

Robert Blair Risk

BY JAMES I. PYLE

Robert Blair Risk, son of Samuel M. and Francina Blair Risk, was born February 20, 1848, on a small farm in East Drumore Township, Lancaster County.

He passed from life after six weeks' illness in the Lancaster General Hospital of pneumonia and complications, March 20, 1926, on the eve of the day on which he was to have returned to his home. He was buried from the Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church, Wednesday, March 24 at 2:30 P. M., and was laid away in an oak casket, made from trees grown in Lancaster County, with no outer case so that he might "return to mother earth from which he sprung" as quickly as possible. This was the wish expressed to a close friend.

The funeral service was in charge of Rev. W. J. G. Carruthers, pastor of the church. Dr. R. C. Scheidt, one of Mr. Risk's close friends, spoke the funeral oration. The body laid in state at a Lancaster funeral parlor, seven to nine o'clock, Tuesday evening, March 23, 1926. The pallbearers were David, John, Chester and Richard Todd, Jacob A. Peiffer and David Byers, sons and sons-in-law of "Farmer John" Todd, Mr. Risk's farmer.

The Women's Auxiliary of the Lancaster General Hospital of East Drumore Township attended the funeral in a body. It was Mr. Risk's custom to entertain this group at his home annually.

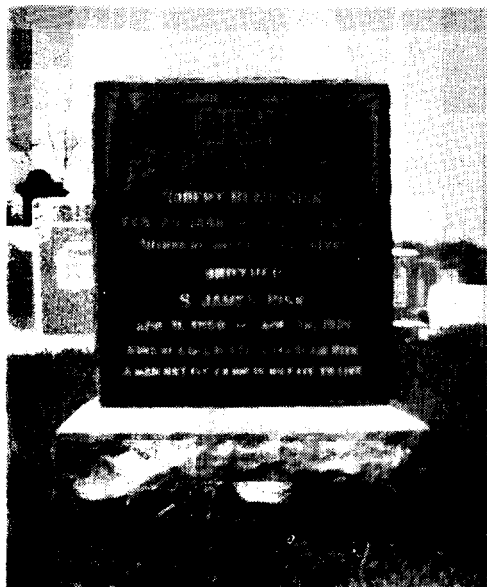
Lancaster New Era Editorial March 22, 1926

"Robert Blair Risk was a newspaperman of the old school and was consistently loyal to its best traditions. For many years he wielded a very considerable influence in local affairs as Associate Editor of the Examiner. Poor health compelled his retirement from the active field of newspaper work, but he kept in touch with the "game" through weekly articles which mixed facts, opinion and philosophy together in entertaining and enlightening fashion. He lived quietly on his farm in an out-of-the-way section of the county, but never lost his interest in men and affairs cultivated through years of association with newspaper work.

"His death will be mourned not only by his personal friends, but by a great many others who knew him only through his writing and who gained from them an insight into the keen mind, ready wit and broad sympathy of the Sage of the Buck."

One of our newspapers said of him, "Even before his death [he] had become one of those almost legendary figures of the Southern End of Lancaster County, who seem to have done everything, been everywhere and known everybody worth knowing."

The gravestone in the Chestnut Level Presbyterian Cemetery is inscribed as follows:



RISK

ROBERT BLAIR RISK

Feb. 20 1848 Mar. 20 1926

AUTHOR OF

OBSERVED AND NOTED

BROTHER

S. JAMES RISK

Apr. 11 1850 Apr. 20 1934

SONS OF

SAMUEL M. & FRANCINA RISK

A MAN NOT FIT TO DIE

IS NOT FIT TO LIVE.

After attending classes in a log schoolhouse Robert entered Williamsburg Academy when eleven years old later studying at Chestnut Level Academy under his cousin, Prof. James Morgan Rawlins. He completed his preparation for college at Parkesburg Academy, after which he taught the Buck School for two years.

Called by the lure of the west, he went to Topeka, Kansas, where he began his legal studies. On account of impaired health he returned to Lancaster and completed his legal studies under Samuel H. Reynolds, Esq., being admitted to the Lancaster Bar on November 2, 1872, maintaining his membership until death closed his career.

The practice of law never fitted his taste although he had a law office at 122 East King Street during 1873, 1874 and 1875, according to the city directory. In his obituary it is stated that on January 1, 1873, he and W. Hayes Grier began publishing the *Columbia Herald*, which lasted two years. After that he returned to Lancaster and for three years studied law and wrote for newspapers. Upon the resignation of D. B. Williamson as Editor of the *Lancaster Examiner* in October 1881, Mr. Risk accepted the position, a post he held for a quarter of a century.

Lancaster County's First Columnist

He became famous for and well known far beyond the borders of Lancaster County for his weekly column "Observed and Noted." After the *Examiner* was absorbed by the *Lancaster New Era* he continued to contribute this column, and is entitled to be known as Lancaster County's most famous and perhaps its first columnist, and among the earliest in the nation. As we read the columns of Observed and Noted, some of which he published in book form in 1893, we get a picture of country life in the post Civil War period as it was in his beloved lower end of Lancaster County.

It was only after he had tried school teaching and law that Mr. Risk entered newspaper work. His paternal grandfather came at the age of eighteen from North Ireland in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and settled in Bart Township near Quarryville, and hammered out a small fortune in his blacksmith shop, forge and sickle mill. His great grandfather was James Moore.

His father, who operated the general store at the Buck, died when Robert was a lad of four. The Risks attended the Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church in whose churchyard they await the resurrection.

The Ancient Church

It seems fitting at this time to give a brief record of the Chestnut Level Church and early graveyard. This ancient church building was in the process of erection when the Revolutionary War broke out and it stood uncompleted until after

the close of the war. Up to a few years ago the level of the walls where they were stopped by the war was plainly visible, but when the walls of the building were repointed these marks were covered up. One change in the old building is still observable. The original doorway, which was in the east wall, was closed up and a new entrance made in the north wall, through the tower, probably when the tower was added to the original structure.

The first burial plot, a short distance east of the present location, was located close to the first building, most likely of logs, which has entirely disappeared. It contains the remains of Continental soldiers, also a number of interments made prior to the Revolution. Nearly fifty of the famous



Francina Blair Moore Risk, mother of Robert



Robert Blair Risk at his desk in Four Pines

Peach Bottom slate headstones are in this ancient God's Acre, with inscriptions very legible after the passing of nearly two centuries.

