The Print of My Remembrance

By Augustus Thomas

IN THE month of January, 1857, Abraham Lincoln was practicing law in Springfield, Illinois. At Guernsey, Victor Hugo, in exile, was preparing the last volume of Les Miserables and was writing Shakspere, the greatest of his single volumes. Germany was alarmed over the success of the French in Lombardy, and Bavaria was preparing for war. The Queen of England, then in the twentieth year of her reign, was planning to establish the Order of the Victoria Cross and was having bronze medals cast from Russian cannon recently captured at Sebastopol. In the United States, President Franklin Pierce was getting ready to retire in March, and James Buchanan, his successor, was preparing his inaugural address.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, then in his fifty-third year, was lecturing in Philadelphia, New York, Ohio and Illinois, and John Brown, of Ossawatomie, Kansas, was making speeches in Eastern States and stimulating the committees who were financially helping the people of Kansas to resist the raids of the Missouri Border Ruffians. U. S. Grant was living with his wife's folks on a farm near St. Louis, much distressed by fever and ague, and occasionally driving a load of cordwood to the city. The Supreme Court at Washington was considering for the second time the question of the liberty of the negro slave, Dred Scott. Mr. Lincoln, at Springfield, was anxiously awaiting their decision before expressing himself as he subsequently did in such immortal fashion.

On the eighth day of that month, in that year, I was born in a little house in what was then the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri.

Of this important concurrent event none of the great personages above referred to knew anything at first-hand, which must not fairly imply neglect on their part, because all of my own impressions of them were subsequently and slowly formed on hearsay and report. I mention these great personages principally to fix in the reader's mind some conditions and the time. But they are mentioned, also, because most of them began soon afterward to take place and shape—somewhat distorted shape, perhaps—in my first permanent memories.

Buchanan took office under the handicap of our family disapproval, because responding to certain preëlection pledges he permitted the recall from Falmouth, England, of my maternal grandmother's second husband, who had been sent there as United States consul by Franklin Pierce; and, without generalizing too hastily, I may say that a similar lack of judgment, according to my people, characterized nearly the whole of Buchanan's administration. Grandmother was there with this second husband. I don't know how the wife of a consul at Falmouth could do it, but in some way grandmother, while in England, arranged a presentation to the Queen, so that with us in North St. Louis, Victoria was a household word.



PHOTO. BY WHITE STUDIO, NEW YORK CITY

Augustus Thomas—From a Recent Photograph

I was two years old when John Brown was hanged and, of course, understood nothing of it. Victor Hugo, in his exile for liberty, with his great sympathy for the oppressed in every land, was eloquent in his appeal to the American public to save itself from this moral stain and from a crime "odious as the first sad fratricide." He cried: "Let America be aware that more terrible than Cain slaying Abel would be Washington killing Spartacus."

A Child's Impressions of Grant

BY THE time I was four and able in childish fashion to carry a tune the land was alive with the music of brass bands. Of course the spirit of John Brown was the important element, but for many years after that time I was not so acutely conscious of anything else as that "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the ground." If we

recall the persistence of George Cohan's Over There during the two years of the war just passed we will have some fractional measurement of the hold that tune of the sixties took upon the Northern heart.

Concerning Grant, I had something to say in 1900. Because this something was spoken under excitement and with a distinctness of recollection twenty years clearer than my present impressions, I will print it here, notwithstanding its forensic taint: "To me Grant is not a personage. He is an epoch. There is a morning filled with the music of martial bands and the color of waving banners. I am just tall enough to reach the door latch with my mother's help. A booted trooper at the door asks for Captain Thomas, while in the gutter stand two champing steeds with saddles of black and brass, deep as the baby's cradle. I see my father ride through the city park, and note with wonderment my mother's tears. The sound of 'Grant—Grant—Grant' is through it all like some infiltrating and saturating echo—that meaningless sound of 'Grant,' which seems to have some trouble with another called 'Fort Donelson.' There are shouts and salvos, and mingling with the cheers there is the derisive song:

"It was on the tenth of May,
Captain Kelly was away,
The Hessians surrounded Camp Jackson.

"Years afterwards I learned that the Hessians were the loyal Germans of St. Louis, who under Frank P. Blair marched to her defense.

"Another happening of that Homeric day is a fair where my mother holds me high in the crowd that I may see a child impersonating the old woman who lived in a shoe, and had so many children she didn't know what to do. That little girl with the cap and spectacles is Nellie Grant, selling her dolls to buy clothes for soldiers; and now there drifts into my ideas vaguely the conception that this echo, this shibboleth, this Grant is a man, a father, not nearly so kind and low-voiced as my own father, not so tender, nor so full of laughter, nor so long away from home as my father, but still a father, tangible and human, and maybe good to that little girl at whom the men and women wave their handkerchiefs.

