

# THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

UNION, THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS—THE GUARDIANS OF OUR LIBERTY.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 1841.

No. 1668.

From the National Intelligencer.

FEBRUARY 23, 1841.

In commemoration of this day, the anniversary of the birth of General George Washington, we are enabled to present to our readers another of those contributions of Mr. Curtis to the hitherto unwritten history of the War of the Revolution, which please us and our readers under great obligation to him.

The Battle of Germantown, and Death of General Nash—October 4, 1777.

From the *Public Recollections and Private Memoirs of the Life and Character of Washington*.

Undismayed by his defeat at the battle of the Brandywine, Washington hovered on the march of his enemy; not with the hope of saving Philadelphia, but with the determination to strike yet another blow before the conclusion of the campaign of 1777. Charged with the courage displayed by his undisciplined soldiers, when opposed to a superior army of veterans, in the combat at Chadsford, the American General anxiously watched for an opportunity of again measuring his sword with that of his skilful and far better appointed adversary, though was were the advantages in favor of the latter.

Sir William Howe, flushed with his victory over the American Grand Army, and the occupation of the then capital of the American Union, and presuming that his foe was sufficiently subdued to give him no further molestation for the remainder of the campaign, quartered a large portion of his troops in the village of Germantown, about seven miles from the city of Philadelphia, while he dispatched considerable detachments towards the positions still held by the American forces on the Delaware.

Washington promptly embraced the opportunity thus offered, of striking at his powerful adversary with fair hopes of success. Gathering together all the troops within his reach, and having received some reinforcements, although they consisted mostly of new levies, the American Army broke up from its encampment, about fifteen miles from Germantown, on the night of the 23d of October, and advanced upon the enemy in three columns, in order of battle.

During the night march, several incidents occurred that might be deemed ominous of the fortunes of the coming day. The celebrated Count Pulaski, who was charged with the service of watching the enemy and gaining intelligence, was said to have been found asleep in a farm house. But, although the gallant Pole might have been overtaken by slumber from the great fatigue growing out of the duties of the advanced guard, yet no soldier was more wide awake in the moment of combat than the intrepid and chivalric Count Pulaski. The delay in the arrival of the ammunition wagons was productive of the most serious consequences in the action of the succeeding day. The general officer to whom the blame of this delay was attached, was afterwards discovered in a state of intoxication, lying in the corner of a fence. Lieut. Benjamin Grymes, of the Life Guard, grasping the delinquent by the collar, placed him on his feet, and bade him go and do his duty. This bold proceeding on the part of a subaltern towards a general officer was certainly at variance with all rules or orders of discipline; but the exigency of the moment, and the degraded spectacle that an officer of high rank had presented to the eyes of the soldiery, would seem to have warranted a proceeding that, under different circumstances, must be considered as subversive of all military discipline. Grymes was a bold, brave soldier, enthusiasticly attached to the cause of his country, and foremost among the asserters of her liberties. The general officer of whom we have spoken was brought to a Court Martial, and cashiered.

The surprise was complete. Between day-break and sunrise, the British pickets were forced, and the Light Infantry routed in their camp, fled in confusion, leaving their camp standing. So complete was the surprise, that the officers' watches were found hanging up in their quarters, together with their portmanteaus and trunks of clothes, the latter affording a most reasonable booty to the American soldiery. Many of the tents and marquees were burnt, owing to a want of transportation to carry them away. Although completely routed in the onset, the British Light Infantry rallied under their officers, and annoyed their enemy from every house, enclosure, or other defensible position that offered in the line of their retreat; thus showing the mighty power of discipline over broken troops, and its invaluable influences amid the greatest emergencies of war.

