GEORGE WASHINGTON HOUSE.

IN OLD BLADENSBURG

Picturesque and Quaint, It Defies Progress.

A STAUNCH RELIC OF THE PAST

Hotels in Plenty, but a Dearth of Good Cheer.

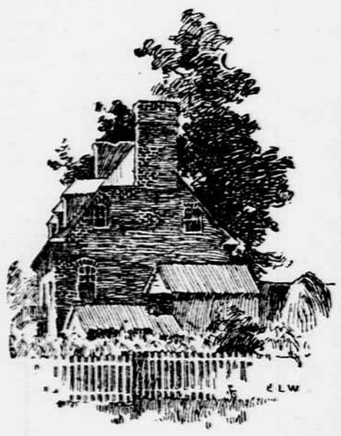
LOYAL INHABITANTS

SOME FOUR MILES northeast of Washington, along the tangled banks of the Eastern branch, sleeps the old, historic and picturesque village of Bladensburg. There, between the hills, its old dilapidated houses still stand, as some of them have already been standing for more than a century, their porches growing a little more shaky and their roofs adding a little more moss each year, but still defying wind and weather, and bidding fair to keep right on there, standing and withstanding, for nobody knows how much longer.

Curious to see what changes might have been made lately by time, or what sacrilege might have been wrought there by the great American juggernaut, progress, I rode out one day last week to reconnoiter. What was my surprise at crossing the bridge at the south end of the village to espy a sign, the very first thing, which read: "$5.00 Fine for Riding Your Bicycle on the Sidewalks." Could it be that the ever-hurrying bicyclist had invaded Bladensburg? Yes, so it proved. In fact, the most animated scene I espied in the town during my stay was a couple of men discussing the question of saddles. It is rather tough on visitors, though, to put up signs warning them to keep their wheels off the sidewalks, without putting up signs to indicate where the walks are. One would need the eyes of an Argus to distinguish between street and walk a good part of the way, as even the natives themselves admit.

I did not find any sweeping changes in the old town itself, however. No electric railroads have been built, nor have any skyscrapers been erected. It is the same old place—only a little older. Bladensburg is mostly built up along two streets. Its chief thoroughfare—that is to say, at least, the one where all the saloons are—is known somewhat indifferently as Main, Front or Water street. The inhabitants, I understand, do not favor its being called Water street, because that leads to the inference that it is frequently overflowed, which, as one of them stated, is not the case, or, at any rate, he added, qualifyingly, "not more than once a year." This street, whatever its name may be, contains some of the oldest and most interesting buildings in the town. The more modern tumble-down shanties of the colored people are interspersed with the older dwellings, whose wide brick chimneys, cracked and worn with age, rise from the ground alongside the walls, and whose broken-backed roofs are green with moss or blackened and warped by many rains.

THE OLD STEPHENS' HOUSE.



The Ross House.

A Plethora of Hostelries.

Main street revels in "hotels." The word must be taken in a somewhat figurative sense, however. It is refreshing to hear the townspeople still refer to them as "public houses," while practical every-day Washingtonians would probably call them by the hard name of saloons. They were hotels once, though, all of them, with an excellent reputation for hospitality and good cheer, and perhaps their proprietors are not to be too severely scored, since Bladensburg has lost its commercial glory, in concentrating their energies in the only department of the hotel which still pays them. Chance visitors might think themselves well provided for in hearing that the town boasted of such hostelries as the Pan-Electric, the George Washington House, the Palo Alto and the Prince George House. Some slight inquiries, however, would reveal the fact that these establishments had long since dispensed with such trifling formalities as providing their guests with rooms or meals.

The George Washington House is one of the most notable of these hotels of other days. It consists of two parts—the hotel proper, which is closed, and the bar room adjoining the south side, which is not closed. A large sign extends out into the road, bearing the familiar face of the father of his country, with the lettering below it, "George Washington House." Tradition has it that Washington stopped there one night on his way over to Baltimore to meet Lafayette. One would naturally expect that such a house would be kept on the American plan, but, strange to say, the proprietor, unmindful of the dictates of patriotism, hung out a sign announcing that it was kept on the "European" plan. Even such a novel plan seems to have failed to draw guests, however, for that sign has now disappeared, and a board hangs upon the door, mournfully stating that the building is "for rent."

The Palo Alto House bears two large signs on either side. On the side met with coming into town its patrons see the words "First chance," and on the other sign is the warning, "Last chance." This, however, is not strictly accurate, for as long as a man has money in his pockets he need not thirst in this vicinity. There are others. The Palo Alto has the date upon it, 1734, but the present building is not that old.

"Meals at All Hours."

Just below the Palo Alto is an old white structure, upon whose south side is painted in large black letters, "Prince George House, meals at all hours." Alas, it is a gay deceiver, and the weary traveler who there seeks the comfort of meals at all hours will turn away sadder and hungrier.

