

# FIFTEENTH LETTER.

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GINSENG AND FEATHERS—JOHNSON ARMSTRONG—ALEXANDER POWER  
—HENRY CLAY DAVIS—WILLIAM HODGE—GOLDEN WEDDING—  
CABIN CREEK PRODUCTS—AN ESSAY ON WILLIAM PENN.

LANCASTER, PA., September 29, 1883.

*Dr. John P. Phister—My Young Friend:* I intended to write you from Philadelphia, where I have spent the past ten days, but I was worn out with the bustle and confusion of the great business cities which I have visited within the last month. My visit to the city was not one entirely for pleasure, though I tried to make it so on account of Annie Gordon, to whom I owe all the pleasure I have in the waning years of life. I need not tell you of Philadelphia. Pleasant relations have always existed between that city and Maysville, at least such relations existed when I lived in Maysville. I well remember the great amount of ginseng and feathers Maysville used to pour into the commercial lap of Philadelphia as a testimonial of the high regard in which Philadelphia was held by Maysville. No stronger bond of friendship could have been given in the early days than that of ginseng and feathers. All the merchants of old Maysville could testify to that fact. I remember several persons who came from Philadelphia and settled in Maysville about fifty years ago, and I remember none with more kindness than one Wm. Martin, a shoemaker, who had a shop on the south side of Second street, near Main Cross. This man Martin was an honorable, industrious man, and merited, as he received, the confidence of the people. I have passed many hours in his shop when he made music with the hammer and lap stone. He originally came from Ireland, and I think when he came to Maysville he came to meet Simon Nelson. There was an intimacy between the two men. Whether it grew up in the old country or not I do not know. I don't think Simon Nelson was then in the habit of going to Philadelphia. He was then a merchant on the east side of the market house and I don't think his stock justified so long a trip to replenish. He had a perfect right to go to Philadelphia if he wanted to and he may have wanted to go some time unbeknown to me. If he did go I have no unpleasant reflections about it now. Simon Nelson was a good citizen who minded his own business and voted the loco foco ticket in a quiet way.

Dr. Frazee when a medical student *en route*, that is a French expression, for Europe, stopped awhile in Philadelphia and wrote well of what he saw. I find that I am inclined to write and speak the French language since reading the doctor's book. I intend to send that book to you, not alone for its intrinsic value but as a more sympathetic chord of friendship between you and myself. It will be found brimful of fun and accurate in-

formation. He was fascinated by a female statue in the *villa Borghese*, at Rome. That gives rise to a doubt in my mind as to his ever having been in my Sunday school class.

I clipped from a newspaper the enclosed account of a threatened duel between a colonel L. J. Frazee and another colonel at Louisville, Ky. I thought maybe that the Frazee mentioned was the Maysville man, (his son—The doctor is yet alive and practicing in Louisville. P.,) because he refers in his book, very minutely, to the duels at Heidelberg. I am very glad the affair was amicably adjusted.

I learned in a publishing house in Philadelphia, where I had some business, that Johnson Armstrong, one of the younger men of Maysville, had recently died in New Orleans. I knew him as a young man in Maysville, and at a later period I knew him as a bookseller and stationer in New Orleans. I can say for him that he was an honorable man and generous to a fault. In his mature years he was boyish in manner and overflowing with fun. He appreciated with kindness his boyhood days in old Maysville. I remember meeting him after the war in New Orleans, when he was in company with Alexander Power, who was once a clerk in some of the stores about the market house, but who was then engaged in some capacity on a steamboat. I don't think that this man Power was any relation to the man of the same name who lived fifty years ago in the north one of the two brick houses which stood on the west side of the market house, directly opposite Simon Nelson's and just south of Abijah Casto's grocery store. It may be that that man's name was Powers instead of Power. I knew both of them but I never knew what business the latter named one followed, and I don't suppose any one else did.

There was a young man named Henry Clay Davis who was a clerk in some of the stores around about the market house forty years ago. He went to Texas at an early day and was in the fights for the independence of that republic. He lived on the Rio Grande during the Mexican war and only died since the late war. He was a conspicuous man and a credit to early Maysville.

I used to know a very worthy, good man named William Hodge, who came to Maysville a great while ago from Flemingsburg, I think. He moved away from Maysville before I did. I don't know where he went but I do know Maysville lost a good citizen when he went away.

Annie Gordon has just read me a notice from a Philadelphia newspaper indicative of the healthfulness of Mason county, and I say to you that the notice gave me great pleasure. It was the mention of the golden wedding of Charles A. Marshall and Richard Henry Stanton. I knew those men many years ago when the blood run strong in their veins as it did in mine. I knew them favorably and remember them kindly. I knew Stanton better than I did Marshall. The latter lived in the country. Stanton came to Maysville a young man as a protege of William Tanner, and became the editor of the *Maysville Monitor*. He behaved himself seemly on the sabbath and wrote stinging loco foco editorials during the week. Though he was the son-in-law of brother Phares Throop, I don't think he was a member of his class in the Methodist church. I knew Mrs.



