

# REMINISCENCES

BY

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## CHAPTER XXX

### Recapitulation

My business experience led me to adopt certain rules by which to be governed. One was never to put money where I could not control it myself; another was not to give accommodation endorsements to others. When I feel it is right, and wish to help someone, I prefer to loan him money, take his note, and, if necessary put my own notes in the bank. I believe that no note which I have given has ever been protested; all have been paid when due or extended by mutual consent. My observation is that few men, companies or corporations escape the necessity of borrowing money for use in their business; some require credit occasionally, others all the time. I learned also that in order to make money a man must take chances; otherwise he will fail to make a fortune. I have always found that it paid to be truthful in all business transactions. I have lost much through the failure of others, and I have usually found that the men who have deceived me are men who boast of their honor and integrity and made a cloak of religion. I prefer to give such people a wide berth and allow them no opportunity to cheat or defraud. I have found it very hard to forgive a person who has deliberately insulted or defrauded me; my disposition in this respect has often resulted in loss financially. I was brought up to be economical, and this has been one of my leading characteristics. When a person has once gained my confidence, I am very loyal to him until I have positive evidence of his treachery, but when I have once reposed trust in a person and he betrays it, it is impossible for me to trust him again. The first time a person deceives me it is his fault, the second time it is my fault. I cannot say that my judgment in likes and dislikes is always correct, but I am careful never to betray a friend or do an act which I think dishonorable.

During my boyhood days I was under an influence intensely religious. I have no doubt that my mother believed that if she prayed to God that He listened and would answer the petition. I was taught that I was under the constant surveillance of the Deity. The anecdote I have told before of the Sunday when I went bathing and cut my foot on an old axe in the water, and how I managed to walk home, though the injury was a serious one and the comfort I had received was the assurance that the punishment was inflicted on me because "I was breaking the Sabbath." This is a sample of the religious conviction under which I was trained.

All the boys in our neighborhood were kept steadily employed week days, and Sunday was about the only day in which we could play. Indeed, I was so confined that I had scarcely an opportunity to take advantage of that day even. Occasionally I would provide myself with a gun and go hunting, but game was scarce and there was not much pleasure in the sport. The most of my boyhood pleasures were obtained by visiting neighboring children after dark; as we had, however, no neighbors who lived less than half a mile from our house, my social interaction was quite limited.

My father was a dignified, austere man; he believed that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. I have no recollection of his taking me on his knee or playing with me; yet he was a

very kind and honorable man. He was known in the neighborhood where he lived as Uncle Alfred. My earliest recollection of my father was when he was about sixty years old. He was a strong, sturdy man of about 180 pounds weight. The top of his head was bald with a fringe of white hair beneath. He wore, if I remember correctly, a 7 ½ size hat. When dressed for church the hat was a tall one. He wore a stock about his neck, and a blue swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons. He was a fine appearing man.

The following story will illustrate my father's high sense of humor. I sold a colt to a neighbor for \$100 and the man came for the horse, as agreed. My father met him at the gate and said: "Mr. Low, Emory tells me that he has sold the colt to you for \$100." Mr. Low replied that it was so. "I do not think the colt worth as much as that, and you may have it for \$80," said my father. I protested that I would not sell it for that price, and Mr. Low paid the \$100 and took the colt. I, perhaps, had a better knowledge of what the animal was worth than my father had, although I was but sixteen years old at the time. But this incident serves to illustrate the honorable character of my father. It was his custom every morning to read a chapter in the Bible and have family prayers. He always repeated the same prayer. When I was a lad I tried hard to learn that prayer, but in some way was never able to commit it to memory. At the beginning of each meal he also asked a blessing, and it was worded the same, but that blessing I was never able to repeat. In spite of this custom of praying it seemed to me that the religious convictions of my father did not run very deep. I think that his father, my grandfather Stephen Skinner, of whom I have but a faint recollection, as he died when I was about nine years old, was an Episcopalian, and that my father was brought up in that faith, but became a Methodist after his marriage to my mother. She had become converted after her marriage and became very religious. She was somewhat noted in the neighborhood for her ability to make an eloquent prayer. My father told me that she was a very handsome girl when he married her. As I remember her, she was quite stout, weighing perhaps 160 pounds. She did not exceed 5 feet 6 inches in height. She had long, coal black hair, which retained its color up to the time of her death, and it was her custom to wear a lace cap over it. She had sharp, black eyes, long eyebrows, a strong nose, high cheek bones and a brunette complexion. She was but fifteen years old when married, my father was six years older. This was in 1802. She was the mother of fifteen children, of which I was the youngest. My parents both lived to be over ninety years of age. They would have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary had my father lived a year longer. Considering the number of children my mother had to care for, she was very kind to us all. She had a failing of busting into tears at the slightest censure.

I have seen nothing in recent educational methods that seems equal to the country schools [of our locality] in my youth. They seldom taught anything except the common branches of education, but the children were taught very thoroughly in reading, writing, arithmetic and geography. A child, if he tried, could get a good practical education in these schools, and for those who desired higher, there was the academy, then a feature of nearly every village.

In my own school work the study in which I excelled was geography, and it has only been in later years that I would fail if any part of the earth were mentioned to tell where it was located.

When I was a little chap I spent much of the time in the house with my mother, her daughters having all married and left home. My mother and the "hired girl" did not tease me as did my older brothers. I remember many things which my mother told me about her own father in those days; she had great respect and admiration for his memory. He was born in Francistown, N.H. in 1765. According to American Archives, Vol. 6, p. 1120, he enlisted from that place May, 7, 1782, in Captain Isaac Frye's Company of the First New Hampshire Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Dearborn. At Newburgh, N.Y. June 16, 1783, he was transferred to the Commander-in Chief's Guard, assigned the special duty of guarding the person of General Washington and his personal baggage and papers. On September 5, 1783, Lieutenant Bezaleel Howe was detached from the New Hampshire Battalion and assigned to the command of the Commander-in-Chief's Guard. In November of that year Washington issued the following letter of instructions to Captain Howe with respect to the delivery of his papers and baggage at his home at Mount Vernon, Virginia. "To deliver the baggage at my house, ten miles below Alexandria, as you know, they contain all of my papers, which are of immense value to me. I am sure it is unnecessary to request your particular attention to them, but as you will have several ferries to pass, some of them wide, particularly the Susquehanna and Potomac, I must caution you against crossing there if the wind should be high or there is, in your opinion or the judgment of others, the least danger. The wagons should never be without a sentinel over them, always locked, and the keys in your possession." Corporal Holt was assigned to the position of wagon-master to his Excellency's baggage. The guard was composed of twelve mounted infantrymen, of which my grandfather, Ebenezer Coston, then only eighteen years of age, was one. After the return of this expedition he was honorably discharged at West Point, N.Y., December 20, 1783. He died at Lysander, N.Y., February 17, 1814. These facts about my grandfather's military career are taken from Dr. Godfrey's History of the Commander-in-Chief's Guard, published by Stevenson-Smith Company, Washington, D.C., in 1904.

My mother was born in Greenfield, N.H., June 26, 1786. My grandfather removed to Litchfield, Oneida County, N.Y., some time before 1800, I am unable to give the exact date, and became captain of a militia company located in the neighborhood.

The Commander-in Chief's Guard was drilled by Baron Steuben of Revolutionary fame. He was said to have been a very strict drill-master, a martinet, who had received his military education under the rough and rugged discipline of Fredrick the Great of Prussia. I have heard my mother say that the members of his company upon drilling day would come to the house before light and fire off their guns to warn him of the impending muster. He would then set out for them a jug of whiskey with which to keep them warm until time to drill.

It was the custom when I was a lad for militia to have training days during the summer months, and in the fall of the year to have a general training, composed of the regiment.

Two of my brothers, Sidney Mills and Dan Barnes, were captains of militia companies. These military days gradually became occasions of drunken rioting, of the humorous sort, until they were finally abolished by the legislature, some ten years or more before the Civil War. The officers of the companies were unable to control their men, and training day was nothing more than a time of drunken carousal. It was the custom in those days to have wrestling matches. My brother, Barnes, was quite an athlete and had a reputation as a wrestler. He was nearly six feet in height, of athletic build, with very piercing black eyes and straight black hair, and my mother said he looked very much like her father; I think he was a favorite with her on account of that resemblance. My mother frequently told me that Goffe, the regicide, was my ancestor, which I believed, until perhaps twenty years ago. In reading of the three regicides who fled to New England, I found that Goffe never brought his family to America; so if there is any of Goffe's blood in my veins it comes through the blood of some dusky aborigine. The story is told that during an attack of the Indians on the meeting house while church service was being held, that Goffe appeared and took command of the defense, repulsed the Indians and immediately afterwards disappeared. The emissaries of Charles the Second searched for him for many years so that he might be carried back to England and beheaded.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### Mining Romances

There are some detached incidents which occurred during my stay in Nevada, which I wish to relate. I resided in Austin, Nevada, from September, 1863, to November, 1865, and while there I corresponded for the Milwaukee Sentinel. I was therefore wide-awake to any incident which I felt would be of interest to the readers of this paper.

I made the acquaintances of Mr. French while here. He had been a miner during the early days of placer mining in California. He related an incident to me in which he had been a participant and which on account of its dramatic interest made a lasting impression on me. At the time I made no memorandum of the account, and though I have thought many times to put it in writing, it has waited until the present time.

Mr. French was placer mining on the Sacramento River. Each man of the camp had pre-empted a small piece of ground for mining, and the little log cabins placed on higher ground for protection against the water, usually held two occupants who cabined together and did their own cooking. They worked day times on their respective mining claims with pan and shovel. If a miner had a suitable claim he washed the gold out of the gravel with a sluice. This was constructed by making a long box from boards and nailing cleats of wood across the bottom, to catch and hold the gold as it was washed from the gravel. Sometime quicksilver was placed behind these cleats, which would retain the fine gold lost in case of a too liberal supply of water. The miners, when too busy, would let the deposit of gold accumulate in the trough for several days until the latter needed cleaning out, as the time was lost to the working of the claim while cleaning out the sluices. Capital punishment was administered in those days to anyone who robbed the sluices. A miner's gold savings were sacred and it was death to the thief who stole them. Judge Lynch tried the criminal and executed him on the spot wherever such a crime had been committed.

One morning it was discovered in the camp where Mr. French was located that the sluice containing savings of two or three days had been robbed the preceding night. This announcement electrified the miners and a meeting of the inhabitants of the camp was called at once. Suspicion fell upon a miner living in that district and a committee was sent to arrest him. Judge Lynch was elected to hold court; a jury was impaneled and sworn and the trial commenced. The evidence was all circumstantial, the judge charged the jury, and the jury without leaving their seats under the oak where the trial was held, began to deliberate on their verdict. The defendant had urgently declared his innocence, but several of the jurymen announced their opinion that the defendant was guilty. When it came to Mr. French's turn to express his opinion, he declared his belief in the defendant's innocence, or, at least, that he saw no evidence to prove that the accused had committed the crime. He made a vigorous speech to support his opinion, when a bystander made an insulting remark impugning his own honesty; to this Mr. French replied that he would hold him responsible when his present duties were over. This meant war to the knife and knife to the hilt. The jury finally disagreed, there being about eight for conviction and

four for acquittal. The execution of the prisoner was thus prevented, but a robbery had been committed and the mob demanded a victim, so it was decided that the accused should be whipped and banished from the camp. Mr. French pleaded with the crowd not to do so grievous a wrong. The prisoner defied his persecutors and threatened to hold any man responsible who applied a whip to his back, but in spite of his protests, he was tied to the oak tree and three men volunteered to apply the lash. The punishment administered was very severe, but the prisoner never uttered a groan; and later he was driven out of camp.

The excitement of the affair died away and something like a year expired, when one morning a man appeared at the door of Mr. French's cabin that he recognized as the man accused of the theft. The fugitive said he was very hungry; that he had had nothing to eat for several days and was nearly famished, and asked Mr. French if he would give him something to eat, and not betray him. Mr. French expressed sympathy for the man and his willingness to befriend him. He cooked and set before him the best breakfast that his cabin afforded. The outcast said to Mr. French that he had a wife and family living in the states, that he had the strongest love and affection for his wife, that he did not feel that he could write and tell her of the circumstances under which he was burdened, and he asked Mr. French if he was willing to write a letter to her and sign it, expressing a belief in his innocence; he said that if he could get such a letter written by Mr. French, he would then feel like writing to her himself and asking her to come to California and live with him. He said that he had been quite lucky in a distant mining camp and had the prospect of making a comfortable home for her.

Mr. French wrote the letter as desired, expressing the utmost confidence in the man and his belief in his innocence as to the crime charged. He handed the man the letter; the latter expressed his heartfelt thanks for all the kindness he had received, and departed. Mr. French told him that if he ever came that way again to come into his cabin and help himself if he were hungry and the cabin unoccupied at the time.

Some time afterwards, one of the three men who had flogged the prisoner was found dead in the woods. Six months later another of the three men was found shot to death in the same way. The third man was in terror of the fate awaiting him and fled from the country. Mr. French said that several years later he was stopping in San Francisco, when one day on the ferry boat he chanced to meet the suspected man. He appeared to be very much pleased to see his benefactor and asked him to go home with him and see his wife. Mr. French was introduced to a very charming woman and a fine family of children. The man at that time was engaged in business in San Francisco. Mr. French gave me the man's name, which I remember very distinctly. I frequently saw the name in the San Francisco papers, but whether it was the man who was the hero of this story or not, I do not know. It may have been the name of one of his children, or of a member of another family. Whether he had taken retributive justice on his tormentors is a matter entirely of imagination.

While living in Nevada, I heard many stories of the Argonauts of early times. I recollect one told of a party of immigrants who were induced to take the southern trail to

California, owing to the tales they had heard of the Mountain Meadow massacres, which had been the work of the "Avenging Angels" of the Mormon Church; these tales caused them to take a more southern route to avoid a like fate. After crossing the Colorado River in south Utah they passed north of the Grand Canyon into the Territory of Nevada. They escaped the Mormons, but met an equally tragic fate in Death's Valley, where they suffered terrible hardships from heat and lack of water. All but three met death there. Often these despairing travelers would see lakes of water ahead of them, which would revive their despondent spirits until the deception of Nature was disclosed by their finding that what they had supposed to be a lake was but an alkali flat. In southern Nevada they discovered some very rich mines of gold, but they could not take advantage of such a fortune, owing to their meager supply of food for themselves and their teams. It was necessary to move on as fast as possible in order to reach some place where they could get supplies before their food was exhausted; then they counted on returning to the rich mines which they had discovered. The country east of California was practically unknown. The travelers pushed on until they entered Death's Valley, where there was no water and it did not rain. This valley is said to be three hundred feet below the sea level.

This immigrant train was well equipped, well manned and well supplied. It consisted of about twenty-five human beings when they entered the valley, but their scant supply of water was soon exhausted, their stock soon drooped and died and their bones were left to bleach in the torrid sun. The men after a day or two began to fall in the same way; three of the party, after enduring indescribable sufferings, finally reached an inhabited locality in California, where they told of the sufferings and tragic deaths of their companions, and of the riches they had discovered in Nevada.

Some hopeful prospectors engaged two of these men to guide them to the mines, but the latter had lost their reckoning and could find nothing which they remembered to guide them to the locality of the lost mines. Only the remnants of the outfit and the bones of the immigrants and the stock were found bleaching on the trail. It had become an incident forgotten by nearly all except the adventurous gold seeker who chanced this way. When I was in Austin the story of this immigrant party was revived; the third survivor of the tragedy had told his tale to some hopeful prospectors and under his lead a party started for southern Nevada to rediscover the lost mines. I was invited to join this party and had some thought of going. By most people the mines were regarded as a myth, formed in the brains of the survivors' fevered fancies, and caused by their terrible sufferings. The mining party returned with no more success than the former attempts.

The remembrance of this story had almost passed from my mind, but after I went to Los Angeles to live, I read of the discovery of gold at Bullfrog, Goldfield and other points in southern Nevada, and concluded these might have been the mines which were first found under such unhappy circumstances by the unfortunate immigrants.

When I went to Austin in 1863 it was stated that there were five thousand inhabitants in and about the town. The town was built in a canyon on the west side to the Toyiabe Mountains. The overland stages crossed through this canyon, the course of the mountains being north and south. West of the range was a large valley covered with sage bush, it



was known as Reese River Valley. Through this, about six miles from Austin, flowed the river to the north. It was an insignificant stream which disappeared after flowing some distance. About ten months of the year it did not rain in the vicinity of Austin; in December and January we had some slight showers and occasionally some fall of "beautiful snow." The bottom of the canyon rose quite rapidly as you ascended it toward the summit, making the appearance of the habitations picturesque in the extreme.

There was not much available material in this vicinity for house building, except stones and rock and the small pinon pines which grew on the mountains and from which poles and posts could be obtained. Probably one-half the people lived in tents. Cotton cloth was the principal material used for roofing. The soil was largely adobe, from which were made sun dried bricks for the walls of the houses; these walls were very substantial, and on them were laid poles for rafters on which was spread cotton cloth for the roof; cotton cloth was also used for ceilings. The soil packed hard and made a floor about as clean as if made of wood.

I lived in a little house of this kind, perhaps 18 feet by 30 feet, for more than a year. We put up three bunks to accommodate the three occupants of the place, in the end of the house opposite the fireplace. These occupants were John P. Kelly, a nephew of the then governor of Kentucky, a civil engineer; John Doyle, a miner who said he was a Welshman, but whose name always struck me as being Irish, and the author of these Reminiscences. Each had his duties to perform. I believe we had but two meals a day; I cooked the breakfast, of fried bacon, boiled potatoes and bread. Kelly washed the dishes and Jack Doyle got supper. We spent many of our evenings playing chess or reading by candle light, as we had to rely upon tallow dips for our evening light. We three were about equally skillful in a game of chess; of course only two could play at a time, and the third member was necessarily an onlooker of the game. Very often he could see chances of attack or defense which would escape the players, and he would sometimes make remarks which would annoy or vex one of the players, and perhaps the game would end with a little ill-feeling; this, of course, soon subsided.

The chief hotel in town was called the International; it was a two-story building of adobe and lumber hauled by ox teams from the Sierras, 250 miles distant and costing \$400 per thousand feet; it was used for joist, floors and rafters. The principal attraction of the place was called the Stone Saloon. It was a one-story building with walls of stone, dimensions about twenty-five feet wide by one hundred [or more] feet in length. The entrance was on the principal street and not far from the hotel. As one entered, upon the left was a large, gaudy bar, disbursing liquors. On the right was a cigar counter, this luxury selling fifteen cents each or two for a quarter of a dollar, and drinks were sold at about the same rate. Passing the bar the rest of the room was lined with tables for the playing of games of chance, and these were occupied by the players and surrounded by sight-seers. In about the center of the room [or hall] was erected a platform upon which a band of musicians generally played. About every half hour a female opera singer who had seen her best days would come out and sing a selection, during which time most of the games would be suspended. Some of the tables were presided over by comely females who acted as dealers for the bank. These attracted the average miner, for he could lose his money with

a better grace to such a banker than to a man. It is wonderful the attraction that a female possessed over these miners who perhaps had not seen a woman for years. There were a great many games here for driving dull care away. This part of my life, however, is so long ago that I have forgotten most of the games, the more so, as I never gambled myself; I might remember better had I been a player. I have never seen similar orgies since I left Austin.

On the foothills of the mountain range there grew every spring a very excellent forage plant called bunchgrass, which sustained large herds of cattle pastured in the valley; it made good "feed" for summer and winter. It grew in the spring and dried on the bunch in summer, but retained all of its nutritive value.

The usual modes of travel were foot and horseback. Occasionally a light wagon would find its way to the town, but most journeys were made on horseback. I found here some of the easiest riding horses that I ever bestrode, and I became very fond of the saddle.

I have many times thought I would revisit the place and see how it looked now, but I presume that is unlikely. The class of people I met there were very intelligent; a great many of them were college bred. The young man who wished to make a fortune quickly; the man who had lost his fortune in the East and wished to make another; the politician who had lost his hold on the public, came west to grow up with the country. I never was lonesome while I lived there, and I often resolved to bring my family here to live; but it is the lot of man to make plans for the future which are overruled by circumstances, as they were in my case. The kind of life I led there had great attractions for me. It was a free and easy, devil-may-care sort of experience, perhaps the most natural life one can enjoy. The only thing that gave me a feeling of unrest was the absence of my wife and boy, they still being in the States.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Western Wonderland

After I was paralyzed I thought I would seek a more congenial climate in which to spend the remainder of my life, if such I could find. I had heard much of the glorious climate of Southern California and once had visited that section. I decided that I would go to Los Angeles and make a systematic investigation, with the idea of making my home there. I wished, in the first place, to obtain a satisfactory dwelling. I visited a great many places offered for sale in both Los Angeles and Pasadena. In the last named place I saw a very attractive home on Orange Grove Avenue, which I thought of buying. The furniture which was in the house was very rich, attractive, and appropriate to the setting and style of architecture, and I desired to purchase it if I took the place, but I did not wish to make a decision until I had seen more of the western coast cities of our states. I went to San Diego and was much pleased with that city; it had many attractions, but I was not favorably impressed with the possibility of fruit growing, or agriculture in that vicinity. There appeared to be a lack of water, of railroads and of shipping facilities; to me it did not promise to be a great business center on the coast. For this reason I went back to Los Angeles and from there north. I saw many excellent localities between Los Angeles and San Francisco, but I gathered the impression that they were too quiet and would be dull places in which to live, so I went on farther north. I was prejudiced against Los Angeles owing to the fact that it was controlled by a corrupt labor element.

Journeying through northern California, we had a beautiful view of Mount Shasta, and our train stopped at Shasta Springs, where an aerated spring of soda water fell over rocks of a wooded bank, which terminates near the railroad. From what I could see of it in the evening light, I thought it a charming place, which I mean sometimes to visit. The train wound slowly up the river, the grade becoming more difficult as we proceeded. We continually saw evidences of mining, but this had few attractions for me now.

As we approached Salem, the capital of the state of Oregon, the country showed more evidence of cultivation, and we saw some handsome farms. The scenery from Salem down the Willamette River was charming. When we arrived at the city of Portland we went to the Hotel Portland, which was a house of much elegance and well filled with guests. The World's Fair being held here at this time to celebrate the discovery of this country by an expedition sent out by President Jefferson under the command of Clarke and Lewis, accounted for the crowded condition of the hotels. I was much pleased with the city, which is very beautiful, and has many fine business buildings and elegant residences. The greatest charm of Portland is Hill Park, being a portion of the city on a high hill crest overlooking a beautiful view. A trolley line ascends this mountain on one side. The Falls of the Willamette are on the south side of the town. On the river just above the falls were several sawmills. Below the falls the river runs through the city, and here are located the steamboat docks for the boats which navigate the Columbia River from the ocean to The Dalles.

The exposition was a very creditable affair, the exhibits being mostly of the productions on the Northwest. The United States had its Philippine display there. The lumber exhibits of the state were also good. We went to The Dalles by train and returned in the same way. The scenery was occasionally very fine, but I did not see any of the fine forests which are said to exist in the state of Oregon.

We went next to Tacoma, Washington. We had some fine views of Mount Hood and Mount Tacoma; there was so much rain and fog that it was only occasionally that we could get good views of them, but their white summits looked very grand when they could be seen. Tacoma appeared to have more life and bustle than Portland. It seems to be built on the top of a high hill, from which a good view can be had of that part of Puget Sound which curves by the city. Many saw mills line the shore of the sound. I visited that district to get a view of the large logs that abound in the state of Washington. I saw some that were eight or ten feet in diameter; I think these were the largest that I had ever seen. I have heard of the great redwood logs of California, but have never seen them.

I stayed about a week here and then went north to Seattle. During much of the time spent in that city it rained, and the weather was foggy and cloudy. The activity, bustle and vim of the town, struck me very favorably; if I had been younger and an able-bodied man I would have selected Seattle as the place to make my home, but as I am now situated, I value pleasant weather, a congenial climate and less range of temperature. I had now seen the whole west coast, from Mexico to British Columbia, and I selected Los Angeles as the place in which to spend most of the days left me of life.

We returned east over the Northern Pacific railroad. Before leaving Seattle I bought tickets for the tour of the Yellowstone Park, though I had some doubts as to whether I would be able to stand the journey. On the train we made the acquaintance of a gentleman and his wife from Akron, Ohio. He was very obliging to me and looked out for my comfort all the way around the park. What I saw in Yellowstone Park made plain many things about geysers and other features there of which I had read but hardly understood. A great deal of the park is denuded, having been burned over by forest fires. It appears to have been covered at one time with tall, slim timber, which fell after being burned, and the trunks nearly cover the ground. Excellent wagon roads had been built by the United States Government; a company of United States soldiers policed the grounds and maintained strict order and observance of regulations. On the arrival of the train at the park, the surreys and two, four and six-horse coaches met the passengers and took them to the Mammoth Hotel, about six miles distant from the terminus of the railroad. We stayed over night here and had very comfortable rooms.

The next morning the stages commenced to load up with passengers to the number of about three hundred. We traveled until noon, when we stopped at the Norris Lunch Station. There was a great crowd here, but after an hour's wait we were able to get something to eat. Afterwards we proceeded on our trip, each passenger taking the same seat in the coach that he occupied when we left Mammoth Hot Springs in the morning. As we rode on we saw some deer in the woods, and once a bear, walking at his leisure, caused considerable excitement among the passengers. Through the action of the

government, park roads have been built and have reached a high state of perfection. We arrived at Old Faithful Inn in time for supper, and remained there over night. The Inn is built from stone quarried in the neighborhood. This building is very picturesque in architecture and we found it very comfortable to spend the night here. Some forty rods distant from the Inn is the Old Faithful Geyser, which spouts, I think, every hour and six minutes. It throws up steaming hot water to a height of some one hundred and fifty feet. The round opening where the water leaves the earth is about eighteen inches in diameter. All through the park we saw many hot springs, some in varied colors; also a large number of geysers.

After our enjoyable night at Old Faithful Inn we started in the usual order the next morning. We took lunch that day at the Thumb Lunch Station, which was a stand-up counter, and then proceeded to the Lake Hotel, the passengers being allowed their choice of steamboat or stage. We spent a very enjoyable night on the shore of the lake in this hotel.

The next morning we proceeded north on the river to Canyon Hotel, where we remained over night. We saw a number of wild animals during this day's trip, consisting of deer, elk and other species. At this hotel they have a custom of feeding the bear after supper and the guest go out to watch them if they wish. All the waste food from the hotel is taken out and scattered on the ground. The bears will walk down the hill, singly or together, eat their lunch apparently unconcerned at the crowd of people standing about. Two soldiers were present with their rifles to protect the onlookers should occasion arise. A short distance below the hotel the government has built an arched bridge of cement across the river to the government road on the other side of the chasm.

The next morning we rode down to the river, where we obtained a fine view of the falls and the rushing torrent which sweeps below. The scenery was grand, such as we do not often see, and it impresses upon man the mystery of Nature. After some more sight seeing in the neighborhood we continued our journey to Norris Lunch Station and there proceeded on our homeward way to Mammoth Hot Springs, from where we were taken to Gardiner. Later we took the train and went to bed in our sleeper.

In the morning we found ourselves in Livingston and our coach attached to the train for Minneapolis, traveling through the interesting grain country of North Dakota and Minnesota. We visited a niece living in Minneapolis, and from there took the train on the Wisconsin Central Railroad for Oshkosh.

We had not visited this city for some ten years. We spent several weeks there and went to Chicago, and about the last of October started for Pensacola. We went as far as Nashville, where we remained until the yellow fever scare abated, then continued on our way south to Pensacola. We stopped with our son at that place until February of the next year, when my wife, my son and I went by the way of the Southern Pacific Railroad to southern California, once more to try and select a permanent home.

Arriving at Los Angeles I learned that the house on Orange Grove Avenue, Pasadena, had been sold. We went to Hollywood to board at the Hollywood Hotel, which was a very admirable hostelry. We looked at a number of places with a view of buying there, but my son preferred a home in Los Angeles, although the transportation by trolley between the two places was quick and easy.

We spent many days looking at different places in Los Angeles, but we finally saw one which pleased my wife and son very much; they expressed their admiration of the place and said they would be delighted to have it for a home. My son was anxious to return to his family in Pensacola, so we departed soon for Florida. I then began negotiations for the property, which I soon brought to a conclusion. The owner and builder of the place had died just as the house neared completion, since which time it had been in possession of a care-taker. It was beautifully furnished and I desired to buy the furniture with the house, but the heirs refused to part with it.

The house is about 75 feet long and 35 feet wide, and consists of two stories and a basement. The latter contains the heating furnace, a large billiard room, two bedrooms, and one very large room, 50 feet long by 25 feet wide, which has a cement floor. The front portion of the main floor is so connected that it is practically one room. The end of this space towards the north is the parlor, the opposite end being the living room, and between these two is a reception hall 20 feet square. Beside the parlor is the dining room, while opening from the living room is the library, flower room and den. Facing the entrance in the hall is the stairway, which is of oak, having a spacious landing half way between the floors. There is a great deal of fine wood carving in the construction of this stairway. Much of the lower floor is finished in English oak, and the wainscoting is paneled; the dining room, parlor, hall and living room are beam-ceiled. The flower room, library and den are finished in mahogany. In the dining room is a fireplace with china cabinet above. On one side of the room is the butler's pantry; beyond this is the kitchen, and other work rooms with a stairway to the basement. From the reception hall, passing under the stairs leading to the second floor, is the staircase leading to the billiard room and the other rooms in the basement. At the end of the living room is a very beautiful fireplace of marble said to have been quarried in California.

On the second floor a long hall opens into numerous bedrooms, closets and bathrooms. These rooms are all finished in white enamel and several of them are very large and fine. On the staircase landing is a fine window of leaded and stained glass, presenting in beautiful colors the graceful figures of a youth and maiden. The rich lights thrown upon the hall from this window is one of the many attractions of the house. In the library the cases are built in the walls, the face being of leaded glass doors, curvilinear in shape.

In its exterior view the house is of the Mission style of architecture. The grounds upon which it is built approaches the crest of a hill, affording a most beautiful view over nearby lawns and gardens, then over the rolling expanse lying between Los Angeles and the sea. The slope of the ground is such that the house stands two stories at the front and three in the rear.

Since purchasing the place I have cemented a roadway past one side, built a garage of the same style of architecture as the house, and by means of a retaining wall, leveling the ground between by filling, and cementing the surface, an excellent court is afforded between the house and the garage. The rest of the yard I have terraced, set out to trees, roses and other flowers, and have built a play house and arbor for the children, not only my own six grandchildren, but it is a favorite resort for the little folk of the neighborhood on pleasant evenings. The house, garage and playhouse are brilliantly lighted by electricity.

This house with its pleasant surroundings is located in a most beautiful climate. I intend to retain it as a home for myself and wife and for my descendants as long as they may wish to occupy it.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### The Real Estate Agent and His Schemes

When I was paralyzed it took but a short time for me to realize that my strength was unequal to conducting my business in a profitable manner, and I saw that I must withdraw from active affairs. In the fall of 1903 a Mr. Bell, who for some time had been trying to negotiate a sale of my lands, came to my house in Escambia with a number of gentlemen whom he presented as capitalists from Indianapolis. He stated that they were prepared to buy my property if they could make a satisfactory contract. After considerable negotiation I sent to Milton for my lawyer, Earnest Amos, who drew up a contract which I submitted to them. One of the members of this party of gentlemen, a Mr. E.E. Douville, appeared to take the most prominent part in the negotiations. He requested that the contract be made out to him alone, for reasons which he did not state. I therefore had the contract altered to suit his wishes. This also proved unsatisfactory to him, and he drew up a contract written by himself, which he offered me. After two or three days of discussion and alterations, we attached our signatures to this. A certain sum had been agreed upon as the purchase price of the pine lands, mills and railroad; \$5,000 was to be paid when the contract was signed, \$5,000 more on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the next year, and \$100,000 to be paid on the following April 1<sup>st</sup>, less the two payments already provided for. There was a provision that by the payment of \$5,000 a ninety-day extension of the April payment could be had.

The deal was consummated according to these terms and the payments met as stipulated, until the following April; then Douville made the payment of \$5,000 to postpone for ninety days the payment due April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Soon after the contract had been signed, my wife and I went to Mudlavia, Indiana, to see if the mud baths there would benefit my paralysis and her rheumatism. I had suffered for years from eczema, and I found that the mud baths produced an irritation which became almost unbearable, so after taking some twelve or thirteen baths I had to discontinue them.

We returned to Escambia and spent the winter. The next spring, in May, I think, my wife and I went to Battle Creek, Michigan, to see what the Sanitarium there could do for our conditions. I did not receive any particular benefit from the treatment that I could perceive but we found the accommodations and the treatments very pleasant. While there I employed a private nurse, for my exclusive benefit; he also did my writing for me. Up to this time my wife had acted as my amanuensis.

I did not hear from Mr. Douville while I was at Battle Creek until after the middle of June. I then learned that there was some doubt as to whether the purchasers would make the payment due on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month. If not, they would forfeit the \$15,000 which they had already paid on the contract. Our efforts in the lumber business had been very light since entering into this contract with Douville. Expecting to surrender the property, I



did not feel like making improvements which I could otherwise have done, thinking I should hand over the affairs to the purchasers so soon.

The sums of money he had paid me would but make good what we had lost from our inability to make contracts, and from the suspended conditions of operating the mill. Douville applied to me for terms to farther extend the time and I offered to give him thirty days, for \$5,000, but stipulated that this sum should be paid before the time of the contract had expired. This was not done, so I notified Mr. Douville that his rights under the agreement had lapsed, and that he had forfeited the payments he had already made. I was sitting in the rotunda of the Sanitarium one forenoon when I saw Douville enter. Evidently he did not see me. He registered, I think, and went away. Not long afterwards I saw Mr. Bell enter the rotunda. I do not believe that he saw me, either. I presumed that they had come to pay me the \$5,000 and get the extension on the contract. In the afternoon Mr. Douville sent me his card, with a request for an interview. I went out and met him in the hall on the third floor. I conducted him to a parlor, inviting him to take a seat; sat down myself and waited for him to explain his errand. He then stated that he had found a party in Michigan, whom I had known when at Pentwater, who stood ready to buy a half interest in my property and pay cash. That he himself would take a quarter interest, and that another man, living at Pentwater, or Manistee, would take the remaining quarter, he was sure, when he returned from Canada, where he had gone on a business trip, to be absent two or three weeks. With this prospect in view Douville asked me to give him authority to consummate this deal. If I did I considered it would be necessary to put the permission in writing. I told him that I knew no lawyer in Battle Creek who I would trust to draw up such an agreement, but he was so urgent that he be allowed to close the deal, as he had outlined it, that I received an impression that there might be some truth in this statements. I did not feel equal to the task of drawing up the contract with him, so after thinking the matter over I told him that I would extend the contract I already had with him for thirty days, to enable him to close the deal he had in hand.

Douville asked me if I would allow him one and one-half percent commissions, if he made the sale, and also stated that he had put \$5,000 of his own money into the transaction, and he asked if I would return him this amount. I consented to both of these terms. Then he wished me to put this agreement in writing. I did not feel able to do more at the time, so I told him I would write him a letter, that evening or the next day, covering these points. This appeared to satisfy him and he departed. Then I returned to my room.

When I was sufficiently rested, I had my nurse write a letter to Mr. Douville for me, stating that I would extend the time of the present contract with him for a period of thirty days. In the usual time I received a reply to this, saying that my letter was all right, as far as it went, but that it said nothing about his commission or the \$5,000. It did not seem to me that I had forgotten to mention these conditions in my letter, but I wrote him that he was to have a commission of one and one-half percent and \$5,000 in case he complied with the contract.

About a week after this I received another letter for Mr. Douville, making no allusions to the Michigan people, to whom he had expected to sell the property, but stating that he felt

sure of finding a customer in a short time. This letter surprised me. I did not know what to make of it. I at once wrote to Douville that I had given him no option on the property, and ask him to send me a copy of my letter, as I had failed to keep one. I received from him a letter enclosing what he asserted was a copy of the one I had sent him. After this I put out of mind that I would have any further business relations with Mr. Douville, as I had come to the conclusion that no confidence could be placed in him.

About the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August I left Battle Creek and went to Chicago and took rooms with my nurse on 33<sup>rd</sup> Place, adjacent to a branch of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, where I continued to take the treatments followed by this institution. I think it was some time in September when I received a letter from Mr. Douville saying that he would like to see me. I sent a reply that he could see me if he came where I was. Not long after that he called at my place and said he came to get my sanction to his selling my property in Florida; but my son and I had come to the conclusion to have nothing further to do with him, so I refused to give him any authority to sell the property.

I returned to Escambia soon after this, taking my nurse, Mr. Grantham, with me. We arrived in the morning and found that there was to be a circus in Pensacola that day, and most of the workmen had gone to see it. The mill was practically shut down, except for the dry kilns.

While we were eating dinner that day, in the middle of the meal my son rose suddenly from the table, passed from the dining room and went out of the front door. I wondered what the matter was, but did not leave my seat. In a little while I heard the fire alarm whistle from the kilns and realized the cause of my son's hasty exit. I arose and hobbled down to the mill as fast as I could go. When I was near the office I saw that the roof of the building was on fire. There were several men there who had come from the woods to get provisions. One man was struggling to drag the hose from the hydrant in front of the mill up the elevated walk that went into the office. He needed help and I hastened to assist him, but before I could reach him he had dropped the hose. There appeared to be nothing efficient done which would put out the fire. The building was a large one, and as I saw that it was likely to burn down I hurried into the store below to direct getting out the goods. It appears that I forgot more important things which were in the office. Mr. Thompson, the bookkeeper, had gone to Pensacola that day and he had locked the two safes, but all of my letters and bills for the last thirty years were burned. We have sadly missed these, as all of our correspondence with Douville was burned except two or three letters which I happened to have in my valise. The building, which was about 110x30 feet in size and two and a half stories high, burned to the ground. The two safes fell into the basement; a copy book of letters was also preserved, and our account books, which contained the accounts of the Skinner Manufacturing Company since the days of 1893, were practically in good condition.

Being now without a store or office, we took as a substitute an empty house which stood on the bluff. In one part of it we put a stock of goods to supply the needs of the mill hands and their families, and the remaining part of the building was used as an office.

Our business moved along as usual without any serious interference on account of the fire.

The next affair of interest came from the negotiations of my son with a Mr. J.R. Saunders for the sale of the property, but specific terms and the conclusion of the matter were left to my decision. My son had included considerable property in his offer to Mr. Saunders that had not been included in the contract with Douville. I named the price definitely for which I would sell the whole, but he wished to divide the pine lands from the cypress lands, so I gave him a price upon the pine lands only, stating that I would keep the cypress lands myself. He then made me an offer \$25,000 less than my price, which I promptly declined. A short time afterwards I called on him to get some maps which I had loaned him, and he renewed the subject of buying the land. After satisfying himself that I would make no reduction in the price named to him he said that he would take the property at my figure. We then began making out the papers for an option; these were completed and signed November 1<sup>st</sup> 1904, and \$10,000 paid; this to be forfeited if the sale was no concluded. Final papers were made out November 25<sup>th</sup>.

Not long afterwards I was surprised at receiving a letter from Douville claiming a commission for selling the property. He had had nothing whatever to do with selling the property. Since his contract had expired and I had given him no further authority to dispose of it, I therefore looked upon his claim as a manifestation of brazen cheek and bluff. I paid no attention to the matter; did not even reply to his letter. After the lapse of a few weeks I received another letter from him making a similar claim for commission, and inquiring if I had received his former letter. I paid no attention to this letter either. The next year I was served with a summons from the United States Court in the case of E.E. Douville vs. The Skinner Manufacturing Company. I called on Attorney W. A. Blount and engaged him to defend the suit. He told me that Douville had consulted him in the matter, and he had told him that from his own story he had no claim for commission. It seemed that after my interview with Mr. Blount, Douville had called on him and objected to his appearing for the defense, and Mr. Blount notified me that he preferred not to defend the case; but said that suit had not been properly brought and he would knock Mr. Douville out in that court, which he did. Douville then brought action in the state court of Florida for the sum of \$7,500, and we had to find another lawyer to defend us against the suit. My son suggested Judge Maxwell, so I told him to engage him if he preferred. When court convened Mr. Douville did not appear; his lawyer however, asked for a continuance, and said that if we took judgment by default he was instructed to begin another suit; therefore we consented to an adjournment.

Soon after this I went to California to live. At the next term of court, it was not convenient for me to come east to attend the trial, so I asked my son to request Douville to put it over the term. To this he consented provided we would agree to postpone it for one year. This was satisfactory to me, as I did not want to go to Florida in the winter time. I therefore came to Pensacola but a short time before the trial, and then had a consultation with our attorneys. I told them that I did not believe the suit would ever come to trial, that I thought it was all bluff. The only thing I saw in the suit to alarm me was the fact that Douville had employed a lawyer in Pensacola who had an unenviable

reputation for “fixing” juries. I told my lawyers to be very careful and get all the information they could about the prospective jurors, and they promised to do so. My son could not well be present at this trial, on account of ill health of his wife, and I did not consider it necessary that he should be there.

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### A Change of Base

In the fall of 1903 I came home from Chicago and found that affairs had been working badly all summer at Chumuckla in our logging matters. I had placed a nephew in charge of the business at that place, but he was of a passionate disposition and antagonized many of the employees, among others a R.R. engineer by the name of Lewis, whom I had always found to be very competent and obliging. Lewis had quit work and an inexperienced man had been given charge of the locomotive that was proving both unsatisfactory and expensive. About the middle of September I determined to go to Chumuckla, and decided that my nephew must path up this quarrel with Lewis, if he retained his own place. Lewis was living on a homestead with he had taken up, about half way between Chumuckla and Florida Town, in Santa Rosa County. I drove there from my place in an open buggy and the weather being warm I rode in my shirt sleeves. I sat in the buggy for two or three hours until my nephew and Lewis had settled their differences. In the meantime I had become quite chilly and realized that I had made a mistake in leaving the house without my coat. However I rode back to Chumuckla with a constant sense of chilliness, and that night I did not sleep well as my feet were cold. The next day I resolved to return to Escambia, my mind much relieved that Lewis was going back to work feeling good humored.

After dinner that day I left to go to Molino to take the train for Escambia. In the evening I went downtown and was shaved. Coming out of the barbershop I met Mr. Hyer on the street, who after greeting me said: "Skinner, you don't look a day older than you did the first time I saw you," this had been thirty years before. I returned to the hotel and went to bed, but the bed was poor and my feet were cold. The train was to leave in the morning at seven o'clock, for Escambia. At a quarter to six I arose and went to the office of the hotel. It had been my custom for a long time to exercise my legs by doing a cake-walk each morning, and as I had time to spare I took my usual exercise. The clerk remarked to me "Mr. Skinner, you appear to feel mighty well this morning." I replied: "I never felt better." After finishing my cake-walk I felt a stinging sensation in my right arm between the shoulder and the elbow; more like a mosquito bite than any thing else I could liken it to. Not long after that I felt a similar sensation in the thigh of my right leg. At train time I took my satchel and walked to the depot, not realizing that anything was the matter with me. When I arrived at Escambia station I was not expected and so there was no carriage to meet me. I gave my valise to the mail carrier and walked to my office about a mile away. Arriving there I busied myself in examining the mail which had come in my absence, and found that three bank checks had been sent back for signature. I signed two of these without experiencing any difficulty but in signing the last one the muscles of my hand and fingers refused to respond to my mind. This surprised me and calling to my son asked him what he supposed was the reason; he said: "Father it looks like paralysis." Even then I was not alarmed. At dinner time I walked up the hill from the office to my house; arriving there, I found that the clock had run down, and I went into the kitchen to get a wooden chair that I could stand on, to reach the clock and wind it. Passing through

the dining room I saw the cupboard where I kept some liquor and stopped and took a drink of whiskey.

I went to my son's house to eat dinner; as nearly as I can recollect, I ate a hearty dinner and felt the effects of the liquor more than commonly. After dinner we left the dining room for the sitting room and my son remarked: "Father, if I were you, I would go upstairs and lie down." I replied: "I guess I will." In going up the stairs my right foot hit the step and I stumbled forward. I righted myself, however, and went on up the stairs and lay down on the bed; I do not now recall whether I went to sleep or not. My son telephoned to Pensacola for a doctor, and by the time he arrived, about half past four, I was pretty well paralyzed on my right side; my arm was entirely useless and I had to take my left hand to move it; the physical condition in which I found myself was so unknown to me that I was astonished. In a day or two I was able to be up, and by holding to something with my left hand I was able to walk to the next room. I was entirely ignorant as to the cause, or the cure of my malady. Since my first attack I think that I have gradually improved; but I realize more and more that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. I have lived in hopes that I would eventually recover from my infirmity, but perhaps I never shall. I have been very fortunate in having to suffer no pain, nor in being under much physical annoyance. I do not think that this stroke affected me mentally, as I appear to have my faculties in about the same condition that they were when I was first afflicted.

Just a week from the time I was paralyzed, my nephew who was at Chumuckla went on the train from that place to the log landing at Delaney River. The men unloading the logging train got a log through the skids, and while they were rolling it into the river he stepped onto the rollway in front of the car on which the two logs still remained, in order to direct the man who was trying to get the logs into the water. It seems that a log projecting from a car in the rear of the one with which they were working, blocked the two logs on the car in front; this was at last loosened and the freed logs rolled towards the water. They came quicker than was expected, and my nephew, to escape them, jumped through the skidding onto the sand beneath; then he suddenly began to call for help. When the men reached him they found that he could not stir a muscle in his limbs; he was paralyzed in his motor muscles, though his speech was apparently not at all affected. As soon as I learned of these facts I sent the tugboat to the Delaney River landing to bring the sick man to the Pensacola Hospital, where the physicians could not find a bruise or contusion on him, or any ostensible cause for the paralysis. Possible it was caused by the fright or the concussion of striking the packed sand. In time he recovered the use of the muscles, but he never regained his strength. He became despondent over his condition, and died a little more than a year later of a fever which developed while he was in Quincy, Florida.

The mystery as to the cause of the paralysis of both my nephew and me has much aroused my curiosity. I have concluded that the interruption of the telephonic system, carried on between the brain and the muscles, which is so apparent to one thus afflicted, is due to ruptured brain cells, and that the paralysis itself is a results and not a cause.

It will be five years next September [1908] since this stroke occurred, and some of the time when I have been under treatment I have fancied myself improving; but on the whole there has been very little change. I noticed that the weather affects my condition; a very warm period weakening me; also the effect on one's mind of realizing that he may be a cripple for the remainder of his life is physically depressing.

By January, 1905, I had sold my holdings in Florida. My paralysis made it difficult for me to get around, so I found it a little dull at Escambia, therefore my wife and I took a notion to go to east Florida, and if that section had sufficient attractions, to make our home there. I decided that I would take no nurse with me, as our freedom would be that much more hampered. We went to Jacksonville, where a great fire had recently occurred. We stopped at the Windsor Hotel, which had escaped injury. From there we went to St Augustine, spent one night at the Ponce de Leon, and then proceeded on our way down the coast to Daytona. We had heard that place very much admired and praised. We stopped a week at the Clarendon, at Seabreeze. All the accommodations of this hotel had been engaged for the automobile races, and I could only secure rooms up to that time. In those days I was not much of an automobile enthusiast, not having acquired the craze then which I took later when I had a machine of my own, but I could well appreciate the beautiful beach at this place, and the fine course which it afforded. We went from Seabreeze directly to Miami. We rode around the city considerably and I was quite favorably impressed with the locality. The soil appeared to be of coral formation. If one had to dig post-holes it was necessary to dig right into this coral rock, but it could be pulverized so as to make clean dirt. Great industry was shown here in the matter of building wagon roads, as this rock made an excellent roadbed. Orange trees, however, grow luxuriantly in it, and I saw many grapefruit fields. The pineapple culture seemed to be a great success, also, and the indications showed a fine future for the locality in the raising of the latter fruit.

After staying here two or three days we concluded to take the boat for Nassau, which at that time was the terminus of the Flagler route. We stopped at the Colonial Hotel while there and during our stay took many pleasant drives around the island. Our accommodations at the hotel being very satisfactory; and among other pleasant features there an excellent band furnished music every evening to entertain the guests. In leaving this place we crossed the channel between New Providence and the island east of it, and visited a place of resort where they fed their guests with oranges; these were pared and a stick run through them and in that manner one could partake of his fill. There was a large bath house and the finest bathing beach one could desire, but after the novelty of these attractions had worn away the life here appeared to be a dull one. East of the hotel, in the channel between the two islands, the water was of different shades of blue and green, the colors being very intense. This was caused, I suppose, by the growth underneath. Down the channel at some distance south of the hotel, glass-bottomed boats were towed by tugs over the submarine gardens between the islands in the channel. One day we concluded to take this trip and we were greatly pleased by what we saw; fantastic and gorgeous shrubs appeared to be growing out of the coral bottom of the stream. Among this growth many beautiful fish of brilliant colors were to be seen.

After stopping at this hotel a little more than a week, we concluded to return to Miami, where I had looked at some property with the idea of purchasing it. I was considerably surprised at the change that had occurred during our absence. I had supposed that this part of Florida was below the frost line, but I found the leaves of the orange trees frost-bitten, and the pineapple fields, of which I had seen before many luxuriant specimens, were blackened with the cold. I had thought that there might be a great future industry established in Florida in the growing of this fruit, but the appearances now deterred me from making any purchase. So we pursued our return journey to Palm Beach, where we stopped at the Hotel Breakers. This was a very pleasant, home-like place, situated directly on the ocean beach. There was a horse car line that conveyed guests from this hotel to the Royal Poinciana. We took advantage of this and occasionally visited the latter hotel for the purpose of seeing the style and fashion displayed by the guests and to observe the pomp of the service. Of the two hotels, I preferred the Breakers. After stopping at this place of fashion as long as it was interesting, we continued our journey to St. Augustine, where we stopped at the Alcazar. I had become attached to this hotel during a former stay, so enjoyed coming back. While at this place we bought coral beads for our grandchildren, and numerous other articles for their edification.

From St. Augustine we went to Jacksonville, where we remained at the Windsor until we started for our home at Escambia. Our trip covered about six weeks; we had had a very pleasant time, and nothing disagreeable had occurred, but I decided that I would travel farther before selecting a home. We remained at Escambia until April, when we went to Chicago and bought round-trip tickets to Los Angeles, California, returning by the way of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

We concluded to take a trained nurse with us; a woman, on account of my helpless condition. We left Chicago on the evening of April 14<sup>th</sup>. We saw little of interest during the first of our trip, except the Standard Oil pipe lines which were being laid beside this road. The farms of Kansas also were attractive. We decided to stop at Las Vegas, a locality of which we had heard much, as the hotel and hot springs had been largely advertised as a health resort. We found the hotel closed, so we stopped at the Harvey Hotel for a couple of days, then we decided to go to Albuquerque, where I had a nephew living in the vicinity, and to whom I had written of our coming. He was a few years younger than me and I had not seen him since I left home in my youth for Washington, D.C. This man was the eldest son of my brother, Dan Barnes. I found him much afflicted, having cataracts on both eyes. To meet him again after so long and to talk to him of the events of our lives for the preceding fifty, or more, years, was very interesting. Albuquerque proved to be a promising place, with good future prospects. I saw here a large sawmill, recently built, with a capacity of three hundred thousand feet per day. The logs for the supply of this mill were brought by rail from Arizona and were cut from forests more than one hundred and fifty miles distant. They were unloaded from the cars into an artificial pond, from which they were drawn into the mill as needed. The altitude of Albuquerque is about four thousand feet.

At the conclusion of our visit in this city, we decided to go and see the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. We took a Pullman car and arrived at our destination in the forenoon and



stopped at the Hotel El Tovar, which occupies a site seven thousand feet above sea level and is close to the rim of the canyon. It is built of pine slabs and stone and is from three to four stories high. It is very attractive in appearance and has the accommodations usual with a first class hotel. In nearby buildings were displayed many curious articles made by the Navajo Indians. A few rods from the hotel was a cliff where one might look thirteen miles across the canyon to the other side, and also look down to where the river flowed, a mile below. The chasm is stupendous; how or when Nature formed it has never been satisfactorily explained; but the magnitude of it impresses the onlooker with a sense of the wonderful power of Nature.

After gratifying our curiosity with the various views of the canyon, we concluded that we would visit the city of Phoenix and the Salt River Valley. I had always wished to visit this territory since ex-Governor Bashford of Wisconsin, the first territorial governor of Arizona, appointed by President Lincoln, had invited me to accompany him here. I was more pleased with the city of Phoenix than I expected to be; there were many fine buildings and the spirit of the place was full of enterprise and push. I accidentally discovered that the grandson of Governor Bashford had come to this city from Prescott, was then living here and was cashier of the bank on which I had a letter of credit.

The valley in which Phoenix is situated is one of great fertility; a number of irrigating ditches carries the water to the cultivated lands, and the great Roosevelt Dam being built on the headwaters of Salt River will hold water sufficient to irrigate two hundred and fifty thousand acres.

