

# THE SOUTHERN LUSTRA

## NEWS.

VOL. I.—No. 8.

RICHMOND, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1862.

PRICE 15 CENTS.

### GENERAL JOSEPH EGGLESTON JOHNSTON.

This distinguished officer is a native of Prince Edward county in this State, where he was born about the year 1808. His father was the late Judge Peter Johnston, of the General Court of Virginia, distinguished alike at the bar and on the bench for sound practical sense and solid legal acquirements. He had been a soldier in his youth—had been one of Greene's officers in his celebrated campaign of 1781 in North and South Carolina—had borne himself honorably and bravely at Guilford, Camden, Eutaw, and Ninety Six—and retained, to the day of his death, a predilection for his early profession, which not all his subsequent success in a profession of a very different character, could entirely obliterate. It is worthy of record, that he was the first Lieutenant of the company in which the celebrated Peter Francisco served as a private, and that the latter, scarcely less remarkable for his gigantic strength and undaunted courage, than for his keen sagacity and powerful, though uncontrolled mind, retained to the close of his life a warm affection for his old commander; a sufficient proof, since he had so often seen him tried, that he had never found him wanting. After the war of the Revolution, Judge Johnston married Miss Polly Wood, of Gloucester county, a niece of Patrick Henry, and one of the most accomplished young ladies of her day. If he had chosen his wife solely on the principle that Mrs. Primrose chose her gown, "for qualities that would wear," he could scarcely have made a happier selection. Mrs. Johnston proved to be an remarkable ally in her married life for the ability with which she discharged the duties of her station, as she had been for her personal attractions in her youth. They raised a large family, some of whose progeny, all of whom proved to be persons of superior understanding, as well as mental; a duty but too often neglected by those to whom the education of youth is entrusted. Among other things, they were taught to obtain complete mastery over their own minds; a lesson, above all others, essential to human happiness; for the mind in the moral, like fire in the material world, is the best and most useful of servants, but the most dangerous and most tyrannical of masters.

Of several brothers, the subject of our sketch was the youngest. When yet a small boy, his father having been appointed a Judge in Abingdon District, removed his family to that town, where three Josephs received the rudiments of his education. At school, he was noted as a boy of quick parts and a bold and enterprising disposition. During this period of his life, he had an opportunity to show one of those characteristics for which he had since been distinguished above his contemporaries. By some accident he broke an arm. Most boys of his age would have indulged in the

saddest lamentation. Joseph, on the contrary, bore his misfortune with the most heroic fortitude. He shed not a tear and uttered not a groan. He submitted to the setting of the limb with the calm and stoical composure of an Indian, making not a very loud, and deploring not a muscle of his countenance. With equal patience he bore the confinement necessary to his situation, and in every incident connected with the disaster, showed a manly spirit for above his years. We mention this circumstance, because, though trivial, it is characteristic, and affords a key to his subsequent conduct

that time to the very zenith of its reputation. His application to his studies, from the moment he entered the walls of this institution, was earnest and devoted. How successful it was, we think his after history very clearly shows. He graduated in 1829, in the same class with General Robert E. Lee, a circumstance well worthy of note, as calculated to render that year and that class forever memorable in the annals of West Point. Cadet Johnston was immediately assigned to the 4th artillery, with the rank of 2d Lieutenant, by brevet. There was at that time no and no opportunity for distinction.

Accordingly, we find him, seven years after, while still a Lieutenant, appointed Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, a post which he resigned the year after, upon being appointed 1st Lieutenant of Topographical Engineers. This rank he held when the Florida war broke out in 1838. His conduct throughout that war was such as to merit the highest praise, and to draw the eyes of the whole country upon him. Upon one occasion, having been sent, under the escort of a party of infantry, to make a survey or reconnaissance of a region which lay around a lake, and having crossed the lake in the party was way-laid by an ambuscade of Indians, and all its officers were disabled at the first fire. The men were thrown into complete confusion, and in imminent danger of destruction, when Lieut. Johnston took the command, and by his coolness and determination, succeeded in reconquering them. He laid hold of a small tree with one hand, and standing boldly out in face of the whole fire of the savages, called on the men to rally and firm upon him. His coolness enabled him to subdue what was fast becoming a panic. The men recovered to their duty and repulsed the attack in perfect order. A great number of the savages were slain, and the relief of the soldiers. Strange to say, while numbers of them struck the trees in which he held fast, for some time he was not touched. At last one struck him in the forehead, above the forehead, about the roots of the hair, and roused him toward the occiput, grazing the skull the whole distance, but not fracturing it or injuring the brain. Let J. of course fall, but the troops had caught so much of his spirit, that they repulsed the enemy and carried off the wounded in safety. For his gallant conduct on this occasion, and throughout the Florida war, he was brevetted Captain; a very nice recompense for so many and such arduous services, it seems to us. But promotion by brevet, and in that capacity, called with the expedition under Gen. Scott. After the capture of Vera Cruz, when the army advanced, Colonel Johnston made a reconnaissance of the enemy's lines, strongly posted on the heights of Cerro Gordo. In this reconnaissance he was



GENERAL JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY VANNORRE.

in some of the most trying situations that a man can be called on to occupy.

