LABOUCHERE AS HIS FRIENDS SAW HIM

BY MRS. T. P. O'CONNOR.

The first time I ever saw Mr. Labouchere was twenty-six years ago at Pope's Villa, Twickenham, that historical lovely place on the Thames, where the Labouchères always spent their Saturday to Monday after Easter. It was a warm day, late in June, when the English sunshine and flowers are at their best, and except for the greater formality and more elegant toilets, the hospitality of Pope's Villa was not unlike an old-fashioned "spending the day in the South." Carriages arrived at about 11.30 and gaily dressed ladies and gentlemen descended from them and wandered about on the close-cut emerald lawn, starred with daisies and blooming with roses until one o'clock, when luncheon was served.

I sat at Mr. Labouchere's right, and he talked continually and very brilliantly. Detecting my Southern accent, he said, flatteringly, he felt a positive kinship with the South; that, when an attaché of the English Legation in Washington he had been engaged to be married to a girl from South Carolina, with long red hair and skin like a magnolia leaf. He had visited her on her father's plantation, seen the slaves, who struck him as being happy and well cared for, heard the mocking birds sing in the moonlight and had his engagement broken with great consideration and charm by the young lady, who had fallen in love with her cousin.

"And were you," I asked him, "broken hearted?"

"Well," he said, with an amused twinkle in his eye, "I was reserved and sympathetically sentimental, for, I, who eschewed poetry, on my return to Washington, allowed Lytton, whom you will know as Owen Meredith, to read me the whole of 'Lucile.' He had just finished the last line and was bubbling over with it."

"And then what happened?" I asked.

"Well," said Mr. Labouchere, "I was cured of poetry, if not for my love for the lady, who afterwards married a second time and now lives in England. We are excellent friends and you will probably meet her some day."

"And has she," I asked, "the lovely red hair still and the magnolia complexion?"

"After forty years," said he, "you ask too much, but as a matter of fact her hair is red. I haven't asked her how she manages it, and she remains a charming, handsome woman."

I then wanted to know the history of Pope's Villa.

"What wonderful tourists you Americans are!" he said; "they come here in shoals and insist on seeing the room where the Immortal Poet breathed his last. There is no such room, but the butler, being an Irishman of imagination and resource, has selected at the top of the back stairs the darkest room in the house, and thither he leads these confiding ladies and gentlemen, gathering the nimble shilling as they depart.

"The fact is, the square hall with the carved panels is about all that belongs to the original house. That and the Grotto, where Pope wrote his 'Universal Prayer,' and a very excellent prayer it is. Two verses have stuck in my memory:

"'Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see,
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.'"

"To hide the fault I see could not well be the motto of 'Truth'," I said, laughing.

"No," said Mr. Labouchere, "'Truth' when the other guests had gone, chatting with her, and it was about half past two o'clock in the morning when is to expose the fault I see, but, after all, frauds, rascals and hypocrites should be exposed. They sap the strength of the community. Did you ever hear about the way the paper got its title? We had discussed all sorts of names and finally I jokingly suggested 'Lies.'"

"'Why not,' Henrietta said, 'call it just the opposite, 'Truth,' and I felt I could not find a better name."

We left the table then and returned to the house.

"The house stood a little back from the lawn for coffee, where Mr. Labouchere was soon surrounded by a crowd of people, all anxious to hear him talk. His sense of humor was so great that he never even spared himself in the making of a good story.

"Tell me," I said to him, years afterward, "a story to lift my gloom to-night, something that will make me laugh."

"As you are fond of dogs," he said, "I will tell you my solitary experience with a bull dog.

"When I was an attaché in Rome, the Marquesa di X held quite a salon. She dabbled in diplomacy, and one night after a large party I remained, the street, and just as I got beyond the steps, a large bull dog appeared from the shrubbery and made me quickly understand that it was his pleasure for me to stand stock still. Any movement on my part, even the slightest, aroused him to instant irritation and activity. He showed his teeth, snuffled most unpleasantly about my legs, and exacted absolute immobility of position. He was not to be won or softened by 'good dog,' or 'nice dog,' or 'good old boy,' he remained adamant, so did I.

