

The Whipping Post in Old Days.

The Laurens correspondent of the Charleston Sunday News furnishes this interesting story of the past:

In the early fifties a young lawyer just admitted to practice was employed to defend a white man charged with stealing a bushel of oats from a rich planter. The whipping post was the punishment for such offenses and there was no alternative penalty. The proof was plain and the young lawyer's humble client was promptly convicted. When the verdict was announced the solicitor came to the attorney and whispered: "B—, it will never do for that white man to be publicly whipped."

"Well, what's to be done about it?" said the lawyer.

"I'll arrange it," the solicitor replied. A brief consultation ensued between the solicitor, the prosecuting witness, the Judge and the sheriff.

Then the solicitor came back to the lawyer. "Explain to your client that if he will break from the sheriff and never stop running till he crosses the Savannah River and never cross back again, he will not be punished. The State will be satisfied if the man leaves the country. As the sheriff takes him to jail from the court house let him lag behind; the sheriff will walk 20 feet in front. When they reach the corner of the alley leading to the jail he must run and never look back. There will be a mock chase, but all your man need do is to run."

The young lawyer explained the programme to the convict, who stolidly assented. When the sheriff took him away the lawyer went out on the court house steps to see the fun. The sheriff, as promised, walked ahead of the prisoner without looking back. They approached the alley-corner. The sheriff passed it. The convict reached it and, with eyes to the front, marched deliberately behind the sheriff into the jail. In due time he took his threshing and went home. He preferred it to leaving Laurens County. A curious sequel, though, is that he did later go to another State and there accumulated a good property and was a highly respected citizen.

The editor of The Mountaineer, who was then a boy and a resident of Laurens, remembers this incident very distinctly, as this was the only white man he ever saw punished at the whipping post, which in this instance was a tree that stood on the south side of the court house and shaded the sheriff's office. Mr. Oswald Richardson was the sheriff, one of the kindest hearted men that ever lived in Laurens, and like the solicitor he did not want to see a white man publicly whipped, much less to inflict the punishment himself. The boys of the village gathered around in much awe at the proceeding, and the sheriff applied the lash thirty-nine times to the back of the culprit, but it was said at the time that he was well able to hit harder licks if the law had required it.

Our recollection is that it was in the forenoon of a bright, sunshiny day, and when the law had been complied with Mr. Richardson told the young man that he was free to go where he pleased and taking with him a small bundle of clothes he set out

for his home in the western part of Laurens. He was a strong, athletic, handsome young man, and he walked away with a firm step to his humble country home, where he tarried only long enough to bid good-bye to his relatives and went immediately across the Savannah, taking up his abode in Hart County, Ga., where he prospered and was much respected by his neighbors.

Some years afterwards we heard his name called at Anderson, where we were then living, and a prominent merchant gave us an introduction to his well-to-do customer from across the river, but he did not perceive that each of us recognized the name of the other, and both were thinking of the sorrowful incident at Laurens, though never a word passed between us in reference to it. We saw him often in the years following upon the public square at Anderson, selling twenty or thirty bales of cotton at a time, hauled there in his own wagons drawn by fine, large mules, which told the story of his prosperity.—Greenville Mountaineer.

Plants That Made History.

Rather more than sixty years ago, says Stray Stories, a tiny fungus—itself a plant—appeared in Ireland and fastened itself on the potato. Fostered by a cheerless summer, the fungus spread until the whole potato crop, the mainstay of the Irish, was ruined and the resulting famine of 1845 stands out in history as a time of overwhelming trouble.

Its relief occupied the whole attention of the British ministry and when the famine was over a quarter of the whole population lay slain by the fungus.

And the potato disease acted in two distinct ways on history. It had an immediate effect in helping the repeal of the corn laws and throwing the country open to free trade.

In the second place, it had a great and unforeseen effect on another continent, for there then started a stream of emigrants across the Atlantic which has steadily continued.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the English and the Dutch were rivals for the possession of a certain little island, Amboyna, in the East Indies, because of the cloves that grew upon it. At this date the production of cloves was extremely limited, and finally the Dutch massacred a small English colony established there. This aroused the bitter feeling in England against the Dutch and, as a great historian tells us, furnished a popular way for two wars.

A sudden passion for tulips turned the heads of the usually placid Dutchmen in the seventeenth century, and the tulipomania is a well recognized event in Dutch domestic history.

It was a time when the desire to possess an uncommon tulip was sufficient to drive men to most extreme lengths of speculation, to cause the ruin of noble houses and to carry whole families to misery. In fact, so acute did the rage become that the Dutch Government was obliged to step in with a heavy hand and by stringent measures allay this fever of the tulip.

The tea plant was the "last straw" which brought about the independence of the United States as we all know.

The poppy involved England in the opium war with China at the begin-

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