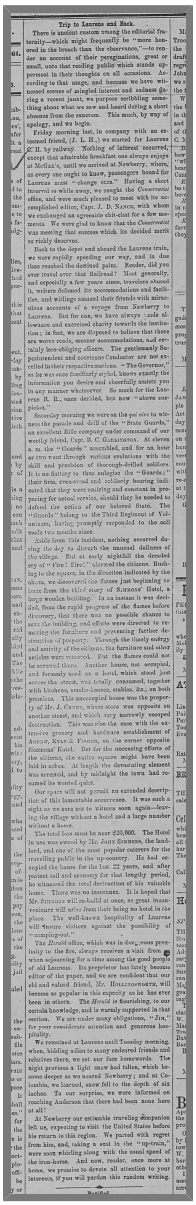
Newspapers.com

Downloaded on Jan 24, 2017



Trip to Laurens and Back.

There is another custom among the editorial fraternity—which might frequently be "more honored in the breach than the observance,"—to render an account of their perigrinations, great or small, unto that reading public which stands supremost in their thoughts on all occasions. According to that usage, and because we have witnessed scenes of mingled interest and sadness during a recent jaunt, we purpose scribbling something about what we saw and heard during a short absence from the sanctum. This much, by way of apology, and we begin.

Friday morning last, in company with an esteemed friend, (J. L. H.,) we started for Laurens C. H. by railway. Nothing of interest occurred, except that admirable breakfast one always enjoys at Moffat's, until we arrived at Newberry, where, as every one ought to know, passengers bound for Laurens must "change cars." Having a short interval to while away, we sought the *Conservator* office, and were much pleased to meet with its accomplished editor, Capt. J. D. Nance, with whom we exchanged an agreeable chit-chat for a few moments. We were glad to know that the *Conservator* was meeting that success which its decided merits so richly deserves.

Back to the depot and aboard the Laurens train, we were rapidly speeding our way, and in due time reached the destined point. Reader, did you ever travel over that Railroad? Most generally, and especially a few years since, travelers aboard it, writers defamed its accommodations and facilities, and willings amazed their friends with miraculous accounts of a voyage from Newberry to Laurens. But for one, we have always made allowance and exercised charity towards the institution; in fact, we are disposed to believe that there are worse roads, poorer accommodations, and certainly less-obliging officers. The gentlemanly Superintendent and courteous Conductor are not excelled in their respective stations. "The Governor," so he was once familiarly styled, knows exactly the information you desire and cheerfully assists you in any manner whatsoever. So much for the Laurens R. R., once derided, but now "above suspicion."

Saturday morning we were on the qui vive to witness the parade and drill of the "State Guards," an excellent Rifle company under command of our worthy friend, Capt. R. C. Gallenor. At eleven a. m. the "Guards" assembled, and for an hour or two went through various evolutions with the skill and precision of thorough-drilled soldiers. It is no flattery to thus eulogize the "Guards;" their firm, erect tread and soldierly bearing indicated that they were uniting and constant in preparing for active service, should they be needed to defend the action of our beloved State. The "Guards" belong to the Third Regiment of Volunteers, having promptly responded to the call made two months since.

Aside from this incident, nothing occurred during the day to disturb the unusual dullness of the village. But at early nightfall the dreaded cry of "Fire! Fire!" alarmed the citizens. Rushing to the square, in the direction indicated by the alarm, we discovered the flames just beginning to burst from the third story of Elmore' Hotel, a large wooden building. In an instant it was decided, from the rapid progress of the flames before discovery, that there was no possible chance to save the building, and efforts were directed to removing the furniture and preventing further destruction of property. Through the timely energy and activity of the citizens, the furniture and silver articles were removed. But the flames could not be arrested there. Another house, not occupied, and formerly used as a hotel, which stood just across the street, was totally consumed, together with kitchen, smoke-house, stables, &c., on both premises. This unoccupied house was the property of Mr. J. Ferry, whose store was opposite on another street, and which very narrowly escaped destruction. This was also the case with the extensive grocery and hardware establishment of Austin, Knox & Fuller, on the corner opposite Simmons' Hotel. But for the unceasing efforts of the citizens, the entire square might have been laid in ashes. At length the devouring element was arrested, and by midnight the town had resumed its wonted quiet.

Our space will not permit an extended description of this lamentable occurrence. It was such a sight, as we ever pray to witness soon again—leaving the village without a hotel and a large number without a home.

The total loss must be near $20,000. The Hotel in use was owned by Mr. John Simmons, the landlord, and one of the most popular caterers for the travelling public in the up-country. He had occupied the house for the last 22 years, and after patient toil and economy for that lengthy period, he witnessed the total destruction of his valuable home. There was no insurance. It is hoped that Mr. Simmons will re-build at once, as great inconvenience will arise from their being no hotel in the place. The well-known hospitality of Laurens will insure visitors against the possibility of "camping-out."

The *Herald* office, which was in close proximity to the fire, always receives a visit from us when sojourning for a time among the good people of old Laurens. Its proprietor has lately become editor of the paper, and we are confident that our old and valued friend, Mr. Hollingsworth, will become as popular in this capacity as he has ever been in others. The *Herald* is flourishing, to our certain knowledge, and is warmly supported in that section. We are under many obligations, "Jim," for your considerate attention and generous hospitality.

We remained at Laurens until Tuesday morning, when, bidding adieu to many endeared friends and relatives there, we set our face homewards. The night previous a light snow had fallen, which became deeper as we neared Newberry; and at Greenville, we learned, snow fell to the depth of six inches. To our surprise, we were informed on reaching Anderson that there had been none here at all!

At Newberry our estimable traveling companion left us, expecting to visit the United States before his return to this region. We parted with regret from him, and, taking a seat in the "up-train," were soon whirling along with the usual speed of the iron-horse. And now, reader, once more at home, we promise to devote all attention to your interests, if you will pardon this random writing.

Clipped By:

ottg
Tue, Jan 24, 2017

Copyright © 2017 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.