The Pan-Electric House is the most up-to-date of them all. It now rejoices in a new coat of paint, and stands in the heart of the place, the very business center, in fact, opposite the blacksmith shop, and within a stone's throw from the post office. They say, too, that it was struck by a shell from the American lines at the battle of Bladensburg.

Older than any of the others, however, was the Spa Hotel, condemned and taken down some years ago by the town officials, after it had already mostly fallen down and saved them the trouble. It was at the time the oldest building in the village.

Truly, "the tavern with its swinging sign" is much in evidence in this quaint old hamlet. As I stood opposite the George Washington House an elderly man emerged from a door suspiciously near the word "Bar," and came careening across in my direction. "Hotel, did you say?" he asked huskily, in response to my question. "That ain't no hotel. Why, sink me, if I had all my money that's gone into that place I'd be a rich man." And he looked it.

Bladensburg is one of those queer old towns in which any one who has a leaning toward the bygone and the picturesque may find much to interest him. It smacks decidedly of the past, and is one of the several landmarks around Washington which civilization has passed by and left on one side in its march.

"A place for idle eyes and ears,
A cobwebbed nook of dreams;
Left by the stream whose waves are years,
The stranded village seems."

Departed Glory.

Apparently it has lived its day. Founded before Alexandria or Georgetown it was once destined for a great city, and in the latter part of the last century it really was a place of importance. The Anacostia river, which now can only be traversed in a row boat, was then a larger stream, and sizeable tobacco boats ascended it as far as Bladensburg. The town began its existence properly in 1742, although there was a settlement there known as Garrison's Landing before that. It is supposed also that Capt. John Smith visited the spot in 1608 in his exploring voyage.

The people of the town fall chiefly into three classes: The original white inhabitants, who have grown up there and cling with a natural affection to their native village; people from Washington, who, attracted by the picturesqueness of the town, have bought up some of the old places and now occupy them in summer, if not all the year around, and, lastly, a goodly quota of colored people, who live there mainly because they haven't anywhere else to live. The old settlers, it must be said, know very little about their home. One man tells you one thing, the next man another, while the larger number of them simply reply that they don't know. There is a kind of advantage in this, however. There are no official guides in Bladensburg, and you are not constrained to learn the exact number of bricks in the Stephens house, nor carry in your head the total number of schooners that have crossed the bar at the George Washington House since the Declaration of Independence. And after all, the old Bladensburgians are very patriotic, and love the old hamlet where they dwell. "I have moved away three times," said one old lady who was born there, "and each time I have come back. You can't coax me to leave here again as long as I live, if I can find a roof to put my head under."

The Oldest Inhabitant.

Mr. Benjamin Lowndes is the "oldest inhabitant," and probably the only native resident, since the death of Mr. Barron, who is well posted on its history. He has lived there all his life, and his home, which is a little way out from the village, occupies, perhaps, the finest site about the town. His house is an old, rambling frame structure on the brow of a superb hill overlooking the valley, and his place is well kept up in old-fashioned comfort and convenience. Mr. Lowndes was born in Bladensburg, and there he has lived all his life. When asked about his age he merely replied: "I'm above eighty." But later he admitted that he recollected the battle of Bladensburg. "I was about three years old at that time, I believe," he said to me. "I remember that I was lying on the lounge, and was awakened by the sound of firing." The battle being in 1814 this would make him about eighty-five years old.

The oldest house in Bladensburg is the Stephens house. It stands just under the brow of the Sand street hill, well back from the road, and is reached from a cross street. The old place is now occupied by Mr. Dieudonne, the Washington artist, and his pleasant family, Mrs. Dieudonne being a daughter of Judge Stephens. On the huge chimney at the south end one could formerly read the date 1746. The figure "6" has recently dropped off, but it is still preserved. The winding staircase is just like the one at Mount Vernon. On the west door is a huge knocker a foot in length, while in the parlor is a very valuable mirror of former days. The Stephens house was built by Christopher Lowndes, grandfather of the present Benjamin Lowndes, and it is claimed that a party of French officers, including Lafayette, were entertained there at the time of the American revolution. It is still perfectly solid, and when a door was recently cut in one of the walls a foot thick, the carpenter remarked that he wouldn't want the job of pulling the house down. People built things to last in those days.

Interesting Old Houses.

North of the Stephens house is the Rogers place, which is quite historical, and just west, across the road, is Lawyer Duckett's house, where Admiral Harewood once lived. During his voyages he collected some queer relics. In the fireplace is a tile brought from some Mediterranean port, upon which is carved a dog with open jaws, while beside it is the somewhat uninviting inscription, "Cave canem," or, in plain every-day United States, "Beware of the dog."

