

I was first introduced to Mr. Clay he said, "Ah, an élève of the Military Academy, I suppose?" and then spoke in commendation of the school. I felt sure the shade of his son rose up before him, for he was educated there, and was killed on the battlefield of Buena Vista. I once related to Mr. Clay a story I had heard about James K. Polk. His reply was emphatic: "It cannot be true. No man with such a heart could ever have been President of the United States." Contrast with this Mr. Benton's remark about Stephen A. Douglas: "He can never be elected President of the United States. His coat tail hangs too near the ground." I never heard Mr. Benton make a speech in favor of a measure; he was generally in opposition. If asked who I regarded the finest speaker in the Senate at that time, I would reply: "Henry Clay." I think his reply to Mr. Soule, of Louisiana, on the boundary of New Mexico the best speech I have ever heard. He was the most self-reliant man I ever knew. Gen. Jesup, who knew him well, told me that Mr. Clay's self-reliance prevented him being elected President. He would frame a bill on an important measure, introduce it, and whip the whole Whig party into supporting it. Mr. Webster and other great men in the party disliked coercion, and their support would be lukewarm, when he might have had their hearty coöperation if he had, before presenting a bill, called them to his room, shown it to them to make suggestions, and asked their support in advance, and made them feel that it was their bill as well as his. But no; he was a great leader of men, and commanded them to follow. That is well in military affairs, but in politics it creates jealousy where the leader is not established by law. In the Senate, where acts are recorded, he did command; in politics the vote is secret, his rivals were envious and, at heart, indifferent to his success, and he fell from his own greatness in the struggle for the presidency.

I recall what Gen. Jesup told me of Clay's duel with John Randolph, of Roanoke. When Randolph called Clay "a being so brilliant and so corrupt, only to be compared, indeed, to one thing under the skies—a heap of rotten mackerel by moonlight, that shines and stinks," Clay challenged him. Gen. Jesup and Dr. Hunt were Clay's seconds, and Gen. James Hamilton and Col. Tatnell were Randolph's. Gen. Jesup carried the cartel to Randolph, who referred him to Hamilton. The preliminaries

were arranged and the parties met on the Virginia side of the Potomac above the bridge over the Little Falls at 4 P.M. April 8, 1826. Randolph drove out there in his morning wrapper. Randolph declared that he would fire in the air, against which Hamilton remonstrated in vain. Without relating the particulars of Randolph's wearing gloves, and how, therefrom, his pistol was prematurely discharged, I will only observe that at the word Clay fired, the ball passing through Randolph's wrapper without touching his person; then Randolph fired in the air. Seeing this, Clay advanced, seized Randolph in his arms, and exclaimed, "I hope, my dear sir, you are not hurt. What do I not owe you?" Randolph exclaimed, "Mr. Clay, you owe me a new wrapper," pointing to the rent made in it by the pistol ball.

But what I wish more particularly to relate is that many years after this, when Randolph was passing through Washington on his way to Philadelphia, he was driven to the capitol, a sick man, and carried into the Senate chamber and placed on a sofa. It so chanced that Clay was then speaking, and Randolph exclaimed: "Raise me up! be quick, that I may hear that matchless voice once more." What testimony to Clay's eloquence!\*

Randolph was Minister to the court of St. Petersburg. He died on reaching Philadelphia, and his last words were: "Remorse! remorse!"

\* When I was stationed in Louisville, Ky., in 1850, on one occasion Thomas F. Marshall, Dr. Matthews (who was with us in Mexico), and I were at the Galt House. Marshall and the Doctor became engaged in repartee. The Doctor was a master of wit. Marshall acknowledged defeat, and invited us to dine with him next day at the Louisville Hotel, and we accepted his invitation. When the morrow came the Doctor was a little reluctant to go, fearing another encounter. However, at the hour Marshall was on hand. He was an entertaining host, and among his many anecdotes he related the treatment he once received from Henry Clay.

