

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of A PENNSYLVANIAN

By Samuel W. Pennypacker  
Pennsylvania's Most Zealous  
and Energetic Governor

## CHAPTER III (Continued)

IN THE YEAR 1859 I suggested to my cousin, Benjamin R. Whitaker, that we two, he being then fifteen and I sixteen, take a walk across country down into the State of Maryland. At that time it was not the habit to walk. Soon afterward the war made walking a necessity to many and disclosed to the rest their capacity for this kind of exercise, and in recent years fashion has made it a conventional thing to do. But then every countryman who had half a mile to traverse hitched his horse to a buggy and drove. Our proposition had no precedent among the people we knew and was regarded as bold and venturesome. Whitaker's father overcame the fears of his mother by telling her we would probably go as far as West Chester, fifteen miles away, but that he fully expected to see us at home the next evening. We started in the early morning, with staff and satchel, and in an outing of about two weeks made a trip of 175 miles, walking at the rate of from twenty-five to thirty miles a day.

### A Walk to Maryland

We crossed the Chester Valley to West Chester, thence to Unionville and Oxford and the rough section of Lancaster County, toward Peach Bottom, over the Susquehanna River at Conowingo bridge, through Harford County, Maryland, by the dilapidated old village of Dublin to the Deer Creek, where my uncle, Washington Pennypacker, then owned a farm. His oldest son, Matthias, about my own age, lost his life in the war, and he, with his family, insisted upon flying the flag of the country from the top of his house, was soon afterward driven from the State. Here we remained for a few days, Ben for the first time making the acquaintance of a homet, visited the granite rocks of Deer Creek and then walked to Havre de Grace, encountering a severe thunder shower on the way. There, a mile and a half from the town, my uncle, William P. C. Whitaker, owned the beautiful place called Mount Pleasant. The mansion of brick, plastered, with an elaborately carved walnut stairway running from the main hall to the second story and taking flight by a bridge across the hall from one side of a gallery to the other, occupied at the time of the War of 1812 by Colonel Hughes, one of the proprietors of the Principio Iron Works, overlooked the Chesapeake Bay, and from the front a long avenue ran to the bay through a wood of forest trees. From there we crossed the Susquehanna to Principio, and through the lower part of Chester County to Avondale and Kennett Square. The last day's walk was from Kennett Square to Phoenixville. As we went down Main street, on our way home, we met a rather stout, full-faced man, with a sandy complexion and side whiskers, who greeted our return with, "I shall put you in the paper." He has had a career, and it is worth while to stop and look at him. I can well remember the healthy appearance, the cordial and attractive manner and the pleasing personality. John Henry Puleston at that time was the editor of the Phoenixville Guardian, a weekly newspaper which had a brief and checked existence. He came to Phoenixville from Scranton, and in a



The hall at Mount Pleasant, Md., to which Governor Pennypacker walked from his home in Phoenixville shortly before the Civil War.

few months he left the town, owing everybody in it who could be persuaded by affability to trust him, even the poor woman who did the family washing. No doubt he was absolutely without resources. Soon afterward Governor Curtin appointed him an agent for the State at Washington. He then became associated with Jay Cooke, who sent him to London, where he acquired an interest in the firm and became its representative in England. When Cooke went down under the weight of the Northern Pacific Railroad in some way Puleston managed to hold up his end and became wealthy. Presently he was made a baronet and went to Parliament, and he died a few years ago in a castle in Wales which he had bought with his acquisitions. Many years after I had met him on Main street I was one of the managers of the Penn Club, an organization of note

in Philadelphia. It was determined to render the hospitalities of the club and give a reception to a distinguished member of the British Parliament about to visit America. The arrangements had progressed to a certain extent, but were revoked when it was bruited about that if he came he would fall into the hands of the Sheriff. Thereupon Sir John Henry Puleston, M. P.—it was he—haunted by his old debts and paid them. To all of his American acquaintances he was kind and attentive when they sought him, and his neglect of his obligations of the past was probably as much due to inertia as to any other cause.

