

## University of Northern Iowa

---

Henry Clay Frick: Builder and Individualist

Source: *The North American Review*, Vol. 211, No. 771 (Feb., 1920), pp. 145-164

Published by: [University of Northern Iowa](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25120447>

Accessed: 19/10/2011 11:08

---

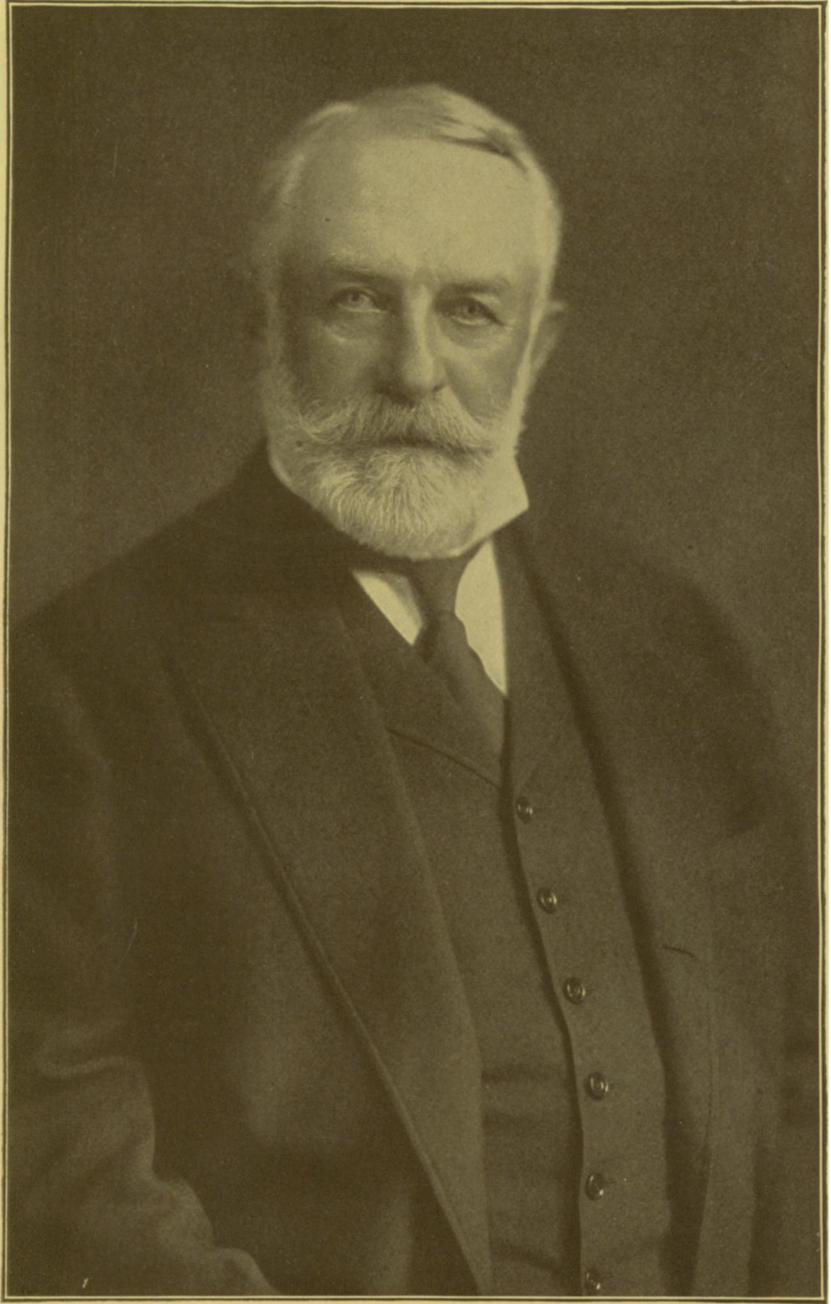
Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



University of Northern Iowa is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The North American Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>



HENRY CLAY FRICK

# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

FEBRUARY, 1920

## HENRY CLAY FRICK BUILDER AND INDIVIDUALIST<sup>1</sup>

BY THE EDITOR

---

PRIMARILY Henry Clay Frick was a great builder—one of the foremost in that generation which produced the most constructive group in the history of the Republic. It is frequently remarked that his monument is the magnificent gift to the people of this imperial city and to the millions throughout the country who are our constant visitors. Surely none could be finer or more permanently inspiring. But when the other night I came through the mountains of his native State and my eyes were blinded by the miles of furnaces emblazoning the results of his genius, toil and faith, I felt that there was another quite as impressive.

How did it happen? How was this marvelous acquirement of wealth and power achieved in a short half century?

Not by luck assuredly. It is difficult to recall the name of a man in whose success chance played so small a part. No advantage whatever was his beyond that which he himself had created by rigid application to details, theoretical and practical, which gave him the mastery of his vocation. But that sufficed. Of all those who swarmed over the Pennsylvania hills, but one was fully equipped to perceive and grasp the great opportunity when it appeared; but one possessed the essential knowledge of craft; the resourcefulness to avail of its offering; the intrepid spirit to urge him on and on, while others were succumbing to impatience and despair.

---

<sup>1</sup> From a speech to the Pennsylvania Society of New York.

