THE CLIMAX.

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CASSIUS M. CLAY.

A Visit to Its Home in Kentucky, by Mr. A. W. Campbell—His Peculiar Habits and Remarkable Career—The Peaceful Ending of a Stormy Life.

(Special Correspondent of the Wheeling (W. Va.) Intelligencer.)

RICHMOND KY., July 26.—This county of Madison, from which I write, is one of the old and rich Blue Grass and former large slaveholding counties of the State. It has a reputation outside of the State as the home of Cassius M. Clay, the famous anti-slavery agitator of antebellum days. I am sure your readers will be interested in hearing something about him (for he still lives at 78 years of age) especially those who remember the speech he delivered at Wheeling in 1859 and the excitement that attended it.

"Cash" Clay, as he is familiarly known, was born in this county, of Virginia parents, and inherited a large fortune in land and negroes. But he was educated at Yale College, and this accounts for his anti-slavery ideas. He imbibed them at the North during his educational sojourn, and never gave them up afterwards.- He became an advocate of emancipation in Kentucky and in this he had the sympathy and to some extent the countenance of his great kingsman, Henry Clay. But Cassius Clay had much more pronounced views on the subject—held them much more tenaciously—and besides was a much bolder man, than Henry Clay was. As respects indomitable will and unquailing courage, Andrew Jackson himself never surpassed this singular man. People tell you here that he never feared the face of man, and you have even now but to look into his face to be convinced that this is no material exaggeration. As far back as 1845 he undertook to publish an emancipation paper in Lexington, but he was mobbed and suppressed. Curiously enough, and apparently also inconsistently enough, he, at the outbreak of the Mexican war soon afterwards, volunteered his services and led a company to the front, although the war was notoriously a pro-slavery raid on Mexico for Texas and other territory. He confesses that he enlisted in it as a matter of expediency, to gain the military prestige that would give him an influential following for emancipation in this State.

A HOPELESS CRUSADE.

He did gain some prestige, although taken a prisoner early in the war, and he did renew his emancipation crusade, but the influential following never materialized. On the contrary he practically led and sustained the hopeless crusade alone, and a wild and bloody time he had of it. A pistol and bowie knife became his constant "vade mecum"—literally and truly the companions of his bosom. And he became more literally than Bismarck "a man of blood and iron."

I had known Mr. Clay and corresponded quite often with him just before the war, but I had not met him since the war until this visit. First, I went out with a friend and paid him a call, and since then have, at his invitation, spent a couple of days with him at his large country home—the largest and most unique country home in the county and perhaps in the State. He made a speech here for Harrison and Morton last Saturday and asked me to go out and stay over Sunday with him, which I did. He lives almost as a hermit in this big house in the country, in the midst of thirty-eight acres of forest trees planted by his own hands many years ago. It is seven miles to the West of this place by way of the Lexington pike. Just where you turn to leave the pike and go across the country to his home stands the elm tree underneath which he and Turner engaged in combat at a political discussion in 1849, in which combat both men were wounded unto death. Clay was stabbed into the lungs and Turner disembowled. Clay barely recovered and Turner died. The former having acted in self defense was never indicted and, of course, never tried for the killing of Turner. This was his second rencontre at a political meeting and it became apparent to his opponents that he was a dangerous man to attack. None but such a man could have carried on the unequal contest with slavery here. His knife and pistol were respected, but his arguments were not.

WONDERFUL VITALITY.

As we drove past the spot last Saturday night in the full light of the moon I made some allusion to the place to draw the old man out, and he said to me, "Do you see those chimneys there? There was a house there at that time, and after that wound I laid on my back in that house for six months, every one but myself expecting me to die. They thought Turner might survive, but I would surely die."

Sure enough he did not die, and here I was forty years later riding past the tragic spot with the self same man, strong enough yet, even at 78, to confront a crowd and as ready as ever to defend himself. In that forty years he had gone on making speeches, and in the interim had served as Minister to Russia for nine years.

Arriving at the great house at about 11 o'clock we found a light in the dining room and a lunch on the table. Such is his dining room every night. His adopted son, whom he had brought home with him from Russia, was at the door to receive us. These two occupy the great house alone, having their seperate rooms. The overseer and his wife, who are the housekeepers, occupy a cottage near by. A lamp in the wide hall showed the pictures that ornamented the walls on either side—paintings and portraits, some of them members of the Imperial family and nobility of Russia, and among them portraits of the Czar and Czarina specially presented under their royal seal to the ex-Minister. There was also a portrait of Prince Gortchacow, the Prime Minister of the Empire, with his autograph, "a greater man," said Mr. Clay, "than Bismarck." He resembled a well-bred German professor, although he is of pure Slave extraction.