Lived In Lancaster

The Lancaster Directories reveal the following facts concerning his life in Lancaster. He lived at 42 North Prince Street in 1874, 237 West Lemon Street in 1875. During the period of his affiliation with the *Examiner* he lived 1882-1893 at the Hiester House, Queen and Chestnut streets; 1894-97, 552 West Chestnut Street; 1898, 445 Nevin Street; 1899-1905, 205 North Prince Street; 1907-09, 119 East Chestnut Street; 1911, 210 West Chestnut Street; 1913, 207 West Chestnut Street; 1916, Quarryville R. D. 2, and in 1917 he is not listed.

Near the close of the period he lived in Lancaster, it was his custom on Friday afternoons to be driven to his beloved country home by Mr. Norbeck, a well-known cabby of the day.

At the close of his working day, it was a familiar sight to see him wending his way, aided by his cane, up North Queen Street from the *Examiner* to station himself in front of the noted Schroyer Flower Store (151 North Queen Street), where he observed the passing pageant. Much of what he observed there was passed on to readers in his weekly column. Nearly always there was a flower in his coat lapel, a contribution from the florist. A copy of his Observed and Noted which he presented to Mrs. Harry A. Schroyer was inscribed, "To Mrs. Schroyer in remembrance of many pleasant talks while enjoying the kindly hospitality of my ivy-covered suburban home (641 Harrisburg Avenue), and with best wishes of The Author. Lancaster Sept. 27, 1893."

This volume is now the property of Mr. Jacob Vollmer, veteran printer and for many years an employee of the *Examiner* and a daily associate of Mr. Risk.

Another of Mr. Risk's "station stops" was at the office of Stehman & Stehman on West Chestnut Street, where he would visit on his way to the boarding house conducted by a Mrs. Waltman, a widow, for an afternoon chat and incidently gather any item that might prove to be grist for his newspaper column.

Physical Disability

Mr. Risk's left leg was shorter than the right leg. We were told this condition was the result of a childhood ailment. Whatever its cause, in time it became more troublesome, and eventually in 1922 the limb had to be amputated just above the knee. He suffered its loss philosophically saying, "It never was much good anyway." Thereafter his limited travels were accomplished in a wheel chair.

On the Farm

Mr. Risk purchased a farm near his birthplace over fifty years ago and named it Four Pines. After the loss of his limb, here it was that he set



Four Pines, home of Robert Blair Risk

up an office and continued to write his pungent articles. He wrote with ink, writing the first few letters of each word and completed it with a scrawl that required one well acquainted with his hand to read it.

One who was called upon to decipher his writing was Walter R. Markley, for many years a co-worker of Mr. Risk at the *Examiner*.

Mr. John Todd, frequently mentioned by Mr. Risk in his *Observed and Noted* as "Farmer John," farmed the Four Pines fields for over thirty-three years. Mr. Todd was one of the Buck School pupils when it was taught by Mr. Risk.

There is a story handed down relating to this ancient farmhouse that says it was once a tavern, and we wonder if it was the original location of the famous "Buck" tavern now located at the crossroads of the "biggest little town in the U. S."

A Republican

Mr. Risk was a member of the Republican Party and an interested one. He came in contact with its leaders and must have been favorably regarded. He accompanied J. Hay Brown, John A. Hiestand, Frank R. Diffenderffer, Elias McMellen, Clayton F. Myers, William L. Peiper, S. M. Myers and J. H. Fry in 1880 to the Republican National Convention at Chicago, where he observed the famous "306" hold out to the bitter end for the renomination of President Grant for a third term, going down to defeat before the avalanche of the opposition who nominated James A. Garfield on the thirty-sixth ballot.

In his book he relates the experience in seeing General Phil Sheridan in 1870 in Topeka, Kansas, and ten years later in the Palmer House, Chicago, being introduced and speaking with him. Continuing he speaks of meeting Grant, Sherman and Hancock saying, "I admire the genius of Sherman, but when it comes to a matter of heart, feeling and hero worship, let me grasp the chivalrous hands of Sheridan and Hancock."

Christmas Spirit

The story is told of a tramp who wandered into Joe Kautz's well-known restaurant on North Queen Street, just north of the old Pennsylvania Railroad Depot, on Christmas eve in search of food, companionship and cheer. Risk, who was filled with the genuine Christmas spirit provided all of these items to the great delight and satisfaction of the transient who, when the food was served to him, bowed his head and offered a prayer of thanks to the Babe of Bethlehem.

Another story was often told of two little waifs looking in the windows of the old Woolworth store, then located on the west side of Queen Street, observing the Christmas display of dollies. First, one would point to the doll she liked and then the other indicated her preference with no hope of possessing them. But they had been observed by one who, while he had no children of his own, nevertheless loved children, had a big heart and proved to be a real Santa Claus. Mr. Risk took the children into the store,

and to their great delight purchased the dolls of their choice and other appropriate gifts. The children went home happy, but who can venture the statement that they were nearly as happy as the donor of the dollies? These two stories were repeated or referred to in Christmas editorials a number of times in after years by the *Examiner*.

The Continental Congress

Mr. Risk was the founder, organizer and host to that unique and fantastic organization known as "The Continental Congress." This group met annually on July 4th at Four Pines and as the accompanying photograph



The Famous Continental Congress. Front row, Robert B. Risk, George W. Hensel, unidentified, Harry H. Hensel, Leander Hensel, unidentified. Rear row, Dr. T. M. Rohrer, unidentified, Henry E. (Sockey) Carson, unidentified.

shows, were able to carry guns even if they did not discharge them.

Miss Helen M. Hensel who contributed the photograph says, "The Continental Congress was held each year on the Fourth of July at the home of Robert B. Risk, the Four Pines, near the Buck. The people I know of having been there were George W. Hensel, Dr. T. M. Rohrer, A. S. Harkness, James Risk, Hennie Carson, Harry H. Hensel and Redmond Conyngham. I am not sure when Bob Risk had his leg amputated so am not sure if they had this party previous to that as Dr. Rohrer, who had gone to school with the Risks, died about 1917.

"It was a day of merriment. Bob Risk had one brother who was a great character. He was a cattle dealer. I think he sold the same old cow fifty times. He thought he was quite an orator and his oratory consisted

of just words. This was a great opportunity for him to talk. I think he was the jest of a great deal of their fun. At least he would tell us the next day what a wonderful speech he had made. He had given us a few dirty peppermints and given us a sample of his speech. I just told you more about Jim Risk than about the Continental Congress but I know he was a prominent figure."

Dr. T. M. Rohrer was a well-known physician and schoolmate of the Risks and father of Mary Rohrer Gilbert, Richard and Robert (twins) Rohrer.

Henny or "Socky" Carson was for many years foreman of the *Intelligencer* Job printing room.

George W. Hensel, the Quarryville merchant.

Leander Hensel was a scrivener.

James Risk, the country drover.

