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SELECTED TALES.

From the Spirit of the Times.

Capt. Suggs & Lieut. Snipe's "Court Martial."

BY MRS. HAYCOCK.

Great was the commotion at Fort Suggs on the morning next after the occurrence of the events related in the last chapter. At Fort Suggs, we say—for so had the Captain christened 'Taylor's Store' and the enclosure thereof. Nor let any one reprehend him for so doing. It was but the exhibition of vanity, which, if not laudable, at least finds its sufficient excuse in a custom that has prevailed 'time out of mind.' Has not Romulus his Rome? Did not the pugnacious son of Philip call his Egyptian military settlement Alexandria? And—to descend to later times and to cases more directly in point—is there not a Fort Gaines in Georgia, and a Fort Jesup in Florida? Who then shall carp, when we say that Captain Simon Suggs bestowed his name upon the spot strengthened by his wisdom, and protected by his valor.

Great, then, we repeat, was the commotion at Fort Suggs on the morning in question. The fact had become generally known—how could it be otherwise, with thirteen women in the immediate vicinity!—that Mrs. Haycock was to be 'court-martialed' on that morning; and the commotion was the consequence.—The widow herself was suffering a great mental disquietude on the subject, in addition to considerable physical discomfort occasioned by the fall and the rough handling of the previous night. Under such circumstances, it would hardly be expected that her woes would fail to find utterance. And it would have been equally unreasonable to suppose that her fellow gossips would restrain the natural propensity of the sex. Let the reader, then, imagine—if he be not nervous—all the uproar and din which three dozen women can make under the most exciting circumstances, and he will have some faint conception of the commotion at Fort Suggs on the morning of the trial.

It was an early hour; in fact—speaking according to the chronometrical standard in use at Fort Suggs—not more than 'fust-drink time;' when Captain Suggs took Lieutenant Snipes aside to consult with him in regard to some of the details of the preparation for the court martial.

"Snipes," said the Captain, as he seated himself straddle of the fence, and saw his lieutenant safely adjusted in a like position—"Snipes, as sure as you're born, thar's a difficulty about this here court-martial. Now I want you to tell me how we're to hold a drum-head court martial, when we aint got no drum!"

Lieutenant Snipes looked very much puzzled, and in fact he *was* exceedingly puzzled, and he considered the matter for several moments, but could see no way by which the 'difikilty' might be surmounted. At length he remarked,

"It *does* look aukered, Capting."

"Yes. You see when these here court martials is jumped up all of a sudden, like this, they're *ableeged* to be of the drum head sort—that's what I've allers hearn. Well now, supposin' we was to hold one without the drum, and heng or shoot this everlastin' old she devil, would the law jestify us in doing so? Sometimes I sorter think it would, and then agin it looks sorter jubous. What's your opinion Lewtenant."

"That's it—what you jist said," replied Lieutenant Snipes, deferentially.

"Good," said the Captain—"lewtenants ought allers to think jist as their captains do. It's a good sign."

"It's what I've allers done, and what I allers *expects* to do," replied Snipes.

"Well, well! remarked Suggs, whose chief object was to impress Snipes with the idea that the widow's life was in actual danger, and through his lieutenant, create the impress upon Mrs. Haycock herself, and all the rest. "Well, well, don't you believe that ef I was to get a bar'l, or somethin' else pretty nigh *like* a drum, and hold the court martial by that—don't you believe *that* would justify us ef any thing was brought up hereafter, supposin' we was to condeinn the old woman to death?"

"Belikes it would," said Snipes.

"I know it would!" said Suggs, emphatically.

"I know so too," remarked the lieutenant, with increased confidence.

"Well, now, all that's settled," said the captain, with an air of satisfaction—"the next thing is, how are we agwine to put her to death."

"Why, we aint tried her yit!" said Snipes.

"To be sure! to be sure! I'd forgot that!" but you know thar's no way to git round condemin' her—is thar?"

"No way as I see!"