"Then there is the illumination, when the night is come. The candles stuck in potatoes behind the tricolored tissue paper in the windows; and the tar barrels are crackling in the street. Suddenly all is dark. I am frightened by an undefined menace. The young mother, in her night robe, is kneeling with me at the open window, one blanket above us both, the sky filled with the twinkle of the summer stars and the air heavy with the weedy smell from the bottom lands of Illinois. Yet it is none of these, but rather a tump-tump-tump-like pulse, a rhythm that my mother whispers is the tramp of soldiers.

"It was the heartbeat of a startled nation. I can recall it now, with all the mystery and magic of the potent and unseen, and it is moving to some ghostlike place called Island Number 10 or Vicksburg, and Grant is there in whispers.

"That is my Grant, a member of that Apocrypha of the nursery to which belong the Bluebeards and the Giant Killers.

"I saw him once, in the winter of 1870, at Washington, when the Senate and House had gathered in the Hall of Representatives, at the funeral of Gen. George H. Thomas. The imperial Blaine was in the chair, and in a semicircle of seats in front of his desk were the cabinet and a short, high-shouldered, round-headed man with whiskers. Grant! I felt the same shock that a little girl of to-day, full of Alice in Wonderland, would feel if she were shown Lewis Carroll and told, 'That is your story.'"

Lincoln's Election

BEFORE the war my father was associated with Mr. W. N. Wells, among others, in the formation of the Republican Party in the St. Louis district. They were in occasional correspondence with Mr. Lincoln at Springfield, not yet the great emancipator, but just a clever debater who was attracting attention in the West. One of those original letters, addressed to Mr. Wells, not to my father, is between two panes of glass in a frame and a folder in my library. It does not add much to the volume of Lincoln's product, but as it has been in print only in connection with my play, The Copperhead, this extract may have for many a genuine interest:

All dallying with Douglas by Republicans, who are such at heart, is at the very least, time and labor lost; and all such, who so dally with him, will yet bite their lips in vexation for their own folly. His policy which rigourously excludes all idea of there being any *wrong* in slavery, does lead inevitably to the denationalization of the Constitution; and all who deprecate that consummation and yet are seduced into his support, do but cut their own throats. True, Douglas *has* opposed the administration on one measure, and yet *may* on some other; but while he upholds the Dred Scott decision, declares that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up; that it is simply a question of dollars and cents, and that the Almighty has drawn a line on one side of which labor *must* be performed by slaves, to support him or Buchanan is simply to reach the same goal by only slightly different roads.

Very respectfully,
A. LINCOLN.

I remember vividly incidents of the presidential campaign, when I was three years old, that preceded Lincoln's first election. Father and the family were black Republicans, but in my private heart I was stoutly for Bell and Everett of the so-called Union Party. Their torchlight processions were the most picturesque, and at intervals in their lines animated men rang hand bells, with now and then a larger one on a wagon. There may have been older spectators and auditors as deeply impressed.

I remember the neighborhood rejoicing over the election and, very soon thereafter, everybody and the soldiers singing, "We are coming, Father Abraham, a hundred thousand strong." St. Louis, except for the Germans, was predominantly a Southern city; the divided feeling ran high; neighborhood animosities were intense. There was a builder named McCormick on the other side of our street who had threatened to kill my father. The opportunity apparently never safely offered, but that and other hatred lasted. For example, the war had been over ten years when on a local election day McCormick, who was a powerful fellow, came behind a buggy in which I sat with my father and endeavored to overturn it by lifting the rear axle. I was big enough to engage in the contest that followed, but the police prevented a decision.

These Civil War events and childish impressions from them have no historic value, but they are the stuff that focused and perhaps formed my tendencies; the stuff that influenced my mature associations and endeavors and became the background and much of the material of my professional work. When I compare these early influences to determine which of them was the most potent in fixing whatever may be persistent in my course, I think I must give predominance to the influence of the grandmother already mentioned. She was so unswerving in her intentions toward me, so positive in her assumptions, so constant that I remember her influence not only as personal and intimate but also as oracular and imperative. I have written her into three different plays quite intentionally, and perhaps into forty others by some indirection. I think, therefore, that a fuller statement of grandmother is pertinent.

Her father's name was Wilson, her mother's name was Walker—both names recently crowded from the advertisements, but they had spirited associations even in my childhood. William Walker, who led his filibusters into Nicaragua, was grandmother's cousin, and she was proud

of him. Her only brother was killed on that expedition. Grandmother's first husband was Daniel Garrettson, a boat builder of Cincinnati. He was lost in a river accident while my mother was still a little girl.