Redmond Conyngham, a Lancaster lawyer.

A. S. Harkness, Quarryville banker.

Harry H. Hensel, reporter for the *Intelligencer*.

Milton J. Brecht, County Superintendent of Public Schools.

Mr. Risk Writes of the Passing of Dr. Haupt

"As I take up the pen this beautiful Sunday morning (October 17, 1920), I imagine I can hear borne on the sweet, still autumnal air, the church-going bells of Lancaster, ringing out a requiem farewell over the passing of Rev. C. Elvin Haupt, who died the wealthiest man in the city, measured by good work accomplished and the universal love of the community; and yet the poorest of the humblest in purse. Whence came this common love, what caused this general respect and admiration? He did not possess the ordinary external accompaniments which attract public attention or command the world's admiration. In scholarship he was neither profound nor brilliant; nor like Aaron of old, eloquent in speech. In personal appearance, he was small in stature and homely in face. He scarcely ever wore conspicuously the outward insignia that marks the calling of the clergyman. He walked not the streets with the leisurely gait of the conventionally dignified, but rather on a half or full run, to accomplish the vast self-imposed tasks he had in mind and heart while the working hours lasted. How then did he create the universal respect, reverence and affection in which he was held? It can be answered in one word—CHARACTER. It was of the kind which brings into a combine every grand virtue men have ever possessed. It was of a sort which makes goodness beautiful and companionable, and puts into religion a vital, pulsating force which uplifts every act of life and presents it in its proper guise, that of the highest morality touched by the noblest emotion. It was a character that creates its own peculiar personality and surrounds it with an atmosphere which attracts by its simple, natural, unconscious expression, and commands love by its sincerity. This fine character Dr. Haupt possessed in abundance, and it had its cause and life in two main sources. First, it can be said of him as it was of Spinoza—he was 'God-

intoxicated.' Next, he took to his innermost heart the eleventh commandment given by the Master—'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' All mankind was his neighbor and for this reason he was more than the pastor of Grace church, or the shepherd to a single congregation. Like the Master, his heart went out to the 'plain folks' as Lincoln called them, and with that great-hearted man, he seemed to believe the Lord had a special concern for such people as He made so many of them. Dr. Haupt believed no man so low or degraded but that somewhere within him was lodged a spark of the Divine, and that it was his duty to fan that tiny, latent spark into a little flame or even a redeeming one if possible. So a great deal of his work was among the weak or lowly, regardless of race or sect. He was more often seen in the cottage of the humble or the home of the lowest, than in the halls of the rich or the drawing rooms of the mighty. He would go where needed and preach a funeral sermon when wanted, where other ministers would not enter, or find an excuse to evade the service. In his love for his neighbor, he welcomed every creed and this benefited mankind. So without any condescension or straining a point of even assuming courtesy, he gave universally the kindly hand of sincere friendship to the Jewish rabbi or the Catholic priest, recognizing that they were acting according to the truth as they saw it, and both were laboring for the uplift of their brother man. All this was but the working of the internal force of noble intentions. It was all natural and nothing artificial in it. It was sincere and not the outcome of selfish seeking for good opinion; and so it appealed in time to all hearts. Thousands came to him to be married feeling that there was a promise of future happiness to have the blessing of a genuine good man. And thousands of parents brought their children to him for baptism as they, too, felt that some special effect would come from the official act of one who so closely followed the Master in word and act. Indeed, I have heard people say they believed if Dr. Haupt had lived in the days of the first disciples, he would have supplanted the beloved John.

"As I sit here looking out at the glories of a beautiful October morning, with a cloudless blue sky overhead, and the bright sunbeams toying with a thousand colors on the leaves of the forest or the flowers of the lawn, I cannot help but feel that the passing of Dr. Haupt came at an appropriate time. His years did not reach the three score and ten of the Psalmist, but he crowded into them the glorious work and service of a century. So he felt with labors completed, even now as nature, not in gloom, but in richest robes, royal colors, is celebrating the full fruitage of the year. It was in the midst of the grandeur of God's handiwork that the good Doctor heard the summons calling him to that still country to hear the refrain of angels singing the welcome—'Well done, good and faithful servant'. Though dead, he still speaks through the voice of grand example."

Perhaps one will get a better idea of the man (Risk) and his background if we quote some of his observations made over the years. Some of these paragraphs show us the contrast between those earlier days and the present.

Spring

"Last Sunday I sat upon a moss-covered bank of a stream I fished in boyhood. It came dashing down a little gorge with springtime merriment. Around me and about me crept modest, unobtrusive but beautiful arbutus, hugging close dear old mother earth, and sending out from its pale pink petals the first incense of spring, swayed by no unfeeling, perfunctory, flabby human hand, but by Nature's own immortal breezes toward the altar of the Infinite and Eternal. Of all flowers the arbutus appeals most to our affections. It is the firstborn of the real spring. There is something so frail in the dainty snowdrop that it has not the suggestion of an actual resurrection. But the arbutus, with evergreen leaves, sturdy, persistent, half hidden by moss, obscured by the dead foliage of the past, comes silently, modestly, trailing its length above all emblems of death, and bursts upon you with the sweet perfume of promise and joy. Deep rooted is its faith, ever green its hopes, and enduring its prophecy of immortality. The first eloquent sermon of the springtime is found in the trailing vine of modesty and in the richness of a deep, silent little flower we find amid brambles and by the wayside, which is too often despised."

Boyhood — Farmed with Oxen

"When I was a farm lad it fell to my lot to work the oxen. I rather liked the big, calm-eyed patient brutes. It is true the Buck was the center of the lower end cattle trade at one time. I think of the good old times when I had Buck and Berry in the field with a roller."

[John A. Brown, who farmed between Chestnut Level and Fairfield, used the last pair of oxen for farming in Lancaster County, as far as we have information.]

"Oh! I had lots of fun when I was a boy, fixing up a Kirby reaper. But I will tell you in confidence that the grindstone and I got a divorce early after our union, on account of incompatibility of temper; and we are too old now ever to resume any latent affection which might exist."

An Old Program

"We had an excellent rendition of the 'Mikado' this week by amateurs. It took me back to schoolboy days in Parkesburg. I have before me now an old yellow programme, and as I look over the list of names I seem to be walking in the valley of shadows. The programme is dated 1868. Twenty-five years ago! This bit of paper calls up many a heart beat, merry laugh and the first whisper of ambition and desire for public applause. I can see it all. Four weeks of excited preparation, studying of parts, business and costume. Then the glare of the public hall, the big audience, the sweet maidens and stage-frightened youths. How our hearts got away up into our throats as we came on in our parts and did well or failed. All the excitement of after years could never equal the boyish attempts to play 'Shylock' or imitate Booth in 'Richelieu.' Then the lights were out at last, and we went to our dormitories to sleep off excitement and

feel the reaction of the night the next day. Now trunks are packed for the homeward journey—to many, never to come together again as scholars. Now is the first tragedy of youth. Trunks rattle into the van with a dull, melancholy sound. We forget the routine of lessons, the old text-books, the sullen blackboard, the deserted playground, and look with kindly feelings toward the familiar bedroom window through which we saw the fierce, tempest-tossed winter blast, and the smile of May upon opening blossom. It is June. But still you are sad. It is good-by to school.