"It's a painful duty, Lewtenant Snipes; and very distressin'—But the rules of war is very strict, you knows!"

"Very strict," said Snipes.

"And officers must do their duty, come what may."

"They're *ableeged* to," said the lieutenant.

"Ah! well! remarked Captain Suggs with considerable emotion, It'll be time enough to fix how we shall execute the old critter at the trial. You think the bar'l will do?"

"Jist as good as any thing," replied Snipes—a bar'l and a drum's sorter alike, any way."

"Well, you'd better go and fix up as soon as you kin, and the natur' of the case will admit. Officers ought to dress as well as they kin at sich times, ef no other. I must go and brush up myself. And with that, the consultation between Captain Suggs and Lieutenant Snipes, ended; the former going off to put himself a little more in military trim; while the latter industriously employed himself in disseminating the result of the conference.

It was with extreme difficulty that the Captain arranged his costume to his own satisfaction, and made it befitting so solemn and impressive an occasion. After a great deal of trouble however, he did contrive to cut a somewhat military figure. With a sword, he was already "indifferently well" provided; having found one—rusty and without a scabbard—somewhere about the premises. This he buckled, or rather tied to his side with buckskin strings. He wore at the same time, the identical blue jean frockcoat which has since become so familiar to the people of Tallapoosa—it was then new, but on this there were, of course no epaulets. Long time did Captain Suggs employ himself in devising expedients to supply the deficiency. At lenght he hit it. His wife had a large crimison pin cushion, and this he fasted upon his shoulder, having first caused some white cotton fringe to be attached to the outward edge. In lieu of a crimson sash, he fastened around his waist a bright red silk handkerchief, with only a few white spots on it. And this was an admirable substitute, except that it was almost too short to tie before, and exhibited no inconsiderable portion of itself in a depending triangle behind.—The chapeau now alone remained to be managed. This was easily done. Two sides of the brim of his capacious beaver were stiched to the body of the hat, and at the fastening on the left side, Mrs. Suggs sewed a cockade of red ferretting, nearly as large as the bottom of a saucer. Thus imposingly habited—and having first stuffed the legs of his pantaloons into the tops of a very antique pair of boots—Captain Simon Suggs went forth.

At the upper end of the enclosure, and standing near an empty whiskey barrel, was Lieutenant Snipes. He had not been so successful as the Captain in the matter of his toilette,—around his black wool hat was pasted or stiched, a piece of deep purple gilt paper such as is often found under bolts of linen. Upon this was represented a battle between a lion and a unicorn; and on a scroll above, were certain letters, which as Lieutenant Snipes himself remarked, 'didn't spell nothing'—at least, nothing that he could comprehend. In his hand was the handle of a hoe, armed at one extremity with a rusty bayonet—the only weapon of its kind, at that moment, to be found in the garrison of Fort Suggs. Equipped thus, and provided with a dirty sheet of paper, a portable inkstand, (containing pokeberry juice,) and a stump of a pen—all of which were upon the head of the barrel—the doughty Lieutenant awaited the moment when it should please Captain Suggs to arraign the prisoner, and proceed with the trial.

"Tollapoosa Vollantares, parade here," thundered Captain Suggs as he walked up to the barrel.

Very soon 'component parts' of the 'Voluntares' were grouped about their Captain.

"Form in a straight line!" squealed Lieutenant Snipes.

The company took the form of a half moon.

Captain Suggs now ordered Mrs. Haycock to be brought out; whereupon Snipes went into the back-room of the store, and directly appeared again, leading the widow—who limped considerably, and howled like a full pack of wolves—by the hand. The Captain, however, by a judicious threat of instant decapitation reduced the noise to a series of mere sobbings."

"Hadn't we better fix some way to have some music," said Suggs, march round the house once, before we proceed with the trial?"