We met, casually, some persons here whom we had known in Chicago; among others a Mr. Giles, who owned considerable land in the valley. In Chicago he had been a jeweler, when I lived there in the sixties. The drawback to this section is the extreme heat. Later we retraced our journey to Ash Fork and from there proceeded on our way to the coast having occupied more than three weeks.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### Mt. Morgan Mine

After the world's fair in Chicago I received a letter from Mr. Godfrey saying that he had discovered a very rich gold mine near Zacatecas, Mexico, and asked if I would join him in buying it. I sent him \$2,500 to pay for my half, but later I had word from him that some parties in the City of Mexico had bought the mine away from us. After waiting for a while I wrote him to return the money I had sent him, but he replied that he had bought another mine with the money and asked me to sanction the purchase. This was called the Mt. Morgan Mine. I concluded that I would go to Zacatecas and see it for myself. I found it to be a well developed fissure vein averaging about two and a half feet in thickness, having been explored by Mexicans for about two hundred feet in length and about sixty feet in depth. Mr. Godfrey assured me that the average quartz in the vein carried from two to three ounces of gold per ton. I liked this mine better than the one he had first selected. I learned that a party by the name of Ayton, a mining engineer in charge of the celebrated Bote mine of Zacatecas, had sold the Mt. Morgan Mine to Godfrey, retaining five of the twenty-four shares into which the Mexican government divided a mine. I was not pleased with this situation of affairs, and told Mr. Godfrey that I thought that he should buy Mr. Ayton out. I returned home with the understanding that the mine was to be sunk deeper on the vein and kept working. I received a report from him that richer ore was found as they went down, and that Ayton had agreed to sell his shares to us for \$8,000. Godfrey stated that if I was willing to pay half of the \$8,000 that he would pay the other half, and I was to place \$4,000 to his credit in New York City to consummate the deal. I did this and was notified by Mr. Godfrey that he had received the deed of the five shares from Mr. Ayton. I entered into an agreement with Mr. Godfrey that I would furnish \$100 per month for the purpose of sinking a working shaft on the center of the mine, and Godfrey agreed to furnish an equal amount for the same purpose. I receive monthly reports from him showing the depth the mine was sunk during the month, the size of the vein, the amount of gold the ore carried; all of which for a while was satisfactory.

I think it was in the winter of 1894-5 that my wife and I went down to the City of Mexico, stopping on our way at the city of Zacatecas. At this time the reports of Godfrey showed that the ore ran from three to four ounces of gold per ton. I visited the mine, and found that Godfrey had erected an adobe house for the workmen to live in, also that there was quite a lot of ore lying on the dump; some of it according to Godfrey's report was very rich; all of the ore he claimed would run two ounces of gold per ton, and some smaller piles would run a great deal more.

When we started for the mine, Mr. Godfrey took along a mortar, pestle and a horn spoon. He requested me to select any piece I wished from the piles each containing from a half ton to a ton of ore. The pile of small pieces contained none which weighted more than a pound. The ore I selected he put into the mortar and had the workman pulverize it with the pestle; then turned this into the horn spoon, poured on water and washed off the dirt, and the bottom of the spoon was covered with what he assured me were grains of gold. I

picked out several pieces of ore which were tested in the same way, which proved them all to be very rich. I left the mine thinking we had a valuable piece of property, and I went on my way to the City of Mexico with my wife, where we spent a very pleasant time sight-seeing.

After staying as long as we wished we started on our return, leaving the train to remain over night at Silao. In the morning we went to Guadalajara, which is situated on a branch of the main line of the Mexican Central Railroad. We passed Lake Chapala, and through a very fine region of agricultural land. We found Guadalajara which is in the state of Jalisco to be a very interesting city, it is I believe second in size in the republic, and has a population of over one hundred thousand. It is a beautiful place, has many shade trees, and some fine public buildings, the finest of which is a cathedral. We spent an afternoon in viewing this edifice, and by means of a liberal tip induced one of the priests to show us the riches of the church; among other treasures being costly cloth of gold for vestments, finer than any we had seen in Europe. We took a carriage ride on the Paseo, a fashionable drive along the river San Juan, and heard a good band playing in the park. The city has excellent schools and it is said that west of Guadalajara is the richest agricultural district and grazing land in the republic. Colima, the only active volcano in North America is situated there. In Guadalajara there is a branch of the Battle Creek, [Michigan] Sanitarium which is said to be quite prosperous.

On our return we stopped where once had been the Falls of Juanacatlan, but a power plant furnishing electricity for the lighting of Guadalajara, and other purposes, used the water which had formerly made the falls. We stopped on our return trip at Aguas Calientes over night, took a bath at the celebrated hot springs, and telegraphed in the morning to Godfrey at Zacatecas to meet our train on its arrival at that place; which he did and went with us as far as Calera; from there he returned to Zacatecas. We stopped at Calera over night and in the morning took the train for home by way of Torreon and Eagle Pass.

After this visit and seeing the ore I supposed taken from the mine, I wrote Mr. Godfrey that I thought the mine could and should pay its own way. I advised him to ship and sell a carload of ore and use the money to develop it farther. I had induced my nephew Bostwick Knapp of Chicago to study Spanish so that he could talk and write it a little, telling him that some time I would take him to the land of the Aztecs with me. I also wrote Mr. Godfrey that I was not willing to operate the mine longer as a partnership.

In the spring I went to Chicago. I had obtained Godfrey's consent to incorporate the mine, and I had proceeded to have it done under the laws of the state of Illinois. It was necessary to have three stockholders and three directors. I gave my wife a part of my stock, so as to qualify her to be a director. When I sent the papers to Godfrey for his signature he refused to sign them claiming that I wished to get control of the mine into my own hands. I proposed that he give Mr. Guenther a share of his stock and make him a director, but nothing I could suggest met his approval. He insisted upon selling me a part of his stock for \$10,000. When I suggested to him that he sell a carload of ore and get money, he wrote that he was ailing, something was the matter with his kidneys, that he

would have to leave Zacatecas and go to the City of Mexico for treatment and that he did not know as he should ever be able to work again. The five shares bought from Ayton were still in Godfrey's name. I had become convinced of the great value of the mine after seeing the large quantities of ore piled up on the dump, and I proposed to my nephew that we go to Zacatecas and see what we could learn. The insurance company by which my nephew was employed, gave him each year a two weeks vacation, and he concluded to extend this into a three weeks trip to Mexico, we were to visit the mine at Zacatecas and see Mr. Godfrey in the City of Mexico, and try to learn what we could about both.

We left Chicago about the middle of July. I had the papers with me for the incorporation of the mine. We bought the tickets via Louisville & Nashville Railroad to New Orleans, to San Antonio via the Southern Pacific, from there to the City of Mexico over the Mexican National and to return from that city by way of the Mexican Central Railway to Torreon, thence by the International Railroad to Eagle Pass. From the latter point we would return as we went, via San Antonio, New Orleans and Nashville to Chicago. Our journey down was uneventful, but it was in the heat of a tropical summer. It was very rainy while passing through western Louisiana and eastern Texas. In going over the mountains in Mexico we saw a remarkable appearance in the sky, resembling electric lights. On the fringe of large clouds covering the mountains as we passed along was an exhibition apparently of electricity such as I had never seen before in any county. It was simply gorgeous in appearance and the grandest and most brilliant display of lightning that it was ever my good fortune to witness.

I had written Mr. Godfrey when I should arrive and I expected that he would be at the depot to meet me on my arrival in the city; but he did not appear. We went to the Iturbide Hotel. I expected to find Mr. Godfrey in a bad state of health as he had written me to that effect, but when I found him he appeared in excellent health, and apparently had not been ill. It has taken me a couple of days to locate him. He was in a very irritable state of mind, and was very indignant with me for trying to get control of the mine, and he would do nothing towards incorporating it, insisting that he must sell me his half of the stock for \$10,000 cash. I was not disposed to put any more money into the mine by the purchase of his interest, so refused to meet this proposition. I requested him to deed me one-half of the five shares he had bought from Ayton, on joint account and he did so. I wished him to go to Zacatecas with us on our return, but he declined. After this we visited the principal points of interest in the City of Mexico. We stopped at the Iturbide Hotel, once the residence of Iturbide the first and last native born emperor of Mexico, who occupied this palace for the one brief year of his supremacy, from March, 1822 to March, 1823, during which time he was proclaimed Emperor under the title of Augustine I. He was afterward banished through the influence of General Santa Ana, but he returned, was arrested and shot July 19, 1824.

We visited Chapultepec on its hills of porphyry, a combination "White House" and "West Point." From the hill we could look down on four battle fields of the Mexican-American War: Contreras, Churubusco, Molino Del Rey and Chapultepec. There were about three hundred cadets quartered in the north end of the palace. South and east of Chapultepec

Hill is a fine grove of cypress trees. They are the only large trees I have ever seen in the Republic. One of them is said to have a circumference of forty feet.

We visited Tacubaya, a city with a fascinating mixture of ancient and modern civilization. We saw the floating gardens, or islands on the Viga Canal, each of which is about two hundred feet in length and perhaps fifteen in width. They are very fertile and are watered in a curious manner. The laborer beats the water with an oar and splashes it over the soil.

After visiting the principal points of interest in the City of Mexico we started on our homeward journey. We stopped at Silao and concluded to make a visit to Guanajuato, situated in a narrow canyon about seven thousand feet above the sea. Most of the streets are too narrow for wheeled vehicles. The Mexican Central Railway has a branch running between the city and Silao, which is about twenty miles in length. From there we were transferred to a street car, drawn by mules, which took us to Guanajuato. It is a city of many handsome buildings, public and private, including a new theater, just completed at the time we were there; it was said to have cost a million dollars. We were unable to view the interior as the building was closed. The mines of Guanajuato are the richest in the republic, one of which in forty years having yielded an annual profit of three million dollars.

We heard of a burial place while there which was entirely different from anything I had ever seen. It was three miles from the city, so we secured burros and rode out there. The cemetery was situated on top of a round hill and consisted of a building which enclosed four sides of perhaps an acre or more. In the walls of this building are vaults of sufficient size to introduce a coffin; these spaces run in tiers, one above another. When the space is filled, the opening will be sealed. These vaults are rented for a certain number of years, and when the term has expired, if the lease is not renewed, the body is removed from the vault and stored in the crypt below; the empty vault can then be leased for another corpse. The entire mountain upon which Guanajuato is built is of solid rock, and it required a great deal of work to dig a grave, hence the necessity for the kind of burial which I have described. I do not know a similar method being used anywhere else.

When we had completed our sight-seeing in this vicinity, we continued on our journey to Zacatecas. On reaching the hotel there, I called for a particular room, and was informed that it had been reserved for Mr. Godfrey, that he had written the landlord to keep it for him, and therefore his arrival had been expected for many days. This surprised me as he had refused my invitation to accompany us here.

The next morning we procured some horses and rode out to the mine. I found that the entrance to it had been closed, having been filled with broken stone, and the windlass had been removed. We were practically barred from any examination of it; therefore we came on home, the trip having proved wholly futile. Mr. Godfrey did not appear at Zacatecas while we were there.

The next year I learned that Arthur C. Payne, a mining engineer whom I had met on a previous trip, was in the employ of a sash and door firm at Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and I wrote him of the trouble I had had in regard to the Mount Morgan mine, and asked him if he would meet me in Chicago. He complied and came to my residence and I explained the situation to him. By this time I wanted some other opinion than Mr. Godfrey's as to the value of the mine and I believed Mr. Payne to be an honest man, and thoroughly competent, because he had had large experience in Mexico. I asked him what he would charge to go to Zacatecas, examine the Mount Morgan Mine, determine what the vein carried in gold and silver, and report officially. He replied that he should want \$1,000; this was more than I felt like paying, and so the matter ended, for the time. It was the winter of 1896, however, that I received a letter from him stating that he was going to Valardena to take charge of some mines bought by parties in Oshkosh and that he would examine and report on the Mount Morgan Mine for \$300, the sum which I had previously offered him. I wrote to Mr. Payne that I wished him to determine how much gold and silver per ton, the vein contained. He went as agreed and examined the mine, then wrote me to the following effect: That he did not like Mr. Godfrey and that he would give no statement which would be of benefit to that gentleman, but if the examination was to be for my individual benefit, that he would gladly make it. I assured him that the matter was solely for my interest; then he made a very flattering report. He corroborated all the statements which Godfrey had made, and this made me very anxious to get the mine into a more satisfactory working condition. I asked Mr. Payne to learn from Godfrey what he would take for his share of the mine. He succeeded in getting a contract from Mr. Godfrey by which I should pay down \$1,000 and \$11,000 more in three months, and \$40,000 additional as soon as the net profits of his half should equal that sum. Mr. Payne insisted that he be allowed to buy one share for the sum of \$1,000, to which I consented. The Mexican mining laws divide a mine into twenty-four shares; Godfrey owned twelve and I also owned twelve shares. My option for buying his half would expire on the first of December, 1897. On the strength of the report of Mr. Payne I now believed the mine of great value.

I immediately went to Chicago, hoping to find some of my friends who would buy Mr. Godfrey's interest. I found that most of them had bought into gold mines, and that their faith in such investments was at low ebb, in consequence of these experiences. I then went to Boston, but found only one man who would invest. I returned to Escambia thinking that the deal was hopeless, but not long after I went one day into the law office of Blount & Blount in Pensacola and talked of this matter to Clem Blount, to whom I showed Mr. Payne's report. He became interested at once saying that he knew Mr. Payne and had confidence in him. Mr. Blount had been one of the parties that I had taken to the Aveno Mine. In conclusion he said: "I will take one share at \$1,000." I thanked him and told him I would see what could be done in Pensacola. I next showed Mr. Payne's report to John Eagan and he asked me to leave it with him, saying he would see what he could do. He expressed a willingness to take a share himself, and stated that he believed a sufficient number of persons in Pensacola would subscribe to complete the amount required to buy Godfrey's interest. I stood ready to take two and a half shares myself. The full amount necessary was soon raised. I gave each one interested a written statement of

the money I had received from him, how and for what purpose it was to be invested, then I started for Mexico in order to close the deal with Godfrey.

I telegraphed Mr. Payne, who was at Valardena, to meet me at Torreon and accompany me to Zacatecas. Upon our arrival at that place we found Mr. Godfrey awaiting us, and the bargain was soon closed, according to the Spanish method, which was as follows: We went to a notary public's office, and that official took all the papers for Mr. Godfrey's interest in the mine. I gave the notary exchange on New York for the amount due from me, and Mr. Payne handed a check to the clerk which I did not read, but Mr. Payne said it was a check on a Chicago bank for \$1,000; this Godfrey accepted and told the notary it was all right; then the papers were signed by both of us as is the Mexican custom. I was then handed the papers relating to the title, with a copy of the record of sale.

After getting a transfer of title I procured some horses and Mr. Payne and I rode out to the mine. I was very much surprised to find the working shaft, which was ninety feet deep and 5x8 feet in size, filled with broken stone, up to within forty feet of the surface, and all the entrances to the mine closed with rock. We therefore could not examine the mine, so I returned home.

I have been thus careful in detailing the circumstances of Godfrey's actions because of what occurred later.

When I arrived at Pensacola we proceeded to incorporate the mine under the laws of the state of Florida, as stipulated in my agreement with the persons who contributed towards the purchase. The stock was issued and I was elected President of the company. It was also agreed that Mr. Payne should be employed as superintendent of the mine but he notified us that he could not give it his entire attention on account of his employment by other parties, but that if it would be satisfactory to us he would engage a man to do the work under his direction, and he himself would visit the mine at stated periods. All of this was agreed to by the company.

The first effort of the new manager was directed to cleaning out the shaft. I then insisted that he should give me a further test as to the value of the ore. After some delay he sent me an analysis showing that the vein carried a value of less than \$8 per ton, instead of \$62 as he had certified in his previous report. I asked him to explain how he had made such a mistake as to send his former glowing account of the richness of the mine, when I had sent him to examine it before buying. He replied that the mine must have been salted. I asked him how it was possible to salt a mine two hundred feet in length and one hundred feet in depth, so as to deceive an experienced man like himself; to this he gave no sensible reply. Mr. Payne's conduct convinced me that he had deliberately deceived me and had lied about the mine. He had proved himself a villain and had joined Godfrey in a plan to swindle me. From the time I went to the City of Mexico to see Godfrey, I had had no confidence in the man, but I did not believe him to be such a scoundrel as later events proved. As to Mr. Payne, up to this time I had the utmost confidence in his ability and his integrity, and of all mining engineers that I knew, I would have selected him to report the truth in regard to a mining proposition. His infinitely false report on the Mount

Morgan Mine caused me a loss of at least \$15,000. So from my personal experience I have come to believe that the mining engineer will betray his best friend when it comes to reporting on a mine. The events which followed the purchase of the mine were very annoying and subjected me to much unjust censure, but I will relate the particulars of this later.

For several years I pursued my usual duties in the manufacture of lumber, and its selling as best I could, but the prices were low and profits small. I could see the forests rapidly diminishing and the product sold close to the cost incurred. I had wasted much time in an effort to combine producers of southern pine lumber in an agreement to hold together for a higher price for their goods, but all my efforts in this direction have proved unavailing. I could but feel, however, that in the near future prices were certain to increase.

I had by this time accumulated over one hundred thousand acres of land situated in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida. The fixed charges upon these and upon the mill and business amounted to quite a sum which had to be paid whether the mill was running or not. Rather than see my bank account diminish, I kept on manufacturing lumber at barely \$1 per thousand feet, profit.

In the year 1898 the stockholders of the Mount Morgan Mine sent Mr. Blount and me to visit the mine at Zacatecas. On our way there we went to Durango and saw Mr. Payne. He agreed to meet us the next day at Zacatecas, but failed to keep the appointment. We made the acquaintance of a mining engineer by the name of Whipple in charge of a mine not far from ours, and we made arrangements with him to equip our mine so that we could examine it; then he went with Mr. Blount into it and they selected samples where they thought they could find an average ore. We did not let these out of our sight, but took them ourselves and saw the assayer test them. We satisfied ourselves that it was not possible for any further fraud to be perpetuated upon us. The results showed the value of the ore to be less than \$8 per ton. After a trip to the City of Mexico we returned to Pensacola and reported the results of our visit to the company, giving it as our opinion that it was not advisable to invest any more money in the mine.

Sometimes in the year 1900 I happened to be in John Eagan's office in Pensacola and he told me that some of the parties who had contributed to the buying of the Mount Morgan Mine had received the opinion of a lawyer that he could recover for them the money which they had given me to invest. Up to this time none of the men had ever suggested that I reimburse him for the loss he had sustained. It was soon after this that I was served with a summons in each of three or four suits begun against me to recover the money paid by the plaintiffs for the stock. I could see no equity or justice in my being held responsible for money they had invested in a speculation regarding which they had the same chances for information that I had had myself, and to whom I had imparted accurately all the information I possessed. I presumed it was done at the suggestion of the lawyer before alluded to, and that he received a good fee from each of the eight persons who entered suit against me. If I had paid the money back, it would have been an acknowledgement of guilt on my part. I think it was two years before the suits were noticed for trial; and when finally brought I did not appear. The plaintiffs produced such



testimony as they could, and the presiding judge ordered the jury to bring in a verdict for the defendant. The lawyer for the plaintiffs appealed from the verdict to the supreme court of the state of Florida with the result that the decision of the lower court was sustained. My lawyer took all the evidence, put it in a tin box and placed it in the custody of the clerk of the court of Escambia County; he then put the key of the box in his pocket and I presume the evidence of those unjust suits will repose in that box until something shall happen to destroy it.

I have always believed that John Eagan had much to do with the bringing of these suits; it would have been his manner of showing gratitude for the many favors I had done him. Thus ended the numerous suits which had hurt my feelings very much. I never have believed that any of the plaintiffs thought I had done anything wrong in the matter, but on the contrary they were satisfied that I, like themselves, had been deceived by Payne; but they were not "game" to meet a loss of \$1,000 each, in a manly way when an unprincipled lawyer told them they could recover the amount of their losses from me.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### The Succession of Roosevelt

After the assassination of President McKinley we read a great deal in the newspapers as to what Roosevelt would then do, whether he would act as substitute to the dead president, and do those things which McKinley would have done had he lived, or follow plans of his own.

The republican machine in Florida, by John Eagan's treachery, had been turned over to the friends of Morton, and upon the death of John G. Long, J.N. Coombs of Apalachicola had been elected to the chairmanship of the state republican committee and it was understood that he was very solid with Roosevelt. The republican office holders in this part of the state had been reappointed by Roosevelt with the exception of Mr. McGourin; he obtained recommendations from all local republicans, including myself, and request for his reappointment to his present office; then he went to Washington to present these to Roosevelt and solicit a reappointment. I was aware however that he did not have the support of the state republican machine. After a few days in Washington, he telegraphed me to meet him there. Upon my arrival I found that W.H. Northrup had been appointed to the office of United States marshal by the president, and that his name had been sent to the senate for confirmation, but that the secretary of the treasury, Mr. Shaw, had prevailed upon the president to hold up the nomination for one week in order to give me time to arrive and present Mr. McGourin's claims to the office. Upon my reaching Washington, McGourin took me over to see the secretary. After a short chat, I saw that he was anxious for McGourin's appointment, and I learned that it was through his influence that the nomination of Northrup had been held up in the senate. After we left the secretary's room McGourin asked me to go back and urge the secretary to make an application to the president to extend the time for which he had deferred action on Northrup's appointment. I returned to the office and repeated the request to the secretary, but Mr. Shaw feared he would not be successful, saying that the last time he had talked with the president; he thought "the boss's eyes were sot" and that if he interfered again in the matter that he might get kicked. The next day McGourin and I went over to see the president. The equipment of the rooms had been entirely changed since the time of McKinley. Instead of the fat, sleek Negro attendants there were men from the "wild and woolly west" with legs of their trousers tucked into their boots, and the free and easy manners of "rough riders" substituted in their places. We sent in our cards and after waiting for some time were informed that the president would see me and no one else. I was ushered into his office and informed that the president was then busy. After another wait of perhaps a quarter of an hour a gentleman entered the room with rapid strides, took me by the hand and called me by name. He commenced to talk about Florida matters and Mr. Coombs in particular. He asked me if that gentleman was not a wealthy lumberman, if he was not the president of a bank at Apalachicola, a prominent and sound republican, etc. I saw that the president had rather inflated ideas of Mr. Coombs importance, and that it would be necessary for me to be very careful what I said. He inquired if Coombs was not at one time a candidate for governor of Florida. I then recollected that while McKinley was president, John G. Long had interviewed me once when I was in

Jacksonville, and had asked me to take the republican nomination for governor of Florida; that I had looked at him to see whether he took me to be a fool, or was making fun of me; but he convinced me that he was in earnest and endeavored to persuade me that a republican might be elected governor of the state. Of course I knew that there was no chance of that, and told Mr. Long so. When the president mentioned that Coombs was the republican candidate for governor, I remembered that he had accepted the nomination and had made the contest, had received a few votes, and I now became aware that he had been posing before Roosevelt as a defeated republican candidate for that office.

After a little preliminary talk Mr. McGourin's case was introduced as a subject of conversation. The president admitted that he had a clean record and was a good officer. I then suggested that I did not think he could afford to appoint so disreputable a man as Northrup to so important a position. The president appeared to get excited in a moment; he assured me that he could do anything he chose; that I had no right to call Northrup disreputable, and asked of what crimes he had been convicted. I replied that the fact of his being disreputable did not imply that he had been convicted of any crime. "Yes it does," said the president. I told him that I did not so understand the word and referred him to Webster's dictionary to settle the question. I saw that the conversation was becoming somewhat acrimonious, and fearing it might not be to the advantage of McGourin I thought it better not to extend it. The president asked me to make specific charges against Northrup and he would investigate them thoroughly. I said I would do so, but after leaving the president, concluded that from the temper he was in it would be useless; and furthermore I had no desire to injure Northrup, but only to help Mr. McGourin.

We concluded that as a last resort we would go and see Senator Hanna. This gentleman appeared to be interested in the case; said he was invited to dine with the president that evening and would carefully introduce the subject. The next day we again saw Senator Hanna, who gave us some details of his conversation with the president the night before. He said the president was angry with me, and that I could do nothing with him to help McGourin. He advised me to go home, and said he would attend to the case and get McGourin appointed if possible, which he did in a day or two.

This was my last effort in soliciting the appointment of others to federal offices. I had never asked anything for myself, though I think I could have had almost any federal office in the state, and sometimes when successful for others I received few thanks from the beneficiaries.

From my experience among northern republicans I had gained the impression that all the republicans in the south were looked upon alike; that we were thought to belong to that party only for the purpose of securing office, and that very few, if any, were thought to be republicans from principle. They apparently knew little of the ostracism endured by the white republicans in the south. I remember one day in the eighties that Mr. Brent who was the leading banker in Pensacola said to me: Mr. Skinner, if you will become a democrat, we will sent you to congress." I was made to feel in a great many ways what it

cost me to hold to the Republican Party; and I also presume that when I was associating with northern republicans I was thought by them to be a “carpet-bagger.”

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### The Negro Question

Among the interesting characters in Pensacola was Colonel Tarble. He came to this town in the spring of 1874, the same year I did, and opened a ship chandlery store with a man by the name of Hickey. I think they drank up the profits of the store and some of the principal. After their failure the colonel opened a livery business. He had a keen knowledge of horses; he knew more of a horse after looking him over ten minutes that I would after using him a year. After that he went into politics and was elected mayor of Pensacola, and about 1880 was appointed collector of customs for the port. Later he lost his official positions and went to the city of Chicago, just prior to the Columbian Exposition, and opened a very fine livery stable on the north side; but this like many other promising ventures made at that time in Chicago, proved a failure.

The colonel fell in with some real estate sharps of Chicago who thought an honest dollar could be turned in trading Florida lands to people in Wisconsin and Michigan who wished to move to a warmer climate and own an orange grove. I met the colonel one day when I was temporarily in Chicago and he requested me to come and visit him at his office on Dearborn Street, which invitation I accepted, and we talked over old times in Pensacola. He told me that some parties in Lansing, Michigan, wished to trade six or eight houses in that city which they claimed had cost them \$8,000 each, and a farm of six hundred forty acres, for a Florida cattle ranch. He said that Colonel Chipley would sell ten thousand acres of railroad lands on the Perdido River for seventy-five cents per acre and that if I could buy the land that he would do the rest. After I had become "wise" to the colonel's game I told him that I could not afford to go into any such transaction and therefore declined the proposition. Later the colonel moved to Pensacola and in talking with him just after that event, in 1905, I happened to remember that scheme, and I asked him how his trade with the Michigan parties turned out. He replied: "I did not trade with them." I asked, "How did that happen?" "Well," he said, "I went to Lansing and saw the houses and the farm, and they were good. I then obtained an option on the land from Colonel W.D. Chipley, land commissioner for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and also transportation to bring them down and take them back. I brought the parties to Pensacola to see the proposed ranch, which was adjacent to the Perdido River. I quartered them at the Escambia Hotel, made them somewhat acquainted with the town, its shipping and its bay, from all of which they received a favorable impression. After they were rested from their trip I hired the best team and surrey available and took them out to view the land. That also made a favorable impression upon the gentleman. I had fixed the price of the land at \$10 per acre, which I assured them I considered very cheap considering the fertility of the soil. The parties began to "warm up" and develop their scheme for raising cattle; the number of head the land would support; the buildings they would need to erect for their protection. I began to consider the deal as consummated, and was puzzling myself as to what I should do with the fine houses in Lansing. One of the investigating gentlemen said it would be necessary to have a house build on the ranch for the man who should take charge. Just as they were leaving the land they saw a clearing with a comfortable farm house on it, and they suggested that they would like to stop there and

get a drink of water. The suggestion was complied with. One of the gentlemen visitors concluded that this particular house would be a desirable one for their ranchman, and asked the owner how long he had lived there and how much land he owned. The man replied that he had homesteaded his farm, which comprised one hundred and sixty acres, and that he had lived there five years. The gentlemen next asked him what he would sell it for, and received from the farmer the reply that he wanted to sell mighty bad and go to Choctawhatchee where his wife's people lived and where he had been offered a good chance to work. "What will you take for your place?" asked the newcomer. "Well," said the rancher, "it's a good ways up there, and if you'll buy me out -" "What have you?" was the question. "Well, I have five cows, forty sheep, and one hundred bushels of corn in the crib, and that horse which you see there tied to the fence [Colonel Tarble told me it was worth a good hundred dollars] and the furniture in the house, all except my wife's feather bed, which she wants to take with her. I'll sell you the whole thing as it stands for \$400." "Silence took possession of this party," concluded Colonel Tarble, "until I suggested that we return to town. Little conversation occurred on the ride back. Arriving at the hotel, I asked the parties if they wished to return to Chicago that night, and received the reply that the sooner they got out of town the better for them. There's many a slip between the cup and the lip," mused the colonel.

After a residence of some thirty-three years in Florida, I am convinced that it possesses one of the pleasantest climates in the United States. I think it would be approximately correct to say that out of the three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, that three hundred may be counted upon for pleasant weather, and the remaining sixty-five days would not be all uncomfortable; for cold and disagreeable weather when it does come, is of short duration, seldom exceeding three days at one time.

This mild climate may in a measure be the reason why matters move a little slow in Florida. The railroads are usually behind time with their trains, the helper is always a little late, and things don't happen at the time calculated, but a little later. It is of no uncommon thing for local trains to halt almost anywhere to accommodate its patrons. On a certain occasion our train waited a considerable time before the gate of a pretentious farm house. It was supposed that some person of importance was the cause, and when a large and impressive woman came down the walk followed by an obsequious retinue of darkies, the passengers considered that the delay was justifiable. When the lady in the case was seated, she informed some of her acquaintances on board that she was on her way to town with several dozen eggs; that she lacked but one to complete the number she was to deliver; she was aware that one of the hens was on a nest and she simply had to keep the train waiting until she could secure that egg.

Another time an obliging conductor hearing a young woman lady passenger exclaim in delight over the masses of purple flag which bordered the swamp, stopped the train and secured a generous supply of the iris, which certainly pleased the girl, and none of the passengers were heard to find fault.

In this part of the country, when one gives his servant orders to be on hand at a certain hour he finds that he will be behind time even if he does not fail to put in an appearance

altogether. When I first went to Florida there was many an old “mammy” and many an old “uncle,” relics of the time “before de wah,” and these were the most delightful servants that I have ever known.

The domestic servants at my home had quarters and kitchens about two hundred feet from the house, and it is one of the pictures clear in my memory of sitting at the breakfast table and looking out of the window at the files of darkies bringing in the breakfast. A stout middle-aged Negress would head the line bearing the chief dish, and behind her in order of size followed the others, down to the little pick-ninnies who came for an open eyed stare into the room were the quality were waiting. But such servants are gone; now most of them sleep the long sleep with their old masters, their progeny, however, live without care of responsibility. The young Negro of today comes and goes where he listeth; he is useless to his employer and to himself; he simply vegetates. What the future may have in store for these thoughtless creatures, time along can disclose. When attending college at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, the Literary and Debating Club connected with our law class, had a long struggle over the subject “Resolved that the whole human race did not originate from one pair.” I have detailed this in a preceding chapter but the arguments apply to the Negro question. I chose the affirmative and was a leading disputant on that side. This was in 1858, when the whole country was racked by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. I gave the subject all the research possible in that literary center, and the question was argued by the most brilliant men in that city, including Senator Harlan, Henry Clay Dean and numerous lawyers and divines. I became thoroughly convinced that the balance of authority and evidence was in favor of the contention. I believe that the mulatto is a hybrid, being a cross which degenerates and devitalizes, and that the mixture of the races has the effect to lessen the capacities of the Caucasian and does not advance the Negro race.

In his natural state the Negro is invested with singular temperamental endowments, which are very different for those of the Caucasians. For one thing he appears to be devoid of all regard or estimation of truth, a virtue highly esteemed by the white race. I never knew a Negro who would not lie, even when unnecessary. I have known among them, however, many who were magnetic and brilliant orators, though the majority use a few high sounding phrases and play upon popular ideas. When control over the Negro is removed he is a most vain and insolent animal and I feel sure that his future in the United States will be one of bloodshed, crime and sacrifice of life. That the Negro will live peaceably and enjoy even equality with the whites, I do not believe. I do not adopt this view through any pessimistic fear that the white race will ever treat the Negro unfairly, but I do not believe that the black man will ever be content to live simply in political equality with the whites. His over-bearing egotism will not allow him to do so. I am not possessed of a dislike for the Negro on account of his color, but my estimate of him is due to his character and habits, therefore I fear for the future. The people of the south may keep him under control for a limited number of years, but his innate egotism will eventually break all control, and then will come the issue. How it will come, when it will come, none can tell, nor what the end will be.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### Securing Government Appointments for Friends

My wife and I went to a session of the Chautauqua Society at DeFuniak Springs, Florida, to find some relief from the monotonous life at Escambia. While there I chanced to make the acquaintance of the Rev. Geo. Collier, who had served in the Civil War as Chaplain in the regiment of which William McKinley was major. This gentleman was very desirous that Mr. McKinley should be nominated the next year for the presidency, and he tried hard to inject into me some of his enthusiasm on the subject. I told him that I had had my last experience in politics and that I should attend no more Negro conventions. The next year he came to my house in company of his wife and said that Major McKinley wished him to visit me and induce me to work for his nomination. He showed me a letter in which McKinley stated that he desired the acquaintance of an honest, influential man upon whom he could rely, should he be elected, for advice as to the appointments to office in Florida, and he therefore wished him to visit me, so there would be no mistake, and if he should find me the man he needed, to urge me to go as a delegate to the St. Louis convention in his behalf.

I told Mr. Collier as in my previous talks with him that I would not again become a member of a Negro convention, but after great persuasion on the part of my guest, listening to his statements regarding the fine character of McKinley and the intimate relations that he held with him, that my help would place me first in the esteem of the future president among the citizens of Florida, all this added to the personal entreaties of Mr. Collier made me reverse my judgment and I promised to make an effort to secure a delegation from our state which would vote for McKinley's nomination at St. Louis. I had been in touch with the republican politics of Escambia County for several years. When I sought out the republican leaders and told them what I would like to do, I was informed by them that they did not believe that a McKinley delegation could be had from the state. It had been impressed upon me by Mr. Collier that as Florida held the first convention to elect delegates that if a delegation favorable to McKinley could be secured here it would serve to influence those states which would hold conventions later.

I was told on the other side that ex-vice president Morton had sent twenty thousand dollars into Florida to be distributed among politicians "where it would do most good," towards obtaining a delegation in his behalf; that an emissary had been all through the western part of the state, distributing a good part of that fund, and it was the opinion that every republican Negro politician had been "fixed." It was considered useless to hope to change the trend of politics as they then stood. I informed these pessimists that I was inclined to assist Mr. McKinley and that if they would help me that we would send a delegation to St. Louis pledged to nominate our candidate; I agreed to pay suitable persons their expense if they would go into the different counties west of the Apalachicola River to stimulate efforts in electing delegates to the republican convention to be held at Tallahassee, in the month of April. These state delegates would in their turn elect the delegates to be sent to the National Convention to be held by the republicans in St. Louis that year.



It was decided that it would be best to hold the county convention at Escambia, where I lived, on the supposition that the leaders of the different factions of Negroes could be more easily controlled there than in the city of Pensacola where free access could be had to numerous saloons. A passenger train was chartered on the railroad to bring the delegates and others to the convention. I asked the trustees of the colored church for the use of their building, which was granted after my becoming personally responsible for any damage done to their property.

The Negro is very shrewd and unscrupulous in politics. When the certificates of the delegates were handed in from the different precincts, it was discovered that the call for the meeting to be held in one precinct of the city of Pensacola stated that the meeting would be held at 1 o'clock on a certain day of the month, without stating whether it would be 1 a.m. or 1 p.m. of that date, so that precinct had two sets of delegates to represent it in the convention. One meeting had been held at 1 a.m. and the other at 1 p.m.

After the expenditure of a large amount of oratory the convention was finally organized and its officers elected. On one occasion in the meeting, a lawless Negro threw a missile of some kind which struck the side of the room near my head. I arose and walked over to the vicinity of the presiding officer and told the convention that the building belonged to me, that I had given the convention the use of it, but that I would permit no lawless or turbulent conduct in the room. Quiet was restored for a time but it became evident later that four or five burly, hot-headed Negroes were bent on breaking up the meeting in a row. At last one of them seized the table in front of the presiding officer and broke a leg from it. I arose and ordered the whole convention to leave the room, which order was obeyed. I then informed the disturbing element that I should go to the office and have all these rowdies arrested. I went to my office, but I was unable to get the sheriff by telephone as he was absent, so after spending a few moments in trying, I returned to the convention hall, to find that the troublesome negroes had disappeared, and then I invited the delegates back into the hall, so the convention was reorganized with the disturbing element absent. After this I stood by the presiding officer and dictated his mode of procedure. A full quota of delegates was elected to the Tallahassee convention. John Eagan and some of the other republican leaders among the white men disappeared from the convention when I went to call the sheriff, and did not reappear to take part in the farther proceedings. In this manner thirteen delegates were secured from the county of Escambia to the state convention to be held at Tallahassee. It was undoubtedly the intention of the unruly element to break up the convention in a row and hold another of its own, but my vigorous intervention foiled their plans.

The McKinley forces, as I remember, were equally successful in all the counties west of the Apalachicola River. The outcome of the Escambia convention gave me some reputation as a ruler of Negro conventions. The state of Florida west of the Apalachicola River sent to the Tallahassee convention a solid McKinley delegation numbering about forty. The total number of delegates in that convention was about one hundred and twenty. The delegates east of the river were about equally divided between McKinley and

Morton, leaving the delegates in the state standing about eight for McKinley and forty for Morton. Upon my arrival at Tallahassee to attend the convention I was taken with another attack of sick headache, which lasted about twenty-four hours. When I was able to attend the convention it had been organized. The turbulent Negroes of the Morton faction were exhibiting their chagrin in powerful oratory. There was no way to stop this display of forensic eloquence except by driving them from the room or allowing them to talk until they were exhausted. This flow of oratory was kept up till after midnight, when the Morton faction under the lead of "Jim" Coombs seceded from the convention, leaving to those remaining in the room, the duty of electing delegates and performing the other services that were customary. John G. Long, Dennis Egan, and I, along with a Negro were elected delegates for the state at large.

When the delegates from the counties of the first congressional district were assembled it was found that the chairman of that district was among those who seceded and when sent for he refused to attend the district convention. Another delegate from the district was nominated and elected to act in his stead, and two congressional delegates were duly elected. Those who seceded from the convention belonging to the first congressional district held a meeting and elected two delegates also to the convention; I think these two were "Jim" Coombs and a Negro from Pensacola named Mark White. The second district elected McKinley delegates. The state of Florida went to the St. Louis convention with eight delegates pledged to his support, and the two contesting delegates whom I mentioned as supporting Morton. This made a contest at St. Louis and much to the surprise of everyone that had anything to do with it, the two Morton delegates were admitted to seats in the convention to the exclusion of the two delegates regularly elected; on the ground that the seceding convention was the regular one because it was called to order by the chairman of the congressional committee, who had refused to perform that duty for the regular congressional convention.

When I attended the St. Louis convention my wife accompanied me. We had engaged accommodations in a private hotel free from the great crowd that was in the city at that time, and we had very pleasant quarters there.

The convention met in a large hall erected for the purpose. I found that a few men ran the whole business and that the other members of the convention had very little to do with the planning of the resolutions, the work being done by a few men in committee. The most vital resolution was one concerning the money question. A large number of delegates, especially from some of the western states and mining territories, were in favor of the free coinage of silver. I think that this craze which affected a large part of the population of the United States was composed principally of the same men who had at the preceding presidential campaign favored the issuing of greenbacks in unlimited quantities, so as to supply all the need of money to the country and the individuals. I was uncompromisingly opposed to both schemes; I believed that gold was the only metal that represented real money among the commercial nations of the world; that any substitute for gold in the way of coining silver and printing paper should be used only to represent gold in possession.

The debate on this money question occupied more of the convention's time than any other subject. The views of McKinley had never been fully expressed on this question, though he was generally believed to be in favor of placing the country on a gold basis. The leaders among the delegates advocating free coinage of silver occupied the attention of the convention nearly one whole day under the determined lead of Senator Teller of Colorado, Cannon of Utah and some others. These finally concluded to secede from the Republican Party and to take their followers over to the democrats. Apparently not much effort was made to combat their arguments but they were allowed the floor and the chance to talk until like the Negroes in a southern convention, they should talk themselves into physical exhaustion; then the vote of the resolution in favor of gold as the basis of the country's coinage was carried by a large majority.

The advocates of silver coinage, with Senator Teller in the lead, took their defeat most seriously. As they sat with tears running down their cheeks, they reminded me of scenes I had witnessed in my younger days, of emotional persons at Methodist revival meetings. They arose finally in a very spectacular manner and announced that they seceded from the Republican Party, that they could not stay with it and be particeps criminis in the ruin of the business of the country which would be sure to follow. Their departure reminded me of the seceders from the Tallahassee convention as they had marched out of the hall a few months before. The seats of the Florida delegates were on the right side of the main aisle, and as the seceders passed me I called to them: 'WHEN YOU GET OUT, STAY OUT, DON'T COME BACK.' I was so disgusted with what I believed to be their insincere talk. They believed that the industries of their sparsely settled territories would be injured by want of a market for the silver bullion that was being extracted from their mines, and they would sacrifice the best interests of their own country at large for the petty interests of their own particular section. They were undoubtedly doing what they thought they were compelled to do in order to retain their seats in the United States Senate, whatever might be their honest convictions upon the question at issue.

After this historic episode, the nominations for the presidential candidate were in order. A number of the delegates who prided themselves upon their oratorical ability arose to second the nomination. Morton also received a nomination. When the voting took place each state delegation was called upon to announce through its spokesman the vote of that state, the states being called in alphabetical order. When the state of Florida was called I told the Negro who was spokesman for our delegation to answer "eight votes for McKinley," which he did. Then Jim Coombs arose and asked that the delegates from Florida be polled. Each delegate arose as his name was called and announced for whom he voted. The corrected vote showed that Florida cast six votes for McKinley and two votes for Morton, these two were Coombs and White.

The announcement of the vote of the convention showed that McKinley had a large majority, and but one ballot was necessary to secure his nomination. One ballot was also necessary to nominate the vice-president, the choice of the convention being Mr. Hobart of New Jersey. This practically concluded the duties of the convention.

John G. Long was very anxious to be a member of the national republican committee. He practically controlled the four Negroes in our delegation, and would dictate the membership from our states on the different committees. I had no farther ambitions in a political way in Florida, and did not choose to oppose any of his designs. If I had anticipated his course later I would have made strenuous efforts to block his game, and with such efforts on my part, I believe that a different result would have been accomplished in our committee. I desired to be on the committee to notify McKinley of his nomination, but such did not appear to be Mr. Long's pleasure and I was too proud to ask any favors. It seems that the chairman of the state delegations from states that had no republican congressmen or senators, had met together and agreed among themselves that they would control the political patronage of those states. This I was informed had been agreed upon, though I had no evidence of it except as circumstances developed in the state of Florida after the inauguration of McKinley.

At the Tallahassee convention Dennis Eagan, who had been the chairman of the state republican committee for a great many years, and had remarkable control over the Negro politicians of the state, declined a re-election and he offered the name of John E. Stillman as his successor, in a speech in which he complimented Mr. Stillman as one worthy of every confidence and esteem. Stillman was unanimously elected, due I think to Mr. Eagan's recommendation. While he was favorably known in the eastern part of the state, up to that time he was almost unknown in the western part. Mr. Long, in his efforts to control the politics and federal appointments in the state, conceived that it would be necessary to have a state committee which would obey his orders, and his first move was to promote harmony in the party. He suggested that a certain number of the committee, there being one member from each county, I think some forty-five in all, should resign and that Morton men, or seceders should be appointed in their places. This would give each faction twenty-one votes, and the chairman would have the casting vote. This proposition was argued by Long until it was agreed to. Finding that he could not control Stillman, he felt it was necessary to get him out of the way. He therefore persuaded John Eagan to resign as member from Escambia County, and have a Morton man appointed in his place; which was done. When a state committee meeting was called and Stillman was deposed from the chairmanship a tool of Long's was elected in his stead. John Eagan had just enough Irish treachery in his make-up to betray his brother and the many friends who had trusted him to carry out their plans, nor did he let me know of his intended treachery. When the conditions had thus been arranged to Mr. Long's liking he thought he would be the exclusive dispenser of national patronage in Florida. On the pretext that republican politics in the state required it, a meeting of the state committee was called; the real purpose of this being to remove Stillman from the chairmanship and to elect a Morton man to the place; which was promptly done. Mr. Stillman was too honest and independent to lend himself to Mr. Long's purpose and he in consequence was ejected from the machine. Until this time I had no realizing sense of the power of "the machine." I found it very difficult to have McKinley make an appointment which it opposed; however Dennis Eagan was appointed postmaster at Jacksonville, and Stillman was appointed collector of customs at Pensacola and both of these appointments were very satisfactory to me.

It was some time in June after McKinley was inaugurated that Sheppard wrote urging me to help him to an appointment as United States district attorney, but a short time after that I learned that Coombs and Sheppard had made up with each other and that the latter had accepted the appointment of collector of customs at Apalachicola. About the same time John Eagan asked me to recommend him for United States district attorney for northern Florida. I told him I would do so providing Sheppard had accepted the appointment of collector of customs at Apalachicola. I wrote Sheppard and found that the report was true. At the death of John Eagan, Sheppard was appointed United States district attorney and later upon the demise of Judge Swain he was made United States district judge for the northern district of Florida, by President Roosevelt.

Up to this time I had never met Mr. McKinley and concluded that I would go to Washington and see him. Senator Mallery took me to the White House and introduced me to the president, who was very gracious; and informed me that Mr. Collier, who had been instrumental in securing my services for the campaign, was one of his dearest friends. I told him that my object in coming to Washington was to ask him to appoint John Eagan United States district attorney; he asked who Mr. Eagan was and his qualifications for the place, and I informed him that he was a brother to Dennis Eagan, was a bright lawyer who had been most active in republican politics, and had helped me secure a Florida delegation for him. Then the president took a card from a pigeon hole of the desk at which he sat, filled it out with the necessary information, and told me that he would have Mr. Eagan's appointment sent to the Senate in the morning; this was done and the appointment confirmed on the same day, which was a very unusual occurrence. My success with the president in this instance led me to believe that he would recognize the obligation he was under, and that he would favor me whenever I made a strong effort to secure the appointment of a friend.

At the application of several aspirants for political office I gave them my written endorsement and made no personal application to the president until it came to the appointment of United States Marshall. T.F. McGourin desired that office; he had been of great service to the party and had made strenuous efforts in behalf of McKinley. I had assured him at the Tallahassee convention that he should have this position. He had antagonized Long by his independence and refusal to be dominated by him; I believed him to be a straight-forward, honest man; he was however of a nervous temperament and became quite insistent that his claims should be presented; this was done, in time and his endorsement filed. At his urgent solicitation I decided that I would go and see the president about it, though the commission of the present democratic incumbent would not expire for some six weeks. I went to Chicago with my wife and from there to Washington, via Sandusky, Ohio, where Mr. Collier lived. The latter gave me a letter to the president in which he recited his having visited me at his [the president's] request, and the latter's promise that if I would work for him he would recognize me in federal appointments in Florida.

When I arrived in Washington I was admitted to the president without the intervention of any senator. After some pleasant conversation I told the president the object of my visit at that time, and handed him the letter from the Rev. Collier; this latter gentleman was also

a firm friend of Mr. McGourin. The president took the letter and wrote on the back of it, signed his name to what he had written, put it in an envelope, sealed it, handed it to me and said: "Take this letter to Mr. Griggs, the attorney general."

During our talk the president had said that the democrats were coming so manfully to his support in the matter of the Cuban War that he did not like to remove a democrat from office; he said also that the present marshal's commission would expire in about a month and when that happened he would feel at liberty to appoint a republican.

Believing that the endorsement of the president on Mr. Collier's letter was a direction to the attorney general to appoint McGourin when the present incumbent's term should expire, I took the letter, thanked the president very warmly for granting my request, and carried the letter to the attorney general. I endeavored to learn from the latter whether the endorsement was a direction for the appointment of McGourin, but he evaded a direct answer; he said however that my man should have the appointment. I returned home, as confident that McGourin would get the appointment as if I had brought it with me. I told that gentleman that the place would be his when the term of the present incumbent should expire, but when that time had elapsed he was not appointed, and he became very much worried and excited about it. Finally I persuaded John E. Stillman to go to Washington and see what the trouble was. It turned out that Long had been determined that McGourin should not be appointed to the office, as he had a candidate of his own for the place; it was apparently a test case and the president appeared unwillingly to act. I gave Mr. Stillman a letter to the president, detailing McGourin's claims to the appointment, but he still refused to act. Stillman then went to Mark Hanna, who was a friend of his. Mr. Hanna did not like Long, and he went to the president and secured McGourin's appointment, apparently against the president's inclination. The latter was evidently more concerned in preparing for his re-nomination for the presidency than in keeping his word. There is no doubt in my mind that when I went to see the president and gave him Mr. Collier's letter, that he intended me to believe that he would appoint Mr. McGourin as I had requested, and that he was acting a falsehood. This incident destroyed all my confidence in McKinley's honesty and integrity, but he was too much of a politician to keep faith with those whom he had used to obtain his high position.

Not very long after this incident the postmaster at Pensacola died, creating a vacancy and the necessity for a presidential appointment. I decided that a young man in the employ of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad freight office would make a good postmaster, and I suggested that I would recommend him for the place. He appeared pleased with the idea, but after a few days declined to make the fight for the office. I then selected Mr. Rix Robinson for the position, when I learned that the man whom I had first chosen had entered the lists for the appointment supported by the influence of Long. This made the fight very interesting to me. I persuaded Mr. Stillman, the collector of the port of Pensacola, to go to Washington and help me secure the position for my candidate. We called upon the president and he assured us that he had just made an appointment but could not remember the name of the party. By this time I did not believe all that McKinley told me. He stated that the postmaster general had just left with the appointment; so we proceeded to hunt up Mr. Smith, and found him in the general post

office building. We sent our cards to him and were promptly admitted; he informed us that no one had been appointed and the Mr. Robinson's name was well recommended. We saw that the postmaster general did not know of the intrigue of John G. Long, and when we informed him of the situation he invited us to call on him the next afternoon, and said that in the meantime he would endeavor to have the appointment of Mr. Robinson made. The next day we called upon him as per agreement and he informed us that the appointment had been made as we wanted it. This was the last occasion I had to ask President McKinley for any political favors.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### Our New Corporation

In the fall of the year 1893 I returned to Escambia. I learned through a Mr. Cyrus Orr that my partners, the McDavids, had offered their interests in the holdings of Skinner & McDavid to the father-in-law of Mr. Orr, Colonel Milner, of Birmingham, Alabama, on a basis of \$107,000 for their half interest in the property. Previous to this I had notified them that I would not continue the partnership that I had with them for a term longer than that mentioned in the articles of co-partnership; the terms expiring in November of that year. I had informed them that I would organize the business as a corporation, if they would consent to do so. Upon receiving this information from Mr. Orr, I immediately wrote Mr. John McDavid that I had been informed of the offer by himself and his brothers to Colonel Milner, and that if they wished to sell their interest in the firm, I would pay them the price they asked if we could arrange the payments satisfactorily. They replied that they would sell their interest at the price stated. I proposed that they take about twelve thousand acres of land which the partnership owned at Choctawhatchee, and that I pay them \$10,000 in cash, assume the debts of the firm, and pay them \$10,000 a year until the whole amount should be paid; that I would organize the property into a corporation with three hundred thousand dollars capital, that I would place one half of the stock of the said corporation in the custody of the First National Bank of Pensacola as collateral to secure the notes for \$60,000, such notes to be payable \$10,000 with interest at six percent per annum. In consideration of this action on my part they were to deed to the corporation their interest in the lands belonging to Skinner & McDavid and give a bill of sale to said corporation of all the personal property of whatever kind or wherever found, belonging to said partnership. This transaction was effected and each of the several notes paid as they fell due. And the end of six years the bank returned to me the stock deposited with it to secure the payment of the notes.

In the new corporation there were as stockholders only three persons, my wife, my son, and myself; so our business was practically a close corporation. The change from partnership to corporation made no difference in our business or in the management of it. I attended to most of the business in the woods, and to furnishing logs for the mill. The profits in the manufacturing of lumber during these years were small; apparently there was an over production of southern pine lumber and it was sold at very small margins. The cost to us for logs cut upon our land was about \$2 per thousand feet less than the price of logs bought on the market; this of course left us a small margin in competition with other concerns which had no timber lands of their own. But this was very unsatisfactory to me, for I felt sure that in the immediate future the stumpage of pine lands would greatly increase in value. I made strenuous efforts to get the lumber manufacturers of the gulf coast to consolidate their interests in practically a trust company. I induced about sixty-six per cent of the manufacturers to enter into such a combination, but the jealousy and distrust among each other, and variable necessities of individuals rendered the plan inadequate to carrying the trust to a successful issue, so after spending some three years in efforts to solve the problem of over production and prevent under selling I gave up the attempt in disgust.



There prevailed in the south an idea that a man who had failed in some other business could make a success in running a sawmill; there were constant instances where lumber merchants, that is the man who bought lumber from the mills and shipped it abroad to dealers in Europe and elsewhere, would secure money from their correspondents and with it would assist one of these impecunious and impractical men, who were always ready but without means of their own to start a one horse sawmill business, and this beginning meant a steady down grade to bankruptcy. Hundreds of these futile attempts have I seen; efforts to get rich without capital and without experience in the manufacturing of lumber; while the fact is that to successfully operate a saw mill requires the highest order of administrative and executive ability and the man who is competent to construct, operate and make money in a sawmill, has the ability to enter upon and manage any other business successfully, of which he has the necessary training.

