

A YOUNGSTER MINGLES WITH THE GREAT

By JOHN R. IRWIN, of Keokuk

The first really great man I remember from my days as a youngster, is Gen. John A. Logan, "Black Jack," as his soldiers familiarly called him. He visited our home when I was a very small boy, and for him I was almost named.

The next recollection of a well known man takes me to a ballroom scene in a hotel dining room in Pheonix, Arizona, the occasion being a ball given in honor of the new governor, my father. There was one man present, however, who far outshone the governor in my small-boy opinion, and he was the governor's adjutant general. He was large of physique and wore a wonderful blue uniform decorated with gold braid and gay epaulets. This man, the first volunteer mustered into the army for the war with Spain, was known as "Bucky" O'Neill. He entered as a private, but later was made captain of Troop A in Theodore Roosevelt's "Rough Riders." When a friend remonstrated with him for enlisting as a private, he answered with the remark that flashed around the country at that time, "Who would not die for a new star in the flag?" Another famous remark of "Bucky's" at that time was, "Who would not gamble for an 'eagle' or 'star?'"

O'Neill was prominent as a miner, journalist, politician, judge, sheriff, and soldier. There was nothing he would not tackle. He would take the "under-dog's" part no matter how many were against him. It was the vivid abandon with which he plunged into frontier life that won him his nick-name of "Bucky." He would gamble with "the lid off" at any game and for any stakes, and he made a standing offer to bet that his horse "Sandy" could cover more ground over rougher country than any other horse in that territory. "Bucky" was a soft spoken, dark eyed, reckless man of unflinching nerve.

Speaking of the men under his command, Col. Theodore Roosevelt said, "Most of the men had simple souls. They could relate facts, but said very little about what they dimly felt." "Bucky" O'Neill, however, the iron-nerved, iron-willed fighter from Arizona, the sheriff whose name was a by-word of terror to every wrong doer, white or red; the gambler, who with unmoved face would stake and lose every dollar he had in the world, he alone among his comrades was a visionary, an articulate emotionalist. He was very quiet, never talking unless he was sure of his listener, but at night when we leaned on the railing to look at the southern cross he was less apt to tell of his hard and stormy past than he was to speak of the mysteries which lie behind courage, fear and love; behind animal hatred and animal lust for the pleasures that leave tangible shape. Had he lived and had the war lasted he would surely have won the eagle, if not the star.

"Bucky" O'Neill was killed at the battle of San Juan, 1898. He believed that an officer should never take cover. As he was strolling up and down in front of his men smoking a cigarette they begged him to lie down, and his sergeant said, "Captain, a bullet is sure to hit you." O'Neill blew a cloud of smoke out of his mouth, laughed and replied, "Sergeant, the Spanish bullet isn't molded yet that will kill me." As he turned on his heel a bullet struck him in the mouth and came out the back of his head, so that before he fell his wild and gallant soul had gone out into the darkness.

About the same time, I remember meeting Francis J. Heeney, in Arizona, and in California, Gen. Alexander McDowell McCook, of the famous family of the fighting McCooks. His father and nine brothers became generals.

ALLISON HAD HIS DOUBTS

The next scene in which an illustrious man played his part was in our home. Sen. William B. Allison was visiting us. It was shortly before the Republican convention at St. Louis which nominated McKinley for his

first term. Mr. Allison was "Iowa's favorite son," and would go into the convention with the solid delegation of Iowa behind him. It was thought perhaps, he might get the nomination. I was anxious for all my boy friends to meet Mr. Allison and took some of them in to see him. As one of them was shaking his hand, he looked at him inquiringly and said, "Well, Mr. Allison, do you think *you* will be the next president?" The senator's eyes twinkled and he replied, "No, my boy; no, I do not think I will be."

I remember meeting many other well-known men about this time—friends of my father's, including such as David B. Henderson, speaker of the U. S. house of representatives, Robert G. Cousins and Jonathan P. Dolliver, possibly the two greatest orators of their day, "Pete" Hepburn, George R. Wendling, William E. Curtis, John Hay, Leslie M. Shaw, and Findley Peter Dunne, better known as "Mr. Dooley."

On board ship is another scene, my father having been appointed United States minister to Portugal by President McKinley. Marconi was on board and when one hundred miles out from the English coast he started sending and receiving messages. Up to that time it was the longest distance he had ever tried his wireless telegraphy. He printed a small paper giving the important news of the world during our seven days voyage. One man sent a message to some friends in London inviting them to dinner with him the next day. He received an answer and then sent another message to the hotel ordering the dinner.