Lieutenant Snipes suggested that there was no drum or fife, as the Captain knew on the premises; but that 'Uncle Bill Allen' was an excellent drummer, and Joe Nolls a first rate performer on the fife, and perhaps those individuals might for the nonce, be induced to make vocal imitations of their respective instruments and with their hands, "go through the motions" indispensable to their proper effect. Captain Suggs immediately spoke these gentlemen, and they 'kindly consented' to serve, on the very equitable condition of receiving a 'drink' each, as soon as the affair was over.

The 'vollontaires' were now formed in double files, and between the two columns Mrs. Haycock, supported by a female friend on each side, was placed.

"Music to the front!" shouted Suggs; and the order was promptly obeyed.

"Company! March!"

'Dub-dub-a-dub-a-dub,' went 'Uncle Billy Allen,' inclining dangerously from the perpendicular, in order to support properly, a non-existent drum!

'Phee-e-phee-fee,' whistled Mr. Nolls, as his fingers played rapidly upon the holes of his imaginary fife!

And the company marched, as it was ordered. Suggs of course, headed the array, walking backwards in order to inspect its movements; while Snipes, with his bayonet walked alongside and kept a sharp eye on the prisoner. Thus they marched slowly around the enclosure, and returned to the spot from whence they started.

"Halt! Form a round ring round the drum! ordered the Captain, pointing to the barrel.

The 'vollantares' arranged themselves so as to decribe not exactly a mathematical circle, but a figure slightly approximating thereto, with the Captain, Lieutenant Snipes, and the widow, in the centre.

"Betsy Haycock," said Captain Suggs, "you're fotcht up heie accordin' to the regelations of drumhead court martials, for infringin' on the rules of war, by crossin' of the lines agin' orders, and that too, when the fort was under martial law. Ef you've got anythin' to say again havin' your life tuk, less hear it."

Poor Mrs. Haycock became lived; her eyes dilated, and all her features assumed that sudden sharpness which mortal terror so often produces. Trembling in all her joints, and pallid lips, she gasped.

"Mercy, mercy, Captain Suggs! for God's sake don't kill me—oh, don't ef you please! I only went for my tobacker—for the love of the Lord, don't murder me! Have mercy—I'll never—no never—as long—"

"It ain't *me*," said the Captain, interrupting her; "it ain't *me* that's aguine to kill you; it's the *rules of war*. The rules of war is mighty strict—ain't they Lieutenant Snipes?"

"*Powerful* strict!" said Snipes.

"You've 'fessed the crime," continued Suggs, "and ef me and the Lewtenant wanted to let you off ever so bad, the rules of war would lay us liable ef we was to. But come, Lewtenant Snipes," he added, addressing that person, "the prisoner has made her acknowledgment; take your pen and ink, and let's go and see what's to be done about it."

The lieutenant took up his writing materials, and the couple retired to a corner of the fence, where they seated themselves upon the ground. Directly Snipes was seen to write; and then he picked up his pen and ink again, and they returned.

"What—what—what's it?" choakingly inquired the widow, as they reassumed their positions at the barrel.

"Read out the *judgment*," said Suggs, with immense solemnity.

Snipes read what he had written in the fence corner as follows:

"Whereas Betsey Haycock were bro't up afore us, bein' charged with infringin' the rules of war by crossin' of the lines agin' orders, and Fort Suggs bein' under martial law at the time, and likewise ecknowledged that she was guilty. Therefore we have tried her accordin' to said rules of war, and condems her to be bagonetted to deth in one hour from this time, witness our hands and seals."

A paleness more ghastly than that of death came over the widow's face as she heard the sentence. Falling to the earth, she grovelled at the feet of Capt. Suggs.

"Save me—pity—help! for God's sake! Oh, don't kill me, Captain Suggs! beg for me, Mr. Snipes. Oh, you won't—I know you won't murder me! You're jest in fun!—ain't you? You could'nt have the heart to kill a poor woman creeter like me!"—and then she added in a hoarse whisper, "I'll humble myself to you, Captain Suggs. I'll get down on my very knees, and kiss your shoe! Don't take my life away with that—" she did'nt finish the sentence, but shuddered all over, as she thought of Snipes' rusty bayonet.