Others there were who remained steadfast to the end and won their rewards, but none can rise from a perusal of the fascinating narratives of that period of mingled hope and doubt without realizing that his was the prescient, the inspiring, the resolute, the dominant spirit to which their faith was pinned. One can but marvel at the tenacity which made possible the achievement. And a glow of pride suffuses the faces of us all when we reflect that it was our country, our free and just Republic, that not only held open the door of opportunity to the penniless lad, but guaranteed by her laws and customs the permanent possession of all—whether thousands, millions, or if it had been so, billions—that skill and energy produced.

The success of Henry Clay Frick was a triumph of individualism, an exemplification of the wisdom of conferring upon the maximum of capacity the maximum of reward. It could never have been achieved in a State held in communal bondage. Like brains and like energizing forces doubtless are stored in the heads and hearts of thousands of human beings whose environment holds their possessors as with bands of steel in the clutch of mediocrity. The incentive lacking, the spirit refuses to exert itself and disuse performs its inevitable function as the most potent agency of decay. If the individual accomplishment of but one man were at stake, there would be comparatively little cause to give heed to the growing Socialistic tendencies in America. But vastly more than the success of one or of scores or hundreds or thousands is concerned. The future of the entire human race is in the balance. History proves conclusively that the only hope of the mass is the development of able individuals. Withdraw ten thousand best minds from any country and you would atrophy the nation. Deprive the ego of the hope of distinctive reward and you not only wither personal ambition, but effectually dam the stream of natural progression.

The lesson to be drawn from the notable success of this pioneer is stern resistance of un-American tendencies whose fulfilment would render impossible like achievements by others in the future.

Mr. Frick personified self-determination. Of all those who comprised that group of builders of commercial America he was the most intense individualist. He believed in the open shop for men and he established it. He also

believed in the open shop for nations and lent his powerful aid to the establishment of that. He was for America, first, last and always. The land contained no truer patriot, no more devoted lover of his country.

One phase of Mr. Frick's nature as I knew him in his later years was one rarely recognized by any except those with whom he was upon intimate terms. That was his extreme gentleness. The charm of his manners was no affectation; it was innate and, just as surely as his expressions of conviction were sincere, there was nothing false either in or about him. He never doubted for a moment the truth of what he believed. He never appeared to be something that he was not. There was never missing for long from his eyes the glint of the appreciative humor that lay behind those mirrors of his heart. He was not shy. He was simply modest. All know that he detested ostentation of any kind, but whatever he did in his social no less than in his business life he did to the limit of his capacity.

In the course of the last game of golf I played with him a very short time ago he somewhat unexpectedly won several holes in succession and turning to me he remarked with a slightly quizzical look in his eyes: "I am beginning to suspect that you are letting up on me." My answer was to the effect that, although as he must have noted and as I was painfully aware, my alleged game was subject to much variation, I always played as well as I could. "So do I," was the prompt response and then, after an instant, he added quietly, "I always have. I have always done everything as well as I could. It is the only way."

Now the chief development of this method was a power of concentration such as has seldom been the possession of any man. Whatever the matter in hand might be, Mr. Frick, invariably and without apparent effort, not only subordinated but put wholly out of consideration all other subjects and purposes. Doubtless this was the effect to a large degree of arduous self-training, but even so I doubt if the process was difficult. He was wholly natural.

And he was absolutely fearless. The quality which he exemplified on the day in 1892 when he walked from his house to his office immediately upon his partial recovery from a murderous assault, unarmed and unprotected, through crowds of angry men, he retained to his dying

day. There was never a time since I knew him when one bent upon assassination could not have reached him without the slightest difficulty. His ways were known and they seldom varied. He never took the slightest precautions and never would permit others to do so. I do not think he was fatalistic; he simply did not think about it, and if he had he would have disdained to acknowledge even to himself apprehensions of personal danger. Whatever else may be thought or said of Mr. Frick "take him for all in all, he was a man."

His attitude with respect to his vast accumulations was as individual as his character. What he had earned and fairly won was his, to do with what he pleased, and he would brook no interference; but when it came to doing, no conception could surpass his in generosity and completeness of fulfilment. Therein lies the secret of what has been pronounced the most wonderful will and testament ever devised by man.

The question has been raised as to why he made no public distribution during his life time. The answer, I think, although only a deduction, is easy. He would do nothing which might appear as a means of currying popular acclaim. His private contributions to alleviate suffering, notably during the great war, were lavish, but publication was never permitted.

As to the war itself, he was a staunch upholder of the Allies from the beginning and stood ready to support his own country in every way possible. One day he showed exasperation far beyond his wont at the complaining of one of his rich acquaintances. He said nothing at the time, but on his way home from the golf links he spoke like this:

"I cannot understand a man like that. He never earned any money in his life. He inherited half of it and the country doubled that. Now when his country is in peril he complains. His precious income indeed! He ought to welcome the opportunity to return in part what he has received not only from his income but from his principal if necessary. I will not play with that man again."

His theory of personal responsibility was unusual, to say the least, perhaps unique. He held the present corporate system faulty in this respect, that it too often deprives the real owners of control of their own properties and vests it in executives holding slight interests. Only

those possessing large shares are in a position to protect the small investors. He regarded himself as in effect a trustee for hundreds of thousands and never for a moment did he relax his vigilance. When occasionally rumors of remarks to the effect that there was never a man who kept so busy watching his money he would laugh pleasantly and say: "That is natural to think, of course. I certainly do keep busy. But I wonder why people fail to realize that it would not make a particle of difference to a man as rich as I am what became of these companies, whether they ever declared another dividend or not or even kept out of bankruptcy. Does it seem reasonable to suppose that I would leave this place [he was on the North Shore] and my golf and companions and keep jogging back and forth between here and New York simply to add to my fortune? Of course, anything I might say to the contrary would be misconstrued and I would not utter a word, nor permit anybody else to do so, but it happens that I must look after the interests of others not as well off as I am—and I get my greatest satisfaction out of doing it as well as I can."

