VARIOUS

THE BAY STATE MONTHLY, VOLUME 3, NO. 1

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Содержание

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CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN

Among the emigrants from England to the western world in the great Puritan exodus was Joanna Thember Coffin, widow, and her son Tristram, and her two daughters, Mary and Eunice. Their home was in Brixton, two miles from Plymouth, in Devonshire. Tristram was entering manhood's prime—thirty-three years of age. He had a family of five children. Quite likely the political troubles between the King and Parliament, the rising war cloud, was the impelling motive that induced the family to leave country, home, friends, and all dear old things, and become emigrants to the New World. Quite likely Tristram, when a youth, in 1620, may have seen the Mayflower spread her white sails to the breeze and fade away in the western horizon, for the departure of that company of pilgrims must have been the theme of conversation in and around Plymouth. Without doubt it set the young man to thinking of the unexplored continent beyond the stormy Atlantic. In 1632 his neighbors and friends began to leave, and in 1642 he, too, bade farewell to dear old England, to

become a citizen of Massachusetts Bay.

He landed at Newbury, settled first in Salisbury, and ferried people across the Merrimack between Salisbury and Newbury. His wife, Dionis, brewed beer for thirsty travellers. The Sheriff had her up before the courts for charging more per mug than the price fixed by law, but she went scot free on proving that she put in an extra amount of malt. We may think of the grave and reverend Justices ordering the beer into court and settling the question by personal examination of the foaming mugs,—smacking their lips satisfactorily, quite likely testing it a second time.

Tristram Coffin became a citizen of Newbury and built a house, which is still standing. In 1660 he removed with a portion of his family to Nantucket, dying there in 1681, leaving two sons, from whom have descended all the Coffins of the country—a numerous and widespread family.

One of Tristram's decendants, Peter, moved from Newbury to Boscawen, New Hampshire, in 1766, building a large two-storied house. He became a prominent citizen of the town—a Captain of the militia company, was quick and prompt in all his actions. The news of the affair at Lexington and Concord April 19,1775, reached Boscawen on the afternoon of the next day. On the twenty-first Peter Coffin was in Exeter answering the roll call in the Provincial assembly—to take measures for the public safety.

His wife, Rebecca Hazelton Coffin, was as energetic and

patriotic as he. In August, 1777, everybody, old and young, turned out to defeat Burgoyne. One soldier could not go, because he had no shirt. It was this energetic woman, with a babe but three weeks old, who cut a web from the loom and sat up all night to make a shirt for the soldier. August came, the wheat was ripe for the sickle. Her husband was gone, the neighbors also. Six miles away was a family where she thought it possible she might obtain a harvest hand. Mounting the mare, taking the babe in her arms, she rode through the forest only to find that all the able-bodied young men had gone to the war. The only help to be had was a barefoot, hatless, coatless boy of fourteen.

"He can go but he has no coat," said the mother of the boy.

"I can make him a coat," was the reply.

The boy leaped upon the pillion, rode home with the woman —went out with his sickle to reap the bearded grain, while the house wife, taking a meal bag for want of other material, cutting a hole in the bottom, two holes in the sides, sewing a pair of her own stockings on for sleeves, fulfilled her promise of providing a coat, then laid her babe beneath the shade of a tree and bound the sheaves.

It is a picture of the trials, hardships and patriotism of the people in the most trying hour of the revolutionary struggle.

The babe was Thomas Coffin—father of the subject of this sketch, Charles Carleton Coffin, who was born on the old homestead in Boscawen, July 26, 1823,—the youngest of nine children, three of whom died in infancy.

The boyhood of the future journalist, correspondent and author was one of toil rather than recreation. The maxims of Benjamin Franklin in regard to idleness, thrift and prosperity were household words.

"He who would thrive must rise at five."

In most farm-houses the fire was kindled on the old stone hearth before that hour. The cows were to be milked and driven to the pasture to crop the green grass before the sun dispatched the beaded drops of dew. They must be brought home at night.

In the planting season, corn and potatoes must be put in the hill. The youngest boy must ride the horse in furrowing, spread the new-mown grass, stow away the hay high up under the roof of the barn, gather stones in heaps after the wheat was reaped, or pick the apples in the orchard. Each member of the family must commit to memory the verses of Dr. Watts:

> "Then what my hands shall find to do
> Let me with all my might pursue,
> For no device nor work is found
> Beneath the surface of the ground."

The great end of life was to do something. There was a gospel of work, thrift and economy continually preached. To be idle was to serve the devil.

"The devil finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

Such teaching had its legitimate effect, and the subject of this sketch in common with the boys and girls of his generation made

work a duty. What was accepted as duty became pleasure.

Aside from the district school he attended Boscawen Academy a few terms. The teaching could not be called first-class instruction. The instructors were students just out of college, who taught for the stipend received rather than with any high ideal of teaching as a profession. A term at Pembroke Academy in 1843 completed his acquisition of knowledge, so far as obtained in the schools.

The future journalist was an omnivorous reader. Everything was fish that came to the dragnet of this New Hampshire boy —from "Sinbad" to "Milton's Paradise Lost," which was read before he was eleven years old.