"Oh Jimminny Crimminny! what a cussed old fool!" exclaimed a voice from the fence corner, outside, which was instantly recognized as Yellow-legs—"he dars'nt no more kill you, 'an he dar fight an Ingin."

The widow looked up, but took no comfort from the words. Captain Suggs, highly indignant, seized a large stone and projected it with Titan-like force, at the dirt-eater; but it struck the fence. Yellow-legs, not alarmed, turned his back to Suggs, and made a gesture expressive of the highest degree of contempt, and then bounded off.

"Lewtenant prepar' for execution," said the Captain, as he returned to the barrel.

Mrs. Haycock renewed her lamentations and entreaties.

"I wish," said Suggs, in a fit of mental abstraction, but soliloquising aloud; "thar was some way to save her. But if I was to let her off with a fine, I might be layin' myself liable to be tried for my own life."

"Oh yes, Captain Suggs, I'll pay any fine you'll put on me—I'll give up all the money I've got if you'll jest let me off—do now, dear Captain—"

"Hey! What?" Have I been talking out loud?" inquired Suggs, starting with a disconcerted look from his reverie.

"Yes, yes," answered the widow with great earnestness; "you said ef I'd pay a fine you'd spar my life—didn't you now, *dear good* Captain Suggs?"

"Ef I did I oughten to 'a done it. I don't think I'd be jestified ef I was to let you off. The rules of war would hold me 'countable ef I did—don't you think they would Lewtenant?"

"Mighty apt!" said Snipes, as he sharpened the point of his rusty bayonet on a fragment of rock, by way of preparing for the execution of the widow.

Mrs. Haycock adjured Captain Suggs by his affection for his own offspring, to impose a fine, instead of makin' her poor fatherless children orfins. Tears came into Suggs eyes at this appeal, and the sternness of the officer was lost in the sensibility of the man.

"Don't you think, Lewtenant," he asked, "bein' as it's a *woman*—a *widder* woman too—the rules of war wouldn't be as severe on us for lettin' of her off, purvidin' she paid a reasonable fine?"

"They would'nt be severe at all!" replied Snipes.

"Well, well, widder! Bein' as it's you—a particular friend and a close neighbor—and bein' as you are a widder, and on the 'count of feelins for Billy Haycock, which was your husband afore he died, I s'pose I'll have to run the risk. But it's a orful 'sponsibility I'm a taking, jist for friendship widder—"

Mrs. Haycock interrupted him with a torrent of thanks and benedictions.

"Thar ain't many," continued Suggs, "I'd take such a responsibility for; I may be a runnin' of my own neck into a halter!"

"The Lord in Heaven purvent your ever suffering, bekase you've tuck pity on a poor widder like me!" was the grateful woman's ejeculation.

"Hows'ever," added Suggs, to shorten the matter, "jist pay down twenty-five dollars, and I'll pardon you ef I do git into a scrape about it—I never could bar to see a woman suffer; it strikes me right *here!*" and the captain placed his hand upon his breast in a most impressive manner.

The joyous Mrs. Haycock immediately untied a key from her girdle, handing it to one of her friends, sent her into the store, with directions to "sarch low down in the left hand corner before of her chist," and bring a certain stocking she would find there filled with coin.—This was speedily done, and the amount of the fine handed to Captain Suggs.

"This here money," he remarked, as he received it, "I want you all to understand, ain't my money. No, no, I have to keep it here!" sliding it down into his pockets—"ontweel I get my orders about it. It's the *government's* money, and I darsent spend a cent of it—do I, Lewtenant?"

"No more you dar to put your head in a blazin' log pile!" answered the Lewtenant.

A whistling—just such as always implies that somebody in the immediate neighborhood of the whistler lies tremendously—was heard at this moment, and Suggs looking round, saw Yellow-legs in his own corner, dealing a suppositious hand of cards to an imaginary antagonist—as if he would thereby intimate that Captain Simon Suggs would embezzle the public money, or at any rate hazard its loss at a game of cards.