The second husband was an actor turned editor when Pierce gave him the consulship at Falmouth. After Buchanan's inauguration this second husband made his home in Washington City, while grandmother lived in St. Louis to be near us and as far as possible from him. I remember his monthly remittances, which were regular and not large, but beautiful. They came during the early war period in newly printed paper, shinplasters, in sheets measuring each about eighteen by twenty-four inches; each sheet having one hundred pieces of fractional currency and each piece with a value of three, five, ten or twenty-five cents, according to the respective denomination of the sheet.

A Dooryard Canteen

WHEN I grew big enough not to make the sport too expensive I was permitted to cut these sheets into their component units. Anyone who has ever cut a coupon from a Liberty Bond that didn't belong to him can estimate my thrills over these small, crisp steel engravings of historic Americans serving as scenery for Federal promises to pay on demand. A percentage of these remittances each month went into the war relief of the time. Recruits from Illinois and Iowa passed grandmother's door and cheered it. The flag with its thirty-four stars hung from her window, and whenever a marching detachment swung into view a table draped with bunting in her little dooryard was quickly equipped with refreshments. Some of the fellows needed them. For any chap especially distressed a reviving nip could be unostentatiously produced. At that time whisky, which had cost eighteen cents a gallon when Lincoln kept store in Sangamon County, had risen to thirty-five cents a gallon. You can't stop the profiteers. Between times grandmother did volunteer work on uniforms.

On the mantelshelf of the study in which I am writing in New Rochelle is a black wooden crucifix about sixteen inches high supported by a base. The brass figure of the Saviour is apparently a copy of Donatello. This was always a prominent object in grandmother's parlor. Archbishop Purcell, of Cincinnati, returning from a visit to Rome, had brought it to her when she was first married, with the blessing of Pius IX. Grandmother was then a Catholic, but some act or failure to act, some utterance or some silence by some Missouri churchman upon the question of secession sent grandmother over to the M. E. Church North.

In Simpson Chapel, Union sentiments were vocal and extemporaneous, and there grandmother inhaled and exhaled an atmosphere of militant loyalty. Twice every Sunday and at least one night of the week she went there to meeting. With father at the front, I was the only male creature in our two households, and though mother thought a boy of six or seven shouldn't be up so late, I loved to act as the old lady's escort. The streets of North St. Louis at night were not lighted at that period; the chapel was four blocks away and the natives were not friendly. But grandmother had a square lantern such as Dogberry carries, with three sides of tin, perforated like a horse-radish grater, and a fourth side of glass. It held a candle and swung by a tin ring larger than a muffin mold. With that candle lighted and the right wing of her Valley Forge circular thrown over her left shoulder, the handsome old lady, then about fifty, used to go forth with me. In that fashion I began to save the nation as vaguely then as we all of us still continue—a few steps in the dark, each holding to some fallible hand in which we have great faith.



Imogene Garrettson Thomas, Mother of the Playwright, at the Age of Eighteen

At that time our home was still in my birthplace, the end house of a dozen called Bates' Row on Tenth Street; brick buildings of almost toy dimensions, having three rooms and a lean-to kitchen each, and little dooryards back and front. Grandmother occupied the house next to us with her widowed sister and a pretty niece named Alice Witham. As a youngster I thought she was the Sweet Alice discussed in the lyrical appeal to Ben Bolt, and I had Ben cast in the person of a sturdy soldier who called irregularly until a black-bordered envelope with crossed flags on it explained his absence. I remember Alice still disconsolate as a handsome youth, also living in the same row and not quite old enough for the war—except as drummer boy, which he was for a while—sang under her window. The police then tolerated that nocturnal custom. This singer was



The Autobiographer's Grandmother in Her Fifties. In the Oval Above—Her Grandson at Four

J. K. Emmett, about sixteen years old at that time. Grandmother forgave him when he sang, as everybody did, but at other times he was on her bad books. His sister Eliza had a contralto voice as fine as Jo's tenor. Eliza sang at Simpson Chapel, and Jo, who came to take her home now and then, preferred to practice jig steps on the board walk in front rather than wait inside, where vociferously mine and grandmother's and the little congregation's "days were passing swiftly by." Eliza Emmett Wycoff became one of the notable singers of the city. With Jo Emmett, Our Fritz, the women of two continents fell in love, and true to precedent forgave completely his many missteps.

Grandmother's Hall of Fame

GRANDMOTHER'S opinion was the most decisive in our family. I had no way of knowing it wasn't so in the nation. Her impatience with McClellan and Grant and even Lincoln seemed to have an effect. At any rate, things happened when she got mad enough. She permanently affected my early admirations. After a soldier, an orator was the finest type. She had heard Webster in the Senate and Andrew Jackson elsewhere, and gauged my early diction by those standards. As I review it mentally, I think there may have been a little of the theater about her, but it was good theater; a sense of the effective, nothing of the insincere. In her prophecy I joined her strangely assorted gallery of the great, and always found her hope and her belief associating me with Jackson and Webster, Lincoln, Edwin Forrest, Charlotte Cushman and Archbishop Purcell. It was a good deal to ask of a lad of seven, but I took a run at it.