The household to which he belonged had ever a goodly supply of weekly papers, the *New Hampshire Statesman*, the *Herald of Freedom*, the *New Hampshire Observer*, all published at Concord; the first political, the second devoted to anti-slavery, the third a religious weekly. In the westerly part of the town was a circulating library of some one hundred and fifty volumes, gathered about 1816—the books were dog-eared, soiled and torn. Among them was the "History of the Expedition of Lewis and Clark up the Missouri and down the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean," which was read and re-read by the future correspondent, till every scene and incident was impressed upon his memory as distinctly as that of the die upon the coin. Another volume was a historical novel entitled "A Peep at the Pilgrims," which awakened a love for historical literature. Books of the Indian

Wars, Stories of the Revolution, were read and re-read with increasing delight. Even the *Federalist*, that series of papers elucidating the principles of Republican government, was read before he was fourteen. There was no pleasure to be compared with that of visiting Concord, and looking at the books in the store of Marsh, Capen and Lyon, who kept a bookstore in that, then, town of four thousand inhabitants—the only one in central New Hampshire.

Without doubt the love for historical literature was quickened by the kind patronage of John Farmer, the genial historian, who was a visitor at the Boscawen farm-house, and who had delightful stories to tell of the exploits of Robert Rogers and John Stark during the French and Indian wars.

Soldiers of the Revolution were living in 1830. Eliphalet Kilburn, the grandfather of Charles Carleton Coffin on the maternal side, was in the thick of battle at Saratoga and Rhode Island, and there was no greater pleasure to the old blind pensioner than to narrate the stories of the Revolution to his listening grandchild. Near neighbors to the Coffin homestead were Eliakim Walker, Nathaniel Atkinson and David Flanders, all of whom were at Bunker Hill—Walker in the redoubt under Prescott; Atkinson and Flanders in Captain Abbott's company, under Stark, by the rail fence, confronting the Welch fusileers.

The vivid description of that battle which Mr. Coffin has given in the "Boys of '76," is doubtless due in a great measure to the stories of these pensioners, who often sat by the old fire-place in

that farm-house and fought their battles over again to the intense delight of their white-haired auditor.

Ill health, inability for prolonged mental application, shut out the future correspondent, to his great grief, from all thoughts of attempting a collegiate course. While incapacitated from mental or physical labor he obtained a surveyor's compass, and more for pastime than any thought of becoming a surveyor, he studied the elements of surveying.

There were fewer civil engineers in the country in 1845 than now. It was a period when engineers were wanted—when the demand was greater than the supply, and anyone who had a smattering of engineering could find employment. Mr. Coffin accepted a position in the engineering corps of the Northern Railroad, and was subsequently employed on the Concord and Portsmouth, and Concord and Claremont Railroad.

In 1846 he was married to Sallie R. Farmer of Boscawen. Not wishing to make civil engineering a profession for life he purchased a farm in his native town; but health gave way and he was forced to seek other pursuits.

He early began to write articles for the Concord newspapers, and some of his fugitive political contributions were re-published in *Littell's Living Age*.

Mr. Coffin's studies in engineering led him towards scientific culture. In 1849 he constructed the telegraph line between Harvard Observatory and Boston, by which uniform time was first given to the railroads leading from Boston. He had charge of

the construction of the Telegraphic Fire Alarm in Boston, under the direction of Professor Moses G. Farmer, his brother-in-law, and gave the first alarm ever given by that system April 29, 1852.

Mr. Coffin's tastes led him toward journalism. From 1850 to 1854 he was a constant contributor to the press, sending articles to the *Transcript*, the Boston *Journal, Congregationalist*, and New York *Tribune*. He was also a contributor to the *Student and Schoolmate*, a small magazine then conducted by Mr. Adams (Oliver Optic).

He was for a short time assistant editor of the *Practical Farmer*, an agricultural and literary weekly newspaper. In 1854 he was employed on the Boston *Journal*. Many of the editorials upon the Kansas-Nebraska struggle were from his pen. His style of composition was developed during these years when great events were agitating the public mind. It was a period which demanded clear, comprehensive, concise, statements, and words that meant something. His articles upon the questions of the hour were able and trenchant. One of the leading newspapers of Boston down to 1856 was the *Atlas*—the organ of the anti-slavery wing of the Whig party, of the men who laid the foundation of the Republican party. Its chief editorial writer was the brilliant Charles T. Congdon, with whom Mr. Coffin was associated as assistant editor till the paper was merged into the *Atlas and Bee*.

During the year 1858 he became again assistant on the *Journal*. He wrote a series of letters from Canada in connection

with the visit of the Prince of Wales. He was deputed, as correspondent, to attend the opening of several of the great western railroads, which were attended by many men in public life. He was present at the Baltimore Convention which nominated Bell and Everett as candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency in 1860. He travelled west through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, before the assembling of the Republican Convention at Chicago, conversing with public men, and in a private letter predicted the nomination of Abraham Lincoln, who, up to the assembling of the convention, had hardly been regarded as a possible candidate.

He accompanied the committee appointed to apprise Mr. Lincoln of his nomination to Springfield, spent several weeks in the vicinity—making Mr. Lincoln's acquaintance, and obtaining information in regard to him, which was turned to proper advantage during the campaign.