Six companies of the 40th Regiment, under their Lieutenant Colonel, being hard pressed by the advancing columns of the Americans, threw themselves into Chew's house, a strongly constructed stone building, and, barricading the lower windows, opened a destructive fire from the cellars and upper windows. The Americans, finding their mucketry made no impression, were in the act of dragging up their cannon to batter the walls, when a ruse de guerre was attempted, which however

failed of success. An officer galloped up from the house, and cried out, what are you about; you will fire upon your own people. The artillery opened, but, after fifteen or twenty rounds, the pieces were found to be of too small calibre to make a serious impression, and were withdrawn.

A most daring and chivalric attempt was now made to fire the building. Lt. Col. Laurens, Aid-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief, with a few volunteers, rushed up to the house under cover of the smoke, and applied a burning brand to the principal door, at the same time exchanging passes with his sword with the enemy on the inside. By almost a miracle, this gallant and accomplished officer escaped unhurt, although his clothes were repeatedly torn by the enemy's shot. Another and equally daring attempt was made by Maj. White, Aid-de-camp to General Sullivan, but without as fortunate a result. The Major, while in the act of firing one of the cellar windows, was mortally wounded, and died soon after.

Washington accompanied the leading division under Maj. Gen. Sullivan, and cheered his soldiers in their brilliant onset, as they drove the enemy from point to point. Arrived in the vicinity of Chew's house, the Commander-in-Chief halted to consult his officers as to the best course to be pursued towards this fortress that had so suddenly and unexpectedly sprung up in their way. The younger officers who were immediately attached to the person of the Chief, and among the choicest spirits of the Revolution, including the high and honored names of Hamilton, of Reed, of Pinckney, of Laurens, and of Lee, were for leaving Chew's house to itself, or of turning the siege into a blockade, by stationing in its vicinity a body of troops to watch the movements of the garrison, and pressing on with the column in pursuit of the flying enemy. But the sages of the army, at the head of whom was Major General Knox, repulsed at once the idea of leaving a fortified enemy in the rear, as contrary to the usages of war, and the most approved military authorities.

At this period of the action, the fog had become so dense that objects could scarcely be distinguished at a few yards distance. The Americans had penetrated the enemy's camp even to their second line, which was drawn up to receive them about the centre of Germantown. The ammunition of the right wing, including the Maryland brigades, became exhausted, the soldiers holding up their empty cartridge boxes, when their officers called on them to rally and face the enemy. The extended line of operations, which embraced nearly two miles, the unfavorable nature of the ground in the environs of Germantown for the opening of troops, a large portion of whom were undisciplined, the ground being much cut up, and intersected by arid fences and enclosures of various sorts, the delay of the left wing under Greene in getting into action—all these causes, combined with an atmosphere so dense from fog and smoke as to make it impossible to distinguish friend from foe, produced a retreat in the American army at the moment when victory seemed to be within its grasp.

Washington was among the foremost in his endeavors to restore the fortunes of the day, and while exerting himself to rally his broken columns, the exposure of his person became so imminent, that his officers, after affectionately remonstrating with him in vain, seized the bridle of his horse. The retreat, under all circumstances, was quite as favorable as could be expected. The whole of the artillery was saved, and as many of the wounded as could be removed. The Ninth Virginia Regiment, under Col. Mathews, having penetrated so far as to be without support, after a desperate resistance, surrendered its remnant of a hundred men, including its gallant Colonel, who had received several bayonet wounds. The British pursued but two or three miles, making prisoners of the worn-out soldiers, who, after a night march of 15 miles and an action of three hours, were found exhausted and asleep in the fields and along the roads.