Marshall was opposed to Clay in some local political issue, and the day after the election many people assembled at the courthouse in Lexington to get the news. Clay was in the rotunda surrounded by friends when Marshall entered and approached the crowd. Clay saluted him with: "Good morning, Mr. Marshall. What is the news from Woodford County?" Marshall answered, "We traitors have been defeated;" and instead of extending his hand to "Tom" and saying, "O come back to the Whig fold!" he waved his long arm and exclaimed, "May that ever be the fate of all traitors!" Marshall said the repulse of his proffered friendship astonished him, but it was Clay's imperious way.

Washington was the home of many eminent men, remarkable for their integrity in the administration of their duties, purity of character, and modest manner of living. In the army there was Gen. Scott, the brave and successful soldier. He had a few eccentricities in regard to language. He called a lieutenant a "leftenant;" a clerk, a "clark." If any one failed among us youngsters to not give "guard" the letter "u" long, he would be corrected; and as president of military boards he would assume to be recorder, and generally wrote the proceedings himself. The press ridiculed him for writing "sparcely settled" and "conquering a peace," and the Democratic party harped on his "hasty plate of soup" when he was nominated for the presidency; to such mean tricks will a party descend.

There was Gen. Nathan Towson, who so gallantly captured the British brig *Caledonia* under the guns of Fort Erie, in October, 1812, ever a polite gentleman; and Gen. George Gibson, J. G. Totten, and T. S. Jesup, the last twice breveted for gallant service in the battles of Chippewa and Niagara. And I often met Col. George Croghan, noted for gallantry in defense of Fort Sandusky, and of whom President Jackson said, when charges of intoxication were presented to him against Croghan, "Tear them up; Col. Croghan may *drink* whenever he pleases;" and Col. J. B. Walbach, who was, if my memory serves me aright, one of the defenders of the Tuilleries when it was destroyed.

There were, of course, many naval officers at the capital, and a jovial, good set of men they were. Commodore R. F. Stockton resigned after the explosion of the "big" gun (the Peacemaker) on the propeller *Princeton*, and soon afterwards represented the State of New Jersey in the Senate. Lieut. Stockton was, as I was told the story, on the U. S. ship *Delaware* (in the harbor of Gibraltar), commanded by Commodore Pattison. Dining one day at a hotel on the neutral ground, among others present were three young English officers of the garrison and a young man, captain of a fine American ship. The three officers had indulged freely of wine, and made some offensive remarks to the young captain, who resented them, and I think threw his plate at their heads. When challenged, they refused to fight him, on the ground that socially he was not their equal. Stockton handed them his card, and exclaimed, "I will take that gentleman's

place; you cannot refuse to fight me." He fought all three and wounded them, and then challenged all the officers of the garrison. When the commandant of the fortress heard of it, he called at once on Commodore Pattison and in a good-natured way suggested to him to get his madcap officer on board ship as soon as possible and make a few days' cruise, or he would have no officers of the garrison left to command the guns. Pattison acknowledged the necessity, weighed anchor, and went seaward.\*

When John Howard Payne was Consul at Tunis, in 1841, he incurred a debt for the repairs of a building for the consulate. The bey refused to pay the bill, as he had formerly done to the foreign Consuls. This claim had been pending since Payne's death, in 1842; so, in hopes of settling the matter, Capt. Van Rensselaer Morgan was given a good vessel and ordered by the Secretary of the Navy to proceed to Tunis and adjust the claim if possible. Selecting his officers, he sailed for the Mediterranean. One of his officers selected was skilled in international law, and from the state papers made out a strong case in favor of the United States. Capt. Morgan was a plain, unpretending man, possessed of much common sense. On arriving at Tunis, he was informed that the bey was at his country palace, a few miles distant. The captain procured a carriage, and took two of his officers with him and drove out to see his mightiness, the bey—a prince in rank.