And he kept the faith. I have no doubt that he would have lived ten years longer if he had not. But he kept on to the last, a veritable engine, constantly going, always rushing either in mind or body or both and allowing practically no time at all for full relaxation.

Perhaps the most appealing attribute of Mr. Frick was his love for little children. It was as true as the steel with which his name is indissolubly associated and it was un-failing. If, moreover, at any moment proof were required of the sincerity of his feeling it appeared invariably in the instant acceptance and response which sprang from the unerring instinct of the little ones themselves. Surely no finer tribute to the character of a strong man could be desired or is conceivable.

To that just recognition I would add simply that despite the delight of his companionship recognized by all who knew him, not until he was gone did those who were closest to him realize how much they loved him.

His last words spoken quietly after taking a glass of water were, "I think now I can go to sleep."

When I read those words I could not but recall that majestically beautiful line from Tennyson:

GOD'S FINGER TOUCHED HIM AND HE SLEPT.

## MARSE HENRY'S BOOK

THOSE admirers of Marse Henry who cherish him in memory as our greatest slinger of editorial English, as a great master of political invective and personal satire and every last cosmic weapon of the editorial pen, will be amazed and nonplussed when they first dip into these engaging volumes. Here is an Olympian chatting in the shade of his fig-tree on mellow summer afternoons. Enmity, battle, wars, causes, slaughter-houses, bloody shirts, open graves, chasms, challenges, issues, are all but forgotten. When they recur they are hardly more than a background for personal anecdotes, for personal descriptions, for ways and manners and music and poker playing and food and friendship, the real stuff of life.

In much of the great doings in our history for the past half century Marse Henry played a speaking part, often a leading part. If he wished, these volumes might have been crammed with the sort of revelations that some autobiographers consider their chief substance—history is set right in a number of utterly important details and the “lies agreed upon” flourish as before. Not so here. The Colonel knows better and, we give a guess, has his heart elsewhere.

Not interested in politics, in setting it down correctly, this Kentucky editor who breathed and lived and wrote politics decade after decade? Well, of course, interested—but far more interested in the people of the show, and in the whole larger scene of which political mouthing, for all its conspicuous clatter, forms only one minor theme.

Nor does this seem a late reaction, the hindsight of a man nearing his fourscore of years. It is a theme running throughout, dropped in a phrase here and a moment of sentimentousness there, and above all expressed in the whole character of the book. Politics was part of his profession; but he never lost his perspective in it, never, in his wildest moments of success or failure, backed it with all his hopes. “There is nothing sentimental about the actualities of Government, much as public men seek to profit by arousing the passions of the people. Government is a hard and fast and dry reality. At best statesmanship can only half do the things it would.” He is writing this of current problems too, concerning which his beliefs are notoriously difficult to confine to parliamentary language.



Almost every political tragedy, of disillusionment, of failure, of lost causes, of failing heroes, known to man, befell Marse Henry. The list is an appalling one. He was born in 1840, "a bad year for Democrats." A Unionist, a strong opponent of secession, he was forced, like so many other Southerners, to cast his lot with what he felt was a mistaken and losing cause; a prime mover in the celebrated '72 campaign that ended in the Greeley fiasco; a disillusioned critic of the only two presidents his party has elected since the Civil War—here was enough to sour any human heart. Yet if ever there was a soul that stayed sweet, that fought political battles with every adjective known to the dictionary yet kept sense of humor, sense of fact and never let his faith in the world be destroyed by the vagaries of individuals or parties, here is that soul. You cannot become an Olympian suddenly at seventy-eight. Mellowness, sweetness, common-sense were born in the Colonel and only ripened with the years.

There is so much engaging anecdote in these two fat volumes—thank the Lord for the concreteness of the matter—that the casual reader hardly realizes what rarely good history he is getting on the way. Not the history of political ideas directly, so much as the vivid characterization of great figures who represented ideas and personified the rightness and wrongness thereof. Marse Henry does put in his opinions frankly enough but it is by anecdote that he builds up his picture. The detachment of the true artist shows here. Of pen portraits there are dozens that would be hard to improve on, some sketches, some full length portraits, built up by much relation. In none does liking or friendship blur the outline. You feel the warmth of the admiration—or the warmth of the dislike. But the facts are the facts. They are presented with a rare knack of characterization and somehow the result is, you feel, the truth. There never was a better demonstration of the fact that not from the neutral does the truth of history or the truth of anything come. We know that there isn't a neutral corpuscle in Colonel Watterson's blood. Yet he gives you his best friend or his worst enemy to the life.

Just as a literary feat of this character, the presentation of Horace Greeley and Carl Schurz, rank among the very best in the book. Schurz enters the book and leaves it several times. There is no connected exposition of him;

or any narrative of his life; or any attempt at final judgment. You get several pictures, much anecdote, some praise, some criticism, all intensely personal. And the net result is perhaps the fairest judgment of Schurz yet written. With Greeley it is the same. The feat almost converts one to a theory of relativity as applied to history—that the best way to see Greeley or Schurz, for instance, is to see how they affected Marse Henry.

