

CHAPTER XXIV.

ULYSSES SIMPSON GRANT.

Home and Birth of Ulysses—How he received his name—Appointment to West Point—Graduates—Joins his Regiment—Goes to Louisiana—Marriage—Resignation—In the Leather Business—Second call to arms—First Post of Duty—Appointed Colonel—Brigadier-General—Contest at Fort Donelson—Major-General—Battle of Pittsburg Landing—Vicksburg—Condition of the Army—Banks and Grant—Fourth of July in Vicksburg—At Chattanooga—At Washington—The Commission of Lieutenant-Generalship—Reply in Acceptance—Advance on Richmond—Strategy—Estimated by the Confederates—President—As Chief Executive—Second Term—Around the World—Subsequent Life.

WAS born April 27, 1822, at Point Pleasant, an obscure village in the State of Ohio. His ancestry on his father's side is purely Scotch; the tartan of Clan Grant may to-day be found in the shops of Edinburgh.

The noblest characteristics of the Caledonian race appeared in the father, Jesse R. Grant, and were transmitted in a remarkable degree to his son. The shrewd sagacity, practical common sense, and clear judgment, so eminently shown by the subject of this sketch, may be traced to his ancestors, the motto of whose house, "Stand firm, stand fast, stand sure," may give us a hint of the source of those personal characteristics which have brought not only honor to himself, but

at Chapultepec, ending in the conquest of the city of Mexico. For distinguished gallantry at Molino del Rey he received the brevet of first lieutenant. The capture of the city of Mexico was no easy achievement. At a certain point in the siege, Lieutenant Grant noticed a church at the right of a defence which must be carried before entrance to the city could be effected, with a steeple about one hundred feet high. He found the padre and demanded the keys, which were refused; but Grant soon convinced the simple priest that the surrendering those keys was a military necessity. A mountain howitzer drawn by hand was speedily taken in pieces, and four or five men carried it to the belfry of this little church, where Grant himself (having first protected the church) quickly arranged the gun so that it should command the defence already noticed. Such success attended him that the Mexicans were compelled to abandon their post, over which the stars and stripes soon floated.

The piece was then directed against the western gate of the city. General Worth was not long in noticing the shells issuing from this novel position, and marking the effect on the enemy, was delighted with the sagacity of the performance. That night the garrison surrendered, and on the morrow the Americans held Mexico. General Worth sent for Grant, and publicly congratulated him on the success of his novel plan. For this achievement, so important and successfully executed, without orders, young Grant received honorable mention in all official reports, and the brevet rank of captain.

At the close of the war he returned with his regiment to the United States, was married to Miss Julia

Dent, the sister of his classmate, and as the life of a soldier in time of peace was distasteful to him, he left the army, and retired upon a farm near St. Louis, which was given by Mr. Dent to his daughter.

The ordinary farm products yielding him but a poor support, he increased his income by hauling wood to the St. Louis market, driving his own team, and arrayed in the rough dress suited to his business; thus drawing to himself scornful looks from the gayly dressed army officers with whom he came in contact.

At length becoming convinced that, as a farmer, he was not a success, he applied for the post of city surveyor of St. Louis, which was declined. He tried various means to increase his income, and often found himself in straitened circumstances. His father offered him an interest in the leather concern which he had established, and here he remained until the boom of the gun at Sumter fell upon the startled ear of the nation.

Hon. E. B. Washburne, then member of Congress from that district, introduced him to Governor Yates, who took little notice of the modest farmer, but afterwards, on the recommendation of a friend, sent for him, and put him in charge of a camp of a thousand men who did not know how to hold a musket. In four weeks this regiment (the Twenty-first Illinois infantry), which at first was inclined to sneer at the officer in rusty clothes who took command, became one of the best disciplined bodies in the service, and this with no severity on the part of the officer, and no ill-feeling on the part of the men. This regiment was subsequently ordered to Missouri.