In the winter of 1860-61, Mr. Coffin held the position of night editor of the *Journal*. The Southern States were then seceding. It was the most exciting period in the history of the republic. There was turmoil in Congress. Public affairs were drifting with no arm at the helm. There was no leadership in Congress or out of it. The position occupied by Mr. Coffin was one requiring discrimination and judgment. The Peace Congress was in session. During the long nights while waiting for despatches, which often did not arrive till well toward morning, he had time to study the situation of public affairs, and saw, what all men did

not see, that a conflict of arms was approaching. He was at that time residing in Maiden, and on the morning after the surrender of Sumter took measures for the calling of a public meeting of the citizens of that town to sustain the government. It was one of the first—if not the first of the many, held throughout the country.

Upon the breaking out of the war in 1861 Mr. Coffin left the editorial department of the *Journal* and became a correspondent in the field, writing his first letter from Baltimore, June 15, over the signature of "*Carleton*"—selecting his middle name for a *nom de plume*.

He accompanied the right wing under General Tyler, which had the advance in the movement to Bull Run, and witnessed the first encounter at Blackburn's Ford, July 18. He returned to Washington the next morning with the account, and was back again on the succeeding morning in season to witness the battle of Bull Run, narrowly escaping capture when the Confederate cavalry dashed upon the panic-stricken Union troops. He reached Washington during the night, and sent a full account of the action the following morning.

During the autumn he made frequent trips from the army around Washington to Eastern Maryland, and the upper Potomac, making long rides upon the least sign of action. Becoming convinced, in December, that the Army of the Potomac was doomed to inaction during the winter, the correspondent, furnished with letters of introduction to Generals

Grant and Buell from the Secretary of War, proceeded west. Arriving at Louisville he found that General Buell had expelled all correspondents from the army. The letter from the Secretary of War vouching for the loyalty and integrity of the correspondent was read and tossed aside with the remark that correspondents could not be permitted in an army which he had the honor to command.

Mr. Coffin proceeded to St. Louis, took a look at the army then at Rolla, in Central Missouri, but discovering no signs of action in that direction made his way to Cairo where General Grant was in command. General Grant's headquarters were in the second story of a tumble-down building.

No sentinel paced before the door. Ascending the stairs and knocking, Mr. Coffin heard the answer, "Come in." Entering, he saw a man in a blue blouse sitting upon a nail-keg at a rude desk smoking a cigar.

"Is General Grant in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

Supposing the man on the nail keg with no straps upon his shoulder to be only a clerk or orderly, he presented his letter from the Secretary of War, with the remark, "Will you please present this to General Grant?" whereupon the supposed clerk glanced over the lines, rose, extended his hand and said, "I am right glad to see you. Please take a nail keg!"

There were several empty nail kegs in the apartment, but not a chair. The contrast to what he had experienced with General

Buell was so great that the correspondent could hardly realize that he was in the presence of General Grant, who at once gave him the needed facilities for attaining information.

The rapidity of the correspondent's movements—the quickness with which he took in the military situation, may be inferred from the dates of his letters. On January 6, 1862, he wrote a letter detailing affairs at St. Louis. On the eighth, he described affairs at Rolla in Central Missouri. On the eleventh, he was writing from Cairo. The gunboats under Commodore Foot were at Cairo, and the correspondent was received with the utmost hospitality, not only by the Commodore, but by all the officers.

Upon the movement of General Zolicoffer into Kentucky, Mr. Coffin hastened to Louisville, Lexington, and Central Kentucky, but finding affairs had settled down, hastened down the Ohio River on a steamboat, reaching the mouth of the Tennessee just as the fleet under Commodore Foot was entering the Ohio after capturing Fort Henry. Commodore Foot narrated the events of the engagement, and Mr. Coffin, learning that no correspondent had returned from Fort Henry, stimulated by the thought of giving the Boston *Journal* the first information, jumped on board the cars, wrote his account on the train, and had the satisfaction of knowing that it was the first one published.

Returning to Cairo by the next train, he proceeded to Fort Donelson and was present in the cabin of the steamer "Uncle Sam" when General Buckner turned over the Fort, the Artillery,

and 15,000 prisoners to General Grant. He hastened to Cairo, wrote his account on the cars, riding eastward, till it was complete, then returning, and arriving in season to jump on board the gunboat Boston for a reconnoissanceof Columbus.

Mr. Coffin continued with the fleet during the operation at Island No. 10. His knowledge of civil engineering enabled him to assist Captain Maynadier of the engineers in directing the mortar firing. On one occasion while mounted on a corn crib near a farm-house to note the direction of the bombs, the Confederate artillerists sent a shell which demolished a pig-pen but a few feet distant.

While at Island No. 10, the battle of Pittsburg Landing was fought. Leaving the fleet he hastened thither, accompanied the army in its slow advance upon Corinth, was present at the battle of Farmington and the occupation of Corinth.

General Halleck, smarting under the criticism of the press, ordered all correspondents to leave, and Mr. Coffin once more joined the fleet, descending the Mississippi. During the engagement with the Confederate fleet at Memphis, he stood upon the deck of the Admiral's despatch boat with note-book and watch in hand—noting every movement. He was fully exposed, aided in hauling down the flag of the Confederate ship, "Little Rebel," and assisted in rescuing some of the wounded Confederates from the sinking vessels.

He accepted an invitation from Captain Phelps of the Benton to accompany him on shore when the city was surrendered, and

saw the stars and strips go up upon the flag-staff in the public square and over the Court House.