“I was back in the closet to-day and ran across my school books. How tenderly I took up that old torn and tattered Virgil, the dog-eared Caesar, terrible Livy—to translate, the Geometry I have forgotten, and the Algebra I will know no more forever. I put those books away some twenty years ago, but they seemed to talk again. But in turning those old volumes over I came across two old music books—one with ancient songs, and the other a notebook which may have been used in Chestnut Level church half a century ago. The old notes were of the buckwheat pattern, and everything about it was as quaint as a Queen Elizabeth ruff. It called up the old-time singing school when some Ichabod Crane gave lessons in psalmody in the country academy—the wayside schoolhouse—where often his own nasal notes were answered by the croaking of frogs in the neighboring pond. In the very old parlor where I was standing, I saw in boyhood a choir practicing. As I think of the scene now it is both sad and funny. Most of the singers are dead, and the rest, old and voiceless. In the old times a country choir-practicing meant business. It was a half solemn occasion, because a hymn then was not to be treated with levity.”

Prominent Lancaster County Farmers

“At present we have no sentiment for the country. The farm is looked upon as a matter of business, hard work, and something to be got rid of if you have a competency. This is not right. Every well-to-do farmer should stick to his land, and every rich man should have a handsome home in the country. At present the countryman works and does not read. In reality he does not love the land. He works because he knows of nothing else. I want an honest love for the country. Nothing is more pleasing to me than to see General Simon Cameron on his Donegal farm. Delightful and interesting as he always is, I prefer to meet him under the shade of the locusts and willows, as he looks with kindly eyes over the playground of his boyhood, and which he loves more than the honors which came to him in his long political life. I am glad to see that Mr. B. J. McGrann clings to the home place of his father and seeks no city home. Col. James Young’s love is in his farm. When Senator [Donald] Cameron retires from public life I hope he will settle down upon the splendid farm which adjoins his father. Col. James Duffy has done the best act of his life in becoming an interested land proprietor. I mention these men because they are well-known and point an example.”

Nature's Cathedral

"You are in Nature's cathedral. Her altar is the hills, her censer the flowers, her choir the birds and babbling brook, her text beauty, her sermon goodness, and her moral joyous contentment. Grander than sound of Vatican bell o'er the classic Tiber are the voices we hear and the service we enjoy in the temple where Nature tells us that only the pure in heart and deed



Group of General Hospital Nurses, 1922, when Mr. Risk had his limb amputated. Reading left to right, Kathryn Sterling (Ammerman); Edna F. Schreiber, Executive Secretary Lancaster County Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc.; Flossie Reitz (Mrs. Ralph Binkley); Frank Deen, Druggist; Kit Hoover (Mrs. Jos. Appleyard); Polly Dull (Mrs. Edgar Hess).

shall inherit the glory of the hereafter. Tormented you may be by the wrongheadedness of the world and the cares of the day, but when you go with a worshipping heart into Nature's great church, you feel that a whisper has come from heaven that all is well. 'Consider the lilies of the field' rings in your ears and you are content."

Spring

"If there is one thing above another which gives me comfort and pleasure during the first few warm days of early spring, it is to sit in a big rocking-chair on the front porch and look at somebody else working."

Sunrise

"One-fourth the population of Lancaster never see the sun rise—the other three-fourths must, as their bread-winning occupations require it. As a rule I go to bed and get up the same day."

Haying

"In the old time a summer morning in the hay field was not as pleasant as an outsider would think or a poet would dream. Everything was sticky and mean. The grass glittered with pearls, but they were the tears of a sleepless night. It is true the scythe ran easier through the moistness of the grass, but that great, blinking, red-eyed sun, looking as if he had been on a spree and could not find a morning cocktail, was a caution. The nearer you get to a woods in the morning, while making hay, the worse the day feels. Of all the trying times to temper and comfort, it is the hay field or barn in the morning. The perspiration comes out of you reluctantly and exasperatingly.

"There were two things in morning farm life in the olden times that made some people believe the infernal regions had somehow got loose and were trespassing on your own or your neighbors' fields. The one was cutting the first swath, and the other 'pitching off' a load of long timothy hay which had stood over night in the barn."

April First

"April 1st is a relic. Its departure as a great day with us is half pathetic and humorous. There was a time when April 1st was the only day when the back, or first edition countryman, came to town. He was then numerous, and primitive from boot sole to unkempt and uncombed hair. His dress was a generation or two behind the age, and his simplicity of manner or innocence of all guile made him the target for the evilly disposed. He counted his roll of money on the streets and settled grave accounts on a water plug. He brought his dinner and horse feed with him and spent nothing upon hotel or seductive fruit stand. He came in early in the morning and went away before supper, with bills all paid, dues collected and a three-horse load of packages. When he got home he stayed there for another year. But he is gone, save here and there, an apparent ghost from the graveyard of dead custom. I miss the old-time country lover and his best girl, walking the streets with little fingers clasped, and getting joy from nibbling the same ginger cakes, drinking nectar from the one three-cent glass of lemonade. The April 1st bully is no more. Electricity, the newspaper and railroad have wiped their hands over the picturesque past and the progress of the age reigns universally."

July Fourth

"It was the Fourth of July at the Buck and quiet reigned. Store, shop and dwelling house were closed, the babies were in the backyard, and the dogs chained in the stable. But one patriotic sound, at stated

intervals, reminded one it was the way we celebrate—a blast of powder from the old anvil at the blacksmith shop.”

Thanksgiving

“While in the country last week I was impressed by the old-fashioned Thanksgiving. The day is for homegathering, without hurry, fret or care. The farm work of the fields is finished. The full crib and bursting mow are ready for the cattle. All is peace and contentment. Now let us go out to the kitchen. Look at that turkey, well-basted and shining. By his side a dainty duck gently toasting in the juiciness of its life essence. The mince pie is letting the richness of its interior perfume the air. The pumpkin pie laughs all over its broad face. But why go on? You know what a good country dinner is. Let us sit down to it.”

