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TWO WARS.

CHAPTER I.

Ancestry—Thomas French—Military Aspiration—Important Document—Appointment to West Point—New Jersey Farm Life—Great Changes—A Real Yankee—Pennsylvania Hall—The Fashions—Capture of a Hessian Soldier—Rufus Choate and Bishop Wainwright—West Point—Cadet Life—Senator Wall—John F. Reynolds—The Boycott—Rufus Ingalls—Requisites of a Commander.

INASMUCH as the government of this country cannot grant any title to nobility, nor can it be conferred by any foreign power, the people of the United States have, to gratify a natural pride, been obliged to obtain distinction in various ways. Among them may be mentioned the accumulation of money, political preferment, the pride of ancestry, and professional attainments.

The pride of ancestry is a very laudable one, and no doubt it has a guiding influence in shaping the destiny of our lives. We discover it in the honor felt by the members of such societies as those of the Colonial wars, the Cincinnati, Sons of the Revolution, Aztec Club, Sons of Veterans, and many others. And it is true: "Those will not look forward to their posterity who never look backward to their ancestors."

Of the countless millions of human beings who in successive generations have passed over the stage of life, most of them, on their exit, have sunk into oblivion. The names of twenty-seven are all that are known of the human family from man's creation down to the days of Noah.

From the deluge to the present time a few men of great genius as poets, historians, warriors, conquerors, and criminals claim *general recognition* from mankind. All others are relegated or consigned to the special history of a people, and thereby rescued from an otherwise oblivion. As individuals they perish.

I am quite sure we are more indebted to Boswell for a true insight into the life and character of Samuel Johnson than we are to his writings, and there is the utmost interest attached to the home life of all the world's great actors. Even as late as our

revolutionary war we find much interest in the part played by the fashionable ladies during the war, and gossip of the Wistar parties, and card parties of New York and Philadelphia. From the "Mischianza" * we have a clear insight to the true and gentle character of Major André and his accomplishments; and the beauty of some of the Quaker City belles.

Now in consideration of the desire of every gentleman to have a knowledge of his ancestry, and some knowledge of the times in which they lived, I purpose for the benefit of my children to write down somewhat of things I have seen and a part of which I was, and to make mention of some of the famous men with whom I have been acquainted during the eventful years between 1839 and the present time (1895).

As I was an officer in the United States army from 1843 to 1856, and a major general in the Confederate army, I purpose to relate some of the events of the Mexican and Confederate wars in the course of this narrative.

I was born in the county of Gloucester, State of New Jersey, on November 22, 1818. My father's name was Samuel French, whose ancestry in this country runs back to Thomas French, who descended from one of the oldest and most honorable of English families. The Ffrenches were Normans and went to England with William the Conqueror. In after days some of the family went with Strongbow, the Earl of Pembroke, when he invaded Ireland and "laid waste the country, reducing everything to subjection," whereby they gained great possessions. Thomas Ffrench, who was a descendant of the Norman Ffrenchs, was, as the register shows, baptized in the church now standing in Nether Hayford, North Hamptonshire, in the year 1537. The painting of that church you have.

A direct descendant of the aforesaid Thomas Ffrench, also named Thomas Ffrench, an adherent of the Church of England, for some reason abandoned it and became a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and for this apostasy was persecuted and imprisoned. To escape the persecution he sailed to the colonies, and when he returned to England he became "one of the landed proprietors of West New Jersey in America."

*A fête given by Maj. André in Philadelphia, May, 1778, in honor of Sir William Howe.

Taking passage for himself, wife, and nine children, he landed in Burlington, West New Jersey, on the 23d of July, 1680, O. S.

In 1664 Charles II. granted to his brother, the Duke of York, the territory along our coast north of the mouth of the Delaware river. The duke sold the land lying between the Delaware and Hudson rivers to the forty-first degree of north latitude to Lord John Berkeley and Sir John Cartaret, who named it New Cæsarea, or New Jersey. They divided it into East and West Jersey; but later, the grant being unsatisfactory to the king, owing to conflicting claims of the proprietors and their heirs, James in 1689 compelled them to surrender or sell their claims to the crown, and all were embodied in one province, New Jersey. Thomas French, under these proceedings, signed the articles relinquishing to the king his proprietary privileges to the one-ninetieth of the one-eighth of West Jersey. Thus New Jersey became a royal colony after the king bought the rights of the proprietors. Sir John Carteret named the land purchased New Jersey because he had been governor of the Isle of Jersey off the coast of France in the English Channel.

