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—OF—

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WINTER.

The sky is drear,
The woods are sere,
At each uprising gust,
By road and brake
The dead leaves quake
And shudder in the dust.
O'er meadows brown
Dull storm clouds frown,
While glimpses of the sun,
By contrast throw
A colder glow
Upon the moorland dun.
Athwart the vale
A vapor pale
With ghostly motion shifts,
Beyond the haze
Their foot-hills raise
Their tops above its rifts.
My heart stands still
To feel the chill
Of silent wood and field,
The very flood
Of nature's blood
Seems suddenly congealed.
'Tis not the view
Of mountains blue
That stirs my inmost soul,
Nor overhead
The clouds of lead
That onward darkly roll.
It is, that all
On which a pall
Of death has thus been laid,
Will wake ere long
To life and song,
In spring's fresh garb arrayed.

—Walter Scott.

THE COLONEL AND THE MAJOR.

BY JOHN KEARNS WHITE.

The colonel was born on the 10th day of December, and the major followed promptly the next day. At least this was the tradition in the old Virginia town which was the place of their nativity. To be sure, I heard one man say that he looked into the family Bible and had found the record of the major's birth in March, but he was a croaker and a skeptic generally, and his cynical utterances can have no weight against a well-established tradition.

This much is sure, however that the day after the colonel was first sent to school the major's name was also enrolled on the list of pupils. You see the way of it was this: The two families lived next door to each other, and naturally the boys became playmates, and continued so until the colonel's eighth birthday. Then the colonel's mother decided that he was old enough to go to school. Not so however, with the major's. She thought that the major was "entirely too young to be sent out into the world yet"—the "world" meaning Miss Fannie Adam's school down at the corner. So the colonel went to school and the major stayed at home—for one day. He could bear it no longer than that; the side yard was a desert without the colonel. He pleaded and wept until finally, with tearful eyes, the fond mother decided to send her son out into the world, and two young hearts were made supremely happy.

On account of his advantages in age, and his longer experience in school life, the colonel undertook the office of patron to the major, which service the latter accepted very gracefully, until, having acquired some experience himself, he began to reason that the colonel was scarcely far enough ahead of him to warrant his attitude. So he rebelled against the colonel's authority and proclaimed his independence.

This lasted three days, and then the colonel regained his ascendency in a manner altogether unusual among the powers of the world.

While so little older than the major, he was a good deal larger and stronger, though it must be added in justice to the latter, not a whit more courageous. He did not use his superior strength to coerce his former follower into renewed allegiance; but the day that Tom Sykes, the bully of the school, attempted to take by force the major's top, knocked him down, and was proceeding to administer a severe thrashing, suddenly the colonel appeared on the scene, and, promptly placing himself in front of the bully, engaged him in battle. What a battle it was! It took rank among the classics of the school, and to this day the two or three surviving witnesses will tell you, with bated breath, how, after a long struggle, the colonel succeeded in whipping Tom Sykes, who was so much older and bigger, and who had never been whipped before.

And from that day forward the major never questioned the propriety of yielding his allegiance to the colonel.

And the colonel in turn appreciated this devotion, so that when he raised a company to enter the Mexican war, and they elected him captain, and Fred Collins first lieutenant, he refused to accept the honor unless they made the major first lieutenant, and so they got together again and nullified the election of Fred Collins and elected the major in his stead. And this added to the strength of the army, for Fred Collins left that company and raised one of his own, and was elected captain and went to the war, and, poor fellow, he was killed.

And then when the great Civil war broke out and their regiment held a meeting to elect officers, the foremost local orator arose after Major Jett had been elected full colonel, and said: "Gentlemen of the —th Virginia, it gives me great pleasure to put in nomination for the lieutenant-colonelcy of this regiment the name of that modest gentleman, that brave soldier, another veteran of the Mexican war, Lieutenant ——" and he called the name of the major. And now the boys did cheer! and the colonel led the cheering, and, in fact, it was whispered that the major's nomination was due altogether to the colonel's contrivance anyhow. Well, the major was just overwhelmed with pleasure and surprise, for he thought the name to be pronounced would surely be the colonel's; in fact he was a good deal astonished that Major Jett was elected commander instead of his friend. As it was, he rose to his feet, blushing and stammering, and after thanking the gentlemen for honor conferred, he said that there were many in that gathering who were more deserving of this mark of confidence than he was, and that there was one in particular who was so well fitted for the office that he could not think for a moment of accepting it himself. Then he sat down, and everyone knew that he meant the colonel. And they also knew that he would stand by what he had said, and so the colonel was elected lieutenant-colonel by acclamation, and in the same way the major was elected a major.