"Finally at five o'clock Rome began to wake up, milkmen and butchers and baker boys passed along. They were amazed to see a gentleman in evening dress standing apparently without reason rooted to earth, but the bull dog was keeping watch under a lilac bush. Finally in desperation I gave a flying leap, landed on the step and rang the bell. By this time my jailor was frothing at the mouth with rage, and held my trousers affectionately in his mouth. As the fashion of these garments was voluminous at the period, my leg had escaped with only a slight graze.

"When the English butler finally appeared, sleepy and yawning, but composed and unastonished as a butler should be, I said to him, as if I was in the habit of calling at five o'clock in the morning, 'Is the Marquesa di X at home?'"

"'Yes, Sir, but she's in bed, sir.'

"'Ah!' I said, producing my card, 'when she awakes, pray give her my card and say I called.'

"'Yes, sir.'

"Then, I said, 'and by the way, I am not in the least afraid of this brute, but as he seems to wish to chew something, I will just wait here until you chain him up and, he finally was chained up, but with quite a good sized piece of black cloth in his mouth.'"

In one of his stories Henry James speaks of a man who had the charm of being always at home. Mr. Labouchere certainly possessed this charm, for he was always, except when at the House of Commons—he rarely went to the office of "Truth"—to be found in his library. He smoked, he read, he wrote, he talked. He never walked but he kept himself in good health by eating very moderately, and he drank nothing. Occasionally his doctor would urge him to take a glass of burgundy for lunch or dinner, and he always forgot it until Mrs. Labouchere said,

"You haven't taken your wine, Labby," and would then drink half a glass.

Those were the days when his pen was his sword. He wrote at a round table on a small pad, with a fountain pen. Every morning the footman filled half a dozen fountain pens, hung them up in a little rack on the wall, replenished a good sized straw basket, hanging beside them, with cigarettes, and this comprised Mr. Labouchere's outfit for the day. He could write with half a dozen people chatting around him, and would finish a cigarette, toss it in the fire, and say, with a smile, "Listen, this will make him squirm," and, without a qualm, read in a soft and gentle voice an unforgivable vitriolic attack on a man, which would give him an enemy for life. Mrs. Labouchere would often say,

"Oh, Labby, I wish you wouldn't," but with his pen he was both fearless and ruthless.

In a personal interview, unless to his bitterest enemy, he could not be anything but kind, and no one ever came to him for personal help or advice without getting it, and he was the confessor to whom many quaint and curious secrets were told. He loved to unravel a tangled skein, and he loved to make peace. Many a scandal in high life in London has been prevented, and many a wife and husband reconciled through his clever intervention.

As a companion he was ideal, restful, equable, cheerful, agreeable, and interested in every topic under the sun. Nothing and nobody bored him. The world in which he was so vital a factor and his own rich mind filled him with amusement and content. Even when suffering from gout his temper remained of the sweetest, and in all the years in which I knew him so intimately, I never once saw him cross, disagreeable or depressed. He was the most forgiving of cynics, and he really loved his kind.

There was never a greater philosopher than he, and there was no circumstances in life, no matter how tragic or how grim, that he could not illumine with his humor. During the siege in Paris, while suffering from positive hunger, he wrote home to Mrs. Labouchere when the authorities began to levy contributions from Mt. Zao for food:

"Camel soup, though somewhat woolly, is not half bad. But stewed mangoose is appalling. Last week I managed to get a chicken from a German by telling him that my mother was dying. The way to a German's heart is through his mother, or even grandmother. You must make the appeal to a Frenchman through his sweetheart. This is the difference between the two nations."

He was the soul of hospitality, nothing pleased him better than company. Mrs. Labouchere used to say he not only liked dinners and luncheons, but delighted in balls. There was no smallest act of hers that did not interest him, and she consulted him about everything. They differed widely in disposition and often in their point of view. Many arguments were the result, but I never saw two people have a better understanding. Indeed, an argument was the breath of his life, for with his ready wit and his power of seeing all sides of a question, he generally routed his adversary. On one occasion he and Mrs. Labouchere were preparing to visit the Duke and Duchess of Westminster at Chatsworth.

"Isn't it trying," she said to me, "that Labby won't take the beautiful dressing bag with silver appointments I gave him, but insists on taking an old shabby bag, and what do you think he has in it? A comb and brush, a tooth brush and Carlyle's 'French Revolution.' What," she said, turning to him, "do you suppose the butler will think of you?"

