

## REMEMBRANCES OF AN OCTOGENARIAN.

A Man Who Lived With Men We Read About.

By Dr. Paul Pritchard, of South Carolina.

I was born in Charleston, S.C., on the 10th of April 1820, and remember the hurricane of 1824 that swept with such desolating force over "Sullivan's Island" and was present with my father in one of the houses, and saw Gen. La Fayette pass in an open barouche drawn by four white horses, as the parade passed through King street.

As a boy, I can remember sailing out little boat on the water lots - south of the Holmes dwelling, the tide ebbing and flowing, where now the palatial mansions stand, adding grace and beauty to the most unrivalled sea view in our entire Southland.

I was a school boy in the "old city by the sea," during the intense excitement of the nullification troubles, and did not fail to hear the captivating oratory of the brilliant speakers of the day - Kayne and McDuffie, Drayton and Pottigrew, Hamilton and Pickens (Pinckney) - then in the prime of their fame and popularity.

I can never forget the awe and sadness impressed upon my childhood's mind in seeing the boats from the third piazza of my father's house at the east end of Pinckney street, returning from "Morris Island," with the brilliant lamented Simons, who had met his fate in a duel with a son of Gov. Geddes - a barbarous practice that in our humane, christianized advancement is now denounced and criminated by statute and revolutionized public opinion - the Cash-Shannon tragedy proving the last feather.

While a student at the Kinderhook Academy, in Columbia county, New York, I became acquainted with two of the most distinguished characters in our country's history. Attending to a summons at the door of my boarding house, I accented two gentlemen to whose inquiries I answered, when one of them said to me, doubtless from my peculiar pronunciation: "Are you not a Southern boy?" "Yes, sir," I replied, feeling as big as a bass drum, "I am a South Carolinian." "Do you know whom we are?" was the next query. "Yes, sir, I do," having recognized both of them from their lithographs. "In you, sir, I see Mr. Washington Irving, of Knickerbocker, "Sleepy Hollow" fame, and the other gentleman is Gov. Martin Vanburen, (Vanburen) ambassador to the Court of St. James."

Two of my student friends at Kinderhook were Lyman Trammis, Attorney-General of the State of New York, and Samuel Tilden, who many think was justly elected to the presidency of the United States. I remember the remark about Tilden, made to me by my kinsman, the late Judge Bryan of the Federal court, then a young man, on a visit to see his brother, at the Academy. "No," Tilden, with whom he had been conversing for hours - "is the best read, informed and intelligent youth in the political history of

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our country and the world I have ever met, and his future is full of promise, success and distinction."

In 1836 I entered the West Point Military Academy with General Sherman as a fellow cadet, a good, genial boy, with no characteristic at that time in evidence of the questionable glory he was to achieve in his desolating march through Georgia to the sea.

It has been my good fortune to see and hear in debate in the senate at Washington those truly great men - Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Benton, Preston, and others - when the entire country felt and evinced full and just pride in their wise statesmanship, burning eloquence and world accepted intellectual superiority.

I am free to say that Calhoun impressed my youthful mind as the best equipped in manner and matter in participating in the discussion of any question sprung upon the senate.

As to Preston's eloquence, I will illustrate by what I heard at a gentleman's dinner party. Penas, seated near Hon. Barnwell Rhett, asked our host, who was one of the most wealthy and sagacious sea island cotton planters on the Carolina coast: "Have you ever heard Preston speak, and did you think him eloquent?" "Well," in reply said our friend, "I must tell you, I attended the late railroad meeting, determined not to invest a dollar in the stock, but wait for the first mortgage bonds; but, eloquent! why, Preston influenced me so much in his speech, as to cause me to plunge into the enterprise to the tune of five thousand dollars, although I knew at the time my money would disappear in the vortex of construction."

Having graduated at the medical college in Charleston, my native city, in March, 1841, I located on the Savannah river the ensuing month for the practice of my profession. Our old "Alma Mater" was then in the zenith of her fame and prosperity, with such brilliant lights in the profession as Dickson, Geddings, Holbrook, Shepherd and others guiding and controlling its destiny. All of these distinguished gentlemen - their mission ended - have crossed the river.

At that date, the country was jubilant over the triumphant election and inauguration of the old patriot-hero, Gen. W. H. Harrison, as president of the United States - to be shrouded in gloom within the lapse of a few weeks by his lamented death.

In those days party contention ran high - it was United States Bank or no bank - with those gigantic intellects - Clay, Calhoun, Webster and Benton - grappling with the momentous issue, until it was buried "in the tomb of all the Capulots."

From 1841 to 1861, the rice culture on Savannah river was an exception in progress, product and prosperity. Large estates were cultivated by such proprietors as Dock, Screven and Daniels; Judges Chenes and Huger; Gen. Hamilton, Allen Inard, and Daniel Heyward. The latter a full success before and after the war.

## ALKAHOL

In evidence, the crop on Pennyworth Island, near the city of Savannah in 1841, the great Harrison freshet year, the rice pen of the river and homestead of Ex-Governor James Hamilton, 100 acres, yielded one hundred bushels of rice to the acre.

