

Highland Messenger.

LIFE IS ONLY TO BE VALUED AS IT IS USEFULLY EMPLOYED.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 31, 1840.

NUMBER 9.

VOLUME I.

D. E. FANALLY & J. ROBERTS, EDITORS.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY, BY J. H. CHRISTY.

Terms.—The "MESSENGER" is published at Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum, in advance, or Five Dollars at the end of the year. No subscription discontinued, (except at the option of the publisher) until all arrearages are paid. Advertisements will be inserted at One Dollar per square for the first, and Twenty-Five Cents for each subsequent insertion. All communications must be post paid.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A TRUE STORY.

Many years ago I happened to be one of the referees in a case, which excited unusual interest in our courts, from the singular nature of the claim, and the strange story which it disclosed. The plaintiff, who was a captain of a merchant's ship, which traded principally with the West Indies, had married quite early, with every prospect of happiness. His wife was said to have been extremely beautiful, and no less so as she grew in years.

After living with her in the most uninterrupted harmony for five years, during which time two daughters were added to the family, he suddenly resolved to resume his occupation which he had relinquished, when his youngest child who was but three years old, sailed once more for the West Indies. His wife was devotedly attached to him, and sorrowed deeply at his absence, and found her only comfort in the society of her children and the hope of his return. At month after month passed away, and she came not, nor did any letters, those inefficient but welcome substitutes, arrive to cheer her solitude. Months lengthened into years, yet no tidings were received of the absent husband; and after long hoping and long waiting, the unhappy wife was compelled to believe that he had found a grave beneath the weltering ocean.

Her sorrow was deep and heartfelt, but the evils of poverty were now added to her affliction, and the widow found herself obliged to resort to some employment in order to support her children. Her needle was her only resource, and for ten years she toiled early and late for the miserable pittance which is ever grudgingly bestowed on an humble seamstress.

A merchant of New York, in moderate and in prosperous circumstances, accidentally became acquainted with her, and charmed with her gentle manners, no less than her extreme beauty, endeavored to improve her acquaintance with friendship.

After some months he offered his hand, and she was accepted. As the wife of a successful merchant, she soon found herself in the enjoyment of comforts and luxuries such as she had never before possessed. Her children became his children, and received from him every advantage which wealth or station could procure. Fifteen years passed away, the daughters married, and by their step-father were furnished with every comfort requisite in their new avocations of house-keepers. But they had scarcely quitted their roof when their mother was taken ill. She died after a few days' sickness, and from that time until the period of which I speak, the widower resided with the youngest daughter.

Now comes the strangest part of the story. After an absence of thirty years, during which time no tidings had been received from him, the first husband returned as suddenly as he had departed.

He had changed his ship; adopted another name; and spent the whole of that long period on the ocean with only transient visits on shore, while taking in or discharging cargo; having been careful never to come nearer home than New Orleans. Why he had acted in this unpardonable manner towards his family no one could tell, and he obstinately refused all explanation.

There were strange rumors of slave-trading and piracy afloat, but they were only whispers of conjecture rather than truth. Whatever might have been his motives for such conduct, he was certainly any thing but indifferent to his family concerns when he returned. He raved like a mad-man when informed of his wife's second marriage, and subsequent death, vowing vengeance upon his successor, and terrifying his daughters by the most awful threats in case they refused to acknowledge his claims. He had returned wealthy, and one of those sea reptiles of the law, who are always to be found crawling about the halls of justice, advised him to bring a suit against his second husband, assuring him that he could recover heavy damages. The absurdity of instituting a claim for a wife whose death had already released from the jurisdiction of earthly laws, was so manifest that it was at length agreed by all parties to leave the case to be adjudged by five referees.

It was on a bright and beautiful afternoon in Spring, when we met to hear this singular case. The sunlight streamed through the lofty windows of the court room, and shed a halo around the long grey locks and head forebowed of the defendant; while the plaintiff's harsh features were thrown into still bolder relief, by the same beam which softened the placid countenance of his adversary.