"My dear Henrietta," Mr. Labouchere said quietly, "I am not visiting the butler, it is a matter of supreme indifference what he thinks of me."

Underneath his wit and whimsicality he had an iron will, great common sense and strong and definite opinions. He always believed in Home Rule and Irishmen never possessed a more loyal or serviceable friend. He had a great admiration for Parnell and was at his resourceful best when he exposed the forgeries of Pigott and forced from him his dramatic confession.

It was Mr. Labouchere to whom Mr. Gladstone gave a promissory paper of Home Rule which was merely to be read to Mr. Parnell and afterward returned to the Prime Minister, Mr. Parnell's face never changed at the reading, and he discussed quite naturally some points with the member from Northampton. Then putting out his hand, said:

"Let me see that second clause a moment," and taking the paper from Mr. Labouchere he read it, considered it, folded it and placed it in his pocket.

Mr. Labouchere said, "Parnell, you must give me back that paper, I am under a bond to return it to Mr. Gladstone."

Mr. Parnell said, very gently, "Oh, no, it's safer in my pocket," and he withstood all Mr. Labouchere's brilliant arguments to get it back, and in his pocket it remained.

Mr. Labouchere's interview with Mr. Gladstone was stormy. Mr. Gladstone fiercely blamed him for the detention of the paper and urged him to recover it and finally Mr. Labouchere said, to the less daring statesman, "It's impossible; you get it back, I can't," and Mr. Parnell remained master of the situation and doubtless the document is still among his papers.

It was an experience Mr. Labouchere was very fond of relating and secretly he enjoyed intensely Mr. Parnell's superior cunning.

Another character who greatly interested Mr. Labouchere was Jack the Ripper.

"The fellow is a humorous murderer," he used to say, and twice before his horrible crimes were committed, whether he wrote them himself or by coincidence, two letters were sent to "Truth," office, addressed to Henry Labouchere, saying, "A murder will take place to-night, The Ripper."

"He sings like a monarch," Mr. Labouchere said, "and certainly at the present moment he is the most talked about man in London. I cannot fancy anything as thrilling as a man who has committed a murder having the morning papers brought to him, all with a different theory of his motive for the deed and his various whereabouts, while he himself is calmly drinking his coffee and safely eating toast and marmalade, his emotions must be delightful."

I said, "Of course a murder is easy, but don't you think the remains would be embarrassing?"

"Not at all, not at all," answered Mr. Labouchere. "Now, suppose I murdered you to-night" (he wouldn't have hurt a fly) and then he would give a dozen amusing ingenious theories of throwing detectives off the scent.

Some years ago there was a murder committed in England and the person strongly suspected was never convicted. Mr. Labouchere, with evidence and map of the locality before him, worked out the case to a perfectly logical and inevitable conviction. He then sent the paper to Sir Georg Lewis, who promptly returned it, saying that it would lead to a case for libel, with such enormously heavy damages to follow, that he could not publish it.

Many of Mr. Labouchere's most brilliant, witty and daring efforts never got beyond the Lewis offices. He did not complain at the return of a manuscript in such a case, or consider it a waste of time. To exercise his keen and ever active mind with ingenious work was to him a delight. He had a great power of concentration and was always studying some new subject or a new language.

When it was decided that on account of the need of more congenial climate he should live in Italy, he immediately began to study Italian. Every morning for an hour an Italian teacher came to give him a lesson. He carried a little dictionary in his pocket and every now and then would take out the book and commit a few words to memory.

When he went to Florence to live an agreeable, cheerful, gossipy, little priest came twice a week for the afternoon to speak in Italian with him. He said in this way he not only learned the language, but he knew everything that was going on in the town.

"And did you," I said to him on my first visit to his beautiful fourteenth century villa, which was really a small palace, with thirty bedrooms and ample reception and ball rooms, "cut down these frowning old windows with stone steps to them and make them into modern French affairs, opening into the garden?"

"I did, indeed," he said, "and thoroughly enjoyed myself in doing it. I am not expecting battles and attacks, like the cavalier of the fourteenth century. I do not, thank heaven, have to take refuge on the stairs while rival Italian factions fire into my dining-room. This is, I am pleased, to say, the nineteenth century. I have modernized the villa, let in sunshine and air, lighted it with electricity, the plumbing is perfect, and Maple has furnished it. There isn't an antique in the house and there isn't an uncomfortable chair."