While gallantly leading the North Carolina Brigade, that formed part of the reserve, into action, General Nash was mortally wounded. A round shot from the British artillery striking a sign-post in Germantown, glanced therefrom, and, passing through his horse, shattered the General's thigh on the opposite side. The fall of the animal hurled its unfortunate rider with considerable force to the ground. With surpassing courage and presence of mind, General Nash, covering his wound with both of his hands, gaily called to his men, Never mind me, I have had a devil of a tumble; rush on, my boys, rush on the enemy. I'll be after you presently. Human nature could do no more. Faint from loss of blood, and the intense agony of his wound, the sufferer was borne to a house hard by, and attended by Dr. house, by special order of the Commander-in-Chief. The Doctor gave his patient but feeble hopes of recovery, even with the chances of amputation; when Nash observed, It may be considered unmanly to complain, but my agony is too great

for human nature to bear. I am aware that my days, perhaps hours, are numbered, but I do not repine at my fate. I have fallen on the field of honor while leading my brave Carolinians to the assault of the enemy. I have a last request to make of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, that he will permit you my dear Doctor, to remain with me, to protect me while I live, and my remains from insult. Dr. Craik assured the General that he had nothing to fear from the enemy; it was impossible that they would harm him while living, or offer an insult to his remains; that Lord Cornwallis was by this time in the field, and that, under his auspices, a wounded officer would be treated with humanity and respect. The dying patriot and hero then uttered these memorable words: "I have no favors to expect from the enemy. I have been consistent in my principles and conduct since the commencement of the troubles. From the very first dawn of the Revolution I have ever been on the side of liberty and my country."

He lingered in extreme torture between two and three days, and died admired by his enemies, admired and lamented by his companions in arms. On Thursday, the 9th of October, the whole American Army was paraded by order of the Commander-in-Chief to perform the funeral obsequies of General Nash, and never did the warrior's last tribute peal the requiem of a braver soldier or nobler patriot than of the illustrious son of North Carolina.

Taking rank with the chiefs who had fallen in the high and holy cause of a Nation's Independence, the name of Nash will be associated with the martyr names of Warren, Montgomery, Wooster, Mercer, while the epitaph to be graven on his monumental marble should be the memorable words of the patriot and hero on the field of his fame: *From the very first dawn of the Revolution, I have ever been on the side of liberty and my country.*

It was not the halt at Chew's house, it was not the denseness of the fog, that produced the unfortunate termination of the battle of the 4th of October. Time that sheds the sober and enduring colors of truth over the events of the world has determined that the misfortune of the battle of Germantown are rather to be ascribed to the undisciplined character of a large proportion of the American troops, than to all other causes combined. Washington's oldest Continental Regiment were but little more than a year's standing, while many of his troops had been but a few months, and some but a few weeks' service. With all these disadvantages, the plan of the surprise of Germantown was ably conceived and gallantly executed in the outset, and failed of complete success only from circumstances beyond all human control.

Congress passed a unanimous resolution consolatory to the feelings of the Commander-in-Chief, his officers and soldiers, under their disappointment, intimating "that it was not in nature to command success," but their brave army "had done more; it had deserved it."

The effects resulting from the battle of Germantown were most happy both at home and abroad. The enemy were taught to respect American troops which they had affected to despise, and Sir William Howe deemed it prudent to draw in all his outposts, and shelter himself in Philadelphia, which proved a great relief to a large and valuable portion of the adjacent country. Indeed, it becomes the duty of the historian to declare that matters might have been much worse on the 4th of October. When the Americans retreated, the second line of the enemy was in great force, having been but little impaired in the action, while the reserve, consisting of the Grenadiers, were close at hand to sustain their comrades, those chosen fellows having, at the first alarm, seized their arms, and ran, without halting, the distance from the commons of Philadelphia to Germantown. Howe's army in 1777, without disparagement of the British service before or since that time, may be considered as the finest body of troops that ever embarked from the British dominions; yet such was the alarm and confusion into which these veterans were thrown by the masterly surprise of Germantown, and such the courage and vigor displayed by the Americans in their attack in the early part of the day, that a rendezvous at Chester became a measure of serious contemplation among the commanders of the British army.