And they went through this war as they had gone through the other, and when it was over they returned to their native town and looked each other in the face, and by that look inquired: "What shall we do now?" For, having lost the inherited property which had been ample for all their wants, they knew it would be necessary to turn their hands to something to earn at least a meagre living. The colonel had "studied a little law;" the major had "done a little surveying." Therefore they decided to open a small office, and soon on one of the doors appeared a modest sign bearing the colonel's name and informing the people that he was a "Notary Public and Commissioner in Chancery," and on the other side a sign with the major's name, and beneath it simply the word "Surveyor." And then they sat in their office and waited for patronage to come, and now and then a little did come, and by pinching and scraping they were able to pay for their office and the bedroom back of it, and irregularly to pay their board at Miss Sallie Carter's, "around the square."

Once the colonel spruced up a bit and began to "pay some attention" to Miss Sallie, but he soon dropped back into his old ways, and this brief departure comprised the entire history of the courting days of the two friends.

Thus into a quiet routine their life settled, and so continued for 20 years. Every morning when they awoke it was, "Good-morning, colonel, I trust you slept well last night," and, "Yes, thank you, major; do you feel refreshed yourself, sir?" And then they dressed and brushed their clothes and walked around to Miss Sallie's where they paid their respects to the "charming hostess" and whatever boarders were at the table then; and after breakfast, asked if the Daily Landmark had come and if they might "glance over it," and said they were thinking of subscribing for it themselves, and then with a bow and "pleasant day to you all" they went back to the office, and the colonel would say, "Well, major, will you be very busy to-day?" and the major would reply, "Not very, colonel." Ah, neither have I much on hand to-day; how would you like to try a game of checkers?" "Very much, colonel." And then, if the time were winter, they spread their board near an open coal fire; if summer, under the old maple tree in front of the door; and there they played until the dinner hour. Then, "Dear me, we have occupied the entire morning; this will never do; our business will suffer." Then dinner, then "work" then supper, then a smoke and talk of old times, then to bed. "Good night, major, pleasant dreams." "Good night, colonel, I hope you will sleep well after the fatigues of the day."

Thus, with rare exceptions, the days went by, the weeks, the months, the years, until the twentieth had come and gone.

Then the letter came. It was addressed to the Colonel, and read as follows:

"ST. LOUIS, MO., ——, ——, 18—.

"My Dear Cousin—You have probably forgotten, if you ever knew of, my existence. I am the grandson of your father's brother who went to Kentucky so many years ago. My father afterward moved to Missouri, as you probably already know, and here I was born and reared. My family consists of myself, wife, and two children, and we are the only representatives of my name, that I know of, except yourself. I recently met a gentleman who proved to be a Virginian, and he told me that you were not in the best of circumstances. Now, I have acquired a considerable amount of this world's goods, and shall be more than delighted if you will consent to come and make my house your home for the remainder of your life. Indeed, I shall take the privilege of a kinsman to insist that you do so. The wife and children have often heard me tell the traditions of my ancestry, and are all eagerness to see their Virginia relative. To show how much in earnest I am, I enclose the railroad ticket necessary to bring you to us. Please write me at once that you are coming, and when.

"With the highest cousinly esteem and affection I am,

"Yours, etc.,

——"

Such was the letter, and the colonel's eyes fairly sparkled as he handed it to the major, remarking at the same time, "Good news for us, major; good news for us.

"There is no doubt about it, you are—that is mean we are growing old, and I don't mind confessing now that I have long been anxious as to my ability to provide properly for us both when you should find it necessary to retire from business. In fact, we must both acknowledge that we have to use the greatest economy even now. But this settles it all. I really had forgotten about the boy, or almost forgotten, but fortunately he has found us out and it is all right."