The plaintiff's lawyer made a most eloquent appeal for his client, and had we not been informed about the matter, our hearts would have been melted by his touching description of the return of the desolate husband, and the agony with which he now beheld his household goods removed

to consecrate a stranger's hearth. The celebrated Aaron Burr was counsel for the defendant; and we anticipated from him a splendid display of oratory.

Contrary to our expectations, however, Burr made no attempt to oppose his opponent's oratory. He merely opened a book of Statutes, and pointing with his thin finger to one of the pages, desired the referees to read it, while he retired for a moment to bring in the principal witness. We had scarcely finished the section that fully decided the matter in our minds, when Burr re-entered with a tall and elegant female leaning on his arm. She was attired in a simple white dress, with a wreath of ivy leaves encircling her large straw bonnet, and a lace veil completely concealing her countenance. Burr whispered a few words apparently encouraging her to advance, and gracefully raising her veil, disclosed to us a face of proud and surpassing beauty. I recollect as well as if it happened yesterday, how simultaneously the murmur of admiration burst from the lips of all present. Turning to the plaintiff, Burr asked in a cold, quiet tone,—

"Do you know this lady?"

Answer. "I do."

Burr. "Will you swear that?"

Answer. "I will; to the best of my knowledge and belief she is my daughter."

Burr. "Can you swear to the identity?"

Answer. "I can."

Burr. "What is her age?"

Answer. "She was thirty years of age on the 29th day of April."

Burr. "When did you see her last?"

Answer. "At her own house about a fortnight since."

Burr. "When did you last see her previous to that meeting?"

The plaintiff hesitated—long pauses ensued—the question was repeated, and the answer was,—

"On the 14th day of May, 17—"

"When she was just three weeks old," added Burr, "Gentlemen," continued he, turning to us, "I have brought this lady here as an important witness, and such I think she is. The plaintiff's counsel has pleaded eloquently in behalf of the bereaved husband, who escaped the perils of the sea, and returned only to find his home desolate. But who will picture to you the lovely wife bending over the daily toil, devoting her best years to the drudgery of sordid poverty, supported only by the hope of her husband's return? Who will paint the slow progress of heart-sickening, the wasting anguish of hope deferred, and finally, the overwhelming agony which came upon her when her last hope was extinguished, and she was compelled to believe herself indeed a widow? Who can depict all this without awakening in our hearts the warmest sympathy for the deserted wife, and the utterest scorn for the mean pitiful wretch, who could thus trample on the earth of her whom he had sworn to love and cherish? We need not inquire into his motive for acting so base a part. Whether it was love of gain, or licentiousness, or selfish indifference, it matters not; he is too vile a thing to be judged by such laws as govern men. Let us ask the witness—she who stands before us with the frank, fearless brow of a true-hearted woman—let us ask her which of these two have been to her a father?"

Turning to the lady, in a tone whose sweetness was a strange contrast with the scornful accent that had just characterized his words, he besought her to relate briefly the recollections of her early life. A bright flush passed over her proud and beautiful face, as she replied.

"My first recollections are of a small ill-finished apartment, which my sister and myself shared with my mother. She used to carry out every Saturday evening the work which occupied her during the week, and bring employment for the following one. Saving that wearisome visit to her employers, and her regular attendance at church, she never left the house. She often spoke of my father, and of his anticipated return, but at length she ceased to mention him, though I observed she used to weep more frequently than ever. I then thought she wept because we were so poor, for it sometimes happened that our only support was a bit of dry bread, and she was accustomed to see by the light of the chips which she kindled to warm her famishing children, because she could not purchase a candle without depriving us of our morning meal. Such was our poverty when my mother contracted a second marriage, and the change to us was like a sudden entrance into paradise. We found a home and a father." She paused.

"Would you excite my own child against me?" cried the plaintiff, as he immediately waved his hand for her to be silent.

The eyes of the witness flashed fire as she spoke. "You are not my father," exclaimed she vehemently. "The law may deem you such, but I disclaim you utterly. What! call you my father! you who basely left your wife to toil and your children to beggary! Never! never! Behold there my father," pointing to the agitated defendant—"there is the man who watched over my infancy—who was the sharer of my childhood sports, and guardian of my inexperienced youth. There is he who claims my affections and shares my home—there is my father. For yonder selfish wretch, I know him not. The best years of his life have been spent in lawless freedom, from social ties; let him seek elsewhere for the companion of his decrepitude, nor dare to

insult the ashes of my mother by claiming the duties of kindred from her deserted children."

