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SOME HOURS IN RICHMOND.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 10, 1881.

As the site of the old Tolbooth in Edinburgh was the heart of Mid Lothian, so the Capitol square in Richmond is the heart of Virginia, and hither, a few moments after the train crossed the bridge, or rather succession of bridges, from island to island, that cross the James, my steps led me. Here on the crest of the shaded hill stands the plain, old-fashioned capitol, with its columns and its wide porch, where for over a hundred years the Governors of Virginia have been inaugurated; near at hand is the "hip-roofed," brick gubernatorial mansion, the statue of Stonewall Jackson, the immense bronze monumental pile surmounted by Crawford's great equestrian statue of Washington, and a little farther down the slope, under a sort of pagoda, is the graceful form and expressive features of Henry Clay, in marble.

This old State House was used as the Confederate capitol, and in and around this square every human passion has found a stage for its exhibition. The frenzy of the outbreaking revolt; the mad exultation over victory; the crushing gloom of disaster; the confused flight of panic—all these has this little spot of earth witnessed. For four long years not a single moment of absolute peace and quietude had visited it; but on this Saturday afternoon what a picture of peace it presented! The sunlight sifting through the elms fell in bright patches on the wide walks; hundreds of children slept or smiled in their little carriages, or clung to their black nurses' fingers as they took their first lessons in the art of walking; the tame squirrels scurried over the grass, and the air was full of the petulant clamor of the sparrows. High above all sits on his great bronze horse the soldier farmer of Mount Vernon, intently gazing on some crisis in the hard-fought field where the ragged Continentals grapple with the foe and will not yield; while the horse, his ears laid forward, his nostrils spread, one im-

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patient fore-foot pawing the air, seems but to need the slightest lowering of the strong hand on the rein to send him flying like a thunderbolt into the thickest of the fray. Around the monument stand the colossal figures of Marshall, Mason, Henry, Lewis, and the other great statesmen, law-givers and founders of Virginia; and as I read their names I remembered that not one of them failed, before he descended to his grave, to enter, with all the solemnity of a prophet of old, his protest against the continuance of slavery in Virginia. Alas, alas, that their voices were not heard and heard in time!

The other statues of the square seemed dwarfed by the presence of this great work, worthy, I think, of any capital in the world. The Jackson statue, contributed by Englishmen, is a fine, soldierly figure, somewhat idealizing, I should think, the Presbyterian general, but still fine. The Clay statue is by Hart, the Kentucky sculptor, and is a pleasing work.

The fine, well-built streets of Richmond would be attractive if there were no special historical associations connected with them. The city lies on a succession of hills along the James, and from its start has shown a disposition to move west. The town was originally started five miles further down the James, but, as the stories go, the "town company" placed such an extravagant figure on the lots that the people moved on up the river. In the time of the Revolution, Church Hill, a sharp bluff overlooking the James, was the center of the town, but now the fashionable "West End" is over a mile away. The city has gained 27 per cent. in population since 1870, and now contains 62,000 people.

Sunday was passed in looking at what may be seen on a rest-day, and at night I went to church and heard, from a clergyman of the Methodist Church South, a very good Republican discourse. One passage was particularly fine; it was where he showed that the division of land among all the people, and the exercise by every man of the elective franchise, was the glory and safety of the Republic. Yet I did not learn that the preacher was even a Readjuster.

On Monday I walked along Casey street in a rather more agreeable state of mind than several thousand of my countrymen have

traversed that thoroughfare, and stopped to look into the largest old junk warehouses I ever saw. There was old iron enough piled up in there to sink a man-of-war. The proprietor, a rosy, pleasant gentleman, formerly one of Stonewall Jackson's artillerymen, went about with me and exhibited his treasures. There were cannon balls of all calibers, cannon of all patterns, and partially concealed by a pile of boards was a huge, rusty mass of iron; it was part of the shaft of the Merrimac, the famous ram that sank our poor old Cumberland, but brought out the Monitor to fight and almost revolutionized naval warfare. The battle-fields, the ex-gunner told me, were pretty well cleaned up now, though for a long time they furnished enormous quantities of lead and iron.