Another very interesting house, and the second oldest in town, is the Ross house, which was built in 1749. This is just around the corner from the Pan-Electric Hotel, the front yard being utilized as a cornfield. It is now owned by a colored man, Mr. S. K. Lee. The walls, which are made of English bricks, are still firm, but inside the house is fast going to pieces. In the fireplace can be seen the somewhat puzzling inscription "Otuxent," regarding whose origin or meaning nobody in Bladensburg seems able to throw any light. This house was used as a hospital during the revolutionary war.

Bladensburg's commercial importance is not striking. True, it has a blacksmith shop, whose scattering array of broken-down carts and wagons, stray hubs, warped tires and runaway horseshoes blends well with the scene. It stands on the edge of the Eastern branch, at the head of navigation, as it were. Then there is the old mill, situated on the Bunker Hill road, just a few rods from the bridge, and hard by the dueling ground. It is old and dingy without and its rusty machinery inside is covered with dust and cobwebs. One of the wheels has already rotted away, and the days of the other are numbered. "Your mills haven't been running for some time," I remarked to one of the townspeople. "No," he said, "nothing but the ginmills—they're always runnin'."

The Old Mill.

A Kindly Warning.

When you go to Bladensburg, take your lunch; I didn't. Up the street is a "bakery and confectionery," which looks very inviting from without, because the curtain is usually drawn, but appears somewhat empty when you get inside. "What have you got for a lunch?" I inquired of the girl in charge, eyeing the counter suspiciously. "Oh, doughnuts, cookies and chewing gum," she answered cheerily, and unless you are prepared to make a meal off assorted flavors of chewing gum it is well to be provided in advance.

Bladensburg is not without its churches, either. The principal trouble seems to be, as one old lady put it, that "we've got churches, but no congregations." On asking her what denominations were represented in the town she replied, "Oh, mostly Methodists, Episcopalians and Protestants."

Down the Bladensburg pike, about a mile and a half below the village, is the ground where the battle of Bladensburg was fought, followed by the sack of Washington in 1814. Near at hand is the other of the famous dueling grounds.

The Spa spring, just to the right of the bridge over the northwest branch on the way to Hyattsville, is the rendezvous for the people of Bladensburg on warm summer evenings. Its waters are at least abundant and refreshingly cold, whether or not they have the great medicinal properties for which the folks of the surrounding region give them credit. Hardly anything else is used for drinking water in Bladensburg, and the spring at all events contains large quantities of iron and sulphur.

Just about twilight of a pleasant evening the belles and beaus of the village may be seen gathering at the spring. Awkward young colored blades lounge about, while colored damsels, healthy and picturesque, if not absolutely pretty, may be seen departing swinging their demijohns or balancing their pails on their heads. The Spa spring is a famous trysting place. Here come the country swains to meet their lady loves, and here I bade good night to the village without disturbing them. A. H. W.

Skill in Shunning Creditors.

From the Detroit Free Press.

The schemes that debtors sometimes evolve to rid themselves of annoying collectors are always amusing—to everybody but the debtors. The very funniest character that Dickens ever conceived—in the mind of man—is Micawber, he with the flat purse and plethoric speech. Who that has ever read it can forget the inexpressibly funny incident of Micawber, upon his departure for Australia, giving poor Traddles his "note-of-hand" for what he owed him, assuring him that that obligation at least was settled? And how Traddles, while looking upon the transaction in a somewhat different light, meekly submitted to Micawber's peculiar logic and allowed him to walk away while he was recovering from the shock.

Some of the tactics resorted to by these haunted debtors show ingenuity worthy of a better cause. On one occasion a man who had the constables on his track was about to take a stroll from his house. He was standing on the doorstep talking to his wife, when he saw two suspicious-looking men coming hurriedly toward him. Quickly taking his note book from his pocket he waited until the men were in hearing and then, in a purposely loud voice, he said to his wife:

"So your husband's out again. He never does seem to be in. It's shameful. I have already called half a dozen times to settle this account. If he's not in tonight when I call I shall put the matter into court."

"Did you say your husband was out?" asked one of the newcomers.

"Yes," replied the wife, "this gentleman was just inquiring for him."

The three men turned and went down the steps together.

"We've got little chance of getting anything there," the debtor said. "I suppose you are after the man, too. Come and have a drink."

After that he was continually meeting the constables about his house and invariably passed a cheery word with them.

The Beech.

From the Buffalo Express.

There are some of our best native trees which seem to be systematically ignored in park and lawn planting. One is the beech, than which there is no better or more beautiful lawn tree. The branches are long and graceful; the leaves have a peculiarly bright color; the buds are long, pointed and polished, and the bark of the trunk and larger limbs lights up the shade of the thick foliage in dark days, and shines in the winter with a pinkish light under clear skies. It requires a good deal of room to develop its greatest beauty, but thrives on most soil, and is not subject to attacks of insects. We plant its foreign relative, the copper beech, solely for the color of its leaves, and our native, handsomer tree is utterly neglected. For a small lawn tree there is no better than the near relative of our common beech. It is generally called "blue beech" or "iron wood," and makes a nice-shaped tree ten or fifteen feet high. It is far better than the mountain ash or horse chestnut, both foreign trees, and very liable to attacks of insects. As far as ordinary observation goes no leaf-cutting insect troubles the blue beech. The leaves are smaller and darker in color than those of the common beech, but in shape and veining are similar.