The Army of the Potamac was in front of Richmond, and he returned east in season to chronicle the seven day's engagement on the Peninsular. The constant exposure to malaria brought on sickness, which prevented his being with the army in the engagement at the second Bull Run, but he was on the field of Antietam throughout the entire contest, and wrote an account which was published in the Baltimore *American*, of which an enormous edition was disposed of in the army—and was commended for its accuracy.

In October Mr. Coffin was once more in Kentucky, but did not reach the army in season to see the battle of Perrysville. Comprehending the situation of affairs there, that there could be no movement until the entire army was re-organized under a new commander, he returned to Virginia, accompanying the army in its march from the Potomac to Fredericksburg, and witnessed that disastrous battle. A month later he was with the fleet off Charleston and saw the attack on Sumter by the Monitor, and the bombardment of Fort McAllister.

In April he was once more with the Army of the Potomac, arriving just as the troops were getting back to their quarters after Chancellorsville to hear the stories and collect an account of that battle.

When the Confederate army began the Gettysburg Campaign Mr. Coffin watched every movement. He was with the cavalry

during the first day's struggle on that field, but was an eyewitness of the second and third days' engagement. His account was re-published in nearly every one of the large cities, was translated and re-published in France and Germany. While the armies east and west were preparing for the campaign of 1864 Mr. Coffin made an extended tour through the border states—Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, to ascertain what changes had taken place in public opinion. In May he was once more with the Army of the Potomac under its great leader, Lieutenant General Grant, and saw all the conflicts of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna, around Hanover, Cold Harbor, the struggles in front of Petersburg through '64. Upon the occupation of Savannah by General Sherman he hastened south, having an ardent desire to enter Charleston, whenever it should be occupied by Union troops. He was successful in carrying out his desires, and with James Redpath of the New York *Tribune* leaped on shore from the deck of General Gilmore's steamer when he steamed up to take possession of the city.

Mr. Coffin's despatch announcing the evacuation and occupation of Sumter, owing to his indefatigable energy, was published in Boston, telegraphed to Washington, and read in the House of Representatives before any other account appeared, causing a great sensation.

Thus read the opening sentence:

"Off Charleston, February 18, 2 P.M. The old flag waves over

Sumter and Moultrie, and the city of Charleston. I can see its crimson stripes and fadeless stars waving in the warm sunlight of this glorious day. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory."

In March the correspondent was again with the Army of the Potomac, witnessing the last battles—Fort Steadman—Hatcher's Run—and the last grand sweep at Five Forks. He entered Petersburg in the morning—rode alone at a breakneck pace to Richmond, entering it while the city was a sea of flame, entered the Spottsville hotel while the fire was raging on three sides—wrote his name large on the register—the first to succeed a long line of Confederate Generals and Colonels. When President Lincoln arrived to enter the city, he had the good fortune to be down by the river bank, and to him was accorded the honor of escorting the party to General Weitzel's headquarters in the mansion from which Jefferson Davis had fled without standing upon the order of departure.

With the fall of Richmond, and the surrender of Appomattox, Mr. Coffin's occupation as an army correspondent ended. During these long years he found time to write three volumes for juveniles—"Days and Nights on the Battle Field," "Following the Flag," and "Winning his Way."

On July 25, 1866, Mr. Coffin sailed from New York for Europe, accompanied by Mrs. Coffin, as correspondent of the Boston *Journal*. War had broken out between Austria on the one side and Italy and Germany on the other. It was of short duration; there was the battle of Custozza in Italy and

Konnigratz in Germany, followed by the retirement of Austria from Italy, and the ascendency of Bismarck over Baron Von Beust in the diplomacy of Europe. It was a favorable period for a correspondent and Mr. Coffin's letters were regularly looked for by the public. The agitation for the extension of the franchise was beginning in England. Bearing personal letters from Senator Sumner, Chief Justice Chase, General Grant, and other public men, the correspondent had no difficulty in making the accquaintance of the men prominent in the management of affairs on the other side of the water. Through the courtesy of John Bright, who at once extended to Mr. Coffin every hospitality, he occupied a chair in the speaker's gallery of the House of Commons on the grand field night when Disraelli, then Prime Minister, brought in the suffrage bill. While in Great Britain Mr. Coffin made the acquaintance not only of men in public life, but many of the scientists,—Huxley, Tyndal, Lyell, Sir William Thompson. At the social Science Congress held in Belfast, Ireland, presided over by Lord Dufferin, he gave an address upon American Common Schools which was warmly commended by the London *Times*.

An introduction to the literary clubs of London gave him an opportunity to make the acquaintance of the literary guild. He was present at the dinner given to Charles Dickens before the departure of that author to the United States, at which nearly every notable author was a guest.

Hastening to Italy, he had the good fortune to see the

Austrians take their departure from Verona and Venice and the Italians assume possession of those cities. Upon the entrance of Victor Emanuel to Venice he enjoyed exceptional facilities for witnessing the festivities.

He was present at the coronation of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, as King and Queen of Hungary. Through the courtesy of Mr. Motley, then Minister to Austria, he received from the Prime Minister of the empire every facility for witnessing the ceremonies.

At Pesth he made the acquaintance of Francis Deak, the celebrated statesman—the John Bright of Hungary; also, of Arminius Vambrey, the celebrated Oriental traveller.

At Berlin he had the good fortune to see the Emperor William, the Crown Prince, Bismarck, Van Moltke, the former and the present Czar of Russia, and Gortschakoff, the great diplomatist of Russia, in one group. The letters written from Europe were upon the great events of the hour, together with graphic descriptions of the life of the common people.