My father, as a bachelor aged twenty-one, had gone to the Mexican War via Leavenworth on the historic Doniphan Expedition, and during the subsequent experience was an aide-de-camp on General Taylor's staff. He sustained there an injury that disqualified him somewhat from extended service when he raised a company of volunteers for the Civil War, and therefore as soon as the immediate menace to Missouri was past he resigned from the Army and was elected to the Missouri Legislature. When Farragut ran the blockade at the mouth of the Mississippi and took New Orleans there was a demand for entertainment by the Northern troops who occupied the city similar to the demand that came from the American Expeditionary Forces recently in France.

Father thereupon resigned his seat in the legislature, and together with Ben de Bar, one of the foremost comic actors of America, the only great Falstaff I ever saw, and a manager named Tom Davey—who subsequently married one of the Maddern sisters and became the father of Minnie Maddern, now Mrs. Harrison Grey Fiske—reopened the St. Charles Theater in New Orleans. This was in the fall of 1863. The party took with them the Revel family, dancers and acrobats, and among others a comedian named George Chapman.

Although New Orleans had fallen a year before, the Mississippi for much of its length below St. Louis was sporadically commanded by Confederate guns, so that this little theatrical company had to run their blockades on a steamboat protected by piled-up cotton bales. There was a long, successful season at the theater, which those lessees

closed at the end of March in 1865. I distinctly remember my father's return, bringing with him a large cage holding two mocking birds, which had to have boiled eggs, and also carrying several bunches of bananas protected by pink mosquito netting. A third item in his baggage was a box of photographs of theatrical celebrities who had been visiting stars at the theater. Among these were some pictures of the talented and eccentric Adah Isaacs Menken. According to my mother, these photographs did not warrant my father's estimate of Adah's beauty. I remember the pictures too imperfectly at this date to umpire the difference of opinion.

Another attractive photograph was that of a young woman in a pancake hat, a short smart basque and a wide expanse of crinoline. She was the gifted Mathilda Heron, mother of Bijou Heron, now Mrs. Henry Miller, and grandmother of Gilbert Miller, who has recently been announced as the manager to succeed the late Alf Hayman in charge of the Empire Theater, New York.

There were a half dozen photographs of a singularly handsome man, each of them inscribed "To my dear Tom"—my father's friends called him intimately by his last name in preference to the given one of Elihu—and signed John Wilkes Booth. Although my father was ten years Booth's senior, he and Booth had been rather boon companions in New Orleans, and coming from the same theater, wearing the same kind of mustachios and the clubbed hair of the period, were so alike that each was sometimes mistaken for the other.

Father had not been back long enough at our St. Louis home to lose the guestlike novelty of his presence, when on the morning of April fifteenth, something having gone wrong the day before with the family baking, I was sent from the breakfast table to the corner grocery for an extra loaf of bread. The weather was unusually warm for that season, even in St. Louis. Saturday was a school holiday. I was barefoot in the first kid freedom of the year, and snail-like on this errand I traveled the short block over the unpaved road, which was ankle deep with its cool bed of dust.

News of Lincoln's Death

At the grocery I was unable to get attention in the group that had gathered there and was increasing. As soon as I learned the cause of the excitement I ran home, burst into the little dining room with a repetition of the cry "Lincoln's been shot!"

I can see the family at that table now, each in his or her proper place, as definite as if the occurrence were to-day. My mother and father, my elder sister and a younger one, a baby brother, my grandmother and a hired girl. It was the democratic custom in that section and time for the hired girl to serve the food in bulk and then sit with the family at the table. My father, refusing to accept my message, rushed to the street. I see the terror on my mother's face and the tragic intensity of grandmother. I am pressed with questions. I remember my inadequate replies, and then my father coming back, his face grown strangely older. As the women look at him he says, "Wilkes Booth ——"

"Shot Lincoln?"

"Yes."

As the women get this confirmation my mother sobs with her head upon the table; grandmother, erect, is making short dramatic denunciations, of which I have forgotten all except their vehemence. Not only that day but an ensuing period of dislocation and excitement followed; a period recalled as interminable compared to the swift actions that the records show. During that crowded time every word of the reports in every paper was read aloud and discussed; every rumor too. The subject occupied the talk and filled all minds through every silence. The apprehension and arrest of conspirators; the pursuit and killing of Booth; the arrangements for the dead President's funeral; the trial of persons charged with complicity in his assassination; bitter division on the question of the guilt of Mrs. Surratt, and upon the right at all to hang a woman; suspicions that arose and were increased concerning Vice President Johnson's possible knowledge of or blindness to the plot banished all unrelated topics. Letters came, neighbors ran in and out to carry or to match their news. Persons heretotore uncertain as to policies took a prompt stand in condemnation of the deed. Many Southern sympathizers honestly arranged themselves with the Northerners; some sullen ones closed their blinds and kept out of view. The excitement extended to the children; and picture papers were cut out, pasted into peep shows and reeled off in soap boxes, back-lighted by bits of candles.