But now, what a change has "come over the spirit of the dream," for while from 1841 to 1861 the rice lands on Savannah river were never in the market and private sales only now and then occurred at from \$100 to \$200 per acre, owing at present to the changed conditions of labor entailing imperfect culture, and the unprecedented frequency of cyclonic visitations, wrecking crops and improvements, one-half of the rice lands are uncultivated, and sales of these once opulent estates forced at values so insignificant as to prove a step from the "sublime to the ridiculous."

The rice lands on Savannah river were considered the "Dakta," the garden spot of the state, the soil inexhaustible, never failing in yielding ample returns, ever being fertilized from the yellow waters of the flowing river; but, now, so changed is the aspect, contrasting the present with the past, we are almost constrained to say they are only here and there, "a roec left on the stalk, to tell where the garden had been."

All of the plantations were fully settled; the rice pounding and threshing mills costing thousands of dollars being an exhibit of all the improvements, regardless of expense, that the most skillful and experienced machinist could devise, for the better marketing of the crop.

During my first year's practice on the river, I found all of the overseers armed with lancets - phlebotomy being the order of the day - accompanied with a drastic emetic, cathartic dose, as a lockdown argument in the treatment and cure of the larger number of prevalent diseases.

Up to my advent, no physician had preceded me in practicing exclusively on the river, so I had to confront and revolutionize this exhaustive medication for more civilized, enlightened, advanced methods.

On the 4th of July, 1843, while at my plantation on Chocohessaco river, twenty miles distant from my office, I was notified that a few cases of Asiatic cholera had occurred the previous day on Savannah river, whereupon I repaired to my post of duty and before night removed over five hundred negroes under my special sanitary care from the plantation and carried them in the pine land.

All the regulations of a military encampment were rigidly enforced, and while a number of cases of cholera were presented for several ensuing weeks, still the result, under vigilant care, prompt treatment and proper regimen, was most favorable, not a single death occurring; besides the satisfaction and blessing additional, that about the latter end of August we ventured with the men to re-occupy the plantations and with a generous diet, oceans of strong coffee and a respectful portion of whiskey, a full crop of rice was harvested without the first casualty.

## ALLEGIST

How different the result in the cholera visitation to the river in 1834, when a number of the plantations were depopulated by the scourge, and the negroes - over two hundred in number, distant a mile and half from our encampment, a dense forest intervening, their removal from the malarial river having been delayed several days - suffered fearfully, about seventy of the number passing away quickly under this terrible pestilence.

It is notable, that in the history of rice culture on the Savannah river, from 1641 to 1861, only one crop calamity occurred, caused by the terrific storm of 1854; while from 1878 to 1888 with floods, (rivalling the great Yazoo freshet and cyclones, destructive alike to life and property, crop disasters have been frequent and desolating.

In October, 1841, I for the first time visited Bluffton, S.C., then known as Kirk's Bluff, only three or four houses being there at the time. The present site of the village was covered with the dense, primitive forest. The location had always been noted for its salubrity and natural beauty and it soon became the summer resort for the planters on the adjacent sea islands as well as those residing on the mainland. From an insignificant hamlet of a few houses in 1841, Bluffton in 1861 had grown into a populous, flourishing village, its inhabitants noted for their intelligence, refinement and hospitality and fully up to the front in the agitation of the movement that led to the establishment of the Southern Confederacy.

I was in command of the village when the fight at Fort Walker on the Hilton Head Island occurred and remember the doubt and surprise of Gen. Ripley when I reported to him that the fort had been abandoned and the troops were evacuating the island. The General had visited the fort during the morning of the fight and found the battle progressing satisfactorily, but after he left, the fleet succeeded in taking up an enfilading position, knocking the guns to pieces in short order and rendering the work untenable.

The village was crowded at the time, and the consternation at this unexpected, startling event was almost causing, while a storm on that night and the next day, with houses, furniture and belongings all abandoned, completed the catastrophe.

In the progress of the war Bluffton was raided by an expedition from "Hilton Head," the torch applied and a third of the houses went up in smoke. Since the war the village has been slowly but surely improving and is regarded, owing to its natural advantages, inclusive of its unrivaled salt water bathing facilities, as one of the most desirable and pleasant summer retreats on the Carolina coast.

After the fall of Fort Walker, Bluffton was honored by a visit from General Lee, who was then engaged in organizing the defense of the Carolina coast. I have now in my possession a gift from him, the spy glass with which at Fort Point he inspected the Federal fleet anchored off Bay Point.

Spending the evening with him at headquarters, I was impressed with his wonderful equanimity in the discussion of the critical, exciting condition of affairs, and when, the next day, we received our cavalry, he appeared to us as the embodiment of splendid manhood - the chivalrous, peerless patriot and hero. To me, it has been ever esteemed a benediction to have met and known the Washington of the Southern Confederacy.

**ALFANEST**

But the "dead past has now buried its dead," and the sunlight of peace and brotherhood has stilled the turbulent waves of strife and contention with the sisterhood of states one as the ocean, both North and South-land cherishing the memory of Grant and Lee as their pre-eminent "ideals" in heroism and patriotism.

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Copied from -

"THE ALFANEST

The Literary Magazine

Of The South-

Atlanta, Georgia.

September, 1900. (Issue)"

*Alfanest*  
*1899-1900*  
*Vol. 1, No. 1*