She drew her veil hastily around her as she spoke, and moved as if to withdraw. "Gentlemen," said Burr, "I have no more to say. The words of the law are expressed in the book before you; the words of truth you just heard from the woman's pure lips, it is for you to decide, according to the requisition of nature and the decree of justice."

I need not say that our decision was in favor of the defendant; and that the plaintiff went forth followed by the contempt of every honorable man, who was present at the trial.

On the cause of the inadequate protection afforded by Lightning Rods, in some cases, and the means of insuring their perfect competency; also, a refutation of the prevalent idea, that Metals are peculiarly attractive of Electricity; by R. HARE, M. D. Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania.

In some of our American newspapers a letter has been re-published from the London Times, calculated as I conceive, most pertinently to lessen the confidence of the public in metallic conductors, as a means of protection against lightning. In common with many other persons, the author of the letter appears to suppose, that metals are peculiarly attractive of electricity; and infers that, when a metallic rod is attached to a house, or ship, a discharge of electric fluid may be induced from a cloud, which otherwise would not have been sufficiently near to endanger the premises. Nothing in my opinion can be more erroneous than this notion. The truth is, that the earth and the thunder clouds being in opposite electrical states, the electric fluid tends to pass from one to the other, in order to restore the equilibrium. The atmosphere being a non-conductor, through which a discharge cannot be accomplished without a forcible displacement of air, any solid body rising above the earth's surface, which may be more capable than the air of transmitting electricity, is made the medium of communication. Metals being pre-eminently capable of acting as conductors, the transmission of electricity is made through them with proportionably great facility. Yet they do not attract it more than other substances similarly electrified. A glass or wooden ball, is as readily attracted, by the excited conductor of an electrical machine, as a ball of metal, and as much more, than a metallic point, as the superficies of the ball may be greater than that of the point.

Nothing, to me appears more unfounded than an idea, lately suggested, that the attraction between a ship and a thunder cloud can be increased, by the presence of a pointed metallic rod surmounting the mainmast. If houses or vessels have been struck with lightning, while provided with conductors, it is, in my opinion, owing to the conductors being improperly constructed; or having no adequate connection with the earth. The power of any body to receive an electric discharge, is dependent on the conducting power of the medium in which it terminates, no less than upon its own. A metallic rod, held by a glass handle or entering a mass of pounded glass, or dry sand, would not be more efficacious as a conductor, than a glass rod similarly situated. If terminated by an imperfect conductor, as for instance by earth or water, its power is reduced in proportion to the imperfection of the medium thus bounding it. This influence of the media, in which conductors terminate, has not been sufficiently insisted upon in treatises on electricity. I should not consider a metallic rod, terminating without any enlargement of surface, in the water or the earth, as an adequate protection against lightning; but were such conductors to terminate in metallic sheets buried in the earth or immersed in the sea, or by a connection duly made with the iron pipes, with which our city is watered, or the copper with which ships are generally sheathed, I should have the most perfect confidence in their competency.

It is not only important that the points of contact between the metallic mass employed to afford lightning an adequate passage, and the earth or water in which it terminates should be so multiplied as to compensate for the inferior conducting power of the earth or water; but it is also necessary that the conducting rod be as continuous as possible. When conductors are to be stationary, as when applied to buildings, they should consist of pieces screwed together or preferably joined by solder, as well as by screwing. When flexibility is requisite, the joints should be neatly made like those of the irons in fall top carriages, and be riveted, so as to ensure a close contact at the junctures.

In all cases, the ordinary, but important precaution of having the rod terminate above, in a fine clean point, should be attended to. Where platinum tips cannot be had, multiplying the points by splitting the rod into a ramification of pointed wires, may compensate for the diminution of conducting power, arising from rust.