It is in connection with the famous Cincinnati Convention of 1872 that the Greeley-Schurz tale begins. This whole episode is one of the solid achievements of the book. It makes one wish that Colonel Watterson had seen fit to treat all of his convention participations with the same detail. A Southern man and a Confederate soldier, a Democrat by conviction and inheritance, he "had been making in Kentucky an uphill fight for the acceptance of the inevitable:"

The line of cleavage between the old and the new South I had placed upon the last three amendments to the Constitution, naming them the Treaty of Peace between the Sections. The negro must be invested with the rights conferred upon him by these amendments, however mistaken and injudicious the South might think them. The obsolete Black Laws instituted during the slave régime must be removed from the statute books. The negro, like Mohammed's coffin, swung in mid-air. He was neither fish, flesh nor fowl, nor good red herring. For our own sake we must habilitate him, educate and elevate him, make him, if possible, a contented and useful citizen. Failing of this, free government itself might be imperiled.

The Confederate soldiers Watterson had behind him. They were tired of futile fighting and to them the war was over. But, especially in Kentucky there were old Union Democrats and Union Whigs who clung to slavery and proposed to win in politics what had been lost in battle. These men controlled the political machinery of the State and they regarded Watterson as an impudent upstart—he was then thirty-two years old. So it was a ticklish adventure that the young editor of the newly combined *Courier-Journal* undertook in marching upon the Cincinnati assemblage of discontented Republicans and independents. It was a strange crew:

A livelier and more variegated omnium-gatherum was never assembled. They had already begun to straggle in when I arrived. There were long-haired and spectacled doctrinaires from New England, spliced by short-haired and stumpy emissaries from New York—mostly

friends of Horace Greeley, as it turned out. There were brisk Westerners from Chicago and St. Louis. If Whitelaw Reid, who had come as Greeley's personal representative, had his retinue, so had Horace White and Carl Schurz. There were a few rather overdressed persons from New Orleans brought up by Governor Warmouth, and a motley array of Southerners of every sort, who were ready to clutch at any straw that promised relief to intolerable conditions. The full contingent of Washington correspondents was there, of course, with sharpened eyes and pens to make the most of what they had already begun to christen a conclave of cranks.

It was a group of rare editorial ability that ran the convention—or, rather ran it up to the break to Greeley. Samuel Bowles, Murat Halstead, Horace White and Henry Watterson foregathered at one hotel with Schurz; and Whitelaw Reid was added to insure the *Tribune's* support. When a boom for a disapproved candidate reached town the Quadrilateral wired scathing editorials to their several papers, all of which carefully reprinted the same morning in Cincinnati, killed the boomlet a borning:

We were, like the Mousquetaires, equally in for fighting and foot-racing, the point with us being to get there, no matter how; the end—the defeat of the rascally machine politicians and the reform of the public service—justifying the means. I am writing this nearly fifty years after the event and must be forgiven the fling of my wisdom at my own expense and that of my associates in harmless crime.

It was a wild gathering. "Coherence was the missing ingredient. Not a man jack of them was willing to commit or bind himself to anything." Schurz presided. And all went on schedule and the nomination of Adams seemed assured, was assured had the Quadrilateral forced the vote when the moment offered. But they were young and overconfident. Next day the name of Greeley was thrown into the ring, and Schurz, stoical, lethargic,—“the most industrious and the least energetic man I have ever worked with,” in words quoted from Joseph Pulitzer—let the stampede go forward without a word to hinder. The Quadrilateral was “knocked into a cocked hat.” There was a dinner by Whitelaw Reid but it was far from a convivial success:

Horace White looked more than ever like an iceberg, Sam Bowles was diplomatic but ineffectual, Schurz was as a death's head at the board; Halstead and I through sheer bravado tried to enliven the feast. But they would none of us, nor it, and we separated early and sadly, reformers hoist by their own petard.

Yet at first it seemed as if all was not lost, for Greeley

caught on amazingly. The people rose to him. "The sentimental, the fantastic and the paradoxical in human nature had to do with this." The South was enthusiastic; for Greeley had signed the bail bond of Jefferson Davis, "the first hand stretched out to the South from the enemy's camp." Let us quote Colonel Watterson's generous and accurate estimate of Greeley in passing:

He was a queer old man; a very medley of contradictions; shrewd and simple; credulous and penetrating; a master penman of the school of Swift and Cobbett; even in his odd picturesque personality whimsically attractive; a man to be reckoned with where he chose to put his powers forth, as Seward learned to his cost.

What he would have done with the Presidency had he reached it is not easy to say or surmise. He was altogether unsuited for official life, for which nevertheless he had a passion. But he was not so readily deceived in men or misled in measures as he seemed and as most people thought him.

His convictions were emotional, his philosophy was experimental; but there was a certain method in their application to public affairs. He gave bountifully of his affection and his confidence to the few who enjoyed his familiar friendship—accessible and sympathetic though not indiscriminating to those who appealed to his impressionable sensibilities and sought his help. He had been a good party man and was by nature and temperament a partisan.

Schurz was deeply disgruntled. Before he could be got to the Greeley side a bridge had to be built in the shape of what was called the Fifth Avenue Hotel Conference to "carry him across the stream which flowed between his disappointed hopes and aims and what appeared to him an illogical and repulsive alternative." He sulked like Achilles and gave more trouble than any of the regular Democratic leaders. Yet when he yielded he did splendid work in the campaign. Says Colonel Watterson in a casual estimate here:

His was a stubborn spirit not readily adjustable. He was a nobly gifted man, but from first to last an alien in an alien land. He once said to me, "If I should live a thousand years they would still call me a Dutchman." No man of his time spoke so well or wrote to better purpose. He was equally skillful in debate, an overmatch for Conkling and Morton, whom—especially in the French arms matter—he completely dominated and outshone. As sincere and unselfish, as patriotic and as courageous as any of his contemporaries, he could never attain the full measure of the popular heart and confidence, albeit reaching its understanding directly and surely; within himself a man of sentiment who was not the cause of sentiment in others. He knew this and felt it.