After spending a year and a half in Europe, Mr. Coffin visited Greece, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, sailing thence down the Red sea to Bombay, travelled across India to the valley of the Ganges, before the completion of the railroad, visiting Allahabad, Benares, Calcutta, sailing thence to Singapore, Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai. Ascending the Yang-tse six hundred miles to Wuchang; the governor of the province invited him to a dinner. From Shanghai he sailed to Japan, experiencing a

fearful typhoon upon the passage. Civil war in Japan prevented his travelling in that country, and he sailed for San Francisco, visiting points of interest in California, and in November made his way across the country seven hundred miles—riding five consecutive days and nights between the terminus of the Central Pacific road at Wadsworth and Salt Lake, arriving in Boston, January, 1869, after an absence of two and a half years. During that period the Boston *Journal* contained every week a letter from his pen.

For one who had seen so much there was an opening in the lecture field and for several years he was one of the popular lecturers before lyceums. In 1869 he published *Our New Way Round the World*, followed by the *Seat of Empire*, *Caleb Crinkle* (a story) *Boys of 76*, *Story of Liberty*, *Old Times in the Colonies*, *Building the Nation*, *Life of Garfield*, besides a history of his native town. His volumes have been received with marked favor. No less than fifty copies of the *Boys of '76* are in the Boston Public Library and all in constant use.

Mr. Coffin has given many addresses before teacher's associations, and a course of lectures before the Lowell Institute. During the winter of 1878-9 a movement was made by the Western grangers to bring about a radical change in the patent laws. Mr. Coffin appeared before the Committee of Congress and presented an address so convincing, that the Committee ordered its publication. It has been frequently quoted upon the floor of Congress and highly commended by the present

Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Lamar. Mr. Coffin also appeared before the Committee on Labor, and made an argument on the "Forces of Nature as Affecting Society," which won high encomiums from the committee, and which was ordered to be printed. The honorary degree of A. M. was conferred upon Mr. Coffin in 1870, by Amherst College. He is a member of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, and he gave the address upon the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of his native town. He is a resident of Boston, and was a member of the Legislature for 1884, member of the Committee on Education, and reported the bill for free textbooks. He was also member of the Committee on Civil Service, and was active in his efforts to secure the passage of the bill. He is a member of the present Legislature, Chairman of the Committee on the Liquor Law, and of the special committee for a Metropolitan Police for the city of Boston. Mr. Coffin's pen is never idle. He is giving his present time to a study of the late war, and is preparing a history of that mighty struggle for the preservation of the government of the people.

COLONEL JOHN B. CLARKE

Editor and Proprietor of the Manchester [N.H.] Mirror

Among the business enterprises in which the men of to-day seek fortune and reputation, there is scarcely another which, when firmly established upon a sound basis, sends its roots so deep and wide, and is so certain to endure and prosper, bearing testimony to the ability of its creators, as the family newspaper. Indeed, a daily or weekly paper which has gained by legitimate methods an immense circulation and a profitable advertising patronage is immortal. It may change owners and names, and character even, but it never dies, and if, as is usually the case, it owes its early reputation and success to one man, it not only reflects him while he is associated with it, but pays a constant tribute to his memory after he has passed away.

But, while the rewards of eminent success in the newspaper profession are great and substantial, the road to them is one which only the strong, sagacious, and active can travel, and this is especially true when he who strives for them assumes the duties of both publisher and editor. It requires great ability to make a great paper every day, and even greater to sell it extensively

and profitably, and to do both is not a possible task for the weak. To do both in an inland city, where the competition of metropolitan journals must be met and discounted, without any of their advantages, requires a man of grip, grit and genius.

In 1852 the Manchester Mirror was one of the smallest and weakest papers in the country. Its weekly edition had a circulation of about six hundred, that of its daily was less than five hundred, and its advertising receipts were extremely small. Altogether, it was a load which its owner could not carry, and the whole establishment, including subscription lists, good will, press, type and material, was sold at auction for less than a thousand dollars.

In 1885 the Weekly Mirror and Farmer has a circulation of more than twenty-three thousand and every subscriber on its books has paid for it in advance. The Daily Mirror and American has a correspondingly large and reliable constituency, and neither paper lacks advertising patronage. The office in which they are printed is one of the most extensive and best equipped in the Eastern States out of Boston. In every sense of the word the Mirror is successful, strong and solid.

The building up of this great and substantial enterprise from so small a beginning has been the work of John B. Clarke, who bought the papers, as stated above, in 1852, has ever since been their owner, manager, and controlling spirit, and, in spite of sharp rivalry at home and from abroad and the lack of opportunieies which such an undertaking must contend with in a small city,

has kept the Mirror, in hard times as in good times, steadily growing, enlarging its scope and influence, and gaining strength with which to make and maintain new advances; and at the same time has made it yield every year a handsome income. Only a man of pluck, push and perseverance, of courage, sagacity and industry, could have done this; and he who has accomplished it need point to no other achievement to establish his title to a place among the strong men of his time.

Mr. Clarke is a native of Atkinson, where he was born January 30, 1820. His parents were intelligent and successful farmers, and from them he inherited the robust constitution, the genial disposition, and the capacity for brain-work, which have carried him to the head of his profession in New Hampshire. They also furnished him with the small amount of money necessary to give a boy an education in those days, and in due course he graduated with high honors at Dartmouth College in the class of 1843. Then he became principal of the Meredith Bridge Academy, which position he held three years, reading law meanwhile in an office near by. In 1848 he was admitted to the Hillsborough county bar from the office of his brother, at Manchester, the late Honorable William C. Clarke, Attorney General of New Hampshire, and the next year went to California. From 1849 until 1851 he was practicing his profession, roughing it in the mines, and prospecting for a permanent business and location in California, Central America, and Mexico.

In 1851 he returned to Manchester and established himself

as a lawyer, gaining in a few months a practice which gave him a living; but in October of the next year the sale of the Mirror afforded an opening more suited to his talents and ambition, and having bought the property he thenceforth devoted himself to its development.

He had no experience, no capital, but he had confidence in himself, energy, good judgment, and a willingness to work for the success he was determined to gain. For months and years he was editor, reporter, business manager, accountant, and collector. In these capacities he did an amount of work that would have killed an ordinary man, and did it in a way that told; for everymonth added to the number of his patrons; and slowly but steadily his business increased in volume and his papers in influence.

He early made it a rule to condense everything that appeared in the columns of the Mirror into the smallest possible space, to make what he printed readable as well as reliable, to make the paper better every year than it was the preceding year, and to furnish the weekly edition at a price which would give it an immense circulation without the help of travelling agents or the credit system: and to this policy he has adhered. Besides this, he spared no expense which he judged would add to the value of his publications, and his judgment has always set the bounds far off on the very verge of extravagance. Whatever machine promised to keep his office abreast of the times, and increase the capacity for good work, he has dared buy. Whatever man he has thought

would brighten and strengthen his staff of assistants, he has gone for, and if possible got, and whatever new departure has seemed to him likely to win new friends for the Mirror he has made.

In this way he has gone from the bottom of the ladder to the top. From time to time rival sheets have sprung up beside him, but only to maintain an existence for a brief period, or to be consolidated with the Mirror. All the time there has been sharp competition from publishers elsewhere, but this has only stimulated him to make a better paper and push it succesfully in fields which they have regarded as their own.

In connection with the Mirror a great job printing establishment has grown up, which turns out a large amount of work in all departments, and where the state printing has been done six years. Mr. Clarke has also published several books, including "Sanborn's History of New Hampshire," "Clarke's History of Manchester," "Successful New Hampshire Men," "Manchester Directory," and other works. Within a few years a book bindery has been added to the establishment.

Mr. Clarke still devotes himself closely to his business six hours each day, but limits himself to this period, having been warned by an enforced rest and voyage to Europe in 1872 to recover from the strain of overwork, that even his magnificent physique could not sustain too great a burden, and he now maintains robust and vigorous health by a systematic and regular mode of life, by long rides of fifteen to twenty-five miles daily, and an annual summer vacation.

In making the Mirror its owner has made a great deal of money. If he had saved it as some others have done, he would have more to-day than any other in Manchester who has done business the same length of time on the same capital. But if he has gathered like a man born to be a millionaire, he has scattered like one who would spend a millionaire's fortune. He has been a good liver and a free giver. All his tastes incline him to large expenditures. His home abounds in all the comforts that money will buy. His farm is a place where costly experiments are tried. He is passionately fond of fine horses, and his stables are always full of those that are highly bred, fleet, and valuable. He loves an intelligent dog, and a good gun, and is known far and near as an enthusiastic sportsman.

He believes in being good to himself and generous to others; values money only for what it will buy, and every day illustrates the fact that it is easier for him to earn ten dollars than to save one by being "close."

A business that will enable a man of such tastes and impulses to gratify all his wants and still accumulate a competency for his children is a good one, and that is what the business of the Mirror counting-room has done.

Nor is this all, nor the most, for the Mirror has made the name of John B. Clarke a household word in nearly every school district in Northern New England and in thousands of families in other sections. It has given him a great influence in the politics, the agriculture, and the social life of his time, has made him a power

in shaping the policy of his city and state, and one of the forces that have kept the wheels of progress moving in both for more than thirty years.

In a word, what one man can do for and with a newspaper in New Hampshire John B. Clarke has done for and with the Mirror, and what a great newspaper can do for a man the Mirror has done for John B. Clarke.

DENMAN THOMPSON

Throughout the United States where-ever the name of New England is held in respect there is the name of Denman Thompson a household word. His genius has embodied in a drama the finer yet homlier characteristics of New England life, its simplicity, its rugged honesty, its simple piety, its benevolence, partially hid beneath a rough and uncouth exterior. His drama is an epic—a prose poem—arousing a loyal and patriotic love for the land of the Pilgrims in the hearts of her sons, whether at home, on the rolling prairies of the West, in the sunny South, amid the grand scenes of the Sierras, or on the Pacific slope.

That Denman Thompson was not a native of New Hampshire was rather the result of chance. His parents were natives of Swanzey, where they are still living at a ripe old age, and where they have always lived, save for a few years preceeding and following the birth of their children. In 1831 the parents moved to Girard, Erie County, Pennsylvania, when, October 15, 1833, was born their gifted son. The boy was blessed with one brother and two sisters, and death has yet to strike its first blow in the family.

At the age of thirteen years Denman accompanied his family to the old home in Swanzey, where for several years he received the advantages of the education afforded by the district school.

For his higher education he was indebted to the excellent scholastic opportunities afforded by the Mount Cæsar Seminary in Swanzey.

At the age of nineteen he entered the employ of his uncle in Lowell, Massachusetts, serving as book-keeper in a wholesale store, and in that city he made his *debut* as Orasman in the military drama of the French Spy.

In 1854, at the age of twenty-one years, he was engaged by John Nickerson, the veteran actor and manager, as a member of the stock company of the Royal Lyceum, Toronto. From the first his success was assured, for aside from his natural adaptation to his profession he possesses indomitable perseverance, a quality as necessary to the rise of an artist as genius. On the provincial boards of Toronto he studied and acted for the next few years, perfecting himself in his calling and preparing for wider fields. Then he acted the rollicking Irishman to perfection; the real live Yankee, with his genuine mannerisms and dialect, with proper spirit and without ridiculous exaggeration, and the Negro, so open to burlesque. The special charm of his acting in those characters was his artistic execution. He never stooped to vulgarities, his humor was quaint and spontaneous, and the entire absence of apparent effort in his performance gave his audience a most favorable impression of power in reserve. His favorite characters were Salem Scudder in The Octoroon, and Myles Na Coppaleen in Colleen Bawn.

In April, 1862, Mr. Thompson started for the mother country,

and there his reception was worthy a returning son who had achieved a well-earned reputation. His opening night in London was a perfect ovation, and during his engagement the theatre was crowded in every part. He met with flattering success during his brief tour, performing at Edinburg and Glasgow before his return to Toronto the following fall.

From that time must be dated the career of Mr. Thompson as a *star* or leading actor and manager, at first in low comedy, so called, or eccentric drama, and later, in what he has made a classic New England drama.

Mr. Thompson is the author of several very pleasing and successful comedies, but the play Joshua Whitcomb is the best known and most popular. The leading character is said to have been drawn from Captain Otis Whitcomb, who died in Swanzey in 1882, at the age of eighty-six. Cy Prime, who "could have proved it had Bill Jones been alive," died in that town, a few years since, while Len Holbrook still lives there. General James Wilson, the veteran, who passed away a short time since, was well known to the older generation of today. The last scene of the drama is laid in Swanzey and the scenery is drawn from nature very artistically. Mr. Thompson is the actor as well as creator of the leading character in the play. The good old man is drawn from the quiet and comforts of his rural home to the perplexities of city life in Boston. There his strong character and good sense offset his simplicity and ignorance. He acts as a kind of Providence in guiding the lives of others. To say that the play is pure is not

enough—it is ennobling.

The success of the play has been wonderful. Year after year it draws crowded houses—and it will, long after the genius of Mr. Thompson's acting becomes a tradition.

Mr. Thompson is a gentleman of wide culture and extensive reading and information. Not only with the public but with his professional brethren he is very popular on account of his amiable character. Naturally he is of a quiet and benevolent disposition, and has the good word of everyone to whom he is known.

As one of a stock company he never disappointed the manager—as a manager he never disappointed the public.

In private life he has been very happy in his marital relations, having married Miss Maria Bolton in July, 1860. Three children—two daughters and one son, have blessed their union.

A book could well be written on the adventures and incidents that have attended the presentation of the great play since its inception. Nowhere is it more popular than in the neighborhood of Mr. Thompsons's summer home. When a performance is had in Keene the good people of Swanzey demand a special matinee for their benefit, from which the citizens of Keene are supposed to be excluded.

In Colorado a Methodist camp-meeting was adjourned and its members attended the play *en masse*. Such is the charm of the play that it never loses its attraction.

Mr. Thompson is in the prime of life, about fifty years

old. His home is in New Hampshire; his birthplace was in Pennsylvania. He made his *debut* in Massachusetts, and received his professional training in Canada; he is a citizen of the United States, and is always honored where genius is recognized.

Like the favorite character, Joshua Whitcomb, in his favorite play, Mr. Thompson is personally sensitive, kind-hearted, self-sacrificing; he never speaks ill of any one, delights in doing good, and enjoys hearing and telling a good story; he is quiet, yet full of fun; generous to a fault. His company has become much attached to him.

In the village of Swansey is Mr. Thompson's summer home; a beautiful mansion, surrounded by grounds where art and nature combine to please. The hospitality of the house is proverbial, but its chief attraction is its well-stocked library.

NATIONAL BANKS

THE SURPLUS FUND AND NET PROFITS

By George H. Wood

In the elimination of an unusually large amount of dead assets under the requirements of the National Bank law, previous to extension of the corporate existence of a bank, the very interesting question is brought to notice, of what is the proper construction of the law in regard to reducing and restoring the surplus fund.

Does the law forbid the payment of a dividend by a National Bank when the effect of such payment will be to reduce the surplus fund of the bank below an amount equal to one-tenth of its net profits since its organization as a National Bank; and if so, upon what ground? It does, and for the following reasons. The power to declare dividends is granted by section 5199 of the Revised Statutes of the United States in the following language: "The Directors of any association (National Bank) may semi-annually declare a dividend of so much of the *net profits* of the association as they shall judge expedient; but each association

shall, before the declaration of a dividend, carry one-tenth of its net profits of the preceding half year to its surplus fund until the same shall amount to twenty per cent, of its capital stock."