The efficacy of the point or points, is however dependent on the continuity of the conductor of which I have already spoken, since it is well known, that if a pointed rod be cut into parts, so as to produce intervals bonded by blunt terminations, its efficacy will not be much greater than if it had no point, because the fluid will in that case, pass in sparks, instead of being transmitted

in a current. It is on this account that I object to chains, or rods joined by loops or hooks and eyes. The error of supposing that a metallic rod must be more capable of attracting electricity injuriously, because of its known wonderful power in transmitting it will be evident when it is understood that the only difference between metals and other bodies arises from the superior power of transmission. Hence, when by a defective communication with the earth or sea, the efficacy of the metal, as a conductor, is diminished, or destroyed its influence over a charged cloud is proportionately lessened. It follows, therefore, that so far as it acts, its action must be beneficial, unless its lower termination should, by an inconceivable degree of ignorance or intention, be so situated as to render it more easy for the electrical fluid to leave the rod, and pass through a portion of the house or vessel, than to proceed; by means of the rod into the earth or sea.

Thus, Richman was killed by a conductor which he employed to receive electricity from the clouds, and to convey it to an electrometer, necessarily insulated: under these circumstances, the head of the professor being about a foot from the conductor, he became a part of the channel of communication with the earth. Had the apparatus been surrounded by a cage of wire, and this duly connected with a metallic rod soldered to a sheet of metal buried in the earth, Richman might have made his observations with perfect security. That, with due precaution, experiments analogous to his are not productive of injury to the operator, is rendered evident by the subjoined quotation from Singers electricity.

I must premise, that the apparatus, by means of which the phenomena alluded to were produced, consisted of a wire a mile long, supported and insulated, upon very high poles, and terminating in the house of the electrician, Andrew Crosse, Esq.

"The approach of a charged cloud; produces sometimes positive, and at others negative signs, at first; but, whatever be the original character, the effect gradually increases to a certain extent, then decreases, and disappears, and is followed by the opposite signs, which gradually extend beyond the former maximum then decrease, terminate, and are again followed by the original electricity. These alterations are sometimes numerous, and are more or less rapid on different occasions; they usually increase in intensity at each repetition, and at last a full dense stream of sparks, issues from the atmospheric conductor to the receiving ball, stopping at intervals, but returning with redoubled force. In this state a strong current of air proceeds from the wire and its connected apparatus; and none but a spectator can conceive the awful, though sublime effect, of such phenomena. At every flash of lightning, an explosive stream, accompanied by a peculiar noise, passes between the balls of the apparatus, and enlightens most brilliantly every surrounding object, whilst these effects are heightened by the successive peals of thunder, and by the consciousness of so near an approach to its cause."

"During the display of electric power, so awful to an ordinary observer, the electrician sits quietly in front of the apparatus, conducts the lightning in any required direction, and employs it to fuse wires, decompose fluids, or fire inflammable substances; and when the effects are too powerful to attend to such experiments securely, he connects the insulated wire with the ground, and transmits the accumulated electricity with silence and with safety."

That is, a ball communicating with the earth, by an adequate metallic conductor.

COURT CEREMONIALS.

BY HON. LEWIS CASS.

A most instructive, as well as amusing, chapter might be written upon the history of these Court ceremonials, existing and extinct, which have heretofore controlled in a greater or less degree, the destinies of nations. I have been told by one who spoke from his personal recollection, that when the unfortunate Marie Antoinette entered the French Court, she manifested a mixed feeling of dislike and contempt for the rigid etiquette which prevailed there; and sought, in the gaiety of her heart, to withdraw herself from its observance. She considered this *disenchantment* as the first in her long series of misfortunes, and as the commencement of that system of obloquy, which pursued her with relentless fury, till it laid her head upon the scaffold. I can well appreciate her feelings in desiring to "walk abroad into nature" out of the artificial atmosphere in which she lived. But I must confess, that I surveyed with surprise one place associated by tradition with her name, and which assuredly I should have thought presented the last scene a young, beautiful, and accomplished woman would desire to visit. This was a stone bench in the catacombs under the city of Paris, in which our guide told us had been constructed for the temporary repose of the Queen and the gay and gallant Count d'Artois, when examining that impressive repository of the mortal remains of many generations which have died in this great city. You know these immense excavations extend under a considerable part of the capital, and that they have no doubt furnished its building materials, since the earliest times. They are no longer worked, because the streets and many of the houses having been undermined, the surface of the ground as well as buildings oc-

