

SOUTHERN CITIZEN.

BY BENJAMIN SWAIN.

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, BUT TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AND BE USEFUL TO ONE ANOTHER?

VOLUME I—NUMBER 9.

TERMS—\$2 IN ADVANCE.]

A. H. BOROUGH, N. C. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1837.

[Of \$3 AFTER 3 MONTHS.]

SOUTHERN CITIZEN,
By B. Swain.
Every Saturday Morning.

TERMS.

Two dollars per annum in advance; or Three dollars, if not paid within three months from the date of the 1st No. received.

Any subscriber may discontinue with the first 3 months of the publication.

No subscription to be discontinued till all arrearages be paid unless at the discretion of the Editor.

All letters, communications &c. to come post paid.

ADVERTISEMENTS, inserted on the usual terms.

CONVERSATION OF MRS. FRANCES SILVERS.

Which was executed at Morganton, Burke County, N. C. on Friday, July 12th, 1837, for murdering and burning of her husband Charles Silvers.

I, Frances Silvers, a native of the State of North Carolina, and raised in the County of Anson, but more recently a citizen of Burke—actuated by feelings of the deepest solemnity, and for purposes purely beneficial to the world, as well as to myself—do in these presents, and in the presence of that God before whom it is the sentence of the laws of our country, I shall appear on the 28th June, and deeming it a necessary preparatory expedient to my appearing as a suppliant before God, to implore from him that mercy that in the fullness of his grace, he is able to extend to all such sinful miserable creatures as myself—make a full and complete confession of my life, from and after my being married to Charles Silvers, down to the 2nd day of December, A. D. 1834, and embracing two years, two months and seven days.

Mr. Jacob Silvers and my father, Isaiah Stovall, being near neighbors, it so happened by the dispensation of Providence, that his son Charles Silvers and myself became attached to each other, and he finally proposed marriage, to which and without reflection, I gave my consent, believing that we could spend our days in love and mutual assistance to each other; we were married accordingly, on the 15th of October, in the year 1830, and it was contrary to the approbation of both our friends.

Not long after we were married, (say three months) while living at Green Silvers', Buncombe County, on a certain day of the week, he went out with his gun and dogs hunting; in the evening when he came home, I told him he had better be at work hauling the smoke-house logs, instead of idling time away; that his uncle Green Silvers had spoke to me about my husband being sporting and hunting, and living on him, and he a cripple at the time by the maul of his thumb, received while lifting logs. His reply to me was, "damn you if you take his part instead of mine, I will put you to an end," holding a rope in his hand at the time. I made a reply to him like the following: "I wished to take no one's part in this, but wished he would do and attend to what was right, and he then declined. During the last of the same week we were sent for to visit Mr. Woolly's family, about half a mile from Green Silvers', and we both concluded to go—but, shortly after

we started, he, for reasons unknown to me, ordered me to go back, and further stated that if I did not, he would sacrifice me in the road; I asked him what were his reasons, he told me, because I don't want you to go with me, and gave me a push, and made off in a run.

In the morning I asked him, when he returned, what was the reason he treated me so; I told him I had left my father and had taken him for my friend. He told me he was not my friend, neither did he intend to be, but wished I would go back to my father or friends and remain. Repeated evidences were made by him of dissatisfaction during the same morning, and as many by me to know the cause, but all without success. He left the house and swore he would not return until I left it. I then left the house and went to his uncle Ned Wilson's. In the evening he came after me, and said he was advised by his uncle to make peace, and we agreed. Some time in the next week we moved over on to Toe River, in the county of Burke, on the place where Thos. Silvers formerly lived, at which place we lived friendly two or three months.

But on the evening of a certain day, when, as he said, he had just come from his father's, he told me he had been persuaded to leave me, and he intended to do it. He continued to talk in that way until we went to the house, when he commenced whipping the teeth of the card that I had in my lap. I then told him he acted as if he had not good wit. He replied to me, damn you, I thought I could make you mad after a while. After which very rough and ill language passed from each to each one and it resulted in an affray—he pushed me out of the door, struck me one or two blows and drew off of me one side of my frock.