The Flower Store

“I have a favorite loafing place in this city—a North Queen Street [No. 151] flower store—and I find it particularly interesting now, for the smile of spring is on flower, fern and tender plant. The spirit of the country breathes through the perfume of hyacinth, over the daffodils, lingers in the cup of the tulip, kisses coyly the modest lily and sweet violet, revels more gorgeously amid the sturdy carnations, breaks into a broad smile over the hydrangea, whispers almost of June in the richness of the azalea, and murmurs of the brook and dew-laden wayside as the maidenhair fern sways in the early warm air. It is a cheap show for the loafer, and full of the poetry and pencillings of nature’s rhythm and artistic touch. Just now all these flowers are living plants, blooming with Easter freshness from good Mother Earth. I oft think cut flowers a sacrilege. They seem transient things, instinct with life and beautiful thought. They are, too. In the long line of continuous life and the struggle for existence they have had a warfare in building up their beauty to reproduce their kind. All the sweet forms of our colored vegetable life are the product of suffering, strife and death. But the resultant of the conflict is the beauty of the floral universe and the symbol of the perfect man. The rose is the culmination of complete development. It no longer reproduces itself by the seed of death, but from cuttings of its seemingly immortal self. A hopeful symbol of that human existence of the long-coming time when full knowledge, making perfect harmony between man’s internal and external relations, will give the world the second Adam of a grander paradise than the Eden of the legend. Like the rose, the culmination of floral development, man carries within him the promise and potency of an earthly immortality. At least the Easter flowers preach that pleasing fancy to me, nor do I think it unscientific.

“But another lesson comes from the flowers. I am happy to see a growing love for them and even an enthusiasm. No people can be dead to the beautiful and true who can read the poetry of the lily or love the paintings of nature’s pencil. Blessed is the man who loves a flower and a little child. Pause and blush as the lily whispers its sermon. Stop at

the flower store, halt by the wayside or pluck the wild bud amid canebrakes or on desolate heaths, and learn of nature her ways and her lessons. For she truly can say: 'Oh! God, *our* God, How excellent is Thy name in all the earth.' Such is the lesson of Easter and her flowers."

June

"The June sun is blazing, and nature is putting forth all her gigantic strength. It is the gorgeous month of roses, full robustness, the prime of the year's age and the zenith of her energy. The scent of the new mown hay quivers on the air of meadow and hillside—the first suggestion of the ripening harvest. A faint suspicion of yellow tinges the wheat, and shows that the bursting strength of the year must ere long result in full fruitage. The song of the grasshopper and the chirp of the cricket will soon be heard amid the stubble. Already the corn is tall enough to shade the earth, and cherries gleam amid the half-rustling leaves. Though the birds, open-mouthed, seek the deep shade, and the kine tinkle their bells in the cool pools of the dells; though the squirrel frisks his egotistical tail less from the great oak bough and the barnyard fowl buries herself in the sand by the old orchard apple tree—in short, though all life that can do so shuns the burning sun and sleeps where the heat cannot strike with direct hand, yet the nights of June come with all the wealth of summer gorgeousness. The stars of the firmament are answered back by the twinkling fire-flies, and the dewy mists which settle on hilltop and dale are the filmy clouds which imitate the sky. The air is full of music—for all insect life is in action. Beetle and bug, tree frog and night bird, mongrel pup and thoroughbred hounds, are buzzing, creaking, barking and baying here, there, everywhere. The low of cattle in the dell, the bleat of lamb and tiny ring of the sheep bell, the long, half-solemn coo of dove, the mournful note of the rainbird, the hoot of owl and the swoop of the whippoorwill on undulatory wing—all these burden the still, warm air. The nights are not oppressive, as in July or August. One can swing in the hammock and half dream that heaven and earth are at last counterparts."

Vacation

"School vacation has come. In fancy I see the old country schoolhouse again. There it stands, closed, grim, lonesome and silent. The grass has grown on the playground, and the wild weed decks the walls beside which we played marbles. Rust settles on the unused hinges of the battered and carved door, and the home of the wily spider is found on doorknob and keyhole. The old house is opened occasionally for some feeble Sunday-school or an infrequent sermon. But the ancient walls seem gloomy, and the maps and last blackboard exercise appear to long for the wild shout of childhood at the recess hour. The teacher's chair is a dead throne, and the desks but silent recollections of nervous unrest, tired feet and sleepy little heads, weary of lessons and foolish confinement. The cobweb on the ceiling, the crumbling bits of flower and evergreen of the 'last day,' and the dust on

window and stove, are all protests against the invasion of the summer's sleep and the rest of the vacation. We who are growing old and reflective find the echoes of all the years in the silent schoolhouse. A shadowy army troops before you with laughter and songs at first; then here and there a playmate falters by the wayside and waits for an epitaph; next the great battling young man striking for place and fame, with blooming schoolmate wife and golden-haired child, tossing in glee the petals of the wild rose, by his side; next comes gray hairs, the crow's feet of struggle or passion a slower, more dignified mien, and the laughing boy of the play yard has won his place and the scars of years. Go to the old schoolhouse to meditate upon the ways and works of time."

Sunday Recreation

"Swinging in the hammock of a suburban home last Sunday evening, I was struck with the happiness of the passing family groups returning from the country, where they had been spending part of the day of rest under the shade of trees by the banks of the quiet streams. In the distance I could hear the ding-dong of bell and flash of the trolley, as the crowded electric cars went swishing from one end of the city to the other. I knew the Lady Gay was carrying orderly crowds to get a breath of fresh air and enjoy quiet rest in some cool, secluded nook around Rocky Springs. I was aware that the West End Park [now Maple Grove], Graeff's Landing, and every point of comfort, easy of access, had each hundreds of quiet, orderly and honest citizens, seeking peace and innocent pleasure on the one day given them to see the green of hill and valley, and to revel in the purity of natural scenes. In all this I saw something moral and elevating."

Lancaster Cemetery

"I went out into the Lancaster Cemetery last Sunday. The day was warm and the crowd large. It was worth watching. Whether it is due to a subjective condition or an objective effect, there is a vast difference between a week day and a Sunday in a cemetery. The very trees seem to be silently praying or reflecting; the sun shone in a tempered way and not with the business air which brings out the rumbling water cart. The noisy traffic of the street does not lumber along the pike; the songs of the birds have a half subdued and not so demonstrative and aggressive tone as the every day provokes. Even the sparrow limits his clatter and the robin rests longer on yonder larch, and looks with security out of his half roguish and yet innocent eye. The crowd is orderly, never noisy. A strange mixture indeed. There is the widow, with the foolish habiliments of fashionable woe, showing by her attire that she is not sure her husband is in a better place, and is mourning over the doubt. There you see the old man looking at the marble stone which tells of buried promise and the pride of a son's manhood. Next passes the lover and maiden, who are as ever present as debt and taxation. The boy and girl loiter away next, then the little ones tread the soft grass and play in a subdued way with the pet dog.

