

## FIRST LETTER.

THE MARKET HOUSE—MARKET DAYS IN OLD MAYSVILLE—PAP MIDDLETON, MIKE MAGRAW AND DICK CRAIG—EDWARDS THE STATESMAN—ENTERPRISE IN OLD MAYSVILLE—THE CITY COUNCIL—A LOCO-FOCO REMINISCENCE.

WASHINGTON CITY, January 18, 1883.

*Dr. John Phister—My Young Friend:* I notice by the proceedings of the city council of the city of Maysville, as printed in the NEW MAYSVILLE REPUBLICAN, that you have moved to demolish the market house. I read that with feelings something akin to sorrow. Among my early recollections of Maysville, the market house always looms up as the most prominent feature. It was the playground of my boyhood days; under its roof I heard the first political speeches; in its primitive days it was the opera house of the city. How Charles Tudor and his boys used to make its stalls rattle with the music of the fife and drum. As a fifer Charles Tudor headed the list of musicians of that day, and no man ever struck a bass drum a harder or a more artistic lick than did his son Edward. When the council chamber was built it was a wonder of architectural design. That chamber was for years the only public hall of the city. Within its walls was heard the voice of the lecturer, the divine, the politician and statesman. In it the magician performed his tricks. On council nights the assembled wisdom of the city was wont to congregate there. In the time of pestilence in 1832, it was a morgue. The bodies of strangers who died in the city were placed there to await burial. Through that old market house was the fashionable promenade of the city. A thousand recollections of old Maysville come to me by reason of your movement on the market house. On Wednesday and Saturday mornings the people, regardless of age, sex or previous condition of servitude, met under its roof or on the pavements adjacent; they were not called sidewalks then.

Market days were grand days in Maysville, fifty years ago. They were the days you might say of public receptions in the city. Everybody knew everybody. Everybody shook hands with everybody and enquired after everybody—they were the blue ribbon days of honest, earnest, heartfelt friendship. In the present greatness of Maysville it should not be forgotten what Maysville was when the market house was built. Well, you are going to tear it down. Let it go with all its associations. It is the link between the old and the new of your city. In the new you may have in its stead a grand plaza, an esplanade, a library building, or some other new fangled thing to keep pace with the improvements of the day.

A Maysville boy of more than fifty years ago, has just paid me a visit. I have called his attention to the demolition of the market house. He seems to be confounded by the proposition. "What," says he, "demolish that building! The shades of old Pap Middleton and Mike MaGraw will forbid it. Our old African friend, Richard Craig, will arise from his grave, draped out with fantastical ribbons and with auction bell in hand will proclaim its demolition a sacrilege. No sir, the new boys may tear it down, but it will always be a green spot in the memory of the old boys."

His reference to Pap Middleton, Mike MaGraw and Dick Craig, brought up some of the old time celebrities of Maysville. Pap Middleton was a little old man who lived in a small red frame house away up on the hillside, I should think about the head of Limestone street. It was in those days an almost inaccessible place. I do not now remember just what his business or calling was. He was well-known to everybody about the city and especially the young schoolboys. He had a great love for ardent spirits and used to find amusement in becoming oblivious from their influence. On such occasions he found a lodging place on one of the stalls of the market house, where he was watched with great fidelity by an otherwise worthless cur dog. Middleton was a harmless, and as the world went in those days, a good citizen—that is he was not a thief, a ballot box stuffer or a prize fighter. He was an honest man and got drunk in an honest way. Mike MaGraw had been a soldier in the war of 1812, I think, and was a somewhat demented man. He used to get very drunk on Christmas and made things lively in the market house when the city marshal would try to check his insubordination. In his quiet moods he was amusing if not entertaining. I remember how he used to go through the military drill on Front street, and cry aloud to the citizens of Aberdeen: "Mark time, Aberdeen soldiers." When he got drunk he put on warpaint and joined the prize fighting class.

There was no auction held in Maysville or vicinity fifty years ago that Richard or Dick Craig, as we used to call him, did not give it prominence by his fantastic dress and the melody of his voice and bell. He used to scour the town, bell in hand, to notify the citizens of public meetings. He even went around ringing up lost children. Yes, my boy, think of lost children in Maysville, fifty years ago. I know the bellman used to go around the city—never forget that Maysville was always a city—crying for lost children. You don't do things that way, now. You do it by telephone, district messenger or some such service, or may be you educate the children to stay at home.

I would not forget to mention John D. Edwards, of Mason county, Ky. He was the local statesman of the period and a scholar withal. His name is inseparably connected with the old market house. Hundreds of times has he addressed the people from its stalls. He was a reformer of a financial and civil service type. How earnestly he used to protest against the introduction of gaslight in Louisville. To his mind it was an innovation fraught with the most direful consequences to the country. He portrayed how corruption would creep in upon the people by reason of its introduction and how the expense would bear heavily upon the people. When

some auditor would ask him an ill-advised question by way of interruption, he would ask them to spell "Bumble bee with its tail cut off." That question was where his civil service reform ideas came in. He was a harmless, demented man. I think he was frozen to death on a door step in Cincinnati or Louisville.

Old Maysville was an enterprising place. The Maysville and Lexington Turnpike occupied a large space in national discussions. The Maysville and Charleston Railroad attracted the attention of the people of the Ohio valley as the very best outlet to the sea. The stage and mail lines from Maysville through Ohio were the great highways to the north Atlantic seaboard.

In the magnificence and grandeur of old Maysville she was the first to erect beacon lights on the banks of the Ohio river for the benefit of commerce and navigation. Away back in 1834 or 1835, council directed that two large lamps or lanterns should be put up; one at the foot of Main Cross or Market street, the other at the foot of Sutton street, so that the steamboat pilots might be enabled to find the city on dark nights. The lights of old Maysville were not hid under a bushel nor under the shadow of Limestone hill.

In the olden time I used to be around the council chamber as a looker on, and I have many pleasant recollections of its deliberations and the earnest efforts of the city fathers to bring the city to the front, so to speak. Sometime I may open a budget of reminiscences of Maysville as it was fifty years ago or thereabouts. I do not now approve of the vandalism of the market house. I am not of the progressive school. I think if a plan could be devised to get rid of the flies and villainous odors which used to hang around it, it would be a step in the right direction. I suppose that can't be done without razing it to the ground. Then, as I said before, let it go, with all its associations, flies and odors.

When a boy I was made to feel sad about the disfigurement of the city hall. It came about in this way. I was a whig boy and thought whiggery was kind of kin to heaven. The loco focos, as the democrats were then called, elected Breathitt governor of the state, over Clarke, whig, by a majority of 1,242. The locos were rejoiced at the victory and went around making those figures on all prominent places. Among the places so marked was the city hall. I don't know how many years those figures remained on the side of the hall, they were there years after when I left the city, and may be there yet. If you had not offered the resolution about the market house you would have been spared this letter. I apologize. When I come to the new Maysville I will talk it all over with you on any street corner in the city.

O. B.

P. S. It is no longer an evidence of progress and growth in a city to have a market house. Such buildings only prove the old-fogyism of the place. For sanitary reasons that market house should come down. If the departed spirits of Pap Middleton, Mike McGraw, John D. Edwards and Dick Craig, want a place of revelry, let them find it elsewhere. Down with it.

O. B.