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## CHAPTER XX

### Aveno Mine

This visit to Mexico and my making the acquaintance of Mr. Godfrey led to some transactions which caused me great annoyance and considerable pecuniary loss. Godfrey was a pushing sort of man; and he boasted much of his knowledge of mines and also of his honesty. While I was with him at Valardena, he offered me a third interest in a mine of which he was then working, as a present. I thanked him abundantly but told him that I did not wish an interest in a jack-knife blade mine; that I had seen too many of them in my early days in Nevada. The mine in question appeared to be a well-developed fissure vein but it was only six inches to a foot in thickness and required a great deal of work to extract the ore. Godfrey claimed that it would yield a hundred dollars to the ton in gold, besides the silver. When I refused to meet his offer, he asked me what kind of a mine I would consider, and I told him that when he found a good fissure vein ten feet thick, that would yield \$25 to a ton in silver, he might write me and I would come and see it. He wrote some time later, hoping to interest me in the building of a smelter at Torreon, but that sort of investment did not attract me. Matters ran along until the spring of 1893, when he wrote me that he had found a mine much better than the hypothetical one I had described to him two years before and he wished I would come and see it. I went to Mexico, met Mr. Godfrey and saw the mine, which was situated twelve miles from the city of Durango. Two others by the name of Diaz were working it under a lease. A little town of two thousand inhabitants was situated at the mine. It was claimed that the mine had been worked for over two hundred years and that a depth of four hundred feet had been reached; that the foot-wall having never yet been found, the width of the vein could not be estimated, although in one place it had been developed fifty feet in width; and the ore it was asserted would clean up \$25 per ton of silver. We interviewed the station agent where Mr. Diaz made his shipment of silver, and he stated that the shipment amounted to about \$18,000 per month in silver, the product of this mine.

Mr. Diaz acting for the owner offered to sell me the mine for \$100,000 [Mexican] with an option running six months for \$5,000 [Mexican]. The option money was to count in the purchase price if I bought the mine, if not it was to be forfeited. The price included the reduction works, which were of the old fashioned kind, primitive in character and common in Mexico at that time.

I returned to Pensacola much elated over the prospect of a fortune. On my arrival I told a banker of that place where I had been, what I had seen and that I proposed to go to New York to try and place the mine there. He said: "Why not place it here?" I replied that I did not believe men could be found in Pensacola who would invest the amount necessary. He thought differently, and mentioned the names of half a dozen men who would invest \$10,000 each. He offered to pay one-half of the option money and to place the mine with Pensacola capitalists. I accepted his proposition and forwarded the amount necessary to secure the option. About two weeks later a party of seven prominent men of our city and I started to visit the mine.

On the trip somewhere after leaving Eagle Pass, Mexico, in the smoking room of the Pullman car, I made the acquaintance of a mining engineer named Ayer, from Chicago. He was traveling to Mexico in the interest of one of the largest manufacturers of mining machinery in Chicago. I introduced him later to the members of our party, and we talked with him considerably during the evening of matters pertaining to mining. Seeing that he was well posted in the business, the parties from Pensacola eventually concluded to employ him to go and see the mine and give his opinion as to its value and prospects independent of the report furnished by Mr. Godfrey in the first instance and of A.C. Payne, made after he had visited the mine at my personal expense.

The next morning we left Torreon for Durango, taking on Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Payne at Pedrisena. On arriving at Durango the party decided to stop there a day before visiting the mine, and give Godfrey time to procure teams to take us out to the mines. The Pensacolians enjoyed the city of Durango very much, finding it novel and beautiful. We left the city on the second morning after our arrival on our way to see the Aveno Mine. Arriving at the station about eight miles distant, some of the party chose to ride on horseback while others preferred the carriage. Reaching Aveno, the entire party was lodged in a large two story adobe building belonging to the mine and occupied by Mr. Diaz as a residence.

A young lawyer from Pensacola, from the time we entered the Republic of Mexico had been troubled with some malady, and he resorted to all the patent medicines which he could find. Each member of the party seemed to have some kind of medicine for his own particular ailments and these were freely contributed to the stricken individual. I judge that by the time we arrived at the Aveno Mine he must have swallowed at least a gallon of patent medicines recommended for about every disease to which this flesh is heir. By bedtime our party held a consultation as to what we could do for the sick man, and some additional drugs were obtained from the commissary. Between one and two o'clock the combined medicines began to take effect and the sick man was relieved but I observed that the patient had not lost a single meal since leaving Pensacola.

Godfrey and Payne amused us greatly telling mining anecdotes, a couple of which I had occasion to remember later on. One told by Godfrey was to the effect that a promoter trying to impress upon the mind of an expected purchaser that he was getting his interest in the mine at first cost, said: "I am letting you in on the ground floor." The possible buyer queried: "But how about the fellow in the basement?" The story that Payne gave was the charge of an English judge to a jury that had been listening to the evidence in a mining case which was being tried before them. "Gentlemen of the jury," said his honor, "you have listened to a great deal of conflicting testimony in this case. You alone are to decide the case from the evidence, but I wish to call your attention to the fact that there are three kinds of liars: the common liar, the damned liars, and *the mining engineer.*"

We spent the next day in examining the mine and the reduction works, which were quite extensive, also in acquiring knowledge of the past, present and future prospects of the mine. Mr. Ayers was employed by the Pensacola parties to extract half a ton of ore from

the mine, of its average grade, pulverize it and take it to St. Louis for reduction. A most favorable impression was made on all as to the value of this mine.

That night we returned to Durango and spent the next day in viewing it; the following morning our whole party started for the City of Mexico. The country and people were new to most of the party and therefore more interesting. When we arrived at the city, the entire party put up at the Iturbide Hotel. One evening while there all met in my room and agreed to the price, division and purchase of the mine and a contract was drawn up and signed by all interested. After a day or two spent in sight seeing, we left for home over the National Railway. At one station where there was a brewery our young lawyer of patient medicine fame got out to procure some beer. A big revolver protruded from his pocket, and was deftly extracted by another member of our party, who handed it to me for safe keeping. When the train was again in motion the lawyer was apprised of his loss; it was the opinion of all that some Mexican must have taken the pistol while the lawyer was hunting beer. After bracing his mind with legal reflections, he announced his intention to sue the railroad company for the value of the lost weapon. As he and his belongings were in the custody of the railway company it must be responsible to him for the robbery. All the party agreed with him as to the liability of the company, and he decided to bring suit as soon as he should reach Texas, where English was spoken.

Arriving at San Antonio, I stopped to visit my sister-in-law and her daughter, who were temporarily in that city, while the other members of our party kept on to Florida. Soon after when I reached Pensacola I was notified in writing by Mr. Brent that he would withdraw from his agreement to purchase the Aveno Mine, and in quick succession I was notified to the same effect by all, I think, of the other men who had signed the agreement to buy the mine. I felt very much disappointed, but was satisfied that it would be of no use to make any fuss about it, and I let the matter drop.

It seems that while we were in Mexico two banks in Chicago had failed, owing to bad management I think, and that this had brought about a panic in money matters affecting the whole country and resulting in serious loss. During our absence in Mexico, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad had withdrawn its deposits from the bank of which Mr. Brent was president; this deposit amounting to some \$30,000, the State of Florida had also withdrawn its deposits amounting to \$40,000. The general impression prevailed that all banks would issue certified checks and not honor individual checks. The bank was also involved in the liabilities of Mr. Baars for the purchase of timber, amounting to some two hundred thousand dollars, all these causes combined to put the bank in serious straits. During the summer it resorted to certified checks and refused payment of the checks of individual depositors in most instances. The money in payment of the mine, some \$60,000 would have to be drawn out of this bank, had we gone on with the purchase of the Aveno Mine. I made some effort in Chicago to preserve the option, and thought I might be able to accomplish the purchase of the mine, but B.R. Pitt, who had during his visit to Mexico become convinced of the value of the mine, at the last moment failed to respond and I had to give up the purchase, although having paid \$500 additional to have the option extended thirty days.

During the summer I was appointed by the Southern Lumber Manufacturing Company in connection with a Mr. Burton, to erect an exhibit of southern lumber in the Forestry Building of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. I selected from my lumber some very handsome varieties of curly pine, cypress and other woods, which I sent to Chicago. I entered into a contract with a firm at Meridian, Mississippi, to erect this exhibit, the design for which was made by an architect of that place, and adopted by the Southern Lumber Manufacturing Company. The exhibit was to be erected at the front entrance of the building, opening towards Lake Michigan. The space appropriated to us was forty-five feet square, and forty-five feet high and it should have made a very creditable appearance, but the work was so shabbily done by the contractors that I refused to accept it as a compliance with the contract. I had paid the contractors about half of the stipulated price before I saw the exhibit, then I refused to pay any farther sum except under instructions of the executive officers of the Association. On referring the matter to the company they sustained my position and refused to order me to pay anything further on the contract. I received a season's pass to the exposition, and as I spent the summer in Chicago I had abundant opportunity to visit the fair; one or two hours at a time would however make me so tired that I gave up frequent visits.

This Columbian Exposition was the finest effort of the kind I have ever seen, or ever expect to see, so since that time I have taken little interest in visiting others. There may be something in the future that will exceed it, but I do not think that such can occur in this generation. Certainly I do not expect to live to see it. The Court of Honor at night, with electric lights in full effulgence, and the fountains playing, was I think the most brilliant scene that my eyes ever beheld or can ever behold, unless it be my good fortune to gaze upon the golden streets of the New Jerusalem of which I have heard so much from people who could in the very nature of things know nothing about it.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### From Mexico to California

Concluding that I could help little in the settlement of the bank's claim against Mr. Schreyer, I returned to Escambia. A few months later the bank notified me that they had received an offer from him towards settling the claim, and inquired what I would do about it. I asked Mr. Brent if he wished to settle and he said that he did; I then offered to stand one-half the loss. A year later, when I was in Los Angeles, Cal., I received a telegram from Mr. Schreyer stated that if I would resume business with him he would come out there to see me. I wrote in reply that when I found a man dishonest I did not care to do any farther business with him. That to render business satisfactory and successful it was necessary that there should be confidence and honor on both sides, and I added that I did not wish to take any farther risk with him.

Some times prior to this I had made a personal effort to organize the interests of the lumbermen so that they need not be at the mercy and misrepresentation of the commission men, who largely handle the lumber products of the south. Knowing that our system of inspecting lumber was defective in many respects, I succeeded in perfecting the organization of the lumber manufacturers. We came to conclusions as to the specifications of grades, and adopted a form of charter by which we all agreed to be bound. Of this organization I was elected president.

In the fall of 1887 the contracting stevedores in Pensacola, some sixty in number, conceived the plan of organizing themselves into a combination or association by which they would control the loading of all vessels which came into the harbor for lumber cargoes. In a measure it was the purpose of the stevedore organization to nullify the benefits of our new charter-party. The contest between the two organizations became quite bitter in Pensacola. Many of the stevedores were not actual residents of Pensacola, but lived in Quebec, where they plied their trade in summer and came to Pensacola to follow it in winter. Our new charter-party gave the right of appointing the stevedore to the one chartering the vessel, as had formerly been the custom. Many evils had befallen the trade through the disuse of this custom, from which the shipper was often the sufferer.

Through the efforts of State Senator Mallory several laws had been enacted by the legislature, which looked as if they had been passed with the express purpose of enabling the stevedores to control the loading of vessels in the harbor of Pensacola. One was that no person should ply that trade without a license, and placing the licensing of stevedores in the hands of three men, called harbor commissioners, who were appointed by the governor. These commissioners assumed a great deal of authority which was not sanctioned by law, and they were inclined to favor the interest of the stevedores. I had to contend against this organization with even some of the members of our own association, who were disloyal to our interest and were trying to make political capital by working in favor of the stevedores. This contention lasted several months, then, owing to my tenacious fighting qualities we won the victory over the other organization and they gave up their efforts to control the loading of vessels.

The Southern Lumber Manufacturers' Association was organized in the winter of 1890 at New Orleans. I attended this convention and was made chairman of the committee on organization, and wrote the constitution and by-laws. This association was composed of lumbermen from all the southern states. At this writing [1906] the association has been in existence sixteen years and it has been of much benefit to the lumbermen of that section. I remained a member of it for several years, but finally I thought it too timid in protecting the rights of its members; it did not do as it should have done, so I dropped out of the association. In later years they followed the methods which I had so long urged.

After the Lumbermen's Convention had adjourned a large excursion boat was loaded with members and we were taken down the river to Governor Warmouth's plantation. We were to see the method of raising sugar cane and making it into syrup. This was all new to me and I found it both instructive and interesting.

After the adjournment of the convention my wife and I decided that we would make a pleasure trip to Mexico. We went by way of San Antonio and Laredo to Monterey. The hotel accommodations at the latter place were quite inferior to those in the United States, but the town was novel and we enjoyed the sight seeing very much. We went to the baths of Topo Chico while there. The waters of these baths affected my wife badly, as they produced an inflammation in a sore on one of her feet caused by her shoe. We were unable to purchase a shoe that was suitably easy, which made it very uncomfortable for her. We therefore completed our visit to Monterey and went to Saltillo, and remained overnight. This place was but a short distance from Buena Vista, the battle field where General Taylor won his famous victory over General Santa Ana. This is a pleasant Mexican town.

From here we went through a desert country to San Luis Potosi, where we met a party of tourists from Iowa who were traveling in a private car. The governor of San Luis Potosi gave a reception which we all attended. That night I was taken with a very severe toothache, from which I suffered great misery. It was a very unfortunate occurrence at that time. I was in a strange country, knew nothing of the language, had no remedies, and did not know how to procure any. In the morning as we started with the Iowa party for the City of Mexico one of the ladies noticing my affliction, gave me a small bottle of tequila and told me to hold some of it in my mouth. I did this and it stopped the pain almost instantly. For ten years after this I kept constantly on hand a bottle of this remedy. I used it also as a panacea for headaches.

We arrived at the City of Mexico and stopped at the Jardin Hotel. This building had formerly been a convent but it had been converted into a resort for tourist. To it belonged a very fine garden, from which it took its name. There is no suitable sanitation for this city, nevertheless we found it a pleasant place to visit, and there is so much of novelty to interest the sight-seer. Our party made the acquaintance of Colonel Foster, who was an ex-confederate soldier, having gone to Mexico at the close of the Civil War. He had been commissioned a colonel by President Diaz and was evidently well regarded by him, having been instructed with many duties involving confidence, skill and discretion.

This gentleman procured admission for our party to witness the reception by President Diaz and his cabinet, of Baron Ketteler, newly appointed German Ambassador to Mexico, which was to be held in the Ambassadors' Hall of the president's palace. At one end of the hall, which was about a hundred feet in length, there was a raised platform, occupied by Diaz and his associates. We were also given positions here.

The baron entered the hall at the end opposite the dais; he was of good stature and of commanding physique and he appeared in the most gorgeous uniform I had ever seen. The president wore a handsome suit, the front of his coat being ornamented with numerous decorations which had been conferred upon him. He sat among the members of his cabinet who formed a semi-circle on the dais. Two lines composed of colonels of the Mexican army stood facing each other, and extended from the dais to the door through which the baron entered. He advanced four steps, took off his military hat and made a low bow; then he put on his hat, advanced four steps more, and went through the same ceremony. When he had accomplished half of the distance President Diaz arose from his chair and advanced to the steps. As the baron reached the platform, the president leaned over and gave him his hand to assist him to the dais. A little speech in Spanish was responded to by the president, and later he introduced the ambassador to several members of his cabinet, and invited him to a seat near him. After a few moments conversation the entire party retired to the president's rooms, adjoining the reception hall. These we had visited the day before; they had been furnished and decorated by order of Emperor Maximilian, and included the most gorgeous draperies and fittings which I had ever seen. Baron Ketteler was afterwards killed in Peking when the embassies of foreign nations were besieged by the "boxers."

That afternoon our party was received by President Diaz, an appointment having been procured by Colonel Foster. At the request of our party I consented to act as spokesman, Colonel Foster officiating as interpreter. This gentleman said he was a cousin of the Honorable John Foster, who had succeeded James G. Blaine as Secretary of State under President Harrison.

I have met Americans who claimed that President Diaz could speak and understand the English language, but the gentleman himself assured me of his inability to do so. The parlor where we were received was very richly and beautifully furnished. I recollect a table of solid silver which had been presented to the president, and I remember his telling me that General Grant had sent him word that he would come to his aid with one hundred thousand men, if he needed to drive Maximilian out of Mexico.

President Diaz I consider to be one of the greatest men of modern times. He was born, raised and educated in Oaxaca. He studied law and at one time was appointed Chief Justice of the Republic of Mexico, but he became involved in a revolutionary movement and had to flee the country. During his absence he was tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot.



After the interview I was conscious that President Diaz must have observed how very ignorant I was regarding the history of his country and himself. He recommended his native state, Oaxaca, if I contemplated investments in Mexico, saying that he considered it the richest of the states in gold and silver, and that coal was also found there in large quantities. He informed us that his government had granted a large concession of coal lands to an English company, in the state of Oaxaca, and that they were under contract to furnish coal in the City of Mexico at the price of \$11 per ton [Mexican money].

Later, when I was in the city of San Francisco, I bought a copy of the Overland Monthly which gave an account of General Diaz' return to Mexico. I regretted very much that I did not know of this story at the time I was able to interview him. It seems that although under sentence of death he resolved to return to his native land and lead another revolution. He sailed from New York to Havana, where he took passage on an American steamer for Vera Cruz under the name Dr. Blank. He had but just recovered from an attack of malarial fever, and was very weak when he entered the vessel. As soon as the steamer was well underway he took the purser into his confidence, and implored him to hide him so that he would not be recognized by any of the passengers. The purser, who was an Irish-American, secreted him in a little closet where he could not lie down, but supplied him with food which he had carried to his stateroom, ostensibly for his own use. It seems that the vessel touched at some point in Mexico before landing at Vera Cruz and a company of soldiers were put aboard at that place. This added to the anxiety of both the purser and of Diaz, and when the steamer arrived at Vera Cruz he determined to jump overboard and swim to shore. Attempting this he was discovered and a boat sent out from the vessel, which picked him up very weak and exhausted. When they were bringing him up the gang plank a lady saw and recognized him, and knowing the peril he would be in if he were seen by any of the Mexican soldiers, with quick wit she threw her cloak over him. The purser immediately returned him to his stateroom where he remained until another scheme could be concocted to get him to shore. A lot of flour in barrels was being unloaded from the steamer onto barges, and these were unloaded at the dock. Diaz managed to communicate with some of his trusted friends in the city and inform them of his precarious position. The purser procured some laborer's clothes, which Diaz put on and so disguised himself that his own wife would not have recognized him, and going down to the lower deck among the stevedores, he went to work as one of them, rolling flour on to the barge. When it was loaded he remained on the barge while it crossed to the dock, from where he managed with the aid of his friends to escape to his native city of Oaxaca, he and associates then starting an insurrection against the existing government. The president at this time was, I think, named Gonzalez; he had succeeded to the office on the death of Benito Juarez, known as the George Washington of Mexico.

At the time of Diaz' return, the misnamed republic was in a state of anarchy. For some fifty years revolution after revolution had reduced the country to a chaotic condition, where the citizens engaged in peaceful pursuits, such as farming and mining, were obliged to maintain forts and keep armed retainers, to protect themselves from the outlaws. Elections were of course a farce, and always have been there. Communications between the different states of the republic, owing to bad roads, was difficult and expensive. The governor of a distant state who was ambitious to become president would

start a revolution in his own state against the national government and march his army to the capital, overpowering the authorities and proclaiming himself president, then busy himself with any form of intrigue which might keep his position secure. Sooner or later would appear another ambitious pretender who would start a similar insurrection and the government would again be changed.

To prevent this easy recourse to revolution, Diaz subsidized railroads and telegraph lines which were built into insurgent districts thus affording necessary information, when incipient revolts were forming, and he was thus able to send troops to quell the uprisings before plans could be matured by the enemy. Before his time, without means of securing information and the difficulty of marching troops and transporting supplies through a mountainous district without roads, the chances of success was with the revolutionists.

Diaz also sent for the leaders of the banditti, inquired of them their approximate monthly income from the hazardous life they were leading; he asked if they would not prefer a safe life for the same pay, and offered to make them "rurales," a sort of rural mounted police. By this diplomatic means he changed a dangerous element into a body of efficient police, inasmuch as they were posted as to all the fastnesses which any other robbers might use, they were able to keep the country well cleaned of desperadoes, and Mexico became one of the safest places in the world for the travelers.

What will come to this great country after the death of this wise ruler is a serious problem. Will she be torn by instability and revolt as in times past, or will some other capable man succeed this strong and efficient head? No one can tell.

From the roof of our hotel, we could obtain some excellent views of Popocatepetl and the White Lady. Our party arranged to go to Vera Cruz by the National Railway, a road which had been built by English capital and engineers. We left in the morning and rode through the beautiful valley of Mexico and over the range of mountains to the east of it, to the city of Puebla. We found this a very interesting city, near which lies the battle ground where the French troops fought the Mexicans on the "cinco Mayo." We stopped at a hotel of modern architecture. It was nearly quadrangular in form and three stories in height. One side of our room looked out on a street and the other opened upon a patio or court. The rooms were entered from a gallery or hall, which ran around the patio. I was very much pleased with this hotel and we stopped here for three of four days.

One day I went to a bull fight, the first I had ever witnessed. As a bull fight it was the best I have seen, although I have witnessed several since. The bulls were black; firm, courageous creatures. I must own that my sympathies were with the bulls, which always met death, but unfortunately none of the matadors. One bull jumped over the fence, which was fully five feet high, and which encircled the arena. I did not enjoy the sight of the bulls goring the poor blindfolded horses. When a bull was killed a team of horses would be driven in, hitched to the hind legs of the dead beast and it was drawn from the arena. Then another bull bounded in to meet its fate.

Another day we went to the Pyramid of Cholula, which is nine miles distant from the city of Puebla. This pyramid is of quadrangular form, six or eight hundred feet on each side of the base. It is a subject of great conjecture, as no knowledge exists as to its builders or mode of construction. It suggests the period of the Egyptian pyramids although this is formed of dirt. It is about three hundred feet high and on its top is built a church bearing the usual Roman Catholic emblems. Around this pyramid there flourishes quite a large Indian village.

It is fifteen miles from Cholula to Popocatepetl, the extinct volcano, if I remember correctly. After spending the day viewing the pyramid and surrounding village we returned to Puebla. Near this city are the quarries of the beautiful Mexican onyx. There was a large and fine cathedral at this place, the interior of which was ornamented with much of this semi-transparent quartz. The dome of the cathedral was beautifully frescoed, and in the center of the dome was a cross studded with diamonds, which were easily and plainly seen from the floor.

From the main line of the National Railroad, leading from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, a branch some thirty miles long runs to Puebla; on this road are situated extensive mills which make serapes and blankets of brilliant colors, and are offered for sale by peddlers at attractive prices. At a town where the branch diverts, quite an industry was carried on in the manufacture of walking canes made from native woods and horn engraved by local artists.

We were now in the state of Tlaxcala, where in ancient times lived the tribe of Indians whom the Aztecs were never able to conquer.

We met the train going to Vera Cruz at this point and proceeded on our way to that city. We crossed vast plains which appeared to be very rich, and well cultivated, from a Mexican point of view. During the day I became afflicted with one of the terrible headaches to which I was subject at that period. It was so severe that my wife and I left the train at Orizaba and remained overnight at a hotel, the rest of our party going on to Cordova and spending the night there. The next morning I was partly recovered from my indisposition, so we took a drive among the orange groves and coffee plantations which flourish in this section.

We boarded the train that day for the City of Mexico. There are some heavy grades on this road between Orizaba and the plains of Tlaxcala. The locomotives used are of English make and of a style called double-enders. It is a peculiarity of this road that the government furnishes a company of soldiers to ride upon each train to protect it from banditti. I found our old acquaintance, Colonel Foster, in command of the company on this train. Another requirement made of the railroad is that they shall run a train load of pulque into the City of Mexico each day, this being a main article of diet for the Mexicans. We arrived at the City of Mexico that evening.

Through the kindness of Colonel Foster we were permitted to visit the castle of Chapultepec [Grasshopper Hill]. This castle had been fitted up regardless of expense by

the Emperor Maximilian as a summer residence for himself and the Empress Charlotte. Through some mistake, Colonel Foster who was to escort us through the palace was not present when our carriages arrived at the main entrance. We drove on over the picturesque road leading up the hill passed the soldiers in charge without challenge, and alighted at the doorway. There being no one to receive us, we walked in and rambled through the castle for some three hours. We went everywhere we chose and I suppose saw more of the castle than is the fortune of most tourists. There are, I believe, no finer fittings in any royal palace in Europe. I remember one stairway where the railings and banisters were of solid silver. In Charlottes' private hall, leading to her oriel room the walls and stairways were of onyx, and the railings and banisters were said to be of solid gold. The dreams of grandeur and greatness that filled the mind of the empress were to be ruthlessly dispelled by the capture and death of her beloved consort.

Near the center of the palace was a well which was said to reach the bottom of Chapultepec Hill. I presume a tunnel connected it there with the outside world. In the basement of the palace we saw stables cut out of the solid rock, extensive enough I should judge to accommodate a hundred horses, though none were kept there at that time. The stables themselves were elegant as were the carriage rooms. There were a bewildering number of beautiful apartments in the palace which I am not able to describe. I remember that the roof garden was filled with a variety of magnificent tropical flowers. We spend a most agreeable afternoon at the palace, free as we were to go where we wished and no one to say, "You cannot enter here."

At the national museum in the City of Mexico is the state chariot of the Emperor Maximilian and his dinner plate of solid silver. My recollection is that the outside of the carriage is also of silver. In this museum were the Aztec Calendar Stone and the stone upon which the ancient Aztec priests made their human sacrifices. There was a gallery of pictures in the City of Mexico said to excel any other on the American continent. The mineral exhibition there was the finest I have ever seen. The cathedral holds many paintings usual to such religious edifices. Altogether the trip to Mexico proved very interesting and instructive to me. All that I saw was new to my eyes and very different from what I had ever seen.

I renewed my acquaintance with Mr. Richard Guenther who was at this time Consul General for the United States to the Republic of Mexico. During the short time he had resided in this country he had acquired sufficient knowledge of the Spanish language to be able to deliver an oration in that tongue which he had given at the unveiling of a monument to the memory of Benito Juarez. It was a most beautiful monument in Italian marble, representing the dead patriot in a reclining position.

The Paseo Avenue from the Alameda Park to the Castle of Chapultepec, built by Maximilian for the empress, is a most beautiful drive extending from the city to the summer palace.

Knowing that I was interested in the lumber business, Mr. Guenther told me that he had an option on some four hundred thousand acres of pine land within fifteen miles of the

city of Durango; that is was represented to him that it would cut fifteen thousand feet of lumber per acre, and that a railroad was practical from the land to the city. I told him I was willing to go there and see if the representations were true or false, and if they were anywhere near the truth that I would take an interest in their purchase. Mr. Guenther said he had a partner living at Valardena engaged with him in mining and who was very familiar with the country around Durango, and spoke Spanish with fluency. He agreed to have him accompany me to these forests. I therefore arranged to have my wife go through to Los Angeles with the acquaintances from Iowa with whom we had been traveling. Mr. Guenther and his partner Mr. Godfrey were extensively engaged in mining and it was arranged that a mining engineer in their employ should meet me at Picardias with a team and take me to Valardena. The railroad from the Torreon station to Durango was not yet built and it was necessary to travel about a hundred and fifty miles by stage. This line passed through Cuencame about fifteen miles south of Valardena. We arrived about an hour after the stage passed. It would be two or three days before another would pass on its way to Durango, Mr. Godfrey therefore hired a Mexican to take us to that city and we started the next morning, traveled at a moderate pace and when night came stopped at a miserable, poverty stricken town and spent the night in very primitive and inhospitable quarters. The next morning our driver refused to go any farther, but insisted on returning to Cuencame. We "hustled around" and found another Mexican and engaged him to take us to Durango. The roads were very bad, the country and the people very poor, so the second night proved a repetition of the first. The next morning this driver also refused to go farther and we were obliged to hire still another team to get us to Durango.

On arriving at this place we found a passable hotel and were enabled to take a bath, which we certainly needed after the two days' ride through such dust and dirt. We spent as much as two or three days' time trying to learn from the parties to whom we were referred, the exact location of the lands for which we were looking. The governor of the state of Durango tendered us a couple of rurales, and we hired a cook. Thus it was that one morning five of us started to find the forests for which we were searching. The first ten or twelve miles we traveled toward the west; crossing plains which extended from the city to the Sierra Madre Mountains. We then began to climb the mountains which appeared to be of solid rock without soil or vegetation; there was a perceptible trail and that was all we had to guide us on our way. We had carried a little water with us, which enabled us to take an afternoon lunch, but none of the party so far as I could learn, knew the country ahead of us. After dark we arrived at a canyon said to be three thousand feet deep. I thought it was all of that before I got to the bottom. Our horses followed the trail down the canyon side in Indian file. It was so dark we could see but little of the dangers and we allowed our horses to pick their way as carefully as they chose. About eleven o'clock we reached the bottom. After following down the canyon about a mile we saw a light which proved to issue from a camp of lumber carriers, who were transporting boards from a saw mill to Durango. One of their cavalcades had stopped at this place overnight. The freighting was done by burros. To each side of these beasts of burden was lashed four boards, one end of this dragged on the ground. These boards were about five-eighths of an inch in thickness, twelve inches wide and about twelve feet long, and were whip sawed. The donkeys were driven along Indian file, and when the I saw the quality of the

lumber displayed in this line, I was given a poor opinion of the timber in this district; also the transporting facilities looked very discouraging.

Our party when arriving at this camp was thoroughly exhausted. It was estimated that we had traveled sixty miles from Durango since morning. I appeared to be the only one of the party who insisted on having something to eat before lying down. The other members of our party were so tired that they desired rest more than food. I had our provisions unloaded, a fire built and some bacon fried on the coals. We then ate heartily of our supplies, lay down on the grass of the canyon under the canopy of stars, and slept the sleep of fatigue until late in the morning. When I awoke I could find nothing of interest to do, so I began shooting at a mark with my revolver.

We ate a hearty breakfast and then the matter as to whether we should go farther was seriously debated. I told Mr. Godfrey that no timber in that God forsaken locality would interest me commercially and so it was agreed that we should return. We saddled our horses, mounted and rode out of the canyon. That day we made our way out of the mountains to a village; I have forgotten its name. A primitive iron foundry had been established here, the only one in that part of Mexico, although there is, within a few miles of Durango, a mountain of iron ore, which Humboldt in his day pronounced the largest visible iron ore deposit in the world.

The next day we traversed the valley to Durango where we arraigned to take the stage back to Cuencame. The coach was to leave at five o'clock in the morning. We paid for our passage and the stage company agreed to have us called early so that we would not be left, and to make double assurance we engaged a man at the hotel to wake us at the proper time. In the deep sleep of early morning we heard this garcon pounding at our door saying that the stage was leaving. I arose and donned my clothes quicker than Godfrey and with my valise in hand I started out just as the stagecoach made its appearance in the street in front of the hotel. It appeared to be loaded with women. There was no use in my trying to talk, as no one would understand me so I found a place on the back seat and listened to the jargon of voices. As the stage was about to leave Godfrey put in an appearance and then the speech was fast and furious. I afterwards learned from Godfrey that the man accompanied by enough women to fill the coach had made his application after we had procured our seats and that they had sold him the seats, our own included, counting on getting away before we appeared, thus making us pay again the next day and claiming that it was our fault that we had lost our places. The fare was some \$25.00 [Mexican] each.

These Mexican stages were built in imitation of the old Concord coach. They were drawn by one pair of mules on the pole and three horses abreast in the lead. The driver had conveniently placed near his feet about a peck of small cobble stones which he threw at the leaders as occasion required. As the morning broke and the sun arose Godfrey and the passengers came to better terms. When we had left Durango it had looked as if there might be a shooting match, but during the day all parties became quite friendly. About noon on the second day we arrived at Cuencame, where we procured horses to ride to Valardena. I stayed at this place some two or three days to inspect some mining

operations being carried on by Oshkosh capitalists. Mr. Godfrey and a mining engineer by the name of A.C. Payne were in charge of the enterprise.

The country between Picardias and Durango was very sparsely settled; there were a number of little towns that were very poor, dirty and unattractive. The International Railroad from Durango to Torreon was not built, but grading was being done. I saw nothing here to interest me in the way of mining and so I left Mexico to join my wife in California where she was waiting for me. I stopped but a short time in Los Angeles, but while there I visited Sierra Madre and also Santa Anita, the ranch belonging to "Lucky" Baldwin. While at the latter place I attempted with two others to drink a bottle of wine made in this district, thinking that the three of us could manage that quantity without deleterious effects, but after a limited trial I concluded that the safest way to carry the contents of that bottle would be in the bottom of the carriage.

During this trip we also visited Riverside and saw the noted groves of that place. In February of that year there had been a hard freeze for that section, which had caused the oranges to drop from the trees in great numbers. On Magnolia Avenue, a drive some ten miles long, which is bordered with orange groves on either side, the ground was literally covered with oranges which had fallen from the trees, owing to the extreme cold weather. This gave me an unfavorable impression as to the profits to be made from orange growing in southern California.

Before leaving California we visited San Francisco, where I found little to remind me of my former sojourn there in 1863-5. From San Francisco we went to the city of the Latter Day Saints; there I discovered an old acquaintance with whom I had roomed in 1864 when in Austin, Nevada. He had established a fine livery business in Salt Lake City and was well acquainted with many leading Mormons. He showed us about; taking us to the "Bee Hive," the Mormon Church and we were also escorted through the new temple, which was then building. Salt Lake City, with its broad streets bordered by flowing streams of water, its fine hotels and evidences of prosperity on every hand, impressed me very favorably. It appeared to me to be a city of great commercial importance.

It occurred to me to visit the station agent in Salt Lake City and make inquiries of him as to which train we should take in order to see the fine scenery I had heard lay between Salt Lake and Denver on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The agent told me that I should take the train leaving the city in the morning and to stop overnight at Grande Junction and then take the train again the following morning. I replied that I had been told that there was not much to see between Salt Lake and the Junction. He answered: "You asked me a straight question and I have given you a straight answer. If you think I don't know, take which ever train you please." I followed his directions and have always felt that it was owing to this advice that I had the pleasure of viewing the scenery, the most magnificent to me of any in America, if not the grandest I have ever seen.

When our visit was ended we went to take the early morning train for the east. In the passenger room at the depot we met a Mr. Dunstan, wife and children. These were pleasant acquaintance of my wife, she having become quite friendly with them while she

was in Los Angeles, and I was still on my trip to the Sierra Madre Mountains west of Durango in Mexico. They were very agreeable people and we traveled in their company until we left Denver for New Orleans. We passed through fertile fields of the Great Salt Lake Valley which were irrigated by the melting snows from the Rocky Mountains, until we began to ascent the range of mountains lying to the east of the valley. Scenic effects of sublime grandeur came gradually into view. The country appeared to be studded with ruined castles built of brightly colored rocks of the most fantastic architecture. I remember one canyon which looked as though great stone doors, hinged to the mountain's side had been swung open to let us pass through. We crossed the valleys of the Colorado and the Green Rivers, I believe, before we arrived at Grand Junction, some time after dark. At this town we obtained somewhat primitive accommodations at a new hotel some distance from the depot, where we spent the night. After breakfast the next morning we took the train for the east. I had a good impression of the country around Grand Junction, as the soil appeared to be very rich. I saw a large number of fruit trees and so judged that the valley would be a fine fruit district; this proved to be correct, as it is now recognized as a superior section for raising fruit.

At Glenwood Springs our train divided, one section taking the southern route over the Marshall Pass, which is some eleven thousand feet in elevation, and the other division, on which we traveled, taking the northern route by way of Leadville, where Mr. Dunstan wished to meet some acquaintances. In crossing the mountains we saw several inches of snow. We stopped at Leadville for a day. The hotel appeared to be closed for the season, but at one we were able to secure rooms; for our meals however we had to seek a restaurant. The altitude was quite trying to some of our party, I, myself did not take exercise for the fun of it. After leaving Leadville we passed through some fine scenery, our trip being through the Royal Gorge; in which flows a mountain stream, closed within high walls which were nearly perpendicular, the gorge in some places being quite narrow. The railroad crosses the river on a bridge, one end of which is supported by rods fastened to rocks above.

We arrived at Colorado Springs, and not being able to get accommodations at the Antler's Hotel, we went to the Alta Vista, which is near it. We took several excursions while in Colorado Springs. We went to a canyon where we hoped to see some beautiful falls, but were disappointed. We went to Manitou Springs and to the Garden of the Gods, in a three seated surrey drawn by four horses, and we very much enjoyed the ride. The scenery in the "Garden" is very grand and well worth a visit. I learned too late, that my old tutor and district judge of our moot court had a fine residence here. We also went to a cave where the formation was very unusual as well as attractive. The party entering the cave was under charge of a guide who pointed out the wonderful things to be seen.

From Colorado Springs we went to Denver, where I was surprised to find a town of such elegance. The buildings looked as though they might have been transported from Boston. We went from here for a one day's excursion to Georgetown and Silver Plume. The railroad building into this canyon held the greatest attraction for me. At one point there was a loop, the road above being brought in a curve back over the road below. At that



time this was considered a great novelty and a fine piece of engineering skill, covering the difficulty of too steep a grade.

In leaving Denver we separated from our traveling companions who had added so much to our pleasure of the journey. The Dunstan family went east to Chicago and Michigan. Mr. Dunstan was later elected lieutenant governor of his state. They lived at Hancock on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

We went to New Orleans by the way of Colorado Springs, Pueblo and the panhandle of Texas. In my early school days, the geography showed this panhandle as the “staked plain” or Great American Desert, I was surprised therefore to ride through a beautiful farming country with a rich black alluvial soil, as fine as that of Illinois or Indiana. Our route was through Fort Worth and Houston, where we struck the Southern Pacific Railroad for New Orleans and Pensacola.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### A Business Trip to Europe

I took the steamer from New York to Southampton and from there went to London. My object in coming to the metropolis was to find another agent to sell my lumber. After a little while I selected Messrs. Shadbolt & Sons, of London. I then decided to go over to Germany and see Mr. Schreyer. I took steamer to Rotterdam and went from there to Bremen by rail. I found Mr. Schreyer very contrary and entirely shameless as to his conduct. He appeared destitute of any moral honor. I interviewed the lawyer employed by Pensacola Bank and concluded that he was attorney for Bremen Bank and probably for Mr. Schreyer also. I left matters about as I found them and went back to London.

On my trip crossing the ocean I had made the acquaintance of a man by the name of Pratt. He was at the head of an advertising agency in Chicago. It seems that this firm advertised English productions in the United States for so much per year, making their own contracts with the papers, and to prove performance of his part of the bargain, Mr. Pratt brought copies of the issue of each paper to the advertisers in London.

I wanted to see something of Scotland and England in a sight seeing trip. Mr. Pratt was somewhat posted and we planned to take the trip together, going up through the trossachs of Scotland, coming back on the west coast to Liverpool, and from there to London through the lake country of England.

Our trip from London to Edinburgh was very interesting and I learned for the first time in my life what "Bonnie Scotland" meant in English, for it was surely most beautiful. The first night we stopped at Melrose on the bank of the Tweed, stopping at a friendly hotel where we met several American guests. In the morning we went to see the ruins of the Abbey; in fact it was pretty much all a ruin, but the carving of the windows and the doors was artistic and fine. We went down to the bridge and crossed the Tweed. We took a carriage and drove to Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott. This place was in a good state of preservation. There were displayed here many fine art exhibits which the author had accumulated in his life, and his fine library was intact. We were shown several groves on the hillside, the trees of which were said to have been planted by Sir Walter to represent the positions of the English, French and German armies at the battle of Waterloo. We found the rest of the country also very interesting and replete with the historic conflicts between the English and Scotch.

We took the train from Melrose to Edinburgh, where we put up at the Princess Hotel. We visited Holyrood and Edinburgh Castle where we were shown the little room, in which it is claimed that Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned. In the middle ages this castle must have been very difficult for the attacking party to storm, with the means of warfare then known. Three sides of the fortress were protected by almost perpendicular rock; the other side had formidable stone defenses, as well as being very steep. We drove in a carriage to the entrance of the castle, and then walked through the fortification.

Later we crossed the great bridge that spans the river Forth. It had several piers which I should think were a succession of cantilever bridges joined together. Because Mr. Pratt was in haste, being more devoted to business than to jaunting about the country sight-seeing, we did not take our proposed trip through the trossachs. We went from Edinburgh to Glasgow where I wished to see a Mrs. Bruce who was mother of my bookkeeper at Escambia. I had promised him to call upon her if I went to Scotland. We remained in Glasgow over Sunday, and Monday I went to Greenock to visit a brother of Mr. Bruce. He was manager of the Clydesdale Bank. I remained with him all night. He took me through a shipyard and showed me an iron ship then building. After an interesting stop at Greenock we went to Liverpool. It rained most of the time we were there, so we did not see much of the city. I cannot remember the name of the hotel at which we stopped but I do recall that it was finished in southern pine which looked very beautiful.

We took the train to Leamington, in historical England. I saw so much during the two or three days we spent there that my memory presents a picture like a bird's eye view. In the hall of the hotel where we stayed was a wainscoting of tile which represented scenes and characters in Shakespeare's plays. I thought them very fine and artistic. The city was a summer resort, and some medical springs were found in the vicinity. The next day we took a carriage and visited the ruins of Kenilworth Castle, where Amy Robsart was secreted by the Earl of Leicester and where Queen Elizabeth accidentally met the heroine of Sir Walter Scott's novel "Kenilworth" while being entertained by the Earl at this castle.

We did not go to Stratford on Avon for some reason. We visited the cliff in which an old hermit had dug out of the solid rock a den where he lived and died. We visited the residence of another of the nobility of England. The grounds of this place were very beautiful. The house was elegantly furnished, and on the walls hung the portraits of many of the ancestors of the family.

We also spent a day in viewing the Castle of Warwick. I have heard it stated that it was the finest residence in England. The families were away but we obtained permission to enter and were shown through the castle by the custodian. We gave this man a good tip and he pointed out to us all there was of interest. A heavy stone wall surrounds the castle enclosing as I remember two or three acres, surmounted in several places by towers for defense. In the center of the space encircled by the wall stands the castle. As we passed through the heavy iron gateway, a keeper took my companion's Kodak away from him saying that he could not enter with one. On each side of this gateway were lofty towers, with battlements on the top, where defenders could protect the entrance. These towers were entered from within the walls and were very strong. In the picture gallery were many portraits of the earls of Warwick and their families. The different rooms contained much elaborate furniture, works of art, etc., but the banquet hall interested me more than anything else. I recall its immense fireplace and the great dimensions of the room. The old Earl of Warwick was reputed to be a "king-maker" and I should judge that he might have feasted a regiment of his retainers in this hall at one time. I also noticed one thing which I think might escape most observers; the ceiling of the room was of southern pine and not of English oak, as it probably had been in medieval times. I expressed surprise at this and was informed that the ancient wall had been injured by fire, and that the oak had

been replaced by southern pine, which was in natural color and oiled. In the village near the castle was a building in which had been identified in some way with Shakespeare.

The lake district of England is very beautiful and I think is known as the Heart of England. I believe the Thames River rises in this region. On our way to London the train passed through Oxford and we obtained a bird's eye view of some of the College buildings. I returned to London very much pleased with my trip, but greatly regretting that I did not have more time for sight seeing, there being so much of interest.

Arriving at London I went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel on High Holborn Street. On the trip across the Atlantic, I had made steamer acquaintance with two gentlemen, one of them named Cushman, the name of the other I do not recall. Mr. Cushman was the inventor of the tubular railroad car frame. About that time and later; I saw in the United States a similar freight car, the frame of which was made of different sizes of gas pipe; the frame was supported on car wheels and on top of this was placed a box car. This was claimed to be much lighter than a frame made from wood. The second gentleman, whose name I have forgotten was at the head of a large stock company making these freight cars for the purpose of renting or selling them to the railroads. The purpose of these gentlemen in going to England was to introduce the use of these cars upon the English railways. They had acquired a mass of valuable information to be used in their arguments in favor of their introduction. As nearly as I can recollect, their car only weighed ten tons and would carry thirty tons of freight. It cost more to carry a bushel of wheat from Liverpool to London in an English car than it would to carry it from Chicago to Liverpool. This great difference in the expense of shipping they attributed to the weight of the English car, and the small amount of freight it would carry. The English car frame was built of 10x10 inch square southern pine timbers, from twelve to twenty feet long, with a little box on top of it not over four feet high, uncovered except by canvass. The promoters claimed that this car would weigh more than the freight; that with their car a locomotive hauling four tons would be hauling three of freight, whereas with the English car the freight would be less than two tons. They said that they had shipped six flat cars by steamer to London, and on their arrival they would set them up and give the English railway officials a demonstration of the superiority of their cars over those in use. When we reached our destination these gentlemen went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel and I went to the Lincoln's Inn Hotel. I spent a couple of weeks in London corresponding with Mr. Schreyer, and busied myself during that time in becoming acquainted with London and its environments.

One Sunday morning I visited St. Paul's Cathedral which was not far from my hotel. While admiring the structure I observed an omnibus labeled Hampton Court, and thinking of nothing better to do, I climbed aboard. I entered into conversation with my neighbor on the seat. He told me that he was from South Carolina, that his father had kept a hotel on Jeckel Island, and that he himself was interested in some theatrical troupe. I judge from what he said that he had become stranded in London, but at all events he proved an agreeable companion. I found Hampton Court and vicinity quite an interesting spot to visit. As I recollect, it was built by Cardinal Woolsey and presented by him to Henry VIII. I believe it is in possession of the Crown of England, and is used chiefly as an art gallery. In it to be seen are portraits of most of those famous in the history of that

country. I should judge that in size it would equal the Field Museum in Chicago. In some rooms around the court resided many protégés of the Queen, it being her privilege to domicile a certain number of ladies who happened to possess her favor, but were in impecunious circumstances. Hampton Court is a place of great resort for people coming from London by bus, boat or train. Adjacent to the Court is a maze of shrubbery which few can enter and find their way out, without aid from the guide. I did not try my skill. In the yard is a grapevine which is more than a foot in diameter when measured at the ground. It is said to raise grapes in sufficient abundance to supply the protégés of the Court ensconced there.

I visited Hampton Court later, but being without agreeable companionship I found the charm of the castle less potent.

I spent three weeks of this visit in the seeing of sights in London. Among the notable buildings which I visited was the Tower of London. I think no one museum which I saw, presents so much of England's history as does this tower, and every American visiting London should spend a day in its study.

Mr. Cushman invited me to go down with them and witness the test of the tubular car. Three Englishmen had been selected by the railroads to give the cars a trial and make a report. One of the judges was a Member of Parliament, another was President of the Board of Trade, and the third represented the combined railroads of England. The trial was to be held on the Mill-wall Docks of London. The docks were traversed by rails, the tracks being full of short curves and switches, which would give the cars a severe test as to their ability to keep the track.

Our party took the train at London for the Docks, which were located some distance down the Thames. On arriving we had to wait some time for the distinguished experts. I asked Mr. Cushman not to introduce me to these gentlemen, as I wished to view the exhibition from the standpoint of an on-looker. The cars were flat bottomed railway cars with plank sides and the ends were about two feet high. A locomotive was coupled to the cars and we got aboard, all standing. As we were hauled over the rails and through the curves and switches I heard one Englishman remark to the others, "These bloody cars do stick to the track; I was sure they wouldn't take the curves." After a sufficient trial of this test the engineer was told to shunt the cars off the tracks. The locomotive shoved us pretty hard and I heard one British gentleman say to another, "They tell me these bogies are an English invention." "Well" was the reply, "that is one thing in their favor." [Bogie is an English word for an American Railroad truck.] The Englishmen became satisfied that they could not get the cars off the track when they were empty so they told the exhibitors that they wanted the cars heavily loaded. By this time it was twelve o'clock, and as no dock laborer would work for love or money until the customary time to return, a delay in the proceedings occurred. The Americans agreed to have the cars loaded with railroad iron and be ready for a further exhibition at three in the afternoon. I was assured in my own mind that the cars would not leave the tracks, therefore after going back to London I did not return for the exhibition of the afternoon. In England a railroad did not then receive freight in a warehouse, load it into a freight car and deliver it at its destination into another warehouse as is done in this country. The shipper in England was

furnished a car at the point of shipment, which he loaded, and when it arrived at its destination the receiver unloaded it. Mr. Cushman told me that he had offered a certain railroad in England fifteen cars if they would take and use them; the man representing the railroads had replied that if they should adopt the American car it would make all the rolling stock of the United Kingdom worthless; I forget the immense value it would wipe out.

On my return from the trip to Scotland I stopped at the same hotel as my American acquaintances. They informed me that a certain Mr. Spencer, M.P. had invited them to take luncheon with him at the Parliament Houses, and to view a sitting of Parliament from a gallery of the house. They said they would be allowed to include me in their invitation, if I would like to go, I gladly accepted as I thought it a matter of much interest to see the House of Commons in session. We reached the buildings about four p.m. and spent some time in viewing various halls. Some of the gentlemen of the nobility were pointed out to me. We went to a gallery in the House which overlooked the Thames, and were served with refreshments, passing a most pleasant hour in conversation and viewing the river scenes below. When the hour arrived for the opening of the session, Mr. Spencer escorted us to the Stranger's gallery, where we could sit and watch the proceedings as long as desired.

The chamber in which the House of Commons convenes is a long room with a long table in the center; from this several rows of seats extended to the wall, rising one above the other like those in a theater. In these the members sat keeping their hats on their heads; a custom which appeared strange to me. When a member desires to address the house he comes down from his seat and stands by the table. At the opposite end of the hall from where we were, the chairman was seated on a raised platform; he wore the typical, long wig of the English judge, one could see nothing of him but his face. Lord Palmerton at that time was Speaker; he was son of the premier of that name. The subject before the house that night was the licensing of the saloons in the kingdom. The Ladies' Gallery was directly in the rear of the Speaker, there was a screen before it so we could not see the occupants. I was informed that they could see the house plainly, but could not signal to the members of the house. When a division took place, the members voting "aye" passed by the Speaker to a room in the rear and were counted as they went out. When these returned to the hall, they ones voting "no" would file past the speaker and be counted. As I remember it, it was eight or nine o'clock before the session began. We sat in the gallery during the proceedings until the "wee small hours" of the morning. At length becoming tired we returned to our hotel, before the house had adjourned its session.

We visited the Westminster Abbey, where are entombed so many of the kings and queens of England, and many of its notable men, who have been chief actors in her history. The marble statuary contained in this edifice is very fine. We Americans should remember that this abbey holds a part of the history of the United States as well as of England.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### Mr. Schreyer and Other Tribulations

My business with Julius Schreyer, for the first two years, had been very satisfactory and profitable. Our lumber had been acceptable and was sold at good prices. Schreyer had shown some impatience at my restricting him in the amount he might sell, so I found it necessary to get another inspector for the lumber which I bought for him at other mills. I selected a young man in my employ that I believed to be both competent and honest. My first inspector prophesied that he would prove incompetent, but I thought him prejudiced by rivalry over a girl in the neighborhood. The young man inspected half a dozen cargoes that I bought at other mills, but were all bought from one firm. Their valuation exceeded \$50,000. As reported by Mr. Schreyer, lumber below grade was put in every vessel. I sent my son to Germany to investigate, as I could not believe that this inspector had proved as negligent or criminal as the reports showed, but he corroborated the statements made by Mr. Schreyer. I called the young man into the office and asked him why he had been so careless in inspecting the cargoes, and he had the audacity to tell me that my son had told him to do this. I knew the assertion was unqualified false and I told him that he was a liar; I discharged him then and there. One cargo of decking which he had shipped, being the worst of the lot according to the account of the stevedore who loaded it, was entirely lost as the vessel floundered at sea. I have never been able to understand what caused this inspector to play the part of scoundrel; whether he was simply too negligent and lazy to attend to his business, or was bribed by the mill manager from whom I bought the lumber. I was informed that this manager put him in piles containing two hundred thousand feet, which Boyer had rejected the year before from prime shipments, and that this inspector shipped them as prime in these cargoes.

Early in the spring Mr. Schreyer came to see me, and said he had been obliged to settle the claims of the buyers, or else go out of the business of selling lumber in Germany. I reimbursed him for all the reclamations he had paid, amounting to \$8,000. The inspector, who had been responsible for this loss, was not long after killed by a Negro who struck him in the head with a scantling, during a quarrel.

I made a new contract with Mr. Schreyer, agreeing that Mr. Boyer should inspect all the lumber shipped and he agreeing to settle all reclamations on the cargoes at his own cost.

The affair which occupied my attention after this was another venture into the political field. In the summer of 1888 I was solicited by Republican politicians to run for the state senate, but I had seen so much of the jealousy existing between the different factions of the party that I refused to accept the nomination unless the convention was unanimous in my support. As a result I received every vote in the convention. There was a majority of Republicans in the county and I felt confident that several hundred democrats of this county would also vote for me. I therefore entered upon the campaign with every prospect of winning. It was the duty of the County Commissioners to revise the list of voters just before election, and the commissioners, who were appointed by the governor, were in this instance Democrats. In the revision which they made at this time they erased from the list the names of thousands of Republican voters. They refused to meet again and replace the names wrongfully thrown out, so all these voters were disqualified.

Although the election was a national as well as state election, yet there was not method, so far as we know, by which we could obtain justice. At the time of the election, even worse means were resorted to; such as violating the ballot-box, etc. In one precinct in Pensacola after the voting was closed, a Democrat entered the polling place wearing a large overcoat. He opened the ballot-box, filled one of the big pockets with the contents and replaced these with Democratic votes from the other pocket.

Notwithstanding all this, and even worse, it seems that I was elected by three hundred majority, and yet they gave the certificate of election to my Democratic competitor. I learned this fact from the chairman of the county commissions several years later when with him in Mexico. I think this political outrage would not have been perpetrated against me, but that some other candidates were voted for on the same ballot that were very obnoxious to the majority of the citizens of the county, especially the Republican candidate who ran for sheriff. All of the newspapers printed in the county were Democratic, and I had no means of reaching the ears of the voters, except by public speaking and issuing of bulletins and circulating them through the mails. The United States District Attorney in Florida was a Democrat; I consulted the U.S. District Attorney for Louisiana at New Orleans. He of course denounced the abuse, but gave it as his judgment that nothing could be done, so long as a jury must be selected from the white voters, even if the matter were carried to the U.S. Court.