As it was late we did not stop long to discuss these pictures, and I was shown to bed in an upper room of the large and lonely house.

The house to which I am referring was built in part by Mr. Clay's father, General Green Clay, early in the present century, and cost then $50,000, but practically the whole structure has been rebuilt at an additional expense of $30,000. The ceilings are eighteen feet high and the windows run almost from floor to ceiling. The parlor is the largest and most imposing in its structure and equipment I ever saw in a country house. The upholstery is mostly in yellow repand in conjunction with certain large vases and other adornments and pictures makes up a very attractive ensemble indeed. It called to mind the great parlor I had seen in Martin Van Buren's home when I was a boy.

CLAY'S HOME LIFE.

"We have no very regular getting up time here," said my host, "and you will be called in the morning." And so after a good night's sleep in my airy room I was called about 8 o'clock. On coming down to the hall, where are old English lounges and chairs, I found that the old gentleman had, according to his custom, made a morning nip of tansy bitters, which he said he preferred as a gentle tonic to mint, and so after exchanging compliments in this way we went into breakfast. He is a man of great simplicity of habits. "I try to live close to nature," was his remark. "I always get up from the table with some appetite left, although my digestion is good. Not exercising much I regulate my diet accordingly. Although 78 years old I wear no wool underwear summer or winter. I do not even use a cotton undershirt. I bathe more or less every morning in cold water and that protects me. I have never used tobacco in any shape and spirits only very sparingly. I spend a great deal of time in the open air. In the forenoon I read under the trees (after attending to my correspondence and literary work in my library) and in the afternoon I take my nap under them on an iron lounge where I use neither pillows or cushions.

I said, "Mr. Clay you are following the example of Emperor William, of Germany, in war times. I suppose you mean to live as long as he did?"

"Well," said he, "I want the air to circulate all around me. I am fleshy enough to dispense with cushions, and they attract flies. You see I have no flies about here. I have my barns, stables and outhouses away off in the forest so as to have no flies about the house. They are my abomination. A fly in a pitcher of milk destroys that milk for me. One reason why I do not care to go from home is the indifference of hotels to this matter of flies and cleanliness of table and house appointments. I prefer this way of mine."

A PLEASANT TALK.

And, sure enough, everything about his grounds and his house shows this attention to order and cleanliness. He is one of the most methodical men I ever saw. If an animal dies on his place he has it immediately buried. No garbage of any kind is seen anywhere. "Pure air and pure water," said he, "have so much to do with health that I want mine as pure as possible."

After breakfast we took seats out under the trees and talked over Kentucky and national politics, and his experiences and observations in Europe, especially in Russia. He is a man of much information on almost all subjects and of a philosophical turn of mind. He uses words with point and force, especially words semi-technical in their nature. Speaking of Kentucky politics he remarked: The almost insuperable barrier to Republicanism is the prejudice of slavery and the war. That is not fast disappearing but descends from father to son. It precludes us from the natural force of tariff arguments. The best we can hope is to neutralize this prejudice and render it passive by arguments of self interest. I regard success this time as very important to the future of the country. If the Democrats succeed they will endeavor to so organize politics as to keep the South forever solid, just as they did before the war, and if they can detach enough support in the North, especially the West, they will resist displacement by violence, if necessary. Next time they will fight inside the Union and under the flag, and thus avoid their former mistake. I always predicted in former days that they would fight before they would give up power and many persons ridiculed the idea. The Southern leaders look upon the Yankees as the Russians do the Jews, as their natural enemies. If they could do so they would introduce the Mississippi and Louisiana method of carrying elections in Northern cities. I know the animus that prevails."

"But," said I, "the manufacturing sentiment is gaining ground at the South, wherever there are cotton mills and iron works. Won't that neutralize the old Bourbon tendency?"

"No," said he, "they (the leaders) will cultivate all that when it is far enough along and will ally it against the North as a rival interest. Four more years of power will give them a big following in the North and discourage and almost eliminate Republicanism at the South. Hence they will strain every nerve to succeed this time. Republican success this time is a great counteractive necessity to the present tendencies and schemes of Southern leaders and as a protection to the best interest of the country."

In all his conversation you can discover the profound distrust of Mr. Clay as to the intentions of the Southern leaders. Strangely enough, however, as it would seem, he supported Horace Greely in '72 and Tilden in '76 and approved the Republican plan of reconstruction. His explanation is that he did so to preserve the "autonomy of the States," as he puts it. Now that this "autonomy" has been preserved he sees again a new danger from those who would suppress the elective franchise and rule by force as they did in the days before the war.

ABOUT RELIGION.