The benches are full. They rest men and women of the sturdy middle class—the bone and sinew of our civilization—who work in shop and kitchen all week and then on Sunday, with their children, come out even among the tombstones to get a breath of country air, see the blue sky and green trees, hear the birds sing and listen to the sermon of the flowers.

“I do not think using our cemeteries as a place of rest leads to any irreverence. Our instinctive respect for the dead puts a ban on any demonstration of mirth. You will never hear a loud laugh, or even the wild merriment of healthy childhood in our cemeteries on Sunday.

“And yet as you sit in the Lancaster Cemetery a thought serious and half sad arises. Within a hundred, certainly two hundred years, all cemeteries within city borders will be covered by paved streets. In the time mentioned the burial of the dead will no longer be a superstition, but cremation a scientific fact. The urn will be our monument and the earth will be unpoisoned. Our costly tribute of marble vanity may last long but the coming higher civilization will look upon them as we do upon the tombs of the Pharaohs and the mounds of the Indian.”

Sunday Rest

“It is only in the country that one feels the beauty and necessity of the Sabbath day. The cares which infest the week are always suggested in the city. In the country God himself seems to ring down the curtain and establish rest. It is because I often see and feel this that I look for much good in a moral way coming to our city population in its easy means of getting to the country—that is, to the parks and resorts of our suburbs by street railway. This will do a world of good. The sermons that are in stones, tongues in trees and books in the running brooks are the most eloquent ever composed, spoken or written. Man in his little pulpit egotism may not admit this.”

A Rainy Sunday

“Did you ever spend a rainy Sunday in the country? On such a day how dreary the city is! Muddy, monotonous streets; dripping umbrellas; sleeping, old cab horses, with sore backbones, making a dreary watershed; hurrying pedestrians; church bells with a dull foggy sound; no life that is interesting; no sight poetical; and no feeling which is bright and joyous. Sunday in the country is a home gathering and a day of happy rest. The rain may patter, but in the lounge, paper and book make this all the more pleasant. A cozy nook and a good book on a rainy Sunday in the country make the height of contentment and happiness. You sit on the wide porch and watch the straight-falling rain through the warm air. It comes down like a Sabbath blessing, gentle as a sigh and beautiful as an infant's sleep. With the music of gentle patter, on leaf and cottage roof, are mingled the laughter and smile of earth. The more you look, think and reflect, the more beautiful the sight—the more inspiring the scene. In half reverie you can imagine that the beauty and peace of the hereafter

have given earth a glimpse of purity and a strain from Nature's never-ending, harmonious chimes. The whole thing is a sermon more suggestive and eloquent than any ever preached from pulpit or housetop. It is the voice of the universe teaching the true, beautiful and good in the temple of God."

Country Funeral

"I attended a country funeral on last Wednesday. I have been at many in younger years but possibly had not sense enough or thought sufficient to see the deep sympathy of country feeling. Death is a great leveler, but also a great vivifier of true feeling. The reality of genuine human feeling—that universal affection which makes the world akin—is seen at a country funeral. All details are attended to. It is a service of love, of genuine affection often—the truest sympathy with acts, not words. The rumble of the cab in our cities, and the banks of flowers, seem stolidly artificial when compared with the sympathy of the country."

Rawlinsville Camp Meeting

"If there is one antique and amusing thing to see, it is the variety of silk hats which appears when a country Blue Lodge of Masons goes to a funeral. The whole evolution of the hat is then seen, and a picture of the same would be valuable to any one interested in archaeological matters. Something similar to this, and equally valuable to the antiquary, would be a picture of the various kinds of vehicle I noticed on Sunday last as I looked at the passers-by on their way to the Rawlinsville camp meeting. The crowd was large, and so all the old and new conveyances in existence had to appear on the road to carry the same. I verily believe I saw the first coach and last gig which came and left Chestnut Level church in our grandmother's day, or the boyhood times of the oldest inhabitant. I saw the old wooden axle, the ancient 'deerborn,' the sulky, the gig with its top knocked off and called a dog cart—everything, in short, but the one I expected to find ending the procession, a yoke of oxen hitched to a hay wagon or flats. If the Rawlinsville camp did nothing else, it gave the antique horses, harness and vehicles of the southern end an airing. I was pleased to see it. I was back in the old times again, and had a word with recollection."

A City Picnic

"I attended a city Sunday-school picnic the other day at Rocky Springs, and again I thought this kind of amusement is something which lives along because it was once started, and not because it has a visable vitality. I remember the celebrations we had in the country many years ago. They were bigger than a county fair or a political meeting. A dozen of schools would combine, and we went to the woods in great wagons, and had a big march with flying banners and a big dinner of thirty-five courses—six of cold chicken and the balance of cake. We had speeches, recitations, singing and indigestion *ad libitum*. Then we had games and swings, love-making

and kissing when nobody was looking, and altogether a perfectly natural and wholly Christian time. But my experience with a latter-day city picnic was a shadow of the jolly ones I had when a boy and got my yearly square meal. But in justice I would add, when I also had a boy's digestive apparatus."

Graduation

"Fulton Opera House with its decorations, a stilted essay or oration on some mighty problem, loud clapping of hands, a dozen bouquets and in the years gone by, a present. A glorious day to graduate and parent. Everything has gone off in a blaze of glory. Then what? The world has no sentiment and very little respect for diplomas, but does inquire what you can do in the struggle for life."

Immortality

There's a beautiful region above the skies,
And I long to reach its shore.
For I know I shall find my treasure there,
The laughing eyes and amber hair
Of the loved one gone before.

"My stricken brother, read that stanza over and over. It speaks of immortality. When the sun is dead and the earth is in darkness the wheels of life will still run in the light of other suns; and even our ashes will yet arise with new life, on a new earth, in the beams of another sun. The meanest thing we see, the highest thing that we can conceive, are manifestations of ever evolving and never dying life, whose possibilities are beyond our conception."