How the Greeley campaign first flourished, seemed to be sweeping the country like a prairie fire, then faltered and presently ended in utter rout is very vividly retold. The pathos and tragedy of Greeley's sudden end, with the campaign cheers still echoing, were not all lost in Marse Henry's view. Out of defeat came something permanent and precious:

The crank convention had builded wiser than it knew. That the Democratic Party could ever have been brought to the support of Horace Greeley for President of the United States reads even now like a page out of a nonsense book. That his warmest support should have come from the South seems incredible and was a priceless fact. His martyrdom shortened the distance across the bloody chasm; his coffin very nearly filled it. The candidacy of Charles Francis Adams or of Lyman Trumbull meant a mathematical formula, with no solution of the problem and as certain defeat at the end of it. His candidacy threw a flood of light and warmth into the arena of deadly strife; it made a more equal and reasonable division of parties possible; it put the Southern half of the country in a position to plead its own case by showing the Northern half that it was not wholly recalcitrant or reactionary; and it made way for real issues of pith and moment relating to the time instead of pigments of bellicose passion and scraps of ante-bellum controversy.

In a word Greeley did more by his death to complete the work of Lincoln than he could have done by a triumph at the polls and the term in the White House he so much desired.

These two pictures of Schurz and Greeley can hang in any portrait gallery. There is the warmest emotion in both, close personal friendship in the one, close political friendship in the other. Yet the features are sharp, the limitations are etched deep. Plainly the philosopher, the detached observer, never slept in the Colonel and never yielded his judgment to the most passionate pleadings of that warm young rebel heart that has never grown old.

Just as a beautiful picture, a short story from real life, the reader will find the tale of The Major from Marseilles as amiable reading as is to be found in a long search of fiction. This engaging soul turned up in Louisville some twenty-five years ago, "a delightful composite of Tartarin, the Brigadier Gerard, with a dash of the Count of Monte Cristo." His raiment was faultless when he first arrived in the metropolis of Kentucky. He wore a rose in his coat, he carried a delicate cane, and a most beautiful woman, his wife, hung upon his arm. He was a spendthrift with his quarterly allowance, and what to do between stipends? He

had been taught to do nothing, "not even to play poker." A restaurant was Colonel Watterson's happy suggestion; and with his aid and countenance it grew and flourished, and great was the talk there in the small hours after the *Journal* had been put to bed:

The Major's most obvious peculiarity was that he knew everything and had been everywhere. If pirates were mentioned he flowered out at once into an adventure upon the sea; if bandits, on the land. If it was Wall Street he had a reminiscence and a scheme; if gambling, a hard-luck story and a system. There was no quarter of the globe of which he had not been an inhabitant.

Once the timbered riches of Africa being mentioned, at once the Major gave us a most graphic account of how "the old house"—for thus he designated some commercial establishment, which either had no existence or which he had some reason for not more particularly indicating—had sent him in charge of a rosewood saw mill on the Ganges, and, after many ups and downs, of how the floods had come and swept the plant away; and Rudolph Fink, who was of the party, immediately said, "I can attest the truth of The Major's story, because my brother Albert and I were in charge of some fishing camps at the mouth of the Ganges at the exact date of the floods, and we caught many of those rosewood logs in our nets as they floated out to sea."

Of the terrapin and Uncle Célestin and the tragedy of this amiable black sheep let the Colonel tell at his fireside length. We shall not spoil it by further quotation.

We could wish much more of many men and episodes in these two fat volumes; we should like to keep the Colonel at work indefinitely. We would know more of the all too briefly related White House poker game in the era of Grover Cleveland—before that great man was transmogrified into "a stuffed prophet." Just as a punishment we shall print the entire narrative of this episode in the pious hope that more arcana of that Administration may yet be revealed:

Mr. Cleveland was fond—not overfond—of cards. He liked to play the noble game at, say, a dollar limit—even once in a while for a little more—but not much more. And as Dr. Norvin Green was wont to observe of Commodore Vanderbilt, "he held them exceedingly close to his boo-som."

Mr. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy, in his first administration, equally rich and hospitable, had often "the road gang," as a certain group, mainly senators, was called, to dine, with the inevitable after-dinner soirée or séance. I was, when in Washington, invited to these parties. At one of them I chanced to sit between the President and Senator Don Cameron. Mr. Carlisle, at the time Speaker of the House—who handled his cards like a child and, as we all knew, couldn't play a little—was seated on the opposite of the table.

After a while Mr. Cameron and I began "bluffing" the game—I recall that the limit was five dollars—that is, raising and back-raising each other, and whoever else happened to be in, without much or any regards to the cards we held.

It chanced on a deal that I picked up a pat flush, Mr. Cleveland a pat full. The Pennsylvania senator and I went to the extreme, the President of course willing enough for us to play his hand for him. But the Speaker of the House persistently stayed with us and could not be driven out.

When it came to a draw Senator Cameron drew one card. Mr. Cleveland and I stood pat. But Mr. Carlisle drew four cards. At length, after much banter and betting, it reached a show-down and, *mirabile dictu*, the Speaker held four kings!