THE JOHN NAVY MANUSCRIPTS

BY CHARLES W. HARWOOD.

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Kepler Paine had swung his chair around facing his guests, but his hand still rested affectionately on a copy of the Maxima, which lay open upon his desk. There was an air of entire satisfaction on Paine's face. The Maxima was just out that day, and it contained a story which he had written a year before—the first of his stories which that magazine had deigned to accept.

Jack Hall was lying upon the lounge with a pipe in his mouth, and Frarie had just entered the room. A thin-faced, dark-complexioned man was Frarie; always cool, self-possessed and critical. With a quiet but friendly greeting he sat down and helped himself to a cigarette from Paine's box. Frarie wrote the book reviews for the Polygon.

"I looked over your story in the advance sheets," he remarked, blowing out a cloud of smoke. "I gave you three lines. There are good points about that story, Paine. Your burglar is undeniably strong."

"I should say so!" exclaimed Jack Hall. "I call 'John Navy's Confession' the best thing out this year!"

Hall was an artist—not a literary man.

"Yes, there are some things in it which are really bright," Frarie admitted. "They have character. Ten to one you picked them up somewhere, Paine."

"There is a story about that, Frarie. John Navy was an actual burglar whom I used to know when I lived in Bolton."

"I thought as much," said Frarie, with satisfaction.

Hall sprang up and went to the table to shake out his pipe and refill it.

"Kep, I've heard just enough about that old burglar to make me curious," he said, abruptly. "How did you get acquainted with your interesting friend?"

"Tell us about it if you don't mind," added Frarie.

"You may have heard of the Penniwell Bank robbery which occurred about seven years ago," Paine began. "The Navy gang made that break. Its leader, old John Navy, was the most audacious burglar of his day. His skill and boldness had drawn around him a picked lot of clever criminals, stanch men, all of them, and adepts at their calling.

"We, in Maine, had heard little about their operations until they visited the town of Penniwell, a dozen miles from Bolton, and broke into the vaults of its bank. They had secured most of the money when an alarm was raised and they were compelled to fly. All of them escaped except Navy. Laden, as he was, with the bulk of the spoils, he nearly eluded his pursuers by running to cover in the ravines of Colquitt mountain. There, before he was brought to bay, he safely concealed his plunder; and, to this day, it has never been found."

"Of course, a reward was offered?" said Frarie.

"Certainly. The Penniwell money is as seductive to the people of that vicinity as Capt. Kidd's gold, and even now they will not allow a stranger to get upon the mountain side alone. It was useless to question Navy. He was true to his associates as long as he lived, and unusual precautions were taken to prevent his sending them any message."

"How did you come to know him?"

"I used to do some charitable work at that time—especially in the Bolton prison, where he was confined."

"Did you reform any criminals?" Jack Hall skeptically inquired.

"Come, Hall, let him alone!" Frarie interposed. "We want to hear about the burglar."

"I had been in and out for months before I saw Navy; but at last the warden gained confidence in my discretion, and, after an explicit warning, volunteered to take me to the convict's cell.

"'Navy is a crafty old fellow,' he admonished me. 'Don't repeat a word that he says! He will try to use you when you least suspect it.'

"We found the prisoner sitting by the door, with his grizzled head resting upon his hands. Weary, dogged endurance was graven in every line of his face. He brightened upon our entrance, and, with a slight twinkle of the eyes, looked me over humorously. By that one glance he had probed my inexperience, and, after the warden's departure, he warily tested his conclusions.

"'This is very kind,' he began, smoothly. 'It is pleasant to meet a gentleman of your cloth. I suppose you would like me to repent of my evil ways?'

"'I had not thought of it,' I answered, curtly. 'Would you prefer to see a clergyman?'

"Navy turned quickly upon me. 'I thought you were one of them!' he exclaimed.

"'Not at all. I came here with merely a human interest in you.'

"Surprised as he was, Navy quickly recovered his poise.

"'Now, I call that kind!' he said, with a touch of feeling. 'Just because I'm a human being that's lonely and needs company. That does me good. If I wasn't wearing these stripes I'd offer you my hand on that!'

"Of course, he made no motion to do so, but I promptly put out my hand.

"'Thank you,' he said, giving it a firm clasp. 'It seems good to meet a gentleman again.'

"'You have a few visitors,' I suggested.