When admitted to the audience chamber, instead of making salaams he walked directly up to the bey and in a frank and friendly manner took his hand and, shaking it heartily, said: "How do you do, Mr. Bey, how do you do? Don't get up, Mr. Bey, don't get up; I will take a seat alongside of you. I hope you are well. How are Mrs. Bey and the children? I hope they are *all* well. I have been a long time coming, and I am glad to see you, Mr. Bey. We have a fine ship; you must come and see us, Mr. Bey, do come." The Captain, after a short interview about current events, rose to leave, and with some expression of solicitude for the bey's health, he retired a few steps, when, suddenly stopping, he turned to the bey, drew from his pocket a large envelope, and remarked, "O, Mr. Bey, I forgot to hand you these papers. Here they are. Don't read them now; you will have plenty of time to do that before we leave."

\*I give this story as related to me by a naval officer.

When the Captain was on his way back to his ship, an officer of the court, riding furiously, overtook him, rode past, and, planting his horse in front of the carriage, stopped it, and, bowing, exclaimed: "O howadji, the bey says that claim will be paid."\*

A few years ago I was the guest of Commodore Morgan at the life-saving station on Indian River, or rather on the broad Atlantic near Indian River inlet, and I regret that I did not think to ask him to tell me the story himself.

Society in Washington in the forties was largely Southern, and had not lost the courtly dignity and grace of colonial days. It was quiet, gentle, and refined, where it is now loud, boisterous, and rough in a measure, from the power of suddenly accumulated wealth that dominates over all the conditions of life, social and industrial. On New Year's and other occasions we used to call on Mrs. Madison. Her face retained marks of that beauty that has been transmitted to canvas and adorns the East Room of the presidential mansion. I have seen her wearing a turban.

On the 1st of April, 1853, I received a letter informing me of the death of Joseph L. Roberts, who died on the 28th of March previous at his residence on his plantation near Natchez, Miss., and requesting me to come there immediately, if possible. Gen. Jesup, ever considerate as he was, gave me leave to visit the family. Mr. Roberts had been the cashier of the branch Bank of the United States at Norfolk, Va., then president of the branch Bank of the United States Bank of Pennsylvania, and at his death was the agent of the latter institution. His wife was Miss Mary Symington, one of the beautiful women of Philadelphia.

As I had been engaged to Miss E. Matilda, their second daughter, we were married on the 26th of April, 1853, and soon after we went to Washington.

I remained on duty in the War Department until the spring of 1854. As I had become tired of hotel life, and wished the quietness of a home, I requested Gen. Jesup to assign me to some Western post, and he sent me to Fort Smith, Ark.

The military reservation of Fort Smith is separated from the town by a street, and the dividing line between Arkansas and the Choctaw Nation runs through the garrison grounds. When

\*Told as related to me.

Mrs. French crossed the street and went into the town, I became both the commander and the garrison, and "my right there was none to dispute."

My duties were light and were mainly receiving and forwarding supplies to the troops stationed at Forts Washita and Gibson. Several times I went in a light carriage to Fort Washita, through the Choctaw people, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles, accompanied by only my servant boy. The accommodations on the road were always clean and good and the people kind. On one occasion my duties required me to go from Washita to Fort Towson (eighty miles), on the Red river, to examine the public buildings and sell them. Col. Braxton Bragg fitted me out on a mule with a hard saddle, and I started off alone. That day I rode forty miles to "the boggy" without seeing any person; rested at night with an Indian family, and rode the next day to Fort Towson. I was met there by a committee of Choctaws, wealthy men and well educated. One of them owned slaves in number sufficient to raise three hundred bales of cotton yearly, and "lived sumptuously every day." They went with me to examine the buildings. It would have been folly to sell and destroy such property, for it would bring nothing. So I recommended that it be deeded to the Choctaws for an academy, and it was given to them.