My mother's name was Rebecca Clark. She was born January 1, 1790, at Billingsport, on the banks of the Delaware river, in New Jersey. She was married to my father on the 3d day of October, 1816. The names of their children were: Garret, Samuel G., Charles C., John C., Sallie C., and George W.

Passing from family records, I will now revert to myself, and will endeavor to show what creatures of circumstances most men are. One day, when a boy (aged about eight years), my father left me at a store in Market Street, near Water Street, Philadelphia, Pa., where he usually obtained his family groceries. Over the door of that store was a modest signboard, and on it was painted the names, Hamilton and Hood. Mr. Hood was always kind to me, and usually gave me a paper of candy or other sweetmeats. On this particular occasion, it being a rainy day, I was left there alone with Mr. Hood, and I remember now—although near seventy years have passed—what there and then occurred. Eating candies and playing about in the store, I discovered hanging in the office a picture of a young person (full-size bust) clad in a gray coat, with three rows of round brass buttons thereon, braided horizontally. From some cause it riveted my boyish attention. After looking at it for some time,

I exclaimed: "Who is that?" Mr. Hood replied: "That is my son." "What is he dressed so fine for?" I asked. Mr. Hood then told me his son was a cadet at the United States military academy at West Point; that he was at school there. Dancing around, I said: "I want to go to that school too." The response was, "Only a few boys can go to that school; to get there the boy's father must have influence with the President, and get an appointment from him," etc. I still looked at the picture, and I can see it to-day as I did then. It will never be effaced. As years rolled on, and I knew nothing about West Point, except that it was not open to all applicants, it was fading away in my mind, until one day when passing along Chestnut Street I saw in the window of a clothing house a large picture of the cadets of the United States military academy on dress parade. I gazed on it a very long time, oblivious to all around me, calling to mind only the remarks made to me by Mr. Hood; on these I pondered long, and made some inquiries, and finally resolved to make an effort to get an appointment to the academy. On entering school, kept by the Rev. Samuel Aaron in Burlington, N. J., my roommate was a boy named Duer, who was from Pennsylvania. One day he opened his trunk and showed me his appointment as a cadet to the United States Military Academy. I told him I wanted to go there also, and questioned him about how he obtained the appointment. It was the same story that Mr. Hood had told me when I was almost a child. But, undaunted by the requirements, I resolved to act for myself, for up to this time I had not mentioned the subject to either my father or mother, because the former belonged to the Society of Friends, or Quakers; save only that, marrying "out of meeting," he was no longer regarded as an orthodox member, and they were not considered as warlike people in any respect. Accordingly, when at home one day, I wrote to the President of the United States asking in the name of my father the appointment. As his name was the same as mine, I supposed I would get the reply myself from the post office.

I was on the lookout for the answer, when one day I walked, to our house, my Quaker Uncle Charles, and handed to my father a letter that looked to me a foot long, and as it had on the envelope "War Department, Engineer's Office" in large letters, he said he was "anxious to know the contents of the document."

As father replied he did not understand why such a letter was sent to him, I rose "to explain."

My father said but little, but my uncle created some confusion by telling the family I was going to the "bowwows" and the "bad place." Without waiting to first ascertain whether I was "going to the war" or not, several of my Quaker aunts called soon after to say good-by before I got shot, as they were sure the British would kill me, so filled were their minds with "war's alarms" caused by the war of 1812.

When peace was restored and my uncle gone, my father told me that if I really desired the position he would aid me in getting it. So one day he took me with him and called on Charles C. Stratton, a relation of ours living near by, and then a Whig Member of Congress. New Jersey was not at that time divided into congressional districts, and a Whig delegation was seated in Congress under "the broad seal of New Jersey," and had no influence with a Democratic administration; and so no appointment came.

But, nothing discouraged, the following winter, being still at the Burlington Academy, I called one day on Gen. Garret D. Wall, then one of our United States Senators, a resident of Burlington. I made known to him the object of my calling. He listened attentively to my request, said that he knew my father and many of my relatives very well, and that he would aid me. The winter passed, Congress had adjourned, and no appointment came.