The winter of 1861-62 I spent at the store of Whitaker & Coudon, a firm consisting of my grandfather, my great-uncle, George P. Whitaker, of Principio, and the son-in-law of the latter, Joseph Coudon, who then lived in Camden. Their store ran from Water street to Delaware avenue in Philadelphia and there they sold the iron made at Durham and Principio furnaces, and likewise represented the Schalls, of Norristown; White, Ferguson & Co., of Robesonia, and other iron firms, and were the sole agents for the Burdens, of Troy, N. Y., in the sale of their horsehoes. I assisted Oliver C. Lund, a gouty, white-haired old retainer, perched upon a high stool, to keep the books and also rolled out kegs of nails and horsehoes, when they were to be shipped, and did whatever else was to be done. I boarded at a hotel on the east side of Third street and there added somewhat to my reputation as a checker player. An irascible Irishman named Felix O'Hair had come to be recognized as the champion among the merchants and their clerks who found a temporary home at the hotel. One evening he met an opponent to whom he was compelled to succumb. After the match had been lost he said to his foe, "You can't play checkers. There is a boy here who can beat you." And the boy did.

### The School Teacher

In the summer of 1862, at Mont Clare, I one day read an announcement that Mr. Craikshank, the county superintendent of public schools in Montgomery County, would hold an examination to determine the selection of teachers for the following winter. Without a word to any one I put a saddle on the bay horse, rode over to the Trappe, in company with numerous other applicants, took the examination and in the evening came home with a certificate in my pocket. At my request the directors gave me the school at Mont Clare, a little one-story stone building with one room. It has since been torn down, but Mr. C. Herman Oberholtzer, of Phoenixville, had a cane made from the wood with the figure of the house carved on it and presented it to me. I taught for a term of eight months for a compensation of \$30 per month. The children were of both sexes and ranged from little tots trying to learn their A B C's to young men and women eighteen years of age, and in all there were from fifty to sixty scholars. It had been a disorderly school and one of the amusements in the earlier winters had been to put the teacher out of the room. I used various devices to establish and enforce discipline. When a boy used filthy language I washed out his mouth with coarse soap. I compelled a disobedient scholar to stand in the corner with his face to the wall, a position which in time grew to be

very monotonous. The names of those who did the best each week were kept on the blackboard where all could see them. I kept regular records of accomplishment and conduct and sent the results at stated intervals to the parents. One of the largest boys, as old as myself and no doubt much stronger, the son of a farmer named Strough, once committed some gross offense and I determined that unless I should flog him my hold was gone. I quietly told him that I wanted him after the school had been dismissed. The children watched in awe and I was probably as uneasy as he. Near the close of the session his nerve gave way, and grabbing his books he made a bolt for the door, much to my relief, and I never saw him more. I had a class in Brooks's Mental Arithmetic and one of the young women, a Miss Caroline Billew (Boileau), went entirely through Greenleaf's Arithmetic with me. Once a month I rode on horseback six miles to a teachers' institute at the Trappe and there, among other teachers, met H. W. Kratz, now president of the Schwenksville National Bank.

After all of these more or less desultory efforts to secure a foothold, at last the uncertainties disappeared and my course became fixed. My grandfather, somewhat influenced by my Uncle Joseph, concluded to advance me the money with which to read law. He was much aroused over the war, and it is very likely that my recent participation in some of its events had finally convinced him that I had sufficient character to make the expenditure of the money a fair business risk. The counsel of Whitaker & Coudon had been James Otterson, but not long before Otterson had taken into an important matter for them Peter McCall and he had made a very favorable impression. It was determined that I should enter the office of Mr. McCall. But I was then about twenty years and six months old. If I began the office study before the age of twenty-one I was required to study for three years, and if after twenty-one, then but two years. We determined that these six months should be saved. At that time Enoch Taylor, the brother of the most intimate friend of my mother, more of a conveyancer than a lawyer, afterward Sheriff of Philadelphia, had an office on Sixth street on the east side not far from Race. He was a thin, nervous, childless, timid man, with so abundant a knowledge of real estate and its transactions that whenever a Republican was elected Sheriff of the county he was selected as chief deputy, in order to see that the unknown Sheriff did not get into trouble. Finally, at a time of political upheaval, he was himself elected Sheriff. He very kindly consented to let me read in his office temporarily and there I made my acquaintance with Blackstone. He had one assistant, Elias P. Smithers, who had come to the city from Delaware, then very much attached to the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church and almost a devotee. Later he broadened, came to the bar, entered politics, became Register of Wills and died from a fall down a stairway, leaving a considerable estate. After my birthday in April of 1864 I entered the office of Peter McCall and may then be regarded as having commenced the serious business of life.