Things remained in this way until evening when I returned from his father's, where, through the course of the day, he had sent me, I found all his clothes and himself missing, hunted for some time, and was convinced he had left me. I then began to cry, and he heard me and come up to the house and told me, damn you, I had no intention to leave you; but I done it to try your pluck, to see if you loved me, and by that have found out that you do. Then for some time we lived in peace, but finally we began to dispute, and several little disputes took place, and at different times; though on a certain evening when he came home to supper, he asked me if there was no clauber but that, which I had set for him in a cup that he wanted some for his brother. I then replied no. He then said he would not eat it, for he would as soon believe I had an intention to poison him as any way. And I then threw out what was in the cup myself, after which warm language past from each to each other, and resulted in an unfortunate affray—he struck me one or two licks, and nished me out of the door, and told me to leave the place, I should not live there, neither should I go to any of my friends to stay, nor have any of my clothes or property, bonnet or shoes. I then flew into a passion, and swore I would be damned if I did not have them if I had to sell my cow to buy a gun to kill him with, or burn the house over him. A contention was kept up between us until we parted; I then went to my father's, and he as I always have and will believe went to his miss. I remained at my father's something like two

weeks, at which time he sent a man in the neighborhood for me, and sent me word he was in distress, was sorry for what was done, and wished to see me. I went to see him, for I was willing to believe, even at that time, that I loved him.

He laughed when he saw me, and we agreed and went together to my father's, then on the next day we moved into an out house on the plantation on which my father lived. We there remained not more than a month, when I went down to milk my mother's cow, and returned, but did not return as soon as he did from my father's, where we both were, in consequence of which he flew into a passion, and about bed time he took his knife in bed with him with the intention to kill me. I being afraid, remained out of bed until he went to sleep, and took it from under his pillow. He threatened to kill me, though before he lay down. We then remained in peace, or what was to us in them times peace, for some weeks, but finally he obstinately left me. It was obstinately done, because he would never give me any cause for his going so, and remained out for near three weeks among his misses, as I had just cause to believe, until his frolic was out, when he come (tho' during his absence I had left home and moved the things to my father's) to one of the neighbor's houses where he expected to see me pass. He met me, and said he was sorry he had treated me unfriendly, he wished to treat me friendly and wanted me to move back, so that we could again live together.

At this time I was far advanced in pregnancy. I loved him and told him I was willing to move back again; I loved him, but it must be on conditions he would not again abuse me. We went together first at my father's, and then at his father's, and then back to my father's where I was confined.

No occurrence took place of any importance previous to my being confined, except on a certain occasion when at his father's, and in the presence of his sister, mother, and aunt, I threw myself on the bed where he was lying, and perhaps I may have threw myself partly on him. He arose immediately and struck me one blow on my head with his fist, for which he was strongly reproved by some one present. He said nothing until I went out, when he followed me out and said he was sorry for it, I went out and sat down without saying any thing until he came out to me. Just previous to my being confined, and so, when it seemed to be my greatest pleasure to see him, we disputed the propriety of my being at my father's with my mother, he got mad, and in the presence of his sister broke a switch with which to whip me. I then was overcome and fell into his arms and cried to him not to injure me.

Never yet had I ever made the first attempt to fend off any of his blows, or to make an attack on him, for as God is the only judge before whom I may now be brought to appear, on this earth I say it as if already at His bar. I then loved him, and had not as yet, the most distant intention to do him an injury.

Various times we differed and as often did he threaten me with death, and his determination not to make use of any means by which to support his children, by me nor any other woman. I am convinced that, notwithstanding at very many times I failed to submit to him as a woman should do, but without grace or religion this is not uncommon; nor yet, do I by any means, pretend

to justify him in any acts towards me, that were connected with brutality, as many of his acts were; yet I always thought I loved him more than he loved me. Very many times has his treatment towards me been reprehensible & insufferable. Such for instance as the following: On returning from preaching on a certain occasion, he was mad, & threatened me with death, he took down his gun and snapped it at me twice without being replied to in any way. At another time when asked to make a fire, he refused. I told him it was infernal laziness. He struck me one blow that fractured my rib, when my child was only about 3 months old. After receiving such abuse, I was afraid to live with him, and we parted. Some time after, he come to my father's and snatched up the child, I then made application to his father, and he told me to take it. He told me, (perhaps he may recollect this when I am dead and gone) that if Charles ever did so again, to make a similar application to him, and he would make application to the Court, and inform the Court that he, Charles, was not fit to keep a child.