The major, upon reading the letter, pressed his friend's hand, but a sad wistful expression had come into his face. "This is indeed good fortune for you, colonel, and I rejoice with you, but I—I—of course it saddens me to think of parting from you; it could not be otherwise."

"Parting from me! What do you mean? There'll be no parting from me."

"Why, yes, colonel, of course; he is your cousin, not mine; and if, through consideration for you, had done so, still I should have to decline. You see my name is not mentioned at all in the letter, nor is it supposed that it should be; he probably never heard of me. Why should we think he had? He knows you only through report, but when you are his kinsman; it is both natural and right for you to live with him."

It must be remembered that Virginia is much like Scotland in the matter of family connections.

The colonel's reply was to grasp the letter and read it again. He then with a sigh, let it drop from his hand. "Yes," he said, "you are right; we shall have to decline this tempting invitation. Ah, well, we have gotten along, and I suppose we can get along still. At first though, it seemed to me to be a godsend to us."

"My dear friend, listen to me; there is but one thing to be done, namely, for you to accept this hospitable offer of your cousin. It would be more than folly to decline it. As for me, I shall undertake to do both your work and mine; it will not be too much, and in that way I shall be able to lay aside something, besides living more easily than we do now. You see the income will be the same and the expense one-half. Then in time I will be able to join you in St. Louis, and if we can not live in the same house we can see each other every day."

"Yes, and I will also work, and being at no expense, can send you what I earn; and that will lessen the time immensely. We will do it, and the sooner the better."

And from that time the two thought of nothing, and talked of nothing, but the colonel's journey and their plans for a final reunion.

As the day of departure drew near their quiet life began to be quite stirring. They did not think they had so many friends. It seemed to them that everybody wanted to know their intentions, and that nearly everybody sympathized with them because they were to be separated. And hints dropped now and then, reminded them that they were no longer young, and therefore could not count with much certainty upon seeing each other again. In fact, this thought began to occupy their minds so largely that the first ardor was very much dampened; but still the preparations went on, and they said nothing to each other about doubts and fears—the colonel, because he had a secret project in his mind by which he hoped to have the major with him again soon. He would state the circumstances to his cousin, who would probably find some way to fulfill his desire without wounding the feelings of his friend. If not, he would return and their old life would be resumed. But nature rebelled against reason, and they both began to lose sleep. By degrees appetite deserted them. They became haggard.

At last the day arrived. The colonel said good-bye to Miss Sallie and the boarders. They noticed that his hand trembled and his lips quivered as the grasp was given and the word spoken. They went to the station. The major had attended the baggage, so the remaining time was theirs. To be sure they had been altogether undisturbed for half the morning, but all that time was not so precious as the 15 minutes still left.

"Major, it is needless to say I shall miss you, be the time of our separation long or short."

"Don't speak of it colonel; we should not become unmanned at a moment like this."

"And, major, our little office, our habitation for 20 years, and the tree, and the game of checkers—you don't know how—how I shall miss them. Mere trifles I know, but—somehow they seem to have taken hold upon me, they have become part of me, or I have become part of them, I don't know which."

"Yes, colonel, this leaving of people and place is a terrible thing; but in this case we may look forward to meeting again. Of course the place will be different, but I suppose that can't be helped."

The two friends had strolled a short distance from the station, and at this moment the bell warned them to return. They hastened back. At the steps of the rear platform they stopped and faced each other. They stood there a moment and then fell into each other's arms. It was the first time, but how they wept. Sobs shook their frames as these two withered old men at last comprehended what it meant actually to part from each other. They were really not two, they had grown into one. To divide them would be death to both, and they now understood it.

"All aboard!"

But it was not heeded.

"All aboard, there!"

But the train moved off without the colonel. Not a word had been spoken, but it was silently decided between them, during the last embrace, that he should not go. They smiled as the cars disappeared. Both were very pale. The colonel tottered; the strain had been too great; he was ill. He was taken to their room and went to bed.

The major telegraphed to St. Louis that the colonel was sick and that it was needless to expect him. He also sent word along the line to have the baggage returned. He then went back to nurse the colonel.

He nursed him two days and then Death claimed his own.