I said, looking at the luxuriously furnished rooms, "I suppose if there was a ghost in these surroundings she's routed."

"I never heard of one," he said, "but in another villa that Henrietta, who can't abide a ghost, wanted me to buy, there were two.

"You see, it was a medieval fashion for Italian ladies of high degree, once a year as a badge of proper servitude, to wash and iron a basket of shirts for their liege Lords. The Marquis who lived in this particular villa had a beautiful wife of whom he was inordinately jealous. To prove her fidelity, the Marquesa, once when she laid her wash at the feet of her husband, prayed him to lift up his shirts and look into the bottom of the basket. He did, and beheld the head of his supposed rival lying on a pretty nest of pink tissue paper. And ever after her death, a tall dark woman stalked through the villa, carrying a wash-basket, followed by a gaily dressed, headless, young gentleman.

"I knew the first time Henrietta met this pair, we would be obliged to move, so I refused to buy the villa. Personally I rather like ghosts. I lived in a house, when a bachelor, in Chesterfield street, with a very quiet but extremely active and persistent ghost.

"He walked down from the drawing room to the kitchen, many times a day. Very likely in life he was like George Augustus Sala, a sort of amateur chef."

Mr. Labouchere loved books and had a large and varied library, but he cared nothing for art, and boasted that the only picture he ever bought was Whistler's "Golden Girl," and was simply to be of service to a friend. He said to Whistler, after the picture was hung,

"I wish you would take it back and paint in the girl. I don't stipulate what kind of a girl, any type will answer, just let me see her, that's all I ask."

And Whistler did take the picture back and had it some time in his possession. They had much in common, these two brilliant, witty men, and their friendship only ended with Whistler's death.

After Mr. Labouchere retired from public life and went to Florence to live, both he and Mrs. Labouchere found the life there to their taste. They loved the Florentines, the villa, the garden and the nightingales, and both loved the children. The Italian children are adorable little affectionate, impulsive creatures. They had many friends among them. Mrs. Labouchere gave delightful children's parties, and he looked on with great enjoyment.

I spent a long happy summer with them two years ago, and we were full of meetings and plans together for the future, and now I shall never see either of my friends again. He wrote me, last November:

MY DEAR MRS. O'CONNOR: Thank you for your book. Henrietta was just going to write to London for it. I have been reading it and it seemed to me to be likely a success, for it reads easily and you make what you describe interesting, but why I liked it was that you praised so much Henrietta, and recalled to me so many episodes with her in the past.

You say that we lived together on such intimate terms that one would be sure to die soon if the other did, and I am sure that I will not regret it if your anticipation proves correct. After above forty years of such intimacy two persons are about merged into one. I think she was really happy during our joint lives. I always intended to make her so and cared a thousand times more for her than for any other, and I am sure that she could always have sacrificed any one to me had it been necessary. At nearly so one has only to live in the past, and I miss her terribly, more terribly than any one but you can imagine. * * *

It looks like an election in a week or two. I hope that the English will not take offence at Redmond's dictating terms to the Government, but I seem to take no interest in politics and not to care which side wins. Yours affectionately, H. LABOUCHERE.

When I read this letter I felt even more than I saw his reticence, has great loneliness, and longing for the faithful companion whom he had lost. She never ceased to value, all her life long, every sign or mark of affection and commendation from him, and I opened the letter and left it all night on my writing table, thinking that if her gentle ghost came anywhere near her old friend that she would read these words, which had so deeply moved and touched me, the words of a caustic cynic, who had truly and faithfully loved but one woman, the whole of his brilliant life.

He wrote me again in March, "Am glad that you are sailing via Genoa and to know that you will visit the villa again. I miss Henrietta more every day, and while nothing logically points to another life, I hope to see her again."

And this was the last time I ever heard from him, and now his longing has carried him beyond the reach of all who loved, and understood him.