The death of Lincoln came with crushing force to every household in the North. To these ours was an exception only in the added poignancy given by our familiarity with the assassin's name and looks and my father's recollections of a recent playful companionship. Booth's photographs were brought out, discussed in horror and then put away and avoided. In the next year or two, through the willing agency of secesh playmates, I quietly gave these pictures to other parents who prized and kept them.

When Lincoln's funeral was held at Springfield there was a ceremony in St. Louis, with a stately representative catafalque set in the rotunda of the classical courthouse, where thousands with bowed head and reverent step passed to express openly their sorrow. I was in that line, and though no doubt truthfully informed at the time, for years I retained the belief that Lincoln's body had been under those flowers and flags. There must have been many who thought the same.

The Flower of the Family

Soon after that time my father was planning and surveying what was called the St. Louis and Glencoe Railroad. There was an onyx quarry at one end of it—the other end, I think. Grandmother called it a mare's nest, which seems to be bad rating for a new railroad, and father suffered in the enterprise in other ways. He had to go to New York about bonds and money, and took me with him to Brooklyn, where his sisters lived. On that visit I learned that father himself had a maternal grandmother, who before her marriage had been a Miss La Farge. It required half a day to get from Brooklyn by ferryboat to New York and by Broadway stage to her house in a thinly settled district near Central Park in the East Sixties. She spoke with a French accent—difficult for me to understand. The only topic on which we got earnestly together was the Civil War—grandmothers seemed to be unanimous on that—but she was a dark and very old lady and in no wise comparable to my grandmother. I felt sorry for father, but was careful never to say anything about her that hurt his feelings.

We went back to St. Louis. An older railroad man, the family said, named Col. Tom McKissock, had euchered father out of the Glencoe Railroad, and in our historic apportionments McKissock joined Buchanan.

There was in those days a touch of economical management by my mother that will appeal to two classes of readers. The first it will impress with mild astonishment; and the second, millions in number if the statement should reach them, it will strike familiarly. The flour for the baking came in coarse cotton sacks. These sacks when empty and with their seams ripped open washed up into serviceable domestic cloth. For the five children in our household in 1868 this cloth was available as nightgowns. Sometimes the brand of the flour stenciled into the bag was indelible. One dealer, dyeing for immortality, identified his product by a pardonable pun which had for my parents a third application, gratifying though not prophetic, as they watched me bundle into bed with The Flower of the Family blazoned on the southern exposure of my gaberdine.

In similar ways and by like episodes my neighborhood horizon widened and took on state and national dimensions. Among father's optimistic friends was a man named Cavanaugh, with whiskers and blue eyes and a broad broken nose. Mr. Cavanaugh never put water in his whisky, as Gen. Frank P. Blair and father did while conversing at the Planter's House bar, but drank it with a nervous toss and considerable display of teeth under his wet mustache and then thoughtfully went "Ha" with a sandpaper exhaust.

Then and again, years and other years afterward, standing at the same bar, I tried to dramatize for my own mind's eye the story of Gen. Frank P. Blair, smiling and unarmed, saying, oh, so confidentially, to another man he had never met before: "Are you Billy Ryder? Well, I'm told you say you will kill me on sight. My name is Frank P. Blair, Mr. Ryder."

"Right where we're standing," Cavanaugh explains, and Mr. Blair laughs it off and says something amusing about a bluff.

Billy Ryder was a political Monk Eastman. As a boy and man I heard him make fiery speeches in Gallic to his compatriots from the courthouse steps, but I always remembered Mr. Cavanaugh's story to my father as I stood listening, nine years of age. Even at sixty-four I like it.

My father was a fine man with a great brain, and now that he is gone I would say nothing of him that could prejudice a reader against him, but he always treated me as an equal. I knew his friends man fashion. They were many and important, and such informing anecdotes as the one just related he always told me in order that I might rightly measure men. On all public questions there was always also grandmother, sometimes mistaken but never in doubt, and from the time I was eligible at six years of age until the time I was indigent at twelve, I had an almost uninterrupted attendance at regular sessions of the St. Louis grammar schools, including at that period their compulsory study of German. When I finished I had a card publicly given me for my recitation of Marco Bozzaris. The scene is indelible. I had walked to the teacher's platform, as was then uniformly required, on tiptoe; we thought in order that our shoes should not squeak too much, but, as a matter of fact, to train us against falling arches. I see my teacher now, the bunch of lilacs on her desk and just behind her the Tropic of Capricorn. It had been there all winter, but never so plain as on that fragrant morning in the spring of 1868, with the girls in white and ribbons, and through the open windows trees and grass and cowbells, and beyond the sky line of a great round world turning upon its own axis once in every twenty-four hours, except in February, which has twenty-nine. The safety of our republic rests upon our public schools.