Another time, while in London, we were invited to dine with Ambassador Joseph H. Choate and his family at their magnificent home on Carleton House Terrace. My mother sat at Mr. Choate's right hand and after everyone was seated she said, "Mr. Choate, I am very pleased to meet you, as I have always heard you paid your wife a most beautiful compliment. Was it not you who on being asked who you would rather be if you

were not yourself, replied, 'I would rather be Mrs. Choate's *second* husband?' "Yes," Mr. Choate answered, and bowing to his wife at the other end of the table, "do you not think she deserves it?"

In Brussels we knew Mr. Lawrence Townsend, United States minister to Belgium, but I was much more interested in meeting his beautiful wife, who was said to have taught King Edward how to cakewalk. In Paris we often saw Ambassador Porter, who was instrumental in locating and bringing to America the body of John Paul Jones. In Madrid we knew Bellamy Storer, United States Minister to Spain.

SAW GAITIES OF LIFE IN PORTUGAL

Again, my thoughts carry me back to a scene on the Avenida de Liberdade in Lisbon. It was the custom there for everyone who could to drive or walk on that splendid avenue every afternoon about four o'clock; and on this particular afternoon Queen Amelia, with a lady-in-waiting, came along on horseback. There were two outriders in front of her and two in the rear. Coming from the opposite direction was Dom Carlos, head of the House of Braganza and King of Portugal. As the husband and wife met the carriage stopped, the king and officers beside him, the coachman and footmen arose, faced towards the queen, and bowed as she rode by, and the queen acknowledged the courtesy with a pretty smile and bow. The whole thing might have been done on the stage, it was done so perfectly and apparently with real sincerity. We often saw this king and queen and their two small boys, the crown prince, Louis Philippe, and Manuel, who afterwards became king, his father and brother being assassinated.

The Duke of Oporto, Dom Carlos' brother, was a noted character of those days, too. He was famous for leading a very gay life, and his greatest amusement was to drive four stunning mules up and down the Avenida, often standing up in his high cart, flourishing his long whip, and probably swearing at the mules in Portuguese!

There was also the Queen Dowager Maria Pia, sister of King Humbert of Italy. Once, it was said, her son the king, remonstrated with her for her extravagance and she flashed back, "Well, if Portugal cannot support me, I'll go back to Italy."

I remember looking upon the faces of two dead kings, and one emperor. They were Dom Carlos' father and grandfather and Dom Pedro, the last emperor of Brazil.

THE NOTABLES AT PRINCETON

The scene now changes for the last time to a small college town. Out of a goodly number of well known men with whom we came in contact I will mention only three names. The first of these was the author of many beautiful stories, such as "The Blue Flower," "The Ruling Passion," "The Other Wisemen," Dr. Henry Van Dyke, later to become United States minister to the Netherlands. Needless to say, the seats were never empty at his lectures and some of the most delightful memories of my college days are of those intimate talks he gave us about such great names in literature as Dickens, Thackeray, and his "beloved Tennyson," men whom he had known and visited in their own homes.

The second name I will mention is that of the sage of Princeton, Grover Cleveland. In my day when we had any great victory in athletics, the student body would march out in a noisy howling "pee-rade" to Mr. Cleveland's home. He always replied to the rather familiar call of "We want Grover" with a graceful little speech of praise and congratulation, and the students would go away even happier than before, after giving one of their famous Princeton "locomotive" cheers for Cleveland.

The third and last name I will mention is a name that was destined to go down in history as a very great name, Pres. Woodrow Wilson. The students might not have loved Mr. Wilson as much as they loved Presidents Patten and McCosh, but they all admired his keen intellect

and respected his iron will. It was the proud boast of my class that we started the Wilson presidential boom long before he was even considered for governor of New Jersey. In the spring evenings of my last year in Princeton the senior class would sit on the steps of "Old Nassau Hall" and start our singing with this verse:

Here's to Woodrow, King Divine,
He rules this place along with Fine;
We fear he will soon leave our town
To try for Teddy Roosevelt's crown.

Our fear became a reality, and thinking of the thrills of those bygone days, of the wonderful spirit of patriotism that beat in every breast from the Statue of Liberty to the Golden Gate, I come back to that remark of "Bucky" O'Neill's, "Who would not die for a new star in the flag?"

THE ORIGIN OF EDDYVILLE

Origins of Eddyville antedate those of Ottumwa. Eddyville was founded upon the site of the Indian trading post of J. P. Eddy. He established a ferry there in 1844. Later that year he left, to spend his sunset years in St. Louis.

In 1848 Eddyville's going business included a pottery, established a year earlier by J. M. McNamee. It lasted four years.

United States Surveyor General Sargeant writing of 1848, refers to Eddyville as being on the "west bank" of the river. As nearly as can be determined, this is an error.—*Ottumwa Courier*, Centennial edition, August 7, 1948.

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