Owing to certain reasons which I will not detail, there had been no resident United States Judge in the Northern Judicial District of Florida for nearly ten years. Many of my friends solicited me to stand as a candidate for the judgeship. I had received a legal education which I believe well fitted me for the office, but I was afraid to make the attempt, knowing I would be attacked by the records of the court over which I would be expected to preside. Senator Sawyer, who had been a good friend to me all the years I had been in Florida, and who had been familiar with my career ever since I had arrived in Oshkosh, Wis., in 1855, said he thought he could have me appointed, but I feared the attack which would be made upon me when the Senate should be asked to confirm my appointment. At that time I supposed that I had been indicted in that court for cutting timber on government lands, and I knew that a suit was then pending against my firm for trespass on government lands, which could not truthfully be denied, although I knew myself to be innocent and blameless. I felt that the office of judge was the most honorable position with which a citizen could be invested, and it was the one which I would prize above all others. The matter dragged along until the next year, when I happened to be in Washington on some business and by chance met ex-Senator Conover, who had been my political assistant in the canvas for Congress in 1882. The filling of this judgeship had been a familiar topic among politicians and lawyers in Florida for a long time. Mr. Conover informed that he had a man whom he would like to have appointed district judge, and asked if I would go with him and call upon Attorney General Miller and try to have him appoint this man. I consented to do as he wished after his assurances that the man was a suitable candidate for the position. In the afternoon we went and saw Mr. Miller and had an interview lasting some three hours. He questioned us very thoroughly as to the political conditions in Florida, and we explained as we understood the situation. One point which we made especially strong was that the violators of the ballot-box should be punished. I recall very distinctly a question which the attorney general asked Mr. Conover, which was: "Does the man *look* like a judge? I want a man to look a judge



as well as to be one." Mr. Conover satisfied him on this point. When we arose to leave, the attorney general said: "Gentlemen, I will appoint your man; you will see this confirmed in tomorrow morning's paper." The announcement appeared as he said it would. The history of this man as judge is not a part of my memoirs; I shall allude to him only as his career affected mine.

Returning to my affairs in the lumber business; I met farther difficulty with Mr. Schreyer. Notwithstanding my contract with this gentleman that I should not be held responsible for any reclamations of lumber inspected by Mr. Boyer, a heavy reclamation was demanded on a cargo shipped to Italy. Mr. Schreyer was himself responsible for the difficulty as he sent a ship for the lumber without giving it time to dry; some of it had also been rained on when being loaded and as southern pine will do when shipped wet, I presume the sap on the timber turned dark and moldy. I did not consider myself responsible in the matter, and refused to pay any reclamation. In the spring of 1889 I had a ship offered me of the capacity of a cargo which I had sold to Schreyer, and I chartered the vessel on his account and with his consent. Not long after that I received a charter party for a vessel which, unknown to me, he had chartered for this same cargo, he having failed to notify me as he should have done. I wrote him that I could not furnish the lumber in sufficient quantities to make the second consignment unless he would take two hundred thousand feet of kiln dried saps, which I would furnish at the price of \$10 per thousand feet. I think at that date no kiln dried saps had been shipped to the continent. He accepted the offer and I loaded the vessel, which proved to be the last I ever loaded for him. The other part of the cargo consisted of two orders. He had sold one of prime lumber, another of heart-faced flooring. For the order of kiln dried saps he had stipulated that I should draw upon him at ninety days. When the vessel was loaded I went to the bank with the documents. The cashier requested me to place the drafts upon the bills of lading for which they were drawn. I did so and left the papers with him.

I went north with my wife after this as it was our custom to pass the heated term there and obtain rest and recreation. I had been north but a short time when I received a telegram from my son saying that Schreyer had refused to pay the draft. I wired the bank for information and they wrote that they had received no notification. I therefore rested easy for a few days until my son sent me Mr. Schreyer's letter in which he said: "You have made a mistake, you placed a \$4,000 draft on the kiln dried saps and a \$2,000 draft on the two orders of prime flooring; you pay my claim for reclamation or I do not correct your mistake." He refused to pay the \$4,000 draft, but paid the \$2,000 draft cash and secured possession of the \$4,000 worth of lumber. I presume the cashier let the drafts fall out in handling them, because they were not pinned to the bills of lading as they should have been. I wrote the bank that I should hold them responsible as the fault was theirs, I having performed my duty in the matter. They ordered suit to be begun against Mr. Schreyer in Bremen, and thus the matter stood until I returned to Florida. After studying the situation, I concluded that I would go to Germany and assist the bank in getting their money from Mr. Schreyer.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### Government Dealings in Logs and Politics

On the journey home I spent much time studying how I should construct the mill which I had resolved to build. I satisfied my mind on all points but one, and that was how I would get the logs to the mill. The old mill was on a brick foundation, which was too narrow for placing the machinery as I wished and still have room for the log-haul.

As soon as we landed in New York my wife went to visit her parents in Wisconsin and I took the first train home. On arriving at Flomaton I met by chance a Mr. Neacy, of Filer & Stowell Co., Milwaukee, saw mill machinery builders. I told him I wanted him to go home with me; which he did. We set up a drafting board in the hall of my house and went to work drawing plans for a new mill; these we completed within a week. I secured a schedule of the machinery required, and of the time needed for the frame, which I bought at Ferry Pass. I then engaged three millwrights who had been recommended to me as thoroughly competent, and in ten days after arriving home I started north to buy machinery. In after years I think Mr. Neacy sold as many as a score of mills, modeled after the plan of this one.

On the way back to Escambia my wife accompanied me and we reached home after dark. In the morning I arose and before breakfast went down to the mill site to see how everything was going. Timber was spread all over the mill yard, being framed. I had stepped over no more than two or three pieces of timber before I began to swear. I saw that my head-man had made serious mistakes in framing and did not understand his business; that I must take charge of matters myself, and so I informed him. After a few days' observation of his work I discharged him altogether. I took the scratch-awl and square into my own hands and laid out the frame. My son took a gang of men and raised the mill frame into position. Some two or three weeks after I had discharged my boss millwright he appeared at the mill and told me that a mistake had been made in his settlement. I told him to go the office and that any mistake would be corrected; he replied that they would not correct it there. He said that he had forgotten to charge me with three days' time in coming down from Michigan. He added: "If you don't pay me for that I will sue you." I rejoined: "If this is all the business you have here, get out quick." He got, and I never saw the man again.

I built the mill with only one competent millwright to assist me. About the last of March I had the machinery placed and expected to start it inside of a week, when I received a telegram from Oshkosh announcing the death of Mr. Hubbard, my father-in-law. This made it necessary that my wife, my son, and I should go north immediately to attend the funeral; therefore I was unable to see the starting of the mill. I had always prided myself that when I built a mill, the machinery would start off the first day without a hitch or a change in it. When I returned, this mill had been in operation for several days, and it was kept running almost constantly for twenty years, until I sold it with my timber lands in Florida.

I have before described the co-partnership I entered into with John McDavid and five of his brothers, in the fall of 1883, they bringing into the company about fifteen thousand acres of pine land. We had bought five thousand acres of land from Mr. Hubbard, with the mill. During the winter of 1883-84 we began building our logging railroad; during the summer of 1884 we completed six miles of the road, which was a three-foot gauge, with twenty-five pound steel rails. These rails were little worn when I sold it in 1904. Up to that time I had bought twenty-six mile of rail and had built that number of miles of road. In the summer of 1884 we bought our logs from different cutters, who ran their logs down the river in rafts. We did not supply the mill with logs cut from our own lands. The business of building the railroad as well as the work in the woods was under the supervision of my brother, Lafayette Skinner. His wife became discontented with living in the woods, and just before I started for Europe, he resigned his position and returned to Newaygo, Michigan. This left the work in the care of the McDavid brothers.

After the mill burned we contracted with Brent Bros. to supply them with logs, that we might not be obliged to shut down the railroad, and that we might furnish employment to the men in the woods. We built booms at Ferry Pass which would hold fifty thousand logs at a time. I bought six miles of railroad iron in 1884 and six miles more in 1885. We had a store at Chumuckla on the railroad five miles from the landing, where we did a trade of \$3,000 per month. I named this place after the springs of that name, about three miles away, which were noted for their curative qualities, and I now believe them to be of value in that line. I also built a railroad repair shop at this point, creating an embryo village.

I was very busy in 1885-6 sawing lumber and shipping to Mr. Schreyer in Europe, so busy that I could give little attention to the logging department which was left mostly to the management of the McDavid brothers, five of whom were in the employ of the firm. I attended to the running of the mill, to supplying the stores at Escambia and Chumuckla, to the chartering of the vessels and their loading, that season there being twenty-five in number. I also attended to the management of the tug, which towed the logs from boom to mill, and to the lighters, which took the lumber from the mill to the vessels. I had to keep a close oversight of Mr. Schreyer in Europe, controlling the price of lumber and timber and the amount of these products which I could permit him to sell. As he worked on commission, he was inclined to sell more than I could allow him, his profits being thus proportionately larger. I managed all of these affairs myself and kept no extra help in the office. I remember that in my younger days I had wished for all the business to which I could attend. During this period and the years to follow, my wish in this respect was fully gratified.

My health was not good at this time. I was troubled with insomnia, also with indigestion and headaches, which condition continued for ten years or more. The headaches were very painful, usually lasting for two days or more, and on recovering I would feel as if I had had a long fit of sickness. At the present time, with added knowledge, I attribute these disorders to indiscretion and over-indulgence in eating. In our youthful days we are taught almost everything that may be useful to us in after years, except that one most important thing of all; how we may have good health. This means to partake of proper

food and eat only what our bodies require. If we are sick our friends urge us to eat, when our ills have been caused by over-eating, and our stomachs are protesting against the excess of food. I remember reading when a boy a book by a Dr. Hall in which he gave this truism: Most men make angels of themselves through their stomachs. At the time of reading I did not catch on to the full meaning of this. We eat until we are full and then eat more. We do not have the consideration for our stomachs which the ancient Roman gourmand showed, who relieved it after a repast by an emetic. We take too little exercise, physically, to make our digestion good, so we suffer the consequences.

In 1886 one of the McDavids had a quarrel with an employee, and the latter in revenge reported our firm to the U.S. Government as cutting timber on government lands. I looked into the matter and found that it was true, so I insisted that this be stopped at once. Not long afterwards the government sent a land agent to investigate the trespass. There was considerable government land on the line of our road that had been trespassed upon for many years before we built the railroad. The agent ran the line separating our lands from the others, and attributed all the trespasses visible to our firm. He began suit against us for a large sum of money, and when the U.S. Court convened, the grand jury indicted several of the McDavids. I was informed that I too had been indicted. I supposed that this was true until some three years later when I was told by the foreman of the grand jury, corroborated by another member, that this was not so; that my name had not been mentioned before the grand jury. I realized myself to be entirely innocent, knowing that I had always been careful to infringe on no man's rights, yet there stood filed in the office of the clerk of the court an indictment against my name, and the signature of the foreman of the grand jury on the back of it. I could only conclude that this had been accomplished by the district attorney who desired to injure me politically. Mr. S.C. Cobb, the foreman of the jury, assured me most positively that he had never seen the indictment against me and that he had never endorsed such. I can only account for this document being in existence by the fact of the district attorney's knowledge that I was a member of the firm of Skinner & McDavid and expecting to indict all the members of that firm he had prepared an indictment to be ready when needed. After finding that there was no evidence incriminating me, he failed to destroy the paper, but kept it among documents of similar character, and probably Mr. Cobb, as foreman of the grand jury, had endorsed the paper, not knowing what it contained. When the cases at that term of court were called, the district attorney announced that he had no evidence to support the charge against me; the judge instructed the jury, which had been impaneled in my case, to find for the defendant without leaving their seats; which they did. This ended the criminal suit. The district attorney brought action against Skinner & McDavid, which remained on the docket of the court for some four years; the outcome of which will be referred to later.

In 1884 I was notified of a meeting of Republican politicians to be held at the office of the collector of the port of Pensacola. I attended the meeting, wishing to learn what was to be discussed, and found that it was called with the purpose of inducing me to again run for Congress. I informed those present that I did not aspire to another nomination, that I was unwilling to make the canvass again; that I was no hog, so I knew when I had had enough. My response seemed to amuse those present, and I was asked if there was anything else in the political line, which I would accept; to this I replied that if the

sentiments of the meeting were unanimous in favor of sending me as a delegate at large to the forthcoming Republican convention at Chicago, it was an honor that I would appreciate and most willingly accept. I stated farther that I would enter into no contest for the privilege, if anyone present wished to be that delegate, I would step aside. Apparently all were enthusiastic that I should be accorded this honor.

The state convention for the election of delegates to the Chicago convention was to be held at St Augustine; there were to be elected four delegates for the state at large, and two for each of the two Congressional districts of the state. A few weeks before the state convention was to be held, the county convention was to occur at Pensacola, and would elect some thirteen delegates to be sent to the state convention. An Irish lawyer, by the name of Eagan, appeared on the scene at this time. He had been trained in Republican politics in the eastern part of the state; he was pretty well acquainted with Republican politicians throughout the state and enjoyed their confidence. I had been instrumental, sometime before, in his appointment as postmaster at Pensacola, but he had been removed by President Cleveland shortly after the election of the latter. Eagan had then taken up the practice of law, but now held under his brother, a deputyship as internal revenue collector. Meeting Eagan one day, he informed me that Col. Tarble was ambitious to go himself as delegate to the convention. I could hardly credit this after what had occurred in the gentleman's presence and that he had cordially approved my name. I went to his office and said to him: "Eagan says you wish to go yourself to the Chicago convention." He replied that there was no truth in this statement. I assured the colonel that if he wanted to go that I would willingly withdraw and give him an open field. He convinced me that he wished me to go, but the friction between the Eagan faction and the Tarble faction, most accountably to me, was kept up. About half the delegates to the Pensacola convention seceded and formed another, each electing delegates to the state convention at St Augustine; I was included in both. I went to St Augustine with the Tarble delegation, although Eagan persistently asserted that Tarble wished to become delegate to Chicago. On our way to St. Augustine we stopped over a day in Jacksonville. While there an old acquaintance in whom I had thorough confidence approached me and asked whom we were to send to Chicago from our part of the state; I being modest replied that I did not know. He said that Tarble wanted to go; I said that I thought not. "Yes he does," said he, and added, "I met him a little while ago and he tried to make a combination with me to send him there." This convinced me of Col. Tarble's double dealing. I think now that Eagan sent this man to me to convince me of Tarble's treachery. I told Tarble that I would not go to Chicago as a delegate and that *he could not*. The colonel denied the charges; my violent speech irritated him and we became political enemies; a condition which lasted for several years. I prevented his being appointed collector of the port of Pensacola. He went into the livery business in Chicago, just before the Columbian exposition. I have become convinced since that time that the trouble between Tarble and me was caused by Eagan, who hoped to add to his own political strength by an alliance with me.

When the St Augustine convention was organized, through the contrivance of Eagan, his delegation was seated instead of that of Col. Tarble's, which was the straight and legal one. The day before, when I had become convinced of Col Tarble's double-dealing, I met

Jim Coombs, a man who is now President Roosevelt's "dictator" in Florida politics, and asked him if he would like to go as a delegate to Chicago, to which he answered, "I would like it best of anything in the world." I replied: "Then I will see that you are elected." Later I notified Eagan that he was not to present my name to the convention, saying that I would not be a candidate. He expostulated with me but finding my decision was final he said that if I would not go myself, that I must select someone to represent my name and influence in the state. When Eagan's delegation was seated in the convention he came again and tried to persuade me, but I told him I had promised Coombs that he should go, and that I would not go back on my word. So, much against the wishes of Eagan, Coombs was elected.

This convention was composed of about two-thirds Negroes; it was noisy, tempestuous and disagreeable. I could see no good reason why a respectable white man should associate with darkies in such a bear garden as this convention proved, and I resolved then and there to have nothing more to do with politics in which the Negro was the dominant factor.

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## CHAPTER XV

### English Brothers and England

I will now go back to the year of 1878. I had sold two cargoes of lumber to be shipped to Sutton Bridge, in England. In due time a ship appeared to take one of the cargoes, a fine elderly man by the name of Ingraham was the captain. I invited him to take dinner with me Christmas, and he proved to be a genial and kind hearted gentleman. When he had his cargo aboard and was ready to sail, he asked me if I would do business direct with the firm he represented, without the intervention of commission merchants. He stated that his employers were very wealthy, that they did an extensive business in lumber; that they had four vessels of their own; they received cargoes at Sutton Bridge and East Lynn on the east coast of England; and that they had large sawmills and planing mills at Peterborough, which place was reached by rail from both ports. I told him I would be glad to do so. Captain Ingraham came after lumber for two or three years and I very much enjoyed knowing him.

I think about the year 1882, one of their vessels came and received a cargo from me which, upon being landed, did not give satisfaction. The style of the firm name was English Brothers, and consisted of an old gentleman and his sons. I knew that the cargo when I shipped it was all right and was what I had sold them, and of course I refused to allow their reclamation. I wrote them many sarcastic and caustic letters and our business relations became quite strained. Captain Ingraham was at that time after a cargo of wood in the Baltic Sea. When he returned to Sutton Bridge he told his firm that he knew I had never sent such a shipment. He waited until the captain, who was shipping the cargo, returned, for knowing the tricks of the trade, as well as this skipper pretty well; he had formed his opinion as to how the cargo got aboard the vessel. He asked the captain if there had been any rough weather while he lay in port at Pensacola, to which the skipper replied that there had been, and that he had lost all his timber while loading, but that he had sent out his sailors to pick up as many pieces as they had lost, which they did and he had put these into the cargo in place of those lost; he had been careful, however, to keep this information from the owners. Captain Ingraham, feeling friendly toward me, explained to English Brothers how the rotten, worm-eaten timber got into the ship, and convinced the firm that it was the captain of the vessel who was the rascal and not I. English Brothers dropped their suit for reclamation, but did not make the amends honorable which I thought my due. However, they knew then that I was not to blame and the next fall they sent two vessels to me for cargoes, which were duly loaded, shipped and paid for.

In March, I received a cablegram from them, asking me to buy a cargo for their account for immediate shipment. There was a vessel in port, loaded by L.M. Merritt, of tonnage suitable for the Port of Sutton Bridge, which I bought of him for them. I think the cargo came to about £1,000 or \$5,000. Of this cargo I had furnished about 100,000 feet, and I was satisfied that the whole cargo was of good quality. As usual, I attached the specifications of the cargo, the charter-party of the vessel, and drew on them for the value of the cargo, and billed it to them for exactly what I had paid for it, and felt that my draft

would be cheerfully paid when it should be presented. I turned the papers over to my bank, as was the custom, and the bank gave me credit for the amount of the draft. In due course of time the bank was informed by cable that payment had been refused. I was entirely in the dark as to the reason until I received a letter from English Bros., saying that the cargo was not what they wanted, that it contained too many 3x9 deals. I wrote them that I did not know what they wanted, only by the specifications mentioned in the telegram; that was "3x9 and up," which I bought for them as instructed. They replied that I should have known that they wanted what they had usually bought from me. I wrote in reply that I had no telepathic communication with them, telling me what they wanted, that it would have been an easier matter for them to stipulate in their cable that cargo should be as usual, if they wished such, instead of wiring, "3x9 and up." The correspondence became rather acrimonious. After a while I received account of sale, "For Whom It May Concern," with a long account of commissions and storage, and a draft in my favor to cover the balance, which amounted to about three-fifths of what I had paid for the cargo; so when I was in London the last of September I thought I would go to Sutton Bridge and see the gentlemen, as I was about \$2,000 short on the accommodations, and from any course of reasoning that I could pursue, I could not find myself blamable in the affair. I felt the fault to be wholly on their side. So I concluded to go to Sutton Bridge and visit Captain Ingraham, my wife accompanying me.

We took the cars for Peterborough, where we changed cars for Wisbech, at which several of the sons of Mr. English lived and maintained a lumber yard. Sutton Bridge was a few miles beyond Wisbech, and before going there I went into the office of English Bros. to inquire about Mr. Ingraham. While making my queries at the desk I heard one man say to another in an adjoining room that he believed that the stranger at the desk was Mr. Skinner from Florida.

We took the train for Sutton Bridge, which we found to be a town of minor importance, being a small shipping port. It had a hotel of meager accommodations, at which we stopped. I learned at Wisbech that Captain Ingraham had given up sea-faring life, that Mr. English had placed him in charge of some docks which he had built at Sutton Bridge, and that he was engaged there at the present time in discharging a cargo of lumber. After locating at the hotel, I went to the docks and looked him up. I found him to be a little changed since I last saw him; at that time he was between sixty and sixty-five years of age. I was very much interested in this man; he was so like my own father when he was of his age. Mr. Ingraham was very much surprised and pleased to see me. My attention was much drawn to their methods of moving lumber, so different was it from ours. The ship delivered the lumber on the wharf; then each workman took a deal on his back; it being all he could lift, and carrying it to a pile two hundred feet distant, where two men took it from him and he returned for another load, two men placing another deal on his back. With us we rarely lifted those weighty deals, but instead put them on rollers or two-wheeled carts. Here in England a "growler" of beer was kept where the man could take a drink whenever he wished one. I did not fancy this method of soul-carting lumber, or rather of not carting it – as it transformed men into beasts of burden; but it has been a custom here from time immemorial, and so of course was considered right.



Captain Ingraham was desirous that we go home with him, and accordingly the next day we did so. He and his wife lived alone except when some of their children were visiting them. At that time a daughter was at home. She was, I think, employed in a ladies' furnishing house in London. She appeared an honest, comely girl, much like her father and mother. Captain Ingraham and wife made it very pleasant. I appreciated especially the character of this man, with his practical good sense and his kindly spirit.

While at this place English Bros. sent a request that I come to Wisbech, which I did. When they learned that my wife was with me, they sent to Sutton Bridge for her. One of the sons of Mr. English took us to his home. They treated us very kindly and showed us much attention. When we were visiting them a political meeting occurred about six miles distant, within the grounds of some gentleman's manor. It was a meeting of the supporters of the Conservative Party of England. The admission to the grounds was by card, this was required, in order to keep out persons who might make a disturbance or oppose the sentiments expressed by the speakers. These were to be the Earl of Cardigan and a Mr. Lawrence, M.P., the latter being a cousin of Mrs. Alfred English. I was invited by one of the brothers to attend this meeting and I cordially accepted.

After luncheon, four of us mounted what was called a "trap" and went to hear the speaking. The grounds in which the meeting was held were very beautiful, and I was very much interested in hearing the politics of this country expounded. The audience stood while hearing the speakers and before I was aware I became separated from my companions by the crowd, and I did not find them again that afternoon.

The Earl was a very gentlemanly looking man. He wore a frock coat and kept both hands in his pockets. He spoke in a conversational tone, without gestures, was very candid and argumentative, and made a favorable impression upon me. There did not appear to be much enthusiasm in the crowd and there was no cheering at the good points made by the speakers. Every thing was very decorous until it came to the last speaker, who was a sturdy red-faced Englishman who attacked his subject with vim. He spoke in a loud voice, pawed the air with his hands, and reminded me of the political wind-jammers at home. After the meeting broke up, I was unable to find either my escorts or the trap, so I started with the crowd and walked back to the city. When I inquired for my wife, and was informed that the ladies, finding the men all gone to the meeting, concluded that they would walk there themselves, and that they had not yet returned. English women thought nothing of walking that distance. I concluded that my wife would come back a ruin, but I sat down and awaited developments. Soon the ladies returned, and were in high spirits, they had had a very good time, had enjoyed themselves and my wife had walked twelve miles. About two was her limit in America. How a person can walk such a distance in England without exhaustion has ever since been a wonder to me.

During this visit Mr. Arthur English took me to see his country place, which proved to be very handsome. I do not remember where it was located. His wife was absent at the time, she was the daughter of an Irish clergyman. Arthur English was the oldest son, and was managing head of English Bros., lumber dealers and ship owners. It was said that he was very anxious to be knighted by the Queen; to be elevated from the non-aristocratic status

of a lumber dealer to the dignity of knighthood. Whether his ambitions have ever been realized I do not know, but for his sake I trust they were, as he was certainly a pleasing gentleman. The sons were very desirous that I should visit their father who was living in the country near Peterborough. He had been a very enterprising man, was now somewhat advanced in years, being about seventy at this time. I went to see him and was entertained at dinner; he and his wife and two of his sons were there. I was a little uneasy not knowing whether he had seen or read my letter in which was a severe allusion to him in connection with the reclamation on the cargo of timber before mentioned. Mr. English was a wealthy man and a large land owner for this part of the world, having some three hundred acres which he farmed. His wife was somewhat dictatorial and opinionated. Once during a conversation at dinner she remarked that she wished that we would keep our wheat at home and not send it to England. I was informed that Mr. English raised wheat largely and that American wheat kept the price of that commodity down, so that he did not realize as much for it as he wished.

While here I also visited a country fair giving a fine exhibition of cattle and horses, which I found very attractive. While strolling through the fair with one of the English brothers, he called my attention to a robust looking man as Lord So-and-So; I remarked that I was not as much interested in lords as I was in cattle. My host asked me if I did not reverence the English nobleman. I replied: "No, unless there is something to raise him above other men; that the fact alone of his title would have no weight with me." He asked if the Americans did not reverence the Queen of England. I replied that Americans respected and admired the Queen because they believed her to be a good woman; that we honored our good women very highly and that all such women were practically queens in America. He evidently was under the impression that we did not know a good thing when we saw it.

During this visit I had interview a couple of attorneys-at-law who had been recommended to me as the best of their kind in Wisbech, and had laid before them my demands for the disputed cargo. They were not enthusiastic as to my chances of collecting the claim; said that the English Bros. were very influential in that locality, and that it would be up-hill business to win a suit against them. I had talked to the different members of the firm in regard to a settlement, but they were very insistent that I should have known what they wanted, and that I was very obtuse not to have had telepathic knowledge of their wants. The matter was left in that state.

On my way back to London my wife wished to stop at Peterborough and see the cathedral which was being repaired. Some historic graves are here, among them that of Catherine of Aragon. Two ladies were being escorted about the cathedral at the same time we were. They proved to be daughters of the poet Longfellow. Miss Alice afterwards became Dean of Radcliffe College, and Anna married Joseph Thorpe, brother of Ole Bull's wife.

While waiting at the station for the train from the north, I took occasion to look at the locomotive which was to take us to London, covering the distance of seventy miles in one hour. It was of the usual English type, the connecting rods and cylinders being between the driving wheels. It had no cow-catcher. What I notice most was the enormous diameter

of the driving wheels; it had but two, one on each side of the boiler, they were eight feet in diameter. The road was double-tracked and there were no grade crossings, all being either under the track or over it on bridges; so the road was nearly free of obstructions and was nearly level all the way to London.

We stopped at the same hotel as before as it conveniently adjoins the Victoria station. A day or two after arriving, I received a cable from home telling me that my mill had burned. We had intended to make a tour of England and Scotland, but this information cut short our trip. I engaged passage by the first German Lloyd steamer leaving Southampton for New York City. It happened to be the "Werra," the same vessel on which we had come over.

While waiting in London for the steamer I thought I would go to Wisbech and make another effort to settle my claim against English Bros. I met Mr. Arthur English, told him of my loss, and offered to take \$1,000 for settlement of the claim, which he freely paid. I never did any more business with them. On the arrival of the steamer we sailed for home. Our return trip was quite different from the one going over, it had then been as smooth as a mill pond all the way, but coming back the wind blew a gale, the waves rolling very high. I arose the first morning and after taking my promenade on deck, returned to our stateroom, when I was greeted with this exclamation from my wife: "Oh Emory, I am so sick. I shall die, but I don't care, I've had such a good time."

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## CHAPTER XIV

### Our Trip to Germany

In the spring of 1884 I started from Pensacola to my home in Escambia, when stepping into my buggy at the station, I saw a tall, athletic looking young man walking ahead of me; I took him to be a Scotchman, more from the color of his hair than anything else. Overtaking him I asked him where he was going and he replied: "To Ferry Pass, to learn how hewn timber is inspected." I informed him that he would find no place there to remain overnight and invited him to stop at my home. I also said that I had several rafts of hewn timber being inspected at Ferry Pass, that I was going there in the morning with my tug, and that I would take him along and drop him on the rafts as I went by, on the way to my log booms. He accepted my invitation, and during the evening entertained us very much by relating his experiences since coming to America, which were some of them quite amusing. It seems that when he landed in New York he was entirely ignorant of the English language. A relative of his was living in New York and put him on board a train coming to Chicago, but he could only make his wants known to someone who understood German. He was afraid to leave the car, lest he should be left, so he went through to Milwaukee without anything to eat, only getting out of the car at Chicago. Reaching his destination, he secured employment with a German store-keeper, and there he learned a smattering of English. Then he went to Moss Point, Mississippi, in order to learn how to inspect lumber, and was then returning to his home in Germany.

The next morning I took the young gentleman, whose name was Schreyer, to Ferry Pass, introduced him to the inspector, and left him on the raft while I went on my way. After a couple hours' absence I returned, took him aboard and went back to the mill where I bade him goodbye, not expecting to see him again. In perhaps an hour I was surprised at his re-entering my office. He said: "Mr. Skinner, I have been down on your wharf looking at your timber. I like it very much and I should like to sell for you in Germany if you would let me." I replied: "But Mr. Schreyer, I don't know anything about you; I should have to know you pretty well before I could let you do that." After some further consideration I invited him to spend another night with me and talk the matter over. During the evening he told me that he, his father, and brother were in the lumber business in Hildesheim, Germany, having a lumber yard there, which handled Baltic woods, and that they wished to handle pitch pine also. He invited me to come to Germany and visit them and learn about their standing. He left the following morning, saying that he would write me when he got home. When this trip to Germany was mentioned my wife became very much interested, and asked many questions of Mr. Schreyer. I did not place much importance to the talk, but some three weeks later I received a letter from Mr. Schreyer urging me to visit him, see his father and brother; also stating again his wish to sell our lumber; he suggested too the line of steamers I would find it advisable to take. After this my wife asked occasionally when I was going to Germany but finally I said I was not going. She then went to Oshkosh and I went to Boston. While there I went into the office of the North German Lloyd Steamship Company, and found that one of the best staterooms of the steamer "Werra" was not taken. I engaged it and telegraphed my wife at Oshkosh, that if she wanted to go to Germany she must be in New York the following Monday.

We sailed Tuesday and had as pleasant a trip across the ocean as one can make. The sea was smooth as a lake all the way over. We were landed at Bremen Haven in the rain at night, and immediately took the train for Bremen. We went to the hotel which we had selected, and met all the manners due royalty, nevertheless, "they were very sorry, but they were full." We found accommodations, however, at another hotel. The next morning Mr. Schreyer called and we went with him to Hildesheim. We spent about a week at this place and found it very quaint and interesting. At one time it had been a walled city. The walls, however, had been torn down and the ground once occupied by them had been made into a park. Some of the houses of the old town were five or six stories high, each story projecting into the street farther than the one below it. I remember seeing while at this place, a woman and a dog hitched together to a cart, hauling a load of some kind. I also recollect going to a church claimed to have been built by Charlemagne; beside it grew a rosebush as old as the church itself. There were exhibited to us the vestments of the priests of the cathedral, ornamented with gold, very rich and handsome. We were also taken through the wine cellar, where we walked long distances between casks of wine, and were asked to sample as many kinds as we would like. At the time of our visit this wine cellar belonged to private parties who used it to store wines, but in olden times it had belonged to the cathedral and was used for storing wines for the priests. There was an entrance to the cellar from the rear of the pulpit, through which the priests could retire to refresh themselves, after the arduous duties of their profession.

Mr. Schreyer was visiting us one evening; after we had been a week in Hildesheim, when Mrs. Skinner remarked that she would like to take a trip through Germany. I said I would not travel where I could not make my wants known and understood. Mr. Schreyer asked Mrs. Skinner where she would like to go; she named the points she wished to visit, and he replied that he also wished to see these places, and if his father would give him permission that he would make the journey with us. I told him if he would go with us that I would pay his expenses, but he responded: "If I go I pay my own expenses and you pay yours." I mention this to show the difference between the customs of Germany and of the United States. The German pays his own way and thinks it belittles him to accept a treat.

I had by this time agreed with Mr. Schreyer to let him act as my agent in selling lumber and timber, all sales to be subject to my approval before closing.

The German country was new to me; I had never seen agricultural districts where the landscape appeared so finished. The country around Hildesheim and north of there is a fine locality for raising the sugar beet, and sugar beet factories were a common sight. On the outside of the old wall is built the modern part of the city, which contains many fine residences. The Hartz Mountains are in view from the city.

We journeyed from Hildesheim to Nuremburg, which still retains all of its fortified walls. Inside the walls the buildings look very much as they did five hundred years ago. It is the quaintest and most ancient city that I have ever visited. This journey, of which I am writing, was made some twenty-one years ago, and I made no effort at that time to jot down my impressions. I recollect there was quite a large stream of water flowing through the city and passing under a stone arch in the city wall, both at its entrance and its exit.

This wall was built of stone, was perhaps thirty to forty feet thick, being thirty to thirty-five across on top, and I should think, thirty feet high.

One feature that interested me very much was a castle built in the corner of this wall. It was occupied often by the King of Bavaria, but it served principally as a museum for exhibiting the instruments of torture used in ancient time in the strife between the Protestants and Catholics. These instruments of torture were used by the Roman Catholic to compel Protestants to recant their belief, or in case they would not, to put these victims of their religious intolerance to death. I remember one styled "the holy virgin," which was build of wood in the form of a woman; it had hinges on one side and opened on the other. The inside, when open, was the shape and space for a human form. On the front half of this were placed iron spikes that, when the door was closed, would pierce the eyes and mouth of the victim. The instrument was shut by means of a long pole. Another feature in this castle was a well, said to be three hundred feet deep, which was designed to supply water to the inmates of the castle during a siege. I amused myself by dropping pebbles into the well and noting the time required for them to reach water and the sound to return to my ears. It gave one the realization of the depth. There was a subterranean passage from the castle to the outside of the wall. I found the study of this ancient fortress extremely interesting.

We went to the home of Albert Durer and saw many of his art works; also visited a museum filled with antique articles of virtue; paintings, furniture, old china, jewels, etc. Nuremberg is the center of the toy manufacturing of Germany; it is also notable for its wood carvings. We also visited the extensive works of the Faber Pencil Company, and were escorted through the manufactory by Johan Faber himself. He ordered some pencils made in our presences, and then presented them to us. Adjacent to the town he had planted a red cedar forest. This tree grows very rapidly in this section.

We left Nuremberg and went to Munich, the great art center of Bavaria. We visited the principal art galleries; the Pinakothek, filled with the paintings of the old masters, and which contains a large number of Madonna, Christ, saints, sinners and subjects chiefly religious. I presume these pictures represent high art, but I did not admire them greatly, either in subject or technique. The building called the New Pinakothek is devoted to works of modern painters and I admire these much more than I did those in the former gallery; but the works of art that pleased me most were in another building called the Glypothek which is used for general art exhibitions. The paintings here were up to date and according to my mind far superior to the old. Our stay in Munich was to be so short that we were able to give but a cursory view to the pictures. One of the most noticeable objects in Munich is the colossal statue of Bavaria, one hundred and seventy feet high. I remember this great bronze most distinctly, but I think it was the size rather that its merits as a work of art which impressed me.

One Sunday we attended the King's Opera House and heard "Lohengrin" given by his majesty's own opera troupe. The old ladies who sat in the galleries were knitting and they were all bonnet-less.

It is in this same Bavaria where the celebrated beer of this name is manufactured. Our stay in this place was far too brief. One could stay a month or more in this city as it is certainly very attractive.

From Munich we went to Freiberg, via Augsburg, Lake Constance and Basle, on the borders of Switzerland. We did not stop at Lake Constance, but we could see the lake and the steamboats plying its waters. The south coast of the lake is very bold; it is this lake which is the source of the Rhine. I do not remember that we stopped at Basle, but I recall a view of the falls in the river and an iron suspension bridge above them. We stopped at Freiberg over night, my object being to visit a Mr. Rivers. A son of this gentleman was employed in my store in Escambia and the young man had proved so worthy that I looked upon him with much favor. I had promised him that when in Germany I would intercede with his estranged father in his behalf. The son it seemed had incurred his father's serious displeasure, but now sought reconciliation. Mr. Rivers I found to be absent from town and we met only the wife and daughters.

There was not much to interest us in Freiberg, except the cathedral, so the following morning we took the train to Heidelberg, the next afternoon we took a carriage to the castle; arriving at the end of the drive we were obliged to walk some distance. Seeing a gentleman coming down the roadway toward us I remarked: "I believe that is Mr. Rivers." When he approached I asked the gentleman if his name were not Rivers, and he replied that it was. I informed him that his son was in my employ in America, but he seemed to have little interest in him. I learned, however, that he was stopping at the same hotel that we were, so I arranged for an interview with him that evening. We then left him and continued on our way to the castle. I have seen nothing before or since which interested me as much as did that old castle. Such a gigantic, beautiful old ruin! I cannot blame the Germans for hating the French who came into the country and destroyed this relic of ancient glory. A large portion of the castle was ruined by invaders, but some of it was in a fair state of preservation.

Heidelberg is situated on the Neckar River [a branch of the Rhine] some twenty miles from its mouth. The castle is situated on the side of the mountain, and overlooks the town and the river. There had once been a forest east of the castle but it had been made into a beautiful park. Inside the castle, one large hall was used as a museum, and in it were stored articles of historic value. From the parapet which was about two hundred feet long and fifty wide, one had a beautiful view of the Neckar River. In one corner of the parapet was a circular room, having a roof like an umbrella; on a bench within this room we saw a young lady reading, who looked very romantic amid such surroundings. Mr. Schreyer spoke to her in German. She had recognized us as Americans and said to Mr. S. that it was not necessary to speak to her in German that she was from Buffalo, N.Y. She also explained that she was not feeling well and so had remained at the castle while her companions went about. Our view of this old ruin was far too short; I hope sometime to be able to give it a more satisfactory visit. This castle is to other castles what the Chicago exposition was to other fairs. It excelled them all.

The next morning we took the train for Mannheim, where we were to take the steamer down that most picturesque river in the world: the Rhine. Castles to the right of you, castles to the left of you; history and legend written on every point of rock, on every mountain and forest that we passed.

Landing at Rudesheim, we stayed over night, putting up at a very pretty little hotel which was covered with vines and flowers, and where there were vine embowered arbors in which to drink wine. I do not recall that any other visitors were stopping there at this time. Above the hotel on the mountain was situated the celebrated Niederwald monument of bronze. There was a cog railroad running from the hotel to the monument. The hillside about was terraced and planted with grapevines, for it is here that the celebrated Rudesheim wine is made. The railroad also runs through fine vineyards as it ascends.

As to the monument: The superstructure was about twenty feet square, upon the top of this was represented a large arm chair, before which stood the gigantic but elegant figure of "Germania." One arm was raised and the hand pointed across the Rhine towards France. On each side of the superstructure were bas-reliefs, representing noted Germans, from King William down, famous for their connection with the Franco-Prussian war. All the figures were molded from life. On one side is shown the young soldier leaving his father, mother and sweetheart for the war, while on the other side is represented his victorious return. The monument is placed on a narrow flat piece of ground, situated about half-way up the mountain. We returned to the hotel for the night; everything there was very quiet and pleasant. The moon shone brilliantly, the wine was delicious. One could sit in the moonlight enjoying the inspiration of a good cigar and dream of the golden legends which seemed floating in the air.

A little farther down was Bingen, "Fair Bingen on the Rhine." I believe that I never enjoyed a journey so much as this delightful trip down the river. I doubt if there is another locality in the world, possessing so much of legend, romance and history as the borders of the Rhine above Cologne.

We visited the fortress of Ehrenberstein, which is regarded as the Gibraltar of the Rhine. It is garrisoned by many thousand soldiers and provisioned for many years. It looked to me to be wholly impregnable.

At Cologne the most important feature was the cathedral, the spires of which, towering to the great height of five hundred and twelve feet, one sees before reaching the city. It is the most stupendous Gothic structure in the world, and required over six hundred years to build. It was planned and building commenced two hundred and fifty years before Columbus sailed to America. This beautiful specimen of architecture is the glory of Cologne. As we entered the mammoth structure, some sort of religious service was taking place. We remained some time admiring the grandeur and beauty of the vast interior.

The next day we took the train to Düsseldorf, this city being another art center of Germany. While there I witnessed the unloading of several regiments of soldiers from the cars. I saw these men march later through the streets. I was impressed by their quick,



springy step, and felt that anything in their way would have to step aside or be run over. We visited the art school and also witnessed the entrance into the city of the Crown Prince Frederick and his son, Prince Henry. We were in an open carriage and as the prince and his retinue drove by, Mr. Schreyer startled me by rising to his feet and uttering a horrible howl. For a moment I thought he had lost his senses, but no, it was intended to be a good American cheer given in German.

The river below Düsseldorf runs through flat country which is not so interesting, so we took the train for Amsterdam, arriving there after dark. We decided to stop at the hotel Amsdel. While walking from the station, carrying my luggage, a man came up and took hold of my satchel; I told him in good vigorous American to let go, but he hung on. I drew my right hand back and planted a blow between his eyes; then he let go. Schreyer was much alarmed lest the police run me in, but I heard no more of the incident.

When we arrived at the hotel we could procure no rooms below the fourth floor; my wife protested that she could not climb so many stairs, but when she found it was absolutely necessary she did it. The hotel had no lift. When the servant came to announce supper, my wife ordered it brought to our room, the servant said that if the Madame could walk down, that the supper would be so much better, and she walked.

Amsterdam is a typical Holland city, with the streets for the most part canals. By these, passengers and freight are transported from one part of the city to another. There are narrow streets on each side of the canal, but the liquid avenue is the center. This city is built on the west arm of the Zuyder Zee. Our stay was so short that we saw but little of the place, as the next day we took the train for Delft, passing through Haarlem and Leyden. I remember that we visited a church, which was celebrated, though I have forgotten its historical connection as well as the name. We also visited the house wherein the Prince of Orange was assassinated, a mark on the floor showing where the prince had stood when the assassin presented him with the pretended petition and then plunged the dagger into this breast. The house would today be considered of very mean architecture; the stairway by which he descended from his dressing room to meet his death was very narrow, showing how simple was the life of this great warrior and statesman.

From Delft we took a carriage and drove to Queen Emma's Palace, in the woods, where we greatly admired the beautiful Linden trees. From there we went to Rotterdam and Dordrecht, the two principal seaports of the Netherlands. These places are very quaint and interesting and to me noticeable because of their wind sawmills. Each mill had three gang frames which would saw three pieces of timber at once; each was hung on one-third of the circle and all were propelled by a huge windmill.

We went from Dordrecht to Antwerp. I remember visiting the bourse at this place, also seeing the spire of the cathedral. Two spires had evidently been planned, but only one completed. I thought it the most beautiful spire I had ever seen. Antwerp is a great shipping port and does a large trade in lumber. I afterwards shipped a great deal of lumber to this place.

Mr. Schreyer left us at this point, returning to Hildesheim. After his departure I felt like a child lost among strangers. We took the train at Antwerp for Calais; all went well until we arrived at the French border. I had understood that we could go through Calais without change of cars, but when we arrived at the French frontier everyone in the cars alighted. I did not know what to make of it. The guard came to us several times and said something which we did not understand, then a lady came and spoke in what my wife recognized as French, and we at last comprehended that they wished us to go out of the car, go through the custom house, and enter a car for Calais. I noted that the country through which we traveled after this was very flat and low; that the French soldiers were of short stature and were gaudily dressed. When we arrived at the boat landing on the pier we found people who could talk American with a bad brogue which they called English. We had rather an unpleasant trip across the channel from Calais to Dover.

We went by rail to London and stopped at the Grosvenor Hotel, adjoining the Victoria railroad station. We visited the Kensington museum, where I was highly entertained. The paintings were largely from the early English masters; Lely, Benjamin West, Turner and others; but what interested me most was the machinery department which I did not discover until late in the evening. Stored therein was the first locomotive made in England; also a model of the first steamboat built in that country. I remained in this section until they began closing for the night. I enjoyed greatly the many interesting subjects. When we came out it was raining a little, I called a hansom and when the caddy closed the door he asked: "Where to?" I replied: "To the Gross-venor." The caddy said again: "Where?" I repeated: "The Gross-venor." Then he called a policeman who was standing by and asked him: "Can you tell me where this man wants to go?" I said once more: "To the Gross-venor." My wife began to "catch-on" that my pronunciation was at fault, and said to me "Grove-nor." Then everything was plain to the cabman and he took us to our hotel.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### McDavid Brothers as Partners

In the summer of 1882, I had considerable logging done on the Choctawhatchee River. I had about ten thousand logs in my boom at the mouth of that river when a tidal wave occurred in the Choctawhatchee Bay. It entered the river and forced the current so far that it carried the logs up several miles. When the wave receded, it made so strong a current down the river that the logs piled up against the boom, broke it, and they went out into the bay. I sent men and a tug to pick up the logs and secure them; they succeeded in getting about half of them in a bayou opening into the river below Freeport. I employed another tug to go to Choctawhatchee to do my towing. It was commanded by a Captain Leonard. The year before I had unfortunately incurred his enmity, and he did much to my injury. A Dr. McLane had chartered this boat to transport the machinery for a saw mill from Pensacola to Point Washington at the head of Choctawhatchee Bay. It was an old side-wheel river steamer. We started out some time in the afternoon, the doctor and his wife being aboard when I took passage. We had a most enjoyable trip until late in the evening when we all went to bed. It was after sunrise when I arose, and I found the boat aground in the narrows, every one of the crew being drunk and asleep except the engineer. I was unable to arouse the cook, who was in a drunken stupor in the galley. Along towards noon the Captain awoke and went to get another drink to straighten himself out: he found no whiskey left in the two gallon jug. I had poured it out. He asked if I had taken it and I told him that he and his men drank it all themselves. He said if he knew that I had taken it he would put me ashore on that island. His "hair pulled" badly all the rest of the day so that the doctor, his wife and I had rather a lonesome time. A little after noon the cook awoke and brought us something to eat, after which we felt happier. We arrived at Port Washington that night and the second day the "Iberia" started back with a tow of logs for me. I went with them and the journey was without incident until we had reached the wide part of the Santa Rosa sound. The wind had been fresh all day, was dead ahead and increased to a gale by evening. Our boat was nearly powerless against it. The Captain put out the big anchor and hung to it, working the engines at the same time to keep from dragging it. The Captain was in such a rage at the weather, he would go to bow of the boat, where the wind would blow the water in his face, shake his fist at the gale and swear like a pirate, cursing everybody and everything. He gave the most picturesque exhibition of profanity to which I had ever listened. This man was six feet tall, over forty years of age, with blue eyes, light hair and possessed of a wiry frame; he had a daring and reckless temperament. During the civil war, he had been employed by the federals in Mobile Bay as a pilot, and had been captured by the confederates just before Admiral Farragut entered the harbor. Tried by a court martial as a spy, he was sentenced to be hung the next day, but was recaptured by the federals just in time to save his neck.

The next trip Leonard made to Choctawhatchee my man at the boom gave him another tow of logs to bring to my mill. Instead of delivering them as directed, he delivered them to George Wright. This was a sample of the many things Captain Leonard did to injure

me. I found such a bad set of rascals at Choctawhatchee that I gave up logging in the locality, and turned my attention to Escambia River.

That fall I became acquainted with John McDavid, who with his brothers owned about fifteen thousand acres of land in Santa Rosa County. He offered to sell me their lands at fifty cents an acre. I do not know why I did not buy them but I think it was because I disliked running in debt. I had always been very careful not to place myself in a position where some other man could make me do what I did not want to do. After some negotiations we agreed to enter into a partnership. There were six of the McDavids. We agreed to buy Mr. Hubbard's interest in the mill. The combined McDavids were to own one-half and I the other half interest in the company. They were to put in their lands, and I was to put in what lands I had. At that time I could have closed out my business and netted fifty thousand dollars as a result of ten year's business and labor in Florida.

I considered it necessary to go to Oshkosh in order to see Mr. Hubbard and make a trade for the mill. I made him a proposition to pay him the purchase price of the property, but he did not seem to wish to sell it. I told him I would as soon go somewhere else and build another mill, but I wanted to see him get back the money which he had put into the property. After a week's delay he informed me that he would do as I wished, and he deeded the mill, with the pine lands belonging to the new firm. Our lands were located mostly along the river, some so far from it as to make the hauling of the logs by oxen too expensive to be profitable.

About this time there was a good deal of experimenting in Florida seeking to find a cheaper and better way for transporting logs a long distance to water. One of the means tried had been a tramway, but the wooden rails soon wore out. Another had been to build a pole road, laying small trees on the ground, using concave wheels that would straddle the pole, but such roads lasted only a short time.

I concluded I would go to Michigan and see what they were doing there in the way of hauling logs. I went to Grand Rapids and there made the acquaintance of a Mr. Belknap who was engaged in manufacturing supplies for the logging business. While I was talking to him one time, a man came in and Mr. B. introduced us. We soon began discussing the subject in question. I spoke of the tramway and the pole road also other methods used in our section, but he replied: "We have been through all these experiments up here and I tell you there is but one way to haul logs economically, and that is on a railroad." After some further talk I promised to come up to Lake Cadillac and look at some narrow-gauge railroads in that locality, used for hauling logs. I did so and the sight was convincing. As a result I bought in Chicago six miles of steel rail of S.D. Kimbark, contracting to have a locomotive made by Lima Machine Works, and engaged George Randall to survey the land and superintend its construction. Randall I had known in Geddesburg, Michigan, when he was a boy, at the time I was working there on a paper mill. Later he came to Oshkosh and was engineer of the Green Bay & Lake Pepin R.R. He was also engineer on the Fox River canal.

Under our articles of co-partnership John McDavid was to give his time and service to the company; later he wished to give his time to the McMillan Mill Company and suggested that I secure anyone I wished to take his place and he would pay his salary. I sent for my brother, La Fayette, who was then living in Newaygo, Mich., and we began the construction of the road at the river, on the west side of Bonal Island which is an island in Escambia River. That fall and winter we built five miles of road in a north-easterly direction. After being on the line three of four months Randall became homesick and despondent, and wished to go home. We consented to his doing so. My brother had charge of the business at Chumuckla, this being the name I had given the terminus of the road.

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## CHAPTER XII

### Political Ventures

In 1882 an incident occurred at the City Hotel in Pensacola which I think had considerable to do with my entering into politics. At the time my wife was in Newton, Mass., boarding, and my son was attending Yale College. I therefore found it rather lonesome at Escambia and would frequently come into Pensacola on Saturday nights and stay over Sunday. One Saturday night I was standing by the counter in the office of the City Hotel. It was a little after the time the train arrived from the north and there were an unusual number of people in the office at that time. I heard a tall, six-footer who was standing by me inquire of the clerk if Mr. Skinner was in town. The clerk replied: "That is Mr. Skinner standing by you." It occurred to me that very likely the man wished to buy a cargo of lumber. He turned to me and said: "Mr. Skinner, my name is Mr. Knowles." I rejoined: "Mr. Knowles, I am glad to meet you." He then said: "Did you send such-and-such a message to me at the depot?" I replied, "I sent such a message to a man there who refused to deliver my freight to my drayman." He said, "I am that person, and I consider your message a direct insult." I remarked, "A man who does not wish to be insulted should not offer insults," and turned around, as much as to say that that ended the conversation. Suddenly I felt my hat knocked off my head; then in a flash I struck the stranger in the face. Probably the blow dazed him a little. I watch him for a few minutes to see what he would do next. I stood there with my thumbs in the arm-holes of my vest, awaiting the next act on the program. My antagonist worked himself through the crowd to the farther corner of the room, leaving me in the center, between him and the door, when he drew a revolver from his pocket, and pointing the weapon at me, said: "Get down on your knees and apologize to me or I will shoot you." I fully believed he would. I was taken entirely by surprise. The crowd sought safety through the doors of the office. I think what I did was without forethought. Walking directly towards him I grabbed the pistol, at the same time Byron Dunwiddy seized him and took his pistol away, then let him go. The man hurried out of sight as fast as possible. I was unarmed and up to this time was not angry and I did not know where Knowles had gone. I tried to borrow a revolver, but it appeared all were without, or would not lend one to me, and the stores which sold firearms were all closed. By this time I became very angry; probably if I had secured a weapon and met Knowles I would have done something for which I ever afterwards would have been sorry. I remained in town Sunday and Monday looking for Knowles, but saw nothing of the gentleman. When I had last seen him the blood was running down his face. I have since heard that he kept out of sight till his face healed.

Monday a stranger met me in the office of the hotel and said: "Mr. Skinner, I saw that attack on you Saturday night, and I think you are the bravest man I ever saw." I replied, "I was pretty badly scared, but I did not know what else to do." Mr. S.S. Harvey met me that day and said: "Nobody will ever attack you in this country again." It is my own opinion that when a man is in danger of being killed by another man he can't tell what his legs will do with him, whether they will carry him away from the danger, or carry him towards it. I learned later that Mr. Knowles, knowing my habit of coming onto town Saturday nights, had invited his acquaintances to the hotel to see me "make a d...d

Yankee run.” The man who told me of his being invited to see the show, said that he told Knowles he might be making a mistake, saying, “You can’t tell sometimes what those Yankees will do when you get them in a tight place.”