The Shoulder-Strap Paraders

During this early period we lived not always in the same house. Places were rented, and like many uneasy families of that time we occasionally removed. Amongst our plunder there were a few bookshelves well furnished and some other volumes with bindings too dilapidated to be shown. These cripples drifted to the garret, where I used to run across them on holidays. Three of these old books I studied with keen interest. One was Blair's Rhetoric; a second was Jefferson's Manual on Parliamentary Law, which had evidently been useful to father at different times; a third was a small copy of Hardy's Military Tactics.

About this time the remittances of new money from Washington City began to get irregular and now and then to lack a few sheets of the stipulated limit, but to be accompanied by peace offerings of useless merchandise, stuff that the sender had probably got at little cost from a War Department that was reforming. In one shipment of that kind there came a pasteboard box containing a gross or more of officers' epaulets in gold and silver on different colored cloths, ready to be sewed on the shoulders of soldier coats. Nobody wanted these things apparently, not even grandmother, and they fell to me. Nothing would have been more acceptable except perhaps a consignment of Indian war bonnets. I distributed them among my comrades, and with the help of the Hardy Tactics organized two or three squads, fairly proficient in the manual, with wooden guns, but composed entirely of officers from brigadier generals to captains. When maneuvering in the streets and encouraged by veterans at the corner grocery we must have looked like a miniature and migratory general staff.

This would be too trivial to record were it not for the fact that it was at a time when two national conventions had made their nominations. With the entire country still wrought up and resentful over the assassination of Lincoln, the Republican Party took no chances on the character of its candidate, and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was the nominee. His Democratic opponent, Governor Horatio Seymour, of New York, had smirched his record a little by addressing an audience of draft rioters in New York in a pacificatory speech as "My friends."

To offset the doubts which that phrase inspired, the Democratic convention gave Seymour as his running mate that gallant Democrat of undoubted loyalty, of whom I have already spoken, Gen. Frank P. Blair. My father was so fond of Blair that, partisan as he was, it hurt him to oppose him in the local districts, but he vigorously did so. I was by this time taking a wider interest in politics and on higher grounds than that which I held in the Bell and Everett campaign. But still the theatrical features of the contest were the ones that interested me most.

In the torchlight processions the marching voters, besides their soldier caps and capes, wore little aprons, because their candidate, U. S. Grant, when a boy, had worked in his father's yards as a tanner. More than in any other district that I have ever observed, and more than in any other campaign, the juniors took an interest in this one, doubtless because of the contentious atmosphere in which they had all been raised. The men encouraged them and there were many marching clubs of boys. My organization of shoulder straps was active two or three nights in the week at the tail end of the tanners' procession.

It is probable that neither Seymour nor Blair, experienced politicians as they were, had much hope of election. At any rate, upon many occasions in which I saw him soon after the decision, I could discover nothing crestfallen about our Missouri member in particular, nor did he carry any animosity against the comrades who had remained loyal to the commander in chief rather than support their local favorite. Blair and my father were warm friends as ever, and Blair himself was influential in having me appointed a page in the Missouri legislature the following session, at which time I was eleven years old.

There were five page boys in the Missouri House of Representatives at that time. They were appointed by the clerk, and there was considerable political competition for the places. As the boys were paid ninety dollars a month, the appointments came under the head of patronage. There were plenty of competent lads in Jefferson City who would have been glad to get the work at twenty dollars a month, but under the spoils system the clerk endeavored to distribute the appointments through different sections of the state. The salary was fixed upon the knowledge that the boys would be under considerable expense away from their homes, and perhaps the committee on appropriations justified the amount also under the theory that the work was educational and to a boy the opportunity would be a kind of scholarship.

Cuspidor Cloture

Any man who can remember working as a page boy in any legislative body will approve this theory. Every session was punctuated by points of order from the members and rulings by the chair, and perhaps because their attention to these contests was not so divided as that of the members, the boys were better average parliamentarians than 90 per cent of the legislators themselves. Besides the ninety dollars, each boy got one hundred three-cent postage stamps every month, a bunch of lead pencils, a supply of quill pens such as a theater property man still provides for Richelieu, and a pocket knife to keep these pens in order. The same allotment was made to every official employe and to every member. In excess of this the members received a supply of black sand, for which a box sat on each desk. Most of the members preferred blotting paper to the use of the sand boxes, but as blotting paper was a novelty some of the old men shook sand on to their wet letters and then shook most of it back again into the perforated lignum-vitæ boxes. I remember the page boys laughing over an editorial comment of one of the St. Louis papers concerning the city's oldest representative then in the house, a certain erratic Doctor Smythe. The paragraph said:

> Doctor Smythe writes his letters with a lead pencil and uses the blotting paper, which he says is much superior to the old sand.