And on another occasion too, when we had scarcely anything upon which to subsist, my father gave me a cow, and I took her home; his father offered me another, and I wanted to have them both, as was the opinion of his father, but upon taking the first home, I received such abuse as caused me to come to this prison with scars, and was then threatened with death if ever I told it. I am still willing to say, that in the midst of all my abuse and distress, I had not harbored any intention to injure him, but was told, and I think there are witnesses to it, that he intended to kill me by inches, to keep from being hung. On Wednesday I told him I had four days work to do—one day break flax one day wash, Friday for myself and Saturday go to the quilting, to which he was willing. Wednesday we both worked in cleaning flax, he broke, and I sketched. When we were done we went to the house, and I had not sketched mine as well as it might have been done, his father told him it was done very well for the first. I had done, but he had better take it back and give it a few more licks, as he had it to wear. He replied to his father, he did not intend ever to wear it. Thursday the 22d, I went to wash at my mother's, and he went to his father's. I returned home from mother's in the evening with a large skillet on my head, and my child in my arms. He came in after I had been there some time, and asked me in a very rough manner, why I had not made a fire. I then asked him why he had not cleaned the chips out of the house left from making a little wagon for his brother. He replied, damn you, I left that for you to do. I have you to wait on me, make fires and every thing else. He then told me he had just come from his father's and had fed the cow. Just after dark when we had seated ourselves around the fire, he said to me, poor Cass I reckon she knows her doom by this time, I reckon she's now in Hell. I then asked what better would become of him, if he was to die in the fix he was in; he replied he would as soon be in Hell as in any other place. He then said, Franky, do you want to do any better. I told him I could not help, while I was aggravated, to commit so much sin. Then he jumped and struck me immediately with his fist, and then pitched at the axe that lay on the floor and drew it on me, as if he intended to strike me, swearing at the same time that one or the other must die before day. Then laid down the axe and pitched at the gun, and said, damn you, I will shoot you, and carelessly threw the shot pouch over his shoulders, and then poured the powder into the gun, and while hunting a bullet in the shot pouch, I discovered his eyes were off of me, and I immediately pitched at the axe, got hold of it, and struck him one blow with the pole of the axe, and he fell, and as he struck the floor I struck him one more blow, which was all

struck him. I then threw down the axe, and for a few moments was insensible to every thing. After which I discovered him struggling and blood running, I heard him fetch one or two heavy sighs, his head lay towards the fire, nearest the side of the house with no door. I then went to bed and covered entirely up, to keep from hearing his moans or sighs, I could hear him draw long breaths and gasps. I do not know how long I lay in bed. I think an hour or more. I then thought I must get him out of the way, or he would be hung, and studied some to know what to do knowing that no one saw it. Nothing I could say would do me any good. I thought of the ground being frozen, so that I could not put him in the ground. I thought if I could only call back the lick I would give ten thousand worlds. At the time I wished I had been dead too—but knowing I must do something with him, I just called him into the fire, whole as he was, without touching him with any edged tool and did not cut him in any way at all. The fire was made with a good deal of ashes on the hearth. I picked up near twenty or more boards, with as I think several bushels of big tucky chips, but lay all around the house, where he had cut wood. I pulled nothing off of him at all, his hat was not on; but I threw it in and burnt it up. He burnt the whole night and burnt entirely up, with the exception of a few specks, which were found by others afterwards, but I took no part of it out, only some small pieces of bones. I washed all the blood off the floor in the night, that night, I then, soon as day came, washed my things as I before was to do. When I got done washing about nine or ten o'clock, I went down to Jake's, his father's and there tried to cut a coat for my child, out of one of my calico frocks, but was so alarmed I could not do it, for fear they would see the trembling of my hand. I staid at Jake's all night. Saturday morning he sent John before day up to my house for Charles' gun, and when the boy returned, I saw Jake load the gun, and the sight of that gun gave me more pain and distraction than any thing I had experienced, as it put in mind of Charles and our unhappy affray. That day, Saturday, I went to Ned Wilson's to the quilting, in Buncombe county, the next day was Sunday and Christmas day, I went that day at James Howell's.

The above statements concerning my confession in the above named case, I do hereby solemnly declare, in the presence of my God, at whose bar I expect to appear on the last Friday in June next, then and there to give an impartial account of my conduct during my past life, as the honest truth, as near as I can possibly recollect. May his divine goodness and tender mercies be speedily extended towards and save me from death eternal. Given under my hand in the jail at Morganton, in Burke County, N. C., in the presence of W. C. BEVENS and Thos. Wilson, Deputy Sheriff, this the 23d day of May, A. D. 1833.

her
FRANCES SILVERS.
mark.
Test { W. C. BEVENS.
 { THOS. WILSON.

AN T

To incorporate the Cape Fear Yachting and Pedee Rail Road Company.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That Hugh Campbell, sen. Hiram Robinson, John Kelly, William Not, John H. Hall, Louis D. Henry, Robert Strange, Benjamin Robinson, Lewis Brown, John W. Sanford, Joshua W. Cochran, Thomas Nash Cameron, Edward L. Winslow, Joseph Baker, Edward W. Wilkings, John Huske, Duncan McRae, Joseph Arey, Jeremiah Kyle, James Seawell, Charles P. Mallet, Oliver P. Starck, Thomas L. Hybart, Peter McKellar, Lauchlin Betts, Josiah Evans, Charles McAlister, John B. Kelly, John Morrison, Edmund Doberry, John Martin, Duncan McRae, Jr., Harry Morgan, Paul Barringer, Abram F. Alexander, Joseph