## CHAPTER IV The War

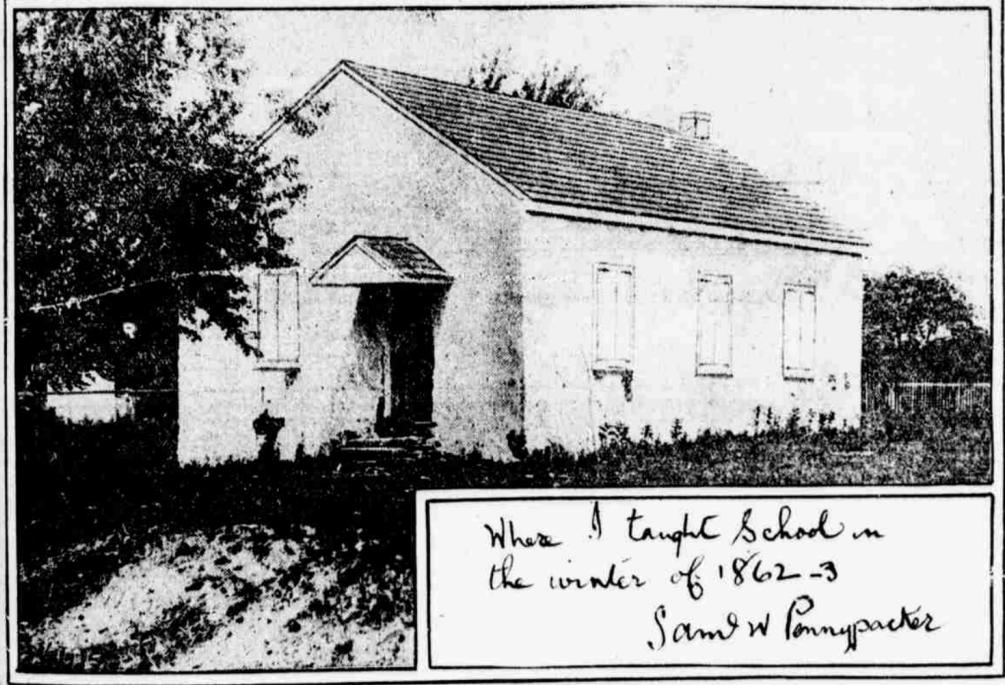
IN THE YEAR 1858 a comet of vast proportions swept across the sky, and its tail, spread out like a curved fan, extended over perhaps one-third of the visible heavens. Such appearances in ages past always portended war, and while the superstitions, which were once realities in their effects upon the conduct of men, had waned, the mental impressions made by them are yet uneffaced. In the inland villages people looked at the heavens and, with smiles of assumed incredulity, shook their heads and said trouble was coming for the country.

In 1860 another great comet appeared, and to those inclined to view the apparition as a foreboding the recurrence had much more than duplicated significance. There were other warnings of coming events, more tangible and some of them nearer at hand.