Our duties as page boys were to carry a bill or a resolution from the member who introduced it to the desk of the clerk who was to read it aloud; to take messages from one member to another or to go to the other end of the building on some errand to the senate; or to one of the departments under the same roof. We were seldom sent outside of the capitol. We were not always busy and our leisure naturally fell when the members themselves were most engrossed; that is to say, when something of real interest was proceeding in the house.

There were generally two sides to every question that came up, and it would be difficult to conceive of any method more instructive than that with which the boys constantly were in contact. The measures were not always of equal importance; there were times of comedy and even of horseplay. Under each desk at that time there was a large individual cast-iron cuspidor with a hinged cover of a Renaissance pattern. If a man by accident slipped his toe under one of these heavy covers, allowing the cover to fall back on the basin, it made a noise as loud as a stove lid treated in the same way. Sometimes when a member strictly within his rights was speaking beyond the patience of his hearers these accidents occurred, and were repeated with increasing frequency, until the din reduced his oratory to pantomime. There was more than one editorial protest throughout the state against this system of cloture, and I remember reading these protests as late as the middle eighties; but I used the device as a comic episode in a play some twenty years ago and was roundly denounced by a Missouri statesman for misrepresentation.

Phœbe Couzins Makes a Hit

Another example of a kind of humorous relief was furnished when a desk neighbor of the Doctor Smythe above mentioned got from his optician duplicate pairs of Smythe's spectacles. In the heat of a debate the old doctor had a way of reading from some authority and then, as he spoke to the question, pushing his glasses to the top of his head. On the occasion in mind, as the doctor finished one reading, the member slipped his second pair on the desk in front of him. The doctor spoke a moment and, during his rest, again mechanically adjusted this second pair of glasses, read his second quotation and pushed the second pair of spectacles up to the first. The effect and his own astonishment caused an uproar and made a serious contribution ridiculous and ineffective.

That winter of '68 in the Missouri legislature, of which John D. Orrick was speaker, is notable for three events: The Fifteenth Amendment, giving the vote to the negro, was adopted; Miss Phœbe Couzins, a pretty girl, then in her twenties, just graduated as a lawyer, addressed a joint session upon the question of female suffrage; and Carl Schurz, at the end of a spirited joint debate, was elected to the United States Senate.

Miss Couzins made a pretty picture as she finished her address to the legislators, and with a graceful wave of a white-gloved hand closed by saying, "Let it be flashed across the continent that Missouri leads the van, and the nation must follow."

In Broadway parlance of to-day that would be called hokum, but at that time every listener, to use another phrase, ate it up. Opinion on the policy was divided, but nobody doubted Missouri's ability to lead the van.

Phœbe Couzins, the first woman to hold a Federal executive appointment, served during President Arthur's administration as deputy for her father, who was United States marshal for the Missouri district, and upon Major Couzins' death the President appointed her to the office. She was an earnest suffrage advocate for years, and an ardent prohibitionist, but before her death in 1913 her accumulated experience, and it may be her wisdom, led her to oppose both measures.

Carl Schurz electrified his hearers. He then had been only sixteen years in America, during which time he had rallied his German-American fellow citizens to the support of abolition, had served with distinction through the Civil War, had acquired a perfect mastery of the English language, and as he said to his fiery little

opponent in the debate, Senator C. D. Drake, who challenged him on some point, "had gained a very dangerous knowledge of the Constitution of the United States."

The Schurz-Drake debates were held at night, with the members of the senate crowded into the larger house and the lobby holding on its full benches more than one distinguished man who thought the lightning might strike him. I remember first seeing at that time the romantic-looking David P. Dyer, the scholarly John F. Benjamin, and ex-Senator John B. Henderson, who because of his vote in the United States Senate against the impeachment of Andrew Johnson was no longer acceptable to his Missouri constituency as United States senator. Mr. Henderson was the author of the Thirteenth Amendment, which in regular form made Lincoln's proclaimed emancipation part of the Constitution. At one stage of the proceedings in these joint debates, in response to many calls for an expression, Henderson, instead of taking the speaker's rostrum as Drake and Schurz had done, arose modestly from a chair well back in the chamber, and beginning to speak in playful fashion moved with much charm and persuasiveness to such dangerous ground that the partisans of the more prominent candidates broke in upon his address.