About this time my father, passing through the town of Woodbury, N. J., happened to stop at the courthouse, and meeting Senator Wall there, asked him about my cadetship, who, on being told the appointment had not been received, sat down in the court room, wrote a few lines to the President, handed them to father, and told him to mail them. In a few days the appointment came, the reward of diligent perseverance and waiting.

Good Mr. Hood! I suppose I often stopped at his store in after years, and yet I can only call to mind one allusion made to West Point. He told me once that his son, Lieut. Washington Hood, was in Cuba surveying a route for a railroad—for Tacon, Governor-General of Cuba—from Havana to Matanzas.

As there may be a desire in long after years to have a knowl-

edge of how the "well-to-do" farmers lived in the early part of the present century in New Jersey, I will describe the condition of the people at my father's. New Jersey was a slave State when I was born. In 1820 slavery was abolished; but there were two hundred and thirty-six slaves for life in 1850 in the State, because it did not emancipate a slave then in being. It only set free the *unborn babes*. You see the difference between *abolition* and *emancipation*? The superabundance of the necessities of life at that period can scarcely be realized now, and every one fared sumptuously, and nearly all alike. Under the house there were four cellars. As winter approached, perhaps forty cords of oak and hickory wood, four feet in length, were hauled to the wood pile. Some twenty or more fat hogs were killed, the hams and shoulders sugar-cured and smoked in a large stone smokehouse. The sides, etc., were salted down in great cedar tanks. The beeves were killed, the rounds dried, not smoked, and the rest "corned." Minced meat and sausage, in linked chains by the hundreds of pounds, cider boiled down in great copper kettles, and apple butter and pear sauce made without stint. Shad from the fishery were bought for salting down for six dollars per hundred. Oysters by the wagon load were in winter put in the cellar and kept fat by sprinkling them with brine and corn meal. In bins the choice apples were stored, each variety by itself, for daily use, while large quantities were buried in the earthen pits for spring. On the swinging shelves was the product of the dairy, cheese and butter. Four hog-heads were kept full of cider vinegar; and "apple jack" (apple brandy) in barrels in a row, according to age; great old-fashioned demijohns were kept full of cherries, wild and cultivated, covered with brandy. Apples, peaches, pears, huckleberries, currants, plums, etc., were dried on scaffolds in the sun for pies and other purposes: and the children forgot not their ample supply of chestnuts, shellbarks, hazelnuts, etc. Turkeys, geese, and barnyard fowls were raised largely, but they were considered produce for sale. There was no stint to these superabundant supplies, and they were yearly consumed. Rabbits, pheasants, partridges, and woodcock were abundant, and often were secured by trapping; and the ponds and streams were filled with fish. I might perhaps convey to you a better idea of the abundance of fruit and its cheapness by stating that I have seen wag-

ons come to the farm for peaches, and they were told to go into the orchard and get as many as they wanted, and on coming out an estimate would be made of the number of bushels gathered, and they were charged ten cents per bushel. Apples, the finest of varieties, were unsalable, and were hauled to the great public cider mill, ground up for cider, and that distilled into brandy on shares—that is, the mills allowed the farmer a certain number of gallons of brandy for every hundred bushels of apples delivered. And as numerous as were these great cider mills, I have seen the gates locked and teams turned away because of the supply exceeding the capacity of the presses.

There were Germans who wove carpets, and mills that converted the wool into cloth. All along the king's highway, which was marked with granite shafts for milestones, each one denoting, in carved letters, how many miles it was to Camden (Cooper's Ferry), there were smith's shops, wheelwrights, cabinet-makers, and country shoemakers, and taverns for entertainment of "man and beasts."

Daily, four-horse stagecoaches, carrying the mail and passengers, passed over the road, and, by common consent, I suppose, they were granted the right of way, or it may have been the last lingering observance of respect to kingly prerogative.