Thaddeus Stevens

"Senator Collum of Illinois remarked about our 'Old Commoner': 'Yes, Stevens was the greatest political leader I have ever seen in Congress; I think none from his time to the present has been his match. He did not say very much nor make very long speeches, but his will, his influence, extended throughout that Congress.' This is true, and people who knew not Stevens wonder in what his power consisted. He was not a great orator; a magnetic man like Blaine; a great lawyer or statesman like Webster; he had not a moral nature like Calhoun; his nature was destructive rather than constructive; he was born for revolution and not peace, and so he must be conceded the strongest personal force in the House of Congress during the war. What was his power, whence obtained? It all resided in that subtle and yet hard to define characteristic called 'force of Character.' It is easier to tell who have and who have it not, than what it is. It is not the child of great intellect or even the product of intellect and moral worth. Washington, Lincoln and Franklin had it in big measure. Character commands respect involuntarily. It leads by common consent. It implies more than capacity and great learning, and it is felt whether its owner be clothed in rags or fine linen. It is seldom vain, but pride and self-reliance always attend it. Its possessor is calm amid censure

or applause. Character is independent and fearless, and yet discriminating. All that we can say of Stevens is that he had that power which resides in character—which makes a Washington with his colossal dignity or a Lincoln in spite of his humor and ungraceful form. When one can define accurately character, he can answer the question of Thaddeus Stevens' power."

Death

"To a philosopher, death is not so terrible. The mystery of earth is birth; the aim of man should be right living. Death is inevitable and takes care of itself. It is a submission to conditions. Whether young or old, if our physical make-up cannot longer resist our environment or contend against temptation, occupation, greed and all the vices, and even virtues, overdone, then the silver cord is cut and the golden bowl broken. My brother, natural affection sheds a tear over those near and dear, but reason gives the comfort that right living robs death of its terrors. If you have a soul worth saving, it will benefit you to give the world evidence of the fact before you die. Live nobly, think the best, and all will be well."

Christmas

"Say, OLD BOY, do you know that big back log you have fixed in the ancient fireplace is a real Christmas one? It is gnarled, dry, big and hard. So, the great day of feasting and joy will be over before I talk to you again. I see you are preparing for it. Yes, my old friend, there is the voice of childhood in the old house. The laugh of Margaret rings through the hallway, and the coo of blue-eyed Mary suggests the spirit and purpose of Christmas. I see you have slyly gone out to the woods and brought in holly, crowsfoot, cedar and spruce, and even got a sprig of southern mistletoe to make your Christmas beautiful—or rather one for the little children who prattle by your knee or sleep like the child Christ in that old cradle which has rocked so many of us. All this is beautiful, and do you know that it makes me feel good or better to see how Christmas is growing into our hearts and influencing the sympathetic side of our natures more and more as the years go by? My old boy, the dear little ones are in dreamland, and as we sit here by the ancient fireplace, with the cider and well-filled pipe, let us deal for the moment in the reminiscent."

The Christmas Tree

"Strange as you may think it, I have two little tots, hazel-eyed Margaret and blue-eyed Mary, in whom I take a great deal of interest, and on whom I spend as much affection as an old bachelor can without placing himself under the imputation of being soft-hearted or leading him to do extravagant acts."

[Hazel-eyed Margaret is Margaret Moore Hopkins, living at the east end of Lititz, mother of a daughter and two sons. Blue-eyed Mary is Mary Moore Myers, living in Cleveland, Ohio, also the mother of a son and two daughters.]

"I have no trouble with Mary, but Margaret, who does not retire at reasonable hours, I have been trying to convince that early to bed is the best way to insure a visit from Santa Claus. I think I will manage to have these youngsters in dreamland in order to get through the decoration before the Sunday hours. But after it is all over, is not your labor repaid? Did you ever see two little goldenhaired, dancing-eyed fairies trotting down stairs on a Christmas morning to find what Santa Claus has done for them, and behold them for the first time gazing on a gorgeous Christmas tree? No poet has sounded the melody of a child's laugh, and no artist caught the innocent gleam of a baby's eye."

Good-By

Farewell, my friend, since we must part,
It matters not the reason why,
With laughing lips and aching heart,
I say good-by.

If you can smile, why I smile, too;
I gauge my sadness by your own;
I cannot show more grief and pain
Than you have shown.

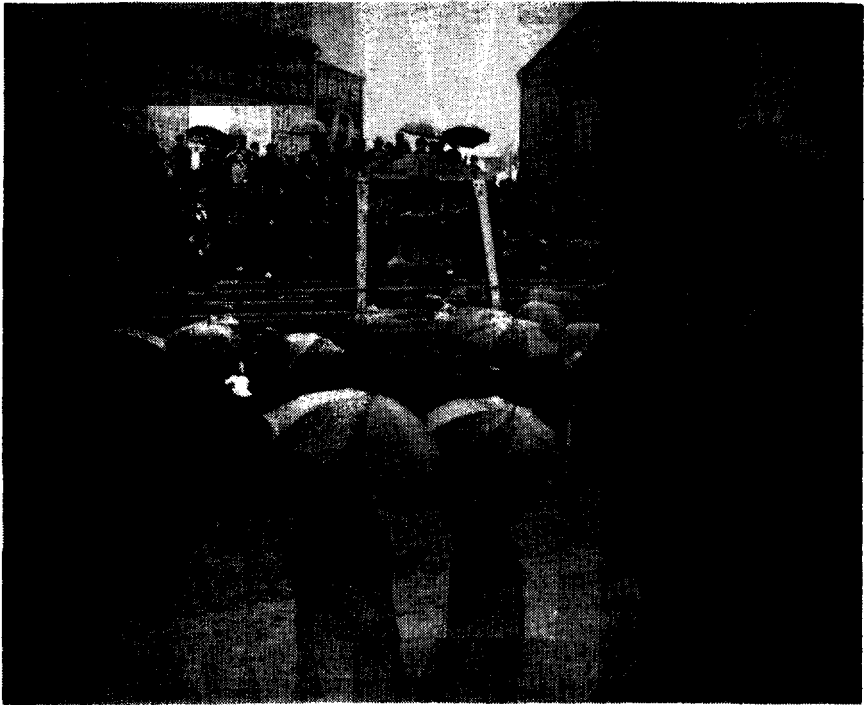
Since I am nothing in your life,
From henceforth I shall vainly try
To banish thought of you from mine,
And so, good-by.

The Liberty Bell

"From the balcony window of the Hiester House [southeast corner of Queen and Chestnut streets] I saw the Liberty Bell pass through Lancaster [April 25, 1893]. It was more than an ordinary sight; something beyond idle curiosity prompted the gathering, and so the scene was impressive. A great crowd had assembled, undaunted and unscattered by the fast falling rain. Bridge, station, pavement and street held an eager, impatient, and enthusiastic crowd. The bands played heedless of the rain drops, and the fire engines shrilly screamed their expectancy. Mayor [Robert Clark] and grave policemen kept clear the railway track. At last the train appeared around the curve and slowly, even majestically, came into the station. At first there was some cheering, and then silence came. Without noise or clangor solemnly on rolled the train, and 10,000 people silently paid reverence to the great relic of the Revolution, which proclaimed 'liberty throughout the land and to the inhabitants thereof.' The spirit of reverent patriotic feeling, the deep, beautiful sentiment of love for country and admiration for her heroes, seemed to possess for a moment that vast, silent throng. Of all our relics its now silent voice appeals the keenest to the imagination. That silent crowd, which with awe and reverence welcomed the bell and felt the meaning it suggested, made the thoughtful man feel better. I am glad the bell came through. It impressed me deeply."