At that time, and it was too much the case to the

end of the war, all appointments in volunteer service depended upon political influence at Washington, and to his constant friend, Hon. Mr. Washburne, Colonel Grant was indebted for his appointment as brigadier-general, received in August of this year, 1861. His transfer to the great central point of Cairo followed this promotion. At his strategy and wisdom in the capture of Paducah we can only glance, as well as at the slaughter at Fort Henry and the contest at Fort Donelson.

Early in 1862 General Grant was again promoted, and was made a major-general, being placed in command of the department of Tennessee. The confederate forces had assembled an overwhelming force at Pittsburg Landing, with the design and expectation of complete annihilation to the Union army. Grant was in the field before eight o'clock on the morning on which the decisive battle was begun. He knew that General Buell was on his way with reinforcements, and if he could hold the foe in check till Buell's arrival, his victory was certain. It was a doubtful and a dreadful day of fighting. Well might the brave commander exclaim, "Oh, for night, or Buell." After a second hard day's fight, victory perched above the stars and stripes, though the fugitives were not pressed. The army of the Tennessee were exhausted by the fight, and Buell's men by the long and rapid march, with the subsequent engagement.

For eight months Vicksburg had successfully resisted all attempts of the Union forces to capture it. Notwithstanding the superior generalship of Grant, and the utmost vigilance of his supporting commanders, it maintained the name of "the impregnable." By

means of intercepted communications, Grant had discovered early in June, 1863, that the Confederate forces within the city had only rations for thirty days. Immediately, sappers and miners were at work, and so well guarded were the entrances to these different excavations, that the enemy had not the slightest knowledge that their forts were being undermined, and yet the parapet of the principal fort was only twenty feet distant from the mouth of the mine. The 25th of June was fixed for the explosion, and twenty-two hundred pounds of powder were used in the shaft; a fuse was run out to the mouth of the shaft, and the match applied. What a surprise must that explosion have been! With a shout, the troops of Grant rushed into the yawning jaws of the shattered parapet, firing as they went. This manœuvre advanced the troops thirteen hundred yards nearer the final breastwork, and our hero sent word to the general in command (who had been his classmate at West Point) that if the city were not surrendered, it would be carried by assault. On the morning of July 3d, an interview was held between Generals Grant and Pemberton, outside the city, at which the latter said: "I meet you, General Grant, to negotiate terms in relation to my post. What do you demand, sir?" "Unconditional surrender, sir." "Never! I will continue the fight." "Very well, sir; my army was never in better condition."

After a long silence, during which, no doubt, General Pemberton reflected on his scarcity of supplies, and the helpless women and children within his lines, he acceded to the terms proposed; and the next day thirty-one thousand six hundred men, including two thousand one hundred and fifty officers, and fifteen generals,

were surrendered to the man whose coat of arms bore the words, "Stand fast, stand sure, stand firm."

This conquest was not followed by inactivity, although from the 1st of May till the 4th of July, he had led seven hotly contested battles, in each case winning victory. He offered to send to General Banks at Port Hudson, an "army corps of as good soldiers as ever stood on the continent, no better in the world." The Army of the Mississippi was now divided between Generals Banks, Schofield and Burnside, and General Grant was placed in command of "the military division of the Mississippi." It had been intended to devolve upon him further duties in the field, but being partially disabled by an accident, he was compelled to decline the honor.

Early in October he was on the move toward Chattanooga, which is situated in a bend of the Tennessee river, in what is well named the "Switzerland of America." The Confederate forces held it as a stronghold, and supposed it impregnable—a depot for supplies and of the greatest importance to their armies. General Grant's command now included the Departments of Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee. The intrenchments of the enemy were on the lofty heights of Lookout mountain, on the ranges of Missionary ridge. After a personal inspection, General Grant decided to effect a lodgment of troops on the left bank of the Tennessee river, three miles below the base of Lookout mountain. On the night of October 26th 1,250 picked men floated down through the darkness, and landed in front of the enemy's pickets, only six miles from Chattanooga. By use of a concealed zigzag road he brought to the banks of the Chickamauga a miniature fleet of