"Charge baggonets on that cussed, pumpkin faced whelp of the devil!" roared the Captain in the frenzy of the moment; and Lieutenant Snipes dashed at Yellow-legs with his rusty weapon, which he plunged through a crack of the fence. Before the gallant Snipes, however, could recover from the impetus of his attack, and withdraw the bayonet, the dirt-eater had pulled it off the hoe-handle, and fixing it on a dry corn stalk, bore it aloft upon his shoulder most contumaciously, under the very nose of Captain Suggs.

* * * * * *

The reader will here suppose fifteen minutes to have elapsed, and Captain Suggs and his Lieutenant to be behind the store chimney, in private conversation.

"Lewtenant Snipes," said Suggs, "I look upon you as a high-minded, honorable officer, and a honor to the Tallapoosy Volantares. I like to see a man to do his duty like you done yourn. Here take *that!*"—handing him one of Mrs. Haycock's dollars—"Simon Suggs never forgot his friends—*never!* His mott-o is allers, *Fust* his *country* and *then* his *friends*."

"Captain Suggs"—was the Lieutenant's reply, as he made a minute examination of the Mexican coin in his hand—"I've said it behind your back, and I'll say it to your face, you're a gentleman from the top of your head to the end of your big toe nail! Less go and liqur; hang expenses."

STANZAS.

Why are springs enthroned so high,
Where the mountains kiss the sky?
'Tis that thence their streams may flow,
Fertilizing all below.

Why have clouds such lofty flight,
Basking in the golden light?
'Tis to send down genial showers
On this lower world of ours.

Why does God exalt the great?
'Tis that they may prop the State;
So that toil its sweets may yield,
And the sower reap the field.

Riches why doth he confer?
That the rich may minister,
In the hour of their distress,
To the poor and fatherless.

Does He light a Newton's mind?
'Tis to shine on all mankind.
Does he give to virtue birth?
'Tis the salt of this poor earth.

Reader, whoso'er thou art,
What thy God hath given, impart.
Hide it not within the ground;
Send the cup of blessing round.

Hast thou power?—the weak defend;
Light?—give light; thy knowledge lend;
Rich?—remember him who gave;
Free?—the brother to the slave.

Called a blessing to inherit,
Bless—and richer blessings merit;
Give—and more shall yet be given;
Love, and serve—and look for heaven.

A stump orator in the west uses the following appropriate language: "If I'm elected to this office, I will represent my constituents as the sea represents the earth, or the night contrasts with the day. I will unrivet human society, clean all its parts and screw it together again. I will correct all abuses, purge out all corruption, and go through the enemies of our party like a rat through a new cheese. My chief recommendations are, that at a public dinner given to ———, I ate more than any two men at the table—at the late election I put in three votes for the party—Iv'e just bought a new suit of clothes that will do to wear to Congress, and Iv'e got the handsomest sister in old Kentuck."

A GOOD ONE.—A corespondent of the New York Spirit of the Times relates the following:—"Some years since, a North Carolina Lawyer, yet living, undertook to convince a Methodist preacher, of some celebrity, that his manner of preaching, in threatening his auditors with *damnation*, was injudicious; and that arguments and exhortations of a milder character would be more successful. After listening patiently, the preacher replied—"My friend, you are mistaken. Sin is like a terrapin—you may exhort, admonish, even kick him, and he will not move, but merely draws his head within his shell, and your labor is lost—but place a coal of fire on his back, and he travels—*Hell fire is the article.*"

First Congressional District of Maryland.

A meeting of the Delegates appointed by the several counties composing the First Congressional District of Maryland was held in Bladensburg on Saturday, the 9th instant, for the purpose of nominating to the voters of that district a suitable person to represent them in the next Congress of the United States.