An Election Special Edition

"Now let me tell you something about getting out the morning extra of the *Examiner* after an election. You all get your paper at the regular mail hour, and as you glance over the news you do not know what hurry, excitement and labor it is to give you, for a cent or two, all the news of



The Liberty Bell as it stopped in Lancaster, April 25, 1893, on its journey to the World's Fair in Chicago.

county and state. The big crowds swarm around the *Examiner* bulletin boards. Upon the balcony the figures are given to the hosts below while up in the editorial den, the news editor, reporters, managing editors, and the foreman of the composing room are making tables, correcting telegraphic sheets, answering questions. In the composing room are waiting a dozen or fifteen printers. In the shadow of the case sit the typesetters. Now comes the foreman. Lights are turned on and every man jumps to his case. Out goes the silent, tell-tale copy, click go the types and the slowly-filling galleys show that the world will get the news in time. Out of the confusion comes order; the cool editors arrange everything. The hours go on. The general result is known and the crowd thins out. The editorial writer begins his work. Down he sits and dashes off his column, reading proof, suggesting

change, hearing the last report. At 3:30 A. M. the last line is set and down the elevator go the forms. The grim cellar is now all bustle. On goes the steam; rattle, bang and whirr goes the press. Hurry, scurry go the newsboys calling, 'Here's yer extra *Examiner*—full account of the election—only two cents.'

Improvement

"If our spare time was put in reading a couple dozen of the very best books, ancient and modern, we would have more wisdom, and be less gulled by political and theological upstarts and demagogues."

Holidays

"For my part I take little interest in holidays—partly because they bring so little rest, and more because we take them so sadly and solemnly. I often think a holiday is a joke in the country. Our Fourth of July is a farce, Washington's birthday a smile, Good Friday appeals only to the religious, Christmas is a matter of comparing presents and at last Thanksgiving is the song of a pumpkin pie."

The Bible

"My brother, as a great many of us talk more about the Bible than read it, let me quote a passage, for instruction: 'For we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.' (II Corinthians 10:12)."

A Strange World

"A strange world this, my brother, and the great thing is to know how to live in it. Dying will take care of itself."

"Wherever you go, my brother, try to get a smile out of this funny world."

Older Years

"Some of you, who have read this column from time to time, may have heard me speak of an 'old boy,' in talks around the ancient chimney fire-place where he smoked the pipe and I the contemplative cigar. The 'old boy' was my uncle Robert Washington Moore. But death's hand touched him and he sleeps, while the angel of the older years, as I write, hovers near another beloved form. The fireplace is closed, the home of my boyhood is almost broken forever, and the footfalls of the stranger will soon echo through its old, loved halls. The tenderest sentiment one can form is a love for the home of his sires, and the noblest satisfaction one can have is an honorable ancestry. One portion of my former home is a hundred years old, and the rest nearly one hundred and fifty. Mr. Moore was the son of Samuel Blair Moore and Mary Reed Caldwell. His grandfather was James Moore who married Francina Blair, the daughter of Rev. Samuel Blair of Log College fame, who is buried in Fagg's Manor church. From

this same Blair stock, through another ancestor, sprang Montgomery and Gen. Frank P. Blair of Kentucky development and fame. From the Blair side came strength of mind, and from the Moore, Caldwell and Reed ancestry, massiveness and strength of frame.

"So the old home has a historical significance. Its foundations were put down thirty-six years before the Revolution. Soldier and patriot went forth from it and rejoiced in the glory of victory and the full splendor of Washington's matchless fame. Many a time I have heard the story of Lafayette's welcome from the old folks, and tales of the Revolution from grandmother (who was a little girl during Washington's last administration), received from her mother, who remembered the days of Indian savagery and the horrors of massacre and pillage. So all these things in these older years came back to me as I sat representing another generation by the fireplace of ancient worthies.

"Mr. Moore was a simple, plain farmer; never rich, but never pinched; not learned or inclined to regular study, but well read in the affairs of the day and with a remarkable memory for all the events he had lived through, and traditions, legends and stories he had heard from father and grandfather in the very room he died. He was full of humor. Few could tell a story better. He was slow to anger. In all my years of association with him, which were from infancy—he taking the place of my father who died before I could remember him—I never knew Mr. Moore to give way to uncontrolled wrath. He was a man of strong will—strong as his iron body, which knew no superior in his younger days, but it was never exercised save in the best and kindest way. No man knew him as an enemy—all greeted him as a friend. He was the youngest old man I ever met. His favorite book in the New Testament was James. He could keenly read men's characters, but natural kindness led him often into the toils of the deceiver. He lost enough by endorsements to have made him wealthy. But money was not his idol. Loss did not trouble him—pain and sorrow in others did.

"Father of my youth, friend and companion of my later days, you fell in the fullness of an appropriate time. While the winds of approaching spring and the early warble of the warm days' messengers are speaking of the earth's immortality, you entered upon yours. Death does not end all—it begins everything. So it is not wise to speak farewell. Far better it is to say to the departed—Wait. Tarry for us."

New Year

"My brother, I know not what opinion you may have of the various thoughts I have expressed in this column, week after week, during the year. But I know that I have aimed at higher things in thought and action than those which ordinarily come to the lazy and unthoughtful minds we meet from hour to hour. I can recall nothing I regret having uttered, even if offense followed. 'Man with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs is not an accident but a product of the time. He must remember

that while he is a descendant of the past he is the parent of the future; and that his thoughts are as children born unto him which he may not carelessly let die.' To the friends I love, and the enemies I am thankful for, A Happy and Prosperous New Year."

A nation without monuments is a land without heroes, memories and inheritances. Without these, no people can have an inspiration which develops the individual, builds up national greatness and establishes a lofty patriotism. The backward nations of today are those without a history or ancestral inheritances, while the great, progressive lands have the records of their nation's achievements by heart, and on every hilltop, in lowly valley or the humble graveyard can be found a monument or memorial marking the graves of their heroes or great men, silently inspiring the resolve that what worthy sires had won should not perish through a degenerate posterity.

—*Excerpt from an address by Robert B. Risk at the unveiling of a monument to Steele, Porter and Ramsay, at Unicorn, September 17, 1921.*

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