asionally fell in, and the government felt it necessary to check the farther progress of the evil. Pillars have been constructed in the most exposed situations, and as it is some time since I have heard of any accidents, I presume there are no further apprehensions. The entrance is secured, and admittance is obtained with some difficulty; for in Europe the public authorities are more careful of life than we are, and persons having been separated from the guides have become lost and perished in this vast field of the dead. What end can be more frightful! To wander in this immense charnel-house, surrounded by the most revolting emblems of mortality, to perish in the midst of departed generations, is terrible indeed. The bones are all arranged with horrible symmetry. Pillar after pillar, and wall after wall, of arms and legs and ribs, hedge in the visitor, and form a narrow path, along which he follows the guide in impressive silence. And as the torches which are carried, and which alone light up these regions impervious to day, shed their feeble and flickering rays upon these sad memorials of humanity, the scene is painful beyond description. And then come the columns of skulls, and you may almost fancy, as the fitful light strikes them, that they are grinning upon you with diabolical malice. The whole cavern resembles the Valley of the Shadow of Death, so powerfully described by the prophet, rendered still more strange by the display of a kind of taste in the arrangement of the materials.

I breathed freer when the portal of this great tomb closed behind me. In one of Victor Hugo's plays, Ruy Blas, these antiquated Court ceremonials are most happily hit off; and the effort is so good, that I am tempted to transcribe a passage. The scene is in Spain, where such a scene ought to lie, for we are told that one of the Kings was almost burnt to death, because the established usage prohibited his removal from a large fire without the aid of the proper officer.

The Queen. "I wish to go out."
The Duchess of Albuquerque, making a profound salutation. "When the Queen goes out, each door must be opened by a Grande of Spain, having a right to carry a key. Such is the rule. But no Grande can be present at the palace at this hour."

The Queen. "Then I am shut up. I am to be killed."
The Duchess, with another reverence. "I am Camerara Mayor. I fulfil the duties of my office."
The Queen, after a moment of silence. "Quick, my ladies, bring cards, and let us play."

The Duchess, to the ladies. "Don't move, ladies." Then rising and making a reverence to the Queen, she adds: "Her Majesty cannot play, according to the established ceremonial, except with Kings, or the relations of Kings."
The Queen, in a passion. "Well, bring these relations."

The Duchess, making the sign of the cross. "God has not given any to the reigning King. The Queen mother is dead, and he is alone at present."
The Queen. "Let them serve me something to eat. Castilda, I invite you to eat with me."
The Duchess, making a reverence. "When the King is not present, the Queen eats alone."

The Queen, losing all patience. "Oh my God, what shall I do! I can't go out, nor play, nor eat as I would. One year as a Queen is enough to kill me."
A song is heard, outside the palace.
The Queen, to Castilda. "The wood is not thick here—this window looks out on the country—let us try to see the singers."
The Duchess, making a reverence. "A Queen of Spain ought not to look out of the window."

But the imagination of the author has not equalled the record of history. In the absurdity of these observations, "truth is strange, stranger than fiction." When Marie Antoinette arrived on the frontiers of France, to espouse the Dauphin, she was divested of all her clothes, in a tent pitched for that purpose, and then habited in a French suit. Even Napoleon was led away by his penchant, for these trifles to re-establish their observance at his Court; and it is well known that at the coronation of the Empress there was quite a family scene, because he insisted that her train should be borne by his crowned sisters.

Under the ancient regime, the right to have both folding doors thrown open, or to sit upon a *tabouret*, which is a cushioned stool, was one of the greatest honors a subject could aspire to, and excited more sensation than many a political event affecting the prosperity of the kingdom. On particular days the King dined in public, when the principal personages of the Court and the Kingdom were seen standing at his chair, holding plates and towels under their arms and in their hands.