Soon after this I was approached by some of the leading republicans of Pensacola and asked to run for Congress. I told them I did not think there was any chance to elect a republican, but they finally convince me that there was a good one. It seems there was a majority of whites and Negroes at that time in the First Congressional District of Florida who voted the republican ticket. We had heard that there was a move in what was known as the “black belt” of Florida to run one Daniel McKinnon as an independent. The democratic candidate was a Mr. Davidson, who was known in Florida as “the funeral member” of congress. He was a pleasant gentleman without much force of character, who was invariably appointed by the speaker of the house, as one of the committee to escort the body of a deceased member of congress to his former home.

The first congressional district of Florida comprised all the counties bordering on the Gulf from Perdido River on the west to Key West on the south, together with some of the inland counties. It was over six hundred miles long. A republican convention was to be held at Quincy, Fla., August 24<sup>th</sup> to nominate a candidate. The county convention to elect delegates to the congressional convention was held some two weeks previous to that date. About the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> of that month I was in Pensacola to spend Sunday, as usual, when Dr. White, the quarantine physician, said to me: “After dinner we are going up to examine that case in the hospital on East Hill, to find out whether the party has yellow fever or not.” I said: “Let me know when you get back.” About three o’clock I met the doctor in the office of the City Hotel and asked him: “What did you decide about that case?” He replied: “It is yellow fever; we are going to put up the yellow flag for Pensacola tomorrow.” At that date yellow fever was supposed to be infectious. I said to Dr. White: “Have you changed your clothes since you went there?” He answered: “No, no one pays me to do that.” I said, “Good day,” and went home to Escambia. At that time there was no railroad from Pensacola to Tallahassee, though the Pensacola & Atlantic was building. The usual route was to Montgomery, then the Georgia Central to Columbus, Ga., and from there via Waycross and Jacksonville. When our delegation arrived at Montgomery the authorities notified us that Montgomery had quarantined against Pensacola and they would not permit our delegation to get off the cars there. They put us in a passenger car and ran us through the town to a place where they kept us until the train for Atlanta should arrive. We left that train at Eufaula and went from there to Macon and from Macon to Jacksonville. The cars were hot and dusty. We were very tired when we reached the city and went to the hotel, congratulating ourselves that we had beaten the yellow fever scare. I had been in my room about long enough to take a bath when I heard a knock at the door. I opened it and a gentleman stood there who announced himself as the quarantine doctor of Jacksonville. He asked me if I did not know that Jacksonville had quarantined against Pensacola. I replied that I did not live in that city; he asked why I registered from there and I rejoined that I lived near that place, in a small village not much known abroad, and when far from home I usually registered as from Pensacola. He asked, “Who is Col. Tarble? He is mayor of that city, is he not?” I said, “Yes,” and showed him the colonel’s room. The latter gentleman tried to argue with him.

He said there was no fever in Pensacola and that but one case had been developed. After combating the official's argument for a considerable time we convinced him that we were not very dangerous. He wanted to know where we were going, to which we replied that we were going to Quincy on the 4 p.m. train that afternoon. He said, "I think you are all right, but I will order you to leave on the four o'clock train this afternoon."

This quarantine business along the gulf coast against yellow fever is the most foolish, senseless and tyrannical exercise of one-man power that it has ever been my personal experience to suffer. It is a most senseless exhibition of fear, a most tyrannical interference with the liberty of the individual, causing him great trouble, annoyance and expense. We took the train that evening for Quincy. Fearing our party might have difficulty in finding hotel accommodations at Quincy, Col. Tarble and I stopped off and stayed overnight at Tallahassee. The next morning the colonel and I went to that place. It was considered politic for our party not to announce my candidacy for the nomination, and I had little or nothing to do with arranging for the convention the next day, but Col. Tarble and the rest of the delegation were kept very busy. They satisfied themselves that we could control the convention.

I had never witnessed a political convention composed largely of Negroes, but had presumed they would behave very much like white folks under similar circumstances. When the convention organized the next day the Negroes displayed racial characteristics which I had not suspected them to possess. It appeared that nearly every Negro in the convention wished to speak at the same time. Some of them were quite good orators, using fair arguments and good logic. Most of the talking was done by those who supported the independent candidate, McKinnon. This man had served a number of terms in the Florida legislature, was a rabid democrat, and had caused to be placed on the statute book of the state several laws showing unkindly feelings towards the Negroes. I thought for a time they would all be mixed up in a promiscuous fight. I was not aware at that time that the Negro did so much talking before fighting. The greater part of the Negroes in this convention were preachers, who made politics and religion their principal occupation; one of them would talk himself tired and then another would take the platform and howl with all the eloquence he could command, then sit down exhausted, giving the floor to a third orator, and so on until their energy had been expended.

George Washington Witherspoon was a fine orator, preacher and the last congressional candidate on the republican ticket in the district. He had consumed much of the time of the convention in explaining his conduct for the last two years and soliciting a re-nomination, but becoming convinced that he could not succeed; he came to Col Tarble and wished to know whom West Florida was supporting, promising that he would give the colonel what influence he had and support his candidate. When informed, he asked to be introduced to me, and then said that he had hoped to be nominated, but was convinced that it was impossible, so if I would agree to it, he would make a speech to the convention nominating me. I gave my consent and he arose and spoke for nearly half an hour very eloquently, extolling my qualifications for the honor and announced my name. This was the first intimation the McKinnonites had as to who was the dark horse. They had confidence that they could nominate their own man, so they consented to an immediate



ballot and it was taken. The results showed that I had two-thirds of the convention and was declared the nominee. Then there was pandemonium in the convention hall; all the McKinnon delegates wanted to express their indignation and disappointment; they had evidently over-estimated their strength. One big fat Negro from Tallahassee laid down full length on the secretary's table and called for some one to stick a knife in him. This Negro was postmaster at Tallahassee, and was afterwards proven a defaulter to the post office department. The McKinnon supporters openly made the charge that I had bought the convention. Col. Tarble, John Eagan and others returned to Tallahassee where we organized a campaign committee. Ex U. S. Senator Conover, who had been a prominent republican politician in the state of Florida, was at the convention and became my active supporter, as did numerous other politicians.

I had arranged to go north in a few weeks to visit my wife and son, which I did as soon as the preliminary arrangements for the campaign were made. I was advised to get a good rousing speaker from the north to help me stump the district. I was also advised to leave a couple of thousand dollars with the treasurer of the congressional committee, to be used in lubricating the republican congressional machinery.

At the Quincy convention the McKinnon Negro delegation had appeared to have an enmity against Mr. Conover. When he attempted to speak they made an attack on him and drove him from the hall. The day before the convention Col. Tarble was talking with McKinnon. The colonel was a conspicuous-looking man who would be noticed in any crowd. Half a dozen Negroes came up to him and asked if he was a collector of the Port of Pensacola and he replied that he was. They said that they were delegates to the convention and had not had anything to eat that day. The colonel said: "You probably are McKinnon delegates; he will give you money to get something to eat." McKinnon told them that he had no money to give away and that he would not give them anything. Tarble told them to wait a minute while he stepped into a grocery store and got a twenty dollar gold piece changed into silver dollars. When he returned he threw each of them a dollar and told them to go get something to eat. He added that he did not give them money to buy their votes, but that he did not like to see men go hungry; that when they got hungry again to come and see him. He knew they would be hungry before the opening of the convention the next day, and sure enough they presented themselves for a hand-out the next morning and informed the colonel that they would vote as he did; that they liked his kind of politics.

John Eagan was elected chairman of the convention. He was a good presiding officer and understood his business; he was also from Pensacola and one of my supporters. At one time the convention did not like his rulings and half a dozen Negroes rose to expostulate. A one-armed Negro from Tallahassee picked up a heavy chair in his right hand and made as though he would knock Eagan over the head with it. Col. Tarble jumped up and swung a big heavy cane, which he always carried, shouting, "sit down." The Negroes sat down as though they had been shot.

When Col. Tarble with his delegates from Pensacola arrived at Quincy from Jacksonville, ex-governor Stearns, who lived in Quincy, caused a meeting of the board of health to be

called, to have those delegates excluded from the village. Col. Tarble attended the meeting of the board of health and told the gentlemen that there was only one case of sickness in Pensacola when they left, and that none of the delegates with him had been exposed to yellow fever. Turning to Stearns, he said: "You can drive us out of town into the woods if you want to, but I shall take the convention to the woods with me if I go there." He then said: "Gentlemen, you know what the governor of North Carolina said to the governor of South Carolina?" The members of the board admitted that they did not know. "Well," he said, "Gentlemen, it is time to go and take a drink." The colonel furnished several drinks, and heard nothing further about leaving town.

After getting all the campaign machinery in order I went directly to Portland, Me., where my wife and son had preceded me. While in Portland I made the acquaintance of Mr. Neal Dow, son of his father, the great temperance reformer in Maine before the civil war – he was afterwards appointed a general in the federal army, and was at one time in command of federal forces at Pensacola. The son was an expert in politics and told me how they did things in Maine. He gave me a good deal of information in regard to running a campaign. In answer to my inquiry he recommended to me an orator who would fill my requirements, a young man by the name of Loony. This gentleman was an Irish Catholic, and from the accounts given me must have "kissed the blarney stone" before leaving the emerald isle. I went to see Loony and found him a pleasant fellow. He told me he was twenty-eight years old, that he had never uttered an oath, nor used tobacco, nor tasted liquor, nor ever gambled. I said to him, "Mr. Loony, you are certainly a remarkable young man, but let me tell you that during the last ten years you have lost a heap of fun."

I wrote to Senator Sawyer of Wisconsin informing him that I was the republican candidate for congress in my district, and asking him to send me letters of introduction to the secretary of the congressional committee and such other persons in Washington as in his opinion would assist me, which he kindly did. He sent me letters of introduction to the secretary of the treasury and the secretary of the post office department; also to the secretary of the congressional committee.

It is customary every two years when a new congress is elected for the republican members of the expiring congress to appoint a committee to help the election of republican candidates in close districts. George C. Gorham was secretary of this committee, and its executive officer. Senator Sawyer's letters were very cordial and endorsed me in unstinted terms.

On my return to Tallahassee I stopped in Washington to see parties to whom I had letters of introduction. Calling on Mr. Gorham I gave him my name. At first I did not present my letter. He said that he had heard about me, and that some charges had been made against me. I talked a little while to him and then presented Senator Sawyer's letter. After reading it he said: "Mr. Skinner, you are all right; this letter of introduction is as good as if it had come from Gen. Grant." He then pulled open a drawer to his desk and took from it a long letter written by a Negro named Fortune, who lived in New York City and imagined himself a great leader of his race. The letter was full of ridiculous statements,

proving that neither the writer nor his informer knew anything about me. In fact, up to this time I had no particular political record, not having meddled in the politics of Florida at all, but had devoted myself since coming to the state exclusively to the lumber business. I had tried to build up a good trade and to make some money.

I had arranged with Mr. Loony that if I should want him to come and stump the state with me, I was to write him and he would come. When I returned to Tallahassee I did not find things in a satisfactory condition. I could see but little hope for my election, with such division. We could succeed only with a united party. I found McKinnon running as an independent candidate, supported by Stearns and his influence. It had become a belief, with many of the republicans of the state that they could be more successful in electing a candidate who was an out-and-out democrat and who would run as and independent. This scheme was tried several times, both in state and congressional campaigns, but in every instance proved a complete failure. Stearns had been captain in the federal army, was left in Florida at the close of the war, and then engaged in "carpet bag" politics. He was elected lieutenant governor of the state on the republican ticket; the governor died and he succeeded to that position. He was then nominated to succeed himself, the year that Tilton and Hayes ran for the presidency. In the scuffle to secure sufficient electoral votes to give Hayes a majority over Tilden in the Electoral College, the state government was given to the democrats and the electoral votes to the republicans. Then Stearns joined a man by the name of Martin and settled down in a general store in Quincy. They controlled every Negro vote in Gadsden County, and had great influence with the Negroes in Leon, Jefferson and Jackson counties. I thought I would go and interview Stearns, and see what the trouble with him was. I soon found out. He told me if I would promise him a consulship he would support me with all his influence. I replied that I had no consulship to give anyone; that I could not promise him something that I did not have the right to give; that I was not a politician, nor did I understand how to play the game of politics; that I should not place myself under obligation to anyone, which would not leave me free to act rightly. We failed to come to an understanding. I had no idea how many votes he controlled.

Yellow fever had become very severe in Pensacola, and this fact hampered me greatly in canvassing the district. It looked as though the coming congress would be republican without doubt. The democrats in certain sections would resort to their old tactics of intimidation, stuffing ballot boxes and cheating in the count. The probabilities were that the contest between Davidson and me would be close, that the certificate of election might be given to him, and that I might have to contest the seat in the house; that a republican congress would unseat him, giving it to me.

It was never my disposition to enter a contest and give it up without a thorough trial, so I told the "boys" that, having accepted the nomination, I would see the thing through. It appeared that there was no way of estimating the number of votes McKinnon could get from the Negroes; we all felt certain that he would get no democratic votes. I found that the two thousand dollars which I had left with the treasurer of the congressional district committee had disappeared, and that he could give no lucid explanation of what he had done with it. I concluded that thereafter I would disburse my own cash; which I did. Of

course under the circumstances I had no great hope of success. We had meetings in the counties mentioned, the audiences being composed mostly of Negroes. In Leon County we had many political meetings after dark in the rural districts, as most of the Negroes worked on the plantations, and their masters objected to their leaving their work to attend political meetings. I had a good chance now to study the Negro in politics.

When I came back from Washington, a meeting of the congressional committee was held, and I was informed that it would be impossible for me to use Witherspoon in stumping the district as he had been charged in the public prints in Washington with getting two hundred dollars from the Negro postmaster at Tallahassee, which he claimed to have paid to Fred Douglas and Lynch of Mississippi. When I asked Witherspoon, who was present, how this was, he said that the man wanted to be appointed postmaster; that he had gone to Douglas and Lynch, who were the foremost men of their race in Washington, and they told him that they must each have one hundred dollars before they would agree to help him. He then wrote the postmaster explaining the situation and that the latter took two hundred dollars of the post office funds and sent the same to him, which amount was paid over to Douglas and Lynch, one hundred dollars each. When later it was discovered that the postmaster was short in his accounts, he told the detectives that he had sent the money to Witherspoon. It seems that Douglas and Lynch had published a card in a Washington paper denying that they have ever received any money from Witherspoon, stating further that they did not know him. Witherspoon, turn to me, said: "Do you suppose that I would go to Washington and spend a year and a half there, striving to get a seat in congress to which I had been elected, but cheated out of by the democrats, and not make the acquaintance of Douglas and Lynch, who both lived there?" I replied that it did not seem to me probable. J.S. Curry, a treasury agent and an inspector of customs, who was in the room listening to the conversation, here interjected the remark: "The last time I was in Washington I saw you and Fred Douglas riding together in the same carriage." I then said: "The card of Douglas and Lynch will have no effect in prejudicing me against you, their statements are evidently false."

I found Mr. Witherspoon to be an eloquent speaker, and very intelligent for a Negro. He was capable of arousing his race to great enthusiasm. He traveled with me while we were stumping the district and we usually spoke to the same audiences. I remember that at one time we went on a trip to Carabelle and Apalachicola, where we had rousing meetings. Returning on the steamer he sat down to eat with the white passengers, and quite a scene was created by the boat's crew making him leave the table and go to the lower deck. He was very dignified and peaceable about it, and the affair passed off without further trouble.

Mr. McKinnon held a meeting in Tallahassee, but there were not many to hear him, or much enthusiasm. In the western end of the state – Escambia County in particular, Col. Tarble attended to the canvas. He stayed manfully, however, to the office he held, mayor of Pensacola, and U. S. Collector of the port.

Yellow fever was the worst that year in Pensacola that it had ever been, or has ever been since. The colonel's son died of it; he had refused to leave his father. He was a promising

young man of about eighteen years, and was mourned and regretted by the whole population of Pensacola. The colonel managed the canvass so well in Escambia that I received six hundred in majority there over Davidson, McKinnon receiving no votes. In Gadsden County, in which Stearns lived, I received seven votes. McKinnon received about one-third of the Negro vote in Leon and Jefferson counties, and one-quarter of the votes in Jackson County; he received a little over three thousand votes in all. It was the opinion of every man with whom I conversed, that McKinnon received no democratic votes, which but for his candidacy would have been cast for me. McKinnon's vote and mine were a majority of the votes cast. The democrats resorted to fraud in only a few counties.

Davidson said he had a hard task to beat two men, but with his opponents, votes were not strength, because they were so divided. About the only satisfaction that I had out of this canvass was the complimentary vote I received where I was known. I had then lived in Escambia about eight years, and in the precinct of Ferry Pass where I lived I received nearly the whole vote; some fifteen or eighteen refugees from the yellow fever in Pensacola illegally voted in the precinct against me, by swearing in their votes.

I had expended about five thousand dollars as cost of this canvass and there was little satisfaction in the way it had been expended. I published a newspaper at Tallahassee, but I learned that most of the copies which circulated through the mail were destroyed by a couple of postal-route agents. I had the satisfaction, later, of having those agents removed. I was asked to do many favors in the post office department, by getting postmasters and postal agents appointed. They annoyed me considerably, yet I was foolish enough to go on the bonds of several Negro postmasters.

I carried the campaign no farther south than Cedar Keys. Undoubtedly if I had gone through the southern counties I could have increased my votes considerably, but I realized that my whole hope of election depended upon pacifying and uniting the republican vote in the black counties before mentioned. Stearns was resolved to control me politically or defeat me; he succeeded in doing the latter.

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## CHAPTER XI

### A Beautiful Forest

I was informed by Mr. Johnson, who was still at Escambia, that yellow-fever was epidemic in Pensacola and that it would not be safe for me to come down there with my family until after a frost.

It was therefore in early November, 1874, that with my wife, my son and my partner Ebenezer H. Hubbard, I started for Florida. I do not recall the incidents of that journey until we reached Decatur, Alabama. At that time the road between Louisville and Pensacola, now known as the Louisville and Nashville, was composed of short, independents lines. I think the road from Decatur to Montgomery was known as the Alabama Southern; from Montgomery to Mobile as the Montgomery and Mobile, and from Flomaton to Pensacola as the Pensacola and Louisville Railroad.

We missed connections at Decatur and stopped at the Polk House for about twelve hours. Our train did not arrive until about 12 o'clock at night, and we sat up in the parlor of the hotel waiting for it, the daughter of the landlord meanwhile amusing us by entertaining her beau. At this time there were no Pullman cars on this route; the coaches were very plain, and usually dirty, but we had to content ourselves as best we could with the accommodations at hand.

The next day about dark we arrived at Oakfield, six miles north of Pensacola, and were informing that it was not safe to go any farther. Several colored people were awaiting our arrival to take us to Escambia. I was suffering with a terrible headache and so my wife and I stopped at a large house where a number of refugees from Pensacola had made their home during the prevalence of yellow fever. These were seeking in various ways to amuse themselves and drive dull care away. Ill as I was I found much to divert me in the stories of a certain gentleman; they were impossible and humorous; one of the stories I recall even now. It was of a dog, born without any forelegs and the owner to mitigate somewhat this misfortune had a couple of wheels made and placed where the dog's forelegs should have been. The dog after that propelled himself with his hind legs, would chase chickens and pigs with great zeal, and also guard his master's front gate against intruders.

The next morning our teams came for us and we went to Escambia, about six miles across the country. On arriving there we examined the house and found that it had eleven outside doors, each fastened with only a button; that the openings where the windows should have been, were filled by solid wooden blinds; one room had four small glass windows which had evidently been appropriated from some schooner. I do not recollect how we provided ourselves with board and lodging until my household goods arrived from Wisconsin.

I found the mill sawing out a cargo of Rio deals for South America. We brought our logs from people who lived back in the country, who put them in cribs of about twenty logs

each, by pinning a pole across each end of the logs. In this manner we secured all we could saw until about the year 1879. I then learned that there had been in 1873 a great depression in the lumber and timber business at Pensacola; that the shippers had met with great losses that year and that some of them had become bankrupt.

It was the custom in the port of Pensacola at that time for the merchants to buy timber and lumber from the producers and ship it to ports all over the world, where they could find a market. The merchants usually sold cargoes of lumber or timber, delivered at destination; the buyer would name about the amount of cargo wanted, the merchant would charter a suitable vessel, load the cargo and ship to its destination. In selling these cargoes there were three items which the merchant had to take into consideration; these were cost, insurance and freight. What he was paid above these items was his profit. It was necessary that he be a man of considerable means, as there were no banks of large capacity in Pensacola at that time, the bank of Hyer Bros. being in the process of liquidation. These sellers assumed the roles both of shippers and bankers. These three items – cost, insurance and freight were matters of much variability. The merchant, after selling his cargo, had to buy it of some mill; if hewn timber he had to contract with some timber getter to deliver it within a certain time, at a certain price. The matter of insurance was a variable quantity, which depended upon the rating of the vessel, and the month of the year in which it sailed. The freight also was an unknown quantity, governed by the scarcity of vessels seeking freight or the abundance of vessels unchartered. So you will perceive that the seller took chances which might cause him great loss, but he usually took these risks with the nerve of a gambler.

The conditions of this trade were such that it necessarily partook of the nature of gambling. The buyers in Europe were kept well posted as to the conditions of the local market, having parties here who were their employees or were interest with them in the business. About this time and after I came here, the brokers in England who made the sales to buyers in Great Britain and on the continent, assumed the right to make sales whenever in their opinion it was advantageous to themselves to do so. I remember the case of a mill company which came here from Chicago and had bought something like one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land in the state of Alabama at the nominal figure of a few cents per ac. The men were wealthy Chicago lumbermen and they understood the lumber business in Chicago. They came and built an immense mill capable of sawing two or three hundred thousand feet of Michigan white pine per day. They sent a merchant to England to make sales for them, paying him a commission on such sales as he might make. He went there and sold a good many thousand feet of lumber and chartered between twenty and thirty vessels. After making these large sales he came home and informed the mill men of his success and they were happy to think that they had such a prosperous season before them. In the early winter the vessels began to drop in on them. In the sawing of the pine it is necessary that the lumber should have a chance to dry out, for if the sap were wet the lumber would stain blue in the vessel and damage its value on delivery, for which the buyer would demand reclamation from the shipper. In such cases as these the broker selects an arbitrator and the buyer does the same; these two select a third and the three decide the amount the shipper must allow the buyer as damages, either

on account of the cargo being injured in shipping, or not being as specified in the contract. The award of such arbitrators is usually liberal to the buyer.

At one time I believe these mill men had twenty vessels in port for cargo. A vessel, when chartered for a cargo is usually ready as soon as she has her ballast out; then she is allowed so many days for loading. When such days have expired the vessel is on demurrage, the amount of this depending upon the tonnage, or size. This demurrage is a part of, and collectible with the freight from the cargo, amounting usually to from one to two hundred dollars per day, and upwards. The lumber shipped in a vessel must be of the character, size and quantity sold; if it is not it may be rejected in toto, or a new price agreed upon that the buyer may choose to make, or damages may be claimed for non-delivery of goods bought. The results of the experience of these men the first year, selling their lumber in such ill-advised manner, put them in such financial straits that they were compelled to close down and eventually to sell out their plant at a price that put them out of business.

I recall another instance similar to the one mentioned, in which a partner, a reckless character who should have known better and done better, one fall chartered all the vessels he could find in Europe, probably getting a commission on the vessel's charters. The ships arrived at Pensacola, until I think the firm had thirty vessels in port at one time, and though quite wealthy, they were reduced to bankruptcy by the bad conduct of this partner.

I have mentioned these two instances of bad management in order to show that a vessel when engaged must be loaded as prescribed in the charter-party. Still greater losses have been made by ambitious merchants attempting to corner the market in the supply of sawn timber. The loss of a dollar on a stick of timber amounts to a large sum of money in the purchase of two or three hundred thousand. In the height of business at this port, one firm, if I remember correctly, loaded and dispatched as many as one hundred and forty vessels in one year, and the cargo of each would average a million feet of lumber.

The law governing these transactions is very complex and intricate. The merchant should know the kind of lumber required in every port to which he ships lumber, for scarcely any two countries require the same dimensions or quality. Lumber for shipment abroad is usually sold by St. Petersburg standard, which is nineteen hundred and eighty superficial feet, and the price is usually specified to be in English sterling pounds, shillings and pence. Freight and insurance are also generally payable in English money. Timber, both sawed and hewn, is sold by the load - being sixty cubic feet. Drafts for the payment of cargoes are paid in English sterling as stated above, and are usually drawn in sets of three and on time. Sometimes, however, buyers wish to pay in the currency of their own country. During the time that I was engaged in this trade, the buyers so disliked to lose anything on a cargo, that they would use any means to place the loss on the seller, just or unjust.

The pine belt that at one time existed on the gulf coast and lower Atlantic at the close of the Civil War was a forest of great extent. Its area was practically level and streams were found in almost all its parts. Where the timber was not in easy haul of the streams, it was



an inexpensive thing to build railroads to the timber. The pine of this writing [1907] in comparison with 1865, is practically exhausted. Of course there is a great deal of it still left; enough to give employment to lumber men for several decades; but the end is in sight. It seems incredible that these millions of acres of pine should have been cut off, transferred through the channels of commerce to other climes, and so few people have been enriched by the process. I have lived in Pensacola thirty-two years and more; I have seen a great many people with small means engage in this lumber business, the manufacturing lumber from these pine woods, and this port of Pensacola for a great portion of that time has shipped on an average three hundred million feet of lumber and timber per year, but out of the men engaged in denuding these forests, I cannot at present writing recall more than fifteen who have accumulated over \$100,000 in the business. A great many engaged in the business have not only become bankrupt, but have lost large sums of money which they had borrowed from merchants, still others lacked practical knowledge of lumbering or ability to learn it. I mention these principal items of risk for the purpose of showing the hazards encountered by a stranger in entering this region and business, without any prior knowledge of the conditions which surround it. Almost every person coming here from the north who had been a successful lumberman in the white pine districts of Wisconsin or Michigan and had amassed a fortune there, greater or less, would naturally have a good deal of confidence in his own judgment and experience, as I discovered upon meeting them, and it would usually cost such a person about a hundred thousand dollars to learn how to do business in the south. I remember a gentleman from Michigan who had bought mills and a large tract of pine, and whom I casually met on the streets in Pensacola. He asked me to meet him at Millview and instruct him as to the proper method of manufacturing his lumber. I expressed a willingness to do so, as I did not like to have men come down from the north and lose money. He said: "I will write you when I get ready, and ask you to come over. I wish first to get a million feet of lumber piled in the yard." I replied: "You have then a million feet of lumber sold?" He rejoined, "I have no lumber sold, but a yard looks so much better with lumber piled in it." I said to him: "My dear sir, it is right there you are making a mistake. In the north you may safely manufacture any amount of lumber of certain dimensions, and it is always sellable and in demand in that market; as much so as a barrel of flour or a barrel of pork, but in this country it is different; you sell your lumber first, and then manufacture it. You may have a million feet of lumber in your yard, and you probably would not get a chance to sell it in a year, and in the meantime the lumber would decrease in value one-half, from the effects of the sun and rain." This idea was so different from his experience in the north that evidently it did not impress him much. He continued doing business in an unsatisfactory manner for about a year, when he sold out for a lump sum to a syndicate in England. The buyers told me that the lumber he sawed [a million feet] was still in the yard unsold, and that they would be glad to get \$6.00 per thousand feet for it. The former owner had paid that price to a contractor to cut the logs off his own land and deliver them to his mill. It was customary then for log contractors to require of the mill owners sufficient money or supplies to enable them to hire men to cut, teams to haul and men to drive the logs, before they would go to work. Perhaps they did with these supplies or money as they promised, or possibly they did something else with it, which would never be known. The log contractors were good talkers and good promiser's; but many of them were playing a game they were familiar with, but which the "tenderfoot" does not know.

The “cracker” population as a rule was irresponsible in a financial transaction. In the seventies, soon after the war, it was a sentiment prevalent among the crackers, owing to their prejudice against the colored people, to hob-knob with the more educated and cultivated whites, who thought it no harm, if not indeed a praiseworthy and loyal act to cheat and bankrupt the man from the north who came here to get rich out of them, as they thought, and whom they called Yankee, as a term of reproach. When I was asked if I was a Yankee I always replied: “That I was a born and bred Yankee.” Of course at the present time, after thirty years of experience and enlightenment, that prejudice exists only to a limited extent and that principally among women. I found then that this prejudice existed against me to a considerable degree, but when a man tried to do an unfriendly thing, I attempted to convince him that it was a game that two could play, and that he would gain little by so doing. I think I did not suffer from this sectional prejudice for more than six years after my arrival; it died out very soon after the white population got political possession of the state. The people had suffered so severely through Negro legislation, dominated by carpet bag influence, that the irrational was natural; when the source of the injury was removed the irritation vanished. During the first few years of my residence at Escambia I found it difficult in getting many of the best logmen to cut for my firm. In 1876 I think it was, the lumber market was very much depressed and it was almost impossible to sell lumber at a profit. Two or three men who bought logs on the Escambia River closed down their mills and refused to take any more from their loggers, refusing even those that had contracted for. These men came to me in their trouble, to sell their logs, though they had formerly refused to sell to me. I said to them: “All right, I will take your logs as long as I have money to pay for them, but when my money gives out I shall have to stop buying.”

In those early years of living at Escambia it was my custom to go north when the hot weather came. During the time we spent away traveling, we closed down the mill. This year I told my bookkeeper when I left to buy logs as long as he had any money in the bank, then stop buying. When I returned in the fall I found that he had paid out what money I had, and also had overdrawn my account at the bank about \$10,000; but I had a fine stock of logs on hand. I found that the market was much better than when I had left in the spring. I formed a shipping partnership with a Mr. Hooten, of Pensacola, who had had a long experience in shipping lumber for himself or in the employment of others. This partner had sold several cargoes to be shipped abroad, and had contracted for the lumber to be furnished by other mill owners. The price advanced on lumber from \$1 to \$2 per thousand feet. The mill owners had neglected to buy logs and could not get them at the old price, when the vessels arrived for their cargoes, they told my partner that I had bought all the logs in the market, knowing what was going to happen, and that I had the logs and could saw the lumber myself, while they could not furnish it. I had thought this state of affairs would come about and had gone to work preparing the lumber, and had it on hand. I did not let my partner know this fact, but kept him in “hot water” by asking him what he was going to do. He finally acknowledged his helplessness that he could not buy the lumber anywhere. I said: “You represent your company; I represent Skinner, Hubbard & Co. I will sell you the lumber at \$2 per thousand advance on the price you were to pay the other parties for it.” He replied: “I accept your offer.” I loaded the vessels

all in good time. Then I said to him: "Mr. Hooten, you send those parties a bill for the difference in price between the contract price for the lumber and that which you had to pay for it; if they refuse to pay the difference, sue them." They did refuse; we sued them, got judgment and they paid the judgment.

When I came to Escambia we had no post office there. I arranged with the postmaster to give my mail to the mail carrier who carried the mail between Pensacola and Milton and I would send a messenger to Prichard Field and get my mail as the carrier passed that point. C.L. Le Baron had a private telegraph line from Pensacola to Milton and I put a private line from Escambia to Ferry Pass. I hired several boy operators but had much trouble with them and more with those employed by Le Baron. After continuing it for about a year I came to the conclusion that the line was more of a vexation than a convenience, and I gave it up. In 1878 my partner, having been accustomed to city life, with nothing to attend to, went home to his uncle and refused to come back.

I heard of the wonderful telephone [the telephone is as wonderful to me today as it was then]; I received a letter from a cousin of my wife who was operating one, giving it unstinted praise. I had never seen a telephone myself; there were none in Florida so far as I knew. In 1880 I put up a line from Escambia to Pensacola, placing the Pensacola end of the wire in the office of my friend, Col. Geo. E. Wentworth. It worked very satisfactorily and was a great curiosity, being the first telephone in that part of Florida, if not in the state.

I needed a light-draught tugboat to tow lumber and logs; one that I could run through the narrows in the sound up to Choctawhatchee Bay, as well as operate in Escambia Bay and River. I concluded to go to Oshkosh and buy a tug; one of those used at that place for towing logs and lumber. I bought a nearly new boat; one of the best, if not the best in those waters. My partner, Ebenezer Hubbard went up to Oshkosh to take passage on the boat and come down with it and he had quite an interesting trip. The tug went up the Fox River and through the canal which connected that river with the Wisconsin River, down the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, down the latter to the jetties and into the Gulf of Mexico. She then had to work her way northward among the Chandelier Islands into the Mississippi Sound and through that to Mobile Bay, and from Mobile Bay through the Gulf. This tug was built for use in fresh waters and had no condenser; her trip through salt water caused her boiler to foam, which interfered with her steaming. When the boat reached Escambia the men were very much pleased that the trip had ended; the voyage having been made for them through unknown waters. To have made such a trip without accident and nearly on the schedule time [made previous to leaving Oshkosh] was very gratifying.

At that time it was customary for men employed on the inland waters of Pensacola Bay to amuse themselves by telling frightful stories of sickness and death to tenderfeet just from the north. Capt. Colburn, of the tug Hercules, was very susceptible to these fairy tales, and his fear being noticeable made him a shining mark for the story teller. I kept him busy towing logs from Choctawhatchee Bay to the mill. A few months after his arrival at the port he was taken sick while at Freeport and was very badly frightened, and

notwithstanding he was to be part owner of the boat and captain of it, he made up his mind to get out of the country while his life remained, and return to Oshkosh.

At the time of my arrival there was a great deal of malarial and break-bone fever. Considering the way the natives lived, the mystery to me was that they did not all die, and not that many of them were taken ill. Dr. John Brosnaham moved to Gull Point, about three miles down the bay, the year after I came to Escambia, and was a great help to me in keeping my family and employees well. He made calomel pills with which he always kept me supplied. He had several grades of these pills, of different strength; the mildest pills he called 'little cusses,' next were the 'royal Bengal tigers,' the most powerful were 'little hell.' Either kind could be administered to the patient, as his condition might require. It was remarkable the uniformity with which these pills relieved the patients.

The principal diet of the crackers at that time was hog and hominy, intermixed with greens when the latter could be had. The hoecake was made by mixing cornmeal and water, with a little salt, putting it on a shovel and baking it over a coal fire; the bacon was fried in a skillet. In the fall they would make some cane syrup, and when in funds some wheat flour, which they would mix and bake as hoecake. This was at times the principal food of the Negroes and poor crackers, and sometimes the "little hell" pills were required to reduce any effect.

Until 1878 I had kept myself in fairly good health with the contents of numerous bottles of Simmons' liver regulator. I went north that summer to New York, where I spent several days with a Mr. Colquett who was a buyer and shipper of pitch pine lumber from the Atlantic coast ports. I was anxious to learn how they inspected lumber in New York when it arrived in cargo lots. He had several vessels which were unloading in New York harbor, and he wished me to see a cargo which was unloading in Brooklyn. He did not seem to be very well posted as to the localities in that city, nor as to car lines. We boarded a car which he thought would take us to the vessel, but it did not. He considered, however, that by walking cross-lots we would soon reach the vessel. It was a very hot clear day and the sun's rays were scorching. The distance proved to be more than a mile. I have never suffered sunstroke, but think I came pretty near it then.

The next day I went up to New Haven, Conn., where I had a cargo of timber and lumber unloading, which I had sold to the New Haven Sawmill Co. When I arrived at New Haven I went directly to the vessel, but the heat of the day-before I think had stimulated the malaria in me and I began to feel sick. I asked Mr. Booth, the agent of the buyers, to take me to a good hotel, he did so. When I reached the hotel I went to bed and asked the landlord to send for a good doctor. The physician came and looked me over. I do not know what his diagnosis was, but he put some "No 1" in a glass of water and some "No 2" into another glass of water and told me to take a teaspoon of "No 1" and in half an hour a teaspoon of "No 2," repeating till I got well, or died. The girl who waited on my room told the housekeeper that she believed that man in No. 22 was crazy; "Just think, this hot day he has kept calling for blankets till I have put six on his bed." During my life I have suffered terribly with headaches, first and last, but I never had such a painful

headache as I had that night. My reasoning appeared to be all right, but the pain was intense. I feared that before morning I would be out of my head if the pain continued. About twelve o'clock I touched the bell button for the night clerk to come to my room and in vigorous language I told him my condition. I directed him to bring me some crushed ice, put it in a washbowl, pour in some water, set it at the head of my bed and furnish me a towel. I then wet it in the ice water and put it on my head. When the towel would get warm I would take it off my head and put it in the ice water; then wring it out and put it back. By three o'clock in the morning the headache had ceased, and later I went to sleep. About 9 o'clock the doctor came to see me again. I told him that I did not want any more "No 1 and No. 2," but that if he would give me something that would not make my head ache I should be glad. He remarked: "You appear to know better what to do than I. I reckon you better doctor yourself." I told him that I thought so too, and bade him good day. I then called the landlord in and asked if he could recommend a good allopathic physician. He was careful to express no opinion as to the merits of any physician, but finally mentioned a Dr. Hubbard. I said: "Send for him; I never knew a Hubbard who was a fool." He came and put me under a treatment of calomel and quinine. In ten or twelve days I thought I was all right and insisted upon going into the dining room to get my meals. This led to a relapse and I was quite ill again. After about two weeks more I felt that I had recovered and I made up my mind that I would go to my wife in Chicago; I was very impatient at the confinement and delay. Dr. Hubbard told me that if I took the journey then to Chicago it would kill me, but I paid my bills; settled with Mr. Booth as he dictated for the cargo of lumber, ordered a carriage and went to the railroad station. As I sat in the depot awaiting the arrival of the train for New York, I felt very ill and concluded that I would have to return to the hotel. I started to get a carriage to take me there, none was in sight, but the train rolled into the station and I got aboard. I kept getting stronger all the way to New York City, and then for some reason I crossed to Jersey City and took the Pennsylvania train to Chicago. I met my wife in the latter place, and accompanied her two or three days in the hot sun on a shopping tour, and then we went to Oshkosh. My wife was an invalid and a local physician was treating her; he also prescribed for me, as I had not yet recovered from my late illness.

About a week later I went to Ripon in order to place my son in school. While at the house of the president of the college, waiting for the return train, I was taken quite sick again, but I arose, in spite of the pain, and took the train to Oshkosh. My partner, Mr. Eben Hubbard, met me at the station and took me to the house of my wife's father. The next day I was taken with a terrible fit of vomiting. My mother-in-law came to me and said: "Don't you think we had better send for Dr. Osborne?" This doctor had been our physician before we went south. I replied that I would like to have him. He was sent for and came in the morning; talked with me awhile and went out of the room. In a short time Mrs. Hubbard came to me and said: "Mr. Skinner, may I tell you what Dr. Osborne told me?" I replied, "Certainly." "He says you are all used up, that he can't do much for you; whether you live or not will depend upon good nursing; that in any event you will not get out in six weeks." I had never suffered much sickness. I took no stock in the doctor's prognostications in my case, but following events proved him correct. Mrs. Hubbard was one of the dearest old ladies I ever knew, as well as the best friend I ever had. She nursed me faithfully, but it was six weeks before I became convalescent. I fully believe she

saved my life. Dr. Osborne remarked that it would be some time before I would have another fever, and I have had none, although I have lived twenty-seven years in Florida. The experience of that malarial fever has demonstrated to me that a person, convalescing from it, should be very careful in resuming the customary avocations of life, and I have used that knowledge much to the advantage of my family and the health of my employees. As soon as I had fully recovered I returned to Escambia.

My experience in 1878 in buying logs led me to buy the log landings along the shores of the bay and river, where logs could be handled by teams and rolled into the water; then these landings could not be used without my consent while I owned them. Up to this time and for several years later, timber lands in Florida were valued at only fifty cents per acre, which price, of course, was ridiculously low. I was aware of that fact, but I think it was the general impression of the natives that these lands never would be worth much. They could secure government land by locating it under the United States Homestead Law, but most of them failed to do so, because it cost fifteen or twenty dollars to locate the claim.

Most of the natives possessed a migratory disposition. They would see locations often which they thought superior to the one they occupied. It did not involve much labor to cut poles, notch them and build a log house; they could cut down a cypress, juniper or pine tree for shingles. Most of them had a little ox-cart or one-horse, four-wheel wagon in which to move their wives, children and household goods, and they could drive their pigs and cattle to the new home. The man would girdle a few acres of trees and start a new plantation, perhaps a little richer than the former worn-out garden spot. At one time I think as many as a hundred of these "squatters" were living on my land.

In the fall of 1880 my former partner, E. H. Hubbard, returned to Escambia and spent the winter with me. His eldest daughter, Mary, was born at my house. I had an option on some thirty-five thousand acres of pine land at seventy cents per acre. This land lay on and tributary to the Conecuh River, and was covered with very large pine trees. Mr. Hubbard had two brothers in New Mexico raising sheep, and about this time they sold out; their names were John Q. and Howard Hubbard. The mill property at Escambia still belonged to my father-in-law and I urged them very strongly to look at this pine land and buy it. If they preferred I would let them have the mill at Escambia and I would go somewhere else, but the three brothers decided to go to Mobile and embark in the lumber business there. Later this land was sold to a syndicate of Wisconsin men – Mr. Wharton and others. Afterwards Mr. Wharton offered the land to me at \$2 per acre, and he finally sold it to a Mr. Peters, who made a fortune out of it, and then sold it to Mr. F. C. Brent and others, who have also made a great deal of money from it.

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## CHAPTER X

### From North to South

I went to Oshkosh and soon became convinced that the scheme which had brought me to that city would not materialize. It was decided that my wife should remain here and that I should go back to Chicago. There I joined Mr. Ferguson who was in the mill-supply business. I went into the project on my own responsibility and secured the agency of a number of manufacturing concerns; this I afterwards made quite profitable. Mr. Ferguson and I occupied the same store on Canal St. and worked together very harmoniously. He was, I think, of Scotch extraction, and was an honest, respectable man whom I very much esteemed.

At first I engaged in building flour mills. I planned one to be built at Washington, Neb., which was to be operated by water power. Also a similar one to be erected in Kansas and a third one for Messrs. Baxter & Brunner, of Gratiot, Wis. In the latter case the owners insisted that I should come to Gratiot and superintend the building of the mill, or they would not give me the contract to furnish the machinery for it; this I consented to do. According to my best recollection this was the summer and fall of 1870. The masonry for the foundation of the mill was laid on solid rock; I furnished the machinery from the firm of Messrs. J.S. Noyes & Co., of Buffalo, N.Y. I used water wheels, some five in number, manufactured, I think, by G.E. Houston, of Beloit, Wis. The building of this mill I enjoyed very much, as I had no annoyance from the proprietor and they did not ask me to make everything as cheap as possible. The building above the foundations was of wood. I built all in a first-class manner, according to my ideas of what that term meant. The owners were very much pleased with the mill. I afterwards read that Charlie Brunner, the junior partner, and his wife and child were killed in the Lake Shore R.R. disaster, which occurred near Ashtabula, Ohio. Thus, at one blow, a whole family was destroyed. He was a splendid man and I loved him very much.

I planned several other mills that summer. In 1871 I took a contract to erect water works for fire protection in the village of Watertown, Wis. At my request Gen. "Gabe" Bouck, who was in the Wisconsin legislature, caused to be enacted a statute permitting villages and cities to issue bonds to pay for such improvements. The main street of the village was continued across the dam which backed up a small lake, furnishing a good supply of water but a low head; it supplied water power for a flouring mill, and the owner donated the water for the proposed works. I set a six-foot Houston wheel on iron posts which stood on solid rock, and built a circular flume of boiler iron. In fact, the whole outfit was of iron, no wood at all about it. The water pipes ran up through the streets of the village and at the different street-corners hydrants were attached to the pipes. When wanted for fire purposes, hose was attached to the hydrants. While I was building these water works the great fire at Chicago occurred. We heard rumors of that fire which seemed almost incredible, but they were confirmed later, so that next day I went to Chicago. I found that our store, No. 54 or 56 Canal Street had escaped the general destruction. I walked through the streets on the south side, among the ruins; it does not seem possible that such a fire could have happened. One thing that surprised me was that the house of Mr. W.B.

Ogden, built of wood in the center of a square on the north side, was apparently uninjured, while everything around it was destroyed. A row of fine trees surrounded this square on which the house was built, and this taught me that green trees were a great protection to buildings in case of a conflagration. After viewing the ruins as much as I wished, I returned to Watertown, the accommodations for strangers being very limited.

That fall I entered an agreement with the village of Black River Falls, Wisconsin, for the construction of works similar to those erected at Watertown. I contracted for the water pipe in Cleveland, Ohio, and it was to be delivered at Black River Falls, about the first of November.

After completing the job at Watertown, I erected a pump in the large saw mill of D. J. Spaulding, then president of the village of Black River Falls. This gentleman was one of the finest men it has ever been my pleasure to know. Owing to the quantity of freight on the lake the pipe was shipped on the last boat of the season. The trenches had been dug through the streets and were awaiting the arrival of the pipe. The weather became very cold and the ground was frozen six feet deep. I recollect laying the pipe one day, and making the lead joints when the thermometer showed twenty degrees below zero. With all the difficulties to contend against I completed the project, gave a satisfactory exhibition of the power of the water, received my pay and went home. Mr. S.S. Merrill, superintendent of the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, was very just to me in repaying over-charges on freight collected at Black River Falls by his railroad.

By some means which I do not now recall, I had obtained the agency for the Northwest of the celebrated carbonized hose, manufactured by the Gutta-Percha Rubber Company of New York. The sale of this hose was quite remunerative to me, as I received a commission of twenty-five cents per foot on all that I sold.

The next summer, I think it 1872, I made arrangements with Cole Brothers, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to sell the steam fire engines manufactured by them. This was a double-piston machine built after the plan of the celebrated Amoskeag fire engine. It was a lighter machine, and I thought, therefore, preferable for use in the west, where the streets were not generally so well paved, as they are now. I sold nine of these Cole Brothers fire engines the next year after I took the agency. The capital of the firm was limited and I agreed to pay a certain price for each machine ordered, and take my changes in collecting my pay from the towns where I sold the machines. The firm agreed to deliver the engines at the point where I should sell it, and to give a satisfactory exhibition of its workings. I fixed the price of the machines that would allow me a profit of \$500 per engine.

In selling these engines I learned a good deal about the inside workings of municipal politics. My principal competitor in the business was the Silsby Company of Lockport, New York, though I had several other machines to compete with, the Amoskeag, Clapp & Jones, etc. I was a very successful salesman and it was seldom that I lost a sale of either flour mill supplies, mill machinery, hose, belting or fire engines. The only sale of a fire engine that I lost was in my own city, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In each city where it was decided to buy a fire engine the people would resolve themselves into two factions; one



favoring a rotary, and the other a piston machine. In almost every instance I was opposed by the rotary people. For the same class of machine they asked \$1,000 more than I did, which one thousand dollars they often used for bribing aldermen or others to help them make a sale. I resolved from the start that I would use no bribery methods, and during all the time that I was selling fire engines I never offered or paid any city official or other person a consideration for the buying of my machine. I fought the rotary people "in the open," and usually the fight was a very strenuous one. If there happened to be a machinist among the aldermen I sought them out and explained to them the good points of my machine, and also pointed out the defects in the rotary engine.

I remember having a hard fight with the Silsby people at Oskaloosa, Iowa. I either saw in a newspaper or received a letter that they were going to buy a fire engine, and I immediately took a train for that city. I had been interviewing the aldermen, explaining the good qualities of my engine for about twenty-four hours, when as usual a Silsby Company agent appeared. There was a man in the city council that had a machine shop, and it was easy to convince him of the superiority of my machine, but another man in the council was a politician, and mixed up in state politics and was a smooth, slick, plausible fellow. At first he was quite favorable to my engine, but when the Silsby man arrived I knew I should have him to fight, judging by my past experience with city fathers. It was evident to me in a very short time that this alderman was "on the make." When I was convinced of this I let the other agent have him.

At a meeting of the council the Silsby agent and I both appeared to represent our respective machines. There was one alderman; I think they called him "Judge," who suggested that there was no difference in the intrinsic value of the two machines, so far as he could see. I told the council they could have my engine for \$4,500, but no less. "The Judge" finally made a motion for adjournment till the next night. They would then buy the machine that they could get for the least money. My friends told me the next day that the Silsby agent had agreed to underbid me, and I was pretty well convinced that he would sell his engine to the city. My friends wanted me to enter into competition with him, and after considerable persuasion I told my supporters in the council that I would bid against the Silsby agent with the distinct understanding that I was not to be bound by any bid I made. This was agreed to by them, and I went to the council meeting the next evening with that understanding. The "Judge" arose and remarked that the council had come to the conclusion that they would buy the machine that could be obtained for the least money, and turning to me he inquired at what price I would sell to the city a second-class fire engine. I replied "\$4,500." He then turned to the Silsby agent and asked what price he would sell his machine, to which the reply was "\$4,400." We kept falling in price until my competitor struck \$2,500, when I refused to go any lower. The council then entered into a contract with him at that figure, and also contracted with me for two thousand feet of carbonized hose. When we had finished I turned to the council and said: "I congratulate you upon having purchased a fire engine at its true value. That is the price the Silsby Manufacturing Company will sell their machines when they cannot get any more for them. I could not sell one of my machines for less than \$4,500." One of the members of the council wished to know what I would have done if the council had accepted one of my bids. I replied that I had an understanding with my friends in the

council that no bid of mine, less than \$4,500 would be accepted, and that it was with that understanding I had entered into competition with the Silsby representative, for the purpose of enabling the city to get a Silsby engine at the lowest possible price. I then turned to the Silsby agent and said: "You established a price with this sale which will be a precedent; I will see that you sell no more machines at over \$2,500."

I had had a very strenuous conflict. A local newspaper had suddenly become very much interested in the Silsby; what influenced it I could only surmise. The next day it contained a bitter attack upon me. During this contest I had not slept for six consecutive days; when it was all over I went back to Oshkosh. After about two weeks I received a letter from a friend in Oshkosh saying that he thought if I would visit the town at once I could sell it my fire engine; I took the next train for that city. On arrival I learned that the Silsby Company had repudiated the contract their agent had made with the city, stating that he had exceeded his authority and that \$4,000 was their lowest price. My friends were indignant, and took the position that they would not have the Silsby machine at any price. A meeting of the council was called for the night of my arrival, and I signed a contract with the city for a Cole Brothers fire engine at a price of \$4,500. The machine was delivered in due time and found satisfactory.

In the spring of 1874 the city of Oshkosh decided to buy an additional fire engine. I interviewed the chairman of the fire committee in regard to the Coles Brothers machine; he asked me to have one made for that city and to bring it to Oshkosh, saying that if it proved a good machine the city would buy it. This man I had known ever since I came to Oshkosh in 1855 and I considered him something more than an acquaintance. During the time I had known him, he had migrated to Colorado, become interested in some mines, which he sold immediately after the Civil War to New York parties, and was reported to have a good deal of money. He had afterwards returned to Oshkosh, built a fine residence, also a new saw mill; and bought pine lands, becoming a prominent lumberman, and was one of the city fathers. I had the engine built and brought to Oshkosh, gave an exhibition with it, and stored it in the engine house on the south side.

"Jack" Hasbrouck, the fire marshal of the city, took out my engine during a conflagration among some lumber piles one night, and used it to fight the flames. The fire department and citizens generally, were pleased with the good conduct of the machine, and praised it highly. I thought this would decide its purchases, but no action was taken by the council. I was satisfied that the delay was caused by the action of the gentleman above alluded to, Mr. Doe, who stated that the Silsby Company was building a machine to bring into competition with mine. I told him that I would not enter into competition with the Silsby engine; that they would build a first-class engine of greater weight and capacity than mine, and I would of course be beaten in a contest with it. My machine stayed in the Brooklyn engine-house awaiting developments.

Not long after that I was in my own home in Oshkosh on a visit to my family, in May, 1874, when my father-in-law came to me and asked me to ride with him to the city. On the way he told me about a project he was considering. It seemed that some parties had appeared in Oshkosh having for sale some seventy-five thousand acres of railroad pine

lands in Florida and some local person lacking the capital necessary for the purchase, had asked Mr. Hubbard to join them. He said these men had been down and examined the lands and that the young man who was book-keeper at the Wakefield flour mill had gone with them to learn what he could, pledging to give Mr. Hubbard a correct account of things in Florida as he should find them; that he had returned and made his report. To insure the full interest of this young man, my father-in-law had told him that if he saw any good bargains in that state, that he would join him in their purchase. The book-keeper brought the report that he had secured a saw-mill plant and six thousand acres of land for \$26,000, paying \$1,000 down and agreeing to pay \$10,000 more in thirty days. Then my father-in-law went on to say that he was getting to be an old man, was troubled with rheumatism, that he wished to go to a milder climate, that he wished to put his nephew into a business which would give him something to do, and that he also thought it might suit me to go to Florida and engage in the lumber business so he thought he would invest. I replied: "Mr. Hubbard, I have been influenced in the past by the advice of others, but in the future I mean to act only upon my own judgment in matters of business. I cannot tell what I would like to do, until I have examined and formed my own conclusions." He replied that he wished I would go and see the property and tell him what I thought about it. I suggested that this would cost considerable in both time and money. He appeared to be quite anxious for me to go, however, and said, if I should see fit to enter the project that he would furnish the money to run the business in good shape. We interviewed Mr. Johnson, the book-keeper referred to, and he was very optimistic about the affair, saying that there was: "Thousands in it."

It was consequently arranged that in ten days time I should meet Mr. Johnson in Chicago and that we would proceed to Pensacola and together examine the property for which he had bargained.