The boys of the Government Seminary were one day playing ball in the road in front of the house when the startling news came that a man named John Brown had invaded the South in an effort to free the slaves and had captured the arsenal at Harper's Ferry. In the main, the sentiment in the school was Republican and opposed to slavery. Roger B. Taney, who as Chief Justice had rendered the Dred Scott decision, they flouted. A mile away at the Corner Stores Elijah F. Pennypacker, a Quaker, six feet four inches in height and straight as an arrow, at one time president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, had a station on the Underground Railroad and when, as occasionally happened, an unknown negro was met vending his way northward, he was bidden "goodspeed." While, therefore, the effort of Brown could not be justified by logic or reconciled with the duty to obey the law, there was an undercurrent of hope that in some way he might succeed, and when he was captured, tried and hanged the result was accepted with the sense that the incident had not been altogether closed.

Jesse Conway lived in a little stone house at the entrance of the bridge which crossed the Schuylkill and there gathered the tolls—one penny for a foot passenger, five cents for a one-horse carriage and ten cents for a two-horse carriage. He and our neighbors, the Jacobs family, were abolitionists. The men of the Whitaker family, old line Whigs, turned drift, supported Fillmore in 1856 and Bell in 1860; but the women, more emotional, agreed with the Jacobs family, and I shouted in 1856 as loudly as I could for Fremont. John Jacobs subscribed for the New York Tribune, which daily lay at the toll-house until he called for it, and there I managed to read doctrine which could not be found at home. One day I sat on the wooden bench in front of the tollhouse and read a speech delivered the night before, at the Cooper Institute in New York, by a man named Lincoln, from Illinois. It made a great impression upon me, and when John Jacobs came along I called his attention to it as the argument of a man of great ability and absolutely unanswerable.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)



Where I taught school in the winter of 1862-3  
Samuel W. Pennypacker

# RAINBOW'S END

By REX BEACH

A novel of love, hidden treasure and rebellion in beautiful, mysterious Cuba during the exciting days of the revolt against Spain.

## CHAPTER XVIII (Continued)

JUDSON'S gummy-sucking hammock bulged beneath him. It threatened to give way as he sat up with a jerk and swung his legs over the side. His face was dark, his eyes were swollen, his chin was pugnaciously outflung and his voice rumbled as he exclaimed:

"The dance it is! Say, I don't like the way you talk about that girl."

"You don't like the point, you can't care for her, would you care to have your sister do what she's doing?"

"That's not the point. You can't compare her with ordinary women."

"Well, this isn't an ordinary environment for a woman, no matter who she is. These Cubans are bound to talk about her."

Judson, the Romeo

"Are they?" Judson glared at the speaker. "I'd like to hear you. I'd like to see Kennedy get fresh. Why, say—"

"I'll get a Government job when the war is over."

"I'm afraid the cupboard is bare," O'Reilly acknowledged. "They're getting ready to slaughter another slaughter-party," Branch said, gloomily. "He's a veteran of the Ten Years' War. That means slow again! Slow! One puncture-proof, rubber-soled and a bushel of sweet potatoes for ten men!"

"Do you know what I want for dinner?" Norine inquired. "Lamb chops with green peas, some nice white bread, a salad and coffee."

The three men looked at her anxiously. Judson stirred uneasily. "That's what I want. I don't expect to get it."

With a sigh of relief the captain exclaimed, "I thought you were giving your order."

"Goodness, no!" With a laugh the girl seated herself upon her camp-stool, trying her callers to dispose themselves on the ground about her. "If you can stand the food, I dare say I can. Now then, tell me what you've been doing since you left Cuba. I've been frightened to death that some of you would be hurt. That's one reason why I've been working night and day helping to get the hospitals in shape. I can't bear to think of our boys being wounded."

"Not much chance of our getting shot," O'Reilly told her. "But Leslie—he needs a good talking to. He has gone into the hero business."

"Vittles"

"Well, it's Vittles," O'Reilly suggested. "Vittles" is a little word that will give you an appetite for supper. Leslie, you begin. Come now, hand your hat to the hat-boy, then follow the head waiter. This way, sir. Table for one? Very good, sir. Here's one puncture-proof, rubber-soled and a bushel of sweet potatoes for ten men."