It is possible that his own inclination led him to choose arms as a profession. Naturally of such a disposition as we have revealed, the son, moreover, of an old soldier whose stirring narrative of his early experience in the army of Greene he must often have heard, it was natural that he should feel his soul stirred within him as by the sound of a trumpet. It is reasonable to suppose, also, that his father, always retaining a predilection for a military life, and early discovering the bent of his son's genius, should encourage his youthful inclinations. Be that as it may, we find him in 1835, a cadet at the military academy of West Point, at









"CONSCIENT," "ARISE," AND "EXEMPT."

"Conscient" immediately snatched it up and began to look at it, "Exempt" joining him in the examination. I went on deliberately to pay away my pencil and to roll up my carefully bent on averting my outraged dignity, and upon taking ample payment for the abominable sicknesses of "Stuecup," "Squint-eye," and "Sap-head." My friends were still too busy examining my sketches to pay any attention to me. Regarding them a moment, I concluded it would be cowardly to attack "Exempt" alone. I therefore deliberately sprayed "Conscient" with one hand, and "Exempt" with the other.

The next moment, I—

When I am mad, I am deliberate; but which the fighting begins, I lose my self-possession. My head swims, I get blind, I don't keep cool. The fact is, I am not accustomed to fighting. How it happened I know not, but the next moment after I had sprayed my friends, I became dimly conscious of being under the water. The inhuman wretches had "dashed in" upon me, and pitched me into the river. It is a wonder I was not drowned, seeing I was hurled from the upper deck of the steamer. But a merciful Providence saved me, and this unwarlike renegade served only to assist me in "getting started."

A boat picked me up, and when I got back on deck I found my sketches all safe, and my friends under arrest; for they proved to be "conscient," on their way to a camp of instruction, in charge of an officer. A suit of dry clothes helped to restore my equanimity, but there were too many questions to answer, and too much curiosity of my humble self on the part of the passengers. My position was uncomfortable. As it was not a particle of difference with me where I stopped, I got off at the next landing, went to a country tavern, lived on the fat of the land—fish, game and oysters were plentiful there—and wound up my festive season by a violent attack of ague and fever. I have a picture of myself when the ague was at the height, and would put it in here but for the fact that it produces vertigo in every person who looks at it.

One day I had a congestive chill, which nearly laid me out. The doctor probed quinine down me until I could taste it in my very boots. My head felt like a full moon stuffed with warm dynamite, and there was a ringing of bells in my ears equal to a Yankee jubilation over the victory at Manassas. When I got better, the doctor advised me to stay at home and rest about the mountains. Here my job was dear, but my landlord was a judge of the article, and sent me up to a neat little truck.

"That's a quinine-water here," said he, "with a lot of broken-down horses; just let me pick one for you, and I bet you get the best bargain you ever got in your life."

"Very well," said I.

He brought me a skeleton, the very sight of which made me shudder.

"Why handspike?" I exclaimed, "that thing will break down of its own accord in less than a mile. It looks like it was going to fall to pieces, anyway."

"That skeleton is the make of a prime horse!" he replied. "He's been terribly abused in the army, but if you take care of him, he will come out wonderfully. That animal will carry you no far as you will ride in a day, anyhow, and if you feel him high, he and you will improve together."

The landlord was correct. I got better every day, and so did the horse. I have got him now, and would not "take stock" for him. An "Ornamented" who has to gallop up and down the streets of Richmond, to the great terror of the ladies, the indignation of the gentlemen, and the detestation of everybody that has got common sense, would give \$1,000 for this.

My horse and myself set pretty on our way, making day stages at first; living well, fatiguing, strengthening, and gradually lengthening each day's journey. In process of time, we struck the bar of the canal, down which I had travelled during the summer. This very day came on the memorable storm, which we all flattered ourselves was sent by Providence for the destruction of Burnside, then on his way to Roanoke Island. What poverty induced me to

continue my journey in the rain and wind? Gracious only knows. I had a thick overcoat—the cold weather seemed only to make me stronger—my horse extremely enjoyed it; and, perhaps, Fate had a hand in the matter.

At all events, I wore an until night-fall, and then found myself not exactly hot, but entirely out of my reckoning. Night came on rapidly. Soon it was pitch dark. The wind rose fiercely and the rain fell heavily. In a moment, as if by magic, I had passed out of a known into an unknown country—wild, black and stormy. I felt as if I were thousands of miles from any human habitation. I was at a loss what to do: having learnt from books and some little experience that the best thing a man can do under circumstances such as these existed, I gave his horse the reins and let him go his own way. He will be sure to find the nearest house.