I made a journey to Fort Gibson through the Cherokee Nation. I had been advised to stop and take breakfast with an Indian family, for I would there, no doubt, see two beautiful and accomplished girls, members of the family. Report had not done them justice. There was only a delicate shade of Indian color in the white skin. They were lithe, tall, and graceful; and nature gave them hands as beautiful as ever Praxiteles shaped in marble. They had lately returned from Troy, N. Y., where they had been educated by Miss Willard. Pope's

Lo the poor Indian, whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,

does not apply to the Choctaw and Cherokee Indians; many of them are well educated. I became acquainted with John Ross, chief of the Cherokees, in Washington, and lately sent to Mr. Clyde, of New York, a letter from John Ross to frame and place in the saloon of his steamship Cherokee.

Indian blood is being rapidly diffused with the blood of the white man—a half-breed, quarter, and eighth. Fred Douglass is dead—a mulatto. Shall we credit his intelligence to the white blood or the negro? Suppose he had been an octoroon? What then!

Sometime during the year 1855 Col. Henry Wilson made Fort Smith his headquarters, and with him came Lieut. J. H. Potter, adjutant of the Seventh Infantry, who was a classmate of mine. He was a jovial, good fellow, and a wound in his leg made it an excellent indicator of rain, and was used to guide us on hunting expeditions. Partridges were numerous, and during the hunting season nearly every afternoon Mrs. French and I in a carriage, and Lieut. Potter on his pony, would ride over the prairie and have rare sport. We had well-trained dogs and open shooting, and time passed pleasantly on. From this dream life I was awakened to make a visit to Natchez, Miss., on business connected with the estate of Mr. J. L. Roberts. In company with a French planter on the Teche, in Louisiana, whom I invited to go with me, I started in an ambulance for Little Rock. The weather was bitterly cold, the thermometer being ten degrees below zero. The close of the second day brought us to the usual "stopping place," but all accommodations were occupied by the sheriff, guards, and prisoners. The owner of the house told me I would have to go on to Little Rock, unless Capt. —, who lived seven miles farther on, could be induced to let us stay overnight with him; but that he was a misanthrope, and would see no one. The gray, leaden sky, the biting wind, the snow that was falling in dry pellets, and the bitter cold made our situation desperate, and induced me to try the Captain with a little adulation.

How lonely and dreary everything was! I knocked at the door, I heard the bolts slide, and the door was slowly opened by the Captain. I introduced myself to him, and told him that I was informed he lived here; that, regarding him as a Mexican veteran, I had called to pay my respects to him; that I was present and witnessed the gallant fight his command made with the Mexican lancers at the hacienda of Buena Vista; that I never was so cold before in my life, except the night of the battle of Buena Vista. He was silent till I finished. He took my hand, and said: "Come in." He ordered the horses taken out, intro-

duced me to his wife, and we passed a pleasant evening before a great blazing fire. Doubt not my word, but no one in Arkansas then believed that we entered the portals of that door.

Learning that no steamers could reach Little Rock, we went to Duval's Bluff, on the White river, for a boat; got on the first one that arrived. The Captain said he was bound for Memphis, but would land us at the mouth of the White river to get a down boat.

When near the mouth of the White river, the captain of the boat informed me that the wharfboat at the mouth of the river had been removed, and that he would carry us up the Mississippi until we met a down boat, and put us on that. The wind was blowing violently, and the river full of floating cakes of ice; and when we met a boat, so violent was the wind, it would not answer our hail to stop, and we went on up. In the midst of all this snow, ice, and gale the boat caught fire in the hold, and the flames burst up the hatchways very high. The hatches were soon covered with wet mattresses, steam driven into the hold, cotton on deck thrown overboard, and the boat landed where the bank was high and the water deep. Baggage and furniture were put on shore, and fires built. Holes were bored in the hull of the boat, but the cotton on fire could not be extinguished. About dusk the captain announced that he would put the baggage on the boat again and run up the river three miles to a place where he could scuttle her in shoal water and put out the fire. All the passengers walked through the deep snow to the landing above, except one man and his wife, the Frenchman, and myself. It was not pleasant to be on the river in such a gale, and with the boat deck hot from the fires beneath; and when we did land and made fast to a wood barge, the owner, seeing we were on fire, ran out and cut our line with his ax to send us adrift. What a punishment the crew of the steamer gave him for cutting our line!