"No habichuela," Branch answered, striving valiantly to enter into the spirit of Norine's pretending. "I had it for breakfast. And, say, turn off the fan; I'm just back from Cuba. Now, then, you may bring me some oysters—"

"Oysters are out of season," O'Reilly murmured politely, "but our oysters are very fine."

"Some oysters," Branch insisted stubbornly. "After that, a cup of chicken broth, a grilled sweetbread and toast Melba."

It fails

Joe Judson put an abrupt end to the invalid's meal by hurling a stick at him, crying, "You're in Belmont's, not in Battle Creek. Let somebody order who knows how. We'll have steak and onions all around."

"I want strawberries," Norine cried. "That's the ripe now. Strawberries and cream."

Branch uttered a disdainful grunt. "Nothing of the sort, I'm a sick man; if I'd rather get shot than suffer a slow death from neglect it's my own business, isn't it? Imagine feeding an invalid on boiled bicycle tires! Gee! I'd like to have a meal of nice nourishing poornesses for a change. Here's!"

Norine eyed the complaint critically. "That's the diet agreed with you. You look better than you did."

Branch turned a somber glance upon her and gave vent to a bitter, sneering laugh. "It was plain that he believed she, too, was attempting to pull the wool over his eyes. 'I wish I could find some jointed toadstools. I'd eat 'em raw.'"

"Listen," Norine went on. "Let's play a game. We'll imagine this is Belmont's and we'll all take turns ordering the best things to eat that we can think of. The one who orders best, wins. We'll call the game—"

She frowned thoughtfully.

Branch and I were nearly all gone, and I've learned what hard work it is being in hospital, when there's nothing to fill them up with. I can't teach these people to take care of themselves—do you see, the other fellows? Some against disease as a profession of cowardice. Summer, the yellow fever season, to bore you and kill, but getting the best of it. Discontented and hungry. They're new sensations to me," she sighed. "I thought I was going to work wonders. I thought I was going to be a Florence Nightingale, and then men were going to die."

"Don't they?" Judson demanded.

"No. That is—not in exactly the way I expected. I'm afraid."

"Innocent bunch!" growled the captain. Then he swallowed hard and said, "But for that matter, so do I."

Why, don't you know what that sort of talk makes me, she warned him.

"Yes, just the same I'll never feel easy until you're safe home again. And I'll never stop loving you until—"

"In the first place, I'm not alone. I take a woman with me everywhere, a Mrs. Ruiz."

What vague and pointless. They possessed elegant eyes, hair, and nose. They laughed, gazed, and looked upon her, the meaning of which she had no difficulty in translating.

"We've been talking about food," Leslie Branch advised his commanding officer. "Miss Evans and a party of ladies are the real test of us, and so of course she can't share our ravenous appetite for beef and cod and water on the hoof."

"See Lopez's handsome face clouded. 'You are hungry, then?'"

"Yes, I'm hungry," she said. "I'm starving. I haven't had a decent meal for a week."

"Had he noticed? I know where there is a good, hot, two-legged away!" said the colonel.

O'Reilly, the Father

"But I don't want a goat," Norine complained. "I want—well, pickles, and jam, and sardines, and—candy, and—tooth-powder. Real boarding-school luxuries. I'd just like to rob a general store."

This may have upon you, yourself. You're impractical, romantic, and poor. You're laughing shortly, but he went on stubbornly—and just the sort of girl to be carried away by some extravagant impulse."

"What makes you think I'm impractical and romantic?"

"You wouldn't be here, otherwise."

"Very good. What are you trying to get at? What do you mean by 'some extravagant impulse'?"

"I'm afraid," O'Reilly hesitated, then voiced a fear which had troubled him more than he cared to acknowledge. "I'm afraid of some ill-entangled, some love affair—"

Norine's laughter rang out, spontaneous, unforced.

"All these men are attracted to you, as it is quite natural they should be," O'Reilly hurried on. "I'm worried to death for fear you'll forget that you're too blamed good for any of them."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)