"'You are the first outsider, excepting the Penniwell people. There's the chaplain; he wants me to be sorry for my sins—Lord, I'm no hypocrite!' he broke out, scornfully. 'Cracking safes is my profession, and if I was free I'd be at it again. I've talked some with the warden, but he hasn't a particle of sympathy with my feelings. He only shakes his head and says: "Ah, John, we ought to have caught you long ago!" Now I call that a kind of wet blanket on a man's professional enthusiasm, don't you?'

"I smiled and assented readily—he was such a fascinating old sinner.

"'So you are driven back upon your memories?' I remarked.

"'That's just it! And comforting they are, too. You would be surprised to know of the fortunes I've made. Well, everything is gone now, and I'm laid on the shelf, but it's a great consolation to look back on a successful career. When I get blue, sitting here alone, I hark back to some time when I outwitted the officers, and it heartens me wonderfully.'

"Then he paused a moment. 'I wonder if you would be interested to hear of such matters?' he asked, doubtfully.

"'Indeed, I would!' was my instant response. 'Do you mind if I use this? Sometimes I write stories for the magazines.'

"Navy was interested at once.

"'How do you make out?' he asked critically.

"'Poorly enough, so far.'

"'Lord, what you needs is life!' he declared. 'Why, I could give you stories to write until your hair is gray!'

"'Nothing could please me better,' said I.

"'Will you put in my own name?' he asked, eagerly.

"'Certainly, if you wish me to.'

"Navy seemed gratified. I well remember the delightful animation with which he began a story of one of his earlier escapades. I wrote it out carefully, and, after that I often visited him, quite as much for my own advantage as for his.

"Meanwhile my notes kept pace with his stories, and Navy showed the utmost interest in them. That a man of his stamp should be so concerned, I laid to the killing monotony of prison life, but at last I discovered that he was brooding over some scheme which he was half-ashamed to propose. One day I frankly inquired what was on his mind.

"'I've got a notion that I'd like to write out one of my stories myself,' he confessed, with some diffidence. 'It's all folly, maybe, but it would do me good to try.'

"It did seem droll, but he was such a genial, open-hearted old fellow that it would have been cruel not to humor him. On my next visit we carried out his project, and never had I seen him so cheerful and happy as when he handed me his completed manuscript.

"'It would do me good to have that published,' he said, smiling upon me with open kindliness. 'You may find mistakes in it; but don't make any changes. Let it go, title and all, just as it is. You see, it is my own work!'

"That was my last meeting with John Navy. I carried his story home and read it, but I saw that it would be quite useless for publication unless some journal would take it as news. Yet, with all its faults there were certain novel expressions scattered through it which could hardly be improved.

"In order to preserve these bits, I copied the whole manuscript for my own benefit. It was short—a matter of two columns only—and I was on the point of sending it to one of the New York dailies when I remembered my promise to the warden.

"The story seemed perfectly harmless. Still, there was my promise; and, after some indecision about suppressing the manuscript entirely, I felt that I must give it up. The warden listened rather triumphantly to my explanation.

"'I told you Navy would try to use you,' he said, gruffly. 'We will keep a strict watch after this.'

"He ran over the story hastily and with evident disappointment.

"'Pshaw! there's nothing about the Penniwell case here!' he exclaimed. 'This affair happened a dozen years ago! Navy is conceited. He wants to keep his name before the profession.'

"I remarked that the story was fairly well told.

"'Oh, yes, he is smart enough, and would be a dangerous fellow at large. It's lucky for the whole country that we have him behind the bars. As for this stuff, it doesn't really amount to anything, but we can't let it go out while the man lives. Thanks to you just the same.'"

"That was rather hard on the ambitious old codger," observed Hall.

"All you could do, nevertheless," said Frarie.

"It seemed so to me," Paine continued. "Yet I felt mean about it and did not visit the prison again. This fell out the more naturally, because matters of business were occupying my time, and within a fortnight I had removed from Bolton to this city."

"Where is your copy of Navy's story, Kep?" asked Jack Hall.

"It is still at my old home. I culled out what I wanted, to go with my other notes. There were some parts which did not seem so bright on a second reading."

Frarie arose, and, flicking away a particle of cigarette ash, took up his hat.

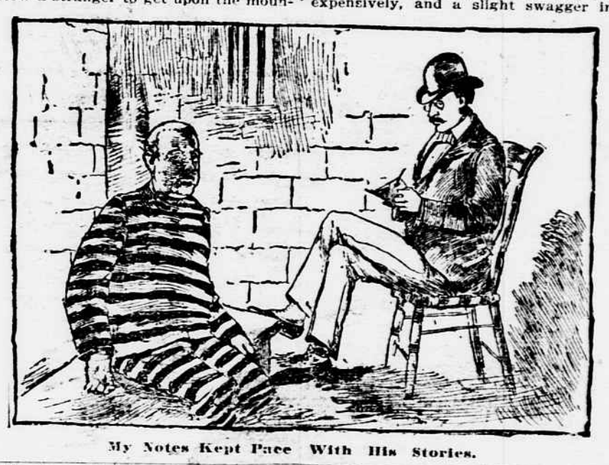
"There may be a call for more of Navy's adventures," he said. "I advise you not to kill off the old man until you have exhausted your material. By the way, I inferred that he was dead. Is that so?"