Page Boys' Larks

The page boys' hours were about nine to four. We liked to sit up late occasionally but not repeatedly, and in front of the Wagner House, where I roomed with another boy, the local statesmen, when the weather permitted, had a convention fashion of holding group consultations on the sidewalk. My first active service as a member of the Vigilantes grew out of that. Our organization was not extensive, containing, in fact, only this other boy of about my own age, Robert H. Cornell, now a prominent citizen of St. Louis, and myself.

To break up the sidewalk meetings Cornell suggested an effective method. We brought home with us from the capitol newspapers which soon accumulated in bulk, and when soaked in our water pitcher and reduced to mash we compressed moderately into missiles of the size of a football. Our rooms were on the top floor of this five-story hotel. At what seemed the proper hour for a curfew Bob would lean from one window and I from another and at a concerted signal intrust these heavy and mushy bundles to that power described in the Newtonian law. Under favorable conditions one of them would cover an entire committee meeting. We had to judge the effect of our attack only by what we heard, as by the time these things had traveled their distance we were back in bed. It was a disgraceful and lawless procedure and we both deserved the house of correction at least, but now that I tell of it under the protection of the statute of limitations, and think of the frequent protests against the destruction of our national forests, I am not sure that any other equal amount of paper pulp has finally performed more useful service.

Another source of annoyance on these open-window nights was a card room behind a saloon extending at right angles to the rear wall of the Wagner Hotel. We couldn't reach or appeal to these offenders with the literary matter that was so useful in front of the house, but the Wagner Hotel dining room was separated from its supply department only by a wooden partition eight feet high. As Cornell was the lighter of us boys, I used to boost him over this partition when the help had retired, and from the inside, standing on one of the shelves, he would procure and pass back a hatful of raw eggs. At the rear of the hotel, on every story, there was a Southern gallery or porch.

The one on our floor commanded the tables nearest the door of the card room just mentioned.

Oliver Herford once answered a lady who asked him if he had any one unsatisfied ambition in life by saying that he had always wanted to throw a raw egg into an electric fan. I have never seen that done, but I am sure that whatever would be lost in mechanical regularity from that reaction is fully compensated by the human interest that can be elicited by two raw eggs suddenly exploded in a pinochle foursome. Let me say to any immature readers that this was very reprehensible conduct, and that on my part there has been complete reformation.

I cannot speak so hopefully of Cornell, because when I last saw him in 1917 he was trying to sell real estate.

The year before this one at Jefferson City parts of Kansas and a part of Missouri had been seriously overrun by a plague of grasshoppers. The United States Government had sent a distinguished entomologist by the name of Riley to study the conditions. I don't know what Mr. Riley was recommending to the legislature, but at the Wagner House dinner table, where for a few days he had a seat next to mine, he advocated eating the grasshoppers. He used to bring to the table a paper bag, holding about a quart of them, roasted and buttered. These he put on a platter and was just as unselfish with them as a dog is with fleas. Very few of his neighbors joined him in their consumption. I ate two or three and found that they tasted not unlike peanuts.

As I try now to recall the impelling motive of this courageous deed on my part I think it was a combination of curiosity, a wish to please Mr. Riley, a desire to report the occurrence at home, where it did make a sensation, and also my recollection of the Sunday-school verses which I used to recite about John the Baptist's liking for them. Perhaps it was the absence of wild honey at our table that accounts for my lack of sustained enthusiasm.

Varied Experiences

The old capitol building of which I write was destroyed by fire in February, 1911. It was of the dome-and-wings type, like the National Capitol, and stood a few hundred feet nearer to the river than its handsome successor, and on a bluff. The muddy Missouri rolled almost beneath, and wild woods and bushes were on the opposite bank, where we looked for Indians and sometimes saw them, but disappointingly reconciled and orderly. On our bank one day my father, who paid us a visit that session and from whom until his death I was always getting some new glimpse of a varied experience, pointed out to me, on the Missouri Pacific track below, the spot where in 1861 an engine and baggage car had stopped after a record run from St. Louis to unload some fifty self-organized patriots who came with revolvers and clambered up the bank Indian fashion just as Governor Claiborne Jackson and a majority of the legislators, who were trying to pass an ordinance of secession over a filibuster of a loyal minority, took to their heels and Missouri stayed in the Union. Father was one of that carload.

My father introduced me to the Hon. Erastus Wells, then a congressman from a St. Louis district. Mr. Wells had some boys himself. One of them, Rolla Wells, when he grew up, became mayor of St. Louis.

If a man likes your dog heartily he probably owns one. A father of two boys is an easy acquaintance for some other's boy. I don't think I was especially forward, but after two or three talks with Erastus Wells he had promised me to do what he could to get me a pageship at Washington. He sicked me onto D. P. Dyer and John F. Benjamin, who were also visiting Jefferson City, and told them I was Tom's boy. As a result all of the nine congressmen from Missouri signed my application for the place.