Next we came to Libby prison. Its exterior is little changed, I should judge, and the iron gratings still cover the windows. It bears but one sign on its front, in worn letters the words, "Southern Fertilizer Company." The whole building is now used as a manufactory of cotton and tobacco fertilizers, and a sharp, pungent odor pervades the rooms. The fertilizer is prepared with South Carolina phosphate as a base, treated with sulphuric acid, and there is nothing offensive about the premises save the sharp smell. Many ladies visit the place. The superintendent, Mr. Gilham, in the intervals of business went about with me and chatted about the old institution. He seems to take a great deal of pride in it, and takes pleasure in showing visitors around. The number of sight-seers is quite wonderful. The first page of the register I looked at showed one hundred and eighty visitors in one day. Nearly all were from the New England States. An occasional Western man strolls around, and I noticed among the last recorded the name of "Theodore Terry, Topeka, Kansas."

Mr. Gilham told me that Libby, whose name was attached to the prison, never owned a brick in the building, and occupied only a portion of it. He said Mr. Libby suffered a good deal of opprobrium on account of the misfortune to his name. The Fertilizer Company occupied a portion of the building in 1872, and in 1880 took possession of the last of it. The building has been lithographed as an advertising card, and hundreds will see it with-

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out suspecting that they are looking at the once-famous prison. The arrangement of the rooms is about the same as of old, though doors have been cut through in places. The ceiling of Major Turner's office is still visible, though the partition cutting off his apartments from that into which the commissioned officers were ushered is gone. Mr. Gilham still retains the folding-doors. Having heard a good word for Wirz down in Georgia, I was not surprised to hear Major Turner commended. Mr. Gilham said that ex-prisoners almost universally spoke kindly of him, regarding him as grown men regard the schoolmaster of their boyhood. This may be so; yet I have not felt any poignant regret that I failed to make the Major's acquaintance during the war.

Mr. Gilham pointed out to me some of the names carved in the floor. I noted "Sergt. A. E. Berry, Co. K, 7th Regt. O. V., August 18, 1863." Thousands of names have been covered with whitewash. Mr. Gilham said that he was requested by letter to cut out of the floor and send to the writer his name, which he would find in a designated place. He did so, and I saw where a new piece of plank had supplied the vacancy. Checkerboards marked on the floor are still visible on inspection.

Mr. Gilham is certainly of an obliging disposition, or he would be greatly worried by some of his callers. He took down the old flagstaff which had borne in turn the flags of the Union and the Confederacy, and sawed it up for the benefit of lady relic-hunters, and exhibited a pardonable sense of injury because some doubted the genuineness of the relic, although it cost them nothing.

The yard under which prisoners were wont to construct tunnels has been cut down, and is partly covered by sheds. Mr. Gilham said he had had among his visitors the officer who first went into the tunnel business, but he did not remember his name.

The last room visited was the famous garret, so graphically described by Chaplain McCabe in his lecture on Life in Libby Prison. Its grim and cobwebbed rafters have not changed, yet I should think it by far the most comfortable room in the house.

For some time I sat in Mr. Gilham's office, looking out on Casey street. There was a telephone there. What would not

the prisoners have given for a telephone which would have brought to them the sounds of home! Opposite was a machine shop and a yard full of young trees, and beyond that the Bethel public school, (formerly a sailors' chapel,) and the scholars looking out of the upper windows at the old prison, and the sailing craft moored to the wharf, and the gliding James, and the low green lands beyond it. The building a little further down the street, once used as the prison hospital, now presents a squalid appearance. The windows have been bricked up, and the place is a stable and wagon yard. Castle Thunder I did not see. It exists no more. It was burned up utterly a year ago last November. Of Belle Isle I have spoken. Libby alone remains, but its memories will remain for many years yet—until the last man who ever dwelt within its walls a prisoner has ceased to live. Then it will become a fading tradition, losing itself in the gathering mists of time, until what was cruel shall cease to vex the hearts of men. For such is the decree of pitying heaven.