"He died in prison more than a year ago. Not until then did I feel at liberty to write him up."

"Well, good-night. Come on, Hall."

On the afternoon of the next day, while Paine was busy at his desk, a stranger was shown to his room by the landlady. Paine whirled his chair around and rose to greet him.

The stranger shot a quick, penetrating glance at his host and bowed with mingled deference and assurance. He was dressed expensively, and a slight swagger in his bearing indicated that he was conscious of bringing his welcome in his pocket.



My Notes Kept Pace With His Stories.

"Sporting man," thought Paine. "What does he want of me?"

"Are you Mr. Kepler Paine?" asked the new-comer, with much suavity.

"I am."

"Then you wrote 'John Navy's Confession,' which has just appeared in the Maxima?"

"I did," Paine answered, with a smile. "Take a chair, Mr. ——. Have you read it?"

"I've read it," said the man, emphatically. "Best thing I ever read. I got onto it from that name. Excuse me—I forgot to mention my own. It's Perkins of Chicago. I should have been sorry to miss that story of yours. Now, when are you going to give us the rest of it?"

"The rest of it?" Paine repeated, in bewilderment. "The story is complete in this number of the Maxima." Then he realized that the public was thirsting for his work. "I can write more tales of the same sort, if that is what you mean."

"About this same John Navy?"

"Certainly."

"That's just what I mean! That story reads like the truth," said Perkins, weighing his words carefully. "You must have known somebody just like him." He looked inquiringly at Paine.

On the Afternoon of the Next Day, While Paine Was at His Desk, a Visitor Was Shown Into His Room.

"I did. I knew old John Navy himself."

"Where?" Perkins asked, eagerly—"begging your pardon! I didn't mean——"

"Oh, it is no secret. He was a convict in the Bolton prison. I used to visit him there—in the course of some charitable work which I did."

With some reluctance Paine added this last explanation, which he considered a detail of no possible interest to a stranger. Yet his words made a marked impression upon Perkins.

"You were good to him, then?" he asked, respectfully.

"I liked the man; couldn't help liking him."

"No wonder! John Navy—according to your story—was a square, open-hearted man. It didn't harm you any to befriend him. You had a rare chance, young man! I suppose he talked pretty freely?"

"He told me a great deal about his life," Paine admitted, a trifle mystified by these questions. "I wrote it all down," he added at length.

Again an eager light flashed in the visitor's eyes.

"Desk's full of it, I suppose," he observed casually.

"My head is full of it," Paine rejoined. "Yes, of course I have my notes."

Silence ensued for a few moments.

"I was amused at some parts of that story," Perkins went on, still dallying with his errand. "The old man said some queer things."

"He used other expressions quite as peculiar as those in my story."

"And you remember them all?" asked Perkins, coming sharply to business. "What's your price for the rest of it?"

Paine was taken unaware. "So you are a publisher!" he exclaimed.

"A publisher?—Yes, of course; you've hit it." Perkins laughed lightly.

"If you want my work make me an offer," said Paine, with instant shrewdness. "Of course I shall expect an advance on what the Maxima paid me."

"That's business!" Perkins replied. "I don't know what those fellows paid you, but it's worth more to me than it is to them. How would $500 strike you?"

"Done!" cried Paine. "You shall have the best story I can write. Five thousand words?" he asked, in the next breath.

"I don't care about the number of words," said the man, with a touch of impatience. "It's Navy's talk that brings the dollars. Can I have it now?"

"Oh, no!" said Paine, in surprise. "It isn't written yet! When must you have the story?"

"Thought you had it all in your head!" exclaimed Perkins, darting a glint of suspicion at the author. "Well, you know your business. Make it short, though. How long—a week?"

"You can have it in a week."

"All right. In a week you shall have your $500." And Perkins bowed himself out, well contented.

Meeting Frarie upon the street at a later hour, Paine gayly accosted him, with outstretched hand.

"Shake, old man!" he cried. "I have bounded into the ranks of the high-priced story tellers."

"How is that, Paine?" he queried. "Have you hypnotized an editor?"

"Syndicate man, I think. I was too much surprised to ask for particulars. It doesn't matter. Perkins of Chicago wants to pay me $500 for a story."

"Long life to Perkins of Chicago. I don't recall his name; but I am heartily pleased at your success, Paine."

When Perkins reappeared, at the appointed time, he glanced over the first few pages of the manuscript with great satisfaction, and counted out $500 in payment.

"I hope this will be a success," the author civilly remarked. "I have made it as dramatic as possible, remembering your interest in Navy's conversation."