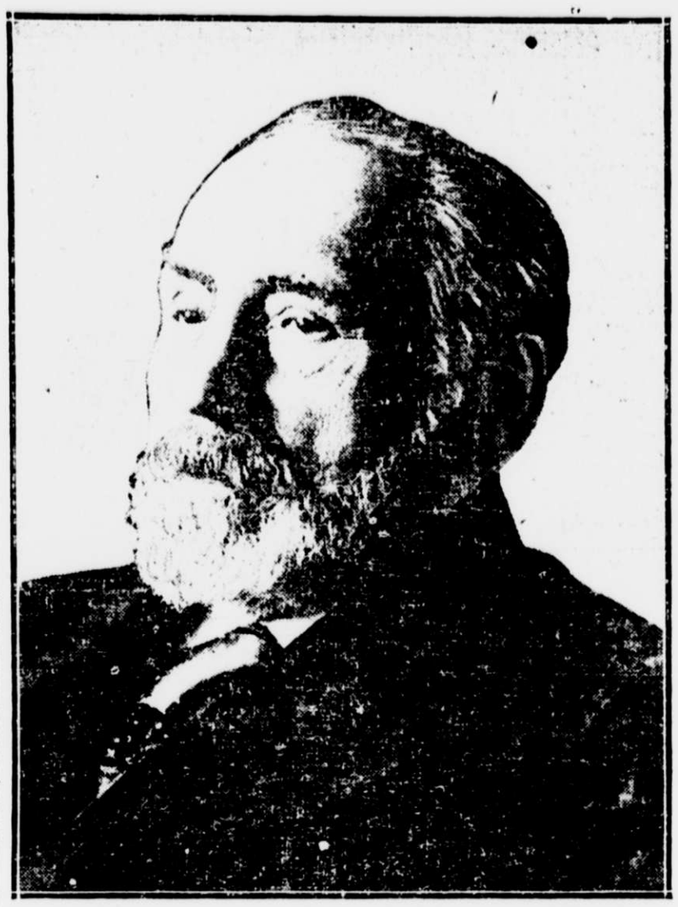

Photo by Brown Bros., N. Y.

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

Correcting the Parson.

From the Boston Transcript.

"In your sermon this morning you spoke of a baby as 'a new wave on the ocean of life.'"

"Quite so; a poetical figure."

"Don't you think 'a fresh squall' would have hit the mark better?"

England's Chief Scout Coming

General Baden-Powell to Visit Boy Scouts of America.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder and chief scout of the British Boy Scouts, who arrives in New York on January 31 on the steamship Arcadian to visit the Boy Scouts of America, is one of the British heroes of the Boer War, having earned his fame by his brilliant defence of Mafeking.

In fact the history of Baden-Powell's life is packed with incidents of daring. When only nineteen he entered the army, being appointed a sub-lieutenant of the 13th Hussars, a crack cavalry regiment and being sent to India.

From India he was sent to South Africa and participated in the Zululand operations in 1888. From there he went to Malta for three years and in 1896 he was ordered to Mafeking and from there made many scouting expeditions to various parts of the country.

While on the Umgusa River he had several narrow escapes from death. On one occasion in a fight with natives he had emptied his rifle and had only his revolver left. "Presently," he said, in narrating the circumstance, "I came on an open stretch of ground and about eighty yards before me was a Kafir with a Martini-Henry. He saw me and dropped on one knee and drew a steady bead on me.

"I felt so indignant at this that I rode at him as hard as I could go, calling him every name under the sun. He aimed for an hour it seemed to me and it was quite a relief when at last he fired at about ten yards distance, and a still greater relief when I realized he had clean missed me. Then he jumped up and turned to run, but he had not gone two paces when he cringed as if someone had slapped him hard on the back, then his head dropped and his heels flew up and he fell on his face, shot by one of our men behind me."

While in Matabeleland, Baden-Powell had abundant opportunity to engage in scouting and to learn the art which fits him for leadership in the boy scout movement. He had a native servant who called him by a name that meant, "The beast that doesn't sleep but sneaks about at night," for in those days he used to spend hours of the night in making his way about the veldt and studying the country. One instance which he relates goes to show how Baden-Powell read the woods.

"I was riding one day while in Matabeleland across an open grass plain with a native scouting," he says. "Suddenly we noticed the grass had been recently trodden down. Following up the track for a short distance, it got on to a patch of sandy ground, and we saw that it was the spoor of several women and boys walking towards some hills about five miles distant, where we believed the enemy to be hiding.

"Then we saw a leaf lying about ten yards off the track. There were, we knew, trees of that kind in a village fifteen miles distant, in the direction from which these tracks led.