"Beauregard"—that is the name I had given my noble steed—understood me at once, increased his pace, and soon turned off from the canal into the country. Unable to see an inch before my nose, I closed my eyes and let him go on. Perhaps, an hour had passed, when he stopped suddenly, snorted, and refused to go. I had become very chilly, very impatient, and now became very angry, and plucked the spurs into him. He danced and snorted, as I thought at the moment, a row or something of that sort. I was about to proceed without stopping to investigate the matter, when I was arrested by a groan—only one groan—and then all was still.

"I dismounted, and, leading my horse by the bridle, went back to ascertain the extent of the injury I had unwittingly inflicted. I had not gone many steps before my feet struck the body of some one lying in the road."

"Are you much hurt, friend?"  
"No answer."  
I repeated the question. Still no answer. I stopped down, put out my hand and felt, as I supposed, the whiskers of the injured person. But as I moved my hand upward from the chin to the neck in a doubtful manner, "Beauregard" said I "and he is stung." Exploring still further with my fingers, I could not neither mouth, nor nose, nor eyes—only a raw smooth—and as I rose up my fingers touched my lips, I tasted blood, salty blood.

Words cannot convey the horror that seized me as I felt the blood. I felt as if I were in a bloody corner of something—a man that lay there at my feet in the muddy road, while the winds were howling, the rain pouring, and the blackness of darkness was all around me.

A terrible ague came on. Again I tried to arouse the shapless mass that lay in the mud; failing in that, I tried, as well as any awful chill would allow me, to call for assistance. But my quivering voice died on the rising wind without bringing any response. No thing was left for me to do but recense my horse, and let him carry me where he might. I did so, and ere long, to my intense satisfaction, a light came in view. Of course, the house was near at hand; for light could not penetrate far in darkness so intense.

I was soon knocking at the door. It was opened by a beautiful black-eyed young lady. My fate felt for I confessed I was terribly frightened and felt like a mauler's—my chattering teeth—for the ague fit was shaking my very bones—struck the young lady with terror, and she drew back. But I made a piteous appeal, and she took me to the fire. There my story was soon told, the adventure with the horrible thing—whatever it was—in the road included. Imagine the rash of of mental confusion in my breast, when the young lady exclaimed—

"Oh, me! oh, me! it's poor Uncle Phil. I know. This was his evening to come, and Aunt Abby is waiting for him."

Aunt Abby was the old man's wife.

Shall I tell how we quickly went in search of Uncle Phil? I insisted upon accompanying the party, in spite of my age and persnickiness to the contrary—how we found him—how, when I saw his poor, black head in blood, the temple crushed in by my horse's foot, I understood at once why his face had seemed to me familiar,

horrible—how we brought him to his wife's house? Shall I tell you this? I cannot—it is too painful.

There sat the old woman, patiently waiting for her husband. It almost broke my heart the first sight of her face, so unrecognizable was it of the evil tidings that awaited her.

"Nor will I venture to tell what the effect was when the news was broken to her. Grief, even in the African, is sacred. Indeed, I could not tell what happened for several days after I arrived at Cal. —a hospitable house, for I was confined to my bed, almost delirious with fever and the excitement I had gone through. The family were as kind to me as people could be; but the young lady, when I got strong enough to enter the parlour, was shy. To be honest, she avoided me. Disagreeable as the fact was, I could not hide it from myself. While she was away, in the lowest degree, unlady like, she gave me plainly to understand that my presence was not pleasant to her. But the more she avoided me, the more was I drawn to her. Helpless as my case evidently was, it seemed inevitable. I was obliged to go on, though I saw what was coming.

One morning, I proposed to go out to see Aunt Abby. "No, don't; please, don't!" said my lady-love—for so I must now call her. "She would rather not see you."

"Oh! you know."

"She doesn't blame me, does she?"

"No, but don't she—who would rather not see you," I said no more. The same evening, however, without letting any one know my intention, I went to the old woman's cabin. She received me politely, but that was all. I was deeply moved by her dejected look, and must have proved by my very manner the sincerity of my sympathy. Still Aunt Abby maintained her coldness. I repeated my visit the next evening and the next, without producing any material change in the old woman's feelings toward me.

The day drew nigh when I must leave. Forging an interview, which my lady-love vainly strove to avoid, I learned there was no hope. I did not exactly desire her, for I respected the edges of the delicate question very faintly nevertheless, I retired with a strong conviction of having been rejected.

Packed my saddle-bags immediately, and then sat down and regarded them pensively. Then I unpacked them, took out pencil and paper and drew a careful and finished likeness of "Uncle Phil." I carried it to his wife. She burst into tears the moment she saw it. Then I mounted "Beauregard"—by this time in splendid condition, for he had been most boundedly fed and admirably groomed—and went home.

There I gave myself up to dolefully-sweet repinings over a lost young woman with black eyes.

"Gone, forever gone," said I, one night, as I sat gazing



AUNT ABBY.