The question at once arises, what are the net profits from which dividends may be declared, and do they include the surplus fund? It is held that the net profits are the earnings left on hand after charging off expenses, taxes and losses, if any, and carrying to surplus fund the amount required by the law, and that the surplus fund is not to be considered as net profits available for dividends, for, if it were, the Directors of a bank could at any time divide the surplus among the shareholders. It would only be necessary to go through the form of carrying one-tenth of the net profits to surplus, whereupon, if the surplus be net profits available for the purpose of a dividend, the amount so carried can be withdrawn and paid away at once, thereby defeating the obvious purpose of the law in requiring a portion of each six month's earnings to be carried to the surplus fund, that purpose being to provide that a surplus fund equal to twenty per cent, of the bank's capital shall be accumulated.

The law is to be so construed as to give effect to all its parts, and any construction that does not do so is manifestly unsound. Therefore a construction which would render inoperative the requirement for the accumulation of a surplus fund cannot be correct, and the net profits available for dividends must be determined by the amount of earnings on hand other than the surplus fund when that fund does not exceed a sum equal to one-

tenth of the earnings of the bank since its organization.

Having shown what the net profits available for dividends are, the only other question that can arise is: Can losses and bad debts be charged to the surplus fund and the other earnings used for paying dividends, or must all losses and bad debts be first charged against earnings other than the surplus fund, so far as such earnings will admit of it, and the surplus, or a portion of it, used only when other earnings shall be exhausted?

This question is virtually answered above, for if the object of the law in requiring the creation of a surplus fund may not be defeated by one means it may not by another; if it may not be defeated by paying away the amounts carried to surplus in dividends, neither may it be by charging losses to the surplus and at the same time using the other earnings for dividends.

Moreover, section 5204 of the Revised Statutes of the United States provides as follows: "If losses have at any time been sustained by any such association, equal to or exceeding its undivided profits then on hand, no dividend shall be made; and no dividend shall ever be made by any association, while it continues its banking operations, to an amount greater than its net profits then on hand, deducting therefrom its losses and bad debts."

This language fixes the extent to which dividends may be made at the amount of the "net profits" on hand after deducting therefrom losses and bad debts, and as it has been shown above that the surplus fund cannot be considered "net profits," available

for dividends within the meaning of the law, it follows that in order to determine the amount of net earnings available for dividends the losses must first be deducted from the earnings other than surplus.

It is to be observed also that section 5204 specifies that if losses have at any time been sustained by a bank equal to or exceeding its "*undivided* profits" on hand no dividends shall be made.

Now the surplus fund is not undivided profits, except in so far as it is earnings not divided among the shareholders. It is made upon a division of the profits—so much to the stockholders and so much to the surplus fund. If the law had intended that losses might be charged to surplus fund in order to leave the other earnings available for dividends it is to be presumed that care would not have been taken to use the words "undivided profits," in the connection in which they are used, as stated above.

Furthermore, if losses may be charged to surplus when at the same time the other earnings are used for dividends to shareholders, a bank may go on declaring dividends, and never accumulate any surplus fund whatever if losses be sustained, as they are in the history of nearly every bank. A construction of the law which would render inoperative the requirement for the creation of a surplus cannot be sound; and as the only way to insure that a surplus shall be accumulated and maintained is to charge losses against other earnings as far as may be before trenching upon the surplus; it must be that the law intended that

the "undivided profits" which are not in the surplus fund shall first be used to meet losses.

To a full understanding of the subject it is proper to say that after using all other earnings on hand at the usual time for declaring a dividend to meet losses the whole or any part of the surplus may be used if the losses exceed the amount of the earnings other than surplus, and then at the end of another six months a dividend may be made if the earnings will admit of it, one-tenth of the earnings being first carried to surplus and the re-accumulation of the fund thus begun.

This is because the law has been complied with by charging the losses against the "undivided profits," as far as they will go, and it is impossible to do more, or require more to be done, for the re-establishment of the state of things that existed prior to losses having been sustained than to do what the law requires shall be done to originally establish that state of things.

CONCORD, N.H

IMPRESSIONS D'UN FRANÇAIS

Par le Professeur Emile Pingault

Quand les Français, les Français de France, comme disent leurs cousins canadiens, parlent de l'Amérique ou pensent à cette reine des républiques, ils n'ont en vue que les grandes villes. New-York, Boston, Philadelphie, Chicago, la Nouvelle Orléans etc. … forment seuls, pour eux, l'immense continent découvert par Christophe Colomb.

Je voudrais essayer de réagir contre l'idée générale qu'on a, que la lumiére, l'intelligence, la prospérité ne se trouvent que dans les grands centres.

La Providence a voulu que je vinsse établir ma tente dans une ville qui, bien qu'étant la capitale du New-Hampshire, paraît comme un point microscopique auprès des villes que j'ai citées plus haut. Eh bien, sans flatterie aucune, si l'on a pu appeler Boston l'Athène de l'Amérique, je ne vois pas pourquoi on n'appellerait pas Concord un petit *Rambouillet*, toute proportion gardée.

Je ne vous dirái pas que Concord est une petite ville située sur la Merrimac, de 14,000 à 15,000 habitants, mais ce que je puis vous dire c'est qu'il faudrait aller bien loin pour trouver une ville plus intelligente et plus éclairée, je dirais même plus patriarcale. Tout le monde s'y connaît et s'estime l'un l'autre. Il y a dans cette ville une émulation pour le bien et pour l'instruction qui ne peut être surpassée.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.