"Take the money, Carlisle; take the money," exclaimed the President. "If ever I am President again you shall be Secretary of the Treasury. But don't you make that four-card draw too often."

He was President again, and Mr. Carlisle was Secretary of the Treasury.

This is clear and revelatory stuff. Given more of it we should have Cleveland to the life. But the Colonel is unsatisfactory for once. He tackles his first Democratic President a number of times, never with conviction. Perhaps, realizing the handicap of his contemporaneous criticism he is trying to be too fair. Yet he has no apologies to offer. To the contrary:

Taken to task by thick and thin Democratic partisans for my criticism of the only two Democratic Presidents we have had since the War of Sections, Cleveland and Wilson, I have answered by asserting the right and duty of the journalist to talk out in meeting, flatly repudiating the claims as well as the obligations of the organ grinder they had sought to put on me, and closing with the knife grinder's retort—

*Things have come to a hell of a pass  
When a man can't wallop his own jackass.*

The nearest we come to detailed analysis is in a paragraph discussing the equipment which Cleveland brought to the White House. "Assuredly no one of his predecessors had entered the White House so wholly ignorant of public men and national affairs." Zachary Taylor commonly receives this distinction. But he grew up in the army, was familiar with the party leaders and was by heredity a gentleman. The same was true of Grant. "Cleveland confessed himself to have had no social training and he literally knew nobody."

There follows an illuminating anecdote of one Keiley whom the Virginia delegation backed for a minor consul-

ship. The President fell in love with him. "Consul be damned," he said. "He is worth more than that," and named him Ambassador to Vienna. It turned out that Mrs. Keiley was a Jewess and would not be received at court. Then he named him Ambassador to Italy; when it appeared that Keiley was an intense Roman Catholic and would be *persona non grata* at the Quirinal. Then Cleveland dropped him; but by the effort of friends an appointment as consul general at Cairo was obtained for him. All of which is cited to show the propensity of Grover Cleveland to take sudden fancies.

As a final comment upon the great quarrel with his first Democratic President, Colonel Watterson prints three letters, one from him to the President, the President's reply, and his own last word. It must be confessed that President Cleveland's letter has a lurching, opinionated, surly sound which leaves him much the worse for the exchange. Here are the final paragraphs of Colonel Watterson's rejoinder:

In answer to the ignorance of my service to the Democratic party, which you are at such pains to indicate—and, particularly, with reference to the sectional issue and the issue of tariff reform—I might, if I wanted to be unamiable, suggest to you a more attentive perusal of the proceedings of the three national conventions which nominated you for President.

But I purpose nothing of the sort. In the last five national conventions my efforts were decisive in framing the platform of the party. In each of them I closed the debate, moved the previous question and was sustained by the convention. In all of them, except the last, I was a maker, not a smasher. Touching what happened at Chicago, the present year, I had a right, in common with good Democrats, to be anxious; and out of that sense of anxiety alone I wrote you. I am sorry that my temerity was deemed by you intrusive and, entertaining a respectful protest against a ban which I cannot believe to be deserved by me, and assuring you that I shall not again trouble you in that way, I am, your obedient servant,

HENRY WATTERSON.

This was the end. Personal relations ceased, they did not speak as they passed by. "He was a hard man to get on with," drops the Colonel plaintively; and adds these few words of general criticism:

Over-credulous, though by no means excessive, in his likes, very tenacious in his dislikes, suspicious withal, he grew, during his second term in the White House, exceedingly "high and mighty" suggesting somewhat the "stuffed prophet" of Mr. Dana's relentless lambasting and verifying my insistence that he posed rather as an idol to be wor-



shipped, than a leader to be trusted and loved. He was in truth a strong man, who, sufficiently mindful of his limitations in the beginning, grew by unexampled and continued success overconfident and overconscious in his own conceit. He had a real desire to serve the country. But he was apt to think that he alone could effectively serve it. In one of our spats I remember saying to him "You seem, Mr. President, to think you are the only pebble on the beach—the one honest and brave man in the party—but let me assure you of my own knowledge that there are others." His answer was, "Oh, you go to ——!"

Let us hasten to add that Colonel Watterson has reserved his fire touching his second Democratic President, and his Book of Woodrow Wilson remains to be written. We hope and trust that it will be written. There are a few paragraphs tossed off casually at the end of these volumes that hint of what is to follow; and the general opinions of the Colonel upon this interesting topic are already abundantly of record. Here is the chief Woodrovian comment:

In all that he does we can descry the schoolmaster who arrived at the front rather late in life. One needs only to go over the record and mark how often he has reversed himself to detect a certain mental and temperamental instability clearly indicating a lack of fixed or resolute intellectual purpose. This is characteristic of an excess in education; of the half-baked mind over-trained. The overeducated mind fancies himself a doctrinaire when he is in point of fact only a disciple.

Of the League of Nations this is set down, not so inadequate or insufficient as it may at first seem:

I cannot too often repeat that the world we inhabit is a world of sin, disease and death. Men will fight whenever they want to fight, and no artificial scheme or process is likely to restrain them. It is mainly the costliness of war that makes most against it. But, as we have seen the last four years, it will not quell the passions of men or dull national and racial ambitions.