Burke says, that one of his predecessors in reform, Lord Talbot, failed in his efforts, because "the turnspit in the King's kitchen was a Member of Parliament." I do not know if the importance of this office has diminished since that day, but as I find, that even in the Red Book for 1840, the Chief Cook, the First Master Cook, the Second Master Cook, and the Third Master Cook, are all designated as Esquires. I may presume it is yet considered sufficient honorable for a Member of Parliament to turn the King's spit. In Scotland, Sir W. Anstruther, a Baronet, is hereditary

carver, having the right, standing at a side table, to cut up the meats; and Sir James Carnegie is hereditary cup-bearer, to wait upon the King when he desires to drink. I find one appointment in the Red Book, which I trust, during the reign of a Queen, and for the sake of conjugal happiness, will be a sinecure, that of *leather breeches maker* to her Majesty!

England may well afford to sweep away what Mr. Burke called these "incumbrances and nuisances," which are as offensive to true taste as they are incompatible with true dignity. She has justly earned for herself as proud a name in the world, that her institutions need no false tinsel to set them off, nor her high personages any barbarous and antique offices, to shelter them from general observation, or to give them a factitious elevation. The period of mystification is passing away.

THE SUB-TREASURY BILL.

AN ACT to provide for the collection, safe-keeping, transfer, and disbursement of the public revenue:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That there shall be prepared and provided within the new Treasury building now erecting at the seat of Government, suitable and convenient rooms for the use of the Treasurer of the United States, his assistants and clerks; and sufficient and secure fire proof vaults and safes, for the keeping of the public moneys in the possession and under the immediate control of the said Treasurer; which said rooms, vaults, and safes, are hereby constituted and declared to be, the Treasury of the United States. And the said Treasurer of the United States shall keep all the public moneys which shall come to his hands in the Treasury of the United States, as hereby constituted, until the same are drawn therefrom according to law.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the Mint of the United States, in the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, and the Branch Mint, in the city of New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, and the vaults and safes thereof, respectively, shall be places of deposit and safe-keeping of the public moneys at those points respectively; and the Treasurer of the said Mint and Branch Mint respectively, for the time being, shall have the custody and care of all public moneys deposited within the same, and shall perform all the duties required to be performed by them, in reference to the receipt, safe-keeping, transfer and disbursements of all such moneys, according to the provisions hereinafter contained.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That there shall be prepared and provided, within the custom houses now erecting in the city of New York, in the State of New York, and in the city of Boston, in the State of Massachusetts, suitable and convenient rooms for the use of the receivers-general of public moneys, hereinafter directed to be appointed, at those places respectively; and sufficient and secure fireproof vaults and safes, for the keeping of the public moneys collected and deposited with them, respectively; and the receivers-general of public money, from time to time, appointed at those points; shall have the custody and care of the said rooms, vaults, and safes, respectively, and of all the public moneys deposited within the same; and shall perform all the duties required to be performed by them, in reference to the receipt, safe-keeping, transfer, and disbursement of all such moneys, according to the provisions of this act.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That there shall be erected, prepared and provided, at the expense of the United States, at the city of Charleston, in the State of South Carolina, and at the city of St. Louis, in the State of Missouri, offices, with suitable and convenient rooms for the use of the receivers-general of public money hereinafter directed to be appointed at the places above named; and sufficient and secure fireproof vaults and safes for the keeping of the public money collected and deposited at those points respectively; and the said receivers-general, from time to time appointed at those places, shall have the custody and care of the said offices, vaults and safes, so to be erected, prepared and provided, and of all the public moneys deposited within the same; and shall perform all the duties required to be performed by them; in reference to the receipt, safe-keeping, transfer, and disbursement of all such moneys, according to the provisions hereinafter contained.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That the President shall nominate, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint four officers, to be denominated "receivers-general of public money," which said officers shall hold their offices for the term of four years, unless sooner removed therefrom; one of which shall be located in the city of New York, in the State of New York; one other of which shall be located in the city of Boston, in the State of Massachusetts; one other of which shall be located at the city of Charleston, in the State of South Carolina; and the remaining one of which shall be located at the city of St. Louis, in the State of Missouri; and all of which said officers shall give bonds to the United States, with sureties, according to the provisions hereinafter contained, for the faithful discharge of the duties of their respective offices.