But the most happy and imposing influences upon America and her cause, resulting from the battle of Germantown, were experienced abroad. Eh, mon Dieu, exclaimed the Count de Vergennes, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the American Commissioners in Paris, What is this you tell me, Messieurs; another battle, and the British Grand Army surprised in its camp at Germantown, Sir William and his veterans routed and flying for two hours, and a great victory only denied to Washington by a tissue of accidents beyond all human control. Ah, ah, these Americans are an elastic people. Press them down to-day, they rise to-morrow. And then, my dear sirs, these military wonders to be achieved by

an army raised within a single year, opposed to the skill, discipline, and experience of European troops, commanded by General's grown gray in war. The brave Americans, they are worthy of the aid of France. They will succeed at last.

The winter of 1777 set in early, and with unusual severity. The military operations of both armies had ceased, when a detachment of the southern troops were seen plodding their weary way to winter quarters at the Valley Forge. The appearance of the horse guard announced the approach of the Commander-in-Chief; the officer commanding the detachment, choosing the most favorable ground, paraded his men to pay to their General the honors of the passing salute. As Washington rode slowly up, he was observed to be eyeing very earnestly something that attracted his attention on the frozen surface of the road. Having returned the salute with that native grace, that dignified air and manner, that won the admiration of the soldiery of the old Revolutionary day, the Chief reigned up his charger, and, ordering the commanding officer of the detachment to his side, addressed him as follows: How comes it, sir, that I have tracked the march of your troops by the blood stains of their feet upon the frozen ground? Were there no shoes in the Commissary's stores, that this sad spectacle is to be seen along the public highways? The officer replied: Your excellency may rest assured that this sight is as painful to my feelings as it can be to yours; but there is no remedy within our reach. When the shoes were issued, the different regiments were served in turn; it was our misfortune to be among the last to be served, and the stores became exhausted before we could obtain even the smallest supply.

The General was observed to be deeply affected by the officer's description of the soldiers' privations and suffering. His compressed lips, the heaving of his manly chest, broken the powerful emotions that were struggling in his bosom, when, turning toward the troops with a voice tremulous yet kindly, Washington exclaimed, *Poor fellows!* then giving rein to his charger, rode away.

During this touching interview, every eye was bent upon the Chief, every ear was attentive to catch his words; and when these words reached the soldiers, warm from the heart of their beloved commander, and in tones of sorrow and commiseration for their sufferings, a grateful but subdued expression burst from every lip. O God bless your excellency, your poor soldiers' friend.

In this interesting event in the life and actions of Washington, he appears in a new light. He is no longer the grave, dignified, awe-inspiring and unapproachable General in Chief of the armies of his country. All these characteristics have vanished, and the Father appears amid his companions in arms, in all his moral grandeur, giving vent to his native goodness of heart.

From the Richmond Whig.

GEN. HARRISON'S CABINET—THOMAS EWING.

The selection of his official advisers is always a delicate task for a Chief Magistrate. On the one hand is Seylls, and the other Charybdis. He has not only to select individuals possessed of abilities and virtues—that were an easy undertaking in a country abounding as ours does in such characters—but he has to discriminate with great nicety, and select those who possess peculiar and pre-eminent qualifications for their respective stations. He must have an eye to all the great interests of the Republic, and pick out the man best fitted to represent each and every one.

In the execution of this delicate and highly responsible task, we hazard nothing in averring that General Harrison has succeeded beyond the expectations of his warmest friends. He has displayed a sagacity and knowledge of men rarely found in the closet politician, and seldom exhibited by any not used to the camp—a school, by the way, eminently fitted for acquiring an intimate and discriminating knowledge of human character. The general sentiment of the country pronounces the new Cabinet, in the aggregate, the ablest since the days of Washington. In the detail, the popular approbation is equally warm and decided. In a word, so entirely unexceptionable has it proved upon inquiry, that even the Factionists who did clamor in the beginning, and who never fail to clamor on such occasions, have been discomfited, and forced to silence—a triumph of Truth and Justice over Falshood and Passion as signal as any recorded in the annals of history.