From Libby I went down the long street for some distance, and then climbed a long flight of wooden steps and passed the mansion occupied by the Van Lews, including Miss Van Lew, formerly postmistress at Richmond, and so came to St. John's church. In this church Patrick Henry made his most famous speech. The church, a wooden structure, has been greatly changed, but pew No. 68 is still pointed out as the spot where the great Virginian spoke his choice: "As for *me*, give me liberty or give me death." The janitor showed the old font which came from a yet older church on the lower James, and the old sounding-board now in a brick lecture room in the churchyard; but I kept thinking about Henry and his speech, and wondering if in those days before short-hand was invented, they really did get his exact words. I think the speech was unpremeditated. Somebody had proposed another compromise; a little more "May it please your Majesty" business, and so Patrick Henry just got up and "turned loose" on him. That is what I think.

Falling in with a young fellow, a native of Richmond and somewhat familiar with localities, a view was taken of the city from Libby Hill. A Virginia gentleman, who had seen better

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days, joined us in reduced circumstances and a suit of blue clothes. We learned from him that the war was a piece of foolishness from the beginning, and involved great loss of life and property, and that had it not been for the war Richmond would now be a city of 100,000 people. As it was, Virginians were leaving Virginia, and a funereal state of affairs prevailed generally. This was too much, and we moved off in the direction of Powhatan, (you will accent the last syllable,) the ancient seat of the Mayos, still a leading family of Richmond, a mile or two down the river. We came first upon the old neglected family cemetery of the Mayos—a picture of desolation. One broken-down tomb marked the final resting-place of the two young children of Winfield and Maria Mayo Scott. Leaving this, we went to a substantial brick house near by, and found on the lawn, under a ruined summer house, a rock. Beneath it, we are told, lies the gallant Captain John Smith, the founder of Virginia. A little black girl led us into a kitchen garden, and there we found another boulder, on which lay Capt. Smith's head, which Powhatan (with the accent on the last syllable) proposed to mash, until Pocahontas rushed in, according to history and the pictures, and saved J. S. The rock looked as if it might be *the* rock. It offered as many conveniences for the braining business as any rock, and we went away satisfied with the tradition.

A long, hot walk back to the city took the life out of future investigations, except a visit to the capitol. It being after three o'clock, the State Library, which contains a fine collection of historical portraits, was found closed. I met Mr. Ruffner, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who informed me that Virginia raised and expended from all sources about one million dollars a year on her common schools, and that the number of scholars, white and black, was yearly increasing.

The colored janitor led the way to the roof, where a fine view was obtained of Richmond and the country about it. The view is simply pretty, and not imposing. The guide pointed out the directions of Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Seven Pines, and the other battle-fields of the seven days' fighting. In the far distance a yellow spot indicated the site of a still-remaining work

of the three lines of defense which encircled the city. The works nearest the town have generally disappeared. Monroe Park, the pretty new park of Richmond, was the old fair ground, used by the Confederates as a camp of instruction. One of the points of interest pointed out was the only colored insane asylum in the world.

In these stirring times in Virginia politics it would not do to leave Richmond without visiting some party headquarters. There not being time to hear both sides, I "took in" the Mahone organ, the *Whig*. The Funders have for their mouthpiece the *Dispatch*, and an evening paper, the *State*, the editor of which always signs his name in full, thus: John Hampden Chamberlayne. The *Whig* people, though playing a lone hand, seemed in excellent spirits. One of the attachés was an old Richmond newspaper man, and gave some stirring sketches of newspaper life in the good old times. I remarked that running a paper in Richmond in the war-time must have been attended with difficulties, meaning meager dispatches, and things of that sort. "Difficulties! I should say so," said he; "we had both the Pollards here, and times were lively. Scarcely a day passed that some one did not come into the office with a gun." He described in a cheerful way the taking-off of Mr. Rives Pollard, once an ornament to Richmond journalism. It appears that in his latter years Mr. Pollard took up the sometimes lucrative but occasionally dangerous practice of blackmailing. He was warned that his useful and agreeable existence might be suddenly terminated, but felt confident in his ability to "draw" quicker than anybody else. One day he wrote an article attacking the sister of a man named Grant. He sent a proof of the article to the brother. He was asked what it would cost to suppress the article. He replied fifteen hundred dollars. Mr. Grant said he could not pay it, and decided that a shot-gun would be cheaper. The article appeared, and Grant retired to the third story of a building, where behind a window curtain, he waited for Pollard's approach. At last he appeared, driving a light wagon. From the window up aloft came the crash of both barrels of the shot-gun. The victim sprang up with a last convulsive effort, drew his pistol, turned his ghastly