In time a steamer going up took us on board and carried us to Helena. After trials innumerable, and too long to write, I reached Natchez safely. Nothing during the late war equaled this journey in the suffering I leave untold. I rode out to the residence of Gen. John A. Quitman, and asked him to go on my bond. He said: "Certainly I will. Take dinner with us, and I will then go down with you." When we reached the clerk's office,

he asked Mr. Inge, the clerk, what the amount would be, and I think he replied about one hundred and eighty thousand dollars. Asking for a *blank* bond, he signed it, and said: "Fill this out when necessary with any sum required." It was a kind act, and all he said was: "If you should have any trouble, let me know it, and I will aid you."

Mrs. Mary S. Roberts died April 5, 1854, and it devolved on me to take out letters of administration on the estate. I then returned to Fort Smith and continued on duty there until March 29, when I tendered my resignation. A reply to this letter was as follows:

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., April 24, 1856. }

*Sir:* Your letter of the 29th ult., tendering the resignation of your commissions of first lieutenant, Third Artillery, and captain and assistant quartermaster has been received and laid before the Secretary of War, by whom I am instructed to say that, as your communication appears to have been written under an impression that your leave would not be extended, he desires that you will state, with as little delay as practicable, if this supposition be correct, or whether it is your intention to leave the service in any event. A decision upon your letter of resignation will be deferred until you are heard from upon the subject.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. COOPER, *Adjutant General.*

Capt. S. G. French, Assistant Quartermaster, United States Army, Greenville, Miss.

As I had now, among other property, a plantation on Deer Creek, near Greenville, and over a hundred servants on it, I asked in reply that my resignation be accepted. To this letter I received an answer: "Your resignation has been accepted by the President of the United States to take effect the 31st inst. [May]."

While living at Fort Smith, Ark., was born Matilda Roberts French, on the 16th of August, 1855.

The summer of 1856 was passed mainly in Canada, and in the autumn we returned to the plantation. In the spring of 1857 Mrs. French and her little girl went on a visit to her sister, Mrs. John C. French, in San Antonio, Tex., and in May following I joined her there. And here a great sorrow crossed my path.

On the morning of June 13 Mrs. French greeted me with joy and hope, but ere the day was passed her life ended in that

sleep "that knows no breaking." She went to the grave for her baby boy, and took him with her. O, the irony of fate! She, the peer of the noblest, crowned by every grace, the idol of the house, the gentle mother, the handmaiden of charity, the priestess of religion, a believer in its promises, bowed to His will, and left all that makes life attractive before age or disease or disappointment or grief or sorrow had chilled her heart, and left a smile on her face for weeping friends, when her pure spirit rose to meet her God. Her remains rest with her babe on her breast, beside her parents, in a vault at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, Pa., where the waters of the beautiful Schuylkill gently flow by the portals of her tomb.

I remained in San Antonio until autumn, when I returned home. In March, 1858, I embarked on the steamer *Europa* for Liverpool. As I leave you my journal of travels in Europe, I shall mention only some of the principal places visited.

Most of the traveling in Italy was in private carriage, and only in daylight. In Naples, Rome, and Florence I remained a month each. From London I went to Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, Naples, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Modena, Bologna, Mantua, Verona, Venice, Milan, Como, Isola Madre, Isola Bella, Simplon Pass, Domo-dosola, Martigny, Chamoni, Geneva, Biene, Berne, Interlaken, Wingen Alps, Grindenwald, Basle, Baden-Baden, Ulm, Munich, Salzburg, Ischl, Lintz, Danube River to Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, Potsdam, Frankfort, Wiesbaden down the Rhine, Cologne, Liege, Brussels, Waterloo, Paris, London, Windsor Castle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Doncaster, Carlisle, Edinburgh, Sterling, Callander, The Trosacks, Lake Katrine, Dunbarton, Glasgow, Belfast, Irish Causeway, Dublin, Chester, Liverpool, home.