But I must pass on or this letter will become too long. As it was on Sunday that we were thus talking, our conversation appropriately enough fell into some thoughts akin to the day. He said, among other things, that he always desired to see the persons in his employ, especially the young people, going to church on Sunday, although he did not go himself. "I have no sympathy," said he, "with Ingersollism. I have seen too much of life and of the world not to recognize the importance of religion to the well being of society. I have no respect for a man who makes merchandise out of the hopes and longings of his fellow men, and who has no substitute to offer for what he takes away. This I can say as a man of the world. I often think of what a consolation their beliefs were to my mother and sisters, and I know it is the only consolation of thousands of others. Hence, I always respect and uphold the church as the main element in our civilization."

While we were thus talking a servant had brought out a basket of fine fruit, fresh from the trees. Continuing on in his strain he referred to the workings of the ecclesiastical system of the Greek church in Russia. The Czar is the pope of the system. The peasantry recognize him as the representative of God, and he said it was wonderful to witness the reverence displayed by them for his person. They are intensely loyal to his divine right claims. Nihilism, he said, was fomented by the old slave-holders—the former owners of the serfs. The peasantry had no sympathy with it. He said that Nihilism had been practically stamped out in Russia as it ought to be. The government of that country was the only government for which the people were fitted, and it was a good government. Although the Czar is absolute yet they dare not disregard the unwritten law of public opinion. He (Clay) believes in the manifest destiny of Russia, and said the government was the only friend this country had in Europe during the war, and Gortchacow, was intensely anxious for our success and gave no countenance to England or France in their desire to recognize the Confederacy. He cherishes among his souvenirs a jubilant vote of congratulation from him announcing the surrender of Lee, just cabled to him by the Russian Minister at Washington. Speaking of Gortchacow, he had said he could converse in perfect English, French or German. The Czar, however, spoke English only indifferently and he generally conversed with him in French.

A KENTUCKY DINNER.

Thus we talked on until dinner was announced. A Kentucky country dinner is something that attests the bounteousness of the blue-grass region. Fried chicken and ham are staple articles of meat, as snap beans (cooked with bacon), new potatoes, peas, tomatoes, squash and onions, and the best of white corn bread, biscuit, milk and coffee. No wonder that the Kentucky soldiers averaged over sixty-eight and a half inches in height and weighed on an average of 149 pounds. The farming class, I presume, live better than the farmers elsewhere in the United States, and of course in the world. Mr. Clay says he lives better than the Czar of Russia. The Czar has no blue-grass region. Mutton is one of Mr. Clay's favorite dishes, and he has a choice herd of Southdown sheep that would average perhaps 145 pounds per head. He says they are his most profitable stock. He sold his wool for 25 cents this year and his sheep averaged over seven pounds to the fleece. They are profitable because he breeds fancy stock and sells them at fancy prices. He sells to breeders. Recently he sold a picked lot to go to South America.

After dinner we came out under the trees again and the old veteran laid down on his iron lounge as is his after dinner habit. There was a handsome bird cage and canary singer singing from a limb just above him, and swinging from another limb was a cedar bucket of drinking water. Like many of the old-timers in this country he prefers to drink out of a gourd. Leaving him to take a nap the Russian young gentleman and myself started out for a buggy ride over the plantation. "I will take you to a point," said he, "where can see into two or three counties." And so we drove out to an elevation where we could see the rich rolling lands of Jessamine and Fayette counties. It was a beatiful landscape indeed. Then we crossed over to the Lexington pike. (Limestone pikes are features of the country all through the blue-grass region.) Presently we could see the farms of Clark county away to the Eastward. We passed many negroes on the pike—some on horse back some in buggies and still more on foot—returning from a Sunday picnic or basket dinner somewhere. They were generally well dressed and were laborers on the various farms round about. "These people" said my young friend "will have a good time on Sunday if it takes all they earn during the week." I asked him if none of them got ahead in the world. "An occasional one only," said he. "Some of this corn land is rented to them at ten dollars per acre, and if they make a good crop it pays them fair wages. This year the crop is very fine and they will do pretty well."

Passing a hay scales along the pike and a live stock pen around it he remarked "there is our voting place in this district." No house, but just a live stock pen, and there was a still house close by. They have some lively times at elections here, said he, and I have seen general arguments end up with knockdowns. The still-house of course furnished the ammunition. This country is dotted here and there with small still houses. Under the law they are allowed to sell by the quart, and it is wonderful the amount of liquor that a two barrel per day still, that does not run half the time, has in reserve for sale. They are really grog-shops in disguise.