"It's a sure success!" Perkins answered in high elation. "Good evening."

He shook hands effusively with Paine and immediately took his departure.

Paine's sleeping room adjoined his study, and the door between these apartments was kept closed at night. When he opened it the next morning on his way down to breakfast he uttered a sharp cry of dismay and sprang forward into the room excitedly.

During the night his desk had been ransacked and its contents strewn over the floor. Paine made a hurried search through both rooms, but nothing else—not even his watch and money—had been disturbed. Moreover, when he had carefully rearranged his disordered papers they were all accounted for, with this exception—every scrap of writing which related to John Navy had been stolen!

Early that afternoon Perkins returned. He appeared depressed and disconcerted, and his changed mien excited Paine's wonder.

"Did you like my story?" he asked.

"Yes, it is a good story," Perkins slowly responded. "It is something of an advance on the other. Still, I don't find that it contains all I expected."

"Why, what did you want?" (Paine was on his mettle now.) "You would hardly expect a three-volume novel for the price you offered!"

"I didn't bid high enough, that's a fact," the publisher confessed. "But I want the rest of it—badly. I am thinking of making you a big offer for all you know about Navy.

"In a series of short stories like the others?"

"Oh, any way you like—yes!" Perkins got up and walked the floor impatiently. "I can't explain! It's this way: You have what I want, and if I can make a deal with you we won't dicker about the price. Now, what can you do for me?"

"I can supply the demand," said Paine, confidently. "But you must give me time for this. Unfortunately, all my notes were stolen last night."

"That was all you knew about Navy?" asked Perkins, hopelessly.

"Everything I had. Stay!—there is Navy's own story; but I have already dipped into that for a few of his peculiar ideas."

"Navy's own story!" the publisher echoed, in strong excitement. "What's that?"

Paine made a brief explanation, and upon learning the fate of this story Perkins drew a long breath as if tantalized almost beyond endurance.

"But you say that you copied it," he exclaimed, with a gleam of hope. "Where's the copy?"

"It is still at my old home—packed away with a trunkful of old letters up in the attic."

"Then you could get it?"

"Certainly, if it is of any value to you."

Strangely enough, the publisher's eagerness was quickly allayed by this reply. "We will let the matter rest awhile," he decided, after a moment of abstraction; and then quietly withdrew.

A few days afterward Paine received a letter and a paper addressed in his mother's handwriting. With a pleasant anticipation of home news, he opened the letter, but its first paragraph drew from him a cry of surprise. His old home had also been entered by a burglar. It was a matter of slight importance, but, in the light of his own recent experience, it ws sufficiently disturbing.

Further details made it very clear that both of these trivial robberies had been committed by the same mysterious person. As in the former case, nothing of value had been stolen; but the contents of an old trunk had been found scattered over the attic floor.

"I send you the Gazette, which has just arrived," Mrs. Paine wrote, in conclusion. "I see that the Penniwell money has been recovered, and that one of the burglars is in custody. Possibly this is the man who entered our house."

A sudden light broke in upon Paine's mind. There was but one man who knew of the papers in his trunk—one man who had shown an insatiate curiosity about John Navy. Snatching up the Gazette, he quickly ran over its prolix account of the arrest.

The last paragraph was especially interesting to Kepler Paine.

"The prisoner registered at the Union House as Perkins of Chicago. His connection with the Navy gang has been clearly established, and it appears that he discovered the long-hidden booty by means of a cipher message from his old chief. Part of this cipher was contained in certain obscure phrases of a story entitled 'John Navy's Confession,' which was recently published in the Maxima."

CHARLES W. HARWOOD.

Tsetse Fly Disease.

From the New York World.

Surgeon General David Bruce of the English army has recently made a report on the tsetse fly disease, called "nangna" by the natives of Zululand. The disease attacks horses, dogs, monkeys and cattle. It is always fatal, except to cattle, and few of them recover from the attack. The disease is characterized by a fever, a rapid destruction of the red blood corpuscles, extreme emaciation, and a swelling of the neck, abdomen and extremities.

Dr. Bruce spent some time in Africa and made many experiments with the tsetse fly. He found that the disease did not necessarily follow the bite of the fly, and never did result from such bites unless the fly had previously bitten a diseased animal. He concluded that the fly serves merely as a means whereby the virus from an infected animal could be communicated to one that was healthy.

Microscopical examinations of the blood of diseased animals show the presence of minute animalculae, which, when injected into the blood of a healthy animal, caused the disease. Having arrived at this point in studying the disease, it is possible that science will soon discover a remedy that will prove efficacious.

ART IN THE CAMPAIGN

How Political Banners Are Painted to Order.

Lightning Work by Brush Swingers, Who Are Expert in This Particular Line.

Already the campaign banner is swinging mid-air across the avenues and adorning the various political headquarters. Very few people, as they gaze on these works of art, have any idea of their manufacture, simply knowing that they appear after the selection of the candidates for presidential honors and associating them with fireworks, brass bands and oratory.