The funeral was well attended. The camp of veterans turned out, the "Dead March" was played, the service read, the coffin was covered with earth.

The major went through it all. He saw the last clod fall and then turned away. At the corner he left the carriage and went alone to the office. He stopped and looked up at the tree. It seemed to share his grief. He laid his hand on its rough bark in silent caress. He opened the door and stood for a moment on the threshold gazing within. He sighed. "Oh, it is desolate" he murmured, and then took a step forward and fell. And there he lay when they found him, face downward, dead.

—Godey's Magazine.

Bucklen's Arnica Salve.

The Best Salve in the world for Cuts, Bruises, Sores, Ulcers, Salt Rheum, Fever Sores, Tetter, Chapped Hands, Chilblains, Corns, and all Skin Eruptions, and positively cures Piles, or no pay required. It is guaranteed to give perfect satisfaction or money refunded. Price 25 cents per box. For sale at J. N. Snyder's drug store, Somerset, or at Brallier's drug store, Belin, Pa.

STATE CAPITOL BURNED

Fierce Flames Destroy the Historic Structure.

HARRISBURG, Feb. 2.—Capitol Hill is to-night a scene of desolation. The historic structure which for three-quarters of a century witnessed the deliberations of Pennsylvania's law givers, and wherein have assembled the men who have made most of its record as a commonwealth, is now only ruins. The round tower of its rotunda, dismantled and blackened, looks down in tragic silence on broken walls and smoldering embers. The tall pillars of the portico, yet crowned with flames, gleam white and ghastly against a background of smoke and blackness. The whole scene lacks no element of desolation.

The destruction was as sudden as it is complete. It came almost without warning. The Senate had met and taken a brief recess. Most of the Senators were in their seats, and the galleries were filled with the usual crowd of spectators. In the House business was moving sluggishly along. The flames, which had doubtless been at work for hours unseen and unknown, suddenly spread to the whole of the upper floors of the Senate wing, and volumes of smoke poured at once, almost, through the pictured ceiling. Even then, so sudden was the coming, few seemed to realize the truth. It was only when the water, turned on by some of the officials of the school department, began to pour down, and a crackle of flames came, soon deepening into a roar, that the Senators saw their danger. An adjournment not contemplated by any rule was hastily taken, and every one rushed for the doors. The House took fright at the same time, and adjourned with equal haste, the Representatives beating a retreat without any semblance of dignity.

They were none too soon, for in a few seconds an explosion above shook the whole building, and the flying legislators were thrown from their feet by its force. A mighty blast of air smashed windows and tore open doors, the ceilings fell, followed by flaming embers and torrents of smoke, while all the woodwork in the uncompleted interior of the dome was dashed down into the rotunda. That no one was injured, saying nothing of the possibility of their being killed, now seems, when the unparalleled progress of the fire is appreciated, little short of a miracle.

Within five minutes after the adjournment the calm, pictured face of William Penn which has so long hung behind the Lieutenant Governor's chair was gleaming redly amid a blaze of flame and was soon obliterated. The House was swept by a whirlwind of fire. In 15 minutes the dome had fallen, and from end to end, from the floor to the roof, the entire capitol was ablaze. Its downfall was accomplished, and any effort to stay it was futile. All that could be done was to prevent the spread of the fire to the buildings on either side. Outside almost the entire population of Harrisburg seemed assembled. Among them were the Senators and Representatives and State officials, gazing helplessly on the scene. It was a sad one. So many memories clustered around the doomed building that few could witness its destruction unmoved. Apart from the great loss, irreparable so far as much of its contents was concerned, it was crowded with historic associations.

Here Thaddeus Stevens, the "Great Commoner," had won his earliest fame; John Hickman and Samuel J. Randall had served in those halls. Twenty-two of Pennsylvania's 34 United States Senators had been elected there. Of these Daniel Sturgeon, William Bigler, Charles R. Buckalew and William A. Wallace, and later John I. Mitchell, Matthew S. Quay and the present Senator-elect, Boies Penrose, had served within its walls. Hendrick B. Wright, George V. Lawrence, Gov. W. F. Packer, John Cessna, James L. Graham, James S. Rutan, B. L. Hewitt, Charles S. Wolfe and scores of others had there won prominence in their day. It has seen the people's welcome extended to Lafayette, Webster, Taylor and Lincoln, and all these memories and associations lent a sadness to the event, and no visions of a new capitol, grander and more gorgeous could dispel the sorrow felt as the old capitol went down in smoke and flames.