I had some sales of fire engine-hose in the western part of Wisconsin also in St. Paul and Minneapolis that I wished to close up and I had some collections to make in the same territory. After completing these affairs, I met Mr. Johnson in Chicago as planned. He brought me from Mr. Hubbard \$10,000 in a New York Exchange certificate payable to my order, with instructions, that if in my opinion the property was worth the sum agreed upon, that I should buy it. We left the north in May for the "Land of Flowers."

I had some relatives living in Florida who had been there since "befo 'de wah." The husband of a cousin was in the lumber business in a place called Bagdad, Florida. Soon after arriving in Pensacola I learned that a steamer was going to this place with a party of people who were to attend an entertainment for the benefit of a local church. I was invited to join the excursion, and did so. We arrived after dark. I had not seen my cousin for twenty years, but was invited to her home and was hospitably received. Their house was a fine old mansion surrounded by live oaks and other handsome trees. It was a very pleasing home.

Every one had a good time and after the entertainment, which had been held in the church, the steamer returned to Pensacola with its passengers.

In deciding about the business venture, my chief desire was of course to see the pine lands. I knew that a saw mill was valueless without saw-logs, and I wished to learn if the forests would yield a supply of logs for a good many years. The agent of the railroad offering this land for sale was a Mr. Peter Knowles, a long time resident of Florida, in fact since before the "late unpleasantness." He was a very genial gentleman, liked good things to eat and drink and a good time generally. He procured a two-seated covered wagon for our journey in which he placed provisions for our comfort. This was propelled by a pair of mules and a Negro driver. We crossed the river at Ferry Pass, an arm of Escambia Bay, and landed on terra firma at Florida Town, where we struck the pine lands which I wished to see. We rode from Florida Town nearly northward, traversing the highest land.

These pines were different from any forest I had ever seen. The ground was covered with a fine green grass that looked like a gentleman's lawn. The trees were very stately and handsome, most of them forty or fifty feet to the limbs, the tops covered with green pine needles which grew in clusters. There was no underbrush and no obstructions except where some tree had been burned or blown down and lay with its long trunk on the ground. One could drive in any direction in these woods. All that was necessary to know was the points of the compass. It seemed like sacrilege for man to come and cut down these magnificent trees. I wished often, in the years to come, that I need not do this.

We traveled that day about twenty-five miles through this beautiful forest. In later years I had the good fortune to own most of this land and at one time I could ride thirty miles in a northerly direction and be upon my own land all the time.

Every few miles through these woods could be found a "squatter." These men would cut down a few trees, build a log house, clear up a few acres upon which to raise cotton, corn and sweet potatoes. His pigs, sheep and cattle would find their own living in the woods, and all the squatter had to do to secure ownership was to brand them while they were young. The names of these settlers would indicate that the majority of them were of Scotch extraction. These were the original Florida "crackers." There were no schools among them, during the days of slavery; and a great many of them were unable to read or write their own names. They prided themselves that a white man would not steal. This fact in their estimation raised them far about the Negroes, for whom they had great contempt; per contra; the Negroes entertained a very low opinion of the poor whites, while they cherished a deep veneration for their own masters. We stayed all night with a squatter who entertained us hospitably at his house not far from the Alabama line. I certainly enjoyed those woods and my admiration for them has never lessened.

In the morning we started our return, but by another road, so we traveled through new forests all the time. At night we arrived at a saw mill not far from the Escambia River, and were hospitably entertained by the owner, Mr. R. D. Byrne, who invited us to spend the night at his home. I recollect that we passed the evening away around the fireplace, although it was in the month of June and that the fire felt very comfortable. We conversed about the country's possibilities, and of the forest, meanwhile smoking our cigars. The next day we returned to Florida Town, and visited the mill that was involved

in the purchase. This, I think, was naturally one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen in Florida. The mill was situated on Escambia Bay at a point where it was about two miles wide, and directly under a bluff that towered about eighty feet above the water, and which gradually sloped to the water's edge. This incline was covered with a thick forest, consisting mostly of live oak trees, from whose limbs hung festoons of grey Florida moss, reminding one of Santa Claus with his grey hair and whiskers. On the top of this bluff was the residence of the mill owner, in a clearing of ten acres. The house was surrounded with crepe myrtles twenty-five feet high, and now in full bloom. In the front yard were two gigantic live oaks, quite shapely and beautiful. On each side of the front porch were two fine Japanese plum trees, the largest that I ever seen of this variety. In the rear of the house were two very large magnolias, and other trees; sycamore, mulberry and black oak. In the yard were several large arbors of scuppernong grapes. In the garden were peach trees in full bearing. It seemed as if a man with a contented mind might find here: "Paradise regained."

From the mill we returned to Pensacola and stopped at what was called the Santa Rosa Hotel. Whether this was built before or since the war I am unable to tell. It was three stories in height while most of the buildings of the town were but one.

A Mrs. Hickey was boarding at this hotel and she had a mocking bird which she had educated as a songster. In the morning we were awakened by the most rapturous singing to which I had ever listened. The bird appeared to be in a very ecstasy of excitement and it made so much noise that it was impossible for one to go to sleep again, I had never before heard a mocking bird, and was charmed as I listened, so much so that I obtained a young one and took it with me Oshkosh. I imagine however, that it needed the training of other birds. After a lingering and uneventful existence it died.

At this time there were two private banking houses in Pensacola; Hyer Brothers and C. L. Le Baron. In making out the papers for the purchase, I had the mill and lands deeded to Mr. Hubbard, rather than have them deeded to the new firm and they give a mortgage to him. I knew this would make Mr. Hubbard safe, regardless of what might happen to the rest of us. I also agreed to take the stock of goods in the store at a fair valuation. After this business was finished, I returned to Oshkosh, leaving Mr. Johnson to inventory the stock and have the care and custody of the property. When I arrived at Oshkosh, Mr. Hubbard refused to give a note to secure the balance due on the property, but was willing to give a mortgage on it to secure the note of the new firm. To this the sellers consented, and the purchase of the property was consummated in that way.

The cost of the mill and lands was \$26,000. The inventory of the goods in the store, as made by Mr. Johnson, showed a value of \$3,000. While the foregoing settlement was in progress, Mr. Hubbard one morning called me into his room and said: "Mr. Skinner I am sick of that investment of yours in Florida; I want to you go to Pensacola and get what you can of that \$10,000 and let the trade go." I replied, "Mr. Hubbard, I do not see how I can do this. If the parties thought we were sick of the trade they would not return any of the money; if I went down there and made a settlement of the trade which involved a loss to you, you would always blame me, unless I made good the loss to you, so I am not

willing to do as you request. I believe the property is a bargain as the price which we paid for it.” After this interview, my father-in-law never referred to the subject again.

Sometime in the summer following my return from Florida, the new Silsby fire engine appeared in Oshkosh. Mr. Doe sent me a challenge asking a trial of capacity between it and my engine, but I flatly refused to make any test of the kind. In consequence I was bullied incessantly by Mr. Doe and the supporters of the Silsby engine. Jack Hasbrouck the chief of the fire department, was very confident that my machine would be victorious, as were numerous other adherents of the piston engine, and after much worry, in a weak moment I consented to make the test. The engineer for the Cole Brothers machine had returned to Pawtucket before I made my trip to Florida; while Silsby’s expert engineer was on hand to run his machine. The excitement in Oshkosh over the two engines was intense; I have never seen a political contest engender so much feeling as existed then between the supporters of the two fire engines. The day of the trial proved a beautiful one, and there were as many spectators present as would have been called out by a well advertised circus. The result of the trial was – in the parlance of the initiated – that the Cole Brothers machine was “washed.” Mr. Doe influenced the city to buy the Silsby engine and it was named the “Doe” after him.

The agent of the Silsby engine also contracted with the city to furnish it two thousand feet of carbonized hose, but in a short time the city was notified that it could not get carbonized hose, unless they procured it of me. Doe was furious and said that they should not buy any from me. Sam Hay was instructed by the city council to purchase two thousand feet of carbonized hose for the city. He also found that he could purchase only through me and so reported to Mr. Doe. I then offered to supply Mr. Hay and divide the commissions with him, which he was willing to do provided the council would sanction the deal. A meeting was called to consider the matter and this I attended. After the usual preliminaries the matter of the hose was taken up. Mr. Doe stated the situation as reported by Mr. Hay to the fire committee and then said that an agent of the manufacturer of the carbonized hose had attempted to bribe him by offering a large amount of belting for his saw mill, if he would give his consent to buying of the carbonized hose for the city. I was sitting on a back seat provided for spectators and when Mr. Doe sat down I arose and said to the council that Mr. Doe’s statement that he had been offered a bribe by an authorized agent for the manufacturers was unqualifiedly false; that such business was left to the Silsby Company. The mayor who was presiding at the meeting informed me that no person was allowed to address the council without first obtaining consent.

The meeting soon adjourned and Mr. Doe walked into the lobby. He was a large man, with a loud voice, and had the reputation of having been in his younger days something of a sport. He was threatening to knock somebody’s head off his shoulders. I cut short the conversation I was having with a member of the council and stepping into the lobby, met the gentleman, to whom I said: “Mr. Doe, why do you make such a fool of yourself? You would not strike me and you know it.”

Mr. Doe made some father efforts to obtain the hose from some other source but failed and after a little delay the city gave me the order for the carbonized hose. But I still had

my fire engine on hand and sought a city to which I might sell it. I had sold a third-class fire engine to the city of Houghton, Michigan, and thought I might perhaps sell this one to the city of Hancock, just across the lake from Houghton. I had little difficulty in making the sale. I delivered the machine and it proved very satisfactory to the purchasers.

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## CHAPTER IX

### Wind and Water

When our ship arrived at New York the passengers scattered in all directions. I had made some acquaintances and formed some friendships on the voyage. My friend and I remained together and boarded at the same house, which faced what was then known as St. John's Park. I understand this has since been taken as a site for a freight depot for the Hudson River R.R. I delivered my letters of introduction, gave the parties much information about the mines of Nevada, and was well received. After some weeks I was informed by the president of the company that I would be employed at a salary of \$3,600 and would be expected to return to Nevada in February. I planned to go to Wisconsin to get my wife and boy and take them to Nevada when I returned.

On my journey to Wisconsin, when we arrived at Pittsburg, Mr. Charles Eldredge, member of Congress from the Fond du Lac district, and Mr. Philetus Sawyer, member of Congress from the Oshkosh district, came into my Pullman car. During the journey Mr. Sawyer informed me how he happened to run for Congress, which interested me not a little. He said that Colonel Bouck, who was colonel of a Wisconsin regiment, resigned his commission and came home from the army to run for Congress on the democratic ticket, proclaiming that the war was a "damned failure." Sawyer said he did not believe it, and in order to beat Bouck he determined to run himself. He spent considerable money to get elected - \$10,000. Mr. Sawyer, as I recollect, served twelve years in the lower house and eighteen years in the senate. He was a shrewd, far-seeing man, who never went back on his friends. He was a good talker in a chair, but could not make a speech on his feet; he appeared to lack the nerve to make the first effort. He was a good friend to me afterwards. Mark Hanna was a similar man, but not as genial as Mr. Sawyer; until a few years before his death Hanna had never made a public speech, yet finally he became something of an orator. President McKinley told me that he was very much surprised at Mr. Hanna's ability. Mr. Hanna discovered that he could talk on his feet and became one of the principal stump speakers of the country during Mr. McKinley's last campaign for the presidency.

I met my family in Oshkosh and after a few weeks' stay we went to Sherburne for a visit among my people. After a short sojourn there I went to New York City. I had not been there long before I discovered that antagonistic influences were at work against me. I learned that one of the directors of the company, a Mr. Bennett, of Binghamton, wanted to send a young lawyer from his city to Nevada to examine the titles to the mines. I knew that was unnecessary. As it proved afterwards, Mr. Bennett had other designs, and as will be related, he accomplished what he wished. I stayed in New York all summer. I had some half a dozen acquaintances there who were trying to sell mines. We boarded with a Mrs. Sheik, near St. John's Park, in the locality where I had boarded the fall before.

The Fenians were then making a great noise in the country about invading Canada. Their head center organization was in New York. A young Irishman who claimed to be chief clerk of this organization boarded in the same house with us. Also a number of Irish



saleswomen boarded there. Mrs. Sheik was herself an Irish woman, but she had procured an appropriate name by marrying a German. The talk at the table by these Irish guests was very optimistic and very annoying to me. I became disgusted one day at dinner because of the young man's braggadocio, and I remarked to him that I had boarded with a young Irishman while I was in Nevada who had explained to me the manner in which many Irishmen had come to this country. The man I had boarded with, Jack Doyle, said that when a ship was in a nearby harbor and wanted immigrants for America, they would take some large wooden boxes, bore many holes through the sides large enough for a man to put his hand through, put a lot of Irish potatoes inside, take the boxes to the mountains and leave them there overnight; in the morning the ship's crew would go to the boxes and find an Irishman fastened to nearly every hole in the boxes. He had put his hand through the hole and grabbed a potato, and it was impossible for him to get his hand out with the potato clasped in it. I had asked why he did not drop the potato and so take his hand out, but the reply was, "The damned fool didn't know enough." When I had finished my story the silence around the table was appalling; I did not know for a time but there would be an earthquake. I remarked that I did not believe the story at all, but that I didn't know but this young fellow might be able to inform me as to its truth. Mrs. Sheik threatened to extradite me to some other boarding house, but the indignation soon subsided and I heard nothing more about the wonderful things the "Fenians" were going to do.

By fall my projects had all matured, but brought me no results. I decided to return to Wisconsin, but nothing there seemed to offer satisfactory inducements; so I went to Chicago to try my fortune in that city. I met an old acquaintance, who was in the same predicament as me. After some investigation we concluded we could both get rich in a retail grocery store. I was to do the buying and he the selling. We bought a grocery on the west side, which we thought had a good trade, but by the next spring we had become rather pessimistic in regard to the future of the business. We, therefore, improved the first opportunity to sell out and let another man get rich. The principal assets of the business were bad debts, which proved to be permanent investments. I spend some time trying to collect them, without success. I made up my mind that if I were to live within my income I must go to work at my trade. At first I went to work in the wood-working department of a machine shop, but after putting wooden cogs into iron core wheels for a few months, I concluded to try my old trade of millwright. I engaged with Messrs. Webster & Pray, at that time the leading millwrights in Chicago, to take charge of rebuilding of a flouring mill at Norville, Mich. The work required considerable skill on my part, and I was about eight months in this employment. I was then sent to Flint, Mich., where I put in new machinery for the making of flour on the patent system, in which effort I was very successful. When I finished and received my pay the proprietor made me a present of a barrel of patent flour. I then returned to Chicago where my family lived. One day I saw and advertisement in a newspaper as follows: "Wanted: Man Competent to Take Charge of a Large Lumbering Business in Michigan."

I applied for the place and was engaged to go to Pentwater, Mich., to take charge of the business of Mr. Charles Mears at that point. Mr. Mears went to Pentwater with me. On arrival I found that he had for superintendent, a man who had held the position for ten years, until he had come to think himself a bigger man than the owner. Mr. M. for some

reason desired to get rid of him. I was not informed as to the situation until I arrived at Pentwater. I then told Mr. Mears that with his permission I would wait a week before taking charge, in order that I might get acquainted with the men and the business.

At Pentwater, Mr. Mears had two saw mills and a large store. A stream ran from Lake Pentwater into Lake Michigan; it was about one hundred and fifty feet wide and a half mile in length. At its mouth a wharf had been built out into the lake, where vessels landed and were loaded and on which lumber was piled ready for shipment. A vessel would arrive from Chicago, tie up at the wharf and be loaded with from one to two hundred thousand feet of lumber, in twelve to twenty-four hours, when she would be ready for her return trip.

Mr. Mears owned pine lands and did his own logging in the winter, the logs being piled on the shore of Lake Pentwater and also on the shore of a little lake north of Pentwater called Bass Lake. He stored logs in these lakes for the two mills, and also cut some seven thousand bolts for a shingle mill which he had in Chicago. He also manufactured lumber at Whitehall, and at two other lakes on the west coast of Michigan; only the plant at Pentwater was to be under my control.

I was privately and confidentially informed that no new man could in less than six months obtain sufficient experience to run the business; moreover, that the old superintendent was popular with the men, who would not permit a new man to take his place. Immediately after taking charge insubordination was exhibited and I became convinced that the laborers intended to make the job a very tiresome one for me; therefore, as soon as a man evidenced an intention to disobey my orders I discharged him. At the end of four weeks I had discharged over sixty men; then the rest became very docile and gave me no further trouble. While there I rebuilt one of the saw mills.

Living in Pentwater I found a Mr. Young, whose native place was Sherburne; he had married a Miss Cook, one of the young ladies who sat in the seat in front of me in the academy when I attended school there, and whom I have mentioned before. These were the parents of the present alderman, who ably represented the sixth ward of Chicago. While I was there Mr. Mears, then seventy or more years of age, married the pretty, sixteen-year-old daughter of his landlady.

Certain agencies were at work at Pentwater antagonistic to me. A clerk in a store by the name of Palms and I attended a party one evening. Not long afterwards Mr. Mears took occasion privately to inform me that he had heard very damaging stories of my conduct there. I asked: "What is it, Mr. Mears?" He replied: "I am told that you got drunk." I said I was very sorry to hear it, but did not see how that could be possible, as I had not seen a drop of liquor since I had been in Pentwater, and did not drink anyway; this seemed to satisfy him.

A feature peculiar to Lake Michigan is the violent gusts of wind that spring up without warning. On one occasion my wife and boy came from Chicago to visit me. The wind sprang up before the steamer reached the wharf. The boat made a couple of ineffectual

efforts to land, but finally backed out and went north to the Manitou Islands, where it remained two nights before returning.

One beautiful evening in early fall I decided to take a tug boat and go to Bass Lake, pick up a tow of logs and bring them to Pentwater. The sun was shining brightly and there was no wind. Bass Lake is distant about three miles down Lake Michigan. The tug was a flat-bottomed scow, having a hundred horse-power boiler on deck. It was a stern wheeler, quite powerful, but unwieldy. When we arrived at Bass Lake we anchored near the shore, spread our towing boom, attaching one end of it to the tug, and commenced running logs into the other end of the boom from the little lake. The wind began to freshen. After we had put a few hundred logs into the boom, we found we could do little against the wind, and the tug was in danger of being blown ashore, so the captain of the tug decided to go back to Pentwater. The wind blew almost at right angles to the shore; when far enough out in the lake the captain turned the boat southward to go up the shore, this put it in the trough of the sea. The boat rocked terribly, and threatened to "turn turtle." We were fast being blown ashore, as the logs helped to pull us in that direction. The captain cut the towline and let the logs go; then he was unable to bring the bow of the boat into the wind. I feared that the rocking of the tug would break the braces that held the boiler to the deck and that it would roll off into the water. The captain was a resourceful man and a good sailor; he tried to rig a jury mast on which to attach a blanket from the cabin for a sail. We saw a sea-going tug put out from Pentwater harbor coming to our assistance, but only put out a little way from the pier when it turned back, leaving us to our fate. We were being "rocked in the cradle of the deep" all right, and were unable to get the tug's head into the wind. I expected nothing but shipwreck, which would probably result in the drowning of all on board. The captain and I finally rigged a jury mast made from the pike-pole, secured a blanket to it, and brought the tug around, bow into the wind. After running a short time we turned around and sailed into Pentwater harbor. The storm subsided as quickly as it had arisen.

The engineers on the tugboats were required to keep within call on Sundays, in case of necessity arising to use the boat. One Sunday morning one of the engineers asked permission to go with some others five or six miles blackberry picking, which I granted. The party returned on horseback feeling rather hilarious, and ran their horses down the principal street, which was paved with sawdust. The horse which the engineer rode stumbled and fell, throwing its rider violently onto the road ahead of him. The engineer was stunned and injured internally. We carried him to the company hotel. Two young doctors who had lately settled in the town were sent for and they gave the injured man a dose of chloroform. The patient went into a stupor from which he never recovered. The doctor worked his lungs like a bellows trying to keep the breath of life in him for several hours. I have known of a number of persons killed by an over-dose of some anesthetic, but there is one consoling feature in the experience of physicians, their mistakes are buried with their patients.

When winter came I returned to Chicago, and later I went to Oshkosh and took charge of a lumbering operation for my father-in-law. I spent the winter in the woods above New London, Wis. In the spring when the logging roads thawed out, I built a board shanty on

the bank of the river at the log landing, and stayed there in charge of the logs, waiting for the ice to break up, when the logs were to be put in cribs. These were about forty feet square, made by four booms put together and pinned at their ends with oak pins, the inside being then packed full of logs. The cribs would run down the river without attention. If one corner struck the bank the crib would simply turn and go out into the stream again. Before we had the logs all put into cribs, the ice above us had broken up, and the rush of logs, cribs of posts and railroad ties made our logs so insecure that we decided to pull out and go down the river with the jam. We took eight or ten suitable logs, put poles across on top, pinned the poles to the logs, put oars on each end of this float, put our shanty in the center of it, and our provisions and traps in same, and then got on board. Turning the logs and cribs loose, we followed in the rear of the logs in our house on the crib. It was our intention to tie up at New London and stop there all night, but we failed to make a safe landing; the high water in the river making the current so strong, that we had to run the river all night. It rained very hard and was so dark that one could not see his hand before him, except when the lightning flashed. The thunder was almost a continuous peal. Taken altogether, it was one of the most terrific nights I ever experienced. Of course, under such circumstances, we could not think of sleeping. It was so dangerous to walk on the crib, that we stayed inside the shanty and watched the shore by the flashes of lightning. To have stepped off the raft into the water would have meant probable death. Towards morning, as it grew lighter the storm abated. We came to an island in the river, which we had expected to reach ahead of the logs, as the cribs should have been turned to the right of it. We stopped here, much relieved to escape from our perilous position of the night.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### Life in Nevada

In the winter of 1864-65 General Rosecranz appeared in Austin; he was connected with some mining interest. A brother of Frank Drake had a book store and news depot which was a great resort for "the boys;" they came there to get their papers and to gossip in the evening. The General formed the habit of coming there also to chat with the others. He was a fine looking man and a good story teller; he entertained us greatly by telling anecdotes of the war, in which he had been so prominent a character. One night I said to him: "General, how about Chickamauga?" He queried: "What about Chickamauga?" "Well sir," I said, "the papers out here reported that you were badly whipped there." He replied: "That was not so," claimed that he defeated the enemy there and gained a great victory. He also claimed that the treachery of General Garfield caused his downfall. The latter was his chief of staff. Rosecranz sent him to Washington to attend to some affairs of the army that could not be well and safely transacted by letter, and claimed that Garfield, instead of representing the matters as they were, misrepresented them, and came back with his [Rosecranz's] removal in his pocket. "Old Rosy" said that if he had known the facts at the time he might have ordered Garfield tried by a drum-head count martial and shot. A number of years later I remember reading an authorized account in the newspapers which confirmed this story as General Rosecranz had told it.

That winter I had become acquainted with a Captain Johnston, an Irishman, who claimed to have been a captain in the English army. According to his own statement he was a dangerous duelist; I thought him a good deal of a braggart, but he amused me, in a measure. A Captain Kent was superintendent of the Keystone Mining Company, and had bought a mine of Captain Johnston, for which he was willing to pay at some future time; I think it was to be when he could report to his principals in Pennsylvania and get remittances from them. I judge finances were at a rather low ebb with Captain Johnston, anyway. He made a demand on Captain Kent for his pay, and that gentleman replied that he had not yet received the money. Captain Johnston did not believe him, and one day he appealed to me to act as his second in a duel. This was new business to me, but I thought there might be some fun in it, and after some palavering, consented. I told my principal that in the first place he would have to challenge his man, which he did, while we all waited for the fun to begin. The next day, I think it was, General Rosecranz met Captain Johnston on the main street. The latter was pointed out to him, and the General immediately turned on him with a military air that would have intimidated almost anyone, and said: "Captain Johnston, what is this you are making a d\_\_\_ fool of yourself about?" The latter in a pleading manner went on to relate his supposed injuries. The General replied that he knew all about the transaction; that his supposed enemy was acting in good faith, and that he would get his money in due time. Immediately the roaring lion became a lamb.

In the fall of 1864 I bought a mine from a Mr. Hunter. It was a claim named after him and was located on top of Mt. Prometheus, about one mile from where I lived in Austin, and was about one thousand feet higher than that point. I used to go there every day and

work, sinking an incline on the vein. When I first began walking up the trail to the mine, and a pretty steep trail it was, I would need to stop every two or three hundred feet to regain my breath, but after a month or so of practice I could start from the foot of the trail and not break a good, smart walk until I arrived at the mouth of the incline. I had found a vein about twelve inches thick which would assay \$30 per ton. I believed the mine to be valuable and bought Hunter's interest in it.

I had made the acquaintance of a Dr. Gellar, whose home was in Santa Clara, Cal. He was a nice gentleman; had been a member of the California legislature, was a practicing physician, and had been living in Austin for some time. He conceived the idea of getting the owners of mines to give him their deeds, he agreeing to pay a certain price for any mine he should sell. He wished me to give him a deed of the Hunter Mine, but I did not believe that people in New York City would buy our mines; hence I refused to give him the deed, though he was confident of success. He went to New York, and after a few months returned, reporting that he had sold the mines, and paid the owners the amounts agreed upon. He had organized a company in New York with a capital of five million dollars, a certain portion of which was set aside for the building of reduction works. He had received \$500,000 of the stock, which was worth, when he left New York, 60 cents on the dollar. The company wanted a competent man to manage the mines in Nevada. Dr. Gellar wanted me to sell him the Hunter mine, for which he offered to pay my price - \$10,000 - \$1,500 cash down, with a written contract to pay the balance when he should sell it. The great success of his former trip to New York inspired me with confidence in his ability, and I sold him the mine.

It may be a matter of interest to know that California and the territories of the Pacific slope had always held to the gold standard. All debts were payable in gold in that section during the war, and U.S. legal tender notes did not circulate as money, though large amounts of the same could be purchased at a discount. I remember buying and sending to my wife a United States compound interest note drawing 7 percent on its \$50 face value. It was lost or stolen in the mails and she never received it. This was the first and only note of the kind that I ever saw. It would be regarded as a great curiosity now.

In the spring of 1864 I sold my plat of surveyed land on Big Creek to a Mr. Johnson from Crab Orchard, Mo. He diverted water from Big Creek for irrigation and planted it with Irish potatoes. He raised about three hundred bushels per acre and sold them for 8 cents per pound. All vegetables and salt meats were imported into this country from California.

Silver ore at that time was crushed in stamp mills and the silver gathered by amalgamation. Many combinations of silver and other metals would not amalgamate, and perhaps one-half of the silver was lost in the "tailings," or refuse, by this treatment.

In the summer of 1865 the overland trip across the country by stage had become quite the fashion for people of adventurous spirit. Some notable men had made the trip and had advertised it to the public in general. Among those were Deacon Bross, of the *Chicago Tribune*; Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*; Prof. Silliman, of Yale College; James G. Blaine, of glorious memory and Albert D. Richardson, the popular

correspondent, who was afterwards murdered. Many of these were induced to make us short speeches. I remember Prof. Silliman, in a public talk to us ignorant miners, explained how the fissure veins were formed and how the quartz and metal penetrated them. His theory was that in some stage of its existence the earth was very damp; it was then submitted in some manner to great heat; this rapid drying of the earth's surface caused it to crack. Again the surface was covered with water in which were carried large quantities of quartz and mineral solutions, and this substance settling in the fissures made the veins which we were trying to dig out. As an explanation it was very lucid; almost anybody who had not much sense could believe it. This theory gave me great respect [?] for scientific men.

Dr. Geller wished me to go to New York and see the directors of his company and said he could procure my appointment as superintendent of the company in Nevada, which would be most gratifying to me. I wished to go home and visit my family any way. I think it was some time in October I made arrangements for the visit to New York, being furnished with letters of introduction to J.S. Christy, president of the company, and to several of the directors. The doctor was also to write them direct, recommending my appointment. When I was ready for the trip Mr. Johnson, whom I have mentioned before, decided to go with me.

Road agents sometimes worked the stage routes, so I put my money into the San Francisco exchange, paid my fare through to that city, and saved out only coin enough to pay my incidental expenses. We intended to leave by the stage that passed through Austin on Saturday. The coach had only one or two passengers, but the agent refused to take any more; we thought this very strange, but could not help ourselves. The next day, Sunday, bidding our acquaintances good-bye, we left. The journey was without incident until we arrived within a mile of the Gould & Curry mill at Virginia City, Monday evening. There was a full moon, and it was light enough to read print. I was lying on the front seat with my head in Mr. Johnson's lap, partially asleep, when the stage suddenly stopped. I heard a sharp voice saying, "Hold your hands up or I'll shoot your head off." Two of our passengers before this had left the inside of the coach to enjoy a ride with the driver; one of them was a Mr. Batchelder, of Boston, who had been a captain in the army during the late war. He was taking this overland trip as an adventure and to see the great west. I knew the command I heard was given by a stage robber. I opened the door of the coach and stepped to the ground. A man wearing a linen coat, with a belt around his waist, a straw hat, a mask, etc., pointed a double-barreled shotgun at me and said: "Get back into the stage." I did so without delay. Then I heard some one say, "Throw out that Wells & Fargo box." The driver threw it to the ground, and it was carried to the rear of the coach, on the left side. It was an iron box, and a man broke it into pieces with a sledge, I was watching the proceedings from where I sat in the stage. I was not much concerned. The road agents did not usually interfere with passengers; their business was to rob the express box. The contents did not appear to satisfy them. The next call was for the passengers to get out of the stage. I knew that meant business for us. My first impulse was to hide my purse in the coach, but I recollected that passengers without money were sometime turned around and kicked. I resolved that I would not suffer such ignominy for the small amount of cash I had with me, so I took my money, which was in a buckskin

bag that also contained a silver “brick” worth \$7 from the Hunter mine, a number of odd silver coins which I had bought in Austin, a \$20 gold piece and fifteen silver dollars, and slipped it with the purse into the pocket of a long linen coat which I wore to protect myself from the dust. We were made to stand in a line facing the coach, a highwayman with a double-barreled shotgun being at each end of the line, one back of us and one at the horses’ heads, while another robbed us. I was at the head of the line and the weight of the coins in my pocket indicated where I had hidden my valuables. The robber, without saying “by your leave,” ran his hand into my pocket and seized the purse. I remarked: “That is all the money I have.” He said: “Get back into the coach.” I made no unnecessary delay in doing so. From my seat I saw them rob the other passengers. When they came to Mr. Batchelder and demanded his purse, he handed them \$300 in gold. They asked him if he had any greenbacks. He took out a pocket-book and opened it; in it laid seven one hundred dollar bills. They demanded his watch and the diamond he wore in his shirt front, and tore the latter loose. Mr. B. said it was a present from his mother, who was now dead, and that he would like to make some arrangement for its redemption. The robber had carelessly dropped the diamond in the road, but he stooped down, picked it up, handed it to Mr. Batchelder and said: “Keep it.” They searched Mr. Johnson but could find nothing. I knew he had \$300 in gold, paid him just before he left Austin. The robbers next ordered us back into the coach, then removed the barrier they had placed at a sharp bend in the road [it had been so placed that the driver could not see it until he was near] then ordered the driver to stand still until they gave him the signal to start, which they did when they had reached the top of the mountain.

Upon receiving the signal the driver made good speed until he reached the hotel in Virginia City. There were eight men passengers and one woman. The robbers did not disturb the latter, but asked her if any man had given her his money to keep; she replied: “No.” Johnson was the only man who had sustained no loss; he had slipped his gold inside his boot-leg while the robbers were breaking into the express box. There were three or four silver “bricks” lying in the bottom of the stage, weighing about one hundred pounds and worth \$ 1,000 each, but the road agents had learned not to want this kind of property, as its loss invariably lead to their detection and capture.

I learned afterwards that three of the robbers were county commissioners of Lander County, of which Austin was the county-seat; also that the secret of the Saturday coach refusing to take more passengers was that in the usual course of travel the stage due to arrive on Sunday had reached Austin on Saturday, twenty-four hours ahead of time, with twenty thousand dollars in gold coins which the stage company was transporting from Salt Lake City to Virginia City. There was much excitement in the latter town when we arrived and told of the robbery. We spend the night at Virginia City, but from there we were to take another route to California other than the one I traveled over when coming to Nevada two years before.

Messrs. Huntington & Hopkins, then large hardware dealers in Sacramento, in company with the Crocker and Leland Stanford, had built a road from this place to Dutch Flat. When Congress enacted a law for the building of an overland road the gentlemen named organized a construction company to build the western end of the road, which they called



the Central Pacific; this road was to extend east of the Sierras to meet the Union Pacific. Our coach went by way of Truckee, where it began to ascend the mountains. That afternoon we passed Donner Lake, rendered famous as the place where the Donner party of immigrants endured the terrible sufferings which has been so graphically and pathetically depicted by Bret Harte. I remember passing the fearful chasm at Cape Horn. I am uncertain whether we went further than Sacramento by rail; we may have taken a steamer there for San Francisco.

When I received the draft for services from the sawmill company I sent it to Lane, of San Francisco, for collection. I wished him to remit me a certificate of deposit for the proceeds from some San Francisco bank, but I received no satisfaction. Then I wrote him some threatening letters about the matter. When I arrived in Frisco, Mr. McCracken told me that I had not taken the right course; he suggested that I let him manage Lane. I did so, and in a short time Mr. McCracken handed the amount to me. I have always doubted whether McCracken loaned the money to Lane or paid it out of his own money in order to protect Lane's reputation. When I lived in Oshkosh, Mr. O.C. McCracken was a dry goods merchant there and he also liked a good horse. After he went to California there were rumors that he gambled. When I reached San Francisco his wife and child had arrived from Oshkosh and he was keeping house. I visited him while there, but he did not introduce me to any of the gambling fraternity. His associates appeared to be gentlemen. He was always a good friend and I respected him.

I waited in San Francisco till a steamer should sail for the isthmus. I took passage by the Nicaragua route, then a rival of the Vanderbilt Panama Line. We landed at San Juan del Sur. As we drew near the coast at a distance of about a mile, we turned a sharp angle toward it, and our little steamer passing through some woods treaded a narrow channel of water, into a circular lake, not twice the length of our steamer in diameter. Our vessel was made of wood of good dimensions and carried six hundred passengers, all of whom were glad to land on the wharf after ten days' confinement on the steamer. We had to go from this place to Virgin Bay, twelve miles distant on Lake Nicaragua. At the landing we found several hundred burros, also a number of two and three-seated wagons and other conveyances, of which the passengers were told to take their choice.

I had made the acquaintance of a pleasant gentleman who had lived at Los Angeles for several years. He talked Spanish fluently and was a very agreeable companion. We each selected a burro on which to ride, and followed a road leading up a stream through the woods. The natives had booths where they sold fruit, native drinks of all kinds, and food, also articles of local curiosity. I bought a walking cane of a very handsome wood that grew in that locality, and when I reached New York City I had it turned and mounted. It made a beautiful cane, and the manufacturers offered me \$10 for the stick.

We arrived at Virgin Bay at about 3 p.m. and found a steamer waiting to take us across the lake. There were no accommodations at this place in the way of lodgings, but the steamer did not leave until the next day, as it took all night to get the freight and baggage across from San Juan del Sur. We started across the lake in the morning; it was a beautiful sheet of water. A few miles from the shore at Virgin Bay is an island upon

which are two extinct volcanoes, beautiful mountain cones, about equal in size and height.

We arrived at Nicaragua River where it leaves the lake. Some dredging had been done here to deepen the channel. Our boat went on down the river to Castillo. We arrived there just before dark and spent the night. As no accommodations for sleeping on the boat were to be had, my friend went ashore to find lodging. He found one. Our bed was of planed boards covered with a sheet and supplied with another sheet to put over us. I was not accustomed to that kind of bed; beside a Spanish garcon talked in an adjoining room, which prevented my sleeping. In the morning we were transferred to a smaller, lighter draft steamer that could pass the rapids in the river, which began just below Castillo. This boat was crowded with passengers. We were served with breakfast aboard the boat and proceeded on our way down the river. We saw many beautiful birds in the trees, of brilliant plumage and gay colors. Through the rapids the river was narrow and crooked, and our passage was consequently slow.

Many of the passengers imbibed large quantities of liquor and became intoxicated. When about twelve miles from Greytown one passenger who had taken too much was leaning against a post on the lower deck. In some manner his shoulder slipped past the post and he fell over backward into the river. I watched him as he lay there on his back, on the surface of the water. The bell was rung and the steamer stopped, but before a boat could be sent to his rescue I saw him suddenly disappear beneath the surface. I suppose an alligator or crocodile grabbed him and hauled him down. I was unable to learn the man's name, and I suppose this to be one of those cases where a man disappears and his friends and relatives never know what became of him. This accident sobered the passengers, who before had been hilarious with drink.

We arrived in Greytown after dark and were told that the transportation company would pay our board at the hotel. My friend had the advantage of most of the passengers, in being able to speak Spanish. He secured lodging for us in the best hotel. It was of the usual type in Mexico, as it surrounded a patio. We lodged in the hotel for a week waiting for the arrival of the Atlantic steamer from New York. The weather was very fine and we had an enjoyable time. All things were curious and interesting to me on account of their novelty. I found some of the finest cigars that I have ever had the pleasure of smoking and brought home with me a couple of thousand. I saw some very handsome jewelry of gold and tortoise shell that was said to have been manufactured by the Mosquito Indians. The carvings were delicate and artistic. I bought my wife a beautiful ring, which proved too small, and so I have it yet.

From the fact that I have been over the Isthmian routes of the proposed canal, both via Panama and Nicaragua, I have felt more than ordinary interest in the present project. I have sometimes thought that the United States government made a mistake in selecting the former route. With my imperfect knowledge of engineering I see no formidable difficulty in constructing a canal via Nicaragua.

In my boyhood days there was but one school in America, so far as I know, for educating boys to become civil engineers. What I learned of engineering I acquired from other men who had taught themselves. I judge I was possessed of natural talent for this profession, but I lacked the early education to fit me for such a position; a fact which I have always very much regretted. I did not dream at that time of the great development of our country I was to see. The business of being a farmer or a merchant; comprised most of the prospects open to the ambitious boys of that day. What is before the lads of this day is a world of magnificent possibilities! How I should like to know what I now know, and have the youth, physique and intellect that I had fifty years ago, with the present chances for education and with possibilities in sight for the boys of this generation!

Science must enter largely into such gigantic operations as building an isthmian canal, but practical experience and "good horse sense" are of even greater importance. The digging of a canal some thirty miles long and an average depth of three hundred feet is perhaps a possibility, but not a probability, without the expenditure of an amount of money, and of life, that is appalling. It involves an amount of work that is almost incredible. But the digging of the Nicaraguan canal, though a gigantic operation, appears feasible to a person of no greater experience and observation than me.

During our stay at Greytown most of the passengers amused themselves viewing the city and becoming familiar with the possibilities of the country. Between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific Ocean there was considerable agricultural development, also some fine coffee plantations. On the East side of Lake Nicaragua I saw but little enterprise or development, the country having the appearance of waiting for something to turn up. The city of Greytown was an exception.

One moonlit night I took a walk through the city. It consisted largely of poor shanties. I saw a few people gathered about a house and inquired what was going on; someone who understood and could speak English replied that a couple of men were fighting. I said: "Why don't you stop them?" He replied: "Oh, the men have got swords." The house was without lights and the women at the door were wailing. The fighters seemed astonished at my appearance and stopped. I seized one of them and swung him through the door. However, as I could understand none of their talk, I went back to the hotel. As I came into the light of the room I was greeted with the demand: "Where have you been?" "Why," said I. They exclaimed: "Look at your coat." I did so; it was covered with blood. I told them of my interference in the fracas just related, and they suggested that I ought to have a guardian attend me when I went out.

One morning we saw a steamer in the offing a mile or two from shore, and were informed that it was the steamer come to carry us to New York. We were conveyed to this vessel in whale boats and other craft manned with oars. We found it to be an iron steamer, the first I had ever seen. It was a fine craft and we found good accommodations aboard; her name was "Santiago de Cuba." As soon as the baggage and freight were on board the steamer set sail. We passed through the Caribbean Sea into the Gulf of Mexico, past Cape San Antonia on the west end of Cuba, through the Straits of Florida into the Gulf Stream, and

made out way up the east coast of the United States to New York City. Nothing of importance occurred on this part of the voyage that I can recall.

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## CHAPTER VII

### Westward, Ho!

In 1858 political strife was engendered by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which led to those celebrated debates in Illinois between Lincoln and Douglas, and two years later to the candidacy of both, for the presidency of the United States. Bell and Breckenridge were also candidates. Douglas introduced a new feature into presidential contests by “stumping” the country in favor of his own election. I was a great admirer of Mr. Douglas. He sent for Henry Clay Dean to aid him by speaking through the state of Illinois in his behalf. I believe it was my efforts which persuaded him to consent. On his return from campaigning in Illinois, he reported to me that Douglas had promised him that if elected president he would appoint him [Dean] governor and appoint me United States Attorney for the territory of Utah. Douglas, in this canvas, spoke as far north as Fond du Lac, traveling as he went in a special train. I went to Fond du Lac to hear him speak, as I had not had that pleasure before. An immense crowd gathered to hear him. I secured a good position both for hearing and seeing. He proved a very deliberate, sententious speaker. He told how many times he had spoken that week and that day, then turning to Charles Eldredge, who at that time was a member of Congress, said: “My friend Eldridge say that I would not be able to stand this, if I did not have the Constitution of the United States.”

I had a great love for Senator Douglas and desired to see him elected president. What would have been the results to the country if he had become president can only be a matter on conjecture. At all events he proved himself to be a true and loyal patriot, until his untimely death robbed the country of his services and counsel.

A proposition to form a business partnership with a Mr. Deverill was presented to me soon after. We were to engage in buying and selling grain, flour or any other commodity in which we considered there was a profit. I consented, and we conducted such a business for a year; then upon figuring results I found that we had made a profit upon everything I had bought and a loss upon most everything he had bought.

Then came 1861 and with it the Great War. When Fort Sumter was fired upon, that event caused great excitement through the entire north. The southern states had seceded and what the result would be for the country, none could foresee. The firing on Fort Sumter caused President Lincoln to call for seventy-five thousand volunteers “to put down the rebellion in the south.” On receipt of this news a public meeting was held in Oshkosh, and speeches were made by representative citizens. Mr. “Gabe” Bouck, a prominent democratic lawyer and politician of Oshkosh, urged the city to send at once a company to the protection of the capital, offering his own services as leader. He asked me to enlist, promising if I would do so to make me a second lieutenant of his company. Prior to this Charles W. Felker, a promising young lawyer at Omro, and I had agreed that in case of a war we could raise a company and serve in same; therefore I felt obliged to refuse Mr. Bouck’s proposition.

Early in July President Lincoln issued a call for three hundred thousand additional men. At that time there were few military men in this country who knew how to drill a company, still fewer who could drill a regiment or a brigade. In all towns of considerable size, one or more companies were being raised and offered to the adjutant general of the state; but it was destitute of clothing and arms and could only accept companies as it could provide them with equipments.

Felker and I called a meeting to be held in one of the churches in Omro. This was well attended by the patriots of the village, and over fifty men enlisted that night. Felker was nominated captain of the company, and elected by acclamation. I was nominated as first lieutenant and was elected in the same manner, as was also Dr. Ambler for second lieutenant. After the election we formed in line and marched through the streets, cheering at the houses of the different officers, and finally retired to sleep the sleep of patriots.

After this meeting we tried to increase the number of our enlistments. I think it was about eighty men we wanted, and that we finally secured about seventy. I remember going out one day with Mr. A. B. Cady, who was our village postmaster, to see a young man by the name of Pingrey, and if possible to persuade him to enlist. Mr. Cady in a strenuous argument told him that his [Cady's] grandfather served in the Revolution, and that his father had served in the war of 1812, and that he himself in the Mexican War. Pingrey listened without enthusiasm while Cady was extolling the patriotism of his own family, and then quietly remarked that he had never known of a Pingrey being in any war, and that so far as he was concerned there never would be. This reply floored Cady and greatly amused me. We returned that day without any recruits.

Patently we waited to have our company accepted. Some of our men became very impatient and often unreasonable; several members went to Ripon and enlisted in a cavalry regiment which was being raised there.

About this time was born unto us a son, and he has been our only child. The event gave my wife and me much happiness.

When the excitement began to subside, the enthusiasm for the war began to wane. It seemed impossible for the state to equip the numerous companies that were offered, neither were they accepted in the order of their offering. Finally, one morning in September, Felker received a letter from the adjutant, saying that if he would report a full company by a date in July, which he named, he would assign him to the seventh regiment Wisconsin volunteers. Felker, not being a veteran in matters pertaining to war, showed considerable independence, and wrote the adjutant general in reply a very caustic letter, calling his attention to the fact that the date he mentioned had elapsed nearly two months; perhaps he had made a mistake in dates and meant October 1, if such were the case, although many of our men had enlisted in other companies, he would report a full company, the same subject to his orders, but that if he meant as he wrote, it was an evident impossibility and that he might "go to h..." This letter Felker wrote and signed, and asked me to sign it also, which I did; with it evaporated our expectations of military glory. We afterwards learned through Judge Wheeler, who was in close touch with the

state authorities, that our commissions were at this time made out and all ready to be forwarded, but that the evident spirit of insubordination in our letter was more than the adjutant general could stand for, and so he let our company die a natural death rather than through military courage. I gave up all ambitions for military glory then. The evident incompetence of the officers in command, and the disheartening campaigns of the war, made the future look gloomy for the north.

In the spring of 1862 my prospects were most discouraging. The legislature refusing process of law against persons enlisted in the army made the lawyer's profession a very uncertain means for making a living. My mill was burned, shutting me off from any business in that line. My only chance for employment in a military capacity was to enlist as a private and this would yield but a pittance towards the support of a family. No opportunity for employment appeared, and I was finally persuaded to remove to Oshkosh, where I opened a law office with a Mr. Boyington, who had about the same amount of law business as I had; which was not much. I was a democrat and he was a republican. There was a secret political organization, which permeated the county at that time; I believe it was called the Loyal Legion. Mr. Boyington told me one day that my case had been considered by this order and that he had been authorized to say if I would join it and become a good republican, I could have any political preference I wished, but that if I remained a democrat the organization would see that I had neither business nor prosperity. I was inclined to think at that time that this resolution had been formed, but I was not to be forced into any party in which I did not believe, so I returned a defiant answer.

Matters crept along; nothing was talked of but the war. I concluded that I could not succeed in Oshkosh and that I would have to go somewhere else. After a good deal of deliberation I came to the conclusion that I would go to California and enter into the practice of law in that state. It was the most promising scheme I could think of, so I prepared to go there.

That spring I joined the Masonic fraternity, and became a member of Oshkosh Lodge No. 27. I was fond of masonry, and have never lost my love for it. A man who is a good mason is a good man in any walk of life which he may follow. At that time I was well posted in the work and became a master mason.

I went from Oshkosh to New York City, and from there sailed on the steamer "Ocean Queen" for Aspinwall. This steamer was built of wood and was I think heavily loaded; at any rate she had a habit of plunging her bow deeply into the sea when it was at all rough. We were eight days on this voyage. When we sailed into the tropic the weather became very warm, and so was the drinking water. The only way to get anything cool to drink was to buy lemonade, made from limes, at the bar. The food for cabin passengers was fairly palatable. On the trip I made the acquaintance of two passengers, whom I afterwards met in Nevada. One was John P. Kelley who claimed to be the nephew of the acting governor of Kentucky; the other was Frank Drake, who was returning from a visit to relatives and friends in Massachusetts. I made this voyage in June, 1863.

We landed in rowboats at Aspinwall, which proved to be a low and dirty town. We came ashore in the morning and after a short delay were transported over the Panama R.R. to the city of that name, where we went aboard a steam lighter which transported us to the steamship "North America." I was fortunate in securing good accommodations. This steamer, like the "Ocean Queen" was an old wooden hull, which I was informed, had been brought around the "Horn" from the Great Lakes. The whole after-part of the upper deck was hung with bunches of bananas, over which were stretched awnings to protect the fruit from the sun.

The next morning we started on our voyage to San Francisco. We had a very pleasant trip, occupying fourteen days. The sea was very smooth all the way, and we were in sight of the land most of the time. We often saw whales sporting in the distance, which excited the interest of all; also the porpoises following the ship were a novel sight.

Upon arriving at Acapulco, Mexico, our ship entered the harbor in order to coal. This coal was carried in sacks aboard the ship on the backs of the natives. During our stay in this port, many of the passengers amused themselves by throwing coins into the water and watching the natives dive for them. The water was clear and deep, and the divers invariably got the coin. When the steamer had received the necessary quantity of coal she proceeded on her way. After reaching the latitude of Lower California we were most of the time in sight of the coast, which was of a dark brown color. This was caused, some said, by the hue of ripened wild oats, the straw of which in drying assumed that color.

At the end of fourteen days from Panama we steamed through the Golden Gate, past Fort Alcatraz, into the Bay of San Francisco, and I had then my first view of the city of that name. I landed and went to a hotel, then proceeded to look up two acquaintances from Oshkosh, whom I knew to be living here. One had been a dry goods merchant when in Wisconsin and was a lover of fast trotters. The other gentleman had been a lawyer in Oshkosh. I found them located in what was known as Montgomery Block, an office building occupied largely by lawyers. Mr. McCracken was engaged, as far as I could judge, in getting contracts from the city for paving the streets, and Mr. Lane was practicing his profession.

I thought I would stay awhile in San Francisco, thinking that by so doing I could better choose a location in the interior in which to practice law.

I found that in the forenoon of each day a cold, raw wind prevailed in the city; furs for the ladies and overcoats for men were comfortable, but at sunset the wind died down, and the evenings were delicious, reminding me of what I had read of oriental countries. There were many places of amusement not of a high order, but on a par with the tastes of the inhabitants. Montgomery Street lay at the bottom of a hill and ran from Market Street to Telegraph Hill. A few streets were built parallel to Montgomery Street and west of it on the hill was Kearney Street, then as now it was the center of Chinatown. The business part of the city was between Montgomery Street and the Bay. The shoal water on the Bay Shore had been filled in with ballast brought by ships and sand hauled from the hills, until quite a city had been built on made ground. I recollect one place where a ship had



been stranded, and there were several streets between it and the Bay. Market Street was a bed of bottomless sand. A street railway had been built three or four miles to a place called Mission Dolores, the site of an Old Spanish Church. Near this had been erected a woolen mill, where very heavy and warm blankets were woven for miners. I remember buying one for myself that weighted eleven pounds. They were about the warmest blankets I ever saw – just what the average Californian and tenderfoot needed.

Near this mill was erected a rough theater, in which Billy Birch and Ben Cotton, with other cork artists, delighted large audiences every Sunday. A street railway being the means of transportation, mules were very busy on Sundays hauling passengers to and from the Mission and the city.

Most emigrants to California in those days came by the way of Panama. The overland stage route had been established, but the latter was a long and tiresome journey. “Frisco” was a Mecca for miners who desired amusement and a good time.

After I had been domiciled in this city about a month, I saw an advertisement in a San Francisco paper which read as follows: “Wanted - A man to go to Reese River to build a saw mill, and take charge of it.”

If I could secure such a position it would mean an immediate income. I told Mr. McCracken that I was inclined to answer the advertisement, and asked him if they would pay me \$100 per month. He replied: “You ask \$100 per month and you won’t get the job. They will be certain that you do not understand the business.” He advised me to ask not less than \$300 per month. I began then to wake up a little to the opportunities of that country. I answered the advertisement, was well received and the opening appeared satisfactory. I engaged at the salary I asked-\$300, having a written contract with Mr. Mathewson, who was the agent of the company. I was informed that John Parrott, banker, Frank Billings, afterwards President of the Northern Pacific Railway Co., and the agent of the company, Mr. Mathewson, who had been editor of the Alta California, published in San Francisco, also the collector of the port, were members of this company; so I was satisfied that there was ample capital behind the project. I was authorized to order and have built in San Francisco, the machinery for the saw mill and to buy whatever was necessary for the purpose, including food for myself and the men, and tools to operate the business. The company claimed to have about two thousand acres of timberland, which Mathewson assured me was covered with trees averaging two feet in diameter. It was necessary to have all the machinery built; none of it was to be found for sale in San Francisco. In order to know how much and what kind of food would be required, I obtained a list of rations furnished by the government to its soldiers, and from this I made my calculations as to the food that would be needed. I was instructed to purchase everything that would be required to operate the mill after it was built; for the cutting of logs and their hauling to the mill. It took some two months to get everything ready for our departure for Austin, Nevada, which is on the Reese River, and was our objective point. Mathewson informed me that they had contracted with a transportation company to deliver the machinery and supplies to whatever mill site I should select, and that they were to be paid ten cents per pound freight on same. I decided to take an engineer with

me, as I might not be able to find one at our destination; so I wrote to Frank Drake at Mare Island offering him the place, which he gladly accepted.

The company procured us passage to our destination, and we embarked at San Francisco on the steamer Yosemite for Sacramento. I have a vivid memory of that trip, of our steaming across the bay, past the islands and up the river. I sat up late in the evening, charmed with the moonlight and the beautiful scenery, and then went to my berth, awaking the next morning at Sacramento. That day we went by railroad to Placerville, about fifteen miles distant in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In the early days of California mining, this place was known as "Hangtown," owing to the numerous lynching that had occurred there. It was the terminus of the overland state route. I remember that this place was composed of wooden buildings, scattered through a ravine or canyon. The country between Sacramento and Placerville had all been dug over in the early fifties by miners, and "rocked" in miner's cradles, and later had been rewashed by Chinamen.

Upon our arrival at this place, we were immediately transferred to stage coaches that were of the old Concord build, the body suspended on heavy wide leather straps, or thorough-braces. They would accommodate nine passengers inside, and two on the outside with the driver, and each was hauled by six fine horses. These stage horses were usually brought from the states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri. It was the custom to change horses every ten miles.

