

## SIXTH LETTER.

---

POETRY AND LAW—THE GIRLS OF OLD MAYSVILLE—MAFFIT THE REVIVALIST—STROTHER B. NICHOLSON—AARON QUINN—WILLIAM TUREMAN—THE OLD TAVERNS—MANUFACTURIES—FLATBOATMEN—THE POYNTZS—JIMMY LINN—CUMMINS' COFFEE HOUSE—RICHARD DAWSON—BLACK JACK—THE SPALDINGS—SAMUEL S. MINER—WISE THE TAILOR—TOMBSTONE POETRY—BUSINESS MEN—JAMES RICE—NOAH GRANT'S BIG SCHEME—AN OPEN LETTER TO GEORGE ORR.

WASHINGTON CITY, February 27, 1883.

*Dr. John P. Phister—My Young Friend:* I have a letter from a lady in Maysville who has kept me in memory through the long years since I left the place of my early boy and manhood. She says, "Your letters to Mr. Phister take me back to future days." I may say that I doubt the propriety of your having read the letters to her. However, having laid aside the frivolity of youth she may be enabled to keep a secret. Her expression of future days is entirely correct, as she and I understand it. When we were young we talked of future days and looked forward to an unmeasured happiness in them. I used to go home from church with her; I used to read Byron to her—Byron was new then. I read Eliza Cook and Mrs. Barbauld to her. We hunted for the four-leaved clover on the hillside and read candy kiss verses together, and after all she admired Jake Outten's poetry most. If Jake Outten had never written poetry I would never have been a lawyer. I met with an almost irreparable loss on the one hand whilst the legal profession made a gain on the other. I did not go into the legal profession willingly or because I knew anything about it. I had heard Frank Hord and John D. Taylor argue a case or two, I had heard the judge charge a jury, I had seen Stephen Lee arrest a law-breaker, and I had seen Paul Hoefflich run after a thief. All this experience I thought fitted me for the profession, and besides I wanted to earn an easy living in an honest way. The affair of the heart brought about by Jake Outten's poetry caused me to take up my residence in the south, where I commenced the practice. The first case I was fortunate enough to get was one of divorce; divorce was not as common then as now. In the beginning of my practice the subject of divorce was one of the most serious thought to all parties concerned, including the lawyer. After as honest an investigation as I ever gave to any subject I advised that it would be for the best interest of the community and the parties themselves that a reconciliation should take place. My advice was promptly acted on and I regret to say that the parties were the bitterest

enemies I ever had. If I had been trusted with a similar case I would have had no hesitation in proving that husband and wife were scoundrels and in doing that I would have secured their lasting friendship. I did not intend to go off on this line but you can't tell in what path early love will lead. I will say, however, that I cherish no animosity to Jake Outten's memory or his poetry. On the contrary, if either are in book form I should like to have a copy.

My lady friend asks why I do not say something about the girls of old Maysville. I knew them and can name them as readily as I can the letters of the alphabet. Their names, forms and features are embalmed in my memory with all that is beautiful and lovely on earth. The girls of old Maysville speak for themselves in the memory of the old people. They were good girls, they were handsome girls, and they were happy girls. Oh how we used to dance the good old square dances, the Virginia reel, down outside up the middle, etc., and how we did rattle off the money musk. Bill Lilliston used to fiddle for us and ring the bell for auction. Heaven bless the memory of the girls of old Maysville, and a silent tear for the good old times which will not come to us again. If I thought there were enough girls of my date now living in Maysville to make up a sett in the Virginia reel I would be tempted to go there. I would bring my pumps along and such dancing as you would see would make your heart glad.

There was a man named Bishop who kept the jail. I think that was his name, I never knew him in his official capacity, and I only refer to him now because he was a respectable man and had a daughter who had a sweet musical voice, which she utilized in singing the Methodist revival rallying hymn, "In the Morning I Am Going Home." The boys and girls of the new Maysville probably sing, "I Won't go Home till Morning." The latter hymn was unknown to the boys of old Maysville.

Not long before I left Maysville John Newland Maffit, a noted divine of the Methodist church, swooped down upon the city and covered it as it were with a mantle of vital piety and evangelical holiness. Maysville was completely upended by the power of this man to save sinners. I did not realize that my labors in the christian vineyard had been so fruitless until the advent of this man. His pulpit elocution was faultless and his tenor voice seductive; I think the doors of all the churches in the city were thrown open to him, and the population, without regard to race or previous condition of servitude, went on a general revival spree. Some years after that it was my fortune to travel in company with Maffit and spend some time with him at the Hot Springs, Arkansas, whether he had gone in search of health. He was indeed a remarkable man in some respects. I did not think he was a profound theologian nor a deeply read man in any other line. He was a tailor and went into the ministry without preparation. He was a poetic, dreamy kind of a man, who readily caught the prominently sweet epigrammatic sentences of the scripture and handled them to the best advantage in swaying the passions of his congregations. He told me of his ministration in Maysville and was undetermined by his labors there. He told me of a conversation he had with

a young Irishman who had thought of adopting the stage as a profession, but who, under his preaching had determined to seek other pastures green. He gave me the name of the young man, I am not certain whether it was Daily or Daly, or not. There was a young man of that name who supported Hiram Bassett at John O. Powling's theatre, when Bassett strode the stage as "Alfred Evelyn." He was a clerk in the store of P. & E. Kelly, who kept on Front street near Johnson Armstrong's corner. The junior member of that firm is now the great capitalist and banker in New York. I saw him in San Francisco nearly twenty years ago. He was a wealthy man then.

The oldest man I knew when a boy was Stod B. Nicholson, we called him Stod because his name was Strother. He was an oracle among men and a walking index among the boys. It is wonderful that all oracles are small in stature. I expect that the Delphic was of that build. Nicholson was an eminently respectable man and a truly valuable citizen. He was a tailor, or a hatter, or a tinsmith, I don't know which, and it is not material to the issue when I state that no charge against his integrity was made whilst I lived in Maysville, and probably not after.

Aaron Quinn was a tailor, because he made me a suit of clothes which gave satisfaction to me as well as to my sweetheart. He lived and had a shop down on the west side of Main Cross street, near where Thomas Y. Payne lived.

William Tureman was a merchant and lived on the corner of Main Cross and Second. He used to ride in a gig. I don't know whether it was his gig or whether he borrowed it from Thomas Donovan. Tureman had two sons or maybe more. Charley and Ed I knew.

There is no use to tell you of the Maysville taverns of early days. they will never be forgotten by those who were fed from their tables or sheltered under their roofs. The Langhorne's, the Goddards, and Dudleys, were household names with travellers in days when I lived in Maysville. Better living and at a less price was given on the old time terms of Maysville than anywhere else on earth. Dr. William R. Wood kept a drug store on the east corner of Main Cross and Front streets. He knew his business and attended to it faithfully and well, although he objected to the firing of the gun near the store. Some ignorant fellow told him the concussion would break the bottles. J. W. Johnson kept a drug store on the opposite side of Main Cross.

In the olden time Maysville was a manufacturing place. Lindsay, Balenger and Woods had wagon and plow shops. Jacobs had a foundry. The rope walks, bagging factories, etc, were in active operation. The manufactured articles were sent south in flatboats. The Maysville flatboatmen were among the very best citizens. Thomas Hunt, who lived in the lower end of the city was an honorable specimen, I knew him well and used to live near him. What bustle there would be in the neighborhood when he was getting ready for the trip to New Orleans by flatboat, and what joy there would be on his return. He always brought back oranges and fishing poles.

The Newdigates, John and William, used to flatboat to New Orleans, so did the Ballengers, the Jacobs, John and William Harover, and many others whose names I do not remember.

The Poyntzs, William, Nathaniel and Moses, used to have dealings with New Orleans. Moses Poyntz was a representative man of the young element of Maysville. He died sometime before I left Maysville. There was a Mose Poyntz, a colored gentleman, who would be described by Bulwer as a man of fine presence and good digestion. Although he stood well with the boys he must not be confounded with Moses Poyntz, of the old firm of William and Nathaniel Poyntz & Co. William Poyntz was a large, fine looking man, and was popular in the city. He lived on the north side of Second, between Main Cross and Limestone. He had three or four boys, Sam, I knew. One of the boys got kicked in the face by a horse. A family named Shofstall lived on the corner of the alley near William Poyntz, and a family named Baxter lived on the other corner. Tom Dye had a shop across the street. Azariah Stewart was a shoemaker and lived somewhere in the neighborhood.

Tom Urie and Tom Devine were carpenters and good men. The last I remember of Tom Urie was his cowhiding a man most terribly for using his shop for unlawful purposes.

I never read "Hamlet" that I do not think of my old friend James Lynn. I think he was called Jimmy Lynn by everyone. He was a grave-digger and a digger of other postholes. He was once marketmaster, and it was then my acquaintance with him ripened into a fast friendship. If he were living he would remember all my contemporaries of the market house days.

I forgot in my appeal for the old house to put in a plea for poor Harry Barnes. He used to make the building ring with his blasphemy after Cutter & Jackson commenced rectifying whisky in the city. I beg to say to you parenthetically that if you or your friends drink whisky at all I recommend you to take the unrectified. Rectified whisky has more diabolical damness in it than any other ingredient known to the common law. A man can come nearer to being a devil incarnate when filled with rectified whisky than any other known process.

I would like to speak approvingly of William Cummin' coffee house, I have incidentally referred to it before. I now refer to it because of the high standard of the eggnog and tom and jerry there in early times.

Larry Gulick was a neighbor of Peter B. Jones, and whether one exercised an influence over the other or not I am unable to say.

Otho H. Davis had a livery stable on the north side of Second, near Sutton, and Robert Cooper had one on the south side, near Main Cross. These men were respectable themselves but their establishments were not ornaments to the city.

George Orr was a carpenter and I think he lived up on Limestone street. I never heard any one speak ill of him and I liked him because he stood in with the Tudor boys in the drum business. I dont know how it is but somehow or other I never see a man beat the snare drum that I do not think him a patriot.

I used to know a young man named Dawson, Richard I think his name was. His mother was a widow if I mistake not, and he had the name of being kind to her and I liked him for that. He was an apprentice to some kind of business, I don't remember what, maybe it was a tin or coppersmith.

I wonder what ever become of Harvey Crowell and the McClatcheys. I knew them.

Thomas Nolin kept a grocery on the east side of Market below the market house. He was a councilman once, I think, or held some perfunctory position under the city government.

John Wilson, "Black Jack" we used to call him, was a tobaccoist and lived on the south side of Third between Market and Sutton.

The Spaldings were great tobacco men, or rather they were engaged in that business, and there were some Davis boys worked in their factory, William, George and Benjamin. I think one of them married the daughter of my old friend John Corwine. I never knew anything bad of these boys but I would have thought better of them if they had been more punctual at Sunday school.

About the time of the flood of 1832, Samuel S. Miner came to Maysville and opened a shoe store. That was a venture and I was glad it was a successful one. Miner was a tall slender man but grew to be a worthy good citizen. He went into the Sunday school business with an earnest good will, and I doubt not his good works will live after him.

William H. Wise was a tailor and a clever man. I don't remember whether he ever made any clothes for me or not. If he did I paid him for it. I think he lived up on Limestone street above Fourth.

I had as well tell you at this point how I lost confidence in tombstone poetry. I was in James Phillips' stoneyard one day, when it was on Third street in the rear of the Presbyterian church, reading the epitaphs, etc., when I came to a headstone intended for the grave of an accomplished and beautiful young lady who had recently died. I had known her well and admired her many good christian qualities. I was much affected on reading the poetical inscription. I felt the tears standing in my eyes, my nostrils were beginning to dilate and my lips to quiver. I asked Phillips who was the author of the poetry and he told me Jake Outten. I quit then and there and have never had any confidence in tombstone poetry since.

If the lower grade was fortunate in having such thoroughly honorable business men as the Maddoxs, the Woods, the Degmans and Stewart Rounds, to press its claims to popular favor, what shall be said of the upper grade with such sterling men as Guthrie, John Burnside, Hugh McCullough and at a later day, William Thompson, doing business on its front. I have forgotten Guthrie's first name. Guthrie had a friend by the name of John Gabby who got the contract to make the fill for the upper grade. Gabby and Simon Nelson came from the same section of the country in Ireland. Nelson also had a store up by the market and a cooper shop on Third between Market and Limestone about where Newdigate used to live.

opposite Stephens Lee's. When Gabby commenced work on his contract it was a debatable question whether he intended to fill up the Ohio river or level Limestone hill. A few suggestions from friends set things right and Gabby finished his contract with the city to the satisfaction of the council.

I met in Mexico years after a man named Fulton who was trading in horses. He told me that he had a contract to build a portion of the Germantown turnpike road and that he knew Guthrie, Burnside and Gabby. We became friends because his references were good. I told him that I knew Aleck and Bob Maddox, John O. Powling and W. B. Huston.

I wonder whatever became of James Rice, "Jimmy Rice" we used to call him. He was a kind of *major domo* for Guthrie & Burnside and good authority on all subjects affecting the interest of Ireland and Irishmen. He was inclined to be frisky and fall in love at first sight. With age I suppose he overcame those minor defects. I never knew any harm of him.

Lawson Grant used to live up near Guthrie's. He had a younger brother, Noah, who was in the confederate army. Just before Pemberton was penned up in Vicksburg, Noah Grant, who was the senior captain of a Missouri regiment preferred charges against all his superiors in the regiment. I don't know how the thing turned out. It would have been pretty good for Noah if the charges had held good. It was a short route to a colonelcy. Noah and every one else was surrendered at Vicksburg.

I am sure I have failed to mention the names of very many good men. How could my little head contain them all even if I had not worn a hat of John F. Mitchell's make. I would wear your patience out if I told all I knew of old Maysville. The infirmity of age is proof that mistakes will occur when talking of men, things and occurrences of nearly a half a century ago. I suppose I have made some mistakes but my motives have been good and no malice intended. I don't want to get into a controversy about it. I am too good a lawyer not to know my rights, and when assailed shall admit everything and demand proof, that I may know who my persecutors are. That is the law as laid down in the books and you had as well bring it to the attention of the malcontents now as at any other time. You and I are absolutely strangers, your position as a councilman in the city of my boyhood assures me that you are a gentleman. I, therefore, make bold to ask a favor at your hands, and if it should prove to be a source of annoyance to you it will be a greater sorrow to me. Draw your chair up a little closer that we may speak in more subdued tones. Let me give you a Deboree cigar. Look at its shape and inhale its aroma. That, my boy, is a cigar of old Maysville. Now light it, taste its fragrance, and watch its smoke wreaths while I unfold to you one of the longings of my life. You are in a condition to do me an incalculable service. You will do your utmost I am sure. Now listen. I want the freedom of the city of Maysville. Steady, steady my boy, there is to be no collapsing at this stage of the proceedings. Remember how the old boys stood by the gun on the initial night, imitate their example if you can do nothing better. There now take a few drops of this Kentucky cordial to steady your nerves. To proceed I want the freedom of the city of Mays-

ville. Steady again my boy. My wants are few and my habits of life are simple. You can mention this subject in the council with perfect propriety. Consult the mayor, who was probably not born when I left the city. The treasurer should be informed of your intentions. The corporation council should be consulted. The corporate authorities of the surrounding villages should be advised with—the Aberdeen ferryman should be notified of a movement of so much importance. Prepare yourself with a speech looking to the accomplishment of the object. There will be some expenses attending the business. What do I care for expenses when honor is at stake. Don't do anything in an underhanded way, consult freely with the people. If a collection has to be taken up I would advise that it be done in the churches, and I especially ask that the newspaper editors be not asked to contribute. I have been an editor myself and know the normal condition of the fraternity. They are as generous as the April clouds and as barren of wealth as a last year's birds nest.

I am frank to say that I have but little to offer for this proposed great honor. I might give to your presiding judge the grand hailing sign of the order of 1001, or I might transform your city council into a lodge of the order of the Sons of Malta, or I might deliver my lecture on "Poetry, Pathos and Humor," as found in the old and new testaments of scripture. This lecture will attract the attention of the clergy and laymen because of the doubt that there is in any humor in the scripture. Have another Deboree and a few more drops of cordial, I can see now that your heart is in the business. I beg of you when you address the council in my behalf to remember the expressions and oratorical effect of Col. Mulberry Sellers when appealing to the jury for his client. You may fail, I hope not. If you do, be not discouraged. Look around and see if you cannot get a piece of timber from the old market house large enough to make a staff to support me in my declining years. I would like to have it fashioned by some Maysville artisan with this inscription: "The city council of Maysville to O. B., as a memento of the market house." Remember I pay all expenses, the honor being worth the money.

Seriously my old friend I hate to see the old market house go, but when I think that in my boyhood days every grocery in Maysville had a salt box before the door with the word salt painted on it in big letters and that in time the boxes disappeared, I can see no good reason why the market house should not also disappear. I overcame my grief at the loss of the salt boxes and I hope to overcome my grief for the demolition of the market house. Consult freely with the mayor and council on all subjects affecting my interest.

O. B.

---

*To the Editor New Republican:* My friend "O. B." has not only given us in this week's letter very interesting reminiscences of the early days, but he has especially remembered one of our oldest and best citizens, George W. Orr, and I ask that you kindly publish this letter also.

I hope that I can have the assistance of all of "O. B.'s" early friends and the new boys too in voting him the freedom of the city. He richly

deserves it at our hands. I intend to get from Mr. John N. Thomas a piece of timber from the market house to make him a cane to support him in his declining years and as a pleasant reminder of old Maysville. He will find a letter in his mail this week directed as before J. P. P.

---

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 27, 1883.

*George Orr—My Dear Sir:* Word just reached me a few days ago that you were alive and well. How glad I was to hear it. I have not seen you for more than forty years. You must have changed a great deal in that time, I know I have, although my form is bent and my hair is white, my heart is in the right place and still warm for the boys of old Maysville. I think of you as you used to look when you hit the little drum a few licks and make it cry out rat-a-tat. You were a martial looking fellow then and was proud of your calling. I was proud of you then and now.

I have been writing to a young man name Phister about the old market house in Maysville and some of my old friends who used to be about it.

If you see Mr. Phister he will read you my letters and they may tell you something of old times. Mr. Phister is in the council and is going to do me a favor if he can. He will tell you all about it. I want you to help him all you can, because it is for the public good.

I suppose you know the mayor. I would like to have you talk to him about it. Go around among the oldest inhabitants and tell them you want to do me a favor and ask their assistance.

If you want to come into the order of the Sons of Malta I will let you in on the ground floor, if our plans work right.

May the blessings of a kind providence be with you to the end. Your old friend,

O. B.