We rode out the pike as far as Kentucky river five miles away. My young friend was just of age and fresh from college, and was pretty well up in geology, and so when we descended into the gorge of the river, which reminded me of a Colorado canyon, he explained to me the peculiarities of the stratification. Down in this gorge they got what is known as Kentucky marble, out of which the towering monument Clay at Lexington is built. It was an inspiring scene to look from the heights of this gorge at the sweep of the river below. The pike winds its way down on the one side, crossing by a great iron bridge, and thence winds up the other side, and you can take it all in at a glance.

We returned to the farm in the cool of the evening and found the old "general" enjoying his chair under the trees. I have omitted all the way through the title of general, by which he is known in this country, because he told me he disliked it, although he holds a bona fide commission as a Major General of volunteers from the government. He came home from Russia during the war to accept this position, but not getting an independent command to suit him he returned.

THE CLOSING OF A STORMY LIFE.

After a simple Sunday evening tea we came out in the moonlight to await the eclipse. What a glorious moonlight it was that night. The scattered forest trees, through which it shown down upon us, seemed literally bathed in its splendor. Sitting vis a vis with the old Kentuckian, looking at his hair and beard, and watching his stern face, I could not but speculate upon the tenor of his thoughts. Here he was at the end of a long and stormy life, and I fancied he must be contrasting the moon-lit scene around him with the "light of other days," when he was young on his native heath, full of his remarkable determination, and "rejoicing like a strong man to run a race." He had said to me that he felt at the outset of his career as if he could do it all himself: but now he realized how great the odds had been against him Yes, said I, you was working at emancipation in a retail way. The Almighty took the task off your hands and finished it up by the wholesale. And yet, said he, I have no regrets over my career, while of course I would not care to go over it again. I obeyed my own convictions, and that is always a satisfaction.

Long as this letter is, it could be spun out indefinitely with snatches of the conversations indulged in by the light of the moon as we waited for the eclipse. We remarked upon the phenomone that attended the total obscuration—how almost instantly a breeze sprung up and the temperature fell. You must hunt us the explanation, remarked the old gentleman, as we took in our chairs and made ready for bed, and let me know whether after all there is not some heat in the reflected light of the moon. A. W. C.

THE BEST LIFE OF CLEVELAND.

Our friends who have been looking with much interest for the issue of the authentic and practically official life of President Cleveland, by the brilliant journalist, W. U. Hensel are not to be disappointed. The work is just out, and is immensely superior to the ordinary Campaign Biography. It is a charming volume in every way. Exceedingly interesting in style, it gives the whole history of Mr. Cleveland's rapid raise to fame and the high position he holds, and shows the remarkable qualities that have won him renown. It also gives an excellent sketch of the Life of Mr. Thurman, and much exceedingly interesting and valuable information respecting the campaign. It is very finely illustrated with Steel Portrait of both Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Thurman, also a beautiful Phototype Portrait of Mrs. Cleveland, with numerous other portraits, scenes, Etc.

It would be difficult to find a man better fitted to write the lives of the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President than W. U. Hensel, lawyer, editor and politician. For nearly fifteen years he was one of the editors of the Lancaster Intelligencer; for five years Chairman of the Democratic State Committee of Pennsylvania; a delegate to nearly all the Democratic conventions since 1877; Chairman of the State convention of 1888; delegate to St. Louis, author of many sketches of public men and notably the campaign biographer of Mr. Hendricks in 1884. He has the additional advantage of having been one of the warmest friends and adherents of Mr. Cleveland, not only before his accession to the Presidency but since and during that entire time. He has also long been an admirer and personal friend of Mr. Thurman.

This is undoubtedly the most authentic and excellent book published on the subject.

The work is issued by the well known house of Hubbard Bros., of Philadelphia, Chicago, and Kansas City, and we are not surprised to hear that it is having a wonderfully rapid sale through agents.

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VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.

Squatters on the Ground Awaiting the Opening of an Indian Reservation.

GREAT FALLS, MONT. News of the opening of the Black Feet Reservation is awaited impatiently here and throughout Northern Montana. A large number of persons have gone to the reservation to locate ranches, mines, and town sites. The desirable valleys are fairly covered with tents, the greatest rush apparently being to the Big Sandy, the famous hay grounds. Soldiers as well as civilians are on the grounds, and when news comes that the bill is signed there is likely to be a rush. Bullhock Valley, beyond Fort Assiniboine, is all staked off, and the tents of the squatter may be seen al along the valley of the Milk River. There is a silver lode in the Bear Paw Mountains that was located several years ago. It is understood that several parties are on hand watching to locate this mine as well as to prospect for others.—Chicago Tribune.

[ED.—The President has now signed the Bill throwing open for settlement the Indian Reservation in Montana.]

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