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head about to see from whence came the blow, and dropped dead. The editors of Richmond have always done their share of fighting. Mr. Elam, the present editor of the *Whig*, a very mild-mannered gentleman, by the way, figured in one of the latest duels, and was severely hurt. Editorial life in Richmond is not the cold, dead, barren waste it is with us.

I endeavored to get at least a clear idea of the Readjuster position. It requires a great many figures to state it accurately. Throwing out the mathematics, it is substantially this:

The Readjusters claim that the lawful debt of the State of Virginia, at the outbreak of the war, was about $30,000,000. Taking out the one-third they claim that West Virginia should pay, left it $20,000,000. They claim that, throwing out compound interest, interest that has been paid on what was really West Virginia's part of the debt, and making allowance for what has been regularly paid by Virginia, the debt remains at about $20,000,000. This the Readjusters say they will pay. There is no talk of absolutely refusing to pay, or repudiating. The Readjusters say that they will pay this $20,000,000 with three per cent. interest, and that is all the State can pay without an increase of taxation, which neither party dares advocate.

The Funder estimate makes the debt larger, and the Funder party proposes to pay it off in talk about "the honah of Virginia."

The Readjusters claim that the Funders were in power for nine years, and instead of paying it off, increased it. They claim for themselves that they have been in power a year, and that in that time the penitentiary has become self-supporting, the schools have prospered, and the State government has been honestly conducted.

The Readjusters have called their State Convention for June, and were holding primary meetings in and around Richmond at the time of my visit. Their convention will consist of over seven hundred members, and it is intended that Democratic Readjusters, Republican Readjusters, and Readjusters of both colors, shall have a representation. The black Readjusters are allowed delegates in proportion to their vote.

The Funder party seems to contain all the swallow-tail, kid-

glove politicians; all the doctors of divinity, all the irreconcilables and implacables, and all who believe in Jeff. Davis. The Funders rely on their tone, and will be supported by all the fine-haired Republican papers of the North.

The advances to the blacks appear to be made by the Readjusters alone, and in view of this I should not be surprised if the Funders drop the debt question, raise the cry of the white against the "nigger," and go in for a fight on the color-line, as of old.

I do not know that the Readjusters will do any good, but I know the Funders will not. Northern men can take up their position accordingly.

This morning I left both the Funders and the Readjusters. Taking the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac road, I sped away northward. We passed through but one town of note, Fredericksburg. A former member of the Fifty-fifth Virginia stepped out on the platform and showed me the position. Here on a ridge on the north side of the Rappahanock the Federal artillery kept up a tremendous fire while the pontoons were laid, and our troops fought their way through the town. Yonder was Marye's hill; there was still Marye's house; at the base of the hill was the fated stone wall. Here was the slaughter; you could walk over a large space stepping on the bodies. At one point, following a ravine, the Union troops broke the Confederate line, but were driven back and the assault failed. I looked back at the town, at the hills, at the river. It was perhaps the last time I should look upon a field where my countrymen, Southern as well as Northern, fought and fell, and were laid in bloody graves. As for the rest, it was peace. We came to the Potomac; sailing up its broad expanse we passed Mount Vernon, its low roof, its pillared porch, its tufted woods and green slopes, fit for the resting-place of a good man, whom his countrymen of every section and faith delight to remember and honor. Later, we came in sight of that marvel, the dome of the capitol. Enduring as a mountain yet seeming as light as a great white bubble, it rose against the sky. It seemed to me in its strength and brightness and whiteness, an emblem of a Nation, free and pure and strong, made, not

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for separation or division, or downfall or decay, but for a refuge and a hope for all men till the end of days.

With my arrival at Washington my tour through the South ended, and nothing remains now but in another letter to sum up the lesson it has taught.

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