The quotation before the last may be taken as evidence that despite the Olympian flavor of these generous volumes it is really our Marse Henry, of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and none other who is writing. There are other bits. Just for a casual picture of what might be considered a reasonably distasteful human being there are the sentences relating to Senator Pomeroy of Kansas, who, as it happened, was the original of Mark Twain's "Senator Dillworthy," creator of that immortal phrase "the old flag and an appropriation." The Colonel presents

"Old Pom," as he had come to be called, whose oleaginous piety and noisy patriotism, adjusting themselves with equal facility to the purloining of subsidies and the roasting of rebels, to prayer and land grants, had impressed themselves upon the Satirist of the Gilded Age as upon his immediate colleagues in Congress. He was a ruffle-shirted Pharisee, who affected the airs of a bishop, and resembled Cruikshank's pictures of Pecksniff.

It was in a straight-shooting, straight-drinking era that the Colonel was born and learned his first creed. No wonder his English was always quick on the trigger and his aim of the best. The barbecue was still alive, men "took their politics as their liquor, straight," and Kentucky was just about the hottest political battlefield the world around. Yet right at the outset of the Colonel's narrative of his boyhood we come upon a back eddy of fact which will startle the conventional historians and their readers. The Colonel when a boy was dandled in the arms of General Jackson and he feels history owes a considerable reparation to Old Hickory for having represented him as a frontiersman with few graces:

I shared when a young man the common belief about him. But there is ample proof of the error of this. From middle age, though he ever liked a horse race, he was a regular if not a devout churchman. He did not swear at all, "by the Eternal" or any other oath. When he reached New Orleans in 1814 to take command of the army, Governor Claiborne gave him a dinner; and after he had gone Mrs. Claiborne, who knew European courts and society better than any other American woman, said to her husband: "Call that man a backwoodsman? He is the finest gentleman I ever met!"

It is hard to believe that anyone so altogether youthful as the Colonel harks back to these ancient figures. Yet he not only remembers General Jackson but was actually on the floor of the House of Representatives when an ex-President of the United States was stricken there in 1848. He had many friends among the Representatives, but none better than a "little old bald-headed gentleman who was good to me and would put his arm about me and stroll with me across the rotunda to the Library of Congress and get me books to read." He was the oldest member of the House when Colonel Watterson's father was the youngest. He was John Quincy Adams:

By chance I was on the floor of the House when he fell in his place, and followed the excited and tearful throng when they bore him into the Speaker's Room, kneeling by the side of the sofa with an improvised fan and crying as if my heart would break.

Presumably the Colonel was a shade older when he picked up the illuminating language on the occasion of the meeting of the great "Colonel" Dade of Virginia and a roistering Representative from Alabama, named McConnell. The latter's custom upon entering a saloon was to ask the entire roomful "to come up and lick", and he did so upon this historic occasion. As Dade drank he asked pompously, "With whom have I the honor of drinking?" After which the anecdote continues:

"My name," answered McConnell, "is Felix Grundy McConnell, begad! I am a member of Congress from Alabama. My mother is a justice of the peace, my aunt keeps a livery stable, and my grandmother commanded a company in the Revolution and fit the British, god darn their souls!"

Dade pushed his glass aside.

"Sir," said he, "I am a man of high aspirations and peregrinations and can have nothing to do with such low-down scopangers as yourself. Good morning, sir!"

Fed upon such rich and racy meat in its tender years no wonder that the Colonel's vocabulary grew into the superb carnivore that a whole nation has admired and feared.

All this early period in Washington life is somehow mighty attractive as here related. Things may be more pure and pious, they are certainly dryer, but they are with equal certainty far duller. The very smallness of the city made for the success of racy personalities—Mrs. Jane Casneau, for instance, who nicknamed General Scott "Old Fuss and Feathers," and incidentally gave the young Waterson a large part of his newspaper education, on the *Daily States* of Washington, of which she was leader writer.

The Colonel makes one feel clearly the doubt and dismay which large sections of the country felt over secession as it loomed up through the smoky fires of fanaticism North and South. He himself was torn between his intellectual resolve for Union and his deep roots in Southern soil. His sympathies are with the middle-ground men, with their tragedy and their problem. He tells of two Confederate generals who first tried for commissions in the Union Army, "gallant and good fellows too;" also of a famous Union general who was about to resign his commission in the army to go with the South but was prevented by his wife, a Northern woman.

The narrative of these last years before '60 gives a valu-

able sense of the unreality of much of the abuse that was flying about. There were a few extremists on both sides. Most of the politicians were playing with fire without really intending to set anything afire. The final break came against the wishes and intention of most of the leaders on both sides. Of the participants in these preliminaries in Washington to our great national tragedy, Colonel Watterson writes:

During a long time their social intercourse was unrestrained—often joyous. They were too far apart, figuratively speaking, to come to blows. Truth to say, their aims were after all not so far apart. They played to one another's lead. Many a time have I seen Keitt, of South Carolina, and Burlingame, of Massachusetts, hobnob in the liveliest manner and most public places.

It is certainly true that Brooks was not himself when he attacked Sumner. The Northern radicals were wont to say, "Let the South go," the more profane among them interjecting "to hell!" The Secessionists liked to prod the New Englanders with what the South was going to do when they got to Boston. None of them really meant it—not even Toombs when he talked about calling the muster roll of his slaves beneath Bunker Hill Monument; nor Hammond, the son of a New England schoolmaster, when he spoke of the "mudsills of the North," meaning to illustrate what he was saying by the underpinning of a house built on marshy ground, and not the Northern work people.