The making of campaign banners is, however, an extensive business, several firms devoting themselves exclusively to their manufacture. It is true that banners are sometimes gotten up by sign painters and the small shops that spring up for the occasion, but they are not to be classed with the banners turned out by the regular factories. A visit to one of these establishments reveals some interesting facts.

On the cheap banners only the names and sentiments of the candidates appear, but the large and costly ones have the portraits of both nominees painted in ovals, separated by fanciful designs. Shields, eagles and figures of Liberty are the most popular. The emblems are wonderfully and fearfully gotten up, the eagle performing feats that would tax a contortionist, airily balanced on a shield, his talons filled with enormous bundles of arrows, a pennant expressing his political opinions floating gracefully from his beak; or with a shield suspended from his neck he takes his wild flight across the rising sun. The Goddess of Liberty and other designs are executed in an equally striking manner.

Takes Three to Make It.

The first-class campaign banner is the product of the combined efforts of three men—the portrait painter, the sign painter and the sailmaker. In making the banner the work is divided up. The painting, which is done on sized muslin, may be accomplished in two ways. If the man is an expert, he takes a large circle of pasteboard, having the features cut out, and traces the general outline and size of the head, using a photograph to finish the portrait from.

But the usual method is by the use of stencils, each stencil being for a different color. The large pieces of muslin, tacked on boards, are ranged in a row around the room, and men with pots of paint pass from one to the other with great rapidity. Painter No. 1 lays in the hair, No. 2 follows with the flesh tint, No. 3 puts on the shirt and collar, and No. 4 the coat; thus the foundation is laid in for the artist, who comes along with his huge palette and completes the portrait.

Patriotic Sentiments.

Meanwhile, the sign painters, perched on stools and boxes, are putting on long strips of muslin "The People's Choice" and other equally flattering sentiments. The sailmakers cut a roll of square meshed net into the different banner sizes, binding them with a thick rope covered with canvas.

No stencils are used for the emblems, they are spontaneous bursts of the artist's imagination. He can indulge his taste in eagles as fierce and warlike as he pleases, and Liberties as defiant. This is not all. A banner once painted is not a loss, even if it remains on the firm's hands. As the artist remarked, "putting on or taking off a mustache or beard, rearranging hair, an extra touch of fat or lean as the case requires is a small matter, accomplished by a few strokes of the brush." The sign painter is equally handy at altering the political mottoes.

The banner takes some days to dry, and a week to finish. A section is placed paint downward on the floor and the net put over it. The same design is arranged on top, and the sailmaker, sitting on the floor, sailor fashion, sews it all together. Then the banner is ready to be raised with cheers and a flare of red fire.

A Dreasy Cow.

From the Philadelphia Bulletin.

There is a man in Germantown who has a great affection for animals. He believes in making life just as easy for them as possible.

This gentleman has a cow which gives a generous quantity of rich milk, and has done the same for several years. Every day she is turned out on the lawn of his place to feed on the succulent grass there.

The recent hot weather has brought a great many flies with it, and these flies, as is the habit with such pests, took particular delight in settling on the cow in clouds.

The owner of the cow, a few days ago, observed the trouble in which it was, and decided something must be done to relieve the animal of the pests. All at once a bright idea came to him, and he went into consultation with his wife. The result was a strange animal appeared on the lawn the following morning.

The legs were as big as those of an elephant, and were striped red and white in color. The rest of its body was a dark brownish red. Its head bore horns and it chewed the cud. Those were the only points of resemblance it bore to a cow.

The flies missed their one-time victim and at first they didn't know what to do. Then they made a common descent on the legs of this strange new beast. They bit for all they were worth, but the object of their attack didn't seem to mind this. It went on complacently browsing upon the grass. It didn't even take the trouble to whisk its tail about.

And the new animal? Well, it has been laughing to itself so constantly since then that it is growing fat at the rate of ten pounds a day, for it is a cow. In fact, the very cow which the flies enjoyed feasting upon so much a short time ago. Her transformation is all the result of two pairs of pajamas or pantaloons, which its owner's wife made out of calico, and which are put on her fore and hind legs each day, and fastened in place by bands passed over her back.

Bullets Wear Out Rifles.

From the New York Sun.

There is one thing which users of the new high velocity of 30-caliber have to consider, and that is the effect of the copper or nickel jacket on the grooves of the rifle. A bullet that leaves the muzzle of a rifle at a velocity of 2,000 feet a second is so wearing on the rifling, especially near the muzzle, that the accuracy of even the hardest-bored rifles is seriously impaired inside of 12,000 shots at the most. The lead bullets, or those but slightly hardened with a mixture of tin, do not wear the barrels to the same extent, and the barrels last far longer.

Interrupted Courtesies.

From the Fliegende Blatter.