We then began the ascent of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which we had to cross in order to reach Carson Valley. The roads up the grade were broad, smooth and sprinkled by water carts. In many places the roads were cut in solid rock on the sides of the mountains traversing the canyon. At the bottom flowed the American River. When we got into the coach, I took the front seat, riding backwards, as I had been told that it was the easiest. The holster let go the bridles of the horses and we went up the grade at a smart trot. The road had been laid out by engineers, and the grade kept as true as possible; sharp angles were often met and had to be turned, and sometimes the road would follow an intersecting ravine, going up one side, and back on the other for perhaps half a mile or more.

At one station where we stopped, I saw the smoke of a saw mill nearby. As I had a curiosity to see the mill, and supposing that the stage was to wait for a change of horses, which would give me sufficient time, I went to it and then hurried back only to find that the coach had gone. I looked down the road and saw it in a whirl of dust, leaving me. I followed my first impulse to try and overtake it, I more than ran, I flew. I gained on it rapidly, but the driver did not stop for me. After running a quarter of a mile, some of the passengers saw me and called the driver's attention to my struggles to overtake them. The driver motioned toward the other side of the ravine, indicating that I should cross over and head off the coach. I went to the bottom but in attempting to climb up the other side my legs would not work – they were paralyzed. However, with the aid of my hands I managed to haul myself up to the road, very much exhausted and out of breath. When the stage arrived I was helped in, and a sympathizing passenger handed me a flask of

whiskey with an injunction to take a deep drink; that it would revive me. I did as directed, but the liquor caused a serious nausea; when the result of this was over, it seemed to me that I was practically empty.

The schedule of these stages over the mountains was an average of ten miles an hour. We met and passed numerous freight wagons, many of which carried ten tons each. Behind the larger wagons would be a smaller one called a tender, which carried the food and camp outfit for the drivers and barley and hay for the mules. These wagons were usually hauled by twelve or fourteen mules, also brought from the states mentioned.

We steadily climbed the mountains, reaching a meal station where we stopped for supper, and a change of horses, then proceeded on our journey.

In coming up to the American River, I noticed that the road was cut in solid rock on the steep mountain side. Looking over the edge of that trail one could see the river, one thousand or more feet below, running in a torrent. If a coach should chance to tip over the edge of the cliff, nothing but the tall majestic pine trees, which grew on the side of the canyon, would break its fall before it reached the river.

It was some time after midnight, about two or three o'clock, when we entered what was called Strawberry Valley; a canyon on the western slope of the mountains, perhaps ten miles from the summit. This is one of the grandest views that I have ever seen. I should judge it to be a quarter of a mile in width where the stage road passed. On one side of this level valley rose granite walls said to be a thousand feet high. They appeared to be perpendicular. In this valley grew almost exclusively what are known as the sugar pine. These were from one to two hundred feet in height and from two to five feet in diameter. The moon shone very brightly as we rode through this most attractive scene.

We passed to the south side of Lake Tahoe. It lies over six thousand feet over the level of the ocean. As I recall it, the entire scene was very picturesque. This spot has since become a favorite summer resort. The lake is about twenty-two by thirteen miles in area. The water was very clear and cold. Mark Twain describes it as "A sea in the clouds, where royal seclusion is guarded by a cordon of sentinel peaks that lift their frosty fronts 9,000 feet above the level of the world." I have wished many times to travel over this route again, but I do not know whether there is now such a stage line through the canyon and if there were, whether the charm would be the same.

The following morning we reached Carson City, where we took breakfast. Our ride from Lake Tahoe down the mountain was very exciting, and rapid, the horse sometimes running. Carson City at that time was the capital of the territory of Nevada. The United States government maintained an assay office there. It was a sandy valley with plenty of alkali dust, through which runs the Carson River. The town as I recollect it is situated about twelve miles from Virginia City. There I was to meet Dr. Mathewson.

This city is built on the side of Mt. Davidson, the mountain which contains the famous Comstock Lode. So far as I know it is the richest ever yet discovered in the world. At the time of which I am writing this mine was at the height of its "Big Bonanza" fame, but the tide of immigration to California and the west had begun to ebb and was flowing back over the mountains towards the east. The first discoveries of the Comstock were of gold, but the deeper the vein was dug, more silver was found and less gold. The method of extracting silver from the quartz at that time was very crude, and much of the silver was lost in the process. Since then, methods have been invented which save most of it. It is estimated that up to this date, six hundred million dollars in gold had been reclaimed from the placer diggings of California. But this vast sum had been wrested from the earth by a great cost in labor. To quote the Hon. Thomas Fitch, of Nevada; "Over fifty thousand of the brightest, bravest, most generous, energetic, and enterprising men on the earth; the knight Paladins who challenged the brute forces of Nature to combat; the soldiers who, possessed with the aura sacra fames, faced the storm and the savage, the desert, and disease, swarmed around the base of Mt. Davidson, and reached out to Aurora, to the Reese River and to the mountains of the Humboldt."

Virginia City was reputed to have a population then of twenty-five thousand, consisting mostly of men, for women and children were few. Saloons were numerous. I remember entering one of the latter, where the furnishings were stated to have cost \$30,000. The buildings were principally of brick and adobe, though lumber was brought from the Sierra Nevada Mountains some twenty miles distant, and hauled to the city by ox teams and wagons. The water was very bad for drinking purposes, there being in it a large amount of mineral substances in solution and alkali, but – I think there was not much of it drank! The speculation in mines and gambling was furious. Many of the secrets of the lode known to the miners were disclosed to the owners of the saloons, making the latter bonanza capitalists. Prospectors had searched the mountains east of Virginia City, and many mines rivaling the Comstock had been discovered.

Dr. Mathewson and I made a journey to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to a town named Galena. We passed through a place called Steamboat Springs, named, I suppose, because of the steam issuing from the water, which resembled the exhaust from a steamboat. A story was told to me that in earlier days a party of immigrants camped for the night in this vicinity. One of the members of the party, hearing a strange noise, went to the spring to discover the cause, then hurrying back to the camp explained: "Boys, hitch up and get out of here; we are right over hell." I did not see the springs myself, but presume that they are much like those I have seen in Yellowstone Park.

In coming back that night we took a more direct road, which led over Mt. Davidson; a fine road, built for hauling ore to the quartz mills. Now they do this differently. The quartz is smelted in furnaces, the metal then separated, and practically all saved.

After reaching the summit of the road, it being a bright moonlight night, we came down the grade to the city at a lively trot; we had a fine span of horses and an open buggy. It was ten o'clock when we reached our hotel.

Claims were made on the ledge in feet at that time. One man, according to mining laws, could pre-empt only two hundred feet. At the time of which I write the Gould and Curry Mine was selling at \$4,000 per foot, and if I am not mistaken, it was 1,200 feet long. The leading paper in this mining city was the Territorial Enterprise, a wide-awake daily paper. Mark Twain was city editor; he gave evidence then of his great wit, and during those days published some things in the paper as bright as he has ever written since.

From here we took the overland stage for Austin, our destination. The outfit was about the same as that with which we had crossed the mountains. If I remember rightly, it was about 250 miles, and the time thirty-six to forty-eight hours. The stage road was mostly through alkali plains, the sand being very deep and heavy, and the ride tiresome and uninteresting. Austin at that time claimed a population of 5,000. Silver was discovered there in March that year. It was a motley looking town, consisting of tents and huts of adobe and stone. I think the hotel was called the International. It was a structure two stories high. The town was built in a ravine, or canyon, lying between Mt. Prometheus on the south and another mountain not so high on the north. Here I found Frank Drake, the engineer, and after getting our bearings we started out under the lead of Dr. Mathewson to see the pine land. We found it on the west side of the mountain range, about half way between Austin and Big Creek, some twelve miles distant.

The first thing was to find a location for the mill. Water being a necessity, we tramped through the sage brush on the foot-hills for some time, but all indications showed that there was none in the vicinity. Finally, Drake told me that if I would not laugh at him that he would find water, sure. I replied that I would not even smile, to go ahead. So he cut a forked twig out of some brush, and held the two branches, one in each hand, the stem being upright, and he walked about where he thought there might be water. Owing, likely to some misstep or muscular movement, the fork of the twig fell down towards the ground at a certain place. He repeated the experiment from several directions, and when he reached the same spot the twig fell each time. "Dig down here fifteen feet and you will find water," he said. I could see no reason why we were not just as likely to find water there as at any other point, so we began to dig. We made a windlass out of some of the growing timber, and after going so low that the laborer could not throw the dirt out of the top we set up a windlass and used a rope and basket. The digging continued until I feared a cave-in, and I concluded that after all the best thing was to go to Big Creek, where we were sure of plenty of water. I became convinced we would find no water here with such appliances as we had. So we went over to Big Creek and set up our house, which was a walled tent 7x9 feet. This was to be our home until the mill should be completed and lumber sawed with which to build the real house. The first work in our enterprise was to cut logs, from which to make timber, and I climbed the mountain side, where I could inspect the trees. I was much surprised and disheartened; the largest log I could find would only make an 8x10, sixteen feet long. I reported the situation to Dr. Mathewson, and he did not seem much surprised, only saying that we must go ahead and put up the mill. We had brought no "fire" or other brick with us to set up the boiler; some stones found in the mountain were represented to be fire-proof, so I employed an ox team to haul some to the mill site, with which I lined the furnace under the boiler. For these teams I think I paid \$15 per day. I had to pay \$11 per day for masons, \$5 for laborers, and eight

to ten dollars per day for carpenters. We set posts in the ground upon which to fix the foundation for the mill, and I had a well-hole dug, filling it with water from the creek.

We were all without experience in hewing timber, but I took hold of the broad axe and succeed tolerably well until one day I had the misfortune to split my big toe open; this laid me up for a short time. I set the engine up on a wooden frame, and I think that in December we sawed the first board. Then we sawed lumber for a house and built that. This pinon pine was a soft light wood. If one took a board of it and laid it in the sun, without putting weight on it, the board would nearly tie itself into a knot. Notwithstanding the high price of labor and of materials, I got the mill running at an expense of \$2,500, not counting the engineer's wages and my salary. After getting the mill in working order I made timber by nailing boards together and with such timber put the mill under cover. At first we sold lumber for about \$200 per thousand feet.

I was in the habit of going into Austin on Sundays to spend the day with Dr. Mathewson. We were coming out to the mill one Monday morning together, when he outlined a plan by which we two combining, could get hold of the mill at the expense of the company that had furnished the money with which to build it. I listened to his plan, until sure I had not mistaken his intentions, then said to him: "Doctor, these men have hired me, paid what I asked, and so far as I know have treated me well, and I shall be true to them as long as I am in their employ." His answer was: "I think when a man has a chance to make a lot of money, and refuses, that he is a fool." I replied: "That may be, but I will not cheat these men." He rode on in silence, but from that time I knew my man. Nothing more was said about the matter between us and I thought he had given up his scheme.

One Sunday, in the spring, a number of the men went into town, and as usual, some of us went into the doctor's to dine with him. There I was introduced to a stranger, a Mr. Merrill, from Maine. As we were coming back from the mill one of the boys who worked for me asked if I knew why Mr. Merrill had come here. I replied that I had no idea; then he said: "If you won't give me away, I will tell you what he is here for." I replied that I would not give him away. "Well," he said, "he has come here to take your place." I was completely taken by surprise, but had plenty of time for thought.

The next morning Mr. Merrill and the doctor rode out to the mill. I met them very cordially, showed Mr. Merrill over the plant, told him of the difficulties I had had to encounter there, the length of time occupied in building the mill and the amount of money I had expended in doing it. He appeared to be a fair man and complimented me highly on my work. I thanked him, and then said: "I understand you have come to take my place. I will say to you that I am under written contract with the owners to take charge of this mill and run it, and that I will not permit any man to replace me until the year is up. If the company is willing to pay my salary for the year and give written release from the contract, I don't care what they do with the plant; but if any man comes here and attempts to supersede me by force – well, I advise him to get his life insured before he attempts it."

Mr. Merrill and the doctor rode back to Austin and that was the last I heard of the subject.

The territorial legislature passed a law that a person could have title to any unoccupied piece of land which he would have surveyed and file a map of same in the county records. I complied with the law and located three hundred acres one-half mile below the mill.

I had considerable unpleasantness with Drake, the engineer. When planning the machinery I had calculated the engine to run 150 revolutions per minute. Drake argued that such speed was too fast.

To settle the contention I had to tell him that I would assume the responsibility and that he must run the engine at the speed I had planned or I would discharge him.

Just before my time expired Dr. Mathewson wanted me to make an offer to run the mill another year, saying that the company was going to put up a quartz mill near the saw mill, but I refused. When my time was up Dr. Mathewson gave me a draft on San Francisco for my due, some \$1,200.

The location of fissure veins was innumerable, but they were all thin in this locality. I knew of one vein that was being worked above Austin by a Dr. Goodfellow, which was only two inches thick, but the ore would assay \$3,000 to the ton. I think half a dozen stamp mills were erected that summer within ten miles of Austin. So far as I know none of them ever paid any dividends to their builders.

In the fall of 1864 I occupied a room in a livery stable in Austin with the owner. He kept saddle horses for hire, and his mow of baled hay was a favorable place for immigrants to sleep. I have seen sleeping there ex-governors from the states, ex-congressmen, and senators; all coming to this new territory to grow up with it and get new political jobs. I will say in regard to the people in this section that the average of education and intelligent was higher than that of any other community I had ever known, though a mining population is not usually supposed to be highly educated. I learned in this country to have respect for "Judge Lynch," and had my respect lessened for "Judge Law." We had several shooting scrapes in town; they occurred frequently. One thing I noticed as distinguishing the bad men of the south from the bad man of the north; the latter gave his victim a chance for his life; but the former would get the drop on his victim and give him no chance for defense. There were plenty of bad men from both sections.

When I left Chicago to go to California I bought a Colt's revolver and strapped to my hip; I thought this to be a necessary precaution, but at the time of which I write I had found it was not, and I had traded my revolver for "feet" in a mine.

The Indians east of Salt Lake were interrupting the stage line about this time and my correspondences with my wife were very much interfered with on this account. She became much worried and I also was quite anxious about it. One day when in the post office, I asked the assistant postmaster if he had learned whether or not the mail had succeeded in reaching the east, whether the blockade had been removed. He expressed

ignorance in regard to the matter and I took occasion to say that I was worried about it, as I had been sending money in every letter to my wife. About two months afterward this assistant postmaster was appointed comptroller of the state of Nevada. From the time I spoke to him till he received that appointment my wife never received a letter from me, but eventually all the letters written to that time, and all written after his appointment as stated, reached their destination. The fellow was an ex-Wells & Fargo express agent, which company carried and delivered mail over the entire Pacific coast, wherever their express routes ran. Letters had to bear the United States stamp and also a Wells & Fargo stamp. The express company ran a messenger and treasure box over every route traversed by the company, and this was over the whole Pacific coast. Its service was more certain than that of the U.S. mail, and was patronized by most business men.

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## CHAPTER VI

### Varied Occupations

I made arrangements to continue my law studies with Wheeler & Coolbaugh, of Oshkosh, a firm doing a large law business. Mr. Wheeler was an honorable man and a good lawyer, but physically not strong. Soon after I entered, Earl P Finch, from Neenah, studied law in the same office.

I boarded that winter with the family of George W. Lathrop, who lived about two miles from town on the south side of the river. I walked into the city every morning and back at night, which gave me good exercise. The next summer I went into town to live with my sister, whose home was on Otter Street. One night hearing an alarm of fire bells, I ran out to Ferry Street where I saw off toward the river a number of buildings blazing high in the air. I was at once convinced that all the buildings on the street would burn. I went to our law office, seized as many books as I could carry, and ran with them to my sister's home. I then returned for another load of books but reaching the office I found the building on fire and unsafe to enter.

The fire department, which consisted of one or two hand machines, was trying its best to stop the spread of the conflagration. A locomotive and flat car was sent to the city of Fond du Lac, sixteen miles distant, for the fire engine of that city. The men returned with the machine in little more than half an hour, making remarkable time for those days.

The city was without water works at this time. Large cisterns had been sunk at various points in the streets for use in case of fire, and most houses at that time were supplied with wells, into which the suction hose of the hand machines could be dropped and the well pumped dry. When the company from Fond du Lac arrived, the boys unloaded the machine on the south side of the river, and started on a run for the fire. Crossing the floating bridge they came up Ferry Street between the burnt and burning buildings. It was indeed exciting to watch this company haul the machine through the holocaust of fire which was burning on every side. It was certainly a brave act, and won great applause from spectators. The fire burned so rapidly that little was saved that in any way was exposed. All the buildings on both sides of Ferry Street, big and little including Mark's Hall and the Winnebago Hotel were burned, as far as Algoma Street.

While living in Mt. Pleasant, in order to straighten out my uncle's financial affairs, I had procured a text book on Double Entry Book-keeping, and had studied the principles so well that I was able to put all his business transactions, so far as he could remember them, into a set of double entry books. This experience made me quite familiar with this system and was of great benefit to me in after years, for I became well grounded in its principles.

The mortgage that I held on the saw mill in Omro I was induced by the mortgagor, to bid in, under the promise that he would redeem the same and pay me the cash. This he failed to do, and I became owner of the mill. The lumber business at that time was not very lucrative. Pine trees were so plentiful and accessible up the river, that more lumber was

manufactured than the demand required. A Mr. Waterman and I entered into partnership in the fall of that year to conduct a lumber business and operate the mill. This mill was what in those days was called a muley mill; its maximum capacity would not exceed ten thousand feet per day; its average was even less. The employees I do not think exceeded eight or ten men in number. The next spring I moved to Omro that I might be near the business. I opened a law office and Waterman managed the mill.

Prior to that time there had been boats for towing logs, operated by horse power. These boats were furnished with what is called a 'grouser,' also side wheels, a rudder, and spool for winding the towline. This grouser is a piece of oak, eight by twelve inches in size, and from sixteen to twenty feet long. It could be dropped endwise and would stick in the bottom of the river and hold the boat firm. The horses attached to the sweep, walked on a platform built on the deck of the boat. The circular gear, attached to the end of the boat operated the spool around which was wound a tow-line, perhaps one and a half inches in diameter, and from five hundred to one thousand feet long. The horse power would be attached to the side wheels and the horses would run the boat out the length of the tow-line, which was attached to the raft of logs or anything else which it was desired to tow. When the line was all run out it would stop the boat, and then the grouser would be dropped, firmly fastening the boat to its position; then the gear of the boat would be changed from side wheels to the spool, which would be turned to wind up the tow-line and haul the tow up to the boat. Then the same process would be repeated. Thus a heavy tow could be hauled up the river or through a lake. These horse-boats, as they were called, were used principally in small rivers. I conceived the plan of substituting a locomotive boiler and engine as power on one of the boats, thinking it would be more powerful, economical and convenient. The change made was necessarily experimental and crude, but it was quite successful. I towed my own logs from the boom at Lake Poygan to the mill, as I bought them. For convenience in towing, they were put up in rafts about three hundred feet long and forty feet wide. The booms were made of long logs, about a foot in diameter; the ends were flattened and bored with a three-inch auger; an oak pin held the two ends together.

When enough pieces had been put together to make a raft, the logs were placed inside of it like candles in a box. The logs were cut in northern Wisconsin and hauled to the river bank or onto the ice, and when the ice broke up in the spring, the logs would float down with the current to where a channel was cut through, near the mouth of the Wolf River to an arm of Lake Poygan. This arm was secured by a stationary boom into which the logs were driven. Then by expert log men they were placed in the towing-booms which I have before described. These towing booms were lashed together in great rafts or floats, and then towed by powerful tugs.

There were more than a dozen mills at one time at Oshkosh and at Fond du Lac nearly as many more. There were also mills at Neenah and Menasha. For a great many years it was estimated that three hundred million feet of pine lumber was produced each year, being the product of forest lining the banks of the Wolf River and its tributaries. Small towboats were used to tow logs up the Fox River to the saw mills situated on its banks. They were of the same pattern as the one which I altered and have described.

At a place called Portage, the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers are within a few miles of each other. A canal had been dug by the Fox River Improvement Company connecting the two rivers. These streams were dredged in order to make them navigable for light draught steamers towing lumber scows. A man by the name of Neff, living in Oshkosh, had a tug boat on the Wisconsin River, and also had some scows at Oshkosh which he wished taken to Portage. A Mr. Barnes had seventy-five thousand feet of lumber which he had contracted to deliver at Portage. My tugboat captain agreed to take the scow and lumber to Portage in the specified time. He therefore loaded the lumber on the scows and started up the Fox River. When he arrived within two days' journey of Portage, Mr. Neff met him and induced him to unload the lumber on the river bank because it impeded his progress. This he did and started with the lighters up the river. The captain of the tug "Lady Jane," coming down the river was informed of this transaction and reported it to me. When I heard of the affair I knew it meant heavy damages and probably a law suit unless the lumber should be delivered as agreed. The "Lady Jane" was to return immediately with another tow, as towing lumber from Oshkosh to Portage was part of her business. I engaged a couple of lighters from the captain, got aboard the boat and traveled up the river to where the lumber had been left. Mr. Barnes had heard of the mishap and had started down the river to see me. We returned to the place where the lumber was piled, and the two scows were left with us on which to load the freight. The next morning we began this work, and before sundown had it all on board – 75,000 feet of dry pine lumber. This proves that we were both strong, active men.

The next day my boat returned from Portage. I started the captain again for that place, Mr. Barnes accompanying him, while I proceeded to Omro. On the return of the boat to the latter place, I was informed by one of its hands that the captain had tried to sell my boat at Portage. I tied the boat up to the dock and discharged the captain. He was furious and refused to leave the boat. I told him he could stay on it that it was all right, as I wanted a watchman anyway. The next day he recovered from his bad temper and wished to conciliate me, but he had proved himself incompetent and dishonest. I had no use for that kind of a man, so insisted upon his going. I had already tried several captains and had been unfortunate in them all, so after some delay I concluded to leave the sawmill in Waterman's charge and go as tug captain myself. I found all the business that the boat was able to do. I was very busy all that season, and made considerable money with the tug, also acquiring much experience in towing logs. There had happened to be quite a scarcity of boats that fall, doing that line of business. The freezing-up of the river ended the towing and sawmill business for the season. Of course I had very little law business, and spent much of my time in Oshkosh.

During the years since I had arrived in Oshkosh, I had been bound to the town by an attraction, in the guise of a girl, now a young lady. She was tall, of slim figure, with red cheeks and a very handsome chin. She had bright brown eyes and brown hair. What particularly attracted me I cannot say. It may be that whenever I met her she looked pleasant and smiled. When I called at her home I always visited with the family. Her mother I found to be an exceedingly intelligent and upright woman, and she too, always gave me a pleasant welcome. There was at that time in Oshkosh a bevy of school girls,

the brightest and most intelligent that I had ever met, and my choice I considered the best of them all. We had known each other more than four years and had been very happy in our courtship; so we concluded in the spring of 1860 that it was time to be married and begin a home of our own, in Omro. I rented a cottage situated in a grove of burr oak, furnished it complete for living, then one quiet Sunday evening we were married in the young lady's home by the Rev. W. H. Marble, the guest being friends of herself and family and my friends and relatives. The next day we removed to our home in Omro. We lived there as happy as mortals can be.

It occurred to me that I ought to carry some insurance on my mill. The local retail lumber trade at Omro was limited and I had shipped my lumber principally to Waupun, Wis. I thought I would go there, collect some money and get the mill insured. I took my wife with me and we drove in a buggy through the beautiful country lying between Omro and Waupun. The drive was very enjoyable, the weather fine and the beautiful homes, bountiful crops and handsome farms looked enchanting. I found my affairs at Waupun in a prosperous condition, and having transacted my business, we started for home. On arriving at the top of a hill overlooking the village of Omro, I met a neighbor who informed me that my saw mill had burned the night before. This put an immediate stop to our happiness and pleasant planning. I was without capital to build a new mill; the prospects for the lumber business were not good and I was in a troubled sea of doubt as to what I ought to do. Friends and relatives advised against rebuilding, and this made it more difficult for me to arrive at any decision. The question arose, should I devote myself entirely to the law? I doubted if I could make a living at it. Thus different schemes were considered, but none adopted.

The railroad from Ripon to Omro had been built by a man named Bigelow. Bonds of the township had been given him in exchange for stock in the road, making that gentleman practically owner of the railroad. He spent much of his private fortune in promoting it, also all the money he could borrow. The track was in such bad shape that the Milwaukee and Horicon Railroad, which operated the road called the Omro & Ripon Railroad, being some ten miles in length, refused to run a locomotive over it until the road should be put in repair. I wished to ship over this road a quantity of lumber which had been hauled and piled along the railroad. Andrew Wilson and another mill owner were in the same predicament. Mr. Bigelow called for contributions of money to help him in repairing the road. He had proved himself to be a good promiser and poor performer; so the citizens refused to give him another dollar, but told him that if he would give me a lease of the road for three years they would raise the money to put it in repair so that lumber might be hauled out and goods and freight brought in. Finding that he could make no better terms, Mr. Bigelow consented.

I had no experience in railroad building or repairing, and so wrote to Mr. Blossom, receiver of the Milwaukee & Horicon Railroad, asking him to send me a competent man, which he did. I spent my time on the line of the road, watching the work and the method of doing it. I soon discovered that the superintendent whom I had engaged was a poor manager of men. I concluded that I could do better, so I dismissed him and took charge of the work myself. The fall proved remarkably warm that year, the ground did not freeze,

so we were able to work on the road-bed until the twentieth of December by which time it was in fairly good shape. Mr. Bigelow had a contract with the Milwaukee & Horicon Railroad on a mileage and pro rata basis. This allowed me only sufficient money to keep the road in order. I endeavored to secure better terms from Mr. Blossom, but he argued that, being receiver, the court would not permit him to make another contract disadvantageous to his receivership; so the prospect for making money in the running of the road was not encouraging.

I think that description of the methods of building railroads fifty years ago would be interesting to the people of this day. When a railroad is to be built by a corporation nowadays it is only necessary to issue bonds and stocks and sell them on the stock market in Wall Street and so raise millions of dollars with which to build the road. In those days the farmers and merchants all wanted railroads in order to get their grain to market and goods into the towns. Some schemer would employ a civil engineer to survey a line of railroad where it might be needed; then a man fitted to such work would be employed to visit farmers along the line of the survey and induce them if possible to donate the right of way. This most of them would do, as they were very anxious to have the road built. Then a plausible talker or writer would induce the farmers along the line of the proposed railway to mortgage their farms in exchange for stock of the road and most of them, with the optimism of the time, would do so; also villages and towns would be persuaded to issue their bonds. I remember the city of Oshkosh gave to William B. Ogden, President of the Chicago & North-Western Railroad, \$100,000 in bonds, to enable him to build the road from Fond du Lac to their city. Any man who was unwilling to give a good share of what he owned to further such a project; and would not advise his neighbors to do the same, was considered to be lacking in public spirit and business foresight. In the early fifties the Chicago & North-Western Railroad was build from Chicago to Janesville and from there northward to Fond du Lac, where it established machine shops and car shops, then extended the line on to Oshkosh, Green Bay and Lake Superior. That line of road became the nucleus of the railways which gridiron the great Northwest and whose lines of track aggregate nearly ten thousand miles.

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## CHAPTER V

### College at Mt. Pleasant

The next winter I taught school in the town of Black Wolf, where my brother lived. When my school ended in the spring, I decided to go to Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, and enter college there. Prior to that time I had taken a mortgage on a saw mill at Omro to secure the money that I had loaned my brother-in-law. Before leaving Iowa I placed the mortgage in the hands of a young attorney for foreclosure. I remember that I had quite a problem to solve as to how I should reach Mt. Pleasant. Traveling facilities in the west at that time were extremely limited. I eventually went to Watertown, Wisconsin, by rail and from there also by rail to Prairie du Chien, on the Mississippi, where I took a steamer to Galena, Illinois, and from there another steamer to Burlington, Iowa. In paying my fare to the clerk of this boat I received in change twenty dollars in worthless, counterfeit money, which fact I did not discover until I landed in Burlington and the boat had gone on down the river. People now know little about this wildcat or worthless money, but at that time all persons handling much currency, sustained greater or less loss from these bills through bank failure, counterfeits and discounts. No bank statements were issued to the public, and the soundness of a bank was indicated only by the rate of discount demanded. Each state had its own laws for the establishment of banks and the issuing of paper money, secured by the depositing of other worthless paper. The bank bills of one state would not circulate in another except at a discount. A formidable document of protection, called a bank-note detector, was issued in New York I believe. Those handling money, consulted this with as much eagerness as the modern citizen consults the daily papers.

On landing at Burlington I found myself without good money to pay hotel bills over night and fare to Mt. Pleasant. Something had to be done to meet the situation, so I went to a jewelry store and told the man in charge of my predicament, asking him to let me have ten dollars on the security of my gold watch and chain, until I could return him the amount. He kindly advanced that sum, and I was able to conclude the journey. Arriving at Mt. Pleasant, I found my uncle and family living upon one corner of what was known as The Bishops Square. Bishop Hamline, a noted divine of the Methodist Church, a man of fine manners, much erudition, but aged and infirmed; his son Dr. Hamline and Dr. Elliot, president of the college, lived on the three remaining quarters. The last named gentleman was author of several books, among them, Elliot on Slavery, 2 volumes. He had the reputation of being a most learned man. He was, I think, of Irish descent and physically of the Horace Greeley and Oliver Goldsmith type. He had three children, two girls and a boy, all students of the college. The commencement that year was held about two month after my arrival, in the college building.

I found in Mt. Pleasant few advantages for studying law; no more perhaps than existed in Oshkosh. The educational lines followed more the denominational lines; some thirty superannuated Methodist ministers lived in the town. It was the county seat of Henry County and the court house occupied the public square. Prominent business houses surrounded this on the four sides.

I made arrangements to study law with the firm of Clark, Doolittle & Cook. Mr. Clark was brother of the noted woman writer, "Grace Greenwood." Mr. Doolittle was a young gentleman of pleasing manners. Mr. Cook had won some honors as a lawyer and legislator in Pennsylvania. He was a late addition to the firm. I read law under such guidance with much avidity, my first studies being Blackstone and Kent.

Mt. Pleasant was at that time quite a literary center. Political interest was dominant and animated. That first summer I caused to be organized a law school as a department of the college work. Henry Ambler, a leading lawyer of the place, accepted the position of circuit judge, in our moot court; he was also to occupy the post of lecturer on statutory and common laws. Senator Harlan accepted our invitation to lecture on constitutional law; sometime later this gentleman became Secretary of the Interior under President Lincoln. Another practicing lawyer of some note, by the name of Palmer, discoursed on criminal law, and Dr. Elliot consented to lecture on ecclesiastical and Roman law. During the fall, winter and spring these gentlemen gave us lectures upon several subjects assigned them, and all concerned appeared to take great interest in this law class.

Later we organized a Literary Society; the gentlemen mentioned, all of the 13 students in our law class and several residents, became members. The debates of the literary society were usually held in the court house, and were generally very well attended. Of those who participated, I remember Mr. Alvin Sanders, who at that time was a banker in Mt. Pleasant, but who afterwards moved to the state of Nebraska, and I think served two terms as United States Senator from that state. There was also Henry Clay Dean, a lawyer who afterwards became a Methodist minister and a chaplain of the United States Senate. He had studied law in the office of Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, a man of great reputation in congress. Mr. Dean was a man of great ability as well as a great egotist. In any group of which he was a member, he monopolized the conversation. He was, I think, the most eloquent orator to whom I ever listened. He was inclined to obesity, was careless in his attire and neglected his ablutions, which detracted much from his popularity. The following anecdote of Dean was repeated by William Penn, a dry goods merchant of Mt. Pleasant, who with his wife visited in Pennsylvania and was told of the orator's visit to this same place the summer before. Mr. Dean had been invited to occupy the Methodist pulpit and after the sermon, was taken to dine with the narrator. A little daughter of the house listened with open-eyed wonder to Mr. Dean's table talk. After the meal, watching her opportunity, she pulled her mother's dress and asked: "Mama did God make Mr. Dean?" "Yes, of course," replied the mother. "Well," said the child, "Why didn't God put a clean shirt on him?" This anecdote was published in the Mt. Pleasant Home Journal, and it made Mr. Dean very angry. I recollect seeing in print a story to the effect that Mr. Dean visited a Senator, with whom he was acquainted, remaining in his house over night. The wife of the host with female diplomacy placed a clean shirt and collar in his room, with the intimation that they were for his use. A year later the senator again received a visit from Mr. Dean; the wife offered the same courtesy, and later discovered that the shirt discarded, was the very one she had given him the year before. Personally I had reason to be grateful to this erratic genius, for he manifested considerable interest in me, gave me the freedom of his library; from him, also, I received many valuable hints on public speaking.

I became deeply interested in our moot court, and for sometime officiated as its clerk. Cases in the court were made up by agreement; they involved questions of law which the students argued before Mr. Ambler acting as district judge. If the embryo lawyer was dissatisfied with the decision of Judge Ambler he could appeal to our supreme court. This was composed of three prominent lawyers of Mt. Pleasant, who had kindly agreed to act in that capacity for us. During the year I had some twenty suits in this moot court and as I recollect, I won all but three of them before Judge Ambler; the three which I lost, I appealed to our supreme court and won two out of the three. I tried more cases with George B. Corkhill as opposing counsel than with any other member of the law class. In later years this man was appointed United States district attorney for the District of Columbia, by President Garfield. He held that office during the trial of Guiteau for the assassination of the president.

Of the thirteen students in our law class I remember only the following: James Berryman, George Baker Corkhill, and Charles McDowell of Mt. Pleasant; also Ross from Pennsylvania and Harlan from Kentucky.

During the winter a debate occurred in Mt. Pleasant between a new arrival in the place, a homeopathic physician, and a number of allopathic doctors residing there. Vigorous attacks were made without regard to feelings or reputation. The debate interested and amused me very much. Since then, however, I have had no great veneration for the medical profession.

Politics at this time were growing strenuous. Senator Douglas's introduction, and the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill by congress, had excited the feelings of both North and South to fever heat, as to the future of slavery. This bitter strife focused in the struggle to gain control of Kansas, and it became a question which party could send the greatest number of emigrants there. This new section was not far removed from our locality, and party spirit was intense. Judge Claggett, of the Iowa circuit court, was a violent democrat, and made himself most unpopular with a majority of the people of his district, of which Henry County was a part. An effort was made to impeach him, but he evaded this by resigning.

There was a second cause of excitement at that time in the discovery of gold at Pike's Peak. There were no railroads then, west of the Missouri River, it being an unbroken country, except for the wagon trails of the government and the emigrant trails to Salt Lake and California. This territory was peopled by wild Indians and herds of buffalo roamed over these plains. The extent of the gold deposits at Pike's Peak was a matter of conjecture, but many went there filled with great expectations. In the following year, a Mr. Francis Springer was appointed by the governor of Iowa, as circuit judge to succeed Judge Claggett. He was a gentleman of fine address, and a very able lawyer.

Ross and Berryman wished to make application for admission to the bar, and asked me to join them. I objected as I did not consider my studies completed, but eventually I yielded to their persuasions, realizing that the attempt would bring me no injury. When court



convened our applications were presented and Judge Springer appointed three members of the Mt. Pleasant bar to examine us in open court, and report upon our qualifications. The committee gave us a thorough test and reported in favor of our admission and the judge ordered us sworn in as members of the bar.

At this term of court the grand jury had indicted a young man for burglary, and he was arraigned for trial. The judge asked him if he had counsel. He replied in the negative, saying that he had no money to pay for such. It is customary for the court to appoint a member of the bar to defend such cases and for some reason the judge selected me. The prisoner was from Indiana; I visited him daily in jail until the trial the following Saturday. District Attorney Berryman was an able lawyer. He opened the case with skill, introducing his evidence and rested his case. We had no witnesses for the defense, as I remember. The trial occupied the forenoon and then the court adjourned for dinner. It was arranged that I should make the opening address, so when the court convened in the afternoon, I spoke for two hours. The district attorney then addressed the jury, the court charged the jurors as to the law, and they retired to decide upon their verdict. They failed to agree, and after holding out all Saturday night and Sunday, stood to disagree. The judge discharged the jury. On Monday or Tuesday he had the prisoner brought before him, and ordered a new trial to be held the following Saturday. I felt much elated at the result, and was confident that I should free the young man on the next trial, but before that time a friend or relative of the prisoner appeared in Mt. Pleasant and employed an old criminal lawyer to take the case. This lawyer asked me to assist him, but I refused. My tutor, Mr. Clark, expostulated with me, but I knew that if the man was cleared, the lawyer, and not I, would get the credit. At the trial the prisoner was speedily found guilty.

About this time our literary society was indulging in some amusement of its own. There was a certain matter which I had given considerable study and I proposed the following resolution for debate which was accepted; "Resolved; that the whole human race did not originate from one pair." I took the affirmative of the question, and Corkhill the negative. He was a fluent speaker, and I judge I must have acquired some skill as a debater, because I was usually honored with a good audience. On the evening of the contest an umpire was chosen to decide the question at issue, upon the merits of the arguments. After the discussion he decided in my favor. Such a verdict was not in accord with the tenets of the Methodist Church or of the college. Some of the professors and other citizens, therefore, wished a rehearing, to which I consented, and again assumed the affirmative side. With my consent Senator Harlan and Henry Clay Dean spoke on the negative side. This time the decision was against me, more upon theological grounds, I thought, than upon the merits of the arguments.

That spring there was a great emigration to the gold fields around Pike's Peak. Many private schooners, bearing the affirmation; "Pike's Peak or bust," drove westward, at the beginning of the season. At the end a few returned, with the sententious legend, "Busted" written on the canvas. My friend Ross was seized with the gold fever, and was most urgent that I go with him, but I declined. He went, and I have never heard from or of him since. He was a nice fellow and I would like to know what became of him. Early in April our law class broke up and I decided to return to Wisconsin. My uncle had a section of

land lying west of Dubuque some thirty miles or more, and he wished me to go and see it as I went back, and to report on its location and value. To this I consented. On the journey, going up the river from Burlington, a man came aboard the steamer with whom I soon became acquainted. He had been to Des Moines, the capital of Iowa, to have a requisition signed by the governor for the deportation of a man who had escaped from Racine County, Wisconsin, the charge being that he had sold a piece of land located in the bottom of a lake. The deputy's route would take him past the place I was expected to examine, so we continued together. Landing at Dubuque, Iowa, we stopped there for the night. The town is located at the east end of a canyon several miles long, opening on the Mississippi River. We engaged a team and open buggy for our trip inland. When we left Dubuque in the morning, a few flakes of snow were falling, as we went up the canyon the snow storm increased, and when we arrived at the end of it and drove out onto a level prairie, a blizzard struck us with great force. It penetrated my clothing as if it had been gossamer. My companion, who had passed through many similar experiences in the northwest, was driving. I slid under the buffalo robe, which was a large and heavy one, and evaded the storm as much as possible. About noon we arrived at a place called Cedar Falls. I noted with interest a brick flouring mill. After dining we resumed our journey. The storm was now less severe, but the air was very cold. We came next to a town called West Union, where we stayed all night at a hotel which was cold and cheerless. In the morning we proceeded on our way across an uninhabited and trackless prairie. On this was situated the land belonging to my uncle, which I was to examine. I covered the location, as well as I could without a surveyor's assistance, and we proceeded on our way across a wide and pathless stretch of county. We came to a creek at one place, and the deputy sheriff, who was driving, asked me to get out and examine the stream and select a place to ford. I did so, and stood on the bank, waiting until he should reach the other side. The water did not appear to be more than eighteen inches deep where he was to cross, but when he drove in, the horses dropped suddenly under water, broke loose from the buggy and finally floundered out the other side. When the buggy tipped forward, the driver was thrown into the water, but clinging to the lines, he was dragged to shore by the team. This accident amused me very much, but it failed to affect the deputy in the same humorous way; instead he became very angry, and denounced me soundly. Later I was able to convince him of my innocence in the matter. My companion dried his clothes as well as he could while I patched the broken harness, and we proceeded on our way, reaching Decorah in time for supper. The next morning we had the team harnessed and brought to the door of our hotel, and my companion directed me to be ready to leave at any moment that he should appear. It a short time he came back in another buggy accompanied by a stranger, who was handcuffed. He transferred this man to our buggy, directed me to get in, and jumped in himself, putting the horses to a run for about a mile, in order to get out of the county in which he had arrested the man fearing to be served with a writ of habeas corpus. This Sunday was a very different day from the Friday before. The sun shone brightly, the sky was cloudless, the air balmy and Nature smiled. Even the prisoner appeared to be resigned to his lot. It was the deputy alone who seemed anxious, and he drove the team as hard as they could stand it. At Cedar Falls he secured another conveyance, resigning the one he had been using to me. Fearing pursuit, he was resolved to cross the Mississippi that night. Before parting from me the officer asked the loan of

some money with which to complete his journey home. Sometime afterwards, when at Oshkosh I received the payment of this loan, but I never learned the fate of the prisoner.

After parting from the deputy and his charge, I proceeded to Dubuque, the next day I crossed to Prairie du Chien, and from there took the train for Oshkosh.

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## CHAPTER IV

### Early Days in Oshkosh

The principal street in Oshkosh was then called Ferry Street. It was later changed to Main Street. From the lower end of this thoroughfare a floating bridge crossed to "Brooklyn," a place on the south side of Fox River. This bridge was made of square timbers lying side by side and fastened together. These were planked over crosswise and a platform was raised at one side to be used by foot passengers. Near the center a section some sixty feet wide was cut out, one end of which was held to the main bridge by a heavy iron coupling. When a steamer or raft of logs desired to pass, one end of this draw as it was called was loosened and the current would float it down the river; the other end being fast by the couplings. When it was desired to close the draw, it was done by means of a chain, one end of which was attached to the main bridge, and the other to a windlass on the draw. The ends of the main bridge were held by piers at each end of the draw. These piers were made by a caisson, composed of timber pinned together and filled with stone, then sunk on the bed of the river. When the draw was to be closed, the windlass was turned with a crank, which wound up the chain, and brought the draw again into place, thus making a continuous passage for teams and foot passengers.

The streets of Oshkosh were about as Nature had made them. Ferry Street and others near the river were very muddy and sticky in rainy weather. Most of the stores were on Ferry Street between Algoma Street and the river. They consisted of structures one and two stories high. Just east of the bridge on the river was a saw mill; said to have been equipped with the first circular saw, for cutting logs, in the state of Wisconsin. The owner was a man by the name of Swartz. The most pretentious building in Oshkosh was Mark's Hall. It was three stories in height, and was located at the corner of Ferry and Ceape Streets; it contained an audience room for public meetings, lectures, etc. Farther up the street, near the corner of Church, was a large wooden building in the shape of a Maltese cross, occupied as a meeting house by the Congregational Church, the pastor at that time being the Rev. H. G. Freeman. He was succeeded by the Rev. William H. Marble, an eloquent and brilliant clergyman, very popular at that time. Between the Hall and Church was the Winnebago Hotel. A cheap two story structure used as a courthouse and jail, occupied the present site of the county buildings. The street running northwest from Ferry Street was called Algoma. Upon this, numerous houses were built as far as Jackson Street.

There were several sawmills on the north side of the river. The section of country between High Street and the river was mostly swamp, where grew flags and bulrushes. It was generally covered with water. It was at that time being filled in with slabs and sawdust as fast as the mills could furnish the material.

Communication with Neenah, Menasha, Appleton and Green Bay was by boat. On the south side of the river were two sawmills, one owned by Mr. Hubbard and the other by Reed Bros. Some two miles up the river, at Algoma, was another sawmill owned by Mr. Philetus Sawyer, who many years later became U.S. senator for the state of Wisconsin.

Northwest of Oshkosh was a tract called Bald Prairie while south and west of the city, the land was what is known as oak openings. These burr oaks reminded me of the apple trees which I had been accustomed to seeing in the state of New York, only these were much larger than the latter.

A Mr. Jackson was at that time the mayor of the city. He was a genial gentleman, quite popular with the citizens. I remember him very well.

On the present site of Hotel Athearn was situated a two story building, known as Gill's Hall, the upper story of which was used as a school-room, the teacher being Mr. Henry J. Raymond. It was also used for lectures and concerts.

Mr. George Knapp owned a farm about five miles west from Oshkosh. I remained with him while waiting for my sister and husband to return from the east. Perhaps it had rained before I reached Oshkosh, but I do know that about the time I arrived at the farm, it began to rain, and it kept at it for weeks. The roads became heavy and the mud very deep. It was almost impossible to drive to town, and I thought it the rainiest, muddiest country I had ever seen. I became quite blue as I awaited the arrival of my sister and her husband. They had shipped their household goods to Buffalo by canal, and then driven with light conveyance across the country from Sherburne to Buffalo, where they took a steamboat around the lakes to Sheboygan. From there they drove to Fond du Lac and thence to Oshkosh, over the Lake Shore road between the two towns.

This road to Oshkosh at that time might be described as bottomless; the mud was black and deep. At that time every building in the city in which a family could live, was occupied. My sister and family stayed a few days with Mr. W. A. Knapp, a cousin of my brother-in-law, Mr. Andrew B. Knapp. Shortly afterwards, the latter obtained possession of a part of a house which his father owned, and which was leased to a Mr. Ellsworth who kindly offered to share the premises with them. Their household goods were delayed somewhere by the freezing of the lakes, and the children slept on mattresses on the floor, for there were no bedsteads. During that winter we lived in a very cramped condition but were as well off as the majority of people in the city, for no one "put on style" in that new country.

The sash, door and blind factory was not started that winter. The weather was very cold, and I found work at my trade, in the construction of a flouring mill, being build where the Wakefield mill now stands. I had not recovered from the fever and ague experience of Kalamazoo. I had a form of the disease known as "dumb" ague; that is I had the fever each alternate day, but no shakes preceded the fever. I was very depressed and stupid; quinine had ceased to relieve me, and I was able to find relief only in taking arsenic in small doses.

At that time two men, Nicholas R. Burnham and Luther Foster, owned and operated a muley sawmill, and they induced my brother-in-law, Andrew Knapp, to buy an interest. The company then decided to build another mill adjoining the first. It was to be a gang

mill and much larger than the old one. The oak for the new mill was found north, toward Neenah. It was hewn and drawn to the site of the mill, which was at the mouth of the river, to the north side. The mill was built on piles, these being driven into the low and swampy earth, by the pile driver, after a hole had been cut in the ice.

The new firm was styled Burnham, Foster & Knapp. To it belongs the credit of building the first gang mill in the state of Wisconsin. Luther Foster planned the mill. He was a member of the firm and claimed to have had large experience with gang mills in the state of Maine. A millwright drew the plans and superintended the erection of the mill. A Mr. Stearns, who was a good mechanic, was employed to build an engine for the gang mill. He had a machine shop on Ceape Street, where afterwards stood the John Morse machine shop. If I recollect correctly the cylinder was to be twenty inches in diameter with a thirty-inch stroke. At that time no facility existed in the state of Wisconsin, north of Milwaukee, for the building of an engine of that size. Mr. Stearns had to make the plans for the engine as well as the patterns. He lost one or two castings for the cylinder, not having conveniences for pouring so large a quantity of molten iron. The weather during the winter was dry and cold. There were one hundred consecutive days when the ice and snow in Ferry Street did not melt under the rays of the sun. There were twenty consecutive mornings that winter when the mercury stood twenty or more degrees below zero, yet at no time was the snow more than six inches deep. There were four months of sleighing and a steady clear cold all the time. The people had their amusements and enjoyments, and altogether seemed very happy and prosperous. I remember a donation party which was held in Gill's Hall for the benefit of the pastor of the Congregational Church. At that party I met a fair young girl, scarcely fourteen years old, but she was destined, some four and a half years later, to become my wife.

During the spring I completed my work in the flouring mill, and commenced putting in the machinery of the gang mill. In the early summer Mr. Stearns completed the engine and it was erected on piling, driven into the ground for a foundation. Around this large quantities of stone were imbedded in the mud, to hold it steady. Upon the piles were bolted heavy timbers which were wedged and five-tailed together, and upon these was placed the iron frame of the engine bed. Despite Mr. Foster's efforts to make the engine firm, it was never steady in its position. The engine was belted to a line shaft, which ran the whole length of the mill, and was to drive all the machinery. The muley saw in the old mill was transferred to the new mill, and a circular saw added [a new invention at that time] which would take a cant six inches thick and twelve to twenty feet long and take off a board, coming and going, one-half or one inch thick, as might be desired. I have seen this machine drop as many as twenty-four boards in a minute. I have known but a few machines of this kind worked; for some reason they did not become popular as I had expected.

About the middle of the summer of 1857 the new mill was sufficiently completed to put out flooring, fencing and scantling in large quantities. The firm then bought five million feet of logs from Andrews & Haight. These logs were very disappointing. By fall I became convinced that Mr. Haight, Mr. Burnham and others were conspiring to swindle the firm of Burnham, Foster & Knapp, by inducing them to purchase very poor logs at a

very high price, with a view of other parties getting control of the mill. I went to my brother-in-law, who was an unsuspecting and confiding man and informed him of my fears; he advised me to attend my own affairs. As far as he was concerned I would have done so, but I felt it a duty to protect my sister's interest, so explained my views and also reasons for the same to her then left it to her to do as she saw fit. About a week after I informed her my brother-in-law shut down the mill. The solving of their tangled affairs resulted in both Burnham and Foster leaving the concern.

I decided to teach school that fall, and accepted an engagement in the district where George Knapp resided. I was employed there for a term of three or four months, I believe. This was my first experience in school teaching, and five years had passed since I attended the academy in Sherburne. I however felt myself competent to teach in all branches unless perhaps grammar, but I taught with much success, not only that, but all other branches studied in the school. I had a few young lady pupils and boys a few years younger than myself, also children so young that I taught them their letters. I boarded with George Knapp and went home at noon for luncheon. I remember that one day his wife asked me go out and call her husband to dinner. He was digging a well with the aid of a hired man. The soil was very clayey, and they were down about twenty feet. When I bade him come in, George told the helper that they would first take the tools out of the well, as he had heard of instances where the openings filled with water while the diggers were away. We went to dinner, and I returned to the school. In the evening when I reached home, I learned that Mr. Knapp had proved wise in his caution. When he had returned to the well, he had found it full of water, running over the top into the creek not far distant.

A short time after I commenced teaching, I made the acquaintance of a Mr. Cooley and his family. They lived about two miles east of the schoolhouse on the road towards Oshkosh. There were three young ladies in the household, a younger sister of his wife and two grown daughters. During that winter I spent many pleasant evenings there.

The "openings," and prairies, in early times were covered with native or wild grass. When this had once been ploughed under, it never grew again. I remember Mr. Cooley's claim that herd's grass and clover would grow luxuriantly when sown, and would solve the problem of pasturage for this country. He had fine fields of these to exhibit as evidence of the truth of his theory. It has since been proved that no better country can be found for the growth of these grasses.

Spring arrived, the school closed and I went to Oshkosh to live. My brother-in-law and his father had gained possession of the mill, and they engaged me to take control and erect the two gangs which had not yet been set up. One cool morning I was down at the mill, looking over what was to be done, when a middle-aged stranger appeared, and said that he intended buying such a mill. He asked me to take him to the owners, which I did. The result of the negotiation was that the Knapps sold him a one-half interest in the property, and a new firm was organized under the name of A.B. Knapp & Co., the "Co." being James Jenkins, the gentleman above referred to. During the spring I completed the

construction of the mill as designed and employed Carlton Foster, a millwright who had worked with me on a flouring mill, to put in machinery in the basement for sawing lath. Some of the land in Winnebago County was still subject to entry at \$ 1.25 per acre. The choicest of the land had already been taken and some of the farming land close to the city of Oshkosh became quite valuable.

During the summer we were troubled with too much rain. This raised the water in the river and lake so that it came over the foundations of the mill, and up to the pulleys and belts, which drove the gangs and circulars. This made me endless trouble. I made water tight boxes to put under pulleys for the belts and pulleys to run in. This worked all right unless some careless workman let a block slip under the pulley, which caused a leak and let the water in; this would result in shutting down the gang until the box could be taken out and repaired. At one time the water became so high that one of the gangs became unmanageable, the wrist becoming so hot that it melted everything in contact with it. I tried my best to make it work, but gave up. Others in the mill, who were expert in such work, tried their skill but none succeeded. It was a mystery to all what caused the trouble. I took the time one Sunday to fit a new cast iron shell into the piston strap as perfectly as I could; this I ran with "Babbitt" to the crank pin and fitted everything in good shape. I completed my task about one o'clock in the night. I was very tired and lay down in the sawdust and slept the sleep of the just until Monday morning. We began sawing logs at six A.M. and worked till seven P.M., there were no eight hour day limits at that time. I put the belt on this gang in the morning and it ran cool and nice, never bothering afterwards that I am aware.

We had in the mill then, in the shape of sawing machinery, the muley mill, the reversible circular saw, a gang for slabbing logs, and a live gang for sawing the logs after being slabbed. Our average cut was about 60,000 feet of lumber per day. I worked very hard, often night as well as day until the occupation became irksome. I had charge now of the entire business inside the mill, that is, overseeing the men, running the machinery, piling of lumber, etc. All this made life strenuous. Mr. Jenkins proved to be a clever, active man of business, and he was given charge of the principal transactions of the company. There were not many railroads in Wisconsin at that time, the only one in this section being from Fond du Lac to Horicon. This had been build in order to transport lumber into the prairie districts of the state. The lumber manufactured in Oshkosh for out-put, was hauled into the country by teams or transported on barges to Fond du Lac and shipped from there south on this short line of railroad. Daily steamers ran between Oshkosh and Green Bay; they were stern wheel steamers of good dimensions. A good steamboat also plied between Green Bay and Buffalo.