Soon after my return from Europe I was kindly invited by Benjamin Gould to make him a visit in Boston. His son, N. Goddard Gould, had, as I have stated, been my traveling companion for many months. Their home was in Penberton Square. The family was composed of charming, refined, cultured people, and I retain only pleasant recollections of their kindness.

I passed the winter in San Antonio, Tex., and the summer at Rye Beach, N. H. This year (1859) some notable events occurred that had important bearings in shaping the history, if not the destiny, of the country.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's publication of an imaginative work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Hinton Helper's pamphlet called a manifesto, and John Brown's raid in Virginia, to raise an insurrection among the slaves and to kill the whites, like distant thunder, presaged the coming storm. His purposes of *murder* were well known to many prominent abolitionists of the North, who assisted him by contributions to obtain arms to carry out his murderous designs. The party consisted of the old murderer, his three sons, thirteen white men, and five negroes from the North. They obtained possession of the armory at Harper's Ferry October 16, killing a negro, the mayor of the town, and other citizens. On arrival of the United States troops under Col. R. E. Lee, the armory was captured. Some were killed in the assault, and the remainder taken prisoners. These were tried and hung.

This infamous outrage on the State of Virginia, instead of being condemned by the people of the North, won their admiration, sympathy, and love for John Brown, and by some he is compared to our Saviour, and "his soul is still marching on," without peace or rest, like the wandering Jew—on, on—a punishment for his crimes. These events induced an uncalled for and unjust feeling of hatred toward the South, and the intensity of this hatred is most significantly displayed in the *apotheosis* of this murderer, and the *consecration* of his crimes. Could this be otherwise than a warning to the Southern people? The statutes made by the Northern States for the *abolition of slavery never set free a living slave*. They emancipated only the *unborn*. Now you can comprehend the difference between *abolition* and *emancipation*.

After the war began many unusual expedients were resorted to designed to increase the wild frenzy of the people North. Among them was the spectacle of Henry Ward Beecher selling slaves from the pulpit stage of his Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. So noted was this exhibition that it is related as one of the eight notable events of the nineteenth century. I attribute this act of his to *heredity*.

## CHAPTER X.

Canada, Boston, Rye Beach—Antislavery Party Nominates Lincoln for President—His Election Evidence of Hostility to the South—Mississippi Secedes—Gov. Pettus—Appointed Colonel and Chief of Ordnance in the Army of the State of Mississippi—State Had No Arms—Governor Sends an Agent to Europe to Purchase Arms—Laboratory for Making Ammunition—Flannel and Paper to Make Cartridges—Cartridges and Horse Collars—Only Old Flint Muskets—Old Shotguns—Governor Objects to the State Troops Going out of the State—Visit Home—Am Offered the Appointment of Brigadier General, Confederate States of America.

I SPENT the summer of 1860 at Rye Beach, Boston, and in Canada. When I returned I found the animosity between the two great political parties very bitter. Slavery, for the first time in the history of the United States, had consolidated all the "isms" and all parties against the South, and nominated Abraham Lincoln for the presidency, save only the Democratic party, and that was divided. On my journey home I found intense excitement all the way on account of a sectional nomination for President, and the election of Lincoln was deemed an open declaration of hostility to the people of the South, and drove them to the act of secession. And the people of Mississippi, in convention assembled, repealed all the laws and ordinances by which she became a member of the Federal Union, and on January 9, 1861, she was a sovereign and independent State.

About the middle of February I received a verbal message from the Governor, J. J. Pettus, that he wished to see me, and soon after I went to Jackson. The Governor informed me that I had been appointed a lieutenant colonel and chief of ordnance in the army of the State of Mississippi on February 12, 1861.

On assuming the duties of the office I found the State destitute of all military supplies and without arms. Investigation showed that a mercantile firm in New Orleans had offered, immediately after the act of secession, to furnish arms from England or Belgium, but it was declined.

Weeks after, the Governor sent an agent to Europe to purchase arms, but it was too late to get any in England; but in