At 12 o'clock Dr. HANSON PENN, of Prince George's county, called the meeting to order, and on his motion ALEXANDER KILGOUR, Esq., of Montgomery county, was appointed President, and JAMES MCCORMICK, of Charles county, Secretary.

A list of the Delegates was then called over, when the following gentlemen answered to their names, to wit:

From Anne Arundel County.—James Kent, Dr. S. Gambell, Dr. Lynch, D. McBrogden, Alexander Randall.

From Montgomery.—Elisha R. Griffith, Alexander Kilgour, W. M. Steuart, Robert W. Carter, George W. Dawson, John Braddock, Samuel D. Waters, Dr. Harding, James House, Thomas Fawcett, Edward Dawes, Richard J. Bentley, Zedediah Gettings.

From Calvert.—Thomas J. Hillen.

From Prince George's.—Dr. J. M. S. Maccubbin, Thomas J. Marshall, Dr. Hanson Penn, Dr. Richard W. Bowie, Richard L. Ogle.

From Charles.—John D. Freeman, Jonas Hawkins, Samuel Cox, James McCormick.

From St. Mary's—Rich'd. H. Reeder.

On motion of Mr. STEUART, of Montgomery, it was

Resolved, That each county represented in this convention be entitled to the same number of votes which such county is entitled to in the General Assembly of this State.

The meeting then, on motion, took a recess until 2 o'clock.

At 2 o'clock the meeting again assembled, when, on motion of Mr. KENT, of Anne Arundel, the meeting proceeded to ballot for a suitable candidate to represent this district in the Congress of the Uuiten States.

JOHN JOHNSON, Esq., of Anne Arundel, was nominated by Alexander Randall, Esq.

ROBERT W. BOWIE, Esq., of Prince George's, was nominated by Dr. J. M. S. Macubbin.

Gen. JOHN G. CHAPMAN, of Charles county, was nominated by John D. Freeman, Esq.

ALEXANDER RANDALL, Esq., of Anne Arundel, and JOHN D. FREEMAN, Esq., of Charles, were appointed tellers.

On counting the votes, the result was as follows:

	1st	2d	3d	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
R. W. Bowie,	10	10	10	10	9	10	11	9
J. Johnson,	12	12	12	12	11	12	12	13
J. G. Chapman,	5	5	5	5	6	6	4	5

After the votes of the eighth ballot had been counted, on motion of Dr. Penn, of Prince George's, the meeting took a recess of twenty minutes.

On reassembling the balloting was resumed, and resulted as follows:

	9th	10th	11th	12th
Robert W. Bowie,	5	5	5	1
John Johnson,	12	12	12	12
John G. Chapman,	10	10	10	14

The Chair then announced that Gen. JOHN G. CHAPMAN had received a majority of the whole number of votes taken.

On motion of Dr. Maccubbin, it was

Resolved, That Gen. JOHN G. CHAPMAN be nominated as the nominee of this convention.

Which resolution was unanimously adopted.

On motion of Dr. Penn, the Chair was requested to inform Gen. Chapman of his nomination.

John D. Freeman then, in a few appropriate remarks, returned thanks in the name of the people of Charles county for the honor conferred on them in nominating their old and long-tried friend, Gen. Chapman.

It was then, on motion of Josias Hawkins, Esq. of Charles county,

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the President and Secretary, and published in the National Intelligencer, and that all the Whig papers of this election district be requested to publish the same.

The meeting then adjourned *sine die*.

ALEX. KILGOUR, Pres't.
JAS. MCCORMICK, Sec'y.

MORE TROOPS FOR TEXAS.—Orders were received on Saturday requiring Captain Duncan, at Fort Hamilton, a few miles below New York, to be in readiness at a moment's warning with his company of Flying Artillery, to march for Texas. It will require two small vessels to transport this company with their horses. Their destination is the mouth of the Arkansas. Captain Ringgold, at Fort McHenry, is chartering a vessel to transport his troop to the same destination, but they will not be prepared to start for some days yet.—*Sun.*

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