All contemporary testimony as to Lincoln is valuable, and Colonel Watterson's is particularly timely in view of the effort of an English poet to place him in drama, splendidly in many large poetic qualities, falsely in much detail. The whole narrative of Colonel Watterson is vivid and persuasive. He was presented to Lincoln by Seward shortly before the first inauguration. Lincoln's appearance did not impress him "as fantastically" as it had impressed some others. "I was familiar with the Western type and whilst Mr. Lincoln was not an Adonis, even after prairie ideals, there was about him a dignity that commanded respect." The next Monday afternoon he met Lincoln again in his apartment at Willard's Hotel as he was preparing to start for the inauguration. He was struck "by his unaffected kindness." The President that was about to be seemed "entirely self-possessed; not a sign of nervousness." Here is Colonel Watterson's description of the inauguration:

As I have said, I accompanied the cortège that passed from the senate chamber to the east portico. When Mr. Lincoln removed his hat to face the vast throng in front and below, I extended my hand to

take it, but Judge Douglas, just behind me, reached over my outstretched arm and received it, holding it during the delivery of the address. I stood just near enough the speaker's elbow not to obstruct any gestures he might make, although he made but few! and then I began to get a suspicion of the power of the man.

He delivered that inaugural address as if he had been delivering inaugural addresses all his life. Firm, resonant, earnest, it announced the coming of a man, of a leader of men; and in its tone and style the gentlemen whom he had invited to become members of his political family—each of whom thought himself a bigger man than his chief—might have heard the voice and seen the hand of one born to rule. Whether they did or not, they very soon ascertained the fact. From the hour Abraham Lincoln crossed the threshold of the White House to the hour he went thence to his death, there was not a moment when he did not dominate the political and military situation and his official subordinates.

A peculiarly successful effort is the estimate of Andrew Johnson, whom Colonel Watterson knew from childhood. Thrice he saw Johnson weep; never did he see him laugh. Life had been very serious for him. Of unknown parentage, the wife he had married taught him to read. Yet at twenty-six he was in the Tennessee General Assembly and at thirty-four he was in Congress. A cross between Jack Cade and Aaron Burr, is the summary phrase submitted. He hated "a biled shirt." He was conscientious and sincere; yet "a born politician, crafty to a degree and always successful, relying upon a popular following that never failed him." Of our three Presidents who came up from poverty, Colonel Watterson writes:

Much has been written of the humble birth and iron fortune of Abraham Lincoln. He had no such obstacles to overcome as either Andrew Jackson or Andrew Johnson. Jackson, a prisoner of war, was liberated, a lad of sixteen, from the British pen at Charleston, without a relative, a friend or a dollar in the world, having to make his way upward through the most aristocratic community of the country and the time. Johnson, equally friendless and penniless, started as a poor tailor in a rustic village. Lincoln must, therefore, take third place among our self-made Presidents. The Hanks family were not paupers. He had a wise and helpful stepmother. He was scarcely worse off than most young fellows of his neighborhood, first in Indiana and then in Illinois. On this side justice has never been rendered to Jackson and Johnson. In the case of Jackson the circumstance was forgotten, while Johnson too often dwelt upon it and made capital out of it.

Coming down to the Tilden-Hayes election we reach a period where Colonel Watterson might have been expected to reveal new and interesting evidence. He was Tilden's personal representative in the Lower House of the Forty-fourth Congress, a close personal friend, and undoubtedly

knew the inside of his party's strategy in those stormy days. But his decision is against revelations: "Long ago I resolved that certain matters should remain a sealed book in my memory." Of the charges against the honesty of Tilden he writes, however, in general terms:

I shall bear sure testimony to the integrity of Mr. Tilden. I directly know that the presidency was offered to him for a price, and that he refused it; and I indirectly know and believe that two other offers came to him, which also he declined. The accusation that he was willing to buy, and through the cipher dispatches and other ways tried to buy, rests upon appearance supporting mistaken surmise. Mr. Tilden knew nothing of the cipher dispatches until they appeared in the *New York Tribune*. Neither did Mr. George W. Smith, his private secretary, and later one of the trustees of his will.

It should be sufficient to say that so far as they involved No. 15 Gramercy Park they were the work solely of Colonel Pelton, acting on his own responsibility, and as Mr. Tilden's nephew exceeding his authority to act; that it later developed that during this period Colonel Pelton had not been in his perfect mind, but was at least semi-irresponsible; and that on two occasions when the vote or votes sought seemed within reach Mr. Tilden interposed to forbid. Directly and personally I know this to be true.

Colonel Watterson relates in some detail the various steps by which President Hayes was seated. His own counsel was always for bolder action; and it was never followed. "The Democrats were equal to nothing affirmative. The Republicans were united and resolute." The result was inevitable.

There is so much else in Marse Henry's fat volumes that it seems as if we had failed to mention almost all of it—his musical diversions with Adelina Patti and Theodore Thomas; his intimacy with Joseph Jefferson; his long stays in France and his abiding love and admiration for the French; of newspapers and their makers; of Colonel Roosevelt and the third term that is so impossible yet so tantalizingly attractive to every President that ever could catch a glimpse of it; of John Throckmorton of Louisville and "Old Hell's Delight;" of Tarifa-Ben-Malik; of Artemus Ward in London; and of almost every handsome or able or witty or crafty or conspicuous human being of the last three-quarters of a century.

There are better autobiographies than Marse Henry's—though precious few this side of England that we can recall. There is none written out of a warmer heart or a clearer, fairer mind or a more varied and affectionate experience of his fellow men.