"Probably, then, these women had come from that village, bringing the leaf with them and had gone to the hills. On picking up the leaf it was damp and smelled of native beer. So we guessed that, according to the custom of these people, they had been carrying pots of native beer on their heads, the mouths of the pots being stopped with bunches of leaves.

"One of the sea leaves had fallen out, but we found it ten yards off the track, which showed at the time it fell a wind had been blowing. There was no wind now, but there had been at about 5 A. M. and it was now nearly 7.

"So we read from these signs that a party of women had brought beer during the night from the village fifteen miles distant, and had taken it to the enemy in the hills, arriving there about 6 o'clock. The men would probably start to drink the beer at once—as it goes sour if kept for long—and would, by the time we could get there, be getting sleepy from it, so we should have a favorable chance of reconnoitering their positions. We accordingly followed the women's tracks, found the enemy, made our observations and got away with our information without any difficulty."

Just before the Boer War broke out Baden-Powell was sent to South Africa to organize a force of irregulars and prevent any native uprising in the country surrounding Mafeking. The government did not believe that in the event of war that place would be attacked. Baden-Powell, however, took it upon himself to be prepared in the event of an attack, and it was through his foresight, his personal courage and ability that Mafeking held out for seven long months against the Boers.

It was not long after war was declared that General Cronjé surrounded Mafeking. Until the day of relief there were practically daily attacks on the little town. In these days, after the Boers surrounded the town, Baden-Powell would go out at night past the sentries to do scouting.

Many of the things he learned on these night trips enabled him to forestall the attacks of the enemy. In all those days when the food supplies were running low, and many of the defenders were ill and others wounded, Baden-Powell was alert and cheerful. His confidence gave inspiration to his men and his bravery and resourcefulness won for him their admiration.

During the siege of Mafeking a writer described him as follows: "He is eminently a man of determination, with great physical endurance and capacity and extraordinary reticence. Outwardly he maintains an impenetrable screen of self-control. He seems ever bracing himself to be on guard against a moment in which he should be swept by some unnatural and spontaneous enthusiasm."

Among his feats that stand out in the course of the defense of Mafeking was the engagement on May 12, 1900, when the Boer besiegers, knowing that relief was on the way to the garrison, made their final desperate attempt to storm the town. But Baden-Powell's men, who for months had kept themselves alive on mule soup as a staple diet and locusts as luxuries, after fourteen hours of fighting, out manoeuvred and totally defeated the Boers. When Mafeking was relieved five days later the people of this country joined with those of England in hailing Baden-Powell as a hero.

Ever since retiring from the army Baden-Powell has given his time to organizing the boy scout movement, which in England has received official recognition. An army of boy scouts last July was reviewed by King George and Baden-Powell was publicly commended for his work. So popular is the idea in England that girls wanted a similar organization, and Miss A. Baden-Powell, a sister of the hero of Mafeking, is now the chief spirit behind the girl guides.

There are 300,000 boy scouts in the United States, it is estimated, and more than 6,000 scoutmasters, all of whom are looking forward to greeting Baden-Powell on his arrival here. His tour will last six weeks, and he will visit every large city, going first to Boston and then to Washington, where he will meet President Taft, who is honorary president of the Boy Scouts of America. He will then continue his trip West to San Francisco, whence he will sail for Australia.

During his visit here he will visit the George Junior Republic at Freeville, N. Y., to take back with him to England the idea which is being worked out there. He expects to have a similar institution near London conducted in connection with the boy scout movement.

In connection with his visit in New York there will occur the second annual meeting of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, which will be held here February 9. On February 10 more than 5,000 boy scouts will gather here to give a demonstration of scout activities in the presence of Baden-Powell and the leaders of the scout movement. On the same evening the General will give an illustrated lecture on "Scouting in Peace and War."

SIR BOBERT S. S. BADEN-POWELL, K. C. B.

H. M. FLAGLER'S DREAM

Continued from Fourth Page.

nounced completed. Indeed, they have built these viaducts of stone and steel to withstand a wind pressure 400 per cent. greater than has ever been recorded in this latitude.

But such extreme wind presure undoubtedly would sweep a moving train into the seething seas beneath. And so these viaducts are fitted with wind gauges which measure the velocity of the gales at every part of the great stretches of masonry and steel, and by electricity register it at each end of the bridges. This registry is attached to a block system which automatically sets a switch against the approaching train when the recorded wind velocity on any section of the bridge reaches or exceeds fifty miles an hour.