But passing by for the present the other eminent men who compose the Cabinet, we would bring to the more intimate acquaintance of our readers the history of Thomas Ewing—the future Secretary of the Treasury. Ewing is a self-made man—one of those who, springing from obscurity and poverty by dint of genius, illustrate the benign influences of Republican institutions, and epitomize their ornament and support. We delight to contemplate such characters, and see them elevated to the first stations of dignity and respon-

sibility in the Republic. The appointment in this instance is alike creditable to the Chief Magistrate who conferred, and the worthy individual who received it. And in a more extended sense, it is a deserved compliment to the genius of free institutions which engenders such men—and by giving assurance that the highest post is within the reach of the humblest citizen, infuses generous and noble ambition into every condition of society.

The following sketch of Mr. Ewing is taken from Waterston's Gallery of American Portraits. The sketch was written in 1836, when Mr. Ewing was in the Senate of the United States. It will serve to give the reader some idea of the character and intellectual power of this gentleman, who has been honored as the Secretary of the Treasury under General Harrison:

Mr. Ewing was born in Virginia, in 1789. His father was a revolutionary soldier, and soon after the birth of young Ewing, removed to the state of Ohio. Mr. Ewing is indebted for the elements of knowledge, to the care and attention of his eldest sister, who taught him to read, and the only additional education he received till he was twenty-three years of age, was two quarters tuition, under two successive teachers. But he had acquired a love of reading and all his leisure hours were devoted to it. His father being in humble circumstances, young Ewing's life was necessarily a laborious one; but obliged as he was to toil daily, he nevertheless availed himself of every opportunity to improve his mind, and to be what his highest ambition then led him to become—a scholar. But poverty seemed to oppose an insuperable barrier to his career, and he was about yielding up to despondency, when a young man, who had seen something of the world, and who was hired by his father as an assistant, roused him from his apathy, and prevailed upon him to accompany him to the Kanawha Salines, where he procured employment as a common laborer. After an absence of three or four months, he returned with eighty dollars in his pocket, which he generously gave to his father, to save his land from being forfeited. In the following spring, Mr. Ewing again returned to the Kanawha Salines, where he labored assiduously till November, and succeeded in realizing about four hundred dollars—out of which, after paying a balance of sixty dollars, still due to his father's property, he was enabled to indulge his favorite propensity, by spending the winter at an academy at Athens, where he was encouraged to make additional efforts to prosecute his studies, and acquire the power which knowledge bestows. He returned once more to his former labors, and continued at them for two years. These

years fully affected his health, which, however, a short residence at home restored, and he again entered the academy which he had left about two years before, and proceeded to labor mentally, with the same ardor and intensity that he had labored corporeally. His progress is said to have been very rapid; but being satisfied that his funds, which were daily diminishing, would be insufficient to enable him to complete his education, he opened a school in Gallipolis, which he threw up in the course of a quarter, not liking the employment, and returned to his former occupation at the salt works.

He now hired a furnace, and by extraordinary labor he acquired a sum in the course of a month, to enable him, as he believed, to complete his studies. He was right; and in the spring of 1815 he received the degree of A. B., and was the first to receive that academical honor in Ohio. He was now 26 years of age, and commenced the study of the law, in the office of General Beecher, who, after he had finished his legal studies, took him into partnership, and in his new and favorite profession he rose rapidly to distinction. As a proof of his arduous and assiduous practice in eight different counties in the state in which he lived. His filial affection was again manifested in the purchase of a fine tract of land in Indiana, with the proceeds of his professional labors, on which he placed his father and family. He had now acquired so high a reputation for ability and talent at the bar, that the Legislature of Ohio elected him in 1822, to represent that state in the Senate of the U. States; and in this distinguished body he has continued ever since, with an increase of fame, and an unerring application to the important duties of his station, that has given him a claim to the gratitude of his country.

