

EIGHTH LETTER.

ST. AUGUSTINE—MAYSVILLE AS A WALLED CITY—THE "LOG CABIN" AND "HARD CIDER" CAMPAIGN—DICK DOBYNS—THE OLD FARMERS OF MASON—THE COUNTY SHERIFF—WILLIAM GIBSON—SOLOMON SHOCKLEY—PETER SKENE—DYNES CHAMBERS—THE LIMESTONE CREEK IMPROVEMENT—STILLWELL'S MILL—DR. JOHN SHACKLEFORD—DYAS POWERS—WILLIAM B. HUSTON—GENERAL JACKSON AND THE MAYSVILLE TURNPIKE.

MEMPHIS, TENN., May 14, 1883.

Dr. John P. Phister—My Young Friend: I wrote you a short letter from St. Augustine, Florida, more than a month ago, telling you that I was coming to Maysville. So I am. I think it is always best that you should advise persons whom you intend to visit in advance of the time of your arrival. I don't like to be entertained as if I was one who had sought refuge from a hurricane. Grace at table and morning and evening prayers need not be omitted on my account. Having been raised in the church I love to observe all the ordinances. The few friends who may call to see me will, I hope, not prove an embarrassment to your family. I went to St. Augustine to get rid of a threatened attack of pneumonia, and I am glad to say I was greatly benefited in every way. I am a lover of old towns, old ruins and old women. St. Augustine is an older town than Maysville. In fact it is the oldest town within the limits of North America, and now that your market house is gone I think it has more curiosities than Maysville. The old fort, the cathedral and the city gate are contemporaries with its early history. The cathedral only is still preserved for the original uses. It has a seating capacity for two hundred persons. I don't think that Lewis Collins or Henry L. Davis could have managed their Sunday schools very well within its walls. Sunday schools were not fashionable when it was built. The convent is a more recent structure and is well adapted to the purposes for which it is used. The fort is as much a place of resort as Front street used to be in Maysville; everybody visits it. The city gate reminds the beholder that St. Augustine was a walled city. In that respect it differs very materially from old Maysville. Think of the men of whom I have heretofore written you, being penned up in a walled city. What do you suppose would have been the conduct and future history of Daniel Spalding, David Aldrich, William B. Mooklar and George Orr if they had been brought up in a walled city? Where would have been the patriotism of my old friend Charley Tudor and the

oratory of his son-in-law, Robiusion Ralls.* I thank God I was raised in a city walled in by the horizon only, where I could enjoy the benefits of a Sunday school and the consolation of a christian church, where fun like religion was free and untrammelled.

What was once the market house of St. Augustine remains, a quaint structure used no longer for its original purposes.

The Pap Middletons, Mike McGraws and Richard Craigs and John D. Edwards', of St. Augustine, have long since passed to that other side where the veil of eternity hides them from mortal sight. May we not hope that our old Maysville friends are with them in the exalted place of the New Jerusalem.

About this time forty-three years ago some of the older boys of Maysville crossed the Ohio river and went up on the hillside above Aberdeen, where they cut buckeye trees down and got logs with which to build a log cabin. That was the beginning of the "log cabin" and "hard cider" campaign on the tidal wave of which general Harrison went into the presidency and I went into obscurity, in so far as Maysville was concerned, for reasons heretofore given. Well we got the logs and built the cabin, locating it on the river bank, at the foot of Sutton street. "Old Tip" was an important feature in introducing it to the people of Maysville and the surrounding country. The cabin was the rendezvous for the buckeye boys, the hunting shirt clubs, and the soldiers of the war of 1812. The leading whigs gave the cabin countenance and frequently addressed the people from a stand near by. A barrel of hard cider was always on hand within the cabin and a gourd for those who wished to drink. I made a few remarks on political economy and the battle of Tippecanoe from the stand one evening, which I thought were well received, and perhaps they were, but I was never asked to repeat them. I stood by the party notwithstanding.

We erected two whig poles. One at the lower end of Front street, near the stone wall, about opposite the residence of John B. Mellvain and Richard G. Dobyms; the other on Front street, a little west of Main Cross. The former of these poles had a canoe on it about half way from the ground. The latter had a hard cider barrel on it about the same distance up. By a singular coincidence both poles were broken. One just above the canoe, the other just above the barrel. The stumps were permitted to stand surmounted by the canoe and barrel. "Old Tip," the two poles and the log cabin occupied much of my time that summer. I well remember the deep interest Dick Dobyms took in the campaign, especially that part of it having connection with the pole and canoe. That was a home affair with him. I don't think I ever heard him addressed by any other name or title than Dick, and I felt ashamed a moment ago when I wrote his name in full. It sounded as if I was doing violence to the memory of a friend who always wished me well although I could not persuade him to take charge of a Sunday school class. He was a liberal man, a good friend, a genial companion, and the impersonation of fun. If "Old Tip" could have returned thanks to Dick Dobyms for his efforts to bring it into notice such music would have been heard so that the people of Cabin Creek would have thought that Noah's ark had settled in the neighborhood.

* Ralls was a son-in-law of "Old man Campbell's."

Coming through the pine lands of Florida, in the railway car; (there are more pine groves in that state than orange groves,) my mind wandered back to the good old days when Kentucky stood pre-eminent among the states for all that made life worth living. When the farmers of Mason county were princes living on the fat of the land. I remember many of these who used to ride into the city on their fine well-fed horses; the Lees, Formans, Isaac Lewis, William Greathouse, Thomas Mountjoy, Charles and Robert Humphreys, Byers, Robert Blanchard, and others. A good many of these men were or had been sheriffs, and I may have been on the road out for them. At all events the best men in the county were elected in those days. The sheriff used to carry a small bottle of ink in a leather socket, swung to a button of their coat with a quill pen behind their ear. There was no steel or gold pens in those days. The sheriff's office was in his hat and the accumulation of papers would sometimes cause it to weigh from ten to twenty pounds, and yet they were long lived men and always spoke well of John F. Mitchell's make of hats. How names will fade from memory and come back all unbidden. Just this moment a name comes to me as fresh as the morning dew; I have not thought of it for forty or more years—Dynes Chambers. He was a clerk in some of the stores about the market, and a painstaking, hard working, honest man he was. I think he lived with a widowed mother on Third street, just across the alley from Dr. Coburn's.

William Gibson lived on the turnpike at the head of what was called the fill, a part of Sutton street. I think maybe he was a tobacconist, and I am of the opinion that he entered a protest against what he called the devilry of the boys, which said protest had the effect to call in requisition the gun to help the old year out and the new year in.

John Armstrong had the floor at the Methodist church, but when the gun went off the congregation thought the d—l had them. I owe it to my good name to say that I never sanctioned the use of the gun in aid of watch night festivities. I am sure that Pap Rudy, John Armstrong and Phares Throop bitterly opposed it. I think whatever blame there was for its use on that particular night should be laid at the door of Solomon Shockley and Peter Skeene. The former of those men kept a haberdashery establishment round about the market or somewhere else. It is not material where, inasmuch, as this letter is to form no part of the records of an historical society. Peter Skeene was an auctioneer and had something to do with the introduction into the city of camphene or etherial oil. The lamps in which this oil was burned were unshapely things, made of tin and japanned in blue with gold leaf figures on them. These men were well behaved, though not members of any church.

After the Limestone creek improvement, which was a transparent folly in its inception, William Stillwell built a large flouring mill on the bluff between the old and the new mouth of the creek. I do not know that his enterprise was suitably rewarded. He had three sons, at least I knew three, John, Everett and Bryson. His daughter married Ely D. Anderson, a dry goods merchant, who afterward became a member of the firm of Kirk, Anderson & Sharpe. John Kirk, the senior of the firm, lived on the south side

of Third street, near Limestone. Sharpe had been the junior member of the drug firm of Seaton & Sharpe. John Kirk's son, Charles, who was a stripling when I left Maysville, became a well known and deservedly popular newspaper writer. He used to come to the city where I lived but I think he was a little shy of me because of my serious-manner. He died, I think, during the war. Sharpe had some boys about Vicksburg, as I was told, but I never met them.

Among the dignified and gentlemanly young men I knew about Maysville were Winchester Rees and Allan Stockwell. Both of these subsequently became reputable dry goods merchants on Front street. My friend Dobyns was a dry goods merchant, but I don't think his health was undermined by close attention to the business whilst I lived in Maysville.

I have not heretofore mentioned to you the name of my friend Dr. John Shackleford. The failure has not been from any disrespect to the worthy good man. He was my senior in years and superior in scholastic attainments. We had both attained the years of manhood before Rand & Richeson had blossomed as rivals to the educational institutions of the west. I mean to speak to you more at length at some future day, if my life is spared, of Dr. Shackleford and others who were intimately identified with the national interests and substantial prosperity of Maysville in the olden time.

Since I came here I have learned of the death of Dyas Powers who was among the earliest acquaintances I had about Maysville. He then lived at Aberdeen and had something to do with the ferry. He was the friend of the Church boys, Horatio and Charles, and I think he aided Charles to build a small steamboat called the *Virago*, which was the foundation of the large fortune Charles subsequently acquired. Charles settled in this city and died here a few years ago. Dyas Powers was well-known here and was a highly respected man. He lived up to the strict construction of honesty and fair dealing. When the war broke out there was a young man here from Maysville doing a prosperous business as a merchant, named Huston, the son I believe of William B. Huston. He was here when generals Pillow and Polk were in command; what became of him after that I do not know, I do not think I ever heard of him afterward and I am certain I was not thrown with him at any subsequent time during the war. Andrew T. Wood, at one time an enterprising citizen of Maysville, and his son, William, used to be about this city just previous to the war. I have never told you how I happened to be in the war, I will sometime. I was beyond the age for conscription but not beyond that for giving evidence of patriotism.

Leaving off as I began, my visit to Maysville will be one of an entirely personal and private character, and will in no sense justify a popular demonstration. I would be glad to meet such of my Sunday school scholars as may be living there. The mayor and council together with the city officials will be objects of curiosity to me. The surviving cannoneers and powder monkeys of the old gun will be affectionately reviewed and I would like, if the old gun is in condition, to let it off once or twice to see if modern civilization has changed the reverberations in the surrounding

hills. An interview with the ex-members of congress now living in Maysville would be of special interest to me because of a desire I have to compare with them the old Jacksonian policy of giving the spoils to the victors or the civil service reform policy of keeping the spoils for themselves. Speaking of Jackson I am reminded that when I was in Washington City last winter I learned something new in reference to his hostility to and subsequent veto of the Maysville turnpike road bill. If the statement concerning it can be verified by documentary evidence it will open the eyes of the old time politicians. If Blanchard's pond and the Indian trail had anything to do with it the evidence should be produced and deep damnation should settle on the offenders. The time of my arrival in Maysville cannot be definitely fixed, I contemplate making a visit to Nashville and Louisville.

O. B.