As an additional precaution for safety, no train is permitted to run over these bridges at a speed faster than fifteen miles an hour. The engineers declare that the strength of these viaducts would warrant a speed of seventy miles an hour, but the possibility of accident from broken rails or from imperfect car equipment, demands extraordinary precautions for the safety of life and property. Within this prescribed limit of speed, half an hour is required to cross the Knight's Key bridge, and almost fifteen minutes to traverse the length of Long Key viaduct and its approaches.

For the purpose of this description the writer met Mr. Krome in his office at Marathon. By telegraphic appointment one hour had been set aside for the interview. Mr. Krome had been painted as a man of few words, and anticipation had photographed him as advanced in years, sedate and hard to approach. The meeting brought pleasant surprise and contradiction of every preconceived notion.

A young man he is—his next birthday will close his thirty-sixth year—slight of form, but bronzed by exposure to semi-tropical sun and wind. When the object of his visitor's coming was stated, and he had begun the story of the work, the prearranged limits of an hour were forgotten. His recital of the problems that had been overcome was fascinating, for he was telling a Florida romance in which the love of the master for his work was the inspiration.

MR. FLAGLER'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

"It was near the end of February last year when the question of finishing the road for traffic in the shortest possible time came up," Mr. Krome said. "We were asked, 'Can you complete the extension so that we can put Mr. Flagler into Key West in his own car and over his own rails from Jacksonville on his eighty-second birthday, January 2, 1912?'

"We did some close figuring and we replied that we could complete the road for that purpose by January 22, provided that the work should not be interrupted by storm or other happening. And we will lay the last rail on the morning of January 21. Ever since that time we have been working on schedule. The year 1911 was the best we have ever had for this work; no hurricane has interrupted us, and we will keep the promise made ten months ago with twenty-four hours to spare."

Mr. Krome produced an account book in which he had recorded the details of the progress of the work. In it appeared a sort of time table to denote just what work and how much of it should have been accomplished at the close of every week of those ten months. Opposite each entry had been recorded the exact statement of what had been done, and a third column showed whether the work was ahead of or behind schedule.

Mr. Krome was a member of the class of 1897 at the University of Illinois, but left before graduation to study engineering in Cornell University.

The completion of the Key West extension this year and month has been the goal and ambition of every man on the line. The animating spirit and impulse which pushed every man to the limit of his strength and ability has been that it was "for Mr. Flagler," that he might not be disappointed. It has been an inspiration to all, from waterboy to engineer, that has kept them pushing and rushing day and night for all these month, with a loyalty like that of sons for their father.

VALUE OF THE ROAD.

Naturally the question is often asked: What has been Mr. Flagler's purpose in building this road to Key West? Will it pay?

Entirely aside from the sentimental proposition that this great system of transportation will ever remain a monument to his enterprise and daring imagination, there is the fact that its usefulness as a transportation line will increase as the State through which it runs shall develop to greater commercial importance, and as the markets of the West Indies and of South America shall be brought into closer relations with the producers of the United States. Indeed, this line shortening by hundreds of miles and by many hours of time the route to these countries will have large influence in bringing about these closer relations.

Key West itself, considered as an objective point, is the most southern city in the United States. It is the site of the only naval station on the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts, and it commands from its location the approach to the Gulf of Mexico. It is the natural basing point for the defense of United States interests in the Gulf and is, therefore, of enormous strategic advantage to this country. It is a natural location for a coaling station for the navy of the United States and for commercial purposes. It has a deep-water harbor wherein the navies of the nations might find anchorage, and for the improvement of this natural harbor large Congressional appropriations have been made.

From the viewpoint of commercial advantage, it is the nearest port by hundreds of miles of navigation to Colon at the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal. Through it, by the completion of the Florida East Coast Railway, lies the rail and water route shortest by a thousand miles between New York and Mexico. It is the natural outlet to Cuba and the West Indies as well as to Central and South American countries from the wheat fields and the beef-packing houses and other manufacturing of the West and Northwest.

Commercially the location of Key West and its rail connection by the completion of this road, are of enormous advantage, and when the transportation systems and the shippers of the United States shall have adapted themselves to the new conditions developed by this line, there is little question that this advantage will become more and more available and useful.