Of course, a new capitol must be built. The general feeling is that it must be one commensurate with the importance of the State. That to-day destroyed, much as it is regretted, was in every way antiquated and inadequate for its purposes. All the money spent on it in late years has been practically wasted. Now that it is gone there should be erected a capitol that will fully answer every need of the State for at least a century to come, and which will be worthy of the State. With the public debt almost entirely provided for and a return of prosperity in every way probable, the Commonwealth can afford to do this, and the beautiful site on Capitol Hill should soon be crowned with a structure of which the people may be justly proud.—Henry Hall, in Pittsburg Times.

THE FLAMES' RAPID WORK.

Bare walls, warped and shattered, with the ribs of the dome and the tall pillars at the entrance, are practically all that is left of the capitol. The entire interior is destroyed.

The fire which demolished the structure must have been making concealed but steady progress for hours before it was discovered. The first arrivals in the Senate chamber noticed an odor of burning wood, and between that time and noon the matter was occasionally mentioned. The building is heated by steam, but wood fires are used in some of the smaller rooms, and it was taken for granted that the smell came from some of these. Finally Senator Grady called a page and told him to go and discover the source of the smoke. The boy returned with the information that it was steam and there was no smoke.

Shortly after noon the Senate took a recess until 1 o'clock to wait for the amended treasury investigation resolution, which had not yet been received from the House. The majority of the members scattered to their committee rooms. The smoke suddenly began to pour into the Senate chamber, and at 12:30 an alarm of fire was turned in.

Senator Saylor and Librarian Miller started to follow the smoke to its source and entered the room of Lieut. Gov. Lyon, who was not in the city. They found it dense with smoke, coming through the walls behind a bookcase. When Senator Saylor took a hatchet and cut out a piece of the floor the flames at once burst forth, showing that they had been working between the partitions and under the flooring. President Pro Tem. McCarrell, with Senators Vaughan and Saylor, and a number of employes, unreeled a hose and played on the flames, but the one small stream had not the slightest apparent effect. By this time the water was pouring through the roof and on the desks and seats in the Senate chamber. The president pro tem. was still fighting the fire, so Senator Grady took the chair, and amid the falling water and blinding smoke recognized Senators Gobin and Mitchell to make a motion to adjourn until 11 a. m. Wednesday. Even then the serious nature of the situation was scarcely realized, and many members of the House, just across the rotunda, did not even know that the building was on fire. But the next few minutes were decidedly lively ones. The business of the House for the day had been about completed when a hasty adjournment was taken.

When the firemen arrived the whole western end of the building was in flames and the fierce flames were blowing like a furnace. A strong west wind was blowing, driving snow before it and making the work of the firemen very difficult. It took nearly 15 minutes to get a hose on the burning building, and by that time the flames were through the roof of the Senate side of the building, the dome was blazing and not a stream had been turned on the flames except from the inside, which was then abandoned. In five minutes more the roof over the Lieutenant Governor's magnificent apartments and the offices of the educational departments fell. Some anxious persons were in the Senate chamber still trying to save effects in their desks. The crowd outside grew frantic yelling at them to come out of danger. Among those was Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Rawlins. When a portion of the floors collapsed he staggered to the door of the House bleeding and overcome from the smoke. He was revived after a time.

Fanned by the stiff northeast wind the blaze ate up the timbers voraciously. Ever and anon a gust stronger than its predecessors would come along and then the flames would leap forth 10, 20 and 50 feet from the building.

The most valuable State records were not in the burned building, having been taken soon after its completion to the fire proof executive building. This is a matter of congratulation among the State officials.

Over the Senate the old and rotten timbers were dry as dust and burned and sizzled like powder. Pretty soon those who lingered on the border of the Senate chamber saw a bright flame leap out from above the Speaker's chair and then around the chandelier appeared tiny tongues of flame that licked away the frescoing on the ceiling and burned the fastenings off the chandeliers, which came down with a crash.