About the year 1851, James Rouse, second husband of my sister Exania, sold his farm at Lodi Plains, about ten miles south of Ann Arbor, Mich., and went to Minnesota, intending to enter claim on government lands for himself and family. He took a steamer from Galena, Illinois, and went to St. Paul, Minnesota, and from there to St. Anthony Falls, ten miles distant on the Mississippi River. The country west of the river was entirely unsettled then, and open to entry. Instead of making his selection on the site where stands the present city of Minneapolis he went some twelve miles further west, to



Eden Prairie and made his entries there. A year later on a trip up the river he was attacked by cholera, which was prevalent on the Mississippi that summer, and died. His family made little success with this venture of his, although they lived in that country for a number of years. In the fall of 1856, Uncle Bostwick, as he was called, took occasion to reprimand me for something I had done, or had not done, most unjustly I thought, and it made me very angry. I expressed my resentment in no unstinted terms and then and there resigned my position. My brother-in-law remonstrated with me and tried to persuade me to return and resume work; he endeavored to excuse his father and the latter even apologized for what he had said. Mr. Jenkins also urged me to reconsider, but all influences failed to alter my decision and a Mr. Tim Crane was employed to take my place.

Once foot-loose, I decided to go to New York State for another visit. I took the steamer for Green Bay, another from there to Buffalo where I took the train for Utica, going by stage-coach from there to Sherburne. I visited my parents and among friends. My youngest sister, Mrs. Knapp, came east on a visit and when it came time to return to Oshkosh she accompanied me. On the trip we went through Kalamazoo, Michigan.

On reaching Oshkosh, I engaged to put in new machinery in a mill belonging to a Mr. Ira Griffin. It was a sash mill, with two upright saws, designed to cut two boards at a time. I remember that I succeeded in this very well.

During my residence in Oshkosh I made numerous acquaintances, among others, with a Byron Sherry and Ebenezer James, who proved most companionable as we held common views on such subjects as philosophy, religion and politics. A deep friendship grew out of the relation. One day in passing me Sherry slipped a bit of paper into my hand; it contained the following lines:

“Friendship is a name to few confined;  
‘Tis the offspring of a generous mind.  
With genial warmth it fills the breast  
‘Tis better felt than e’er expressed.”

We three were in a similar business condition. The foundry belonging to Sherry had been burned. James had become a bankrupt through a small sawmill venture, and I was practically out of work. Sherry and I were ambitious to become lawyers and later we were able to put this purpose to a touch. How well I remember these young men! Two years ago I went back to Oshkosh and found James living there still. Sherry was living in Kansas City the last I heard of him. He had been very fine looking when a youth and was a great favorite with the girls.

My plan to study law had been intercepted by another visit east. When I returned to Oshkosh later, my mother accompanied me. She came to see her children who were living in Wisconsin.

In the year 1857 the Northwestern Railroad was completed from Fond du Lac to Oshkosh and it offered the citizens of the section an excursion over the road. A committee was appointed to select the guest, and I was among the fortunate, or as it turned out, unfortunate ones who accepted the invitation. My brother-in-law was unable to go, so I took my sister with me. The train consisted of some eight or ten coaches when we left Oshkosh and other cars filled with excursionists were added at Fond du Lac and other towns. It was a very happy crowd, composed of the representative people of this new country. A short distance below Watertown an ox, with the usual stupidity of that animal, jumped on the track ahead of the locomotive and ran between the rails until coming to a small bridge it fell through between the ties. The locomotive ran into it and was derailed, as were also the baggage car and the smoker. The train was a heavy one consisting of fifteen coaches. A car in the middle of the train was telescoped. Some fifteen persons were killed or died of their injuries, as a result of this accident. The principal sufferers were passengers from Oshkosh. My sister was badly injured in the back. A Mr. Philetus Sawyer, who was very bald, sustained some severe scalp sounds. He presented a horrible sight when, all covered with blood, he pulled himself out of the wreck. He was not seriously injured however. Thus our pleasure trip ended in sorrow. The railroad company returned us to our stations as best they could and our arrival was a scene of mourning and lamentations, exceedingly affecting. It was long time before my sister recovered.

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## CHAPTER III

### From Washington to Oshkosh

I was greatly impressed with the public buildings of the city of Washington, and enjoyed my surroundings very much. To my untrained eye the architecture appeared very imposing. The Washington Monument was then in process of erection, having reached a height of about a hundred feet, only a fifth of its present elevation. Wings were being added to the Capitol building, but so far only the basements of these had been completed. But of all the excellent opportunities for interest and instruction no building afforded me so much attraction as the Patent Office. I never tired of examining the content stored within these walls.

In March of the following year I had the pleasure of witnessing the parade incident to the inauguration of President Pierce. In the procession Mr. Fillmore, the retiring president, was the usual guest, and rode in the same carriage with Mr. Pierce. I was within twenty feet of the incoming President when he delivered his inaugural address. This was delivered from a platform erected for the occasion over the front steps of the central building of the Capitol. The speaker was surrounded by the dignitaries of state, and the ambassadors, which added to the impressiveness of the occasion. There was a marked absence of gold lace, decorations and badges, which are so noticeable in a similar scene today. Judge Taney administered the oath of office. Mr. Fillmore, who sat in a chair beside the speaker, would smile appreciatively whenever some emphatic passage was uttered. The entire affair was dignified, impressive and grand, and I shall never forget it.

As time went on I found the climate of Washington to be very trying to my New England blood. The summers were exceedingly sultry, and the long hot days had a bad effect upon me. One wilting day I went to the second or third floor of the store building and lay down on a pile of cotton goods. The proprietor, probably missing me, came and woke me with a sharp reprimand and the next day I was discharged. This was a hard blow to my sense of justice, because I had tried to be attentive to my duties and in every way to do the best I could.

To find oneself in a strange city, a long way from home, without employment, and with very little money, is a strain upon the stoutest heart. I met help, however, a second time from my friend, Moses Kinne. He secured another situation for me in a short time, in a store combining dry goods and shoes. It was situated at Seventh Street, about a mile north of Pennsylvania Avenue. I have been in the same locality several times in late years, but find nothing to remind me of the old store, which had been located under Dorsey's Hotel. This section of the city was known as "The Northern Liberties," for what reason I never learned.

Near the store was a fire engine house. The engine was a double-decker with the formidable name, "Northern Liberties." The department was manned by volunteers, who served without pay. I was awakened one night by loud clanging of the fire bells. I hurried out of bed and into my clothes and ran to the engine house, arriving in advance of the company. A few of us manned the ropes, and hauling the engine out of the house, started for the fire. I was much excited and seemed to fly rather than run, as the men rushed the engine at a tremendous rate of speed. And thus I witnessed my first fire, although, having seen some vast conflagrations since, as I now recollect the fire of that night, it did not amount to much.

In our business life my new employer gave his clerks to understand that they must not let a customer leave the store without buying something. If we did he would demand of us an explanation. Also we were instructed to ask more for each article that we expected to get, but the buyer also knew that he did not have to pay the price first asked for the goods, but worst of all, we were not expected to be truthful in our statements. In a great many ways this trade was very distasteful to me, so after a time, I made up my mind that if I had to lie, I would lie for my own benefit rather than another man's. I resigned my position in the store and returned to the State of New York.

First I spent some time in visiting my sister, who lived in the town of Sherburne, on a stream called Handsome Brook. I went next to Painted Post, where my brother, Lafayette, lived. He was running a sawmill some distance below Painted Post. Under his instructions I began running the boiler and engine. It was my first experience with steam, and I found it very interesting. But I was not to be here long. My brother received a letter from a man in Corning, by the name of R. E. Robinson. He styled himself "The Regulator," and stated that he expected to build a planing mill and start a sash, blind and door factory on a large scale. He added that my brother had been recommended to him as a competent man to have charge of the undertaking. I urged my brother to give up his present contract and accept the position offered. Eventually he did so, and together we went to Corning.

Mr. Robinson owned a large cracker factory, which occupied the ground floor. He proposed to put in the sash and door machinery over the bakery and to add the planing mill at one side. My brother was an expert mechanic and understood his business thoroughly. When the machinery had been put in position my brother put me at work on first one machine and then another until I could operate all the machines in the factory. As far as we two were concerned, everything seemed propitious; when suddenly one night we were awakened by an alarm of fire. Going to see what it was, for the flames lighted up the whole heavens, we discovered the planing mill, the factory and bakery in one grand conflagration – and my brother and I out of a job.

The "Regulator" commenced rebuilding his factory at once, but owing to some dissatisfaction on the part of my brother, we concluded to leave Corning and go to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Arriving there, we found employment with an old acquaintance of Lafayette's, a foreman in the erection of a large paper mill at Geddesburg, on the Huron River, between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. I worked on this mill for something over a year.

Charles W. Vail had a wide reputation for his skill, it being held that he was able to erect the best mill frame of any one in the State of Michigan. The one built while we were with him was the best I have every seen before or since. It was made from white oak timber, hewn from the log; the basement story was framed from 14 inch square timber and so thick and massive that when it was finished it was impossible to see through when looking from one corner of the building to another.

The foundation was made by bedding heavy timbers in the river channel and covering them with four-inch planks. Upon this foundation the mill was erected. The building was sided up and finished with white wood, and presented a fine appearance when completed. I found Mr. Vail to be very intelligent, a good talker and singer; altogether a very interesting man. After I had been working a short time at framing Mr. Vail made me his personal assistant. I was called upon to help him when he took his measurements, or other occasions where he needed aid. This was very instructive to me, and I fully appreciated the friendliness which this employer showed me. All the timbers used for the mill were first hauled to a level piece of ground several hundred feet from the mill site and framed for erection. When the time came to raise the frame of the mill Mr. Vail put me in charge of the work of moving all this timber from where it lay on the ground over to the mill site. When a certain piece would be wanted he would give me the number of it, and I would see that it was placed where it was needed. These timbers were moved on rollers and I was given the superintendence of such men as were necessary for the purpose. I think I was engaged only about a month in this service, but by this time I had become so expert that I could frame as well and as quickly as any man on the job. I was about twenty years old at this time, and had been in this employment about six months.

Before the building was quite finished Robert Ailes, the millwright, came to oversee the putting in of the machinery. I asked if I might work with him and learn the millwright's trade. I received a warm recommendation from Mr. Vail, and Ailes took me into his employ.

It was his method to work three men in a gang, and to put one of the three in charge of the work entrusted to them. This was before the days of turned shafting and bored pulleys and gears. The shafting was six-sided cast iron and the eyes of the pulleys and gears the same shape, and these were fitted to the shafts by iron wedges. It required very, very skillful workmanship to fit these keys or wedges with a cold chisel and file so that they were true upon the shaft. After a time I became skillful in this line, and after some months' practice I gave up working as a "jour." After that, during many years of labor as a millwright I served as a "boss." Mr. Ailes eventually gave me some of the most difficult work to be done on the mill, for he had confidence in my ability to do whatever task he set me to accomplish.

At length the machines came and were set in place, and the mill started in the making of printing-paper from rags. A man by the name of Barnes was put in charge of the paper making. He came from one of the New England states and was experienced in this business. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and being well disposed towards me, often gave me friendly advice. One day he asked it if was true that I was

about to marry a certain young lady, and I acknowledged the possibility. She was the daughter of a wealthy farmer and mill owner, who was also a member of the Michigan Legislature. This man was of small stature and had married a wife smaller than himself. They had two children, the young lady in question and a boy, both very small. Mr. Barnes asked if I had considered the size my children would probably be should I marry one so under-sized. He dwelt upon the duty a man owes to his descendants to give them good proportions, good mental powers and bodily vigor; he said that an intelligent man should exercise at least as much judgment in behalf of his own children as he would for the lower animals he might raise. I had never before thought on this subject, but his conversation led me to its careful consideration, with the result that I severed my connection with the young lady as soon as I could honorably do so.

My brother, before going back to New York state, had introduced me to a man by the name of Comstock. He was a connection of the family, by marriage, his brother being the husband of my eldest sister. Mr. Comstock lived about six miles south of Ypsilanti. After the paper mill had been completed I went out to visit him. While there I contracted to run a little sawmill, which he owned. It was a water mill and the dam holding the water, that operated the machinery, was made of clay. Minks or rats of other rodents were very destructive, digging through such dams, and the water running into such holes, in time so increased the size of the fissure as to permit all the water in the dam to run out, unless the hole was discovered early and plugged up. Annoyances of this nature occasionally suspended other work. As I recollect, this mill had but one saw and I operated it without any helper.

In this portion of the state of Michigan the soil was very rich, being a deep, black muck, extending over a large section of the country. It was covered with the finest hardwood timber I have ever seen. This timber was all cut and burned by settlers that they might secure clearings to cultivate. I am certain that I saw land there that would cut twenty thousand feet of white oak to the acre, and I estimate that this timber would be worth today from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per acre.

Mr. Comstock owned quite a quantity of whitewood timber, the logs were, some of them, five or six feet in diameter and as free from defects and knots as a cake of tallow, and they were of about the same color as tallow.

While running the sawmill for Mr. Comstock I contracted with him to erect a horse barn. I sawed out the materials in the mill and made a draft myself for the frame. I then laid out the timbers for framing by the system known as the square rule. Up to this time two methods were used in laying out the timbers. One was called, I believe, the fit and try; by this system the pieces were put together on supports, side by side, and the measurement of one made the measure for the rest. This method was used by persons untrained in the use of figures. The other way consisted in finding all the lengths by means of a ten-foot pole, and this system was called square rule.

I was obliged to plane by hand all the lumber intended for covering the barn, and for door and window frames, etc. It was my first experience in erecting a building. I made some

mistakes, but none were serious. One may conclude that it was very substantial for a horse barn, from the fact that the frame was made of ten-inch square timbers. The covering was of whitewood; after the building was completed it was painted white, and presented a fine appearance. Mr. Comstock was much pleased with the results.

It was while this barn was in process of construction that I took a vacation and made a trip back to New York state to visit my parents and former home. I spent a few weeks there, then returned to Michigan and completed the barn. My brother, Lafayette, came west with me. Mr. Comstock and he went out into the vicinity of Newaygo, Michigan, and bought some school lands.

About this time my youngest sister, with her husband, came to see me. They were passing through Michigan on their way to Wisconsin. It seems that my sister had made an agreement with her husband, that she would consent to his selling his farm in Sherburne and go with him to Wisconsin, on condition that when settled he would erect a sash, door and blind factory and take me in as partner. He was to allow me a one-third interest. They wished me to go with them to Wisconsin at once, but my contract with Mr. Comstock would not permit, and it was arranged that I should follow them some weeks later. But in this matter events took a turn. After completing my engagement with Mr. Comstock I started on my journey to Wisconsin. I proceeded as far as Kalamazoo, and stopping there, visited my cousin, Edward Phetteplace, son of my mother's sister, Submit. In the years gone by he had lived in Sherburne and had attended the academy there. When a young man, attracted by the stories of western adventure, he had gone overland to California. On this trip he was elected the captain of the company with which he was traveling. When he returned to Sherburne he was regarded as an "Argonaut" of untold wealth. How much he really possessed he had wit enough to conceal, nevertheless he bought the old Kalamazoo House Hotel and rebuilt it with brick. During this visit these relatives used every persuasion to have me remain in Kalamazoo until my sister and husband should return from Wisconsin, their purpose being to induce them to settle here, instead of going to Wisconsin. I did not remain idle long. I had my kit of tools with me and soon found employment in repairing a flour mill, situated near the railroad depot of the town. While I remained on this undertaking I worked alone.

When I had finished this task, the head millwright [I forgot his name] put me in as assistant to a man engaged to erect a smut-mill some miles distant. This fellow proved to be a carpenter, rather than a millwright and did not properly understand the business required. He wasted two or three days, accomplishing little or nothing. He became disheartened and made up his mind that he could not succeed in his attempt. I let him try until he was thoroughly discouraged, then I told him that if he would let me take charge, and would do as I told him, that we could put up the machinery. To this he gladly consented. The very first day I had the elevators laid out through five stories, and the machinery in place. The boss millwright was very much pleased with my success, and wanted to know if I would take charge of some work for a Mr. Ransom, brother of the Governor of the state of Michigan. He owned a mill which was to have the old machinery taken down-and-out and new machinery made and erected in its place. This was entirely new work for me, but I felt I would be equal to the occasion and would learn a new kind

of work much in demand at that time throughout all the northwest. There were six millwrights who were to work under my direction; some of them had ten or twelve years' experience on flouring mills. I took great pride and pleasure in this piece of work. The plans were draught out and furnished me, and the work ran splendidly. I took some of the most difficult parts of the work to do myself, doing much with my own hands; especially the bolt chest. The boss millwright came occasionally to see how I was getting along. On one occasion he directed me to cut the bearings in the bridge trees of the bolt chest, a certain size. I objected for the reason that the journals would not fit the bearings because they would not all be turned one size. He stated that he would have the journals turned to the size named. So under protest I cut them as he required. All this time there was trouble brewing between the boss millwright and the men under my control; gradually one after another left, stating their grievances to me. I was feeling dissatisfied with the outlook when my sister and her husband arrived from Wisconsin. They assured me that everything was working well in their affairs at Oshkosh, and they again urged me to go there. One day I discovered a young fellow at work re-cutting the bearings in the bolt chest, he was the one who had assisted me when I was erecting the smut-mill. I went at once to the boss millwright and resigned my position. He asked the cause and I told him that I thought it time for me to leave, when another man had to do my work over. He remonstrated with me, saying that it was a mistake and that I might do the work, but I did not like him anyway so I insisted that an order be given for my wages. I then went to Kalamazoo and presented the order to Mr. Ransom, who asked me what the trouble was, saying that he would give me charge of everything if I would go back and complete the work. I thanked him for his confidence in my skill, but declined his offer as I was anxious to go to Wisconsin.

I was taken ill a short time after this, a most distressing pain attacked my back and head. A doctor was called and I was told that I have fever and ague. I suffered tremendously, and sickness being a new experience, I did not bear it with patience. During this time my cousin's wife served as my nurse, and I was given a course of the usual remedies; these proved helpful, and I recovered from the attack in two or three weeks, when I proceeded on the journey west.

The railroad was completed at that time to Lake Michigan, to a place called New Buffalo, if I remember correctly. There I took a steamer for Chicago. We arrived in the morning, going ashore near the place of the present steamboat landing. This was in the fall of the year 1855. Chicago was at the time a rambling city, built mostly of wooden houses. It had a population of about sixty thousand. I took a bus for the Garden City Hotel; such it was called in that day. It was located on Market Street, between Washington and Madison Streets. It recurs to me as a two story building of wood, having a veranda at the east side. I found it a very fair hotel, although the immediate neighborhood was not built up. There must have been a rainy spell before I arrived as I have an impression of streets that were very bad and unsightly. There were no paved streets that I recollect. Most of the streets were laid with three inch plank in the center, and in many places these were pressed down under the mud. The more important buildings were being raised, six or eight feet by means of jack screws. It was tiresome work traveling over the side walks as they were uneven and on many different levels. The indications were few that this was to be a great



metropolis. Two or three railroads were projected, of which the Chicago and Galena was the most prominent.

I stayed in the city but a day or two and then took a steamer for Milwaukee and Sheboygan. At the latter place I took a stage coach for Fond du Lac. The following morning I boarded a steamer for Oshkosh, which for some time had been the goal of my ambitions. I think that the name of the steamer was Peytona, but I am not certain. It was a fine boat for those days, and it was well loaded with home seekers, coming to settle up the new state of Wisconsin.

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## CHAPTER II

### Youthful Experiences

I was born in July, 1833. When I was about ten years old, my father constructed a threshing machine of his own invention, in the basement of the barn. He erected an upright wood shaft, the lower end of which was placed in a block of wood buried in the earth. The other end was fastened to the timbers of the barn. To the upper end of this shaft he attached a beveled wheel upon which was fastened cast iron cogs. Below this he inserted a strong pole for a sweep, to which a team of horses could be attached and driven around the shaft. A pulley was fastened to the pinion of this beveled wheel, from which a belt ran to the threshing cylinder situated on the floor of the barn. When I was a schoolboy, we threshed oats with this machine on alternate Saturdays, it being the custom in our district to dismiss school every other Saturday for the whole day instead of the half day usually allowed at the end of the week. When threshing we would stow away in a mow at the side of the barn floor, enough straw to supply the cattle until the fortnight came again.

When playing, I often pushed the sweep of this machine and took keen delight in seeing how fast I could make the pulley, which ran the cylinder, revolve. One day I had a visitor, and together we pushed the sweep to see how fast we could make it turn. During our play the belt fell off and dropped between the cogs. This cut it in pieces. I did not emulate G. Washington by confessing what I had done; instead I hung the belt out of sight where it stayed until we were ready to start again the next winter. When that occasion arrived and I was ordered to make ready the horses, I realized that trouble was brewing. My premonition proved correct. When father discovered the condition of the belt, he “hollered” for me evidently knowing the guilty part. I went onto the barn floor without a word. Father took a piece of board, seized me with his left hand and paddled me well with his right. He did not thresh oats that day – he threshed the boy.

I remember going swimming one Sunday in Gorton’s mill-pond, which was about two miles from where we lived. While wading about I cut my big toe nearly off, on what I supposed was an old axe in the water. I wrapped my foot as well as I could and hurried home. There I was informed that I had been hurt because I was breaking the Sabbath. I accepted the judgment, for I knew no better then.

An incident occurs to me in regard to the fanning mill. It was somewhat like the affair with the threshing machine, as there was a boy visitor, this time a little nephew, Edgar Comstock, and like the other occasion we turned the crank as fast as we could in order to see how much noise it made. Edgar did not appear to get tired, but I finally told him that he must stop. When he refused I went and pushed him from the machine, whereupon he began to cry and ran in to complain to his mother. I remained in the barn for I knew that when I went in there would be trouble for Emory. At last hunger drove me in. Dinner was just over. My father asked me what I had been doing to Edgar and I replies: “He sassed me and I bunged him.” This expression clung to me until I was grown and had left home.

Whenever I had trouble with any one I would hear repeated: "He sassed me and I bunged him." I was ever a sturdy fighter.

We had a field of very good land, about four acres, which lay just south of the house. I recall that one year on that land we raised twelve hundred bushels of potatoes. These were mostly fed to the hogs and cattle, although we put about a hundred bushels in the cellar for winter use. The cellar was large extending under the whole house, probably 30 x 40 feet and it did not freeze in winter.

Every spring we filled a hogshead with cakes of maple sugar; three or four hundred pounds, as we had some two or three hundred maple trees. When we gathered the sap I would make a sled, put a tongue on it, and yoke some steers to draw the sled around, collecting the sap and hauling it to the kettles, where it was boiled down into sugar or syrup. My father bought what was called "muscovado" sugar for table use, in addition to this supply of maple sugar and syrup. Every summer we raised sufficient buckwheat for the winter's supply of griddle cakes. As children we considered them a real treat when eaten with maple syrup.

We kept from twenty to forty cows, and made large quantities of butter and cheese. I remember the price of butter as being from 13 to 15 cents a pound, while cheese brought about 6 cents.

My mother, being short of girls, pressed me early into service. I assisted in making butter and cheese, and about the house. Eventually I became so handy that I could cook and sew as well as look after the butter and cheese, and in time could do all things in the domestic line fairly well.

My father was somewhat of an Abolitionist then, and made an impression on me when several of the townsmen appeared at our house one day and urged father to run for supervisor on the Abolitionist ticket. After some discussion my father consented. As a result of the election I believe he received nine votes in the town.

It was my custom to go every two or three months and bring a cousin to our house for a visit. A sister of my mother's had lost her husband, who had died leaving his family in poor circumstances. Her daughter worked in a cotton mill in New Berlin. She was very glad to come to us as our place was about the only home she had ever known. This girl met with great extremes of fortune. It came about that she went to Florida as a woman overseer of girls in a small cotton factory near Milton. She eventually married the owner of the mill, a man said to be worth more than a million and a half dollars. A few years later she came north and visited at my father's, bringing with her a slave girl as nurse for her infant daughter. My father made it most uncomfortable for every one concerned by insisting that the colored girl should sit at the table and eat with the rest of us. The nurse, however, from southern training as to what was proper behavior, did not dare to eat at the table with white people. One day my father took the girl aside and told her that she need not go back into slavery. As she had been brought into a free state by the voluntary act of her owners she could not be forced to go back. He offered to aid her and send her to

Canada. Her response was: “Good, lordy, Mistah Skinner, I wouldn’t stay up hear fo’ yo’ whole fahm.”

Living at a neighbor’s home was a boy by the name of Charles Gilfillan, who did chores for his board while attending district school. He was a very bright pupil, afterwards attending the academy at Sherburne, where he attracted considerable attention. He experienced religion, was then taken up by the Presbyterian Society, and sent to a Theological Seminary that he might prepare for the ministry. I did not hear anything further concerning him for many years; but eventually learned that he had forsaken church orders and had gone to St. Paul. He was very successful there, and visiting him years after, I found him the owner of the water works of that city and worth half a million dollars. One of his brothers, James Gilfillan, also became prominent. He was a lawyer, and a Register of the U.S. Treasury.

Another lad that I knew then recurs to me with interest. His name was Ezra Huntley, and he lived most unhappily with his step-mother. This boy caused considerable excitement, in that quiet neighborhood by disappearing suddenly from his home. A short time after, we heard that he had gone to New Bedford, and enlisted on a whaling ship bound for the Behring Sea. He was gone two or three years and when he returned, was received as a hero by the boys.

My father’s family was quite large at this time, usually consisting of a dozen members. Being the youngest I was naturally the butt of the older brothers and sisters who enjoyed teasing me until I would become angry. My Methodist parents had named me after two Methodist bishops and in consequence I was nicknamed “Bishop,” and many the quarrels which the older children provoked on this subject. Probably this had its influence in developing the good nature, for which I maintain such a high reputation!

It was customary for the lads from the farms who wished a more extended education than the district school afforded, to attend the academies of some of the nearby towns. These schools corresponded in opportunity to the present high school. I was possessed with an ambition of this kind and my father made arrangements for me to board with the family of a Mr. Whitford who kept a grocery in this town. Near the Episcopal Church in the village of Sherburne was located the two-story frame building known as the Sherburne Academy. I was sixteen years old when I entered this school and my course continued for two winters. The more advanced pupils occupied the second story which was rather a large room. The seats were made to accommodate two pupils, one end of each seat being against the wall and the other opening into the schoolroom. I occupied a seat with Homer Newton, both winters; he was a very pleasant boy and an excellent scholar. I used to envy him the ease with which he learned his lessons. Apparently to commit anything he had but to read it once.

Directly in front of us sat two girls, one about fourteen and the other sixteen years old. The elder was bright, witty and good natured; she lived in the same home with Homer, as she was being educated by his parents. I did not see her for many years after we left school, but twenty years later I met her accidentally in Michigan. She was married and a

mother. The other girl was a slim little miss of rare beauty, with brown hair, beautiful blue eyes and rosy lips. To my boyish fancy she was very fascinating. I cannot say that these girls made me more studious but certainly they made the time pass more pleasantly.

Of the boys attending school about half were sons of farmers, living in the valley. Between the country lads and the boys of the village a little friction became apparent which gradually grew into a marked division. As was customary in those days, the students formed a debating society, of which the lads from the country became the ruling spirit. By permission of the principal, we held our meetings by candle light in the school room. One of our by-laws prohibited the presence of any student not a member of the club this proved unsatisfactory to some of the rougher village boys. One night when we were holding a debate, these disturbers broke into the room, through some pre-arranged plan for entrance, giving the club an uninvited and unwelcome audience. I had been elected president, and on motion I adjourned the meeting. We turned out the lights and went home, to the evident dissatisfaction of the intruders. Time passed on until one day in March, when an election was held for the purpose of choosing village officers. On the evening of that day the proper officers met, in the in the basement of the Episcopal Church, to count the votes and determine who was elected. I boarded at Mr. Whitford's, not far from the church, and I thought I would go over and see how the election had resulted. After satisfying my curiosity on that point I started for home. It was quite dark in the church yard, and three or four boys followed me out of the basement of the church and attacked me. Believing safety to be the better part of valor, I ran away.

Some boys in certain ages are like the male members of some quadrupeds. If a stranger of their kind appears among them they are not content until they find out which is master.

The next afternoon, at recess, I recognized one of the boys who had attacked me the night before. He was larger than I, but I caught hold of him, threw him down and began choking him, the other country boys standing around to see fair play. The bell rang for school, but I was too "busy" to pay proper attention to the summons until the head teacher appeared on the balcony and ordered me to stop. Out fight was ended for that time by the appearance of the principal, but this was not to the satisfaction of the other boy. He announced that he would have another trial at the first opportunity. After school that day a large boy named Delos Luther, who came from the town of Pharsalia, accompanied me to my boarding house. There stood my enemy attended by several of his chums, ready for another encounter. He attacked me and I grappled with him, while Luther kept the other boys from interfering. I soon had my enemy down, and I pummeled him well until he cried enough. This ended our fighting, although his friends tried to frighten me by saying that this boy's father intended to have me arrested for assault and battery. Sometime after that I met this gentleman on the street. He accosted me pleasantly and jocosely remarked that I had given his son, Peter, what he should have done himself – a good threshing.

Public travel in those days was by means of the stage coach, or by canal-packet, drawn by three horses, and which achieved a speed of perhaps six miles an hour. I recollect leaving home when about sixteen to visit a sister living in Lodi Plains, south of Ann Arbor, in the

State of Michigan. I was taken to Utica, a distance of about thirty miles. There I took the railroad for Syracuse and went to Auburn, next to Rochester, then on to Buffalo. Beginning at Albany, the first road ran to Schenectady, the next from there to Utica, the third from Utica to Syracuse, the fourth from Syracuse to Auburn, the fifth from Auburn to Rochester and the sixth from Rochester to Buffalo. These were afterwards combined and today form the New York Central. This consolidation was effected by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr., under charter from the state.

From Buffalo I took passage in a steamer of good dimensions to Detroit. A railroad was being built from Detroit westward towards Lake Michigan, but at the time did not extend far beyond Ann Arbor. I recollect several kinds of rails used on this road. Some portions had a flat rail, about two and a half inches wide by three-quarters thick, laid on stringers of wood and spiked down. The running of cars over such rails tended to curve the ends upward, and to draw the spikes from the wooden stringer. When the bend was sufficient to raise the rails over the wheel it was called a snakehead. It frequently happened that the iron pierced the bottom of the advancing car, sometimes even wounding and killing passengers. Other divisions of the road used rails of the shape on the modern "T" rail, divided in two parts, these bolted together to form a continuous rail. Another kind in use was the "I" pattern, that is, after the fashion of the capital letter "I." Many were the experiments made in devising a rail that would be durable and safe.

I spent several months in the family of my sister. In returning home I left Michigan at Detroit on the steamer "Atlantic," one of the side-wheelers on Lake Erie at that time. On the following trip this boat was lost with all on board and nothing was ever heard of her from that day to this.

Reaching the age when the youth becomes gallant, I invited the sister of a boy friend to go with me to the spelling school. My father let me take a horse named "Old Judge," and we started away in the cutter for a good time. The drifts were heavy, and in a certain bad place the horse floundered, fell and broke one of the thills of the cutter. What a time I had righting the old horse, turning the cutter around, and with a patched thill, restoring my charge to her mother's arms. I expected to be well scolded at home for breaking the cutter, but to my surprise my father did not utter a word of reproof.

When I was sixteen years old I started into field work, where I took my place in the row as a man. The summers were devoted to putting in the crops, tilling and harvesting them. This required steady work from daylight till dark. There were not ten-hour rules in those days. I have heard my father say that for years he worked sixteen hours a day in the summer season. In the winter people allowed themselves more time for visiting and recreation.

My brother, Zara, and I were living on the old home farm when I was sixteen. We tried working the farm together, but we disagreed about many things. There was considerable friction between us until my brother decided to leave and I was left to run the farm by myself. I was the only one of the children left at home with my parents, my brothers and sisters having married or settled on places of their own. The responsibility then fell upon

me, as my father was retired from active management some years before. I raised or bought all that was necessary for the farm or the family, and sold what was marketable. It was in this experience, probably, that I gained early knowledge of business methods. There were no neighbors within half a mile, so I had small opportunity to mingle with others, neither did I have time for fishing or hunting. I recollect trying to shoot some squirrels that thronged the cherry trees with an old shotgun which had to be touched off in the pan by means of a live coal. Of course, I did not hit a live squirrel very often. I occasionally shot a woodchuck, but they were very shy. Sometime I borrowed a rifle, intending to hunt on Sunday, but my mother kept such close watch on my actions that I found it difficult to accomplish my purpose without being caught and censured.

It was while I had charge of my father's farm and business that on a certain Saturday morning a neighbor, Mr. Kingsbury, rode up to my father's house. It was a sunny morning after a rainy spell. There was a large side hill in front of the house which had been sowed to oats. These had been harvested and stood in shocks. Mr. K., looking at the hill, remarked to my father that he should have those oats put in the barn. My father replied that such was his wish, but that I was so contrary I wouldn't do it. I turned to him and said: "Do you want those oats put in the barn?" He replied that he did. I said that it should be done at once, and immediately set two teams at work. There was a young man among the field hands who thought he could do more work if he had a little whiskey to stimulate him; so with the knowledge of some of the other help, I went to town and bought a jug of whiskey and secreted it in the barn. We worked most strenuously all day, and partook rather liberally from the jug. When it came evening, after the cows had been milked, it was proposed that we go down to the river to fish. I objected to the teams being used, but said that I would arrange with a neighbor to take us down. This plan proved satisfactory, and while the man was hitching up his horses we boys lay on the grass in the front yard. We had brought some of the contents of the jug with us to fortify us in the exertions of fishing, and I had put a small bottle in my pocket. In boy nonsense, as I lay on my back I put this bottle to my mouth and let the entire contents run down my throat.

I can remember little after riding half a mile. After that all is oblivion until three o'clock the next morning; the boys were then having a serious time to arouse me sufficiently to get me home.

We succeeded in reaching our house without our return being known. We went to sleep in the hay mow of our horse barn and were dead to the world until awakened by hearing my father drive the cows out of the yard into the pasture. Owing to our absence he and the hired girl had been obliged to milk forty cows.

All that day I felt weak and miserable. Fortunately it was Sunday, and for once I kept the day in rest and quiet.

This escapade, however, resulted in serious changes in my future life. My parents did not learn the story until the following winter, when it was carried to them by mischief-mongers, and the end of the affair was that I left home, never to return, except as a visitor. I had managed the business of the farm for two years with excellent success, and I

was not afraid to face the world for myself. I had a schoolmate friend living in Washington, D.C., who was a clerk in a dry goods store. I wrote to him, asking that he find me employment. In a short time he wrote to me to come at once. An older brother was brought home to take my place on the farm, the affairs were settled, and I turned my face to new fortunes.

The days of boyhood and youth were over.

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Returning to this valley a year or two ago, and visiting the old village, I faced the melancholy fact that the building in which had flourished the academy sixty years ago had entirely disappeared, and not a reminder of it was to be seen. The church was still there, looking much the same as in former days. At the rear of the church, in the little cemetery, was the grave of one of my grandfathers, Stephen Skinner, who married Mary Foote, a lineal descendant of nine successive Nathaniel Footes.

Sherburne, "loveliest village of the plain," has also changed since the time of which I have been writing. The banks of the canal have been leveled and the easy-going packets have been superseded by railroad cars. A beautiful monument has been erected to the memory of the soldiers who perished in the Civil War; its location is by the side of the Congregational Church, and at the intersection of the two principal streets of the village. Among the names of the heroes chronicled on the monument are several of those related to me, and with whom I passed my childhood. A bank has been established and a few houses of a better and more modern style of architecture have been built. But most of the people whom I knew have gone to "that bourne from whence no traveler returns," and I realize that in a few years I shall follow them.

The village itself, however, is the same placid home of a contented people, practically undisturbed by the ambitions or avarice of the outside world.

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# REMININCENCES OF EMORY FISKE SKINNER

## Chapter 1

### The Chenango Valley of Early Days

South of the Mohawk River is a beautiful strip of country known as the Chenango Valley. About the commencement of the nineteenth century this valley was in a primeval condition, as far as the work of civilized man was concerned. It was covered with a vigorous growth of timber, comprising every species of tree indigenous to the state. At the close of the revolutionary war it was an unbroken wilderness.

The men of that day were like the men of this, and speculators schemed to obtain large tracts of land for the purpose of selling it at a profit to the incoming settlers. These were mostly immigrants from the New England states, going west to grow up with the country, who wished to obtain farms for themselves; as later I have seen them settling in the states of Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, etc.

This valley is watered by a stream known as the Chenango River. As the settlers have denuded the valley of its timber, the stream has decreased in width and depth, so that now in the drought of the summer it is little more than a large brook.

The early settlers of the valley had but a few places where they could market their crops. The usual way was to haul such produce as they had to dispose of over the rough, rugged and hilly roads to Albany, more than a hundred miles distant. Afterward the Chenango Canal was built from Utica to Binghamton, and this gave the farmers an outlet for their surplus produce, as it connected with the Erie Canal and Hudson River, giving them connections with New York City.

Before the canal was built through Chenango Valley many efforts were made to transport produce from there by means of covered flat-boats, which were called "arks;" these were floated down the Chenango River, then down to the Susquehanna River while the two streams were swollen by freshets, to markets on the Chesapeake Bay. These trips were fraught with much danger, and often resulted in the loss both of the boat and its cargo. In fact the matter of transportation was a most difficult one; the canal, however, met well the necessities of that section.

The land, as I have said, was covered with a heavy growth of timber, consisting of beech, birch, maple, hemlock, chestnut, some pine and other trees too numerous to mention. When I was a boy the settlement of the country had been progressing for about forty years. There were two lakes or ponds in the vicinity of where I lived, situated on the tops of high hills; one of them known as Jackson Pond and the other as Madison Pond. When I was a lad we visited these places for the purpose of fishing or bathing, in summer time, and in the winter to skate or fish through the ice. The name Madison Pond has recently been changed to Chenango Lake, and the place has become a summer resort.

From the hills east of the village of Sherburne, flows a stream called the Mad Brook. About a mile from the village on this stream there is a waterfall, at the foot of which are a couple of sulfur springs flowing out of the rocks. To my boyish fancy this waterfall was a grand affair, but on my last visit to the village I found the water of the stream nearly exhausted. On the banks of the falls was built a summer hotel, a very pleasant resort for visitors during the season.

In my boyhood days, it was necessary for my father to raise most of the provisions which would be used by the family; the wheat, corn, rye and buckwheat being taken to the mill, six miles distant, to be ground into flour and meal. He had sheep and cows, as well as horses for driving, riding and tilling the farm; each spring the sugar for the ensuing year would be made from the sap of sugar maples, and in the fall came the killing, curing and packing of several barrels of beef and pork. A quantity of cider was also turned, for use as vinegar. Large bins were filled with potatoes, vegetables and apples and stored in the cellar. The hides of the cattle killed, were taken to the tannery to be made into leather for boots for the family and the wool went to the carding mill where it was made into rolls and spun into cloth, for the use of home members. Every fall a tailoress came to make the children's clothes from the cloth which had been woven. The home of that day was a general manufactory for the necessities of its inmates. The farmer needed to buy only tea, coffee, salt and the better clothes for his family.

My father and mother made a trip to Connecticut, when I was a small boy, with the purpose of visiting some relatives. I remember they went as far as Canastota in a lumber wagon. From there they took the packet on the Erie Canal for New York City, and from thence by sailboat to East Haddam, Connecticut. It was from this same Colchester County, from a place called Westchester that my father had emigrated to live in Central New York. Previous to this his eldest brother, Stephen, had moved to Sherburne, N.Y., to ply his trade as carpenter, there being many houses to be built for the incoming settlers. My father joined him in order to learn and follow the same trade, and it was but two years later that my grandfather sold out in Westchester and came to Sherburne also. Shortly after he bought a tract of land for himself and his sons and it was on a portion of this land that my father lived most of his life. At the time of my grandfather's purchase the method since adopted by the United States government for surveying wild lands was not then in vogue. Lands were then surveyed in lots containing two hundred and fifty acres. My grandfather bought two of these lots.

With the hope of escaping fever and ague, then prevalent in most new countries, high ground was preferred for the homes. It was for this reason that my grandfather selected some of his lands on top of a high hill. In the matter of laying out roads in those days, the custom seems to have been to follow as direct a course as possible, up hill and down. Settlers did not seem to realize that it was no farther around an apple than over it.

At the time my grandfather settled in Sherburne, all imports had to be brought from Albany, a distance of about one hundred miles, and hauled by teams traveling through the woods, over miserable and hilly roads. I remember hearing my father tell that he walked from his home in Connecticut to Sherburne carrying his broadaxe, square and his clothing in a

bag; on his shoulder. He stopped at taverns and settlers' homes, as he might find them, for lodging and meals. It is difficult for us to realize the hardships to which the early settlers were subjected. There were only such conveniences as could be constructed on the spot of the settlement. My father had an advantage over many settlers, in being a carpenter, thus able to plan and make home comforts which many could not do.

In spite of the great variety of trees, in that part of the country, their usefulness was limited, owing to the lack of saw mill to cut them into lumber. Carpenters' tools at that time were made by the blacksmith, as were also iron nails; cut nails were unknown. Houses were at that time built of small logs. The floors were made by splitting straight grained trees in the middle, laying with the split side up, then making all as smooth as possible with an adz. The edges were made even by matching and straightening. These half logs were called "puncheons."

At the time of which I write, it was necessary to go some thirty miles with the wheat of the farmer to have it made into flour. There was very little that the settler could raise for selling. The only article he could turn into cash was potash, manufactured from wood ashes. There were no dentists in that locality. If a tooth needed to be extracted, a string was tied around it with which to jerk it out. I have heard my mother tell of suffering of this kind which she endured, that made my heart ache.

At this time the curse of the Indians had been removed from this locality, though a few years earlier this district had been the haunt of Leather Stocking and Indian tribes with which Fennimore Cooper has made us familiar. The conditions of these early days in the Chenango Valley I repeat from family narratives, from as far back as I can remember, my father had a lucrative farm, well stocked with cattle and horses, and a good farm house provided with excellent conveniences for that period in which we lived. He possessed good horses, light wagons, and there were fairly good roads for reaching town and visiting neighbors.

As a boy it was my duty to have the cows in the milking yard by six o'clock in the morning. In the summer time I made these excursions in bare feet. I had to go about half a mile for the cows, and drive them up to the house; so it is plain that I had to get up pretty early in the morning. I recollect that sometimes I had stone bruises on my feet, and these are very painful and unpleasant things to endure, but luckily boys are optimistic and make light of such sufferings.

I recollect hearing my father tell of the manner in which he tided his stock over the long hard winters, while he was clearing off the timber and getting his farm ready for cultivation. He could raise no hay or grain until this was done, so he was obliged to keep his cattle alive by what he called browsing them. This was done in the following manner. He would go to a piece of woodland which he designed clearing, and would cut down each morning, some of the birch, beech and maple trees, and the cattle would eat the tender green twigs of the young branches. This was all that he had to feed them, that they might give milk for the children of the family. This was but one of the many hardships which the earlier settler endured during those early pioneer days until he could get part of

his land cleared so that he might raise hay, grain and vegetables upon it, in order to feed his family and his stock.

I reckon people of that day had some “sand” and grit in their characters, which provided them with endurance to meet such hardships.

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## PREFACE

The thought of writing these memoirs was suggested to me by a gentleman, who was a newspaper writer, whom I met in Pensacola several years ago. I was having a pleasant conversation with him in which I related some of the incidents of my life, when he said: "Mr. Skinner, you ought to write a book giving the events of your life; I am sure it would be very interesting." I gave the suggestion no thought until after I was paralyzed. In that condition I could do little but read and talk; often I found the time hanging heavily upon me. After some experimenting I found that the dictating of these reminiscences made the time pass pleasanter to me, as it busied my mind.

Another reason for writing this book is that I might avoid the utter oblivion which is the condition of humanity in general, a short time after this life is ended, and from which man shrinks in his normal condition.

My life has been more stirring and exciting than the plain narrative herein related will convey to the reader. My conduct has been governed by my own judgment, as I have not had an older and wiser head to give me the benefit of advice when such might have been beneficial; when it would have been received and followed if the proper course had been suggested to me, as events in my life have occurred.

I have sometimes regretted that I did not continue in the profession of the law, but circumstances seemed to force me into a business life, against my will. Whether my success at law would have been more satisfactory to me than my business life has been; will always remain unknown.

I trust this book will be a source of interest and satisfaction to my descendants as it shows how and where I spent my life and my statements regarding these events.

EMORY FISKE SKINNER



**E. F. Skinner**  
At the age of 40

I DEDICATE THESE REMINISCENCES TO  
MY WIFE

WHO HAS BEEN MY AFFECTIONATE COMPANION FOR  
NEARLY FIFTY YEARS

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I HAVE DICTATED THESE PAGES TO HER AND SHE HAS PUT  
THEM IN WRITING, WITHOUT COMMENT. WITHOUT  
HER ASSISTANCE I WOULD NOT HAVE  
UNDERTAKEN TO WRITE THEM

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### In Conclusion

For certain reason, I desire to express my opinion on religious subjects, in order that I may not be misquoted or misunderstood in the future. With this object in view I introduce the subjects herein presented.

Every man creates a God of his own, or has some one create a God for him, and the characteristics of his God will be the characteristics of his own nature. The superstitions of man incline him to believe in some kind of deity. It is natural for every one to accept the fact of a Higher Power which has "created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is." If we knew more about this Being it might be better for us; however, if the Creator thought it well for us to know more than we do, it was within His power to have enlightened us. Man by his intellect has discovered many natural laws, the recognition of which has made apparent many things which in his previous ignorance and superstition he had believed to be unnatural and attributable to supernatural causes.

In the early days of the world, monarchs obtained their right to rule over their brothers by "divine right," by what was regarded as the sanction of God, delivered by human hands. People suffered great wrongs and injustice under cruel and inhuman rulers, and believed that they had no right to resist. Human slavery was upheld by religion. Probably most of the evils which have seriously affected mankind have resulted from the teachings of some religion which rendered the person believing it impervious to reason or argument. Gathered from the ancient Jewish writing of lawgivers and prophets is a compilation known as the Bible. In this is given a circumstantial account of the creation of the world. I recollect in my boyhood days learning a piece of doggerel which ran as follows:

"The world was made in six days, and finished on the seventh;  
According to the contract it should have been the eleventh.  
The carpenters got drunk, and the masons wouldn't work,  
And the quickest way to finish it was to fill it up with dirt."

This account of the creation is as circumstantial, reliable and truthful as the one given in Genesis. There are certain books in the Bible giving an account of the lives and wanderings of the descendants of Abraham. The Jews claim to be the beloved of God in preference to any other tribes or races of men. They have generally been a very unpopular people, though many of them have been talented, wise and of remarkable ability.

During the first four centuries of the Christian era many histories were written concerning Jesus Christ, who claimed to be the Son of God. From these numerous writing were selected those which form the books of the New Testament, and these added to the ancient religious and historical writing of the Jews form the modern Bible. This book is the foundation of most of the religions taught in civilized countries today, and the followers believe it to be, without investigation or proof, inspired by God Himself.

Jesus Christ taught His disciples and mankind generally to “love one another,” and to “do unto others as ye would have others do to you,” yet the priests of this new religion of Jesus Christ raised themselves, step by step, in earthly power and attempted to dominate the world. They became careless of His precepts and sought for pomp and glory, and employed all the advantages of their high places to gain power and control over their fellow men. Eighteen centuries have followed of cruelty and crime, done in the name of Christianity, and claimed to be in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. The masses of the believers in the Christian religion were ignorant and unlearned, while the learned among them grew more domineering and crafty in order that they might enjoy supreme earthly power.

One purpose of most religions has been to invent a scheme by which a few could live in luxury at the expense of the many. It has been the object and purpose of most sects to force great numbers of persons into their belief and control them by injustice and cruelty. Great wrongs have been inflicted in the name of religion, and the severest tortures have been endured by many who refuse to believe in some particular creed. What the nature of God is no man knows. We do know, however, that the more humane and intelligent a nation is, the better it is for its people. The honest beliefs of an individual, if he does not attempt to force them upon others, and if he advocates only what is virtuous, honest and merciful, can do no serious injury and must tend to the betterment of mankind. What the future has in store for us, where we are to go, what we are to do or be, is entirely unknown to us. Shakespeare speaks of death as:

‘That undiscovered country, from whose bourne  
No traveler returns.’

So far it has been idle to attempt to penetrate the veil. We know that the heavens are full of worlds and planets and that they are of area so vast that all who have dwelt on earth from its dawn to the present time might live upon them. The suggestive mind of man can easily imagine what might be our future, but that we can have any real knowledge upon this point is not at all profitable. The intense curiosity of man leads him to conjecture and resolve schemes of existence which he tries to foist upon mankind as being the will and purpose of the Creator Himself.

I remember when I was a boy, I was told that God kept constant care over me, that He even counted the hairs on my head, and that He kept a diary in which were recorded all my good and bad acts; all my good and bad thoughts; and at that time I was not very well able to distinguish the good from the bad.

Faith is the ability to believe a lie, there being no evidence to prove its truth. Somehow I appear to lack that faculty. I always desire some substantial evidence of the truth of anything. I am not easily convinced of the truth of things which I cannot see, hear, or prove by some sort of reasoning, especially if the things themselves appear to be against reason. Many possess the faculty of faith, but believing a thing does not make it true, for believing is simply a confession of ignorance. We may believe a thing is so and not know it is so. Knowledge is very different from belief; one must have evidence to substantiate

knowledge, but belief is simply an opinion. Belief is something like seeing an alkali flat in a desert and thinking that it is a lake.

Religious beliefs are usually more prevalent among the unlearned than among the educated classes of humanity. Every creed which is not founded on the dogmas which teach immortality of the soul and everlasting rewards and punishments, is unsuccessful. Such dogmas were unknown to the Jews, therefore Judaism, far from being supported by Providence, was an unsuccessful doctrine. It is necessary for a religion to take hold on the minds of the followers so they will have a hope of reward and a fear of punishment constantly before their mental vision.

I recollect, when a boy, of living a short time with a family in which there was an aged and infirm gentleman, who made agonizing prayers and appeals, twice daily, to his Presbyterian God. He impressed me as one having an intense fear of death. He would accuse himself of being a terrible sinner, unworthy of any consideration by his Maker, and would implore in a most pathetic manner, forgiveness for wrongdoing. In my youthful imagination I used to wonder what the terrible crimes might have been of which he had been guilty. He was a deacon in the Presbyterian Church, a polite and lovable man, respected by everyone who knew him, yet the fear with which he regarded death was appalling.

The child's faith in the fiction told it by grown-up people, of the rabbits which lay painted eggs, for which they search Easter morning, is about equal to the faith of their elders in the dogmas of their religion, which has no more foundation for its assumption than the other.

The clergy has a great influence on the mind of the public, and it is not always exercised with wisdom. It was the excitable sentiments uttered from the pulpits of the north against the south, and in the southern churches against the north which engendered an animosity, culminating in one of the most terrible and bloody wars of modern times. I do not believe that the result of this fearful cost will be of benefit to those for whom it was fought. The Negro of today is a different creature from the slave of 1860. At that time he was generally a docile and kind-hearted attendant to his master. After the close of the war the clergy again led northern public sentiment into the foolish step of demanding franchise for the slave class, holding that political equality with the whites would serve as a protection for the weaker. This was granted and served as a menace to one-third of our country ever since. And with all the loss to our own people it did not help or satisfy the Negroes, whose master ambition is for social equality rather than political, or commercial. But the white can not concede this if he would, as necessarily it means the lowering of the white to the level of the Negro, who is disqualified from meeting the higher conditions.

It is quite probable that the next part of the country to suffer from this folly and egotism of the Negro will be the north; the freedom and latitude given the blacks will eventually meet a rebuff in some form of bitter war of the races. Again the clergy, as leaders of public sentiment, will be heavily responsible, and it is likely that the curses will come

home to roost which have been uttered against the south, whose experience of three centuries with the Negro makes it better fitted to meet the problem, than any other.

The motives of the clergy in all of these mistakes may be of the purest kind, but their pursuits and occupations disqualify them from understanding such drastic measures as are required in certain extremes of business and politics.

When at times I realize some of the ignorance expressing itself everywhere about us, I am impressed with the thought of what a terrible state of ignorance there must have been in the period following the creation. The first thunderstorm, or earthquake; the first sight of birth, or death, without the knowledge that it must be borne by millions of others; not even to know why the sun rose or set! As man becomes more intelligent, his ignorance in a measure disappears. It may be for the benefit of the human being that theories are constructed with regard to future existence, of which he can know nothing, but in my opinion it is a doubtful exercise of the imagination.

I believe the Deity to be the concentration of All Knowledge. He is the acme of all mechanism. The construction, organization and individuality of the human structure is so marvelous that the mind is paralyzed in its efforts to comprehend it; and the mortal mind approaches the Creator the nearest when it excels in the construction, invention and operation of applied mechanics. I have never been as happy in any pursuit as when I was building a mill, and contriving to make all the parts work together.

I believe that God is omniscient but not necessarily omnipresent. In the construction of a mechanical invention, its highest perfection would be proved by its ability to work on without supervision.

It is self evident that the Deity has given us no knowledge of Himself or of His purposes, only such as we are able to read from the laws of Nature, but we see that the human body partakes of food, in the manner supplying its own materials to maintain existence until the organism wears out through an over strenuous life or from the decay of old age.

Man comes into the world against his wish, and he departs from it the same way. Today he is and tomorrow he is not. Why he comes and why he goes, are equal mysteries; however, death has no sting, but such as we give it.

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