pontoon boats, in which soon after midnight of November 23d the daring troops embarked, floating silently along the darkness through the Chickamauga into the Tennessee, keeping close to the right bank of the river, within a few rods of the enemy's pickets. Not a word was spoken; not the dash of an oar was heard as the current bore the troops along. As the morning broke over the lofty heights the entire command had reached the designated spot where their comrades were waiting to be ferried over. By the middle of the next day the entire force, artillery, cavalry and infantry, had crossed the river and encamped on Missionary ridge. Generals Thomas, Hooker and Sherman, acting in concert, kept the Confederate forces engaged until, toward evening, at a given signal of six guns from the headquarters of General Grant, a portion of General Hooker's command sprang impetuously forward, dashed up the steep of Lookout, and there won, after a desperate struggle, that battle above the clouds, at which a large capture of munitions rewarded the valor of our troops and the wisdom of their commander. His characteristic modesty was shown in the despatch to Washington which followed these four days of desperate fighting and brilliant achievement:—"I believe I am not premature in announcing a complete victory."

The effect of this conquest, which had shattered the Confederate forces at the West, was most inspiring, not only to the Union troops, but to the entire country. President Lincoln appointed a day of special thanksgiving to God by the people in their usual places of worship. At the assembling of Congress the united thanks to General Grant of both houses, as the repre-

salvation to his country. Ulysses S. Grant, until eleven years of age, enjoyed the advantages of a common school education, for three months of every year; during this time he assisted his father in the tannery, and at such out-of-door work as was needful on the farm, exhibiting a great fondness for horses, as well as skill and judgment in training them, quite noticeable in one so young.

When twelve years old he was sent by his father to purchase a horse of a neighbor; intrusted with sixty dollars, he was instructed to pay, if possible, but fifty. The owner made some inquiries of the lad respecting the amount of money which Mr. Grant had given to his son, and, with the ingenuousness of childhood, Ulysses told the whole story. As a matter of course, the price of the horse was sixty dollars. But the shrewd lad knew something of the merits of a horse, and on examination, decided that he was worth but fifty. No effort on the part of the trader could move the lad whose family crest bore the words "Stand firm;"—words were of no avail, and after a deal of haggling the lad rode away on his purchase and ten dollars in his pocket.

But he had no taste for the life he was leading, and while he frankly told his father that he would cheerfully work with him until he was twenty-one, he would never be a tanner when at liberty to choose for himself. The father, too wise to attempt to coerce a boy who knew so well what he wished, cast about to find means to educate the lad, and when his son was fifteen years old, urgently applied to his friend, Thomas L. Hamer, to procure for his son an appointment for a cadetship at West Point, then vacant in his district.

Young Grant was baptized Hiram Ulysses, but, at the moment of rising to make the nomination, Mr. Hamer had forgotten that fact, and knowing that his mother's name was Simpson gave that as his middle name, entering him as U. S.; thus giving him the initials of the country which was to educate him, and whose life he was destined to preserve. He made efforts to have the mistake corrected, but in vain, and U. S. he and his country remain to this day.

Grant made no brilliant record at West Point. He had no special fondness for any branch of study except mathematics. He was by no means insubordinate, but inattentive to the minutiae of military etiquette required of cadets, so that he was constantly undergoing petty punishments for having a shoe untied on parade or a cravat awry. This same disregard of forms has followed him throughout his career: no officer is less scrupulous in the etiquette of costume or requires from his subordinates fewer tokens of respect.

He graduated in 1843, twenty-first in a class of thirty-six; and as there were not twenty-one vacancies in the regular army, he had brevet rank of second lieutenant and was attached to the fourth infantry, stationed at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, where he met a friend and classmate in the son of Fred Dent, a prominent St. Louis merchant. A little later, in consequence of the Mexican war, Grant's regiment was ordered to Texas, to join the army of General Taylor. His first battle was at Palo Alto, followed by Monterey. His regiment was then transferred to General Scott, and participated in the renowned siege and capture of Vera Cruz. Here the young officer was made quarter-master, and was present at all the battles of Scott's brilliant campaign,