All the important records, including the Journals of the Senate and House, were saved. At 3 o'clock about all that remained of the old capitol were the walls.

Several firemen were injured by falling timbers and a number of capitol employees were hurt. There were many narrow escapes from death.

The capitol was insured. It had been on fire scores of times in the past, but never seriously. It had never been insured until Speaker Boyer was State Treasurer, when he called Gov. Pattison's attention to the fact, and then it was insured. The insurance was about $200,000 and the loss is estimated at $1,000,000. There was much handsome furniture. The fire took with it these separate rooms: The Senate chamber, offices of the clerk and Senate librarian, Senate committee rooms, Forestry commission, rooms of the president pro tem, Game commission, Lieutenant Governor's apartments and offices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the House chamber, committee rooms, Speaker's office, resident and chief clerks' apartments and newspaper rooms.

The records and statistics of the Department of Public Instruction were destroyed, including much valuable statistical information regarding the public schools. Dr. Schaeffer saved the warrant book.

HISTORY OF THE CAPITOL.

The capitol of Pennsylvania, totally destroyed by fire had been in use, on the day of its destruction, exactly 75 years and one month. Its cornerstone was laid by Governor William Findlay on May 31, 1819. On January 2, 1822, Governor Joseph Heister, with the heads of the State departments; the Senate, headed by Speaker William Marks, Jr., of Pittsburg; the House, led by Speaker Joseph Lawrence, of Washington county, father of George V. Lawrence, and a large concourse of citizens, marched in procession from the old court house, where the legislature had met for two years, to the new capitol, and with appropriate ceremonies dedicated it to the Legislature's uses, for which it served three-quarters of a century.

As early as 1785, John Harris gave five acres of land to the State on which to erect a capitol. The Legislature was then sitting in Philadelphia. In 1787 the body decided to go to Harrisburg, but that was reconsidered, and in 1765 Carlisle, and in 1798 Wrightsville, York county, were successively selected by the House for the seat of government, but the Senate refused to concur. In 1799 both branches agreed on Lancaster and that town remained the capital until 1812. In 1810 Harrisburg was finally selected, but the Legislature did not move there until two years later.

The commission appointed to erect a capitol offered prizes of $400 and $200 for plans. Stephen Hills, of Boston, was the successful architect and erected the building. It was regarded as one of the purest specimens of colonial architecture in the country. Hills also designed the State capitols at Indianapolis and Jefferson City, Mo., and they were almost copies of that destroyed to-day. The original cost of the main building was $135,000. It stood practically unchanged until 1836, when an addition, until recently used for a State library and until to-day for committee purposes, was erected at the north side at a cost of $50,000. In 1874, the doubling of the House membership caused an enlargement of the House wing, costing $14,000. Two years ago $125,000 was spent in extensive improvements, mainly on the House side. The result was not satisfactory, and last year $70,000 more was spent, the work being not yet completed when the fire destroyed the building.

Seventy-one regular and special sessions of the Legislature have met in this capitol and 17 Governors have sent their messages to them. The most important legislation under the State's three constitutions was framed within the walls and the building has witnessed the most exciting scenes of legislative history, from the "Buckshot war" down to the stormy Senatorial elections wherein Simon Cameron was the chief actor.

On Tuesday, February 1, 1825, 72 years almost to a day before the capitol's destruction, Gen. Lafayette was given a reception in the House by the Legislature and sat in the chair in which John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, sat when he signed Lafayette's commission. In 1860 the Prince of Wales was also received there, and the great grandson of George III., at the invitation of Simon Cameron, seated himself on the chair of the first signer of that declaration of independence which wrested the brightest jewel from England's crown. This historic chair was not destroyed to-day, having been placed in Independence hall, Philadelphia, some time ago.

Fifty years ago Daniel Webster, attired in his famous blue coat and brass buttons and buff vest, addressed the Legislature in the House. Later President Zachary Taylor was given a reception there, and on February 22, 1861, Abraham Lincoln, on his way to assume the Presidential office, spoke to the Legislature in the House. That night he secretly left the town and was hurried to Washington, to escape at Baltimore the assassination that overtook him four years later.

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