Stanton and a most excellent lady she was. I am sincerely glad that couple has been spared to the people of new Maysville. If I ever had a grievance against Stanton for his loco loco editorials it has been blotted from my memory long ago. I reverently ask that the blessings of a kind providence may be with Marshall and Stanton and their families to the end. If I had been at their golden weddings I would have shaken them heartily by the hand whilst I gave them cheering words for the future. I knew another Marshall, Thomas, who lived up in the territory of Chauncey B. Shepperd, and who with myself had something to do with assisting the supremacy of the United States in Mexican soil in the year 1846. This man had very many better traits of character in a political way than the whigs of early Maysville were willing to give him credit for.

I used to know a promising young man about my own age who lived up in the Cabin Creek settlement. I formed his acquaintance on one occasion when he came down to the city with a flatboat load of tan bark. He subsequently became one of the mediums of supply for the market house. I think he usually brought persimmons, fox grapes and such other things as nature took care of without the intervention of a husbandman. His name was Thornton Farrow. I thought him a man of worth and he must have reached some place of prominence if his life was spared. I think it likely that Joseph F. Brodrick would know something of him, because he was one of the pilots of the gunboat *Helen Mar* in the memorable cruise to Dover, ostensibly to capture a flouring mill, but in fact it was a cruise for gunboat practice. I have heretofore referred to that. My visit to Philadelphia and this place has brought to my mind the picture in the early school books of Maysville of William Penn making a treaty with the Indians. What a benevolent countenance he had whilst engaged in that humane business—how appropriately he was dressed whilst engaged in that honest trade, and how confidently the Indians looked too. When I looked at that picture I thought Mr. Penn was the personification of human goodness and christian excellence; I had more confidence in his doing the fair thing than I had in the veracity of George Washington, although the story of the hatchet and the cherry tree was in the juvenile text books. Later in life when I had dropped the pictures and taken up history I found that friend Penn had considerable cussedness interspersed with native deviltry in his composition. You will remember how in 1670 he worried the authorities of London by preaching in Gracious church, and how when the soldiers were posted in the church to stop his preaching he quietly walked out and commenced preaching in the street. The soldiers only had orders to stop his preaching in the church. His street preaching was the cause of riots which culminated in his arrest, trial and acquittal by a jury. For that verdict the judge imprisoned the prisoner and the jury. They were liberated by writ of *habeas corpus*. Penn subsequently visited Holland and Germany where he conceived the idea of founding an asylum for the persecuted of all classes in the new world. In 1681 Charles II, of England, granted him a great tract of land in the new world. He came to America and took possess-

ion of the grant and proceeded to carry out philanthropic ideas. Hence the treaty and the picture to which I have referred. The Indians, then as now, were not persecuted, but their homes were taken for the oppressed of the old world, and America was largely the gainer, as can be seen by visiting Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. My surroundings have caused me to run off on Penn and the picture, both of which you may consider foreign to the subject of my correspondence with you. I am proud of my new cane. It suits me as if my measure had been taken for it. Though inanimate it seems to tell me many stories of the days when it contributed its share of beauty and strength to the old market house—the haleyon days when the old house was new. It tells me of the many friends who used to meet under its roof that larders might be replenished—it tells me how it has vibrated in sympathy to the martial music of the Tudors—it tells me how it has quivered when the thunder of old Tip rolled over the city—it tells me of the orators whose voices sounded through the building—it tells me of the merry-making boys who made of it a play house—it tells me of very many pleasant things long since lost to my memory—it tells me in unmistakable language of the old families whose names I have freely used in connection with the old building. I have them with me as companions when I take my usual walk. I am almost sure that my cane was once a part of the stall on which old Pap Middleton found a resting place, or maybe Richard Craig, in fantastic costume, stood in the stall, rung his bell and told his story of auction sales, or maybe Mike McGraw drilled his imaginary soldiers on that stall, or from that stall John D. Edwards may have told his pathetic tales of the wrongs practiced on the tax-payers. The cane tells me another story—no, no, it *will not* or *shall not* tell unpleasant stories. They were buried when the old house went down and they shall not be revived by me. My friends of more than sixty years ago who took pride in the advancement of Maysville are widely scattered. Many, very many, have found their last resting place on earth. May that peace which passeth all understanding be with the ashes of the dead, and may the living enjoy comfort and happiness in their old age. The new Maysville, I am happy to learn, has progressed beyond, far beyond the expectations of those who were my boyhood friends. It has its railroad, its gas light, its electric light, its water works and base ball club. I claim nothing for all the felicity you now enjoy but content myself by giving you the sentiment of Ulysses:

*“Quae non fecimus ipsi,  
Vix ea nostra voco.”*

Now my young friend I beg you to assemble the men and women of new Maysville on the esplanade as the daughters of Penzance were assembled on the sands of the sea, and when assembled talk of the weather and think of me. I send you herewith a picture of myself taken by my daughter, Annie Gordon, whilst I was writing to you. The picture is a very good one and will be readily recognized by those who know me. You will discover that time has laid his ravishing hand on my head in no tender manner.”

“O. B.”