX—Hinson is a native of North Carolina, five feet six inches and one half high, twenty two years of age, has blue eyes, light hair, fair complexion, by occupation a *Carriage-Maker*.—William Cox, is a Virginian, six feet high, twenty six years of age, has blue eyes, light hair, ruddy complexion, by occupation a *Hatter*.—Fifty Dollars reward, will be paid for securing the above Deserters in any goal, and information given to me, or if delivered to any commissioned officer in the army of the United States, the whole of the expenses paid independent of the reward.

ADDERSON B. ARMISTEAD,

Capt. 1st Regiment U. S. Artillerists, Commanding Savannah, March 21.

### BIOGRAPHY.

#### SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS,

#### THE CELEBRATED SCOTCH POET,

In a letter from himself to Dr. Moore, author of *Zeluco*, and *Travels in France and Italy*, and father of the late General Sir John Moore, who fell at the battle of Corunna.

MAGDALENE, 2d August, 1787.

SIR—For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expence; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like

Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble, I have, I say, like him turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. \* \* \* After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some twinging qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a Gentleman. When at Edinburg last winter, I got acquainted in the herald's office, and looking thro' that granary of honours, I there found almost every name of the kind; but for me,

"My ancient but ignoble blood  
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."  
Gules, Purple, Argent, &c. quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; and where, after many years wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom.... I have met with few who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn ungainly integrity, and headlong ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighborhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farmhouse; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate. At those years I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety.... I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs or participles. In my infant and boyish days too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition.—She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales, and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elfcandles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, *How are thy Servants blest, O Lord!* I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear:

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung  
"High on the broken wave...."  
I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*.—Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier, while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays between sermons, at funerals, &c. used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy about me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modification of spited pride, was like our catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connexions with other youngers who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where alas, I was destined to drudge

behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age, that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were perhaps born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the cloutery appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart I am sure not even the *Munny Begum* scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction, but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my *Tale of Two Dogs*. My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken.—There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these two years we retrenched our expences. We lived very poorly; I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert) who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the s..... factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life....the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of Rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom; she was a *bonnie sweet sonsie lass*. In short, she altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c. but I never said I loved her—Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an *Aolian harp*; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly: and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the Moorlands, he had no more scholar craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry: which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made, was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a gaol by a consumption, which, after two years promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!

It is during the time that we lived on this farm, that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps, the most ungainly awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story

was gathered from *Salmon's* and *Guthrie's* geographical grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with *Pope's Works*, some plays of *Shakespeare*, *Tull* and *Dickson on Agriculture*, the *Pantheon*, *Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*, *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, *Justice's British Gardener's Directory*, *Bayle's Lectures*, *Allan Ramsay's Works*, *Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, and *Harvey's Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of Songs was my *vademecum*: I poured over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice, much of my critic-craft such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school..... My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life: for though the will-o-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue, kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune, was the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance? Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good-sense, and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant a l' adorable moitié du genre humaine*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assistant confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions, & I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand, seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage: but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of Follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature; to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c. in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me, but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a