Now somewhere in this part of the country there lived an old and very polite Frenchman. He possessed a pony and a little wagon, and in that wagon he carried a bench, his lasts, and his tools; for he was a shoemaker, and went the rounds of the neighborhood to make, yearly, the family shoes. Out of morocco imported from Barbary, calfskin from France, and leather from the village tannery he fashioned most beautiful boots and shoes for male and female; yes, neat and befitting they were; and how long they lasted! Wonder not that I have introduced you to this polite and kind old Frenchman. He belonged to the Emperor's old guard, and after Waterloo he came to this country. Young as I was, many times and oft would I persuade him to tell me of "the battles, sieges, fortunes he had passed, of moving incidents of flood and field, of hairbreadth escapes," and grand charges he had made under the eye of the Emperor, how he detested England and loved the vine-clad hills and pleasant fields of France. At our house he would fix himself up in the loft over the carriage house, and then while at work he would

tell us boys so much about the "Little Corporal" and the grand marshals of France.

His abiding faith in and admiration for the Emperor passed all bounds. When it was known to all the world that Napoleon was dead, sleeping in a lone grave in a far distant island, guarded by English bayonets, as though he might "awake to glory again" and make the little monarchs tremble once more even at his name, this devoted soldier of the old guard would not believe it, and swore it was an English lie.

I have given these minute details of the manner in which the people lived in New Jersey and adjoining States in the olden times, "when the richest were poor and the poorest had abundance," to show you how well they lived, how comfortably clad, and how content they were in the days when trusts, combines, and protective tariffs were unknown, and no great corporations existed. To-day (1895) these great combines have destroyed individual competition, and impoverished more than half the entire population of the country and reduced it to rigidity of hours and the *slavery of wages*. They control legislation, corrupt the courts, subsidize the press, maintain advocates in the pulpits, and this will estrange the poor from the rich more widely than the peasant from the prince; and, continued, may implant an unkindly feeling, which, if not placated, may have to be settled by a resort to arms.

What a change has sixty-five years wrought! The stage-coach has disappeared on the advent of railroads, steam will be displaced by electricity as the candle and lamp have been, and as the friction match has banished the flint and steel and tinder box, the scythe and sickle have been superseded by the mower, the magnificent sailing ships have given way to the ocean racers. Ere long we will see the wind pass by as we see the streams of water now. "The cloud of witnesses around that hold us in full survey" may themselves be seen, for we are discovering the secrets of Arcana every day; the source of life and the mystery of death will soon be discovered.

When I was a boy the habitat of the Yankee did not extend south of Connecticut, as bounded by that elegant writer, Washington Irving, in his *veritable* history of New York. In that Knickerbocker history you will find the southern limit of the Yankee. Is it possible to conceive that Wouter van Twiller,

Rip van Winkle, William the Testy, or Peter the Headstrong, and the drowsy, dreamy Dutch people of New Amsterdam were Yankees? No! they dwelt farther north; yet they might have overrun and subdued New Amsterdam had not their minds been diverted by a sudden outbreak of witchcraft, that afforded these saints infinite amusement in a pious way, which saved New Amsterdam. When I was young it was not considered complimentary or prudent to call a boy of your own size a "Yankee."

My first recollection of seeing a real Yankee was connected with a clock. At home there stood in the hall an eight-day clock, nearly eight feet high, and it is to-day in the city of Woodbury, N. J., in possession of my sister, Mrs. John G. Whittall. On its face are the words, "Hollingshead, Woodstown, N. J., 1776." I infer that it might have commenced recording time about the hour that the liberty bell in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, on a certain fourth of July rang out the Bible proclamation of liberty to all the land, and the "inhabitants thereof."* It is a clock of some repute. It has Arabic numerals to express the hours. The pendulum was adjusted in length to the latitude, and vibrated every second and recorded it. It marked the day of the month, and the month itself, and a picture of a round-faced female would peep up from behind the scenes just as the moon rose, and veiled her face when she set. In the absence of the moon a ship sailed slowly on.

It had another accomplishment: an alarm that was worse than a Chinese gong. I should think that handsome clock, which has been recording time now for one hundred and nineteen years, would have sufficed; but no! One bright May morning, when all the fruit trees were in bloom, and the white-faced bumblebees were buzzing around, and the air was redolent with perfume, a wagon stopped at the gate, and a tall, lean individual came to the door and wished to see the mistress of the house. Said he was "a stranger in these parts, that his load was too heavy for his horse, and that he had clocks and other notions." Father was not in, so my mother gave him permission to leave a clock until such time as he would call for it. So he brought in an eight-day clock about three feet high and adjusted it on

*"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." (Lev. xxv. 10.)