Mr. Ewing is, in person, athletic and muscular—broad across the chest, vigorous, but not elegant in his proportions, or graceful in his motions. His countenance is expressive of good nature, and enlivened by a frequent smile; though awkward in his appearance, his manners have a natural ease that even an early intercourse with refined and polished society could not have rendered more agreeable. Nature has bestowed upon him a mind of great powers, which have been cultivated to the extent his limited means and opportunities would afford. It is analytic and logical, rather than brilliant and imaginative. Oratory, as an art,

has not claimed much of his attention, and though his arrangement is lucid, and his mind affluent in topics, and fertile in arguments, his speeches possess few of the embellishments of rhetoric, or the elegance of style. He cannot bleed the *utiles* with the *dulce*, or amuse while he persuades. He always endeavors to edify, and but seldom attempts to please. Reasoning is his forte; in that he is conscious of his power; and will not trust himself to the efforts of fancy. His diction is plain and unadorned, not verbose or involved, but clear and suited to his reasoning, and is terse or vigorous, according to the strength or weakness of his argument.

Mr. Ewing is too good natured to deal much in sarcasm, or to resort to bitterness of invective; and he never electrifies his auditors by unexpected bursts of eloquence. He is sagacious, argumentative and laborious; often eloquent, but never oratorical. As a politician his principles are firm and unyielding, never fluctuating between self-aggrandizement and the interests of his country; never balancing between right and wrong; but always directing his efforts to that which he conceives will promote the glory of the nation, and the happiness of mankind.

*Strange, but true.*—It is a remark generally applicable to the character of the "better half" of man, that, though she be given to censure and admonish her lord in those eloquent periphrastic familiarly called curial lectures, or even enforce her precepts in the less delicate mode of applying the broomstick to his pate—yet she will allow no mortal but herself to abuse, or wield the chastening rod over him, with impunity; she is as ready to take up the cudgels for his defence as for his correction. And the rule has been noted to work both ways.—It is a singular and a desirable trait in a woman, that she will ungrudgingly defend the life, property, honor—in short—all and singular the rights and credits of her husband, against all aggressions of third persons, even though she be most scandalously ill-treated and abused by him.

We have not ventured these speculations without a "case in point" to back us. A respected old acquaintance of ours says that when he was a young man—full of the ardor and ebullience of youth—his adventures befell him: While travelling in a strange part of the country, he came upon a cabin, from behind which he heard the angry voice of a man, mingled with the screams of a woman, and regular intervals a hickory stick, rattling through the air, as if well directed.

He rode round to get a sight of the cause of this clamor, when he saw a man, busily looking toward the cabin, with a wife-like fury, with a stick too broad and durable to be within the meaning of the statute. On perceiving our presence, the belligerents stopped operations; the "shower of timber" ceased to fall, and there was a great calm in a moment's duration. The young man, whose wrath had suddenly waxed hot against the cruel husband, cried, "You brute! you rascal! throw down that whip, and don't touch that woman again, or I'll wear it out over your own ugly carcass! you savage you!"

Who should respond to this valiant defiance, but the injured lady herself! Turning her bleared hair out of her face, and giving her fist a protuberant shake, she squaled out, *He's as good as you are, you gawky, good-for-nothing creature, you!*

Greensboro' Patriot.

*Caught in his own trap.*—The Portland Advertiser relates an amusing case, in which a beggar received what he asked for, but not what he wished for.

A few days ago a full grown, able-bodied man, presented himself at the door of one our citizens, and solicited the lady of the house to give him two cents. She remarked, that she had none, and inquired what he wanted of them. "To buy a dose of castor oil, marm. (was the reply) for I feel dreadful sick."

The lady had no cents, but she had plenty of oil, and she prepared him a stiff dose. He tried to get cured from taking it; but she was firm: he was a sick man, and it must be done. The loss, found he was caught in his own trap; and where he went to have a glass of liquor, he got a dose of physic; but, making a virtue of necessity, and with sundry wry faces, he gulped it down, and cleared. He'll not call at that house again, we dare say.

Choose the course of life which is the most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful.