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THE LIFE OF HENRY A. WISE

OF VIRGINIA

Henry A. Wise

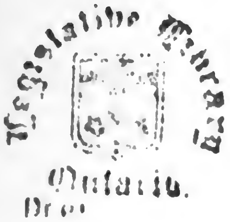
1918

THE

LIFE OF HENRY A. WISE

Biog.

OF VIRGINIA



1806–1876

BY HIS GRANDSON

THE LATE BARTON H. WISE

New York
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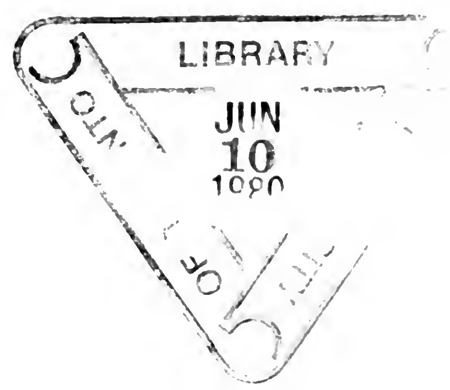

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BARTON HAXALL WISE

1865–1899

Barton Haxall Wise, the author of this volume, departed this life February 6, 1899, at the early age of thirty-three. He was the youngest and last surviving child of the marriage of the Rev. Henry A. Wise and Harriet Haxall, and grandson of Henry A. Wise, whose life he has written. He came into the world in troublous times. He was born at the crisis of the great civil strife, which threatened the existence of the Union; and the brief span of his earthly journey was punctuated with more than the ordinary number of landmarks of domestic bereavement. His father, a brilliant young Episcopalian divine, was classmate at college with Phillips Brooks of Boston, Bishop Potter of New York, Bishop Randolph of Virginia, and many other distinguished graduates of the Virginia Theological Seminary. They counted him as their peer in learning, eloquence, manliness, and Christian zeal. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was in charge of a church in Philadelphia. Although a non-combatant, his sympathies were with his family and friends, and he returned to his native State. During the war he filled sundry parishes in Virginia, and several children were born to him. Soon after the restoration of peace, he was called to Christ Church in Baltimore, but fell a victim to disease, and died in 1868, just when his eloquence and piety were gaining rapid recognition.

He left a widow and two little boys, the younger of whom is the subject of this sketch.

The youth of the child was passed in Richmond, Virginia, amid scenes of change and mourning, which could not fail to make a deep impression upon him. His grandfather Wise, at whose house he was a frequent visitor, was no longer the fiery and impetuous Harry of by-gone days, but the boy knew him as an old and broken man, who, after a stormy and dramatic career, in which he had gained prominence and honor, had been overtaken by disasters, political and domestic, which had nearly conquered his indomitable spirit. Yet one strong trait was as prominent in his grandfather's old age as it had been throughout his life, and it is somewhat surprising that the book dwells so lightly upon it, for no man ever more thoroughly enjoyed the companionship of children, or possessed for them a greater fascination. My earliest recollection of Barton Wise was when, as a little boy, he came, with a brother a year or two older than himself, in charge of their mother, or a black mammy, to visit their grandfather Wise. They were handsome, sturdy children, and their coming was a sure, if temporary, antidote to the gloomy broodings into which, at times, in those days, the grandfather was wont to relapse.

The home of Governor Wise was not more attractive or happier than that of their grandfather Haxall, with whom they lived, but, on such occasions, it was a merrier and noisier spot. The hearty greetings which awaited them, the games and toys and romps provided for their diversion, made lifelong impressions upon the boy. Many a day their sports were ended by the tired little one clambering into his grandfather's lap and falling asleep encircled by his loving arms. Although the child had known both parents, and all his grandparents, he buried

them and his only brother, one by one, before he was a man. To him there was beyond question a note of pathos in those sad lines of Praed reproduced near the end of the book, which his grandfather loved to repeat in his last days.

He received an excellent education. When he was a small boy he was placed in the Pampatike School, at the home of Colonel Thos. H. Carter, one of the few establishments which retained the character of the olden times, and he fell under the influence of a lovely woman, Mrs. Carter, who has stamped upon every boy attending the school, the impress of her singular refinement and high character. He afterward attended the University of Virginia, where he graduated in law, and then devoted several years to travel in Europe and in all parts of the United States, lovingly ministering to the wants of an invalid mother. After her death he made a brief essay in business in New York, but soon abandoned it for a residence in the beloved State of his birth, and devoted himself to the practice of the profession of law, for which he was best fitted. Although he was still a very young man he secured reasonable employment, and grew steadily and strongly in the esteem of his fellow-citizens. His practice and private means enabled him to consummate a happy marriage about five years before his death, and for the first time life seemed opening up to him cheerfully, with success and happiness in sight.

He was not a demonstrative or showy man, but one of deep affection, of clear perceptions, marked individuality, firm convictions, integrity, and high principles. Upon a recent occasion, and concerning a public issue, he proved his independence by refusing to coöperate with his party, denouncing its doctrines and arraying himself against its candidates, although well aware of the temporary unpopularity of such a course. He was a close analytical

student, and was scrupulously cautious about committing himself to any statement of fact until he had fully examined into it and was prepared to establish its truth. As a speaker and as a writer he was lucid, if not eloquent; and as a lawyer he was painstaking, studious, growing, and watchful to a marked degree of the interests committed to his charge. These qualities are sure to impress themselves upon the community in which their possessor lives, and that they did so in his case was evidenced by the general and deep expressions of sorrow which greeted his unexpected death. Those who knew him best were foremost in attesting his moral and intellectual growth, since he renewed his residence in Richmond, and his death was mourned as the loss of a high-minded, valuable citizen.

Mr. Wise had a decided taste for literary and antiquarian pursuits. These he indulged by active participation in the affairs of the Virginia Historical Society, and by several memoirs which he wrote, particularly one on the life and services of his ancestor, General John Cropper. During his last years he became more and more absorbed in preparing this life of his grandfather. He felt, and felt keenly, that the career of that remarkable man had not been preserved in any fitting and connected record. After infinite toil and research, he has produced a thorough, faithful, and loving narrative, which will survive. The book reveals the intense interest of the writer, and a pardonable pride and loyalty to its subject. But it is singularly free from fulsome praise, and displays discrimination, breadth of view, and general reading, beyond the average author of to-day. His friends knew the keen anxiety with which he looked forward to the appearance of his work, and the honest pride he felt and joyous expectation which he indulged at the prospect of seeing the results of his labors in print. Then came the end — suddenly —

without much warning — contrary to his own expectations and those of his family and friends. The first proofs of his loved book were lying upon his desk at the moment when his earthly work was ended.

His death was without dramatic incident, but it was sad, as is the death of the young. Sad, too, because he was loving and beloved, with much to live for; and touching because, while he was prepared, he did not want to go. The past had been cheerless to him; the present was bright and warm and hopeful; and the future was opening up to him fair with every promise of what the past had lacked. The mournful task of placing the capstone upon his work is one bathed in tears.

The perusal of the book has revealed him as an abler and stronger man than even his best friends had known him to be. It draws nearer to him, than ever before, by the intense loyalty and admiration he displays for our common ancestor, one who loved that ancestor before the author of this book was born, and who still venerates his memory above that of all others.

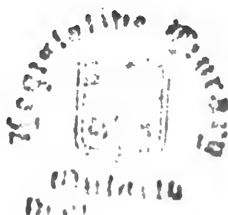
The book itself fittingly embalms the grandfather's memory, and his fame will be henceforth linked with and preserve the name of his worthy descendant and biographer.

Moving out to life's firing line past the graves of the generation which preceded and followed, one almost feels that he is at last heir to the solitude which is the refrain of Praed's lament.

Yet there are those who still look upon them both as not dead. Those who love to fancy that, as of old, the boy, tired of life's toil, has only clambered up once more upon the old man's lap and lies there sweetly sleeping, enfolded in loving arms.

JNO. S. WISE.

NEW YORK, March, 1899.



THE LIFE OF HENRY A. WISE

CHAPTER I

THE EASTERN SHORE PENINSULA. THE WISE FAMILY. BIRTH OF HENRY A. WISE AND SCHOOL DAYS AT MARGARET ACADEMY AND WASHINGTON COLLEGE. ATTENDS LAW SCHOOL OF JUDGE TUCKER IN WINCHESTER

THE peninsula formed by the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, and Delaware Bay includes the greater part of the State of Delaware, about one-third of Maryland, and two counties of Virginia. That portion at present embraced within the limits of the Old Dominion is about seventy miles in length, extending from the Pocomoke River to Cape Charles, and having a mean breadth of from eight to ten miles.

It is a flat and sandy tract, largely covered with pines, and swept by the breezes of the Atlantic and Chesapeake, whose waters lave it on either side. The Indians gave it the name of "Acchawmacke," or Accomack, which in our tongue signifies "land beyond the water," the meaning having reference to the location of the peninsula, separated as it is from the mainland of Virginia by the Chesapeake Bay.

Captain John Smith in his voyage up the Chesapeake from Jamestown, in 1608, visited Kiptopeke, "the laughing King of Accomack," and has left us some account of the eastern shore and the Indians who inhabited it; but

no settlement was planted there until grim Sir Thomas Dale founded a colony in 1612, for the purpose of catching fish and making salt, at a point a few miles above the cape, on the bay side, called "Dale's Gift." This settlement, although it languished for a while, on account of its remoteness from Jamestown, afterward became permanent and thrifty, and when, in the year 1634, Virginia came to be divided into shires, after the English manner, Accomack formed one of them.

Owing to its isolated situation, the eastern shore of Virginia has undergone less change than any other part of Virginia, and its people preserve to-day many of the characteristics of the seventeenth-century Englishmen, in habits and modes of speech. During Bacon's rebellion they harbored Sir William Berkeley, with whom they sympathized, and when a century later the storms of the Revolution broke, they sent their quota of men to join the standards of Washington; but at home naught ever happened to disturb the quiet of the little sea-girt land, and the life of its simple folk flowed in an even channel, broken by scarce a ripple.

The peaceful Indians, among whom the first inhabitants settled, had almost entirely disappeared by the end of the seventeenth century, and the dying out of the savage was followed by the coming of the negro.

Simple frame dwellings, inhabited by a body of primitive country people, in a land affording every delicacy of food and drink, characterized the peninsula at an early day as at present.

With their vessels coming from the West Indies, bringing goodly supplies of Jamaica rum, admirable for toddies, and with excellent peach brandy at home, and salt-water creeks about them abounding in the finest terrapin, crabs, and oysters in the world, the eastern shore men recked

little of the outside world, and were a contented, happy people.

Despite its mild climate and other conditions which conduced to *laissez-faire*, the eastern shore men were a more thrifty, shrewd people than were to be found elsewhere in tide-water Virginia, and the slaves were never so numerous as to deprive the peninsula of a class of hardy yeoman.

Like the contiguous portion of Maryland, however, but little of the spirit of modern progress has been felt, and it was not until the year 1884, nearly three centuries after the first settlement, that the sound of a locomotive was heard in Accomack, — communication with the outside world having been entirely by water.

John Wise, the progenitor of the Wise family in Virginia, sailed, according to Hotten, from Gravesend in the ship *Transport*, bound for Virginia, July 4, 1635, and settled on the eastern shore. He was then but eighteen years of age, and as far as can be ascertained was a member of the Devonshire family of that name. Henry A. Wise used to say that he was descended from Sir William Wise, knighted by Henry VIII. for his wit, and who, when asked by the king what *fleur-de-lis* meant, replied, "It means French lice, Sire." This John Wise early figured in the records of Accomack and Northampton, which began as early as 1632. He married Hannah Scarburgh, daughter of Captain Edmund Scarburgh (or Scarborough), who had emigrated from Norfolk, England, and whose son of the same name afterwards became the Speaker of the House of Burgesses and Surveyor-General of the colony. With Calvert he ran the boundary line between Maryland and Virginia. Colonel Edmund Scarburgh was among the most picturesque of the colonial figures, and a haughty, domineering cavalier. He erected

the first salt works in the colony, of which commodity he long enjoyed a monopoly, and on account of his influence over the Indians was given the name of "conjurer." In 1662 he conducted an expedition against certain rebellious Quakers, residing near the Maryland boundary, whom he required to subscribe to the oath of loyalty to the king's government, but upon any refusing he "set ye broad arrowe" above their door-posts.

John Wise purchased a tract of land on the Chesconnessex and Onancock creeks, the deed to which made by "Ekeekes," the Indian king of Onancock and Chesconnessex, may still be seen, and the real consideration of which, according to tradition, was seven Dutch blankets.

Sir William Berkeley, the governor, afterward in 1668, made a grant of 1060 acres to Wise, part of which was confirmatory of that previously purchased of the Indian king.

This John Wise was one of the justices of the Court and a man of consideration in his day and, it is said, noted for his piety. He died in 1695. He had an eldest son John Wise, but as if fearing this worthy might not survive, he named a second one John, "called Johannes for distinction sake." This first-named John, however, did perpetuate the name; and from the landing of the emigrant in 1635, down to the subject of this biography, there were in all six generations of the family, the eldest son in every instance being named John Wise, and they continued to reside, as planters, on the family estate lying on the Chesconnessex Creek. John Wise, the fourth of the name, was a man of prominence on the peninsula and justice of the peace. He married Margaret Douglas, the daughter of George Douglas, a native of Scotland, who was the leading lawyer of his day in Accomack; and their

son, John Wise, who was known as Major John Wise, from a commission held in the militia sevice, was the father of Henry A. Wise.

Major John Wise owned large tracts of land and a number of slaves and was a lawyer by profession, which he combined with planting. He was a man of high character and intelligence, greatly beloved by the people of his native county, and seems to have been one of those men to whom the inhabitants of a community naturally turn for guidance and advice. A likeness of him is extant, a delicately executed miniature, on ivory, which represents a handsome man, with large intelligent brown eyes, gentle expression of countenance, and clear-cut features. He is dressed after the fashion of the period, with high-collared blue coat, stock and muslin shirt, and powdered hair, queued behind. He married, first, Mary (called Polly) Henry, a daughter of Judge James Henry, a native of Accomack and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, who settled in Northumberland County, was a member of the Continental Congress, and a judge of the Admiralty Court, formerly in existence, and hence of the first Court of Appeals. Judge Henry was a man of learning, whose opinions were respected. By his marriage with the daughter of Judge Henry, Major Wise had two sons, John James and George Douglas, who attained to manhood and inherited the family estates, Fort George and Clifton, on the Chesconnessex. The last named of these sons died without issue, but the former married and left the estates to his two sons, John James Henry and George Douglas Wise, in whose possession they remained until the year 1867, when they were sold to settle up the estate of the latter, who was the assistant inspector general in Wise's Brigade, Bushrod Johnson's Division, Anderson's Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, and who died from the effect

of wounds received in June, 1864, in the trenches in front of Petersburg.

Major John Wise was a Washingtonian Federalist in politics and represented the county of Accomack in the House of Delegates for about ten years, beginning in 1790.

At the sessions of 1794–5–6 and 7 he was elected Speaker of that body, and the year following, at the noted session which passed the celebrated resolutions of 1798, which were so strongly anti-Federalist, he was chosen Speaker over Wilson Cary Nicholas, a Republican and favorite of Jefferson. This circumstance aroused the indignation of Mr. Jefferson, who roundly abused those of his followers who had forgotten their party allegiance at such a time and voted for a Federalist.

The year following, Major Wise, on account of his opposition to these resolutions, was defeated for reëlection by Larkin Smith, of King and Queen County, John Stewart, the federal clerk being succeeded at the same time by William Wirt, and shortly after Wise retired from public life. He was at this period a widower, and having abandoned the turmoil of politics, his thoughts naturally enough reverted to the choice of a second helpmate and were directed toward Miss Sallie Cropper, the daughter of General John Cropper, who resided with her father, at the ancestral seat, Bowman's Folly, on Folly Creek, a few miles from Accomack Court House; and the following correspondence, which has been preserved, will show with what result his addresses were received: —

JOHN WISE *to* GENERAL CROPPER (*without date*).

"Feeling myself irresistibly impelled by inclination, and prompted by a sense of propriety, I have presumed now to address you upon a subject of importance and delicacy.

"Having conceived an affection for your daughter (Miss Sally) I beg leave to solicit your permission to make my addresses to her, and at the same time, let me express a hope that should I be so fortunate as to succeed in obtaining her affections, my first wishes may not be frustrated by your disapprobation, I have thought proper to make the application to you on the subject in this manner, rather than in person, because my character, (if I have acquired any,) my condition and my situation in life are not altogether unknown to you, and if objections are to be made they can be more freely communicated in this than in any other way. I have hitherto proceeded no further with the lady than merely to obtain her permission to make this application, and Sir, I now pledge you the honor of a Gentleman, that in case you have objections, of an insuperable nature, to the proposed union, whatever may be the chagrin, regret and mortification which I may feel upon the occasion, I will not disturb the quiet of a parent anxiously solicitous, no doubt, for the happiness of a beloved daughter, by persisting any further with her.

"Permit me to assure you that I am with much consideration and respect, your obedient servant,

"JOHN WISE."

"BOWMAN'S FOLLY, 11 of May. 1797.

"SIR: — Although the application made by letter of this day was unexpected, yet my reflections heretofore on that subject have prepared me to answer: That however solicitous I may be for the temporal felicity of my daughter and future respectability of my daughter and future respectability of my child, she is the only proper Judge of the person best calculated to make her happy. Respect and impartiality ought to be shown by me to you

or any gentleman that might make his address to my daughter, and I confide in your candor and justice.

"I am, sir, with due respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN CROPPER."

The reader, however he may smile, will not be surprised to learn that, in consequence of this formal exchange of epistles, Miss Sarah Corbin Cropper became, on the 18th day of April, 1799, the bride of Major John Wise. She is said to have been a handsome blonde, of a high-strung nervous temperament, and a temper of her own, and received her education at the celebrated school of Mrs. Valeria Fullerton, on Mulbury Street, Philadelphia, where she formed the friendship of Maria Jefferson, her schoolmate; and where, also, she had a love-affair with Mr. Thomas Sergeant, a nephew of her schoolmistress, and brother of the distinguished lawyer John Sergeant. This match was broken off on account of some objection raised by her father, and singularly enough, as if by way of illustrating the old saying that a marriage interfered with between two families in one generation will occur in a succeeding one, many years afterward, the son of Major Wise, by his union with Miss Cropper, married a niece of her old sweetheart.

Owing to its geographical position, the intercourse of the eastern shore, both commercial and social, was with the North almost entirely, and especially with Philadelphia, and in this already famed city Sallie Cropper had formed something of a taste for fashionable society, so that it could not have been remarked of her, as the English peasant said of Lady Canning, that "when fortune made her a fine lady, she spoiled the bonniest farmer's wife old

England ever saw," for it is related that she was even better fitted for the city than a country life.

Major Wise had changed his residence, prior to his second marriage, from his estate on the Chesconnessex, to the little village of Drummondtown, the county seat, where he was for some time Commonwealth's attorney, and later on for a number of years clerk of the Court, and an honored member of that representative body of old-time Virginians.

His wife bore him six children, of whom three died young. Henry Alexander Wise, the fifth child of this marriage, was born at Drummondtown, Accomack County, Virginia, December 3, 1806, and was called by his mother after a Mr. Alexander Fullerton of Philadelphia, the husband of her old schoolmistress, and the name of Henry was given in compliment to Judge James Henry, to whom Major Wise was much attached. The house in which he was born, a large old-fashioned frame dwelling, with dormer windows, located opposite the Court green, in after years became and was, until a short time past, the village tavern; on the porch of which the bucolic sons of the peninsula would gather to talk over politics and county affairs, or to play "seven-up" and "back-gammon," from which pastimes they would adjourn from time to time, to regale the inner man with the cup which both cheers and inebriates.

Major John Wise died in 1812, and the year following his widow passed away, thus leaving the subject of this biography an orphan at the age of six years. It is related of the wife of Major Wise that as she lay upon her death-bed she turned to a woman attendant, seated by her, and looking her in the face, asked if she thought that she would ever rise from her bed again, to which query the servant, with tears in her eyes, answered "No," where-

upon the invalid sprang from her bed calling out, "I'll show you, you hussy," and as a result of this exertion died soon after.

After the death of his mother, young Wise was taken to the home of his maternal grandfather, General Cropper, who had been appointed his guardian, and under whose roof-tree at Bowman's Folly he remained for the next two years. Bowman's Folly is located on what is there known as the sea side of the peninsula, the terms "sea side" and "bay side" on the eastern shore of Virginia and Maryland being understood to designate localities, the waters of which flow into the Atlantic or Chesapeake respectively.

The homestead of the Croppers is situated on Folly Creek, several miles distant from Drummondtown, and within full view it empties into Metompkin Bay, which in turn outlets into the ocean through the inlet of the same name.

General Cropper, when but nineteen years of age, had raised the first company in Accomack, at the outbreak of the Revolution, as captain of which he had marched northward, to join Washington at Morristown. He had been married but a few months previously and left behind him, at Bowman's Folly, his young wife. Cropper served with conspicuous gallantry, as a major, at Brandywine and at Germantown, and throughout the Northern Campaign, wintered at Valley Forge, and at Monmouth commanded Morgan's regiment of Virginia riflemen. In the fall of 1778 he returned home on furlough, where he saw, for the first time, his infant daughter, Sarah Cropper, who had been born after his march northward and was then about a year and a half old. He did not return north again, to join the army, but was allowed to remain at home on an indefinite leave of absence, where his duties as county lieutenant occupied him closely, in protecting the peninsula

from the Tories and the British barges which were ravaging the coast; and his services rendered in this capacity were even more valuable than those of an officer of the continental line.

Gathered around him in after years on the winter nights at Bowman's Folly, the children would never tire of hearing him relate the story of the bloody fight at Brandywine, when the 7th Virginia, the command of which had devolved upon him, was almost cut to pieces, and he himself wounded by a bayonet thrust; and how when the ensign had been killed and the colors captured, he drew a ramrod from a musket, tied his red bandanna handkerchief to the end, and hoisted it as a flag; and upon meeting General Knox on Chester Bridge the latter alighted from his horse, and pressing him to his bosom, said, "The boy we thought lost is found." Their youthful imaginations were stirred, too, when they heard him tell of the night the British rowed up Folly Creek with muffled oars, and made an attack upon the house; and of the bloody battle of the Accomack volunteers on board their barges, with the privateersman cruising in the bay.

General Cropper was a whole-souled country squire, fond of a horse-race and cock-fight, and an ardent patriot and public-spirited man. He had much of the Irish heedlessness of money affairs, characteristic of the old-time Virginia gentleman, and when he passed away left his property greatly encumbered. He was a stickler for etiquette and jealous of his prerogatives as an officer of the militia. It happened upon one occasion that a young officer addressed a note to him, asking the loan of a brass cannon, to be used at a militia drill, which letter he concluded in the following terms, "permit me to sign myself, John G. Joynes." Cropper, much incensed, refused to deliver the cannon, on the ground that the "letter did not

contain that respectful language which ought to have been used by an inferior officer when addressing the commander of the regiment." He said that the letter ought to have concluded with, "respectfully, I am, sir, your very obedient servant," or "sir, your very obedient servant."

When in January, 1821, the veteran answered his last roll-call, William Wirt wrote to his daughter: "The account you gave me of the little incident about three weeks before his death, requesting you to trace with him the military map of New Jersey, and the old war songs with which he closed the ideal excursion, is very interesting. The soldier's heart beat in his bosom to the last, and those scenes were the freshest, as well as sweetest to his recollection, in which he had in the morning of life drawn his sword in his country's cause, under the banners, too, of the immortal Washington."

His veneration for the character of Washington was such that in after years when a member of the legislature at Richmond, whenever he attended a banquet, or gathering where toasts were given, he would arise, as Mr. Curtis tells us in his "Recollections," and give the only sentiment ever offered by him: "God Bless General Washington."

It is related of him that upon the publication of Marshall's biography, he would frequently gather his children and grandchildren about him at night, and read to them the story of his great commander, the book almost taking place of the family Bible, and on the 4th of July he would make them listen to the Declaration of Independence, and on the 22d of February, the Farewell Address complete.

Students of the laws of heredity lay it down as a general principle that a daughter inherits the disposition and temperament of her father, and a boy those of his mother. It would seem that in the case of Henry A. Wise, this law

was illustrated, as he doubtless received from his grandfather, through his mother, his excitable disposition, which made him wayward and impetuous. General Cropper used to say that most of his sons and grandsons would make gentlemen, but that Tom Bayly and Henry Wise would be hung.

The following description of Wise, written by himself, gives us a likeness of him in his boyhood, much of which will apply to the full-grown man: —

"He was a pale and puny boy in body, of large eyes and mouth and ugly, and so odd and oldish he wouldn't mate with the children, but sought the old folks and learned their sayings, and was fond of sweethearts older than himself, and spent his pocket money for red ribbons and climbed after nuts and fruit for their favors. He delighted in old stories, loved curious things; caught up quaint sayings, made something or much of what others threw away as nothing; was called by hard nicknames, but especially by the name of Prince Hal, because of a high-strung nervous temperament; and, fondled by black nurses, he was wilful in his humors and sharp and quick and imperious in his temper; he loved fun and was fond of sport, precocious in mischief, tough and wiry in his tissues, an active, daring bad boy who could learn whatever he tried, but wouldn't learn what he didn't love, and could fight hard or run fast. There was a strange admixture of hardy recklessness and extreme caution in his nature; he was a great mimic and game maker, often offended by his broad humor, but was frank and genial, and so warm in his affections, and generous in his disposition, that he was generally popular, though he could when he tried make some hate him with a bitter hate."

At the age of eight years, Henry A. Wise left Bowman's Folly to reside with the two sisters of his father, Eliza-

beth Wise, an old maid, and Mrs. Mary Outten, a widow, at Clifton, on the Chesconnessex Creek, about six miles west of Drummondtown, on the bay side of the peninsula. Mrs. Outten, having lost a son of her own, felt for her young nephew the anxiety and love of a parent. We are told that "she was one of the finest and most dignified ladies, of the most sweet yet austere manners and morals. . . . She curbed the wild and wayward boy and first taught him how to read. She instilled into his youthful mind lessons of virtue and religion, and taught him to feel the manly sentiment of gentlemen, the fear of God, the fear of nothing else—and self-respect. The writer has often heard him allude to this more than parent, in terms of the deepest filial gratitude and devotion."[1] Wise's other aunt, Elizabeth Wise, a woman of unusually good judgment, also looked after his welfare while at Clifton. Of this woman, Thomas R. Joynes, the clerk of the County Court, said that he would rather have her opinion upon a business matter than that of any man in the county. She and her sister attended to the conduct of the farm and illustrated the familiar saying that the greatest slave upon a Southern plantation was the mistress. Here at Clifton, young Wise's home continued in the main until his fourteenth year.

The estate was situated about two miles from the mouth of the Chesconnessex, where it empties into the Chesapeake. About ten miles distant is Tangier Island, which was occupied by the British fleet under Cockburn, in 1814, and from which the morning and evening guns of the enemy greeted the ears of the household. The British made numerous raids upon the main, and once advanced up the creek to within a mile of Clifton, but retired after

[1] "Portrait Gallery of Distinguished American Statesmen," by William H. Brown.

scattering a camp of the militia, into which they suddenly broke, under cover of darkness.

Wise's country home afforded ample opportunity for the sports of rod and gun, of which he was over-fond at an early age, and he would fish for days at a time, from the Crammahack rocks off the Chesconnessex to Half Moon Island, and thus became not only a devoted but an expert disciple of Isaak Walton, and mingled freely with the fishermen along the bay shore, who taught him to become as skilled in the handling of a sail-boat as any skipper. It was during these early years, too, that he formed that love of the ocean and its tributaries, the murmur of whose waters he was as accustomed to hear as of the soughing of the pines of the peninsula.

The county of Accomack is too flat a country generally to correspond with our ideas of picturesqueness; but along the creeks, where they wind in tortuous courses to mingle their waters with the bay or ocean, tall evergreen pines and scarlet maples border the shore, and in the distance may be seen the white caps, which add their charm to the scene. "The forests, though largely of pine," are, as Wise tells us, "interspersed with oak, sweet gum, ash, red-maple, spruce, tulip-poplars, and hollies, where redbreasts feed. Underneath and everywhere are the myrtle, periwinkle, honeysuckle, wild crab-apple with its perfume, the black-haw with its egg-form pearls of jet, the grape-vine, and the wild rose. The little water-craft sail to and fro out of the mouths of the creeks, into the bay or ocean, past the sands where the pipers skip, and the reeds where the marsh hen cackles to her nest full of eggs, and the heron and bittern stalk. The beaches and marshes have mollusca of all sorts, and along the shore the surf casts up myriads of shells, and all sorts of seaweeds, some scarlet from the coral reefs."

Along the banks of the Chesconnessex, as elsewhere upon the creeks of the peninsula, there arose the merry sound, when, —

> "there beats
> The throb of oars from basking oyster fleets,
> And clangorous music of the oyster tongs
> Plunged down in deep bivalvulous retreats,
> And sound of seine drawn home with negro songs."

His youthful surroundings made an indelible impression upon the mind of the child, and throughout life Wise retained his fondness for the "milk of the ocean" and land of his birth.

At the age of twelve years he was sent from home to attend school at Margaret Academy, about two miles from the hamlet of Pungoteague, in Accomack. This was the first high-grade classical school permanently established on the peninsula. Shortly after the Revolution, the legislature incorporated the academy, which was organized by the leading citizens of Accomack and Northampton, and among them Wise's father and maternal grandfather; but it was not until the year 1807 that the buildings were erected and the academy opened, the legislature having given no assistance, and the money being raised by the contributions of the citizens, to which was added a sum from the sale of the glebe lands, and a gift of five acres from a prominent citizen. An old minute-book of the academy, kept during the early days, prescribed the following course of study in Latin and Greek, in which, from all accounts, the boys were not over-proficient, as they were an unruly set, and given to mischief. "The portion of each classick to be studied by each student shall be as follows: fifty colloquies in Cordery, four coloq. in Erasmus, the whole of the first part of Selecta e veteri, and from fifteen to twenty pages of the second part, three books of Selecta e profanis,

six books in Cæsar, the first four and the thirteenth in Ovid. All Sallust, the Eclogues, the Georg.; and the first six books of the En: in Virgil; all Horace; the orations of Cicero from the beginning to the end of those against Catiline; the four Evangelists and the Acts of the Apostles in the testament."

With how much of this formidable array of knowledge the ideas of young Wise were taught to shoot, the writer is not informed, but he was not studious, and a ringleader in most of the fun and frolic. The same minute-book contains many curious and amusing regulations, such as forbidding the playing of musical instruments during certain hours, providing for the removal of students infected with the itch, and a warning against the use of English translations of the classics and of the drinking of spirituous liquors, all of which goes to confirm the tradition that at Margaret Academy a boy learned more mischief than Latin and Greek.

In the summer of the year 1822, Wise not yet having reached his sixteenth birthday, it was determined to send him to college, at Washington, Pennsylvania, as Wise tells us, "for the improvement of his health as well as of his mind and morals." General Cropper, his grandfather, had died in 1821, and Wise, being old enough to make choice of a guardian, selected his uncle by marriage, John Custis, Esq., who had married his father's half-sister, Tabitha Gillett, and resided on his farm on Deep Creek, the next stream north of the Chesconnessex, and here Wise made his home until the time of his departure for college.

It was more natural for a Virginia boy at that day to go to William and Mary, or Princeton, and Wise was induced to attend Washington College by a graduate of that institution, who had been his instructor at Margaret Academy, as well as on account of the bracing climate. He elected

for himself to attend, and was possessed of a barely more than sufficient income to obtain a collegiate education, as his father had left the bulk of his estate to his two eldest sons, and that portion left Henry had been largely overvalued. His patrimony consisted of a farm on Onancock Creek and several negroes, also an undivided moiety, along with his younger brother, in two more. His farm and slaves yielded an income of from $450 to $500, as the land rented fairly well, and a "likely" negro would hire for a good price.

Washington College was one of the first founded west of the Alleghanies, and was established a few years after the Revolution by the Scotch-Irish who settled in that country. It is located in what has been termed the bluegrass region of the North, and abounds in "romantic scenery, beautifully rounded hills, park-like groves and fertile fields, variegated with the colors of ample harvests," and is in the midst of what is now the oil region of Pennsylvania. Such a landscape must have charmed the young eastern shore man, who for the first time in his life had left his native sea-girt peninsula, and gazed upon the panorama presented by a land of mountain ranges, undulating meadows and green pastures.

The president of the college at this time was Dr. Andrew Wylie, a sturdy Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, of large frame, brusque manners, and sound learning, and who was pronounced the finest scholar west of the Alleghanies. In after years, Wise wrote to Wylie's biographer: "From October, 1822, until the day of his death, I was a pupil of whom he was fond, and he lectured me to the last with partiality and loving kindness, with pride in me, and with all the pride of an honest, earnest, philosophical, heart-touching and head-reaching, brave, noble, good, gracious, and grave divine. I wish I could tell you of

how he taught me, — a wild, reckless, and neglected orphan, a self-willed boy, — to love honor and truth and wisdom, and the standard of all these, and try to be virtuous for virtue's sake — never to *imitate* these or anything else but *to be really* what these alone can elevate one to be." Wise was far from being singular, in his apparently exaggerated estimate of Dr. Wylie, as many of his other pupils wrote of him in a similar strain. Dr. John W. Scott, the father-in-law of ex-President Harrison, and a pupil of the college at the time of Wise's matriculation, tells us that he was impressed with the manner and presence of the latter, who was the bearer of a letter to him; and that he was instrumental in persuading Wise to join the Union Literary Society, one of the debating clubs of the college, in which he early exhibited a talent for extemporaneous speaking, and skill in debate. The following year Wise was chosen to represent his society in a joint oratorical contest, in which the judges awarded him the victory, his subject being "The Existence of a God," and his opponent declared "that it was the beard upon my face that caused a child to strip me of my honors."

Wise was thrice selected as the orator of his society, winning the victory twice, and tying the judges the third time.

But he had by no means outgrown as yet the period of his boyish pranks. In 1824 Lafayette, who was on a visit to this country, in the course of his triumphal tour, visited the little town of Washington. On the day of his expected arrival, the people of the surrounding country had flocked into the village from miles around, and lined the street, awaiting the arrival of the distinguished guest, whose coming was to be announced by a herald on horseback, proclaiming his approach. While excitement and expectation were at a high pitch, Wise stole out of town,

by way of a back road, and first disguising himself, rode down the main street of the town, arrayed in a gorgeous sash, shouting the approach of the Revolutionary hero, which was received with great applause, but upon the non-arrival of the General, for some hours, the people realized that they had been made the victims of a hoax, and had not the perpetrator kept well out of sight, he would have fared badly on the occasion. In time, however, the wayward youth became more sensible of his duties and studious in his habits, which he tells us was brought about by his falling in love while yet a student with one "whose heavenly piety touched his heart and changed his ways."

The Rev. Obadiah Jennings, a man distinguished in early life at the bar, and later on in the ministry, was the pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Washington, at that time. It was in this way that Wise became acquainted and fell in love with his daughter Ann, and that "his love for her made him struggle for honors, and though her piety was after one of the strictest sects of Holy Faith, he made successful ambition serve his love and won her."

While Wise was a student at Washington College, in the fall of 1824, General Jackson was on his way to attend Congress, where the House of Representatives was to decide his success or defeat as a presidential candidate, and travelled on horseback from Wheeling, via the Cumberland road, passing the little town of Washington, *en route* to the capital of the same name. Wise tells us in his book, the "Seven Decades of the Union," "the populace flocked to see the hero, and among the hero-worshippers who crowded around him was the eminent and excellent Andrew Wylie, D.D., president of the college. He knew Dr. Wylie and had the highest respect for his character and reverence for his religious profession of the Presbyterian faith. We were not awed by his presence but in-

tently studied him, and we argued his greatness from his looks and words, which drew us close to him. Dr. Wylie made the remark to him that he had no apprehension about the certainty of his being chosen by the House of Representatives, unless Congress was corrupted, or beguiled by factious intrigues. Immediately General Jackson replied with flashing spirit, 'Sir, no people ever lost their liberties unless they themselves first became corrupt. Our people are not yet, if they ever will be, corrupt; and the Congress does not decide this obligation by the intrigues of corruption, for the fear of their sovereigns, the people. The people are the safeguard of their own liberties, and I rely wholly on them to guard themselves. They will correct any outrage upon the political purity by Congress; and if they do not, now or ever, then they will become the slaves of Congress, and its political corruption.' The remark struck us then as indicating that he was fit to govern a republic, and it has come to us a thousand times since, with all the weight of truth and prophecy. He was our choice from that moment for the presidency.

"The next morning a select corps of students obtained leave to join his escort for miles on his way. He rode a splendid chestnut sorrel, the stock of his old racer Pacolet, which he bought from William R. Johnson, in Virginia, and we can see him now, a model of grace in the saddle, whilst he chatted at ease as his horse kept the pace of a quick travelling walk. He saluted us with marked valediction when the students in escort drew up to return, and bade us accept his acknowledgment of our courtesy and the advice from him 'to study hard to fit ourselves for the service of our country.' We thus first knew Andrew Jackson, the greatest man, take him all in all, we have ever known among men."

After graduating at Washington College, where he

divided first honors with another student, in September, 1825, Wise made a tour through Canada, before returning home, but between his being in love and on the other hand his anxiety to place foot upon his native peninsula once more, the trip was neither as enjoyable nor instructive as it might have been.

The winter of 1825–26 Wise spent at Clifton in Accomack, and having determined to study law, he set out, during the following June, for Winchester, Virginia, to attend the law school of Judge Henry St. George Tucker.

Judge Tucker had been elected chancellor of the Fourth District of Virginia, in 1824, and shortly afterward established a law school at Winchester, which flourished with great success, until he abandoned it to become president of the Court of Appeals. Although his school was located in an out-of-the-way town, and not connected with any college, and at a period when travel was by stage, it was nevertheless largely attended, and among the pupils were many men afterward distinguished at the bar. George Hay Lee and Green B. Samuels, both of whom were afterward members of the Appellate Court, and men like R. M. T. Hunter, Robert Y. Conrad, John W. Brockenbrough, and Charles J. Faulkner received their legal instruction from Judge Tucker. In addition to the pupils of the school, Wise enjoyed the acquaintance of the lawyers of the town, of whom he wrote in a sketch of his friend the Hon. James M. Mason: "The bench and bar of Winchester and surrounding circuits then, even more than now, were distinguished for eminent lawyers, such as Henry St. George Tucker, Alfred H. Powell, and John R. Cooke, and a younger tier of professional devotees, such as the two Marshalls, the Conrads, and Moses Hunter, the best wit of them all."

Winchester was moreover noted for its excellent society

and beautiful location in the lower valley of the Shenandoah. Judge Tucker was accustomed to indulge in versification during his leisure hours, and among his productions was the following satire on the politics of the day.

> "Hence if you have a son, I would advise,
> Lest his fair prospects you perchance may spoil;
> 'If you would have him in the state to rise,
> Instead of Grotius let him study Hoyle,
> And if his native genius should betray
> A turn for petty tricks, indulge the bent;
> It may do service at some future day.
> A dexterous cut may rule a great event;
> And a stocked pack may make a President!'"

An anecdote of Wise's stay at Winchester, and how Mrs. Tucker, of whom he was very fond, cured him of gambling, is as follows: One Saturday night a circus was in town and he had just received his half-year's allowance. While nearly every one else had gone to the circus, he went to a faro bank, which was run by a disreputable fellow, and there alone played with the gambler until a late hour, finally losing every dollar he had received from home. Just about this time, the circus having closed, he heard footsteps on the stairs, and in came Major ——, the sergeant of the town, a bluff old chap, weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds, who was a regular gambler but who was very fond of Wise, and had his good points. The old fellow evidenced great surprise at finding him there alone and took in the situation at a glance. Wise told him the story in a few words and asked him to lend him a "Ben Hatcher" (that being the name given to ten-dollar bills of the old bank of Virginia) to try his luck once more. "Yes," said the Major, "I'll lend you a Ben Hatcher and as many as you need." Then addressing the gambler, "You scoundrel! You have been robbing this

boy up here all alone. Open the game afresh, and understand you are to play an honest game, and if I catch you cheating, I'll cut your ears off." Under these cheerful influences the game was resumed, and just before daybreak Wise rose from the table, having won back exactly what he had lost. In the chill of daylight, he made his way back to the tavern where he had his rooms, thinking he would slip in unobserved. On the same floor were the rooms of Judge and Mrs. Tucker, and as he stealthily reached the head of the stairway Mrs. Tucker's door opened. He started to pass her by with some word of kindly greeting and expression of surprise at her being up at that hour, but advancing toward and walking with him she said, without any trace of reproach in her voice, "Yes, my dear child, I could not sleep. I have had you on my mind very much of late. I have something here I want you to read," and with that she handed him two tracts, and laying her hand gently on his shoulder said, "Will you read them?" and retired. He took them to his room, and read them by the early morning light. They were simple, truthful narratives of the wreck of useful, honorable lives, through yielding to the passion of gambling. The lesson had its effect, not only from what it taught, but from the manner in which the rebuke was given.

From that day until the day of his death, Wise never entered a gambling-house as a player and always mentioned the name of Mrs. Tucker with reverence and love.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE TO MISS JENNINGS, AND REMOVAL TO NASHVILLE. VISIT TO THE "HERMITAGE" AND IMPRESSIONS OF "OLD HICKORY." PRACTICE OF THE LAW, AND RETURN TO VIRGINIA

WHILE Wise was a student at Washington College, in 1823, the Rev. Obadiah Jennings accepted the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church in that town; and not long after the former found himself deep in love with the latter's daughter Ann. Although Wise remained at college until the fall of 1825, he had never had the courage to address her, as he acknowledged in a letter to a friend, nor did he realize that his affection was returned. Later on, he had begun the study of law at Winchester, had abandoned all thought of courting her, and had devoted himself assiduously to his legal studies. While a pupil at Judge Tucker's law school, in the spring of 1827, he had learned from a friend in Philadelphia that his old sweetheart, who had been spending the winter in that city, was to pass within about forty miles of Winchester, on her way to Washington, Pennsylvania. His former ardor was forthwith awakened, for he set out to join her, and pressed his suit with such success that the young couple became engaged.

The Rev. Obadiah Jennings, the father of his betrothed, received a call to become the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, whither he moved

during the summer of 1828, and the family persuaded Wise to locate there for the practice of his profession, as the pair were to be married that fall. After two years spent under the instruction of Judge Tucker, Wise graduated from his school, and returned to Accomack, where he cast his maiden vote for Andrew Jackson in 1828. Tidewater Virginia, even at that date, had long before seen its best days and afforded but a poor opportunity to a young man beginning the practice of law; moreover Wise wrote of it: "I have actually found the place, dear as it is to me, after having left it and returned, to be paralytick to my energy. I will not attempt to account for the phenomenon of always being in a state of mental lethargy and corporeal torpidity when there. I know not whether it was owing to the atmosphere or to better eating than I ever got anywhere else, but so it was; and Captain Smith, in his history of the settlement of the Virginia colony, describes the climate of Accomack, named after the Indian[1] chief, who was patriarch of the tribe on the Eastern Shore, as salubrious, the soil as fertile, the place altogether adapted to a settlement that he established at Onancock, but noticed that the aborigines were inactive and lazy." Thus, Wise was induced to leave his native peninsula and cast his lot in the new and flourishing town of Nashville.

During the month of August, 1828, having procured his license to practise, he set out via the Chesapeake for Baltimore on his way to Tennessee. Of this trip he wrote in his old age:[2] "We stopped at Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay, there to part with kindred and friends who accompanied us to the island, where was held the annual

[1] This is probably an error, as Accomack was not called after a chief, but on account of its location, as stated in the opening chapter.

[2] "Seven Decades of the Union."

camp-meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Love and plighted troth urged us to fly with swift wings westward and the 'amor loci' drew us back to 'Home in old Virginia.' . . . The camp of 1828 was most numerously attended. We had started in a sail-vessel from a beautiful creek late in the evening and when within about two miles of the beach the breeze died away and we were helplessly becalmed. The sun set clear o'er the bay, smooth and rippleless like a mirror of the Almighty; in a few moments the island was not to be seen until the moon effulgent rose o'er the eastern land and lighted up the glassy waters, and she had not risen high when suddenly the lightwood flambeaux of the camp shot forth their beams, and the rows and avenues of hundreds of broad and high blazes were like supernatural lamps of the heavens; and soon the hymns of the multitude came softly stealing by moonlight o'er the mirrored bay, mellowed by distance, as if angel voices were in choirs of melody coming from an island cloud! Oh it was sweet beyond fancy's dreams! We could not but exclaim 'that is the anthem of farewell to home and friends, and that is the cloud-music giving welcome to the West and to active life! Here is a start with good omen!' Tears both of joy and grief were wept!"

From Baltimore he drove in a one-horse gig, with a little hair trunk tied up behind by way of baggage; and his money, consisting of about $800 was carried in a belt around his waist, which caused him to arrive in Nashville, considerably chafed at the end of the month's trip.

On the 8th of October, 1828, the marriage took place, and the day following, the wedding party repaired to the "Hermitage" as the guest of General Jackson, who was a warm friend as well as parishioner of the Rev. Dr. Jennings. The bridesmaids and groomsmen went on horse-

back and the bride and groom in the gig. "We arrived at the 'Hermitage' to dinner," says Wise, "and were shown to a bridal chamber magnificently furnished with articles which were the rich and costly presents of the city of New Orleans to its noble defender.

"Had we not seen General Jackson before, we would have taken him for a visitor, not the host of the mansion. He greeted us cordially and bade us feel at home, but gave us to distinctly understand that he took no trouble to look after any but his lady guests; as for the gentlemen, there were the parlors, dining room, the library, the sideboard and its refreshments — there were the servants, and if anything was wanting all that was necessary was to ring. He was as good as his word. He did not sit at the head of his table, but mingled with his guests, and always preferred a seat between two ladies, obviously seeking a chair between different ones at various times. He was very easy and graceful in his attentions; free and often playful, but always dignified and earnest in his conversation. . . . The cost of the coming presidency was even then very great and burdensome; but the General showed no signs of impatience and was alive and active in his attentions to all comers and goers. He affected no style and put on no airs of greatness, but was plain and simple, though impulsively polite to all." Among the household at the "Hermitage" were several of Mrs. Jackson's family, Judge Overton, an intimate friend of the General's, and Henry Lee, half-brother of General Robert E. Lee, who resided there for the time and was engaged in preparing Jackson's campaign papers. After a delightful visit of a few days, the young couple returned to Nashville, where they made their home with Dr. Jennings, and Wise began the practice of law. Shortly after coming to the bar, he formed a partnership with Thomas Duncan, Esq., a brother

of Governor Duncan of Illinois, which, however, did not long continue. Later on Duncan became involved in a duel which was fought on the Mississippi above New Orleans, in which he was run through the body and killed.

Among those with whom Wise was brought in contact in the practice of his profession, were Felix Grundy, Francis B. Fogg, Baillie Peyton, Ephraim H. Foster, Andrew Hays, O. B. Hays, Thomas Fletcher, and others, then prominent at the bar of Nashville. His letters of that period relate the usual tedious experience of most young lawyers before and since, in waiting for practice, and although he was not inclined to hide his light under a bushel, he wrote that his clients were few and far between. During this period of waiting he frequently amused himself by writing articles for the press, as he began early to take an interest in public affairs.

Nashville was at that date a flourishing town of between four and five thousand inhabitants, and the centre of a considerable cotton trade. Cavalier manners and customs prevailed, and all the vices and characteristics of a new southwestern town existed; and there was a full share of paper-shavers and adventurers, along with a highly intelligent, refined society, and a class of resolute men who had left the older States along the seaboard to seek their fortunes in the western country. Of Wise's life in Nashville there is not much to tell, but it is interesting to note, as indicative of his views about slavery at that time, also as to his habits of life, that he was the secretary of the Tennessee Colonization Society, and an active member in a temperance organization. The following spring after his location in Nashville he made a trip westward through Tennessee, with a view to purchasing a plantation, for the reason, as he wrote in a letter to one of his college mates,

"I may say, without a particular detail of circumstances, that I find it absolutely necessary to bring my slaves to this cotton country, and most advisable to settle them, immediately, on a plantation of my own, in order to assist my quota of fees in the profession in defraying the exorbitant expenses of this very *fashionably* extravagant city." He visited the country bordering on the Mississippi, in the neighborhood of what he describes as "a very flourishing town called Memphis," and was on the eve of purchasing a rich tract of land, consisting of six hundred and fifty acres, for $2000. It was his intention to bring his slaves from "the old worn-out sand banks of the Mother of the Union" and settle them here, to plant cotton, and he expected to induce his brother-in-law and relative, Tully R. Wise, to come out and take charge of the plantation for him while he remained in Nashville. The profits arising from cotton planting in a new country, and the natural increase in a body of slaves, were very large, and Wise had high expectations; but his project was abandoned, doubtless on account of the determination of his brother-in-law to remain in Virginia. Despite the fact that for a while he was a briefless barrister, Wise gradually acquired a good share of practice for a young attorney, and a little more than a year after coming to the bar, he was called upon to argue a case in the Supreme Court of the State, where he maintained his client's cause with credit to himself, though he was unsuccessful. Hambleton tells us: "But despite all that he could do, he was unhappy outside his native State. There is something peculiar about Virginians in this respect. We rarely if ever find one, no matter how well he may be doing, satisfied for any length of time in any State but his own. Why it is, remains to be solved. Finally, to gratify the wish of his heart, he determined, with the consent of his wife,

to return to Accomack, which he did in the fall of 1830. When he arrived at home, the scenes of his boyhood exhilarated and enlivened a feeble frame, which had almost fallen a prey to melancholy."

In the spring of 1831 Wise wrote from Accomack: "I never declared my intention to remain among this people until about first of January last, and from that time until this my business has been constantly increasing. So far my practice has been worth for the first three months $325. I am as popular as I could wish, but have no disposition to dabble in politics so long as my profession thrives." His intention, however, not to embark in a political career, was not destined to be fulfilled; for although he soon acquired a lucrative practice, yet he possessed in a more than ordinary degree a Virginian's weakness for politics.

At the bar of Accomack and Northampton, he crossed lances with George P. Scarburgh, Carter M. Braxton, P. P. Mayo, M. W. Fisher, and Vespasian Ellis — men who were types of the old county court lawyer, and some of whom could hold their own with the best anywhere.

For the first year or more, after his return from Tennessee, Wise made his home in the village of Onancock, on the bay side of the peninsula. Later on he moved to a farm near the county seat, Drummondtown, where his life was that of the lawyer and planter combined, so common in the country at that time. "Such a lawyer," as said a distinguished jurist of our day,[1] "lived upon his farm, which he cultivated, and attended the courts, without any strict devotion to business in his office. His library was not measured by the number but the weight of his books. He read and mastered Bracton, Coke, Hale, and Blackstone.

[1] John Randolph Tucker's address on the character of Beverly B. Douglas.

His reports were few — My Lord Coke's, Salkeld, Saunders, Atkyns' Equity Cases, and the like. He read history much and studied the human heart profoundly. Amid the mountains, hills, valleys, forests, and fields about his country home, he meditated much upon natural law. The principle of right and justice, implanted in the instincts of our nature and deducible from observation and experience, he evolved from his own native intuitions and reasons. "He wrought out by original thought what law ought to be, without learning much from the decisions of the judges, and thus in ninety-nine cases in a hundred he found what was the law in any special controversy. He was less technical than the city lawyer, skilled by ample practice and full libraries in the infinitely varied phases of social contacts and contracts. He was less scientific, but more philosophic; his views were less astute, probably, but more broad and fundamental, and his generalizations less accurate, because deduced from a less number of particulars. The law he learned was that whose 'seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice is the harmony of the world': Nec enim alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac, sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit."

Wise's skill in extemporaneous speaking gave him great power before a jury, especially in criminal cases, and his ready knowledge of human nature, coupled with a faculty of making acquaintances, caused him to rise rapidly at the bar, and a successful career lay before him in that direction. At the period when he began the practice in Accomack, it was the custom of the lawyers to attend the warrant tryings every month, in the various magisterial districts, and here the legal fledglings tried their wings, as well as on County Court day, that "folk moot" of the Virginians, when the sovereigns gathered from

afar to hear the lawyers argue their cases, or the public speakers discuss the issues of the day upon the Court green, where the crowd could also amuse themselves swapping horses, examining the wares of the pedler, or in witnessing the fights of the local bullies. On these occasions intercourse was had with the people from every portion of the shore, and Wise formed acquaintances which were to prove of great value in the political career which lay before him. His ready faculty of making friends and his kinship with many of the leading families of the county caused him to attain a high degree of popularity while yet a very young man.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL VIEWS AND ELECTION TO CONGRESS. PERSONAL APPEARANCE. DUEL WITH RICHARD COKE

ALTHOUGH a member of a family which was Federalist on both sides, Wise from boyhood was an ardent Democrat, and concerning his political views at that time, wrote: "My master in the study of municipal and constitutional law was a Republican after the 'straightest sect' of strict constructionists, — the learned and now lamented Henry St. George Tucker of Winchester, — than whom no man in the day of his health was of more subtle intellect, no man more a gentleman and a scholar, and no man more beloved by his pupils, upon whom he failed not to impress the stamp of his great authority. He led me to the pure fountain of the Madisonian philosophy of politics. The first of leaders whom I preferred for the presidency was Mr. Crawford of Georgia, though I was too young to give him a vote, even if the state of his health had allowed him to be nominated. My next preference was for General Jackson, who was my first choice in 1828, and for whom I voted then and in 1832." Upon his return from Judge Tucker's law school in 1828, before his departure for Nashville, Wise, then not twenty years of age, delivered an eloquent speech from the hustings in advocacy of the election of "Old Hickory." Four years later — in 1832 — he was sent as a delegate from his district to the Baltimore convention, where he voted for the renomina-

tion of Jackson for President, but declined to acquiesce in the nomination of Van Buren for Vice-President, and, like many others in Virginia and Alabama, cast his vote for Philip P. Barbour of Virginia for that office. After the adjournment of the convention, he was appointed one of the "Jackson Corresponding Committee" for his county, and wrote an address urging Jackson's reëlection and condemning the policy of Clay, especially upon the subject of the tariff and internal improvements.

In December, 1832, the issue of nullification had arisen in South Carolina, and Jackson issued his celebrated Proclamation. Many of the Virginia democracy sympathized with the nullification doctrine and took sides with South Carolina, and it was largely through the influence of the Richmond *Enquirer* and prominent Democrats like Dromgoole, John Y. Mason, Andrew Stevenson, and Philip P. Barbour, that Virginia was saved from embracing the South Carolina heresy. The district in which Wise lived, generally known as the "York" district, was composed of the counties of York, Gloucester, Matthews, Warwick, James City and the city of Williamsburg, on the western side of the Chesapeake, and the counties of Accomack and Northampton on the eastern shore. It was the oldest section of the State, in which were located not only the old Colonial Capitol and historic Yorktown, but Jamestown Island, where the earliest colonists had made their home. In an address, delivered at the last-named spot, upon the two hundredth and fiftieth anniversary of the English settlement, Wise said: "Here the Old World first met the New. Here the white man first met the red, for settlement and colonization. Here the white man first wielded the axe to *cut the first tree*, for the *first log cabin*. Here the first log cabin was built for the *first village*. Here the *first village* rose to be the *first State Capitol*. Here

was the first capitol of our empire of States, — here was the very foundation of a nation of freemen which has stretched its dominion and its millions across the continent to the shores of another ocean. Go to the Pacific now, to measure the progression and power of a great people!"

As late as 1833, despite the decline of the tidewater section, generally, from the long cultivation of tobacco in previous years and the effects of slavery, as well as the removal of many of its leading families to other portions of the country, the district still continued to be the home of a refined, intelligent agricultural population of English descent, among whom the best traditions of the Commonwealth still survived.

Along the banks of the lower James, known among the strictly orthodox as the *Jeems* River, there dwelt in glazed brick houses a few of that class, who, from their aristocratic pretentions, arrogated to themselves a sort of superiority over the common clay of humanity, yet the great mass and controlling element were marked by that democratic spirit and simplicity of dress and manners which have always characterized the Virginia people, as a whole. Wise's brother-in-law, a Pennsylvanian, wrote him of a visit to the former's home in Accomack, in which he gives his impression of the people as follows: "The winter was passed very pleasantly, and if you had been here, my dear brother, I would have classed it among one of the very pleasantest of my life, for the frank manners of the Virginians are more congenial to my feelings than those of the city of aristocracy, where before sociability can be established you must either possess the mines of Mexico or trace your descent from 'Tara's Halls.' Yet do not understand me as not being pleased with the Philadelphians; I was only contrasting their manners with those of the Old Dominion."

In the spring of 1833 Richard Coke of Williamsburg,

who represented the district at that time, was a candidate for reëlection and openly espoused the nullification cause. An appeal was made to the Jackson party on the eastern shore, to put forward a candidate, and several gentlemen were solicited to announce themselves, among them Wise, and upon the others declining to run, he declared himself in the race, in January, 1833. He forthwith published an address to the voters of the district, defining his position upon the questions then before the people, which Mr. Ritchie in the *Enquirer* characterized as "a masterly refutation of many of the errors of the day, the doctrines of *Consolidation* as well as of *Nullification*."

In it he planted himself upon the principle enunciated in the Virginia resolutions of 1798–99, drawn by Madison, "that each State for itself is the judge of the infraction and of the mode and manner of redress," which, however, Mr. Madison "applied in cases of *last resort* for the conservation of inalienable rights, and Mr. Calhoun applied it in cases of governmental policy and expediency. But as applicable to any class of cases, Mr. Calhoun, in fact, changed, and, as we think, essentially perverted the true doctrine, and thus caused it to be misunderstood and misapplied until it was brought into disrepute and was finally overthrown, if not forever destroyed." Wise believed that milder means should have been used by Jackson and that the tariff bill could have been "compromised before the ordinance of South Carolina was passed, as it was afterward." An exceedingly warm and bitter campaign ensued, between Coke and Wise, both speaking from the hustings and holding joint debates, at times, in accordance with the Virginia custom; and the latter delivered, as he afterward declared, "as many as twenty-seven stump speeches, besides having one hundred and fifty cross-road skirmishes."

A resident of Northampton County, James B. Dalby, Esq., thus gives his recollections of Wise during the campaign: "I was only a boy, but his eloquence, his frank cordial manners, his honesty of purpose, that seemed to speak out from his looks and countenance, possessed a charm for me that time has not dimmed, nor circumstances changed. There were still other powers of attraction. My father, besides being a strong Jackson man, was an old-fashioned Methodist and a zealous advocate of temperance. Mr. Wise was what was called a teetotaler, — he did not drink nor treat to ardent spirits, which was an unusual thing for a candidate for office, — therefore my father thought him not only a great but a good man, and so educated me to believe." Wise at this period was a stranger to the people of the York district, outside of Accomack and Northampton Counties, and they beheld for the first time, on the hustings, a tall young man, about five feet eleven inches in height, and thin as a rail, of fair complexion, with light auburn hair, almost flaxen, worn long behind the ears, and deep-set, piercing hazel eyes, which at times appeared grayish in color. His forehead, though low, was broad, with great depth between the temples; nose, Roman, and large firmly set mouth, above a square chin, furrowed down the centre. His general appearance was exceedingly youthful, and his pronounced features and clean-shaven face added to the Indian look about him.

Although embarked upon his first campaign, he showed himself not only an eloquent but ready speaker, possessing a clear, resonant voice, and capable of holding his own upon the hustings, among a people accustomed to hear the political issues discussed by orators of more than ordinary powers. It is related that upon one occasion, while speaking on a court green during a canvass he was constantly interrupted by a man, who injected his remarks

and attempted witticisms at the end of almost every sentence. Assuming a look of injured innocence, Wise said, addressing the crowd, "My fellow-citizens, when this *Solomon* has finished I will proceed with my speech." The eyes of the audience were immediately fastened upon the noisy individual, who, much incensed, demanded a retraction of the remark. "Yes, my fellow-citizens," continued Wise, who assumed an air of mock humility, "I will cheerfully retract it, for he is *no Solomon*."

The nullification doctrine was espoused by Abel P. Upsher, Severn E. Parker, and other leading men of the district, and was widely believed in, as the vote polled at the election indicated. Coke carried all the counties on the western side of the Chesapeake, by large majorities, Wise receiving but one vote in James City; but if the western shore was loyal to its candidate, the eastern shore was even more so to Wise, and he received there an overwhelming majority, which more than offset the vote cast on the western shore, and elected him by 401 votes. From this it may be accurately inferred, however, that the political issues did not enter as largely into the canvass, as the rivalry between the different sections of the district on either side of the bay.

It is interesting to recall an abstract from a speech delivered by Wise, some years afterward, in 1841, upon the floor of Congress, which may be said to convey a truthful impression of the feelings among the Union Democrats of Virginia, upon the subject of Jackson's intended coercion of South Carolina. Said he: "I was no nullifier. I opposed the doctrine. I opposed the theory upon which the resistance was founded. I defeated its advocate in an election for a seat on this floor; I was a Union man and for peace. But let me tell, gentlemen, that if war had begun, every Union man of Virginia would have been a

Southern man. No standing army would ever have crossed her ancient lines to do battle against a sovereign State, without first fighting her sons of every faith at every pass where volunteers could have made a stand. Why? Because, sir, when the torch of civil war between this government and a State had once been lighted, the Union would have been dissolved. Once a war, never more a *Union* — a Union as a Union has existed and should exist. After a war of that kind, it would have been a *Union of consolidation cemented by blood!* — such a Union as no Union man of my acquaintance would have been willing to see exist." The bitter contest between Coke and Wise, aggravated by the intemperate zeal of the friends of both parties, resulted in a correspondence between them, in which Coke sought to hold Wise responsible for certain criticisms of his character and political views. The matter blew over at the time, but the animosity had not subsided, and in January, 1835, nearly two years afterward, Wise wrote from Washington, to a friend at home, alluding to a correspondence between his second and that of Coke. "Wray writes Coke has been seen some time at Hampton 'Barking trees.' I am ready and have learned in quick time to be so *by boring holes in chalk lines*." The duel was fought about the hour of noon, on the 22d of January, over the eastern branch of the Potomac, just across the district lines. The distance stepped off was ten paces. Wise wrote of the affair to a friend at home, Captain Stephen Hopkins, as follows: "It will give no one more relief from anxiety and concern on my account than yourself, to be informed that I have fought Coke, and escaped unhurt. I wounded him through the right elbow joint, the ball passing to the centre of his side, but not quite through *his coat*. It raised a contusion, however, and cut the skin on a rib opposite his heart. He will soon recover,

and I thank God sincerely I did not kill him." The effect of Wise's shot had been to destroy Coke's aim, and the ball from the latter's pistol struck the ground a few paces in front of the former. After this exchange of shots, the parties shook hands and the affair ended. Coke opposed Wise during the succeeding congressional campaign, but during the canvass announced his withdrawal, and ever afterward voted for Wise and also visited him at his home in Accomack.

Wise was never before or afterward the principal in a duel, though prior to the meeting with Coke, he had challenged his cousin Thomas H. Bayly, who had declined to accept. Several years later he became involved in a difficulty with Mr. Gholson of Mississippi, to whom he addressed a challenge, but Sargent S. Prentiss, who acted as Wise's second, declined to deliver it and the affair was amicably adjusted.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWENTY-THIRD CONGRESS. THE DEBATES OVER THE ABOLITION PETITIONS. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

DURING the month of December, 1833, Wise took his seat as a member of the Twenty-third Congress, a body which, as Parton observes, owing to the number of distinguished men it contained, has been called the star Congress. In the Senate sat Webster, Clay, and Calhoun the great triumvirate, besides a number of other lights of scarcely less magnitude; while among the members of the House were John Quincy Adams, the "old man eloquent," Pierce, Choate, Cambreleng, Fillmore, McDuffie, Polk, Corwin, and Ewing. "Of the members of this Congress," says Parton, "five have been President; five Vice-President; eight Secretary of State; twenty-five governor of a State."

Wise was just twenty-seven years of age when he qualified as a member of the House, and his clean-shaven face and slender frame gave him an exceedingly boyish appearance, and Hambleton relates that when John Y. Mason introduced him to the Speaker, Andrew Stevenson, to take the oath, the latter inquired, "Where is Mr. Wise?" Mr. Wise then standing before him, whom he took to be one of the pages of the House. Mr. Mason whispered to the Speaker and told him that was the gentleman to whom he had just been introduced. "The Speaker," continues Hambleton, "smiled and presented the Bible with a pleasant remark about his youthful appearance."[1]

[1] A similar story is related of John Randolph of Roanoke.

At this period of American history, the generation of statesmen belonging to the Revolutionary era had for the most part passed away, and the effect of the new frontier States upon our national life had begun to be felt; railway construction had commenced, sectional irritation over the tariff had arisen, and the slavery agitation begun by petitions presented to Congress, and, in short, those questions were coming to the front which led up to the war between the States. "The inauguration of Jackson" as a distinguished author, Professor Woodrow Wilson, has observed, "brought a new class of men into leadership, and marks the beginning, for good or for ill, of a distinctly American order of politics, begotten of the crude forces of a new nationality. The new generation which asserted itself in Jackson was not in the least regardful of conservative tradition. It had no taint of antiquity about it. It was distinctively new, and buoyantly expectant."

Prior to the assembling of the Twenty-third Congress, and just after his second election, Jackson, in pursuance of his declared hostility to the Bank of the United States,—the charter of which was to expire in 1836,—had ordered the removal of the deposits, amounting to something like $10,000,000, which were transferred to the "pet" banks as they were called. The withdrawal of this large sum necessarily compelled the Bank to curtail its loans, in like proportions, and caused a stringency, almost amounting to a panic, in the money market. This act of executive usurpation, as many considered it, alienated from Jackson the support of seventeen Democrats in the House, besides several in the Senate, who, on account of their peculiar situation,—acting neither with the administration nor the Federal opposition,—were designated the "Awkward Squad." Among this number was Wise, whose maiden effort upon the floor of the House was an argument in

favor of the restoration of the deposits and of a national bank, which last he considered as the best agency to secure to the country a safe and uniform currency. During the course of his speech, in alluding incidentally to John Randolph, he commented upon the fact that his death had never been announced to the House of Representatives. A few days afterward, Judge Bouldin of Virginia, who had been elected as Randolph's successor, rose to explain the reasons why the House had never been informed of Mr. Randolph's death; when suddenly, just after commencing his remarks, he swooned, fell, and expired in a few minutes.

Foremost, at least in its far-reaching effects, among the questions that were forced upon the attention of the country during the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Congresses, was that of the presentation of abolition petitions. As far back as the year 1790, a petition on this subject, signed by Benjamin Franklin among others, had been presented, and in response thereto it had been resolved "That Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them in any of the States." During the first forty years of the government, very few antislavery petitions were presented, but about the years 1831–32 the question began to assume a serious aspect, from the appearance of numerous petitions praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, over which it was claimed Congress had entire jurisdiction, and by the time of the assembling of the Twenty-fourth Congress in December, 1835, the question of the reception and disposition of these memorials caused wide divisions of opinion and aroused acrimonious controversies.

It was in the discussion of this question that old John Quincy Adams was to employ all his energy of mind and character, as a member of the House of Representatives,

to which he had been elected, after having served his country as minister at foreign courts, as Secretary of State, and as President. On January 10, 1832, Adams wrote in his diary: "Mr. Lewis came to have some conversation with me upon the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia. . . . He said he wished to know my sentiments upon slavery. I told him I thought they were not materially different from his own, that in presenting the petition I had explained the wish that the subject might not be discussed in the House, because I believed a discussion would lead to ill-will, to heartburnings, to mutual hatreds, where the first of all wants was harmony, and without accomplishing anything else. I asked what he should think of the inhabitants of the District of Columbia if they should petition the legislature of Pennsylvania to enact a law to compel the citizens of that State to bear arms in defence of their country. He said he should think they were meddling with what did not concern them. I said the people of the District might say the same of citizens of Pennsylvania petitioning for abolition, not in the State itself, but in the District of Columbia."

The agitation of this question was naturally peculiarly disturbing to the people of the Southern States, and, viewed in connection with other events of the period, was calculated to irritate and alarm them in a high degree. In 1831 William Lloyd Garrison founded the *Liberator*, and in 1833 the American Antislavery Society was formed. The people of the Southern States awoke to a realization of the fact that their section was being flooded with abolition pamphlets and literature, and that they had been slumbering in false security.

The inhabitants of Virginia, by nature conservative and hard to arouse, became alarmingly aware of the fact, by the Nat Turner insurrection which broke out in the year

1831. Prior to 1830, a large proportion, if not a majority, of the abolition societies were at the South, and as late as 1827 there were eight such organizations in the State of Virginia, besides the African Colonization Society. The subject of gradual emancipation had long been thought of in that State, and received a large share of attention in the legislature during the session of 1831–32. A similar sentiment existed about the same period, in the States of Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee. In Virginia, at least, the opinions of her foremost public men, in the earlier days, had always been in favor of gradual emancipation, which was strengthened by the fact that the institution was not profitable there, as it was in the cotton-growing section. They had never regarded slavery as "a good, a positive good," such as Calhoun declared it to be, but looked upon it as an inherited wen, grafted upon their civilization, which ought to be removed as soon as practicable. It was agitation of a far different character, and conducted in an entirely different spirit, by people having nothing in common with their situation and surroundings, which caused a revulsion in the sentiments of the Virginia people, at the period mentioned, and made peaceful emancipation thereafter impossible.

The discussion of historical "might-have-beens" is always useless, but there seems no good reason to doubt that had not the fanatical agitation of the question of abolition arisen in the North during the thirties, the four States of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina would have themselves undertaken to do away with slavery in their limits, and the effect of such action upon their part would have been inevitable upon the States further south. Thus the consummation, so much to be wished, could have been accomplished by the peaceful power of public opinion, and not, as it afterward was, by fire and sword.

On the 16th of February, 1835, a petition from certain citizens of Rochester, New York, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia having been presented, a lively discussion ensued, during the course of which Wise arose and said: —

"Mr. Speaker, although I have my feelings, my passions, and my fixed principles and determinations, as a Southern man, on this subject, yet I hope I can discuss it without excitement. I rise not, sir, to throw, as some others have thrown, a firebrand amongst us. I rise simply to state to my constituents and the country at large, the true state of feeling and of the case as it exists here, in the North and in the South. I trust I am well assured that the representatives on this floor from the North do not wish or design to interfere with our rights. That they merely feel bound in their representative duty to *present* these memorials, so dangerous in their tendency and incendiary in their character, from a respect to a *few*, a very *few* only, of their constituents comparatively, and that they do not act from their own impulses. Sir, on this delicate and vitally important subject, the moderate, considerate, and patriotic men of the South, as well as of the North, have enemies to contend with. In the North we have a few misguided fanatics, whose zeal prompts them to rush blindly into the most absurd extremes, and in the South — I am sorry to say it — there are not wanting those who seize upon every pretext to inflame the public mind on the subject of slavery. In this delicate situation, what should be the course of the friends of the country and our institutions? Why, sir, the friends of good order, of the Constitution, and of the existence of this republic, in this House, or out of it, in the North, or in the South, must use their influence to moderate and quench these spirits of both extremes of fanaticism and disorganization.

"When memorials of the character of this now asked to be printed are presented, it is respectful enough, I should think, to the memorialists, to *receive* them; if *printed*, they will be circulated throughout the country, to fan the flame of the zealots on one side, and to serve as food for the disorganizers on the other. We, who would be safe and secure in the blessings we now enjoy, will, therefore, smother these memorials on their first presentation. I am willing, sir, to treat all memorials, no matter how extravagant or preposterous, or of what character, with respect, provided they are from a respectable body of citizens, decorous and not dangerous in their tendencies. But, sir, I cannot tolerate, much less give consequence and éclat to, memorials and petitions which strike at the very foundations of the social compact and of our civil institutions. I will not hear them; I desire not to see them, and I would reject them at once. With what sort of respect — I put it to the gentleman from New York [Mr. Fillmore]— would he treat an incendiary who should respectfully ask him to permit him to apply a torch to his dwelling? Would he regard him as a sober-minded neighbor or madman, as a friend or fiend? Sir, I was sorry to hear some of the remarks from the gentleman from New York. He says that the people of the North are continually shocked by advertisements of slave dealers in the papers of the District. I am sorry, sir, that their nerves are so delicate, when their fathers did more than any other people of the Colonies to establish slavery amongst us. And I appeal to Southern gentlemen for the truth of the remarkable fact that the immigrants from the North to the South, some from the gentleman's own district, perhaps, are as ready to become masters as any who are hereditary masters. To strengthen their nerves and change their whole principles and opinions on the subject, they have

but to change their climes, their heavens. And if they choose to remain at home, they may cease to take these odious papers. If slavery was abolished in the District, I know not what would *restrain the press* from still publishing advertisements. And if the papers here ceased to publish for *runaways and purchasers* of slaves, still the gentleman would have to cease taking the papers of the South, or to silence them, too. Sir, slavery is interwoven with our very political existence, is guaranteed by our Constitution, and its consequences must be borne with by our Northern brethren, as resulting from our system of government; and they cannot attack the institution of slavery without attacking the institutions of the country, our safety and welfare. The gentleman says he will ever respect the property of the *States*, but he claims to legislate away the *property* of this *District.* Sir, a slave is as much property here as in Virginia; *property* by the law and the Constitution. And, in addition to the remark of the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. McKinley] that you surely will not take *private property without just compensation*, and that you cannot compensate without taking in part of the taxes of the South to pay for slaves, I will repeat the idea, that, although you have exclusive jurisdiction over this 'ten miles square,' yet it is *common ground*, for the good of the whole, and for the use of the whole people of every State in the Union. And I would ask of the gentleman, if he can come upon this ground with his *carriage and horses*, why cannot I come with my *slaves* to remain here, to live here, as long as I please? Sir, I say it not in passion, but calmly and dispassionately, that Congress has no right to abolish slavery even here, against the consent of the slaveholders, who are not represented; and I warn gentlemen, that the South — I speak for *all* as strongly as *one* man can speak for *many*, for millions —

that the South will fight *to the hilt* against the abolition of slavery in this District, unless the inhabitants owning slaves themselves petition for it, as they would against any interference with the right of slave property in Virginia. The gentleman calls this a great '*National question*.' I protest, sir, against it being so considered. The *nation* has nothing to do with slave property. It is simply a delicate question of *private individual* right, wholly and solely under the control of the States where slavery exists. It is a *reserved State right*, with which the General Government *has no right of interference even*, and from intermeddling with which the free States and their inhabitants should scrupulously abstain. The pseudo-philanthropists of the North do but defeat their own objects, when they rudely attempt to touch or handle a subject which does not immediately concern them; and true Christians and philanthropists will always find their principles and the cause of humanity best subserved by being *the friends of slaveholders*, instead of being *the friends of slaves*, and by coöperating with intelligent, humane, and patriotic slave-owners of the South, by ways and means which the lights of the age have already shown. If violence or intrusion upon our rights be persisted in and pursued, gentlemen will find Union men and nullifiers of the South *all united* on the subject, — ready ripe for revolution, if the worst must come to the worst! I hope, sir, that this House will not *shock the South* more by the *printing of this memorial* than the constituents of the gentleman from New York were ever shocked by *slave advertisements*, and that it and all others like it will now, and for all time to come, be smothered and suppressed."

A warm discussion followed, participated in by a number of its members, which caused William S. Archer, of Virginia, to remark that he considered it almost as indis-

creet in gentlemen from the South, or slaveholding States, to discuss the question, as it was for the representatives from the North to introduce it; and upon his motion the whole subject was laid upon the table. But from that time until December, 1844, the question continued a thorn in the side of members of Congress, and arose upon innumerable occasions. February 8, 1838, Henry L. Pinckney, of South Carolina, moved a set of resolutions on the subject, viz. (1) That all the petitions should be referred to a select committee; (2) With instructions to report that Congress could not constitutionally interfere with slavery in the States; and (3) Ought not to do so in the District of Columbia. These resolutions were passed by the House, and shortly after an additional one reported by the committee, viz. that thereafter all petitions relating in any way to slavery, or its abolition, should be laid on the table, without action and without being printed, or referred. Prior to the introduction of the Pinckney resolutions, when a motion was made by Jarvis, of Maine, to lay a petition on the table, Wise moved as an amendment: "That there is no power of legislation granted by the Constitution, to the Congress of the United States, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and that any attempt by Congress to legislate upon the subject of slavery will not only be unauthorized, but dangerous to the union of the States. The war," he said, "is now commenced between evasive and direct propositions upon this subject, for he regarded the proposition of the gentleman from Maine as entirely evasive. . . . He wished the whole South to mark it if the previous question to this amendment should be put to them. Let them toe it and let the South be undeceived, or let the South be guaranteed in her rights." And in the discussion of Pinckney's resolutions, he again objected to them, as not meeting the

issue, and called attention to the fact that it was not the people of the South, or their representatives, who introduced the subject in Congress, and that the responsibility rested upon the representatives from the North and their constituents. The reception of the petitions and legislating upon them, he regarded as yielding the point in issue, for the reason that if the House could legislate against, they could likewise legislate in favor of the objects petitioned for.

In a letter to Governor Tazewell of Virginia, dated March 29, 1836, to be laid before the legislature, Wise wrote his views in regard to the abolition petitions, which we reproduce in part: "The problem then was reduced to this: that from the course of events and the tendency of causes, good policy required us to act and act speedily whilst it was yet day; and that being protected by the adventitious state of political parties, we had everything to gain and nothing to lose by acting boldly, provided the representatives of the slaveholding States were united, and true to themselves and their constituents. Accordingly, my course was taken with those whom I considered the true advocates of slaveholding rights, of Southern safety, and of the national welfare, in resisting the reception, not the hearing, of abolition petitions. This resistance was in vindication of the true right of petition, and founded upon the true construction of the Constitution in relation to the power in Congress of abolishing slavery. The right of petition, it was contended, belonged only to petitioners praying to a government having the power of legislating over themselves, in cases where they had a direct interest themselves in the subject of their prayer for legislation; where they petitioned in a peaceable manner, not subversive of the rights of the legislative body, to whom they prayed; for no object hostile to the public

safety, and where the government to which they had petitioned had the power to grant their prayers. In these cases the petitioners were not citizens of the District of Columbia, and they prayed to the government of the District of Columbia, distinct from the government of the United States, and from any, or either of the State governments. It was contended that the people of Maine had as much right to petition the legislature of Virginia to abolish slavery in Virginia, which would not be claimed or conceded by any, as they or the people of any State had to petition the local legislature of the District of Columbia to abolish slavery in the District. That the right to petition carried with it the right to have the petition considered and granted, if reasonable and just, and it would be unreasonable and unjust that petitions of people whose own rights and interests could not be affected, either for good or for evil, by the grant of their prayers, should be received, considered, or granted, to affect the rights and interests of others, which might be injured, or destroyed, against their own consent. . . .

"It was further contended, that to refuse to receive petitions after hearing their contents stated or read was not a denial in any sense of the right of petition. That the Constitution restrained Congress from making any 'law prohibiting the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances'; that a refusal to receive these petitions was the making of 'no law'; that it prohibited not the right 'to assemble'; that it prevented not and hindered not the right 'to petition'; or even the right to have the petition heard; that these petitions for abolition were not for 'redress' of their own 'grievances,' but of the grievances of others, who did not and could not themselves petition or complain; and that the right of Congress,

as a legislative body, to receive or reject these petitions, commenced only where the right of petition ended. That if petitioners had the absolute right to have their petitions received, by the same course of reasoning they had the right absolutely to have them considered and granted."

In the light of the present, the ground on which Wise and his associates based their course of action was clearly untenable, as "the right to offer a petition implies the duty of Congress to receive it"; but in either case, the Southern members pursued a short-sighted policy in allowing Adams and the abolitionists to assume the attitude of champions of a right as ancient as Magna Charta. Due credit, however, should be accorded to the motives of the former, which were doubtless largely controlled, not only by the desire to protect their property, but to prevent the agitation of a subject dangerous to the welfare and safety of the Union. But from the vantage-ground thus gained the abolitionists enlisted the sympathies of thousands of conservative citizens, who, in other respects, were but little inclined to regard their fanatical agitation of the subject of slavery with any degree of approval. As long as the right to petition seemed in any wise abridged, or denied, the antislavery party not only awakened the sympathies of many on that score, but were also constantly able to provoke discussion upon the abstract question of slavery; and thus through its existence in the District of Columbia, were furnished, as Adams said, with a "fulcrum for their lever," so much so that he declared he would not abolish slavery there, even if it were in his own power to do so.

Perhaps no figure has ever stood out in bolder relief, or occupied a position more striking upon the floor of the House of Representatives, than that of old John Quincy

Adams during the period of these debates. He came to be, as has been remarked, "the funnel" through which these petitions were poured, by the thousand, into Congress, and dealt hard blows upon the heads of his political opponents, who joined issue with him, on the right to present these memorials.

Rarely have scenes more stormy been enacted in Congress, and the debates from first to last were marked by great acerbity.

February 8, 1837, Wise wrote in a letter to his wife: "On Monday we were all called up from the committee room to witness one of the most serious and, at the same time, most ludicrous occurrences I ever witnessed, and one which has not ended yet. Mr. Adams rose and said he had a paper which purported to be signed by twenty-two *slaves* and asked the Speaker if that came within the resolution of the House which lays all abolition memorials upon the table. He didn't say what the petition prayed for. The members took it for granted it was for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and several offered resolutions and amendments immediately, some to censure and others to reprimand, and some even threatened to move his expulsion. He sat and enjoyed the scene exquisitely, for an hour or so, and at last rose and said that the paper would be found, if read, to pray *against abolition* and for his expulsion! The hoax was grand, and put those who offered resolutions in a grander passion still — then, sure enough, they were for expelling him. The subject occupied Monday and Tuesday."

The contrast between Adams and his political antagonists, Thomas F. Marshall, Gilmer, Dromgoole, Wise, and others, was in many respects striking, particularly between him and Wise. Adams was a New Englander, far past the meridian of life, whose presence and mode of

speech were not those of an orator, but he was thoroughly informed on public questions, and his words attracted his hearers because of the weight his statements carried. Despite the fact that he lacked the element of personal magnetism to attract men to him, and the support of the wealthier classes in his own district, he was nevertheless able, by the force of his mind and character, to command the foremost position in the halls of legislation. Possessed of vast stores of information, a natural fighter and master of invective, intensely narrow, notwithstanding his learning and travel, and rarely thinking good of any one politically opposed to him, he stood upon the floor of the House, in many respects the incarnation of the cause he championed, and the prophet of things to come. As early as May, 1836, he declared that, should the Southern States become the theatre of war, the government had the right, by virtue of its war powers, to abolish slavery.

Wise, the young "Harry Percy of the House," barely twenty-seven at the time of his election to Congress, and a mere boy in comparison, also foresaw the future strife; but singularly enough, the old, and not the young man illustrated best the drift of thought of the epoch in which they lived. And yet, it could hardly have been different, in view of the environment of each. Wise, despite his youth and inexperience with public affairs, had won a place in Congress second only to that of Mr. Adams, and his impassioned eloquence, his frank, manly nature and personal magnetism made him respected and admired. Unlike Adams, he drew men to him, and there was that in his genial and lovable nature which endeared him to his friends. Both were alike in the bitterness which characterized their arguments in debate, in their turn for invective, and irritability of tem-

per. The use of invective, however, did not sound strange to the ears of a generation which had been accustomed to hear the speeches of Tristram Burgess and John Randolph.

At each succeeding session of Congress, after the adoption of the Pinckney resolutions for the tabling of abolition petitions, similar rules were adopted by the House, such as the Patton resolutions in 1837, and those of Atherton the year following, and in January, 1840, the one of like purport, which came to be known as the "twenty-first rule." In December, 1837, while Slade of Vermont was discussing the reference of two abolition petitions to a select committee, he was interrupted by Dawson of Georgia, Rhett of South Carolina, and other members, who called him to order and moved an adjournment, against which the Speaker ruled; and Wise arose and declared that, "He [Slade] has discussed the whole abstract subject of slavery — of slavery in Virginia — of slavery in my own district, and I now ask all of my colleagues to retire with me from this hall." A scene of indescribable confusion and excitement followed, and the Southern members finally withdrew from the House.

At another time, Wise declared that if the discussion of the petitions were continued, he would advocate a retrocession of the District of Columbia, which the abolitionists sought to control, and that if that failed, he would vote with the Western members to move the seat of government.

The exciting debates on the subject of abolition petitions were renewed at each session of Congress, until the final triumph of Adams and his followers in December, 1844, when the twenty-first rule was abolished. When Adams presented a petition from citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying for the dissolution of the Union,

some of the Southern members advocated his expulsion, and the character of the debate grew even more acrimonious than ever. Then it was that he turned fiercely upon his antagonists and charged Wise, who had declined to vote on the question of his (Adams's) expulsion, with being responsible for the Graves-Cilley duel.

S. G. Goodrich in his "Recollections" quotes a spectator of this debate as saying: "I remember one day to have been on the floor of the House when he [Adams] attacked Mr. Wise with great personality and bitterness. In allusion to the Cilley duel, with which he was connected, he spoke of him as coming into that assembly, 'his hands dripping with blood.' There was a terrible jarring tone in his voice, which gave added effect to the denunciation. Every person present seemed to be thrilled with a sort of horror, rather toward Mr. Adams than the object of his reproaches. In speaking of this scene to me afterward, an eminent member of Congress said that, 'Mr. Adams's greatest delight was to be the hero of a row. There is no doubt that the rude personal passages, which often occur in the House of Representatives, derive countenance from Mr. Adams's example.'"

An amusing remonstrance to the abolition petitions occurred when Wise presented a petition from a number of men and women of Halifax County, Virginia, praying Congress to furnish husbands at public expense to all female petitioners upon subjects relating to slavery, thereby giving a direction to their minds calculated to make them good matrons and to avert the evils with which the fanaticism of the Eastern States threatened the people of the South.

But if Adams delighted in being "the hero of a row," it must be confessed that in that particular Wise did not altogether differ from him; and his fiery, excitable tem-

per and disposition to run into extremes too often marred and destroyed his influence for good. In his calmer moments, he would have been the last to approve many of the extravagant declarations into which his intemperance of feeling and speech too often led him. He was not unwilling to acknowledge his faults, however; and in a letter to an author who proposed writing a biographical sketch of him, he expressed his thanks to the former, for not publishing a letter which he (Wise) had written, containing unpleasant allusions. In adverting to his habit of intemperate speaking, he wrote: "I never have deliberately and wantonly wounded a fellow-being, though I have often done so, sometimes from a sense of duty, and sometimes impetuously. Even if I were inclined to 'lash' any one for 'lashing's sake,' I do not think that your intended volume would be the proper place for it. I do not prize my fame for the faculty of saying severe things very highly, and he who is gifted with the power and constrained by the necessity of saying harsh things, or even of speaking out his mind and feelings strongly, however honestly, in this world, is not apt to be blessed with mild judgments of men himself."

After the debate over the Haverhill petition, previously alluded to, Arnold of Tennessee, in commenting on the spectacle presented by the House, remarked that scenes had been enacted during the previous seven years which suggested the French Revolution. A hearty laugh went the round, when he proceeded to address some good-natured remarks to Adams and Wise, between whom, he said, some very extraordinary points of coincidence existed, and who ought to make up and meet as friends. "Indeed," said he, "they seemed made for each other, they were so nearly alike in their tempers and passions. Both were of the genuine Federal stock — both were opposed to limit-

ing the veto — both professed to be opposed to abolition — and they were, *pro tempore* at least, both supporters of the present resolution. Clearly, then, they ought to shake hands. They were both ruling spirits of disorganization and confusion in this House, and they were, in this respect, such a complete match, that he had more than once remarked that if they were put into a bag together and well shaken, he did not know which would fall out first."

Wise's attitude, on the question of abolition petitions, was in accordance with the views of his constituents, and Thomas R. Joynes of Accomack, in a letter to him in 1837, had written as follows: —

"Your course on the abolition question meets, I believe, the approbation of every one here — and I hope you will continue to act in such manner as to entitle you to a continuance of the approbation of your constituents. I have always been afraid of the abolition question, as one which would ultimately lead to a dissolution of the Union with all its deplorable consequences. The subject of the abolition of slavery in the States is one which *must not be debated in Congress*, let the consequences be what they may. I am very much afraid that 'President making' will be suffered to enter so much into the consideration of this subject that it will prevent the united action of the slaveholding States on this important subject. This matter is one of the greatest importance and one which requires that every step should be taken with the utmost caution and prudence. We are much pleased at the prominent position you occupied in this business." This may be regarded as a very fair expression of the views of Virginians at that time, as also the following toast offered at a public dinner given to Wise at Williamsburg, during his congressional career: "Slavery — Whatever differences of opinion may exist among us Virginians upon this vexed subject, we are

unanimous on one point, a positive determination that no one shall think or act for us."

Upon the one hand, however, Adams and the abolitionists continued the agitation of the question, and on the other, unfortunately, the Southern Hotspurs kept up the "agitation for the suppression of agitation." From the outset the latter had failed to observe a "masterly inactivity," and had not shown themselves possessed of the ability to "let alone." In December, 1843, when Adams moved to refer an abolition petition to a select committee, Wise arose and stated that, though he had long opposed the reception of these petitions, the war which had been commenced was likely to be carried on unceasingly against the South, and that thereafter he would vote for the committees, that the designs of the abolitionists might be disclosed and the Southern people informed of how they stood on the question. Just one year later, and after Wise's resignation as a member of Congress, Adams achieved a signal triumph in securing the abolition of the twenty-first rule, against which he had waged a prolonged warfare.

When a candidate for governor of Virginia, in 1855, Wise declared from the hustings: "I have had a very severe training in collision with the acutest, the astutest, the archest enemy of Southern slavery that ever existed. I mean the 'Old Man Eloquent,' John Quincy Adams. I must have been a dull boy indeed if I had not learned my lessons thoroughly on that subject. And let me tell you that again and again I had reason to know and to feel the wisdom and sagacity of that departed man. Again and again, in the lobby, on the floor, he told me vauntingly that the pulpit would preach, and the school would teach, and the press would print, among the people who had no tie and no association with slavery, until, would not only

be reached the slave-trade between the States, the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, slavery in the District, slavery in the Territories, but slavery in the States. Again and again he said that he would not abolish slavery in the District of Columbia if he could; for he would retain it as a bone of contention, — a fulcrum of the lever for agitation, agitation, agitation, until slavery in the States was shaken from its base. And his prophecies have been fulfilled — fulfilled far faster and more fearfully, certainly, than ever he anticipated, before he died."

CHAPTER V

ADVOCATES BUILDING OF AN IRONCLAD. OPPOSES VAN BUREN'S ELECTION. A REPORTER'S DESCRIPTION OF WISE. THE EXPUNGING RESOLUTIONS. DEATH OF HIS WIFE. VIEWS ON TEMPERANCE. SARGENT S. PRENTISS

During his first session in Congress, Wise was appointed a member of the committee on naval affairs, of which he became chairman later on. His efforts for the improvement of the condition of the navy were untiring, and he zealously advocated an increase in the size of the naval force and the pay of officers and men, the establishment of a naval academy, the revision of the code of naval signals, and a variety of matter, designed to promote the efficiency of the service.

On the 8th of April, 1842, Wise addressed the House on the need of proper coast and harbor defences, and reported a bill for the construction of an iron-clad vessel, with submerged propellers. According to the report of his speech contained in the *Globe:* "She was to be constructed of sheet iron plates and riveted together in such a manner as to be impregnable to either the Paixhans or round shot. Indeed, the experiments of the board of officers had demonstrated that the plates, put together in the manner intended for the ship, resisted sixty-four pound shot, fired at a distance of thirty feet. She would also have all the lightness and buoyancy of wooden ships and a velocity equal to that of any other steam vessel either for escape or attack.

These were not her only merits ; all her machinery would be below water and out of the reach of an enemy's shot. Her means of annoyance would be a shot invented by this same Mr. Stevens, of which the government had been in possession these twenty years, and which was as much superior to the Paixhans shot, as that was superior to all others ; a shot that would explode immediately on striking the object, that had no fuse, and was perfectly safe in every respect. He would mention one fact to show its great superiority. Out of twenty of these shot that had been kept on hand for ten years, nineteen of them exploded on striking the object fired at. The whole ship with her armament and means of propulsion came from one of the ablest engineers of the country. He proposed a new plan of propelling vessels, similar to that of Mr. Ericsson's — and, by the bye, Ericsson's plan was his — by which the wheel would be below the water, and out of the way of the enemy's shot as well as the roughness of the sea." Mr. Wise concluded by saying that "everything relating to the ship had been proved by actual experiment, and that it was the best mode of defending our coasts and harbors, now eminently threatened by the English power."

The bill passed by a vote of 129 to 31, and a contract was entered into with Robert L. Stevens, brother of Edward A., the inventor of the plan, for the construction of the vessel, which he shortly commenced at the dry dock excavated by him in Hoboken. Owing to the various improvements in cannon about this time, which enabled them to throw round shot that would pierce armor plate, repeated interruptions and delays ensued in the building of the vessel, which lay in the basin at Hoboken and was never launched. This is claimed by Stevens's biographer to have been the first ironclad ever attempted, and pre-

cedes by more than ten years the vessels used by the French at Kinburn in 1854.

It was before the naval committee over which Wise presided, that Morse exhibited his battery and wire, to demonstrate his discovery, and Commodore James Barron, after his return from exile at Copenhagen, urged the adoption of his invention of an ironclad, consisting of an "impregnable steam propeller, armed with a pyramidal beak on the water-line. From stem to stern, from side to side above water would be a terrapin back, at a very acute angle of incidence to a shot fired from a ship's deck." This plan of construction was thought impracticable, and Barron could never induce Congress to adopt it. He presented Wise with his model of the *Catapulta*, and upon the breaking out of the Civil War in 1861, the latter wrote to General Robert E. Lee, urging the construction by the Southern Confederacy of a floating battery after this design.

Throughout his career in Congress Wise continued his efforts for the improvement of the navy, and in 1841, upon the retirement of President Tyler's cabinet, was tendered by him, the position of Secretary of the Navy, which, however, he declined, preferring to retain his seat on the floor of the House of Representatives.

In the spring of 1835, Wise was a candidate for reelection, in opposition to his former rival, Mr. Coke; but during the canvass the latter withdrew, and thereafter supported Wise. Although the district had previously indorsed the Jackson administration, to which Wise at the time of his second candidacy was opposed, yet he was returned by a handsome vote, and reëlected successively in 1837–39–41 and 43.

Throughout the remainder of Jackson's administration, Wise earnestly opposed the executive control of the public

moneys and the "pet bank" system, and waged a continual warfare on the abuses connected with the public finances. He was the author of the resolution for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the mode of selecting the banks of deposit, the contracts with the treasury, and the relations between the notorious Reuben M. Whitney and that department. But the power of the Jackson party in control effectually blocked the way to success in any of these measures, and General Jackson was able to nominate his successor for the presidency in 1836. The national Republicans put forward Harrison and Granger, as their candidates, in that year, and the Jackson Democrats, Van Buren and Johnson, while a third party was formed by those who had become alienated from Jackson, by the questions of nullification, the removal of the deposits, the expunging of the resolutions of censure, the sub-treasury, etc., and that third party selected as its standard bearers Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee and John Tyler of Virginia. This latter ticket was supported by the disaffected wing of the Democracy, among whom were Calhoun, McDuffie, Poindexter, Wise, and others, who distrusted Van Buren on the subjects of abolition and the annexation of Texas. The power of the dominant party and its compact organization caused the election of Van Buren, whose administration witnessed the culmination of the financial panic which had long been brewing. Throughout Van Buren's term, Wise continued his advocacy of a revenue tariff and his opposition to the sub-treasury, believing a United States Bank, the best means of furnishing a safe and uniform currency, the great need of the country, and made unceasing protest against the reception and reference of abolition petitions and distribution of the proceeds of the sale of public lands among the States. His speeches on the floor of Congress were

scathing invectives against the abuses of the Treasury Department, and he was chosen one of the committee to investigate the Swartwout defalcations. John Quincy Adams, who rarely had anything good to say of a political opponent, and especially of Wise, wrote in his diary December 21, 1838, in alluding to a six hours' speech of the latter: "The speech was the most powerful and unanswerable attack upon the administration, and especially upon the Secretary of the Treasury, that has ever been made in Congress; and as he passed from charge to charge, he supported every imputation by the documents from the Treasury Department itself."

Although but thirty years of age, Wise had won a reputation among the foremost members of Congress, and he had come to be regarded as one of the leading political orators of the country. A reporter, in an article entitled "Glances at Congress," thus describes his personal appearance and manner of speaking: "He is pale and thin, about thirty years of age, perhaps not so much. He dresses like an old man, though his general appearance is very youthful. He is very slovenly in his apparel, his coat hanging like a miller's bag on his shoulders. His face I said is pale, and his white cravat adds to its appearance of livid pallor; but he has a dark and brilliant eye, a powerful feature in Mr. Wise, which seems sometimes to flash almost unearthly rays of light over his whole countenance. His forehead is projecting and massive, and his mouth large, but firmly set. Without being handsome, his face has a general pleasing character. . . . To see him sauntering about the hall, with his long Indian strides, you would at once be tempted to ask who he was; to hear him speak your attention would be riveted upon him. You no longer see the loose garment on the ungainly figure, the *outré* neckerchief vanishes, and your eyes are

fixed on the excited and earnest orator. All his prominent characteristics are brought out with great rapidity — firmness, impetuosity, a disdain for honeyed words, fierce sarcasm and invective, all gather into a hurricane and startle the drowsy members from the lounges and wake up those victims of dull hours, the reporters. . . . Mr. Wise may not always say anything remarkable or striking, but there is an intensity about his manner that fastens on the attention and clutches it until he has finished. He is remarkably quick in arriving at conclusions, and generally, too, in a way that would not have been struck upon by any one else. He is very independent in his disposition, fearless, and, to use a common expression, above board. . . . He has undoubtedly very high talents, and I have heard him, upon more than one occasion, soar into the regions of commanding eloquence. His forte lies in invective; then he becomes, to those whose party sympathies follow his own excited train of feeling, thrilling; his pale and excited face, his firm and compact head thrown back, his small bony hand clenched in the air, or with the forefinger quivering there, his eyes brilliant and fixed, his voice high yet sonorous, impress a picture too vivid to be easily erased from the mind. A stranger, a few days ago, of his own party, on coming into the hall for the first time, at such a moment, compared his appearance to that of a corpse galvanized! Mr. Wise, as is well known, is a prominent member of the opposition. He cannot be ranked as a leader; certain it is, however, he is not led. He is much beloved by those who know him in private life, being jovial, free-hearted, and full of hilarity."

On the 17th of January, 1837, Wise wrote to his wife as follows, describing the celebrated "expunging" scene which he had witnessed in the Senate Chamber: —

". . . Last night I witnessed one of the most distressing scenes I ever beheld, or ever will voluntarily behold again. The Senate sat late. I went up to the Capitol after I got my supper. I found Strange, the senator in Mangum's place, addressing the Senate on the resolution to expunge. He was weak and disgusting. Ewing of Ohio followed him in a strong and manly speech. After Ewing, Mr. Webster rose and stated that, if there was a constitutional provision allowing them to do so, he and his colleague (Mr. Davis) would file their *protest* on the journal. But there was no such provision, and if there was, he knew that it would not avail them if the journal could be expunged. He then, in the only way left them, *read* one of the most able, conclusive, and eloquent papers I ever listened to, with deep pathos and solemnity. He said if he and his colleagues were not compelled to regard the act as a ruthless violation of a sacred instrument, they would look upon it as but little elevated above a contemptible farce. He said they had '*collected*' themselves to witness it, etc., etc., etc., said it was dictated by the executive to do homage and penance to the Press through State legislatures, made a beautiful allusion to Massachusetts, proud she was unconquered, whose soil was mired with the best blood of the Revolution. I never heard anything better as it was delivered. I looked at Rives and thought of Virginia and wept. Webster finished; the hour had come — a blank only was to be filled. Benton rose and named the day — the 16th of January, 1837 — that date was entered. He called for a division of preamble and resolution. It was entire, it could not be divided. It had to be passed entire, all had to be swallowed at once. The vote was put and stood 24 to 19 for the desecration of a record which the Constitution solemnly declared should be kept sacred so long as its creature, the

Senate, should exist! When should the resolution be carried into effect? Benton said, 'At once, better done at once.' He seemed to fear the minds of men would, upon a night's reflection, revolt at the deed and reconsider its enactment. 'Now?' was repeated. 'Now.' The clerk went for the book, brought it in, laid it open — he took the pen, wrote on it across the lines, 'Expunged by order of the Senate, January 18, 1837,' and then took up his rule to draw the black lines. Patriotic indignation could brook the sacrilege no longer! 'Hiss, hiss,' whizzed from the galleries, and groans of actual agony were heard from spirits grieved with the unutterable oppression of the deed. 'Ruffians!' exclaimed Benton. 'Clear the galleries.' 'No, sir, arrest the offenders!' exclaimed he again. The scene required a victim — an American citizen was ready — a fit victim. He was seized, dragged before the Senate, the act imputed, the intention imputed, the guilt presumed without proof or hearing, and he was without proof or hearing condemned and punished by Benton alone. 'Cannot I be heard?' exclaimed the citizen. 'Take him out of the House,' exclaimed the president *pro tem.* The cause: 'I am a Roman citizen.' 'Bind him, lictor.' The Chair announced the work of expunging was done. Benton asked if it was done; the clerk replied *it was done*, and the fiend god of the scene pronounced it 'Very good.' The Senate adjourned, and I looked at the page expunged as I would at the corpse of a murdered being."

During the year 1837, Wise met with a severe misfortune, in the destruction by fire of his home — Edge Hill — in Accomack, which was followed not long after, by a great bereavement, namely, the death of his wife, for whom he cherished the fondest attachment. While absent in Washington on February 1, of that year, his dwelling

and papers were consumed; his wife and children, however, escaping safely from the house, were kindly cared for by the neighbors. A few months later, the house occupied by himself and family, in the village of Drummondtown, was set on fire by an incendiary, and although the fire was arrested and the building saved, the dread and nervous anxiety inspired in the mind of his wife caused her to give birth prematurely to a child, and brought on an illness from which she died. She was one of the loveliest of women, in both person and character, and Wise had been in love with her from early boyhood. From her household duties, she would turn to her favorite poet Burns, whom she was fond of repeating; and her letters prove her to have been a highly intelligent, pious, and devoted wife. She did not share her husband's political ambition, and begged him to retire from public life, the glamour of which had no charms for her. Although devoted to him, she knew his excitable temper, and dreaded the turmoil of politics and its many pitfalls, to one of his fiery nature; and a quiet, domestic life was more to her taste. She was, moreover, horrified at the practice of duelling, then in vogue in the South, the dangers of which his public position constantly exposed him. In one of her letters to him, not long before her death, she had written, "I wish that, as we have 'clomb the hill together,' we may be spared to a good old age, be found in the way of righteousness, and sleep together at the foot." This was not to be, however, and when but twenty-eight years of age she passed away, leaving four children, two sons and two daughters. A few months after her death, Wise wrote as follows to a friend and college mate, Dr. Robert R. Reed, of Washington, Pennsylvania:

"Oh! my friend, my friend, you touched the chords of a heart snapping with bitter, bitter sorrow too tenderly,

too affectionately for that touch to have been forgotten. Your letter has not been neglected by me. I would have answered it ere now, but since that harrowing moment which took her from me, I have been more dead than alive. I could not answer a letter which, above all others, has revived so many recollections to make my tears flow afresh. Yes, you know how our love began, — were witness with us of its early scenes, — you know its purity and its power. She was one of the purest and brightest spirits of this earth — she was *unaffectedly* all goodness, sweetness, and intelligence — she was *my wife* for more than eight years, bore me five children, and daily, hourly, did that love such as you knew it in childhood, increase and increase until in the sight of God, I fear, it became the worship of idolatry. Was this the sin for which she was taken from me? If she had a besetting sin it was this — that she loved me too well. Is such a sin in the eyes of Him who made us and commanded us for one another? Oh, God, thou hast stricken me severely! She lived as she died, and she died in the Lord. Oh! that I may die in the straight path to her in heaven. There is my sin, Robert. I am a rebellious, stubborn sinner, I have fully experienced that I love not God — I wish to go to Heaven, not to meet *Him* there but *her*. She was the star of my life and she was my comfort, I have known no other. No, I never did. Ambition itself was never so strong as my love for her; she made my ambition what it was — it is nothing now. My temples have often throbbed with the hot contests of the world; I have lived an age since I saw you. My brow has burned with all the misery of public life — want has never overtaken me, success to satisfy ambition's self has ever attended my footsteps and exceeded all my merits, but in nothing did I ever find happiness, peace, pleasure, comfort, but in my dear devoted wife, and she is

taken from me! Is it selfish to grieve as a husband thus bereaved should grieve? There is some joy in my grief — it may make me a better man, I hope I am so; I believe intellectually all, I have no faith in my heart at all. 'I would believe,' and I have desire strong enough for Heaven now to pray. 'Oh, help my unbelief!'"

At the Congressional election of 1837, Wise was returned without opposition, his course meeting with the cordial approval of the great majority of his constituents. In that and the following year, he was the guest of citizens of Norfolk, Williamsburg, Richmond, and other places in eastern Virginia, where dinners were given in his honor, he being everywhere enthusiastically greeted by the admirers of his course in Congress.

Though naturally inclined to conviviality he was remarkably abstemious in the use of liquor, for a man in public life at that period, and his intemperance was confined to the habit of chewing tobacco, to which he was always addicted. After his return from Tennessee in 1830, he had been active in organizing temperance societies on the eastern shore. In May, 1837, he wrote to B. Hopper, Esq., president of the Maryland State Temperance Society, in answer to an invitation to be present at their convention, in which letter he warmly advocated the cause of temperance, and, in defining his views on the subject, wrote: "I am but thirty years old, and for the last eight years and some months of my life, I have not tasted a tablespoonful of ardent spirits nor drunk one half of a gallon of wine. I have paid in part the expenses of messes of gentlemen, who at the boarding-houses provide themselves with *wine* for the table, and for the customs of hospitality to visitors; I have never bought nor used ardent spirits at all, and but touched wine at times in

observance merely of the forms of society at the metropolis. . . . It has fortunately, or unfortunately, I know not which, fallen to my lot in public life to be the instrument of exposing abuses in public affairs and offences in the men who conduct them. Such as I think worthy of exposure, I shall not shrink from castigating by speaking of them in my place and out of my place at will, without any regard whatever to personal consequence. I state the fact, then, to the nation, that some of the higher executive officers at Washington are, and have been, notorious drunkards — drunkards in my sense of the term — habitually affected by ardent spirits, drunk at least once a week, impaired in constitution by the use of strong drink; and I further state that I have often heard the reason assigned and believe it was a valid one, for the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States not sitting in the evening after dinner, when the public business required it, that many of the members were so much in the habit of intoxication, that they were not only unfit, themselves, for public duty, after a certain hour in the day, but were likely to prevent others from discharging their duty by interrupting the order of proceeding. During the latter part of the session of Congress, when the two houses were compelled to sit late, members too drunk for the decency of a tavern bar-room were not uncommon sights in the Senate Chamber and in the hall of the House of Representatives, of a republic whose fathers handed down to it the hallowed and immutable truth, 'that no free government or the blessing of liberty can be preserved to any people, but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, *temperance*, frugality, and virtue!' These are facts, sir, which in my name, if you choose, you may bring to the attention of the people of the United States. I am utterly opposed to making the temperance cause a political engine in any

way whatever, but if the friends of temperance will aid in ridding Congress of sots, no matter to what political party they may belong — for they are a disgrace and an actual injury to any party — they will be subserving their own work of good morals and do the country some service. Indeed, the facts which I have stated apply with equal force and truth to both Whigs and Tories, in about the exact ratio of their numbers in the list of public men, and let me not be misunderstood as reproaching the administration, except so far as high and responsible executive offices are intrusted to intemperate incumbents, whose habits are known by the boys on the streets of Washington. I have been a candidate three times for the suffrages of the people in the oldest district of 'Old Virginia,' proverbial for *honey drams*, *mint juleps*, *hail storms*, *slings*, *dew drops*, and every description of nectared drink, and have never found it necessary, or requisite, to obtain a single vote, to resort to the vulgar graces of the familiar cup."

Wise's abstemious habits in regard to drink doubtless saved him from running into the excesses then common at Washington and elsewhere, as he was by nature convivial and socially inclined. His means, furthermore, did not admit of any but a plain, simple life, as his circumstances were very moderate, the pay of a member of Congress being very small, and he had to meet the expenses of a growing family. He was, however, a participant in many of the social affairs of the Capitol, and in a letter giving his reminiscences of Sargent Prentiss, describes a dinner given to the latter and his colleague Word, at which all the notables were present; and when, in the midst of an after-dinner speech by Webster, a member of Congress in a frenzy of excitement seized an empty champagne bottle and threw it at the head of the "godlike Daniel," he was prevented from striking him by Wise catching his arm.

While a member of the House, Wise boarded at Mrs. Queen's near the Capitol, or at one of the Congressional messes, as was the custom at that day among public men. Among his most intimate friends while in Congress were Hugh Lawson White and Baillie Peyton of Tennessee, Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts and Sargent S. Prentiss of Mississippi; and the brother, as well as biographer of the last named, has happily preserved entire in his memoir, Wise's reminiscences of the great Mississippi orator, justly observing that such "an effusion of true-hearted friendship is too rare a gem to be broken." Still another biographer of Prentiss, Joseph D. Shields, has written that "in genius, in intellectual power, in fiery eloquence, in lofty scorn of all that was low and mean, in unflinching valor, in unswerving integrity, and in tender-heartedness, Prentiss and Wise were not unlike, and hence the sympathy between them. There is a secret intellectual magnetism which draws kindred spirits toward each other, and so it was in this case; spirit responded to spirit at first sight, without a word."

In his reminiscences of Prentiss, Wise relates the following among other episodes. "One evening he and a friend of his were invited with me to take a terrapin supper at Colonel John McCarty's rooms. We spent the evening jovially, and at a moment when I least expected any manifestation of affection from Prentiss, he came to me unobserved by the others, took a small stud from my shirt-bosom — an urn in gold enamel (I wonder if it be among his relics) — and put in its place a pin of great price, set in diamonds. He demanded the exchange and said it was for something he had heard and seen, he did not mention what — to be a memorial. I tried to get at his meaning but he would never tell me. I always took it to signify his approval of my advice to bury the morbid sen-

sibility about his lameness, and to brighten his existence by taking a wife. . . . Soon after this conversation a scene occurred between us which I shall never forget. It was at the entrance of a faro-bank; I declined to accompany him and said: 'That is one of your high rocks and it has no foothold. Remember the fathers and the comely daughters, too, have a right to forbid your walking there; it is a monstrous height of extravagance, from which you even must fall and be crushed, and you have no right to set such an example.' He said he would go alone, went on, and I followed him to the head of the stairs and stopped him. Looking him true in the face, I said: 'You are rich in everything. You have a mother and sisters — are they provided for by you?' He turned black in the face; the veins in his temples curdled; I expected he would strike me with his cane. It was the only moment in our acquaintance when I had reason to suppose we would no longer be friends. 'Do you take me for a dog?' said he. 'Yes,' said I, 'baser than a dog if you have the heart to give your abundance to the Cerberi of faro-bank hells instead of giving it to a mother!' He dropped tears, took me by the arm, went in, bet a few moments, and came out with me completely subdued. He would, ever after that, permit me to chide him like a little child. He, too, had done his part in saving me from sin. Severe conflicts had passed in the House between myself and one of his opponents (Mr. Gholson). I drew a challenge, and offered to put it in the hands of your brother. He declined altogether to take it, unless I would submit implicitly my honor to his discretion. I did so, not imagining his object in obtaining the pledge — a pledge I would not have made but for the conviction that in all such cases it is proper to be exacted of the principal by one called on to act as a second. As soon as he got the pledge, he took the chal-

lenge, slept upon it a night and brought it back to me, saying that he had reflected upon it well, and concluded definitely that I was neither called upon, nor authorized to send a challenge at all in the case; that he had witnessed the whole scene and I was bound to forbear the call, upon every consideration of necessity, justice, or honor; and that no one could fairly bear it as a second. In case I was challenged he would act, but not otherwise. On another occasion, at my request, he saved a young friend of mine from a duel; and his influence in such matters was always potential for peace."

Of Wise's religious views, we have thus far omitted any mention. Although not a communicant of the church, his temperament was an essentially religious one, and he had been from early manhood a believer in the teachings of the Christian faith. When a motion was made in the House of Representatives, on the assembling of that body in 1837, not to appoint a chaplain, Wise arose and said: "This was the first time since he had been in public life that the propriety of appointing a man of God had been questioned. Sir, I can with truth say that I am among the vilest sinners in this body; I can with truth say that I have more personal reasons, if personal reasons were to govern me, for opposing the election of a chaplain than any other gentleman on this floor; but, sir, there is no consideration that would make me, a representative of the people on this floor, a member of a House of Commons in a representative republic, divorce a republic from the God of nations. Let me tell those who are now desirous of divorcing the State from the Church, that they cannot divorce a nation from the God of heaven. He has more power than you have to dispense with nations as with individuals; and who will pretend to say that no good may be done by making our acknowledgments here, as it were, with the

uplifted hands of a nation, that there is a good Providence who presides over the destinies of nations. If there be any one thing more opposed than another to the existence of a republic, it is infidelity. Infidelity was the handmaid of anarchy in France, and we trusted that we would not encourage it by departing from the example of our forefathers."

CHAPTER VI

THE GRAVES-CILLEY DUEL

On the twenty-fourth day of February, 1838, occurred a duel between two members of Congress, which, owing to the prominence of the parties engaged and the sad termination of the affair, created more excitement, perhaps, than has ever been aroused in consequence of a similar catastrophe, in this country, with the single exception of the notable meeting between Burr and Hamilton. Matthew L. Davis, a newspaper correspondent at Washington, wrote a letter to the New York *Courier and Enquirer*, in which he charged that it was in his power to convict a member of the House of Representatives, whose name he did not give, of having accepted a bribe. A motion by Wise to investigate the charge gave rise to a discussion on the floor of the House, in the course of which Hon. Jonathan Cilley, a prominent member of the Democratic side and representative from Maine, urged that it was ill-advised for the House to go into an investigation of the matter on a mere newspaper assertion, and alluded in severe terms to James Watson Webb, the editor of the paper. The result was a communication from Mr. Webb to Cilley, which he placed in the hands of the Hon. William J. Graves, a member of the House from Kentucky. Mr. Cilley declined to receive Webb's note, on the ground that he would not be held responsible for words spoken in his representative capacity, as a member of Congress, but

at the same time stated that he meant no disrespect to Mr. Graves and did not decline on account of any personal objection to Mr. Webb as a gentleman. Graves subsequently called upon Wise to consult him in the matter, and was informed by the latter, in response to a question from Graves, that he considered Cilley's answer entirely satisfactory. Graves, however, determined that it was proper to secure a written answer from Cilley, and accordingly addressed him a note calling upon him to put in writing what he had previously stated in the interviews between them. Cilley replied by saying that he declined to receive Webb's note because he did not choose to be drawn into any controversy with him, and went on to state that he had neither affirmed nor denied anything in regard to his character, and that he intended by the refusal no disrespect to him, Mr. Graves. Graves was not satisfied with his answer, and addressed a second note to Cilley requesting a categorical answer as to whether he had declined to receive Webb's note on the ground of any personal exception to him as a gentleman or man of honor. To this Cilley replied by denying Graves's right to propound the question contained in his note. Thereupon Graves, who considered that Mr. Cilley had refused in writing a satisfactory answer which he had made verbally, and furthermore that he had impeached the honor of Mr. Webb, for whom as a gentleman Mr. Graves had by bearing his note undertaken to vouch, sent a challenge to Cilley, which the latter accepted. Graves had never been intimate with Wise, and when he first called upon Wise to bear the challenge, Wise declined, but yielded when Graves reminded him that on a certain occasion he (Graves) had defended him when he was attacked on the floor of the House during his absence. The preliminary note of enquiry which was so framed that it forced a duel, and the

challenge itself, were drafted by Henry Clay, an intimate friend of Graves, though he did not accompany him to the field. Wise, with the assistance of John J. Crittenden, Senator, and Richard H. Menefee, M.C., from Kentucky, arranged the preliminaries, as seconds to Graves, with George W. Jones, M.C., from Wisconsin, for Cilley, associated with Messrs. Bynum of North Carolina and Duncan of Illinois. Rifles were named as the weapons with which the duel was to be fought, at a distance of eighty yards, to which Wise objected, as unusual and necessarily fatal; but Mr. Clay, upon being consulted, remarked, "He [Graves] is a Kentuckian and can never back from a rifle." Various pretexts were resorted to by Wise, designed to delay and prevent the meeting which he considered unnecessary, as the affair turned upon a mere punctilio, and the real quarrel, if any, was between Cilley and Webb. These, however, proved futile, and on the afternoon of February 24 the parties met in a field on the Benning's road, near Washington, about a quarter of a mile north of where it intersects with the Marlboro turnpike. A coin was tossed up for the choice of positions, which Wise won, and Jones gave the word. Three shots were fired on each side, and at the third exchange Cilley fell mortally wounded, Graves's bullet having passed through the groin and severed the femoral artery.

Wise in a letter concerning the duel, written to Jones, Cilley's second, correcting some newspaper accounts, gives the following description of what occurred on the field, which, though written years afterward, is remarkably accurate as to details and confirmed by contemporary reports, as well as by General Jones, to the author in person. "All fairness and every courtesy were observed. The preliminaries were settled without a jar; you won the word, and the choice of position fell to me. You fronted

me half way the line of fire, held yourself in position to be equally heard, and delivered the word aloud, distinctly and fairly, as prescribed. My eyes were turned upon Mr. Cilley to see that he observed the terms and he fired first, nearly about the count 'one,' Graves last, about the word 'two.' Mr. Cilley's ball struck the ground between your position and mine, forty steps from his stand. Graves missed him the first shot. Mr. Cilley was evidently disturbed by losing his shot and firing too quickly. You ran to him, and something passed which showed Mr. Cilley was excited, and I knew would make no concession without another fire. Then in turn Mr. Graves lost his shot at the second exchange. He had a large coarse hand, no sense of touch fine enough for a hair-trigger, and no experience with firearms. My orders to him, therefore, were to hold his rifle cocked, hair-trigger set, according to terms, horizontal; at the word 'fire' to push his gun forward, so as to bring the breech firmly to his shoulder, and then level the sight on the vertical, covering his antagonist's person, and to fire when he raised as high as the hip of his antagonist; and to insure deliberation and to prevent losing his shot, *to keep his finger* out of the spanner until the instant of pulling the trigger. This he did the first time, and he fired plenty quick enough. But before the second shot, whilst I was forty yards off at my position, Mr. Menefee (he and Crittenden stood on either side of Graves, as Duncan and Bynum did on either side of Cilley), when he put the rifle in Graves's hands, told him he fired too slow the first time, and upon Graves's telling him of my orders, he, Menefee, objected to them and prevailed on him to put his finger in the spanner. The consequences were as I had expected. At the word 'fire,' and as he pushed his gun forward, and raised the breech to his shoulder, his gun was discharged not three feet from his toes. With his gun fixed on Cilley,

seeing no smoke and feeling no recoil, he was unconscious that his gun was fired, and raised and stood pulling at his trigger, when he received Cilley's fire again about the count 'two.' He still stood pulling at his trigger until the count was out. Thinking he was writhing from a wound, I ran to him and he dropped the breech of his rifle to the ground, blew in the muzzle and exclaimed, 'Why, this gun is discharged!' He and Menefee at once explained the cause. But he was very much mystified and nothing could have prevented him from demanding another exchange of shots. When you came up, as you did every time to inquire whether Graves was satisfied, you could receive but one answer, not without some disclaimer; and Graves's awkwardness caused me to give you the notice I did, so much denounced, that after the third fire I would demand a shortening of the distance. By the time of the third exchange of shots, both were well trained, were deliberate, and Graves strictly obeyed my orders. At the count 'two,' a moment before, Mr. Cilley fired, and about an instant after 'two' Graves fired, and made the vertical line shot just above the hip. Thus ended the fight. Both of Cilley's last two shots were very fine; they passed through the fence logs just behind Graves, one at the elevation of the breast, the other a space below, perpendicular to the upper, and at the elevation of the hip. If his coat had been unbuttoned, both balls would have perforated its lapels. His life was saved by his position. The wind blew steadily fresh obliquely against Mr. Cilley's ball. I was sure the aim would be at the centre of Graves's body, and allowing about from four to six inches for the deflection to the left of Cilley and right of Graves, I selected the position I did, though disadvantageous in other respects."

It is well-nigh impossible to conceive at this day the

storm of indignation that broke out, at news of the duel and its fatal result. Cilley was not only a prominent, but a popular, man in his section, and the further fact that the duel was fought over what was regarded as a mere punctilio, rather than a real cause of difference between the two combatants, tended greatly to aggravate the popular odium which was visited upon the participants. Although Henry Clay had been Graves's chief adviser, and Messrs. Crittenden and Menefee had acted as seconds on the field with Wise, as Messrs. Bynum and Duncan had with Jones as Cilley's seconds, yet Wise and Jones, who had had the arrangement of the details, were looked upon as the main actors in that capacity; and the former especially, as the bearer of the challenge, which, however, he had neither written nor approved, was fiercely assailed in the press at the time as the instigator of the duel, Colonel Webb, the editor of the *Courier and Enquirer*, also coming in for a full share of censure, as being the proper party to have fought Cilley, assuming there was ground for a difficulty.

An investigation was ordered by the House of Representatives upon the announcement of the duel, two days after its occurrence, to inquire into the circumstances of Mr. Cilley's death, and as to whether there had been any breach of the privileges of the House. A committee of seven members was appointed who, after an investigation, declared in their report: "It is a breach of the highest constitutional privilege of the House, and of the most sacred rights of the people in the person of their representative, to demand in a hostile manner an explanation of words in debate." They also submitted resolutions for the expulsion of Graves, and censure of Wise and Jones, but after a long debate the whole subject was laid on the table. Popular feeling, however, found vent in the enactment by Congress of the Anti-duelling Act not long after.

Cordial political relations existed at the time between Clay and Wise, and the friends of the former were very anxious lest his part in the affair should be disclosed in the public prints, and mar his chances for the presidency. Several years afterward Wise wrote: "Mr. Clay's friends particularly were very anxious, for obvious reasons, not to involve his name in the affair. Thus, many confidential facts remained unknown on both sides. Mr. Clay himself, it is true, whilst all his friends were trembling lest the part he took in it should be disclosed, boldly came to me and said: 'Sir, it is a nine days' bubble! If they want to know what I did in the matter, tell them to call me before them, and I will tell them!' This excited my admiration at the time, and was effectual to prevent me from unnecessarily bringing his name before the committee."

For several years succeeding the duel, Wise continued to bear the opprobrium visited upon him, — until early in 1842, during the debate in the House of Representatives, upon the resolution to censure John Quincy Adams, which arose from the presentation by the latter of the Haverhill petition. Adams attacked Wise with great bitterness in regard to his connection with the duel, and declared that he had come into that hall "with his hands dripping with human gore, and a blotch of human blood upon his face," which provoked the latter into replying that "the charge was as base and black a lie as the traitor was base and black who uttered it." Wise, whose relations with Clay were no longer friendly, published the circumstances of the duel in the *Madisonian* and *Intelligencer*, and called on Clay to declare the part which he had taken in it. This the latter admitted, in a letter over his signature, of which full use was made by the New England Democratic press in the ensuing presidential campaign, and it was instrumental in defeating him for that office.

CHAPTER VII

THE NOMINATION OF HARRISON AND TYLER. "THE UNION OF THE WHIGS FOR THE SAKE OF THE UNION." CAMPAIGN OF 1840. MR. TYLER'S ADMINISTRATION. ANNEXATION OF TEXAS. WISE MADE MINISTER TO BRAZIL. PARTING ADVICE TO HIS CONSTITUENTS. SECOND MARRIAGE

IN December, 1839, the national convention of the Whig party assembled at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. There had been a strange alignment and readjustment of party divisions, and never had the maxim that "politics makes strange bedfellows" been more strikingly illustrated. The many prominent Democrats who had become alienated from the administrations of Jackson and Van Buren on various issues had united with the Nationals in opposition to Van Buren, under the Republican name of Whig. Throughout the country, numbers of leading Jackson men were prominent in the new party group, especially in the South. At one time, the supporters of Hugh Lawson White were undecided concerning the course they should pursue in the election of 1840, and it became a matter of general interest whether he would again become a candidate, or would leave the field open for Mr. Clay, who from all appearances was the most available candidate within the Whig ranks. Wise, who was on intimate terms with Judge White, was requested by mutual friends to elicit from him an expression of his views, with the result that the latter

announced that it was not his purpose to again become a candidate, or block the way to Mr. Clay's success; but at the same time he urged upon Wise the necessity of obtaining from Clay certain avowals concerning his position upon public questions, so that there could be no misunderstanding, and that the Democratic wing of the Whig organization might not be placed in a false position. Wise, in a letter to a friend, thus describes his personal relations with Clay and the result of the interview upon the subject suggested by Judge White: "I was two years in Congress, from 1833 to 1835, before I would be introduced even to Mr. Clay. But opposition makes 'strange bedfellows.' After making his acquaintance, his many high points attracted me. About 1838 I became intimate with him, and personally so fond of the man, that, though I differed from him on almost every political issue but one, — the Bank, — I was desirous with others to enter into any fair compromise, without sacrifice of principles, to support him for the presidency. And at the time of my interview with Judge White, there appeared to the common view no other man in sight for a nomination by the Whigs. Judge White was the first to warn me of a danger of his nomination being defeated. I laid before him the willingness of Judge White and his friends to support him, but the necessity which they felt of some fair understanding or compromise in respect to the principles on which his administration would be conducted. He was clear and perfectly satisfactory on every cardinal point named and discussed by Judge White. The issue of Bank, or no Bank, he agreed ought not to be involved in the presidential election, but it ought to be postponed and submitted after the election to what he afterward called (in his Taylorsville speech) 'the enlightened judgment of the people.' Upon distribution

he referred to his report in 1832 as evidence that he never thought of applying that measure except when there was a considerable *Surplus in the Treasury* and only for such limited time as to consume any surplus. He would not, by any means, resort to it when there was a deficiency, and a debt, and when the Treasury would in the least be embarrassed by it. As to Internal Improvements, he had never thought they could be so well carried on by the general government as by the States themselves or by private companies. His only object at first had long been attained, — to give an impulse to great works and to State enterprises. The latter had already received too great an impulse, and the States had been run into debt two hundred millions, almost beyond the means of redemption. As to the tariff, he was emphatic and eloquent in his pledges to abide by the Compromise Act of 1832. It was the chief pride of his life that he was the author himself of that great measure of pacification. He would, of course, be the last to disturb its provisions, and would be the first to resist any infraction of its good faith. And as to the question of abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia or in the Territories, or of the slave-trade between the States, he hardly supposed that he could make stronger pledges than he had made. True, he had admitted the naked power by Congress, and he had deemed it policy to keep the true issues apart from false issues about the right of petition, by always advocating the *reception* merely of abolition petitions; but he was a slaveholder himself, identified with the South in that interest; and so inexpedient and bad in faith did he deem the *exercise* of the power of abolition by Congress, that he would justify its resistance by force of arms. Thus, then, practically he would be with the most ultra of strict constructionists, though he might fundamentally differ with them

as to the principles at the bottom of all these questions. These pledges and compromises he, in general, actually embodied afterward in a speech which he prepared beforehand for the Taylorsville dinner. He informed me, from his notes, of its leading points. Said it was a programme of principles upon which, if nominated and elected, he would desire to see the government administered." Comparing now these admissions of Mr. Clay and similar admissions of other Whigs (formerly National Republicans) with the measures and tendencies of the Democratic party of Van Buren, there can be no doubt that the Whigs as a party assumed in the canvass the position before the public as the States-rights party of the Union. The principles of its Democratic wing as manifested in the careers of Tyler, Wise, Duff Green, Preston, McLean, Berrien, and others were really the platform on which they solicited the suffrages of the country. From every hustings the Whigs in every part of the country denounced the Democrats as Federalists and latitudinarians.

With the understanding above related, the friends of Judge White adhered to the fortunes of Mr. Clay, but the defeat of the latter was brought about at Harrisburg by the followers of General Winfield Scott, who, though unable to nominate their candidate, were yet able to prevent Mr. Clay from securing the coveted prize, which went to William Henry Harrison.

John Tyler of Virginia was put forward for the vice-presidency, his name having been agreed upon among the Whig leaders beforehand, largely through the influence of Wise. His nomination was a proof of the States-rights character of the party, Tyler having been from the commencement of his political career a consistent advocate of strict construction and Democratic principles.

The candidates of the Whig party did not enter the

canvass with a hopeful outlook before them, and the paraphernalia of log cabins, coonskins, and hard cider would seem to have indicated an absence of true issues or principles in the campaign. But underneath the claptrap and *ad captandum* arguments of the orators, a healthy moral tone prevailed in opposition to the abuses of the Van Buren administration.

The convention of the Whig young men of the country, held at Baltimore the spring following the one at Harrisburg, aroused the enthusiasm of the masses, and started the tidal wave which bore Harrison and Tyler into the White House. Such an assemblage had never been witnessed before, and the leading Whigs of the Union — among them Clay, Webster, Sergeant, Preston, Southard, Botts, and Wise — were there to help kindle with their eloquence the popular flame.

On the Fourth of July previous, at a gathering of Whigs, on an island in the Delaware opposite Philadelphia, Wise had uttered the sentiment, "The union of the Whigs for the sake of the Union," which was caught up as a party watchword and inscribed on the transparencies during the campaign. A galaxy of Whig orators everywhere spoke from the hustings and made the campaign of 1840 memorable for its enthusiasm. Wise was untiring in his support of the nominees, and from Yorktown in Virginia, where he presided over the Whig convention of his district, as far north as Poughkeepsie in New York, lent the weight of his voice and eloquence to the cause of Harrison and Tyler. The triumphant election of the Whig ticket was not, however, in reality a triumph, but the coming into power of a mere opposition party, composed of heterogeneous elements, destined soon to divide policy and action. This was hastened rather than caused by the death of General Harrison,

one month after his inauguration, which placed Mr. Tyler in the presidential chair, and upset the calculations of the followers of Mr. Clay. Immediately upon General Harrison's election, Clay had assumed a dictatorial attitude towards the incoming administration, which was bitterly resented by General Harrison, who clearly indicated that he would never assent to the revival of the old National Republican measures; and at the called session of Congress in May, after Harrison's death, Clay undertook the championship of those policies which, prior to the Harrisburg convention, he had agreed to surrender. Henry W. Hilliard, a spectator of what transpired at this time, records in his "Politics and Pen Pictures": —

"Visiting Washington in June, I found Congress in session; the signs of anarchy in the Whig party were clearly visible. Mr. Clay, the real leader of the party, disclosed his purpose to compel the President to accept the measures which, as a senator, he dictated without the slightest regard to Mr. Tyler's antecedents as a statesman. Imperious, unsparing in his denunciation of any one who faltered in support of his plans for the government of the country, he presented a grand spectacle. But Mr. Tyler, with equal firmness, declined to submit to the dictation of the illustrious senator."

The charge of "traitor" was quickly applied to Mr. Tyler upon his vetoing the bill to recharter the United States Bank; but to any one at all familiar with the political career and personal character of the man, the word was not justified, even coming from baffled politicians whose designs he had thwarted. Mr. Tyler, throughout his public life, had not only been an avowed strict constructionist, but time and again had declared that in his opinion it was unconstitutional to charter a

United States Bank. During the campaign of 1840, in response to inquiries from various citizens, he had published letters in which he declared that his opinion upon this point remained unchanged; but, in the face of these declarations, Clay and his followers believed that they could force him to yield his life-long convictions and sign a charter. Mr. Tyler held various interviews with the Whig leaders, with a view to arrive at an understanding with them, but never for one instant abandoned his well-known position in regard to the Bank question.

It was not long before the President, and his party in Congress, found themselves at war with each other, and the small group in the House who championed his administration were dubbed by Clay the "corporal's guard." Among these, however, were Wise, Caleb Cushing, and Thomas W. Gilmer, men capable of withstanding the onslaught of their opponents. From the first, Wise opposed the Bank agitation, the policy of protection, and the various measures revived by the National Whigs.

The administration of Mr. Tyler, despite the violent opposition which it met, was signalized by exceptional purity of conduct: the spoils system of politics was done away with, the credit of the country restored, and a balance substituted for a deficit in the Treasury.

The exchequer bill, which he drafted himself, anticipated by a number of years the present national bank system founded upon the same idea; and the foreign policy of the administration was conducted in a highly successful manner. Frémont was sent westward to explore the unknown passes of the Rockies, and Whitman aided in transporting bodies of emigrants to the Western country. In all the measures of Mr. Tyler's administration he enjoyed the hearty concurrence of Wise, who remained throughout

his close personal and political friend and leading champion on the floor of the House.

Shortly after the election of the Whig candidate in November, 1840, Mr. Tyler had written Wise: "In desiring your views I wish to prepare myself for playing my part as may best become me should it be required of me to play any part. Let me also say, I scorn to flatter, that I regard you as having been as much instrumental in bringing about the present state of things as any man who lives, and your views of the future should be as much sought after as your opinions in the past." Although Wise had differed with Mr. Tyler as to the constitutionality and expediency of a government bank, he subsequently abandoned this position not only because he realized that the time had passed for chartering a United States Bank, but that issue had become merged into questions which he considered of far greater magnitude. His position on the Bank question up to the time of Harrison's election was identical with that of Mr. Clay. After that time their position was unlike in this,—that Wise stood by his abandonment of the Bank, while Clay who had also abandoned it, insisted upon reviving it.

In his attitude toward the spoils system of appointments to office, few members of the House have taken bolder and stronger ground than Wise, and during Van Buren's administration he had declared "if government officers are allowed to interfere in elections, yea required to save their salaries by their party services, the Treasury must suffer for it; for electioneering requires funds, and officers will not take their own money when they can reach Uncle Sam's. The dearest purchase ever made by any people is the purchase of themselves with their own taxes which they have paid into the public Treasury. I would put down at every hazard the tyranny of *proscription*, the most extravagant of all tyrannies, which is always sure to turn out of office

some honest and many knowing officers and to put many dishonest and ignorant ones in their places. I could give many instances under the present and last administrations from this cause alone. *Appoint the virtue and intelligence of the country to office without regard to party services* and you will find thousands of dollars gained as well as thousands saved by that simple operation of finance."

Few men have ever been more bitterly assailed than Mr. Tyler by his political opponents, but despite that fact many of the most important offices at his disposal were filled by those opposed to him politically.

The most important act of Mr. Tyler's administration must be held to be the annexation of Texas to the Union. It is a circumstance worthy of note that all the great acquisitions of territory to our country up to this time were secured under the leadership of Virginians, and the addition of Texas to the sisterhood of States was destined to form no exception to this rule. In 1837 Texas had unsuccessfully applied for membership in the Union, and Wise had strongly advocated the measure. This question was taken up by Tyler shortly after he became President, in accordance with the urgent advice of Wise, who warmly supported him as did Thomas W. Gilmer and Caleb Cushing. Texas was already looking to England for aid, being deeply in debt to British capitalists, and the latter country was anxious to build up a rival to the United States along its southern border; while the abolitionists abroad were striving to have slavery done away with in Texas so that the institution might be attacked from the South. The negotiations for annexation which had not culminated at the time of Upshur's death in February, 1844, just after Tyler had tendered him the position of Secretary, rendered it highly important that a man in sympathy with the measure

should be appointed to succeed him as Secretary of State. This fact alone can serve as an excuse for Wise's conduct upon the occasion. The morning following Upshur's death, caused by the explosion of a cannon on board the *Princeton*, and without authority from any one, Wise hastened to Senator McDuffie's rooms, and requested him to tender the position to John C. Calhoun. Having done this, he then proceeded to the White House, where he breakfasted with the President and informed him of what he had done. The latter, naturally indignant at the time, nevertheless acquiesced in the act as one which could not easily be remedied. The President had, through Upshur, secured pledges of support from over two-thirds of the senators in favor of the Texas treaty, and his fear was that Calhoun's appointment might drive off Benton and other senators of the Van Buren wing of the Democratic party. And this fear appears to have been not wholly unfounded, as the vote finally given in favor of the treaty was only one-third instead of two-thirds, as required by the Constitution.

Wise thus describes the part taken by him immediately upon hearing of Upshur's death.[1] "We came at once to our conclusions. Mr. Webster remained in the Cabinet until the Northeastern question was settled, and as long as Upshur or Legare was alive, the Southwestern question was safe in Southern hands; but now that they both were taken away, there was one man left who was necessary above all others to the South in settling and obtaining the annexation of Texas. We need hardly say that man was John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. But we knew that, for some reason of which we were never informed, the President was opposed to calling him to his Cabinet. It is vain to conjecture the reason, and we are utterly unable

[1] "Seven Decades," p. 221.

to account for the fact, but the fact was known, and that caused us to be guilty of assuming an authority and taking a liberty with the President which few men would have excused and few would have taken. We thought of Mr. McDuffie, then in the Senate, and determined to act through him. The President, in 1843, at the instance of the Hon. Baillie Peyton, had sent our name to the Senate for the mission to France, and the nomination was rejected at a moment when it was the rule of party not to allow him to have any of his own friends in appointments when the Opposition could prevent. Thus, Mr. Cushing, for the Treasury, Mr. Porter of Pennsylvania, for the War, and Mr. Henshaw of Massachusetts, for the Navy, were all rejected; and when our name for France was before the Senate, and the doctrine was openly avowed that the President should not be allowed to have his own friends in place, Mr. McDuffie had met the dogma as it deserved, and denounced it with great cogency and spirit. Our nomination hardly deserved the defence he made, but its natural effect was to draw us to him in personal gratitude for the vindication which it caused in 1843–44 by the confirmation of our mission to Brazil. We determined, through him, to act on Mr. Calhoun, whilst we took unprecedented license with Mr. Tyler. Before breakfast, by sunrise the next morning, the 29th of February, 1844, we visited Mr. McDuffie's parlor. He was not dressed, but came down in his slippers and robe-de-chambre. We excused our calling so early by the exigency arising from the catastrophe on board the *Princeton*, and immediately inquired whether Mr. Calhoun, in his opinion, could be prevailed on to accept the State Department with a view to the vital question of annexation. He admitted the magnitude of the interest involved, and how desirable it was to have it negotiated by Mr. Calhoun, but feared he

would not accept. We then urged him to write to Mr. Calhoun immediately, saying that his name would, in all probability, be sent to the Senate at once, and begging him not to decline the office if his nomination should be made and confirmed. Mr. McDuffie's delicacy toward us doubtless prevented him from inquiring whether we spoke by Mr. Tyler's authority or not, and we made no statement to him pro or con on that point, but presume he must have supposed that we were authorized to make the request, for he promised to write to Mr. Calhoun at once.

"On parting from him we went directly to the presidential mansion to breakfast. At the gate of the White House grounds we met Judge John B. Christian of Virginia, the brother-in-law of Mr. Tyler, and, when we reached the house, found Mr. Tyler and Dr. Miller, another brother-in-law of his, in the breakfast room. Mr. Tyler was standing with his right elbow resting on the mantel of the fireplace, and held a morning paper in his left hand, containing an account of the awful catastrophe of the day before. As soon as he saw us he accosted us with tremulous emotion, saying how humbled he was by his providential escape whilst such invaluable friends had fallen from around him, and he turned his face to the wall in a flood of tears. We came to his relief at once by saying that it was no time for mourning or wasting himself in grief, — that the moment called for prompt action and attention to duty, and that his work was pressing and heavy. It was an auspicious time, at least, to nominate for the vacancies in his Cabinet, when the dignity and solemnity of public grief for so great a calamity would shame and hush all factious opposition, and human sympathy alone at such a moment would confirm the nominations he would then make to the Senate. There

were too many important affairs to be disposed of in this last year of his term of office to admit of delay. He must subdue his grief and find relief, the best relief, in turning to his tasks. He asked at once, 'What is to be done?' The answer was ready: 'Your most important work is the annexation of Texas, and the man for that work is Mr. Calhoun. Send for him at once.'

"His air changed at once, and he quickly and firmly said, 'No: Texas is important, but Mr. Calhoun is not the man of my choice.'

"Aided by Judge Christian and Dr. Miller, we reasoned with him, though in vain, until the bell rang for breakfast. At the table the conversation turned on the calamity of the previous day; and the President gave a minute description of the manner in which, by the most trivial circumstance, he had been detained in the cabin at the table with the ladies, whilst Stockton, Upshur, Kennon, Marcy, Gardner, and Benton all went up on deck to witness the trial of the Peacemaker! During the whole breakfast we were exceedingly uneasy, thinking how we should prevail upon him to nominate Mr. Calhoun and justify us to Mr. McDuffie. Of this we were assured, that if Mr. McDuffie's letter reached Mr. Calhoun before a nomination was made, he, Mr. Calhoun, would decline the nomination, and thus waive our committal to Mr. McDuffie; but if Mr. Tyler should nominate before Mr. Calhoun replied, declining, then we would be in an awkward position, as having made an implied committal to his nomination. But 'the policy of rashness' saved us, as it had often done before and has often done since, and sent in Mr. Calhoun's nomination. As soon as breakfast was over, we rose, hat in hand, to depart, went with some impressiveness of manner directly up to Mr. Tyler, and said: 'Sir, in saying good morning to you now, I may be taking a lasting farewell.

I have unselfishly tried to be your friend and to aid your administration of public affairs, and have, doubtless, your kind feelings and confidence; but I fear I have done that which will forfeit your confidence and cause us to be friends no longer. You say that you will not nominate Mr. Calhoun as your Secretary of State. If so, then I have done both you and him a great wrong, and must go immediately to Mr. McDuffie to apologize for causing him to commit himself, and you too, by an unauthorized act of mine.'

"'What do you mean?' exclaimed the President, evidently disturbed.

"'I mean that this morning, before coming here, uninvited, to breakfast, I went to Mr. McDuffie and prevailed on him to write to Mr. Calhoun and ask him to accept the place of Secretary of State at your hands.'

"'Did you say you went at my instance to make that request?'

"'No, I did not in words, but my act, as your known friend, implied as much, and Mr. McDuffie was too much of a gentleman to ask me whether I had authority express from you. I went to him without your authority, for the very reason that I knew I could not obtain it; and I did not tell Mr. McDuffie that I had not your authority, for I knew he would not in that case have written to Mr. Calhoun as I had requested. And now, if you do not sanction what I have done, you will place me where you would be loath to place a foe, much less a friend. I can hardly be your friend any longer unless you sanction my unauthorized act for your own sake, not my own.'

"He looked at us in utter surprise for some minutes, and then lifting both hands, said: 'Well, you are the most extraordinary man I ever saw! — the most wilful and wayward, the most incorrigible! and therefore there is no help

for it. No one else would have done it in this way but you, and you are the only man who could have done it with me. Take the office and tender it to Mr. Calhoun; I doubtless am wrong in refusing the services of such a man. You may write to him yourself at once.'

"We answered that we would do no such thing, for if Mr. Calhoun was given time to do so he would decline; and we therefore asked that his name should be sent to the Senate at once, when it would be confirmed, and then he could not decline. This was done; Mr. Calhoun's nomination was sent in and confirmed even before Mr. McDuffie's letter reached him."

Although the treaty which was concluded through Calhoun's negotiations April 12, 1844, was rejected by the Senate, the issue of annexation caused the defeat of both Clay and Van Buren and the election of Polk that year, which was regarded as an indorsement of the measure. At the following session, a joint resolution providing for annexation passed both branches of Congress, and on the last day of his term Tyler despatched a special messenger to secure the assent of the Texan Congress, which was unanimously given.

Despite the unpopularity of Tyler's administration at the time, and the small minority in which his supporters in Congress found themselves, Wise wrote afterward from Rio to his friend Caleb Cushing: "If I live a thousand years I shall look back to our lone position and single-handed fights for truth and fair play from '41 to '44 with the greatest pride and pleasure. The administration of Tyler, with all its *domestic and internal* follies and weaknesses, — you and I know all, — was great in all its leading public measures. Its glorious successes in foreign policy, its peace of Florida, its regulation of finance without aid in spite of opposition, its general integrity of administra-

tion, will be perpetual mementos of great wisdom and virtue, whilst all the small things will be forgotten. Twenty-five years hence it will be brighter and brighter praise to have been a member of the corps of 'Corporal's Guard.'"

During the session of 1842–43, Wise's health became much enfeebled, partly from a long spell of fever, and President Tyler urged him to resign his seat and to accept any foreign mission at his disposal. This he declined, but early in 1843 Mr. Tyler nominated him as minister to France. Owing to the influence of Clay and other Whigs whom Wise had antagonized, the Senate refused to confirm him; although prior to the death of Harrison, Clay had urged Wise to accept any foreign appointment at the President's disposal.

In the spring of 1843, Wise was a candidate for reëlection and every effort was put forward by the Whigs to bring about his defeat, and Mr. Hill Carter of Shirley was selected as the candidate to oppose him. Mr. Carter, who had served in his earlier years with distinction as a naval officer under Commodore Warrington, resided at his estate, "Shirley," on James River, and was a great favorite with the Whigs. Many thought that the design in nominating Mr. Carter was to produce a personal conflict between him and Wise, but their relations were very friendly, and Mr. Carter became so attached to Wise that during the campaign he insisted that Wise should accompany him in his private vehicle, and ever afterward they were warm personal friends.

As the home of the President and of Judge Upshur, the result in Wise's district was anxiously watched, and the Whigs were more than ever eager to redeem the district. The district at the time included the two eastern shore counties, Accomack and Northampton, and on the west-

ern shore the counties of Northumberland, Lancaster, Middlesex, Gloucester, York, Warwick, Charles City, James City, New Kent, and Elizabeth City, thus extending from the Maryland line to Cape Charles on the eastern side of the Chesapeake, and from the mouth of the Potomac to that of the James on the western shore.

The Richmond *Whig*, the leading organ of the party in the South, alluded, during the campaign, to the fact that the district had in 1840 given the largest Whig majority in the State — nearly fifteen hundred — and hoped for the defeat of Wise as Tyler's representative. Few representatives, however, have ever possessed in a more marked degree the esteem and affection of their constituents than did Wise, and his eloquent voice was heard during the canvass at every county seat and hamlet rallying his followers. Fortunately for him he knew his district — at least the older portion of it — from end to end, and in after years in testifying on the subject of the Maryland boundary line he said: "I represented the Accomack district of Virginia eleven years in Congress. I dare say that from January, 1833, to February, 1844, when I resigned my seat in the House of Representatives, no Congressional district in Virginia was ever more thoroughly canvassed by its representative or better known by him than my district was by me. I visited every county on both shores of the Chesapeake every year, and then without the facility of steam, had to travel by sail vessels and in canoes quite as much as by carriages. The mode of traversing a district so cut up by bays, rivers, and creeks was very dilatory and difficult, and compelled me to be better informed of localities than I could ever have been if travelling by steam, or with more facility or rapidity. I have passed up and down the Chesapeake innumerable times to and from Baltimore and Norfolk, had to cross and recross to and from the eastern and west-

ern shores, and I became familiar with every main, creek, island, and headland, so that I could pilot myself very well in emergency, by my knowledge generally of courses, distances, and bearings. I have been twice stranded on the shoals of the eastern shore, once had to take command of the vessel on which I was a passenger, and thrice was in peril of my life. . . . I was somewhat practised in sailing, and, I may say, as well informed about the shores as any one not a skipper and pilot by profession. The first time I took my seat in the House of Representatives I had to sail up the Potomac to Washington, which I had done several times before when a law student, passing to and from Winchester and my home in Accomack."

But his knowledge of the localities in his district was not exceeded by his acquaintance with the people of every class, and though many were disposed to censure him for his severe denunciation of Clay and the Whigs, yet at the election which took place, Wise achieved a signal victory and was returned by a good majority.

A gentleman[1] of Gloucester County, now living, has given the writer a description of Wise's appearance on the hustings at Matthews Courthouse during the campaign, and how a party of excited Whigs endeavored to prevent him from addressing the people, by breaking up the meeting, but before he had finished his speech, many of the same men were throwing up their hats in the air, and cheering for him.

After his return to Congress, Wise's health continued much impaired, and Mr. Tyler sent in his name to the Senate as minister to Brazil. The same group of senators who had several times refused to confirm his nomination for the mission to France, were inclined to defeat his appointment to Brazil, especially on account of his con-

[1] General William B. Taliaferro who died since the above was written.

tinued opposition and denunciation of Clay during his campaign for Congress, but William S. Archer, senator from Virginia, although a Whig, demanded his confirmation by the Senate, which was accordingly done; and on February 8, 1844, Wise resigned his seat in Congress.

Before leaving home for Brazil he issued an address to his former constituents, in which he wrote, "At the earliest eligible period of life you took me up a poor boy, without adequate merit, and you have ever since upheld me by your gracious confidence, though my faults and infirmities have been many and great." His parting advice to them was to tax themselves, for the purpose of paying the State debt, and of promoting public free schools among them. The urgent need of the last named was evidenced by the statistics which he cited, which showed that in the counties of his district, of the whole number of free white persons, who numbered 37,230, nearly *one-eighth* could not read and write, while of the whole number of free whites above the age of twenty years more than *one-fourth* could not read and write. In commenting on these and other facts connected with the subject, Wise wrote: "This is a lamentable condition of education among us. I would never have exposed it to the scoff or the pity of the world, but our own census takers have already made report thereof to the Department of State of the United States, and Congress has printed these facts at public expense. I know that a very large body of our people is among the most intelligent, and some of them among the most learned of the country; I know how much credit and honor are due to some of our parents, who have not only rubbed nature's rust off their sons at common schools, but have polished their minds bright, not only at our own colleges and universities, but at the universities of Europe. I know what

a body of well-instructed gentlemen we have, who would do honor to any society of any Athens in the land; how gracefully they live in all the means of the light of learning; what a venerable alma mater of great men we have in old William and Mary College; what a select corps of professors and teachers become our seminaries; what a fine body of young graduates yearly come out from our own and the Northern schools; what an eminent professional corps, both in law and in medicine, minister to our minds as well as to our physical and pecuniary cases; what active industry, enterprise, and intelligence there are among the great body of our farmers and planters and mechanics; I know how to account for much of the want of learning among our people from their geographical location — living as many of them do, on islands and long peninsulas, inconvenient to schools; and how much ignorance is to be attributed to the valuable labor of poor children, whose poor parents cannot spare their time at schools, precious as it is, to procure their daily bread. I know all these consoling excuses, but still the fact stares us in the face, that more than four thousand poor children in our district are growing up in the night of ignorance. Most of these, doubtless, are female children, and the touching fact is presented that many mothers of the generation to follow will not be able to teach their sons and daughters to read and write."

His urgent advice to his constituents was to organize and tax themselves in their several counties, and not to wait for State aid to public schools. Despite the large percentage of illiteracy, however, then prevalent, many of the children were educated at the "old field" schools, where they received oftentimes more thorough instruction than at the public schools to-day; and although but few newspapers circulated among the country people in that

part of Virginia, yet they were generally, through means of the intercourse held with the sea-captains, and with each other at the warrant tryings and County Court, kept well informed as to public affairs.

In November, 1840, Wise was married to Miss Sarah Sergeant, the daughter of Hon. John Sergeant of Philadelphia, a woman of attractive person and polished mind. After resigning his seat in Congress, he repaired to his home in Accomack to arrange his household and private affairs, preparatory to setting sail for Brazil.

CHAPTER VIII

TRIP TO BRAZIL ON BOARD THE "CONSTITUTION." LIFE AT RIO. THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE. VISIT OF GENERAL SHERMAN. EVENTS LEADING TO WISE'S RETURN

HAVING completed arrangements for his departure from home and received his instructions at Washington, Wise embarked on the frigate *Constitution*, with Captain Percival, and on the twenty-ninth day of May, 1844, sailed from New York. He was received aboard ship with a salute of cannon, and the old antagonist of the *Guerrière* "set every threadbare sail" for the voyage that lay before her. Accompanying him were his wife and five children — one an infant in arms — and several domestics. After a pleasant, though protracted voyage of sixty-two days, during which they touched at Orto in Fayal, at Funchal in Madeira, and at Santa Cruz in Teneriffe, having lain by in all seventeen days, they entered on the 2d of August the beautiful harbor of Rio.

A few days later Wise was granted a cordial reception at the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by the Emperor Dom Pedro II. at his palace at Boavista, where mutual expressions of good-will and wishes for the prosperity of Brazil and the United States were exchanged.

The then Emperor of Brazil was but eighteen years of age, although the government had declared his majority some four years previously, to prevent his sister, the Princess Donna Januaria, from occupying the throne.

Wise, in one of his letters at the time, describes the youthful ruler as "rather grave, studious, and monastic in his habits."

Within a few weeks after his landing at Rio, Wise had installed himself and family in a residence located in the Engenho Velho, and had assumed the work of his mission at the office of the legation. The etiquette of the Court and social observances appear to have had little charm for his republican heart, and he wrote that "the only reward for going and waiting for hours on a hot day, in a hot uniform, is to make three bows forward and three bows backward and then bob out of Imperial Presence." His duties, for the most part, were of the usual ministerial character, and he doubtless found life at Rio dull, after the political excitement of Washington. Though he did not speak Portuguese, he found no trouble in conducting the business of his office, with the aid of an interpreter, and was, moreover, greatly assisted in his correspondence by his wife, who was an accomplished linguist.

The claims of American citizens, prize causes, questions arising in connection with the construction of treaties, the arrangement of tariff schedules, and troubles growing out of the arrest of American seamen occupied a large portion of the time of the minister at the Court of Brazil. In connection with these, there is little or nothing of interest, or that deserves to be noted here.

There was one subject, however, to which he devoted his best energies while at Rio, worthy of being recalled and of more than passing interest.

At that time the slave-trade between Africa and Brazil was actively carried on, and although a treaty had been entered into between England and Brazil, as far back as the year 1826, for the abolition of this traffic, it had by no means been suppressed. While Sir Robert Peel, the Earl

of Aberdeen, and other British statesmen inveighed against the slave-trade, many English merchants were still largely interested in it, and among the Brazilians the practice was not only common, but the mining and planting interests were anxious for the continued importation of slaves. By virtue of what was known as the Aberdeen Act, passed in 1845, England asserted the right of seizing suspected vessels in Brazilian waters, and public sentiment had been aroused to some extent toward the suppression of the traffic.

The subject of the slave-trade had an important bearing on the relations existing between the United States and Brazil, as numerous American bottoms were converted into slave-ships, and the slave-dealers eagerly availed themselves of immunity from search gained by the use of the American flag. From the time of his landing at Rio, in August, 1844, until his return home three years later, Wise was unremitting in his efforts to have those engaged in the traffic arrested and to bring the matter to the attention of the Department at Washington, and indirectly to that of the British Parliament, and probably did more than any one at the Court of Brazil to arouse public sentiment in this particular.

In a letter to Messrs. Maxwell, Wright & Co., merchants at Rio, dated December 9, 1844, he gave his views of the subject as follows: "It cannot be denied and is no longer to be concealed, and the sooner all parties at home and abroad are informed of it the better, that there is no trade whatever between the coast of Africa and Brazil, but what partakes directly or indirectly of the nature and of the profits or losses of the slave-trade. The slave-trade is the main, the staple business, and all other trade, with the slightest exception, is accessory, or auxiliary to it, between that coast, particularly the parts

about Congo and Cabinda and Brazil. And no vessels of the United States are chartered for that coast in this country, but to export goods, provisions, and munitions of war, to make funds for the slave-trade; or they are chartered to carry and bring news of vessels employed in the slave-trade, and to be tenders of those vessels in other respects; or they are chartered to cover their sales and to obtain the protection of their flag until they come to be delivered on the coast and ship their cargoes of slaves. And they are chartered by and sold to none, or scarcely ever to any one, except notorious slave-dealers, and are consigned in almost every instance to their known agents in Africa. And extraordinary prices are given for the vessels and the charters of vessels of the United States, because their national flag alone protects them from visit and search. And all this is so notorious here, and the ways and means of doing this are so well known here, the charter parties being almost stereotyped, that there is not an intelligent, observing, or inquiring citizen of the United States in Rio Janeiro, who has resided here three months, but what may be said to know and could, with the legal means, easily verify the objects, purposes, and interests for which such charters and sales of vessels deliverable on the coast of Africa are made. And the general knowledge and the general intent could in almost every instance be proved, if there was full power to compel the attendance of witnesses, and to make them answer under oath. The vessel is apparently chartered by the month, at so much per month, for the coast to cover her on the voyage to Africa with the United States flag. The charter party binds her to take over *passengers*, meaning a Brazilian or Portuguese master and crew, who are in fact to navigate her back with a cargo of slaves, without either flag, papers, or nationality, running all risks of capture.

But she has, in fact, been actually *sold* deliverable on the coasts; the whole or greater part of her purchase-money has been advanced here as security for the sale: her charter and sale have been negotiated by an English broker, directly with the slave-dealer, and he gets two and a half per cent commission. The advance of the purchase-money here is security, and the guarantee of the payment of the whole charter and sale is made, and two and a half per cent commission is charged for that, besides two and a half for doing the business, and two and a half per cent for remittance to the United States, making ten per cent, at least, on the whole transaction of charter and sale. The master of the vessel is ordered and authorized to take, in case it be offered, the sum already bargained and guaranteed to begin here; and the agent of the slave-trading purchaser in Africa is written to, and ordered by him to offer and give the sum already agreed upon and partly paid here; the vessel is loaded with English goods, 'fit for the coast,' *i.e.* with goods which are the medium of exchange there for slaves, money not being used or known there, and with Brazilian provisions of jerked beef, black beans, farina, and cachaca, and sometimes with bar and hoop iron and with powder and muskets; and there is another vessel chartered in like manner already there, or going, or gone, or soon to go, with a like cargo to make slave-trade funds, and to supply the slave-trade employees, and, according to her charter party and a private understanding with the first vessel, to bring back as '*passengers*,' the American crew of the first vessel at the cost of the charterer; and the first is sold and delivered; and the American master and crew have *very particular written* instructions by some business friend here how far to go exactly in order to evade the laws of the United States; to take off the flag, the name on the stern and the vessel's

papers, and to exercise no act of ownership, and to give no aid or assistance after sale and delivery, and neither before nor after to aid or abet the slave-trade in any way. In most cases these instructions are very scrupulously followed; and in from two to seven hours after the vessel is sold and delivered, she is loaded to suffocation with hundreds of miserable captives already on the beach in shackles, who are berthed on water-pipes, laid level fore and aft, covered with rush mats; and instantly she sails for the first port she can reach in safety on the coast of Brazil; and her American master and crew are transferred to the second vessel, which, during the time of waiting, is employed, perhaps, in transporting and carrying supplies along the coast from slave factory to factory, from Cabinda to Congo, and Congo to Cabinda, and which, as soon as she gets her returning *passengers* who have carried a *vessel* over directly to the slaves and carried the *slaves* themselves over, returns, perhaps, with a *lawful* cargo of wax, ivory, etc., which has been brought from the interior to the coast of Africa on the heads of the very captives which her consort has just sailed with to the first port in Brazil. . . . And, in conclusion, if the question be repeated, as it has been asked, why I, an American slaveholder, manifest such extraordinary zeal on this subject, the only answer I shall deign to give is, that the fact of my being a slaveholder is itself a pledge and guarantee that I am *no fanatic*, foolishly and wickedly bent upon running amuck against any lawful property or trade; and that I find the same old interest at work here and now, to fasten African slavery upon Brazil, which in our early history fastened the condition of a slave state on Virginia. Vessels and capital from precisely the same quarters bring the slaves to this country in this age, which carried them to that country in times past. The very lands in the Old and in

the New World, where world's conventions are held, and where abolition petitions flow, are the lands where there are manufacturers of 'goods fit for the coast,' and where there are owners of vessels to be 'chartered and sold deliverable on the coast of Africa, who *will not eat slave sugar!*' . . . Our whole country, with a few exceptions in every part alike, perhaps, would have me, I am confident, exert every energy, in my station, to suppress the African slave-trade carried on by our citizens. The courts and the whole country of the United States, I am sure, slave-holding and non-slaveholding, will incline in favor of the law and against the evils of this trade. No officer need to fear, therefore, that he will not be sustained by both public law and public opinion at home, in the faithful and zealous discharge of his duty in this behalf. Without making any superfluous professions of proper motives, there is one sentiment alone which is sufficient to inspire me with ardor in the course I have pursued and will pursue. I love the *flag*, under which my country has won its national independence and its national respectability, and with which it protects our persons and property, too well to sit still, or to sit silent, and see its 'blessed bunting' openly or secretly chartered or sold for the uses of an infamous trade, as fine linen is bought and sold for the uses of prostitution. No! Gentlemen, I had often looked at it when waving 'over the land of the free and the home of the brave,' or when floating over the decks of the 'old *Constitution*,' with feelings too near akin to adoration, but until I left the shores of my native land, until I saw it when far off from home and country, in the 'dim distance' at sea, or waving a welcome from the flag-staff of a United States Consulate in the Western Islands of the Atlantic, I never understood, or fully comprehended its symbol — the essence of which it is the type — until then

I never realized the substance and the value that there is in it. . . . Is that flag to be struck not to an enemy, but to the slave-trade? Is it ever placed where it dare not be seen? Has it to be hauled down for the foreigner? Has it to hide its 'stars and stripes' in order to evade the laws of its country, of itself? Is it bought and sold for a price of infamy, which should turn it the true color of the pirate's flag, blood-red all over with the blushes of shame? Gentlemen, I could never look at it again hoisted over a man-of-war, without having tried my uttermost to rescue it from this degradation. I could never again hear the anecdote, with patriotic pride, that when one Brazilian slave asks another, 'which of all the national ships lying here the English are most afraid of?' they reply invariably, 'Americanos,' and that they never think of matching a United States frigate, in their comparison, against less than an English seventy-four, without feeling that this impression upon the very slaves of Brazil is derived from the safe protection which our flag gives to the African trade against British cruisers."

In another letter, dated March, 1846, in describing the connection of the navigation interest of the Northern seaboard cities with the slave-trade, he wrote: "Out of twenty-two vessels of our merchant marine engaged in the African trade between the coast and Brazil since June, 1845, but four hailed south of Philadelphia, and they were from Baltimore."

Hon. Hamilton Hamilton, the British minister to the Court of Brazil during the time of Wise's residence there, was also active in bringing the facts connected with the slave-trade to the attention of Parliament, and hearty co-operation existed between the two ministers on this subject. In March, 1845, Hamilton wrote Wise as follows: "The zeal and activity you employ so unremittingly to

detect and frustrate the nefarious practices of the slave merchants cannot fail to produce good fruit hereafter; and in the meantime to obtain for you, as you richly merit, not only the approval of your own government, but the gratitude of England, and of all other nations embarked in the great cause of humanity." The doom of the traffic was then fast approaching, and in 1853 it was discontinued.

During his residence at Rio Wise familiarized himself with the fauna and flora of the country, and was greatly impressed with the physical possibilities of Brazil, though he found the climate enervating, and evidently was not imbued with the idea that the natural advantages of that country are superior to our own.

In a letter to a friend at home, in regard to the shipment of plants and fruits for transplanting here, he wrote: "I must say that I think our temperate zone already far surpasses, in vegetable luxuries, any tropical climes which I have yet seen. Much, for commerce and luxury both, might be introduced into our extreme Southern country from Brazil. Why not coffee, tapioca, mandioca, the great varieties of fruits, and particularly the dyewoods, the cabinet-woods, and the innumerable silk and manila grasses for bagging and ropes? A Brazilian friend has promised to furnish me with the seeds of the jacaranda tree — that beautiful, black, ebony-like wood which so far surpasses, in my taste, the mahogany, The nuga tree, also of this country, might be introduced. It is a beautiful shade tree, grows as large as our hickory, and bears a nut very similar, but larger, which is used to make, it is said, the best painter's oils. It resembles the hickory in the bark, and the sycamore in the leaf. The truth is, one is confounded by the question what plants to send home, such are their numbers, varieties, uses, and beauties, and

the doubts respecting their standing our climate. I send you a small parcel of some species of acacia. The small pods are a beautiful flower, and the large red seeds are of a tree like the locust."

Apropos of Wise's life at Rio, we may be pardoned the introduction of an anecdote in relation to it. While residing there, his family received two new additions, a son and a daughter. The former, John S. Wise, now a lawyer in New York City, a few years since met General Sherman at an entertainment in New York, and the two soon engaged in conversation. The talk turned upon the subject of the latter's visit to Rio, when a young officer, and his meeting with the American minister. "Yes," said the General, "I met your father upon one occasion, and that was in December of 1846; Halleck and I were lieutenants, and had been ordered around to California by way of the Horn. We had a splendid trip of it; made a stop in Brazil, at Rio Janeiro. Your father was minister at that time. Halleck and I climbed Sugar Loaf Mountain, near there, and on our way up we met two gentlemen coming down. They were attired as Americans, and we heard that they spoke English. One of them wore the shoulder-straps of a surgeon in the United States navy. He proved to be young Dr. Garnett, who afterward married your sister. Halleck and I introduced ourselves, and were cordially welcomed; the other gentleman was your father, the United States minister to Brazil. I remember that both gentlemen were exceedingly courteous; that they showed us every attention. I recall all as clearly as if it had happened yesterday, yet this was in 1846. It was the day after Christmas. We dined with your father and Dr. Garnett, and spent the evening with them, and met your sister. When we bade them good-by at ten o'clock that night, and went back to the boat, Halleck and I

agreed that we had never met more charming friends." "Did you meet my mother?" asked Mr. Wise. "No," answered General Sherman; "we did not have that pleasure; we were told she was indisposed." "You didn't see *me* either?" asked Mr. Wise. "No, not that I recall," replied the General. "Well, mother *was* slightly indisposed that evening," said Mr. Wise. "If you had not left the house at ten o'clock that night, if you had stayed four hours later, you would have seen *me*. I was born at two o'clock in the morning of December 27, 1846."

It is related by John Quincy Adams in his diary that, when James Monroe asked Jefferson as to the advisability of the former's appointing Andrew Jackson minister to Russia, Jefferson replied, "Why, good God, he would breed you a quarrel before he had been there a month!" Fortunately, Wise did not involve his government in serious complications with Brazil, but his impulsive nature and disregard of diplomatic methods rendered him somewhat dangerous in the capacity of a foreign minister, as it was by no means certain what hasty action he might take at any time.

During the month of October, 1846, a party of American sailors, belonging to the warship *Columbia*, became engaged in a fisticuff alongshore, and they were arrested by the local police, along with Lieutenant Davis of the United States navy, who was endeavoring to separate them. They were roughly handled and incarcerated in the Imperial prison. Wise, as the representative of the United States government, promptly demanded their release, which was finally acceded to, although at first the Brazilian authorities were only disposed to grant it on terms humiliating to Lieutenant Davis, and which were declined by him. The affair led to strained relations between Wise and the Court, and while he was awaiting

further instructions from Washington, the Emperor's birthday was celebrated. Upon this occasion, through some oversight, Commodore Rousseau of the American navy, who was aboard the *Columbia* lying in the harbor, failed to salute with his guns, which neglect, or breach of etiquette, was erroneously attributed by the Court to Wise's influence. When a short while after, the Department of State at Washington transmitted through Wise a letter tendering congratulations, upon the birth of the Princess Isabel, the Emperor declined to grant an audience for that purpose, to such an extent had the breach widened. Wise's conduct in the affair of Lieutenant Davis, though somewhat intemperate perhaps, received the indorsement of President Polk and Secretary Buchanan, and they positively refused to recall him, in response to a request from Lisbon, the Brazilian minister at Washington, which was made at the instance of his government. It was obvious, however, that Wise's stay at Rio could no longer be fruitful of good results, under the circumstances, he believing that the interest of those high at Court in the slave-trade was at the bottom of the feeling manifested toward him. In the spring of 1847, he wrote to Washington, requesting his recall, which was granted, and David Tod of Ohio, was appointed to succeed him. Upon the arrival of the latter at Rio, about August 1, 1847, Wise took passage on the *Columbia* for the United States, where he landed safe during the month of October. A few days later he reported at Washington; and then returned to his home in Accomack, where a cordial greeting awaited him by his neighbors, who received him at the wharf, with cannon booming, followed by a welcome from a spokesman chosen from their number.

CHAPTER IX

WISE'S HOME ON ONANCOCK CREEK. RESUMES THE PRACTICE OF LAW. ANECDOTES OF HIS CAREER

Shortly after his return to his native country, Wise made his residence at a farm which he had purchased on Onancock Creek, near the village of that name. Here he erected a plain but substantial frame dwelling and gave to the place the name of "Only," after a former owner of the land. The location of the house is singularly beautiful. Onancock Creek, which at this point is very wide, comes down from its source, and, in a bend of the stream, is situated a grove of sturdy oaks, in a yard largely surrounded by water. Embowered among these trees and but a few miles distant from the Chesapeake, into which the creek empties, was the "Only" mansion.

Wise again resumed the practice of his profession, which he had long neglected, and in a short while was in the enjoyment of a fairly lucrative income from that source, as such things were measured in the country in Virginia. He declared it to be his intention to abandon politics, but in 1848, the year after his return from Brazil, he was nominated as an elector from his district, on the Cass and Butler Democratic ticket, and was on the hustings advocating the election of the party nominees.

But for the next few years, he devoted his best energies to the law, and his readiness in speech and gifts of oratory gave him great power before the jury, especially

in criminal trials. An instance of his keen knowledge of human nature and fertility of resource was furnished in the case of a slave who was tried for robbery in the county of Accomack. A Mrs. Bagwell, while alone at home on her plantation, after nightfall, was approached, while seated in her chamber, by several negro men, who stealthily crept into the house, and seizing her from behind, choked her and threatened her life, in order to extort money and other valuables. She told them where her money was kept, and in addition to this they took some meat which they hurriedly wrapped in sheets. In taking out the linen from a chest of drawers, where they thought more money was concealed, a paper containing vermilion was accidentally torn open and its contents scattered through the sheets. While making their way from the house, through the woods, the men heard footsteps, and in their flight dropped the bundle near the cabin of a negro named Jacob. The news of the robbery rapidly spread throughout the neighborhood, and searching parties were quickly organized. Jacob in the meantime had found the bundle of linen near his cabin, and in a moment of fear lest he should be suspected, dug a hole in the ground, buried part of the linen and meat, and sewed the remainder up in his bedtick. His cabin was shortly after visited and a search begun, with the result that the articles were found, hidden as described. The sheets upon being compared with those at Mrs. Bagwell's house were found to exactly correspond in texture, and the marks of the scattered vermilion powder left no doubt as to their identity. The case was to all appearances a very strong one against Jacob, and the circumstantial evidence seemed to furnish irresistible proof of his guilt. Wise was employed to defend him, which was apparently a hopeless undertaking, as in addition to the circumstances previously narrated, a

negro testified that he had seen him, in company with several other men, enter Mrs. Bagwell's house at the time of the robbery. Mrs. Bagwell, though she had been blindfolded, was partially able to identify two of the men, by the sound of their voices, but could give no clew to the identity of the third. These two, as well as Jacob, were convicted, and the former sentenced to be hung. During the progress of the trial, Wise had become convinced of the innocence of his client, and his attention had been attracted by the peculiar demeanor of a negro seen about the court-house, who excited his suspicions to such a degree, that he believed him to be the guilty party. Before the sentence was passed upon his client, he arose to make a motion to set aside the verdict, and, after a brief address, astonished the court by asserting that not only was his client innocent, but that the guilty man was in the court room. During the delivery of his speech, he had watched the effect on the negro, shown by his horror-stricken countenance, as the details of the crime were vividly described. In his wonderfully dramatic way, with his piercing eye fastened upon him, Wise with uplifted arm pointed out the culprit, seated in the gallery, who, wild with fear, arose and fled. On being apprehended, he confessed his guilt and testified to the innocence of Jacob, whose life was thus saved.

Many stories are related on the eastern shore, even at the present day, telling of Wise's remarkable triumphs before juries and on the hustings; and numbers of anecdotes illustrating his ready wit and love of fun. Among the latter is the following, which was related to the author by a resident of the peninsula. Just off the coast of Accomack on the Atlantic side of the peninsula, near the Maryland boundary line, lies Chincoteague Island, which was formerly inhabited by a primitive, but shrewd class of

fishermen and cattle and pony breeders. The annual pony pennings on the island, during the month of August in each year, when the wild animals were caught and branded, attracted hundreds of people, while sportsmen sought the island at all seasons, for the hunting and fishing. Upon one occasion, a Baptist revival meeting had been in progress for several weeks, and religious excitement ran high. One evening Wise and a half dozen convivial spirits, who had just reached the island for a few days' relaxation, came up. Several of the party, as the story goes, had been imbibing freely. No sooner were the group seated on the rough, improvised benches, than the preacher, a "hard-shell" of the most severe type, discovered their presence and, as Wise wore a serious countenance and was of a somewhat clerical appearance, called upon the unknown brother to exhort. Without a moment's hesitation, to the astonishment and infinite amusement of his comrades, who were *not so far gone* as to be oblivious of the humorous situation, Wise proceeded to the front of the large assembly. Taking for his text "wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and he that is deceived thereby is not Wise"—he talked eloquently and to such purpose, that a number of conversions followed the exhortation, while the guilty young men from the mainland, to whom the talk was really addressed, were almost choking with suppressed merriment. Ascertaining Wise's identity afterward, the "hard-shell" divine was ever wont to mention him as a worker in the vineyard and a good Baptist.

For the following anecdotes of Wise, which were recently published in the Richmond *Times*, we are indebted to the pen of the Rev. J. R. Sturgis. "One summer, during the progress of a camp-meeting on the famous Tangier beach, a Mr. ——, from the 'Mainland,' disturbed

the worshippers and almost broke up the meeting. The managers determined to prosecute the offender. His conviction was a certainty and everybody predicted that it would be exceedingly hard with him; that the law would and ought to bear heavily upon him.

"In due time the case was called and the trial proceeded. Joint testimony of credible witnesses established the prisoner's guilt. 'What can Wise say? What can he do?' men were asking.

"When Mr. Wise arose in defence of his client, he astonished many by admitting the fact of his client's guilt, as claimed by the prosecution. He even lectured the prisoner, incidentally, on his bad behavior in drinking and then disturbing the worship of Almighty God. Then turning from the prisoner to the church, as represented by the prosecuting ministers and managers, he denounced the spirit and fact of the prosecution, as being opposed to the spirit and teachings of the Christ they professed to represent. Calling for a Bible and turning its pages, he paused, and then read Matthew xxii: 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's.'

"Taking this as his text, he preached his sermon. Before he concluded it — long before — the jury was convinced that the prosecution was a persecution and the church the real sinner instead of the poor persecuted prisoner at the bar. Without going out of the room to deliberate, the jury acquitted the man, and the heavy costs thrown upon the church amounted to hundreds of dollars.

"It is plain that these jurymen deliberated upon questions of sin, which they had no right to consider, and ignored totally the question of crime, the very and only question they were empanelled to consider. But do not make the mistake of supposing that this was owing to the

ignorance or obtuseness of these jurors. The witchery of Wise's words often blinded, not only a jury, but also all who heard him, to everything in the case, except what he wished them to see.

"One side of his nature was rarely, if ever, revealed to the public, but glimpses of a spirit delightfully chivalrous were occasionally caught by a few beholders. Two instances will illustrate this: Mr. Thomas Crockett, of Tangier Island, is now growing gray. During Mr. Crockett's boyhood, one bright Sabbath morning, Mr. Wise unexpectedly appeared at the home of this Crockett family. All its members were at church with the exception of the boy 'Tom.' Mr. Wise refused him the exciting privilege of running to the church to inform his parents of the distinguished guest awaiting their coming, remarking, 'If your folks knew I were here they would either leave the meeting or could not enjoy it.' In due time, however, his mother returned, and appeared considerably 'frustrated' at the sight of her guest, so much so that when they sat down to dinner it required several attempts before her trembling hands could pour the coffee. As for speech, at the sight of Mr. Wise her voice had fled, and every attempt to speak had only increased her embarrassment. Suddenly to the amazement of the observant and sympathetic Tom, the cloud of fear and anxiety passed from his mother's face, and she became her natural self. In smiling, complacent manner, she even addressed some remark to the visitor, whose presence hitherto had upset her. Tom registered two resolves: To ask his mother for an explanation of this wonderful change in her, and to ask Mr. Wise concerning a breach of 'table manners,' that their guest was guilty of, according to the island standard. Strolling out with Mr. Wise, he put his burning question. 'Mr. Wise, why did you take that

piece of biled chicken in your fingers and bite mouthfuls off in that way, instead of using your knife and fork? My mar makes me use a knife and fork when I eat biled chicken, and she says that's the right way to eat it. You ought to know what is the right way, Mr. Wise, and you eat it with your fingers. Now, is mar wrong and you right?'

"'No, my boy, your mother's right and I was wrong; I never ate chicken that way before,' said Mr. Wise. 'I had a reason for eating it that way. Did you notice how embarrassed your mother seemed to be?'

"'I knew she was skeered nighly to death,' said Tom.

"'And did you see that her fear left her all at once?' said Mr. Wise.

"'Yes, sir,' responded Tom.

"'Well, it was the way I ate the chicken, my boy, that made your mother feel at ease in my presence. She felt that she could teach me one thing if she was an islander, for I evidently didn't know how to eat decently; and the moment she first felt that she was above me in this respect, that moment her fear left her.'

"Perhaps it was the friendly interest shown Tom Crockett by Mr. Wise, then and afterward, that made him, with perhaps one exception, the best educated and most intelligent man of his island generation.

"On his way to or from a Maryland court, Mr. Wise was once spending the day with a friend, not far from what afterward became Crisfield, although the town and a railroad were not then even dreamed of. While there he accompanied his host to the sale of a deceased man's personal estate. Among the effects was a large bowl — the old-time punch or egg-nog bowl. It was full of sugar belonging to the widow. Not thinking that the bowl would be 'put up' so soon, she left the room to get a

bucket in which to empty the sugar. A friend soon ran after her to tell her that they were selling the bowl, with her sugar in it. The widow hastened back to stop the sale of the bowl until she could empty it. It was 'knocked down' to a party just as she entered the room. It was in vain that she explained to the purchaser. He refused to give up the sugar and allow the bowl to be resold. Stung by the indignant looks and remarks of the crowd, he openly appealed to Mr. Wise, whom he knew by sight:

"'Mr. Wise, you are a lawyer and know whether I am right or not. I ask you in the presence of these people, am I entitled to the sugar in this bowl, or not? If you say I am not, I will give it back to her. If you say I am entitled to it, then I shall keep it.'

"'My friend,' said Mr. Wise, in his gentlest tone, and with a deprecating manner, 'you put a delicate and an unpleasant responsibility upon me. Hadn't you better decide this yourself?'

"'No,' said the buyer, 'I know what your opinion is going to be, and I want you to give it so this whole crowd can hear it.'

"'Then,' said Mr. Wise, 'I advise you that the sugar is yours. The widow cannot take it from you. She has no redress in the matter.'

"At this point the man cried out, 'What did I tell you!'

"'Stop!' thundered Mr. Wise. 'I've given you my opinion; I've advised you, at your persistent request, as I can prove by all these people. It remains for me to tell you that I charge you five dollars for the advice and my service in the matter, and I demand immediate payment. If you trifle with me a moment in the matter of payment, it will be the dearest bargain of your life.'

"As Mr. Wise concluded, he walked to the crestfallen

individual and extended his hand for the money, while the crowd yelled its approval. But the crowd became suddenly silent, as Mr. Wise walked over to the widow, and placing the five dollars in her hand, said: 'Madam, this money is honestly mine. I have a perfect right to dispose of it as I please. Take it and with it buy more sugar for yourself and your fatherless children.'"

The *Times*, in adverting to the subject of the legal advice above related, said: "Is it certain that Governor Wise decided the point of law correctly? Portia's judgment, in which she decided that the pound of flesh carried no blood, may be cited to the contrary, though the late William Green of Richmond, one of the most learned lawyers the world ever saw, always questioned the correctness of that, upon the ground that a grant necessarily carries with it all of its incidents.

"No legal reasoning, however, can impair the effect of the admirable story of Governor Wise and the skinflint."

CHAPTER X

THE MOVEMENT LEADING TO THE VIRGINIA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1850–51. THE MIXED AND WHITE BASIS. WISE'S PART IN THE CONVENTION. THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY OF REPRESENTATION IN VIRGINIA

THE year 1850 witnessed a political upheaval in Virginia, which had long been brewing. Probably no more radical revolution, of a peaceable character, has ever occurred in this country than that which culminated in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1850–51.

The accession of Jefferson and his followers to political power, in 1776, marked a great democratic triumph, for the abolition of the laws of primogeniture and entails and the disestablishment of the Church quickly followed. Simplicity in manners and in dress were the order of the day, and the democratic spirit everywhere prevailed. As the French wines were substituted for English ale, so the dress of the colonial period gradually gave way for the pantaloons of our own day. But though the democratic leaven was at work, the institution of negro slavery yet remained, and with it, of necessity, certain survivals of a feudal character.

There appears to be, for some reason, a species of conflict and antagonism in every country between highland and lowland peoples. The sharp points of contrast between the inhabitants of tidewater Virginia and those residing west of the Appalachian range recalled to the

Rev. Alexander Campbell, in the convention of 1829, the words of the poet: —

> "Lands intersected by a narrow frith
> Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
> Make enemies of nations, who had else,
> Like kindred drops, been mingled into one."

From the time of the Revolution down to the year 1850, the breach between eastern Virginia and the transmontane section had steadily widened and deepened. In soil, climate, system of labor, and habits of the people, there were wide divergences between the two divisions of the State. Slavery existed in all the eastern counties, and the slaveholding interest was everywhere dominant in that locality. On the other hand, comparatively few planters had carried their slaves with them west of the Alleghanies, and in the transmontane section slavery had gained but little foothold.

The constitution of Virginia, adopted in 1776, was characterized by an inequality of apportionment with respect to representation, it being based on counties or districts and not population. Jefferson in his "Notes on Virginia" had pointed out the great advantage thus gained by the tidewater section. From time to time the popular discontent manifested itself, through measures introduced in the legislature, providing for a new convention to revise the constitution, and in 1784 Madison strenuously advocated such action. At each recurring session of the legislature the question was debated, until finally in 1816 the western people clamored for a new apportionment, and met in convention at Staunton, to consider what steps to take. At that time, one white man in eastern Virginia "had the same representation in the Senate as three men in the west." In 1824, Jefferson published a letter on the

subject in the Richmond *Enquirer*, in which he said: "The exclusion of a majority of our freemen from the right of representation is merely arbitrary, and an assumption of the minority over the majority. . . . In the representative privilege the equality of political rights is entirely prostrated by our constitution. Upon what principle of right or reason can any one justify the giving to every citizen of Warwick as much weight in the government as to twenty-two citizens in Loudoun?"

Tidewater Virginia was at that time an unprogressive community, with little influx of new population, while the steady growth of the mountain region further increased the inequality in representation.

It was not until October, 1829, that the State Constitutional Convention, which had been petitioned and fought for over a period of fifty years, at last assembled in session in Richmond. As has often been remarked, perhaps no State convention ever assembled in America containing a like group of able men, such as were gathered then. Monroe, Madison, Marshall, Upshur, Barbour, Doddridge, Benjamin Watkins, Leigh, Chapman, Johnson, Giles, Dromgoole, Tyler, Baldwin, Stanard, Randolph of Roanoke, Mercer, Cooke, Powell, Summers, Tazewell, Gordon, and Alexander Campbell were among its ninety-six members. The question most debated was the basis of representation — the east stoutly contending for representation founded on property as well as numbers, which was known as the "mixed basis," while the western members were practically a unit for the "white basis," or representation founded on white manhood suffrage alone. But one man from tidewater, General Robert B. Taylor of Norfolk, favored the latter system, and his views were so antagonistic to those of the people whom he represented, that he resigned his seat during the sitting of the convention. In

the opinion of the eastern members the attitude of the west was radical in the extreme, in seeking to deny property representation, while, on the other hand, the west could see no justice in a system which gave the slaveholders a voice in the government, all out of proportion to their numerical strength, and the white men of the trans-montane country who owned no property were denied the ballot. Although the argument was ably urged that property demanded protection, which it could not obtain under the rule of King Numbers alone, yet there can be no doubt that the institution of slavery was the real stumbling-block in preventing the two sections from arriving at a solution of the problem, satisfactory to both sides. In his address to the convention, James Monroe, the president of the body, said, "I am satisfied, if no such thing as slavery existed, that the people of the Atlantic border would meet their brethren of the west upon the basis of a majority of the free white population."

The people residing beyond the mountains had as their immediate object in view, in struggling for an increase of representation, the gain of a sufficient number of votes in the legislature to insure them appropriations for public works, of which they stood in sore need. They, time and again, disclaimed any intention of interfering with slavery in the east, but they never succeeded in dispelling from the minds of the slaveholders of tidewater their doubts as to the security of slave property, should the trans-montane section gain control. Nor was this distrust on the part of the low country altogether without good reason, for though the west was sincere in its declaration not to interfere with the slave interest, yet there was probably no time between 1829 and 1860 when, under a system of white manhood suffrage, the majority of the voters of the State would not have voted for any reasonable scheme of emanci-

pation. But while the west sought not to disturb the east in its possessions, it had viewed with almost as much alarm the removal of slave-owners to the mountain country, as the east had ever regarded any diminution of its power to control legislation. It was in answer to the argument of an eastern member, that there would soon be no diversity of interest between the different sections of the State, that Charles J. Faulkner of Berkeley County declared, in January, 1832, during the debates in the legislature growing out of the Nat Turner insurrection: "Sir, it is to avert any such possible consequence to my country, that I, one of the humblest, but not the least determined, of the western delegation, have raised my voice for emancipation. Sir, tax our lands, — vilify our country, — carry the sword of extermination through our now defenceless villages, but spare us, I implore you, spare us the curse of slavery — that bitterest drop from the chalice of the destroying angel." Though it is not probable that the west, from the physical character of the country, and the fact that its people were farmers and graziers, and not planters, as in the tidewater, would have received any great influx of slave population; yet the representatives of that section noted that some of the Southern States at this time were enacting laws against the importation of slaves, and it seemed but reasonable that the black tide, which would be denied outlet to the southward, would pour itself westward across the Blue Ridge and Alleghanies, to whose base it had already come. The mountaineers, too, had contrasted their rude, but well-tilled country, where free white labor worked the soil, with the eastern section, of which Philip A. Bolling of Buckingham said, in the legislature in 1832: "If we turn our eyes to that part of the country which lies below the mountains, and particularly below the falls of the rivers, it seems as if some judgment

from Heaven had poured over it and seared it; fields once cultivated are now waste and desolate — the eye is no longer cheered by the rich verdure that decked it in other days; no, sir, but fatigued by an interminable wilderness of worn-out, gullied, piny old fields."

The outcome of the convention of 1829 was a virtual victory for the east, although representation was more nearly equalized, and the west had gained forty-one per cent of the members of the legislature where previously they had but thirty-three. Under the white basis, however, they would have received forty-six per cent; and the final settlement of the question was thus merely postponed to a future day, as disaffection still existed.

At the risk of wearying the reader, the author has felt himself under the necessity of pointing out the conditions which led up to the convention of 1850, as a proper knowledge of them is necessary to an understanding of Wise's political career. The like may be said of the subject of internal improvements, to which we will advert as briefly as possible. This question was closely allied with that of representation, so much so, indeed, that in a certain sense they may be treated as having been almost identical. If the reader will cast his eye upon the map of Virginia, he will observe, between the mouth of the James and the Chesapeake, the magnificent harbor known as Hampton Roads, capable of floating the navies of the world. And if he will reflect at the same time that along the banks of the James the Englishman made his first permanent home on this continent, the thought must come to him with unusual force, that it is strange indeed that nowhere along this great roadstead, or on any of the streams emptying into the lower Chesapeake, is there to-day a city of any considerable size. When he further considers the magnificent back country, lying but a few hundred miles

to the westward, and the additional fact that Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Kansas City are but the growth of yesterday, historically speaking, it is the more remarkable that in Virginia, the oldest colony of the American Union, there is to-day no city of one hundred thousand inhabitants, or of seventy thousand white population. Yet the reason for this fact is not difficult to discover, for from the settlement at Jamestown down to the outbreak of the war between the States, this section was dominated by the plantation interest, which was anti-commercial in character, and little disposed to encourage manufactures and internal improvements.

In 1831 a convention was held at Lewisburg, Greenbrier County, by the people of the surrounding country, for the purpose of urging the necessity of connection with the seaboard, in order to furnish an outlet for western produce. The Richmond *Enquirer*, the leading paper of the State, strongly seconded these efforts, despite the fact that it was published in an eastern city, and in one of its editorials declared: "Our western citizens *want* a market and *will have it.* If they do not find it in Richmond, they will seek it and they will obtain it in Baltimore." At that time, long lines of wagon trains passed down the Shenandoah Valley, *en route* for Baltimore, and a few far-seeing men urged upon Richmond and Norfolk the necessity of acting promptly, if they would prevent this trade from being permanently diverted in another direction.

There is something very pitiable in the contemplation of Virginia at this time; for not only was her material condition far from being prosperous, but her people were divided in sentiment and failed to grasp the opportunities which would have brought about her revival from the slough into which she had fallen. A contributor to the *Enquirer* of February 8, 1831, thus describes the general

appearance of the country: "Wretched highways, scarcely passable; noble, majestic streams, either wholly neglected, or encumbered by ill-digested and expensive attempts at improvements; dangerous bridges, badly constructed by heavy county taxation, or owned by individuals who keep them in bad order, and oppressive tolls; and that, under laws which give them *exclusive rights to do so forever:* deserted fields, covered with broom sedge and intersected by gullies; decayed, patched-up, and worthless fences; half-cultivated farms and plantations, without adequate farm buildings and conveniences, or even comfortable quarters for laborers; miserable hovels scattered in every direction, and relieved, but occasionally, by the appearance of dwellings which promise comfort and independence; a population, restless, dissatisfied, in debt and dependent on other States for many of the necessities and comforts of life, without the *means to buy.* These and many other degrading spectacles present themselves to our daily observance."

While, of course, there were localities which did not answer to this description, it was, however, generally true of the country east of the Piedmont section.[1]

Yet it should be said that there were many Virginians, even at that day, who lamented the decadence of their

[1] It should be stated in this connection that the condition of Virginia was greatly improved between 1845–60. Not only had agricultural products risen in price during the decade prior to the Civil War, but the methods of farming were probably better, and more attention was directed to the rotation of crops, and the "five-field" system was adopted in many instances. Tidewater Virginia, with the exception of the river and bottom lands, was, generally speaking, a poor country, and although the soil is easily worked and responsive to kindly cultivation yet it does not hold improvements; and an old farm that has been carefully tilled for years, if left to itself will soon grow up in broom straw and scrub pines. Prior to the war Edmund Ruffin had written at great length on the subject of the use of green sand marl, and other manures, and they were more generally used than was the case in 1830.

State, and who longed to see her reap the benefit of the improvements and inventions of the age and assume the foremost position in the work of industrial development. Though the great majority were most interested, as an old gentleman once remarked, in the question "of the price of tobacco and whom they should elect President," there were those who anxiously strove to turn the faces of their people from the dead past to the living present — from memories and bygone glories to the duties of the future. Men like Joseph C. Cabell, Wyndham Robertson, Claudius Crozet, Moncure Robinson, and Charles Ellet were equal to the pioneers in any State in the ability, energy, and zeal which they displayed in keeping Virginians apace with the industrial activity of the age in the construction of railways and other lines of communication.

On February 10, 1830, the first railway charter ever obtained in Virginia was granted to the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, and between that date and the year 1840 the construction of about three hundred miles of road was undertaken on various lines. These included the Winchester and Potomac Roads, designed to connect the valley with the Baltimore and Ohio at Harper's Ferry, and carry the trade of that section to Baltimore; the Seaboard and Roanoke, running from Portsmouth to a point on the Roanoke River; the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac, intended to give a route due north from Richmond; the Louisa Road, connecting Hanover Junction on the former line with Louisa County, and the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad, uniting the two cities of those names. All these lines, however, except the Winchester and Potomac, were in eastern Virginia, and communication between the eastern and western portions of the State was as roundabout and difficult as ever, as

there was no railroad across the Blue Ridge and Alleghanies, which stood as barriers, shutting off the people of one section from those of another. Frequently travellers coming from beyond the mountains to eastern Virginia would go around by way of Baltimore, so difficult were the modes of travel across the mountains.

In 1850 the James River and Kanawha Canal was in operation between Richmond and Lynchburg, and the western members of the legislature would come in stage-coaches across the mountains to the last-named city, where they would take the boat, in which, packed to the point of suffocation, they would be drawn by mules to the capital, about one hundred and fifty miles distant.

Perhaps no country on earth possesses a greater number of magnificent navigable streams than tidewater Virginia, yet this fact, strange to say, was destined to greatly hinder, rather than advance, the growth and development of the State. By way of the Potomac, the Rappahannock, the York, the James, and the numerous estuaries, creeks, and arms of the Chesapeake and Atlantic which exist in that region, vessels could come up almost to the barn-doors of the planters, thus affording them cheap and convenient transportation facilities. On this account, even more than owing to the sloth of the slaveholding community, the population of the eastern counties were singularly indifferent in regard to works of internal improvement; and when bills in furtherance of those ends were before the legislature, through their representatives opposed them regularly. This opposition on their part gave rise to an abominable system of "log-rolling," and it was only by this means that an appropriation of public improvement could ever be obtained. It was largely for this reason that great dissatisfaction continued to prevail among the transmontane people with the constitution

adopted in 1830, as the power and attitude of the tidewater section in the legislature blocked the way to effectual State aid in the construction of railways, turnpikes, and canals.

Threats of separation from the State were freely indulged in throughout the western country, for though the people there were loyal Virginians, they felt that there was no disposition on the part of the east to accede to their demands. But one man in the legislature from the lowland counties advocated appropriations for public works. This was Joseph Segar, who represented first Northampton County, on the eastern shore, and later Elizabeth City County. His speeches in this behalf, still preserved in the newspapers of that period, prove him to have been a liberal-minded and far-seeing statesman, with a full appreciation of the needs of his State; but unfortunately he was ahead of the people of his time in the section from which he hailed.

Wise's opinions, on the great questions of suffrage and internal improvements, had been, from the earliest period of his public life, heartily in favor of unrestricted suffrage and liberal encouragement to railways and improvements of all sorts. By nature a thorough Democrat, he believed in the right of every man to vote, and he looked too far ahead not to appreciate the urgent necessity of the union of the west and east, which, in his opinion, could only be accomplished by bonds of steel rails. There was too little individual wealth at the time beyond the mountains, and railway construction in that country too expensive, for the people of the west to do this unaided, and he consequently favored their demands for State aid. This, however, he considered would redound to the great benefit of the tidewater section, as well as the west, and was of equal importance to both.

During the month of April, in the year 1837, Wise was

tendered a dinner by prominent citizens of the city of Norfolk, and in the course of a speech delivered upon that occasion said: "Never did any people under the sun make as gross a mistake as did the people of the Chesapeake counties, the counties of tidewater Virginia, in the year 1829, when the convention sat. Sir, we warred with our natural allies. The counties of the valley and the transmontane counties are the *back country* of Virginia — we have the seaport. The seaport conflicted and contended with the only source of its trade and commerce. Richmond and Petersburg can never be any other than manufacturing cities — that is enough for them. Instead of clubbing interests with the western people, we united with the people between us and the mountains, who are interested to cut us off from the west. Laboring under this grand and grievous mistake our host of good and great men — Virginia never had more of such — our Leighs and Randolphs and Tazewells and Taylors — no, I beg pardon of the memory of that honored and lamented and clear-sighted man, General Robert B. Taylor — he made no mistake, and was ostracized for it — our Upshurs and Joynes — and all our talents and greatness were exerted to their utmost to prove a monstrous proposition: That a Majority have not the Right to govern a Free Republic — merely to strip our own natural allies of their just portion of power in the State. With a fortuitous majority we conquered a majority and conquered ourselves. What have been the consequences? Norfolk and Portsmouth have dwindled, the inland towns are an incubus upon their unequalled harbor for a port — and every leading man almost in lowland Virginia who was in that unfortunate convention, except Messrs. Barbour and Nicholas, and a few others who have taken the bounty and sold out to the Dutch, have been prostrated and damned in the

esteem of all western Virginians. Any political cause which has the name of a Leigh, a Tazewell, or an Upshur identified with it, no matter what may be its intrinsic merits, no matter how it may involve the honor and interests of the State and the Union, and all upon which it depends, is doomed in western Virginia. A demagogue who was not in the convention, who lives midland on the western borders, has only to seize upon this sectional grudge against a name, and no issue whatever can be fairly tried before the people. What is the remedy? Sir, we must heal and repair these internal dissensions which distract and divide us; we must restore State harmony, atone for past wrongs, become socially, politically, and commercially united with the west, and all will be well. Norfolk and Portsmouth must be made to reach out their Briarean arms of internal improvement. Our works must radiate from this centre to every point of the compass. You must reach south to Charleston — North Carolina's trade is yours, her coast is sand-bound and she can have no port — nature forbids it. You must reach north, by the Eastern Shore Railroad, to Philadelphia. You will thus become the great central emporium, and, above all, you must reach out due west, to the Big Bend of the Ohio River! Behold Norfolk and Portsmouth, with these lines of improvement—they then will have capital, because they will have trade; trade, because they will have the great carriers of trade. Unite with the west, say I, to all the tidewater country — give them what they want, outlets without stint or number; make Norfolk and Portsmouth a New York, and every tongue of land by the Chesapeake will be a Long Island. God speed the day when thus Virginia will become united, will progress more rapidly than ever any new State did, to her wonted and certain Dominion — when she *will* become *herself* again!"

No man within the limits of the Commonwealth believed more strongly than did Wise in the great industrial future that awaited Virginia when her resources should be developed along commercial and other lines, instead of agriculturally alone; but he realized keenly the *laissez-faire* spirit of the people and their indifference regarding the improvements of the age, which had caused Virginia to become a laggard in the race for supremacy in the Union. In a letter to his friend, Caleb Cushing, he spoke of his own district as "old, moss-grown, and slipshod"; and in his speeches to the people, he pleaded with them to wake up. In an address delivered upon the floor of Congress in 1837, in replying to the argument of a Southern member, that a national bank was injurious to the South, Wise said: "In many respects, sir, but in none so much as in relation to the improvements of commerce and of the mechanic arts, are the Southern people a half-century behind the times in which they live. Noble, generous, liberal-minded, brave, independent, intelligent, and sagacious, yet are many of them too *metaphysical* and likely — as Mr. Letcher used to say of old Virginia, *to die of an abstraction!* They admire and cherish old things and ways, and despise, without much reason, improvements in the credit system just as they do a new lapel or button! They do not enlarge, as I said on a former occasion, their capacities to receive the benefits of any institutions of trade; they do not calculate their losses in the destruction of them when created and existing, but look alone with dissatisfaction to the greater benefits which others received from improved capacities and enlarged advantages. They claim justly that *nature* has done the most for them; are content with what nature has done for them, and are only discontented when they behold the *art* of others outstripping their friend *nature*. They are only wrong, sir, in not

improving and assisting their own natural advantages, and in wishing to prevent others from exerting their enterprise and wits to make up for natural deficiencies, whilst they are unwilling to exert their own wits and enterprise at all."

The agitation for a new constitutional convention in Virginia was not allowed to abate by the western members, but was kept up with renewed vigor during the period from 1830 to 1850. The trans-Alleghany people continued at times to talk freely of separation, and complained of a system under which they received scant assistance from the State for any purpose, while they are, at the same time, largely denied participation in the political offices of the Commonwealth. The long-continued efforts of the west for reform were at last crowned with success, during the winter of 1849–50, when, owing to a sentiment that had arisen in the east as well, in favor of needed changes in the organic law, the legislature passed an act providing that a vote of the people should be taken to determine the question of calling a constitutional convention. The passage of this act was, however, at the time regarded as an eastern victory, as it provided for an election of delegates apportioned upon the mixed basis of representation, which would insure a majority in the convention in sympathy with the country lying nearest the Atlantic. "The supposed white population in 1849 was 887,717, and the revenue tax was $472,516,31; and since this apportionment for the convention was to be on the mixed basis (taxation and white population combined) every $7,000.24 elected one delegate, and every 13,151 white persons one delegate. This meant that in the convention every white person was to have just a little more than half as much weight as a dollar in taxes." [1] The section

[1] "Representation in Virginia," by Julian A. C. Chandler, pages 56, 57, Johns Hopkins University Studies.

of the State east of the mountains thus secured 76 of the 135 delegates. For this reason most of the counties beyond the Alleghanies voted against the convention, but the bill passed by a good majority.

On the 6th of May, 1850, Wise issued an address to the people of his district, which was composed of the two counties of Accomack and Northampton, announcing himself a candidate to represent them in the convention, to revise the constitution. After declaring himself in favor of a liberal public school system, he continued: "I hold that the only true element of *representation* in the legislature *is the will of the people.* That *property*, whether it consists of horses and lands, or carriages, or cash, or an ox, or a maid-servant, or a man-servant, or of anything that is a man's, *having no will* has no right as such to be represented; morally, the *owner* of it has the right only to have it *protected* by the constitution and the law. That *representation* ought to be fairly and equally as possible apportioned among the *legal voters* of the State, those who are endowed by the Creator with reason, free-will, and conscience, and by the constitution with political entity and the franchise of suffrage. That the will of the *majority* of legal voters, subject only to the *constitutional guarantees of protection to minorities* of persons and to *property*, ought to give the law to the State. That *minorities* of *persons* represented, and *property* unrepresented, are entitled to *constitutional guarantees of protection*, and the majority in convention is bound to provide them. That they can be easily provided and can be made ample and certain securities against all unequal burdens and oppressions upon a minority, or upon property. That our present representation in the legislature — based as in part it is practically on *slaves*, who have no political voice or entity, on *carriages*, which are in many instances but extravagant luxu-

ries, and on *licenses to sell whiskey*, which are human curses —is not only fundamentally aristocratic and anti-republican, but it has *proven utterly futile and fallacious* in protecting the State from an onerous *debt of fifteen millions of dollars* for local works of minor importance or values to any, and of no profit to the tidewater region, whilst it degrades our brethren in the western portion of the State by its individious inequality."

Among other reforms Wise declared himself in favor of biennial, instead of annual, sittings of the legislature, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and the extension of the right of suffrage to every white male citizen, above twenty years of age, who had resided six months in the Commonwealth. He furthermore advocated a law that a man should vote but once in the State at any one election, and that no man should be allowed to vote upon his property of any description, and favored the election of the governor, judges, and executive and municipal officers by the people, and the abolition of the County Court system. To us at the close of the nineteenth century there seems nothing peculiarly radical and revolutionary in these views, nor were they so considered in many States of the Union in the year 1850, even prior to that time; for ours is a levelling age and distinctions of class have been rapidly broken down. It is hence difficult to realize the attitude of the people of Virginia on these questions, as late as the middle of this century; but, with their habitual dislike of innovations and their devotion to conservative tradition, many of the leading citizens of the State regarded the views of a man like Wise as worthy of the French Revolution. Alone and single-handed he stood, in tidewater Virginia in 1850, as an advocate of the suffrage or white basis of representation, and that, too, in a district that had sent Upshur and Joynes, two of the strongest champions of

the mixed basis, to the convention of 1829. The counties of Accomack and Northampton were composed of a rural population, were traversed by no line of railroad, no newspaper was published in their limits, and the people remained unchanged in their condition and habits of thought, and the spirit of modern change and innovation had gained no entrance in their midst. Their views on the question of representation, the main subject at issue, were diametrically opposed to those enunciated by Wise, and the conservative land and slave-owners of the peninsula were little disposed to embark upon a system of government where mere numbers were to be given absolute dominion, and property was to be left, in their opinion, without adequate protection. Wise went before the people and addressed them at length upon the questions at issue, and despite his isolated position was chosen one of the two delegates from his district, his colleague, Louis C. H. Finney, being elected at the same time as a mixed basis man. Thus the people of the eastern shore chose two delegates of radically different views, the one, because he truly represented their ideas, and the other, because of their personal admiration and devotion to him. Wise always considered this election, as in many respects it was, the greatest victory of his political life.

The convention that assembled in the Capitol building at Richmond, on the 14th of August, 1850, unlike the one which gathered in 1829, was not particularly remarkable for the group of distinguished men it contained, and many persons commented upon the number of comparatively unknown and youthful delegates. Those disposed to criticise alleged that this arose mainly from the fact that party service and prejudice had entered largely into the choice of delegates, which frequently resulted in the ablest men being left at home. Another subject of adverse com-

ment was the fact, that of the 135 delegates, 97 of them were lawyers, who were compared by a writer of the time to the plagues of the Egyptians. It might be remarked, however, that from this profession have arisen most of the leaders in nearly every struggle for liberty, and that, moreover, the convention of 1850 had about it an appearance of freshness and vigor which the earlier gathering of Virginia statesmen had not possessed. John Y. Mason, a man well versed in public affairs, and a member of the previous convention, was chosen as the presiding officer. Among the list of delegates were George W. Summers of Kanawha, a son of the able Lewis Summers who figured in the convention of 1829, an orator of persuasive eloquence; Robert E. Scott of Fauquier, a master of logical argument; James H. Ferguson of Logan, a man of but limited education, but powerful intellect; John Minor Botts of Henrico; Muscoe R. H. Garnett of Essex; Beverley B. Douglas of King William; R. L. T. Beale of Westmoreland; Thomas J. Randolph of Albemarle; Walter D. Leake of Goochland; James Barbour of Culpeper; John Janney of Loudoun; John T. Anderson of Botetourt; John Letcher of Rockbridge, afterward governor; Hugh W. Sheffey of Augusta; Green B. Samuels of Shenandoah; Charles J. Faulkner of Berkeley; Joseph Johnson of Harrison, afterward governor; John S. Carlisle of Barbour; Allen T. Caperton of Monroe; Robert C. Stanard, James Lyons, and John A. Meredith of Richmond; Benjamin R. Floyd of Wythe; George W. Hopkins of Washington; Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia, and others, who proved that, though the older generation of Virginia statesmen had passed away, she still had within her borders many men of a high order of intellect. After remaining in session several weeks, the convention adjourned November the 4th in order to receive the bene-

fit of the new census, but reassembled during the month of January following, and remained in continuous session till August.

The great question of representation transcended all others in importance; and in the long argument which ensued, each delegate apparently felt it his bounden duty to give utterance to his views upon the various schemes of apportionment presented to the convention. Comparatively little new light, however, was brought to bear upon the subject, it having been thoroughly gone over and exhausted by Upshur, Doddridge, and others, in the convention of 1829. Messrs. Scott, Stanard, Barbour, and the other eastern champions contended that by the adoption of the white or suffrage basis, the west, which paid but about one-third of the taxes, would be given the control; that property would fail to receive adequate protection, that a mere numerical majority would rule, instead of a majority in interest; and that the west would impose heavy taxes for the purpose of improvements, and would, furthermore, overtax or abolish slavery, and extend the railroad between Winchester and Baltimore, thus carrying the trade of the valley and mountain region to the latter city.

On Wednesday, April 23, Wise began his speech in favor of the white basis in these words: "Mr. President, for myself, personally, on this subject, I have not one word to say. All personal considerations are overshadowed by the Coliseum of the State! What man — what mere man, now living, is worthy to be considered — to be weighed in the balance at this moment, when the 'crisis of our fate has come,' and Virginia — Virginia is in the scale? . . . What are local considerations, what is trans-Alleghany, what is the valley, what is Piedmont, what is tidewater, what are these mere sectional conflicts com-

pared with the entire, immeasurable interests of the State, as a whole State — a State measured by herself in the past, a State that cannot be measured for the future? Now, the question is, whether in this moment of general rivalry among States, Virginia shall remain supine and dormant, or whether Virginia shall not reach out her hands to take an empire more magnificent than that of the Cæsars."

The idea of a division of the State, he declared that he would not allow himself to contemplate or discuss. Throughout Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and the Monday following, he consumed the whole of the day and night sessions of the convention. But though he spoke for five days, he never flagged for an instant, nor did his audience weary of hearing him, for during his entire speech the aisles and galleries were crowded with eager listeners. A comparative stranger in Richmond, the people were anxious to see the man, to whom not only an unusual degree of interest attached on account of his marked personality and fervid eloquence, but because he alone among the members from tidewater championed the cause of the west. In adverting to the great speech of Upshur, delivered twenty years before, Wise denied that there were no *a priori* rules of government, and that men did not stand upon a status in the State, above property; or that government was instituted primarily for the protection of the latter. He pointed out the injustice of the system, by which a majority of ninety-four thousand white voters west of the mountains were denied an equal voice with the east, merely because the east paid an excess of $132,000.00 of taxes and on three hundred and forty-eight thousand slaves, and declared that these men west of the mountains were their brother Virginians, and that it was wrong thus to distrust and humili-

ate them. He founded his argument for the suffrage basis, not only on the bill of rights, but the further fact that man was given dominion over the earth, and alone possessed will power and volition. He dwelt at length upon the need of railways and material development in Virginia, and pointed out the great future that lay before the people, when they should make use of their advantages. The idea of the west abolishing slavery he combated as a slaveholder himself, and maintained that the east could not more surely cause the people beyond the mountains to hate slavery than by permitting them to realize that that institution was the cause of full representation being withheld from them, and of their failure to secure internal improvements. When, he argued, the people of the mountains discuss among themselves why they are cut off from the world and denied communication with the eastern markets, and when they further ask themselves the question why Virginia was lacking in the public improvements and advantages of other States, the answer would come to them that it was "because black slaves make white slaves!" In closing his long speech he said: "Give us an united people with one affection, one interest, one feeling, and one impulse. If any people upon the face of God's earth ought to be inspired by the recollection and glories of the past, it is Virginia; for she has more than Greece or Rome to inspire her. With the glory of the past to inspire her, what might she not achieve? Give me for the people of Virginia free and universal education, give me free and equal suffrage, give me free and universal representation for our people, and who can foretell our destiny?" Although his address to the convention was marred at intervals by intemperance of language, yet his effort was undoubtedly a great one, and produced a strong effect. If he did not possess to the

same degree the winning eloquence of George W. Summers, nor yet the logical power of Robert E. Scott, he did have in a greater measure than either of them the power of riveting the attention of an assemblage and impressing his views upon them. The *Whig* had pronounced him "a modern Jack Cade" and said that his speech was made up largely of abuse of the rich and aristocrats; but any man holding Wise's views at that time, in eastern Virginia, would have been regarded as a radical, if not a revolutionist.

After long, weary months of debate, during which proposition after proposition in regard to the apportionment was voted down, a compromise measure was at last adopted. By this plan the apportionment for the House of Delegates was on the suffrage basis, and that of the Senate on a purely arbitrary one; but the west had gained the victory, for it secured a majority of four on joint ballot. Many men in the tidewater section regarded the new constitution as violative of the rights of the east, and some talked of a division of the State — among whom was Littleton Waller Tazewell — before surrendering the mixed basis. The new constitution was adopted by an overwhelming vote of the people, and Virginia had at last become democratic in fact, as she had long been in theory. It must not be forgotten, too, that a tremendous forward stride had been made in other respects than the new representation, for after the adoption of the constitution there was to be an abolition of the law allowing freeholders only to vote; the governor, judges, and other officers were to be elected by the people, and many relics of feudalism had disappeared, and for once it seemed that the people of Virginia were thoroughly permeated by the spirit of the age in which they lived. In the bringing about of these reforms, no

man had been more instrumental than Wise, and from the beginning to the end of the sessions of the convention he had occupied the position of a leader. A writer of the time, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, in describing the members of the convention, thus speaks of him: —

"In appearance he was one of the most remarkable-looking men in the Assembly, and would attract attention wherever seen. His face seemed full of cavities, — hollow cheeks, large, hollow eye-sockets, and the most cavernous mouth; when he spoke, the eyebrow seemed thrown up toward the top of his head, and his mouth immensely opened, like a gate on its hinges, so that he appeared to be all eyes and all mouth — two very good features in an orator. His face is full of flexibility and, by the easy play of its muscles, expresses every emotion and passion of the mind. In fact, the whole face speaks in every muscle and fibre of it. When at rest, his relaxed features, tall, loose-jointed figure, and slight, spare form give no promise of physical power; yet the length and frequency of his speech and his earnest, violent gesticulation show that he possesses great power of endurance. From out this cavernous mouth flow streams of eloquence; these hollow eye-sockets are filled up with the blaze of the eye; and the very flexibility of his features adds force and emphasis to his words. His hazel eye, even when quiet, has a daring outlook that well expresses the character of the man; and in his excited moments it blazed and burned in the fire of his own vehemence, as if it would consume all opposition and intimidate all resistance. His action is always abundant and is of the most vehement and excited character. Totally devoid of grace, which his loose, angular figure forbids, it yet possesses much power and eccentric force; his use of the long forefinger reminds us of Randolph, and, like him, he

excels in denunciation. His voice is the most perfect and beautiful feature that, as an orator, he possesses; it is at once powerful and sweet, as flexible as the muscles and features of his face, and as perfectly under control; it has compass, variety, depth, and clearness, and, besides this, it has that peculiarity of sound or accent which constitutes the winning spell of the orator and which so effectually charms an audience. . . . Mr. Wise spoke on every question that came up, and, in fact, scarcely a day passed that he did not have something to say. His greatest speech was made upon the Basis Question, toward the close of the debate upon that subject; he was five days in delivering it, and the best proof of his power as an orator was shown in the intense interest with which his long speech was listened to by the people of Richmond. The galleries and the aisles were crowded with an interested audience; the members of the convention gave up their chairs to the ladies, so that it was really a mixed assembly of citizens, delegates, and ladies before whom he spoke. The effect of his speech was strikingly evident; and if the true test of an orator is in his power to convince a mixed audience of the truth of his own opinions and to carry with him their attention and their sympathies, then Henry A. Wise is one of the most eloquent men in Virginia. . . . He led the van of the western party, and perhaps contributed more than any other man to the success which that party obtained. It is but due, however, to him to say that he esteemed this Basis advantageous to the east as well as to the west, and hoped that, by giving power into the hands of western men, they would construct lines of railroad connecting east and west, and thus increase the population and build up the cities of tidewater Virginia."

During the long, weary months through which the con-

vention sat, Wise had never despaired of the success of the principles contended for by him; and even when many of the western members had abandoned all hope of victory and talked of going home, he had stimulated their drooping spirits and urged a continuance of the struggle. After securing the passage of the clause providing for manhood suffrage and a new apportionment of representation, Wise, in justice to his own constituents and the eastern party generally, led the struggle for equality in taxation, in order to protect the residents of eastern Virginia from excessive taxes levied on slave property. The new constitution provided that taxation should be equal and uniform, and all other property than slaves should be taxed in proportion to its value; also that every slave who had attained the age of twelve years should be assessed with a tax equal to and not exceeding that assessed on land of the value of three hundred dollars. This provision, save as regards the amendment excepting slaves under twelve years of age, was drawn by Wise and passed largely through his influence, in order to prevent any misuse of their newly gained power by the west.

CHAPTER XI

THIRD MARRIAGE. OPINION OF OLD BACHELORS. ADDRESS BEFORE THE VIRGINIA COLONIZATION SOCIETY. "AFRICA GAVE TO VIRGINIA A SAVAGE AND A SLAVE, VIRGINIA GIVES BACK TO AFRICA A CITIZEN AND A CHRISTIAN!" VIEWS IN REGARD TO THE NEGRO AND SLAVERY. DELEGATE TO THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION OF 1852

During the sessions of the Constitutional Convention in the autumn of 1850, Wise had lost his second wife, who died suddenly, at home, while he was in Richmond, in attendance upon the Convention.

In November, 1853, he was married a third time to Miss Mary Elizabeth Lyons of Richmond, a sister of James Lyons, Esq., a prominent lawyer of that city. From the frequency of his matrimonial ventures it may be rightfully inferred that he was an advocate of the married state; and in one of his speeches on the floor of Congress he had said: "Mr. Speaker, there is a certain class of men who, put them where you will, in any situation in life, will *piddle* — I mean old bachelors! I never will henceforth support any man for the presidency who will appoint a bachelor to any office of honor or profit, and especially of responsibility. An old bachelor, sir, is a 'withered fig tree,' he is a 'vis inertiæ.' Old bachelors are too near akin to old maids!"

For the next two years, after his service in the Constitutional Convention, Wise remained quietly at home in

Accomack, not participating in, but an interested observer of, public affairs. At that time he was filled with gloomy forebodings in regard to the antislavery agitation, which he believed would end in bloodshed, and a disruption of the Union. During the month of January, 1850, he delivered an address before the members of the legislature in Richmond, in which he said, "Our only safety now lies in bold, manly, united resistance, firm, concentrated, dignified, and determined action." He urged the necessity of preparation on the part of the South, for events which were casting their shadows before. Of Wise's views on the general subject of negro slavery, a fairly correct idea can be formed from an impromptu address delivered by him before the Virginia Colonization Society, at Richmond, January 10, 1838, as these views were substantially those entertained by him, up to the time of the war.

In the course of his speech he said: —

"The abolition society denounces slavery as a *sin;* summons the *abstract* principles of right and justice, and an imaginary law of Heaven, to destroy the most holy obligations of political right and justice, founded upon constitutional compact among men; appeals to prejudices and passions the most dangerous, because most fanatical, to release a portion of mankind from an alleged cruel and oppressive bondage; inflames and agitates the public mind, by threatening to demolish all established social relations; arouses a religious zeal in a crusade against the peace and order and union of a nation; teaches and preaches insurrection to the slave; encourages lynch-law, and hallows the victims of its penalties with the glory of martyrdom; calumniates and curses the slaveholder; hurls its incendiarism against his life; attacks and attempts to render unsafe the institution of slavery, and thereby tightens the

fetters of the slave and makes his chains more galling; opposes the colonization of the freeman of color in a land where the black man may be the fellow of man, and advances the horrible amalgamation here in the land of his degradation, with those to whom his mere association is contamination the most abhorrent and revolting! The Colonization Society sacredly regards slavery as a civil institution of the country, which, upon the principle of the lesser yielding to the greater good, cannot be attacked by the law of humanity, and must necessarily be tolerated and sustained from motives and reasons of policy; defends all the eternal and immutable principles of right, and religiously promotes the obvious decrees of Heaven, whilst it faithfully obeys the paramount laws of the State; appeals to the reason and enlightened consciences of men, and to that calm and peaceful religion which ever righteously interposes to ameliorate the various conditions of *all* men, and which wisely *wins* the powerful to assist the weak — the unbound, the bound; hushes the din of discord, and by a charm preserves our peace by reconciling our moral duties with our social and political rights and interests; invokes the love of union; teaches and preaches obedience to servants; supports the majesty of the laws by respecting public sentiment, and classes all the disturbers of the public peace together, inspires the slaveholder with confidence, and addresses itself alone to his affections; removes the enemies of his peace and safety; guards and renders safe the title of his property and its enjoyment, and thereby obtains for the slave the indulgences which the slackened cord of confidence yields without cause or fear; incidentally facilitates voluntary emancipation, by sloughing off the free colored population always in the way of freedom to the slave; strengthens and upholds the friends of the slaveholder

where he needs friends most, where there are no ties and associations of slavery to plead for the institution, and where in the North it is a sword to pierce abolition; and, above all these special benefits, its great aim is that which makes the grandeur of this cause rise to sublimity — *to make light shine out of darkness, to colonize a nation of freemen in their fatherland out of our kitchens of slaves.*

"Yes, sir, the existence and operation of *abolition* but add to the special benefits of colonization. It not only renders the institution of slavery secure at home among ourselves, but it grants the only ground on which our friends can stand in the non-slaveholding States among our enemies who are daily multiplying in numbers and increasing in power. But, sir, I repeat that the special benefits of this cause to this nation are nothing compared with its general benefits to all mankind, to all posterity, to Africa, to the world. In contemplating the vast, ultimate design and effects of this great scheme of lighting up a whole land now shrouded in the blackness of darkness, I have often been struck with the thought which justifies slavery itself in the abstract, and which has made me wonder and adore a gracious special Providence. Ay, sir, a special Providence — bad a man as some may have been taught to believe me to be — I, sir, even I do firmly if not faithfully, intellectually if not religiously, believe in a great and good overruling special Providence. And, sir, I as firmly believe that *slavery on this continent is the gift of Heaven to Africa.* Is it unworthy of the divine purpose or impious to suppose that it was by God intended to be the sun of the illumination of that land of night? Cannot one well see the hand of the everlasting Almighty who worketh not in a day or generation, in making *one generation serve for another of the same people?* Is there aught religiously wrong in making an *idolatrous pagan sire work*

out the civilization and Christianity of a son? What mortal can say that the *slavery of the sire* was not divinely intended to be the *consideration* — and is it anything more than a fair equivalent — for the arts of life and the lights of truth *to his posterity?* Africa gave to Virginia a *savage* and a *slave;* Virginia gives back to Africa a *citizen* and a *Christian.* Against which does the balance lie? If this was not the divine will, let those who object tell me, how came *African* slavery here? Sir, it is a mystery if not thus explained. When our fathers landed on the shores of my venerable district, did they find a population fair as the forests of the land? Who roamed those forests? Were *they* too not savages, ignorant, rude, barbarous, and uncivilized as the negro of Guinea's coast? Were *they* not as fit for *slavery?* Did not the war of massacre, of tomahawk and scalping-knife, give the fairest pretext for slavery by the right of capture and subjugation? Boast as we may of the royal race of aborigines who lorded it over this domain, — of the kingly Powhatan, the peerless Pocahontas, — the common Indians of North America were just as fit for slavery, and ready here at hand, as the savages of Africa's desert strands, — they were enslaved by the Yankees. Why, then, were slaves brought three thousand miles across the ocean, leaving our neighboring tribes of savages untouched by yoke or chain? Why but to return civilization for slavery? Who so fit to be the pioneer of civilization in Africa as the *black man?* Its light expires, has always gone out in the hand of the white man. And what will the civilization of Africa not do in the end for mankind, for the world, its arts, its science, its commerce, its peace, and happiness, and for freedom? What new fields will it not explore? The subject is vast and unbounded. I say then, sir, send forth your missionaries with light and love to the land of night, until that 'dry

nurse of lions' shall become the nursery of arts, and science, and civilization, and law, and order, and religion."

During the year 1854 the Rev. Nehemiah Adams of Boston, who was then engaged in the preparation of his interesting book entitled "A South Side View of Slavery," wrote to Wise requesting his opinions on this subject. In his reply he stated that he did not consider emancipation desirable for either the negroes or the whites, as long as the blacks were to remain here, and that the amalgamation of the races was against the law of nature. He wrote further that he had emancipated one slave, but would never free another; and that he considered the race fit only for the patriarchal state of a Southern plantation. In his native county of Accomack, from which he wrote, the free colored population at that time numbered 3295, while there were 4987 slaves; from which figures it will be seen that emancipation was no rare thing among the slave-owners. Indeed, among the Methodists especially, which denomination was quite numerous on the peninsula, the habit of freeing their slaves was often practised. But it cannot be said that the conduct and progress of the free negroes afforded much encouragement to the advocates of this plan; for the former were as a rule a shiftless class, and regarded as a nuisance in the communities where they resided. In Wise's opinion, the Virginia negro was only adapted to a condition of pupilage, and he wrote, "I have seen the negro from my youth upward in all circumstances and I know that his tendency, if left to himself, is constantly back toward barbarism." Like the overwhelming majority of Virginia planters, he was a kind and humane master, who was fond of his slaves and they of him. There was little in the institution, as it existed in Virginia, to excite horror or pity for the condition of the slaves; for peculiar as was the institution in its relation to the century in which it had

survived, as has been truly said, it was even more so in regard to the people among whom it existed, who were an eminently humane and gentle race, among whom the ennobling influences of Christianity had been felt in a high degree. As regards the physical condition of the slaves, it is no exaggeration to say that a better housed, clothed, and fed peasant class probably did not exist. If proof were needed of the truth of this statement, it could be found in the rapid increase of insanity (formerly unknown), and the enormous growth in the death rate, among the negro population in our day. But while he regarded the negro as totally unfit for the responsibilities of freedom and citizenship, he was not blind to the many good qualities of the race.

"With white officers," he wrote Adams, "I would fight a regiment of them against any foreign troops who could land on our shores. They are faithful, and they are brave, and more disinterested than the white man. They are joyous in their temperament, and patient, as their nerves are coarse and strong. The owners love their race and its qualities better than their pseudo-friends the abolitionists do. Every adult slave around me has half a pound of cured bacon per day, corn meal without stint or measure of allowance, scale fish in season, and an abundance of such vegetables as they prefer planted and sown for them. Besides this, they have crops of their own which they sell for their own use. Not one of them who is industrious can fail to have two or three dollars a month to spend. They have no occasion to buy anything but fine clothes. They have their rations weekly of molasses, coffee, and tobacco. They are not allowed to work, and are carefully nursed, when sick, and when well don't average ten hours of labor per day. They have their feast-days and holidays and enjoy them more than the whites do. Here they have Easter

and Whitsuntide, two days, a week after harvest, a day at August Court, three or four days each during the camp-meeting seasons of the Methodist Church, to which they mostly belong, and a week at Christmas, besides the half-days of Saturday in going to see their wives."

Wise, like many other Southern men, regretted that slave labor had not been introduced into California, where it could have been profitably employed; and which would have had the effect of diffusing the slave population, and thereby encouraging gradual emancipation. It is strange how completely this latter view of the subject was ignored by the abolition party, for though it was true that slavery needed an "outlet," and that to prevent its spread meant ultimate extinction in the older slave States, yet the converse of this proposition was equally true, and perhaps the greatest obstacle to peaceable emancipation was the fact that the slave population was concentrated in one section of the Union only.

In the spring of 1850 Wise was chosen as the delegate from his district to the convention called that year at Nashville, Tennessee, to consider the affairs of the South. In the course of a letter, dated May 18, 1850, and addressed to William H. Roy, Esq., the president of the convention to select delegates, he explained his inability to go to Nashville, but in discussing the question then at issue wrote: "I never weighed and never will weigh — no man can weigh the value of the Union, nor count the cost of its dissolution. I abhor the man who would deliberately impair it even in the affection of the people. He is a traitor to the best bond and security of civil liberty who would betray its safety by any devised snare whatever. He is an enemy to his country and to mankind who is not sincere in these times upon this subject. But if the *Constitution* of the United States shall be *nullified* by a *major-*

ity doctrine and become frittered away, by the *awful pacification of compromises* upon *compromises*, the Union will no longer exist as it was formed by the Adamses and Shermans and Franklins and Hamiltons and Lees and Randolphs and Madisons and Rutledges of the Revolution; it will cease itself to be a compromise, the *compromise of compromises* as it was in 1789; it will become the absolutism of a many-headed monster of oppression, inequality, and dishonor to us, and we will be obliged to resist it as our fathers did 'taxation without representation,' or lose our self-respect and the respect of the rest of mankind and cease to be a free people. We will have then to exclaim in anguish to King Majority instead of King George the Third: *not* that the *Union* shall be dissolved, no, never! But: '*Give us back the Union as it was formed*, in *its* compromise of the *Constitution*, in *its domestic tranquillity, in its equality of rights, in its equality of burthens, in its fraternity and freedom; or*, give us *peaceful separation, or take* the consequences of *revolution!*' "

During the period following the Constitutional Convention of 1850–51, Wise had withdrawn from public life, although he at one time thought of becoming a candidate for the legislature, with a view to advocating public schools and internal improvements; and he was also urged in 1853 to allow his name to be brought forward as a candidate for the United States Senate, but declined for the reason that he would not oppose his friend R. M. T. Hunter. The subject of public education had always been a topic in which he had been deeply interested, and some of his addresses to the people of the eastern shore on this topic are still preserved. In the spring of 1852 he attended the State Democratic Convention at Richmond, and his eloquent address before that body made him the central figure, among the many able party leaders there assem-

bled. He was also chosen a delegate to the National Convention of his party, which met at Baltimore in June, and along with the remainder of the Virginia delegation voted for Buchanan thirty-five successive times, despite his opinion of old bachelors previously given. After the thirty-fifth ballot the delegation withdrew for consultation, and on the next ballot cast their vote as a unit for Franklin Pierce, whose name was presented by them, for the first time to the Convention. He was largely instrumental in determining the Virginians upon this course of action. For a while Pierce received no new accessions of strength worthy of note, but was finally nominated on the forty-ninth ballot. Wise, for the second time, was made an elector, for his district, and did his part in promoting the success of the ticket. The political conditions which existed in Virginia, in the year 1854, and the position which he came to occupy, with regard to the question which then divided political parties, we shall relate in the chapter following.

CHAPTER XII

THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN OF 1855. THE OVERTHROW OF KNOW-NOTHINGISM IN THE SOUTH. "I HAVE MET THE BLACK KNIGHT WITH HIS VISOR DOWN AND HIS SHIELD AND LANCE ARE BROKEN"

ALMOST from the birth of the American Union, the nativist feeling has from time to time cropped out, as was shown by the enactment of a law by the Federalists in 1798, making fourteen years' residence on the part of a foreigner necessary to entitle him to naturalization, which length of residence was again shortened upon the triumph of the Democratic party several years later. Following periods of great immigration the sentiment against foreigners has been invariably aroused. Closely allied to it, though distinct from it, was the anti-Romanist feeling which had always been entertained by a considerable number, who believed the teaching of the Church of Rome to be inimical to the safety and welfare of republican institutions. Lafayette, himself a Romanist, and who had fought for the independence of the American Colonies, did not give utterance to an opinion peculiar to himself alone, when he declared that, "if the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they will fall by the hands of the Romish clergy." The fact that the great majority of immigrants hailed from papist countries and professed the Romanist faith, resulted in a fusing, as it were, of the nativists and anti-papal sentiment, so that, after the decade

of the thirties at least, the two ideas may be treated as practically inseparable. The new immigrants settled for the most part in the cities, and hence in New York, Philadelphia, and the various towns occurred the riots, during the period of the thirties and forties, growing out of the animosities which a variety of causes had contributed to engender between native and foreign-born citizens.

Though efforts had been made to found an "American," or nativist party, yet its appearance in political affairs had been short-lived, and the movement may be said to have languished, until the fresh impetus to immigration furnished by the European political troubles in 1848–50 once more revived with renewed vigor the nativist sentiment, and rioting and anti-Catholic demonstrations were again resumed in different parts of the country.

Some time during the year 1852, a secret oath-bound fraternity was organized, the name of which was "The Sons of '76 or The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner." In consequence of the fact that its real name and purpose were only disclosed to those of its members who had taken the higher degrees, the members ordinarily, when questioned about the order, replied, "I don't know," from which circumstance they soon came to be dubbed "Know-nothings," which has continued to be the popular designation by which they have been known ever since. The new order declared as its leading principle that "Americans must rule America," and the rapid spread of its organization throughout many States set at naught the calculations of the politicians, who found themselves confronted by a new and powerful element, hard to deal with. As a distinguished historian, Professor McMaster, has written of it: "Highly organized, thoroughly in earnest, it did its work with a precision of movement and a

concert of action hitherto unknown in American politics." The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854 resulted in the disruption of the old Whig party and the going over of a large body of Whigs to the new organization, which that year carried Massachusetts and Delaware and polled a considerable vote in New York. The spread of the new faith throughout the Northern States was most rapid, and there was much in its creed to commend it to the good favor of the people of the South. In the latter section the foreign element was insignificant, and the old-time Whigs, who could not be induced to act with either the Democratic or Republican parties, readily availed themselves of the opportunity to identify themselves with the new party group. During the summer of 1854 the order is said to have been first introduced into Virginia, and the first council instituted in the town of Charlottesville, strange to say, almost under the very shadow of Monticello. Though the Whigs at first stoutly denied any abandonment of their organization, yet in a short while the new movement had practically absorbed the main body of them, who, unwilling to embrace the antislavery views of the Republican party, at the same time hated the very name of Jefferson, and would have voted for the devil himself, if necessary to defeat the principles and aims of Democracy. The American, or Know-nothing, organization had still another feature, calculated to win popular approval in the South, as it laid claim to being strictly national in sentiment and opposed to the agitation of the slavery question; and with the accession of the disbanded Whigs and a body of ambitious young men, who were brought into prominence by the new adjustment of party lines, the movement had assumed formidable proportions throughout the South before the end of 1854.

During the summer of that year a committee of citizens

of Norfolk County, Virginia, in view of the approaching gubernatorial campaign in that State, addressed a number of letters to various men prominent in political affairs, calling upon them to give their views concerning the new party and its principles. Among these were William Smith, Shelton F. Leake, James A. Seddon, John Letcher, and Wise.[1] The latter replied in a letter of considerable length, giving expression to his views with no uncertain sound, and in a tone calculated to win the approval of the Democracy of the State. The following extract from the letter, which is dated "Only, near Onancock, Virginia, September 18, 1854," may be said to furnish the keynote of his views: "In this country, at this time, does any man think anything? Would he speak anything? Would he write anything? His mind is free, his person is safe, his property is secure, his house is his castle, the spirit of the law is his bodyguard and his house-guard; the fate of one is the fate of all, measured by the same common rule of right; his voice is heard and felt in the general suffrage of freemen; his trial is in open court, confronted by witnesses and accusers; his prison-house has no secrets, and he has the judgment of his peers; and there is naught to make him afraid, so long as he respects the rights of his equals in the eye of the law. Would he propagate Truth? Truth is free to combat Error. Would he propagate Error? *Error* itself may stalk abroad and do her mischief and make night itself grow darker, provided Truth is left free to follow, however slowly, with her torches to light up the wreck! Why, then, should any portion of the people desire to retire in secret, and by secret means to propagate a political thought, or word, or deed by stealth? Why band together, exclusive of others, to do something which all may not know of toward some political end? If it be

[1] See Hambleton's "Virginia Politics in 1855," page 7.

good, why not make the good *known?* Why not think it, speak it, write it, act it out openly and aloud? Or, is it evil, which loveth darkness, rather than light? When there is no *necessity* to justify a secret association for *political* ends, what else can justify it? A caucus may sit in secret to consult on the general policy of a great public party. That may be necessary or convenient; but that even is reprehensible, if carried too far. But here is proposed a great primary, national organization, in its inception — What? *Nobody knows.* How organized? *Nobody knows.* Governed by whom? *Nobody knows.* How bound? By what rites? By what test oaths? With what limitations and restrictions? Nobody, nobody knows!!!! All we know is that persons of *foreign birth* and of *Catholic faith* are proscribed, and so are all others who don't proscribe them at the polls. This is certainly against the spirit of Magna Charta." In conclusion he declared: "I belong to a secret society, but for no political purpose. I am a native *Virginian; intus et in cute*, a Virginian; my ancestors on both sides for two hundred years were citizens of this country and this State — half English, half Scotch. I am a Protestant by birth, by baptism, by intellectual belief, by education, and by adoption. I am an American in every fibre, and in every feeling an American; yet in every character, in every relation, in every sense, with all my head and all my heart, and all my might, I protest against this secret organization of native Americans, and of Protestants to proscribe Roman Catholics and naturalized citizens!"

On the 30th of November, 1854, the delegates representing the Democracy of the State assembled in convention in the Methodist Church, in the town of Staunton, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the offices of governor, lieutenant-governor, and attorney-general, to

be voted for at the following spring election. The names of Wise and Shelton F. Leake were the two most prominently discussed for the position of governor, and the choice had narrowed down between them. Mr. Leake had served as a member of the State legislature and of Congress, and as lieutenant-governor of the State, and was an unfaltering Democrat, much beloved by the people of the Piedmont section, where he resided. He was a man of acute powers of mind, a speaker of unusual adroitness and force, as well as possessed of those moral characteristics which command admiration and respect. He may be said to have been the choice of the Democrats of Piedmont and middle Virginia, while Wise's followers hailed from the tidewater country, on the one hand, and the section west of the mountains, on the other — the two extremes of the State. The latter's record on the questions of the basis of representation and internal improvements, in the Constitutional Convention of 1850–51, had gained for him a host of political friends in the transmontane section, who were largely instrumental in securing for him the nomination for governor. When the Convention first met, their choice of a candidate seemed involved in some doubt, but as the stage-coaches rolled in from the mountain counties the followers of Wise were reënforced by large delegations, who insured his nomination. Mr. W. R. C. Douglas, of New Kent County, presented his name to the Convention and among those who seconded the nomination was Dr. Thomas Dunn English of Logan, the author of "Ben Bolt," who, from the zeal displayed in behalf of his candidate during the exciting debates of the body, showed himself to be unlike his own "sweet Alice,"

> "Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile
> And trembled with fear at your frown!"

Wise received the nomination on the second ballot, Elisha W. McComas of Kanawha was named for lieutenant-governor, and Willis P. Bocock of Richmond for attorney-general. Hambleton, in his history of the campaign of 1855, remarks truly that "no candidate ever went before the people for any office under more discouraging circumstances than Mr. Henry A. Wise." Although Virginia was ordinarily a safe Democratic State, and in the preceding gubernatorial election had chosen Joseph Johnson, the candidate of that party, over George W. Summers, the Whig nominee, yet at the outset of the campaign of 1855 the prospects for Democratic success were far from encouraging. The politicians, as a rule, had been unfriendly to Wise and many of them looked with favor upon his nomination as an easy means of getting rid of a troublesome man, who would "take the bit in his teeth" and rush on to certain defeat. Moreover, not only had the American party given evidence that it was thoroughly organized and making rapid headway throughout the State, but Wise's nomination was far from pleasing to hundreds of Democrats who preferred Leake as the more "regular" party man. The fact that Wise had opposed Jackson in Congress and had been prominently identified with the Whigs was not forgotten, and many criticised his political course and what they regarded as his inconsistencies. The friends of Mr. Leake, however, were loyal in their support of Wise, and the Richmond *Examiner*, which had earnestly remonstrated against the nomination of the latter, contained the following extract in one of its issues of December, 1854: —

"He is a man to whom we have never felt but one objection personally, and that was that though as sound in politics now as the strictest Republican of the Virginia school, his course *had* been inconsistent and his record

contradictory, in a manner and to a degree which rendered it difficult for the party speakers and writers in this canvass to defend him, according to the old mode of party reasoning. We have said this frequently and we do not mean to unsay it in the canvass at hand. But of all the claims to office, those of the mere party men are the flimsiest and most wretched. . . . Honesty, fidelity, capacity — the Jefferson tests — these, at last, are the true qualifications for office. Consistency, in the vulgar acceptation, belongs oftener to the demagogue and ignoramus than to the honest politician and the capable statesman. Those high personal qualities which make us love, admire, and trust in men belong oftener to the rash, impulsive, and brave than to the cautious, calculating, and consistent. If you judge Mr. Wise by the acts of his life, we admit that, in our opinion, he has few claims to consistency. But if you judge him by the impulses of his nature and the fidelity and chivalric bravery of his adherence to them, the verdict in his favor is emphatic and beyond question. The political horizon is filled with admonitions of trouble. The recent elections at the North reveal a state of feeling very portentous to the South. We are upon the eve of times which will try men's souls. Let us have a tried, brave, true Southern man in the executive office of Virginia. At a time like this, let us look to the *metal* of our men rather than to their 'records.' The Democracy of Virginia have declared at Staunton that they care not for political antecedents or partisan animosities, twenty years gone by, in the presence of the danger now threatening the South. They have resolved that old and obsolete differences, such as used to divide them from their political opponents at home, are not to be remembered against the true Southern man in a contest upon that issue — Northern aggression against Southern rights.

"There is significance in the nomination of Mr. Wise. The Democracy of Virginia have resolved, in disregard of past domestic animosities and old differences of opinion, to manifest their stern, uncompromising temper on the sectional issue by the man they mean to place at the head of affairs. When we make Henry A. Wise governor of Virginia, the North will know what we mean."

Shortly after the Staunton Convention, Wise arranged his private affairs preparatory to entering upon the campaign, and on the 5th of January, 1855, opened in Norfolk the most brilliant and aggressive canvass that has ever occurred in the history of the State. The newspapers, in describing his opening speech, tell us that frequent bursts of applause followed his "sabre-like flashes of eloquence," and that his words "were as fire that ran and thrilled the whole audience." An admirer of Wise, ex-Governor William E. Cameron, thus describes him at this period: —

"He was then in the prime of life, and in person, manner, voice, and mental equipment the ideal leader of a forlorn hope. Elected to Congress in 1833, he had, by lengthy service in that body and by intimate association with the ruling intellects of the age, acquired knowledge of public affairs and a readiness in debate which gave the fullest play to his natural powers of oratory. Tall, lithe, yet muscular, a frame of steel, knit with nerves; his face, clean shaven, had the rigid lines of a classic cameo, but his expression varied to suit his rapid moods so that the auditor could almost anticipate his words. His gesture was eloquence itself, powerful, yet restrained. His command of language was unequalled in my experience, though from Stephen Douglas to Blaine, I have heard all the famous speakers of this country. . . . His voice, too, had the compass of an organ pipe, and ranged from the persuasive softness of a lute to the metallic ring of the

bugle note. Add to all this the magnetism which defies analysis, which forces other men to listen and then compels them to believe; a courage as uncalculating as that of a sea-hawk; a strength of conviction as absolute as ever sustained a martyr at the stake; and there you have an imperfect portrait of the man who flung himself single-handed against an epidemic of fanaticism, and won the fight. For after the election the 'dark lantern' lost its magic and the 'culvert' its attractiveness." The model of a campaign speaker and a master of invective, Wise was in every way fitted to strike terror to the hearts of the members of the new secret order, and from the Chesapeake to the banks of the Ohio and to the Tennessee line, he canvassed the State, delivering speeches of impassioned eloquence and convincing logic. Everywhere enormous crowds greeted him with unbounded enthusiasm and people rode on horseback fifty miles across the mountains to hear him."

Early in the campaign the Democratic State Committee of Indiana forwarded to Wise a copy of the "Know-nothing" ritual and charter, which they had procured and of which the latter made free use during his canvass to the discomfiture of his political enemies, who would greet his disclosure upon the stump with catcalls, groans, hisses, and other noisy demonstrations. His Democratic followers would laugh heartily, too, when he quoted the words of Job: "For we are but of yesterday, and *Know nothing*." There is every reason to believe that not only was the American or Know-nothing order powerfully organized in Virginia in 1855, but in addition, that had that party confined itself to the issue of "Americans must rule America," the restriction of immigration and revision of the naturalization laws, it would have achieved a sweeping victory. While it is true that the foreign population

of Virginia at that time was not over two or three per cent at the most, and there was no friction engendered between the natives and the foreigners, as in the North where there had been large immigrations, yet the people of Virginia, despite the further fact that not only the English but the Scotch-Irish, Huguenot, and German blood entered into their own race elements, were, in the main, essentially homogeneous in character, as compared with the States to the northward, and not inclined to favor any commingling of the various foreign elements with their own people. There were, moreover, many who noted the fact that the immigrants settled almost entirely in the Northern and Western States, and contributed to swell the balance against the South with which section Virginia, on account of the problems growing out of the institution of slavery, was more nearly identified. On the 12th of December, 1854, the *Examiner*, a leading Democratic organ of the State, and edited at the time by Robert W. Hughes, said editorially: "Know-nothingism is partially right. American citizenship ought not to be made dirt cheap. The sovereignty of this Republic is in the people; and every vagabond adventurer escaping from the jails, and packed off from the poorhouses of Europe, is not fit for sovereign citizenship in this country the moment his dirty rags and stinking carcass touch our shores. There is not a sensible citizen and patriot in the Union who will deny that the naturalization laws do need reformation; and no party in the country, be it ever so strong, veteran, and disciplined, can sustain itself upon an issue in favor of these laws as they stand. Jacobinical organization, however, is not necessary to the required reform, and is, besides, at war with all the essential principles of popular government. Religious proscription, too, is more prolific of the seeds of social disrupture than for-

eignism in its most aggravated and offensive form." The views expressed by the *Examiner* were widely held throughout the Southern States and Von Holst, who rarely has a kind word for that section, in his "Constitutional History of the United States" (Vol. V., page 190), in alluding to the fact that in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina the party had been forced to abandon its more objectionable features, remarks: "It does the South no small honor that there the party had to agree to give up its secrecy and its oaths, as it had already previously been forced there to make concessions in regard to the Catholics." In Virginia, while the various councils of the order had been organized in conformity with the same ritual and usages in force throughout the Northern States, yet the secret oaths and anti-Catholic features were always obnoxious to the character and genius of her people.

Protestant to the core, and in many respects narrow-minded and intolerant, yet her people had not forgotten the principles of religious freedom promulgated by George Mason in 1776 in his immortal bill of rights, and later by Jefferson in his Statutes of Religious Liberty. They possessed, moreover, that personal manliness and individuality which probably attain their highest development among a country gentry, and the subordinating of their will and thoughts to a secret, oath-bound organization was in every respect opposed to their temperament and ideas of the proper conduct of government. It is worthy of note that while in almost all of the larger towns of the State, including Richmond and Norfolk, the Know-nothings triumphed over their Democratic opponents, yet the majorities gained in the cities were more than offset by the country voters, who were more conservative in character and tenacious of the principles taught by the fathers of the Republic.

General John D. Imboden, who was prominently identified with the American party in Virginia, in an article[1] published shortly before his death, wrote: "Its [the American party's] main purpose, which was to require a twenty-one years' residence of all foreigners before full naturalization and the right to vote, met with the hearty support of nearly all the old Whigs in the South, — and many Democrats, — but the anti-Catholic feature was so generally condemned, as contrary to our fundamental law, that in Virginia, at least, it was insisted that no religious test to vote, or hold office, should ever be made, and a movement was put on foot to hold a national council and strike that odious clause out of the party creed, as well as to abolish secrecy, and to plant the party simply on a denial of full citizenship to any adult immigrant under twenty-one years' residence." On the 19th of October, 1855, some months after the gubernatorial election had been decided, the American or Know-nothing party met in convention at Lynchburg, and to its credit, be it said, a resolution was passed, with but one dissenting vote, counselling the abandonment "of the ceremonies of initiation, the oaths, signs, secrets, and passwords"; and in addition, another resolution inviting into the organization all men "who profess to owe no temporal allegiance to any foreign power"; this last being regarded as an abandonment of the Catholic test.

At the commencement of the canvass of 1855 all the signs of the times seemed to point to the triumph of the Know-nothing party, as it was spreading with remarkable rapidity throughout the State, and as previously stated had won a valuable accession to its ranks in the absorption of the Whigs, who, on account of their numbers and pres-

[1] See letter signed "A Grandfather" in the *Richmond Times* of August 25, 1895.

tige, constituted the chief strength of the new party. Indeed, the Whigs at that time arrogated to themselves the larger share of the blue blood of the Commonwealth, and it is related of John Syme, the editor of the Petersburg *Intelligencer*, that when asked whether or not a Democrat was a gentleman he was wont to tap his snuff-box significantly, and reply: "Well, he is apt not to be; but if he is he is in damned bad company."

The Whig gentry had counted on the certain defeat of their old opponents, and were surprised to find Wise, instead of remaining quietly at home, going among the people and delivering speeches of telling effect. The spectacle of a candidate for governor "on the stump" was a novel one in Virginia; for, prior to the adoption of the new constitution in 1851, the chief executive of the State was chosen by the legislature, and with the exception of George W. Summers, who had been the Whig nominee in 1851, no gubernatorial aspirant had ever before canvassed for that office. Wise's eloquence, however, stirred the enthusiasm of the Democratic masses, and he possessed in a remarkable degree the ability to electrify and thrill an audience and overpower his opponents. Never before had a speaker on the hustings in Virginia kindled such a spirit of admiration among his followers, or met with such opposition from the rival party. Political feeling was intense, and party spirit held full sway. Despite the effect of Wise's oratory and bitter denunciation of the new order, had the election been held a few months earlier the Democratic flag would probably have gone down in defeat.

On the 14th of March, 1855, more than three months after the Democratic convention held at Staunton, and while Wise was in the midst of his canvass, representatives of the American organization assembled in secret meeting

at Winchester, for the purpose of nominating a State ticket. "Never before in the history of Virginia," says Hambleton, in his "Narrative of the Campaign," "did any party for the purpose named assemble in privacy and secrecy to make a State nomination. . . . Who were there and what was said and done in all human probability will never be known to the generation now in existence. There could be nothing discovered by examining the registers of the hotels, for the delegates used fictitious names in recording themselves." As a result of the Winchester convention, or rather conference, for it was a gathering of a few party leaders only, Thomas Stanhope Flournoy of Halifax was nominated as the American candidate for governor, James M. H. Beale of Mason for lieutenant-governor, and John M. Patton of Richmond for attorney-general. Mr. Flournoy was a resident of the good old county of Halifax, where he had risen into prominence as a lawyer, in a circuit noted for its brilliant bar. He had known and ridden to court when a boy with John Randolph of Roanoke, who was an intimate friend of his father, and throughout his life delighted in relating many interesting reminiscences of the eccentric Virginian. From the outset of his career, Mr. Flournoy had been a stanch, old-line Whig, and his political views had brought him into intimate association with Judge William Leigh, the Bruces, Chalmers, Banks, Barksdales, and other leading Whigs of his county and State. Shortly after coming to the bar, he had been selected by his friends as the Whig candidate for the legislature from Halifax, his Democratic opponent being John R. Edmunds, a personal friend and young man of about the same age. The campaign between these two youthful aspirants for political honors was opened by a joint debate between them, at a cross-road precinct, in the back country. Flournoy prepared himself

for the occasion by donning his best suit of broadcloth, whereupon he mounted a fine horse and rode over to the scene of action. It is related of him that he was considerably disconcerted when, a little later on, after the sovereigns had gathered in large numbers, he saw his opponent ride up, clad in a homespun suit, with stitch-down shoes, seated astride a wagon saddle on a plough horse, looking as if he had just taken the animal from the furrow, to repair to the place of the coming forensic contest. It is said that Flournoy advanced to where Edmunds was standing, surrounded by an admiring group, and inquired, "Edmunds, what upon earth do you mean by coming here in such a plight?" "Oh!" said Edmunds, "I leave fine dressing to you gentlemen of the law; but I belong to the 'bone and sinew' of the country, and don't care for it. I am a plain farmer, like most of these worthy friends of mine, and I prefer to dress as they do." Although Flournoy carried off the honors of the debate, it is needless to add that Edmunds went to the legislature. But if we have unintentionally conveyed the impression from this little anecdote of his early life that Mr. Flournoy was at all haughty or exclusive in his bearing, we would hasten to correct it here; for few men were more approachable, or simple in their manners. As an admirer and fellow-countyman the Rev. John Cosby has written of him: "His popularity, like Henry Clay's, was of a personal character. Men were Whigs because they loved Flournoy, and many old Democrats loved him in spite of his Whiggism, and rejoiced in his forensic success. He has often told me he never had to spend a dollar for electioneering purposes. Houses were everywhere open to him, and his party friends were his zealous personal friends, and championed his cause with all their might and means." Although the district in which he lived was Democratic by a large

majority, Mr. Flournoy was elected to Congress in 1846, by dint of his able canvass and personal popularity, and in the succeeding congressional election was only defeated by nine votes, though the Democrats of the district put forth their best efforts to defeat him. While in Congress, Mr. Flournoy made the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln, and a lasting friendship sprang up between the two. Flournoy was sent from his county, along with James C. Bruce, as a member of the Virginia convention of 1861, where he stood as a stanch Union man, until Lincoln's call for troops, when he acquiesced in the action of that body and returned to his home enlisting in the Confederate army, where he served with gallantry. After the downfall of the Southern cause at Appomattox, Mr. Flournoy received a letter from Mr. Lincoln, containing warm expressions of personal regard and asking his aid in the proposed effort of the latter to restore the Southern States to their former status in the Union.

Mr. Flournoy was a speaker of great fervor and eloquence, as well as a man well versed in public affairs, and this, together with his popularity with the Whigs, had led to his nomination by the Winchester convention, as the candidate of the American party in 1855, for governor of the State, although the honor was not of his seeking and conferred against his protest. Additional interest would have been added to the campaign, had Flournoy and Wise met in joint debate; but in accordance with the policy determined upon by his party, the former did not appear upon the hustings. Despite the feeling engendered by the political excitement, the friendship existing between the two candidates was in no manner interrupted, and they continued warm friends through life. Mr. Beale, the American candidate for lieutenant-governor, it was thought would add strength to the ticket in

the western portion of the State, from whence he hailed, and Mr. Patton, who was named for the position of attorney-general, was a leading member of the Richmond bar, and had previously been prominent in political affairs, as a member of Congress, where he had served for some years. Mr. Flournoy, in his letter of acceptance, after defining his views on public questions, wrote in regard to the main issue then before the people: —

"I indorse fully the Basis of Principles of the American party, believing them to be the most conservative presented to the consideration of the country since the establishment of our independence. The rapid increase of foreign immigration is well calculated to excite alarm, and the power of the government, both State and Federal, should be exerted to check it. It seems almost impossible to doubt that the influx of between four and five hundred thousand foreigners into our country annually will ultimately be subversive of our republican institutions. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson gave early warning to the country of the danger to be apprehended from foreign influence. The naturalization laws should either be repealed or so modified and such restrictions imposed as to avert the evil.

"The South is especially and deeply interested in this question. This immense annual addition to our population settle in the non-slaveholding States and the extensive territories of the West and Northwest, out of which free States will come, in consequence, to be more speedily formed, increasing with fearful rapidity the balance of power against us. Intimately connected with this question of foreign immigration is the growth of the Roman Catholic Church in our country. Despotic, proscriptive, and intolerant, its ascendency, as all history teaches, has ever been destructive of freedom of opinion, and while I

would uncompromisingly oppose any interference with the rights of its members as citizens, by any legislative enactment, yet by a full and independent exercise of the right of suffrage and the appointing power, they should be excluded from the offices of the government in all its departments. It may be said that there are comparatively but few foreigners and Roman Catholics in Virginia. She is not acting for herself alone. She is a leading member of this great sisterhood of States, and her action will be felt for weal or woe, by them all. Her destiny is identified with theirs, and she cannot look with indifference to the fact that the great valley of the Mississippi, watered by twenty thousand miles of navigable rivers, and the immense and fertile territories, stretching beyond to the Pacific, capable of sustaining a population of one hundred millions, are rapidly filling up with this class of people. I will advert particularly to one other principle of the American party, the 'non-intervention of the Federal and State government with the municipal affairs of each other.' The strict observance of this principle will make the union of the States perpetual."

The Winchester convention had published the "Basis of Principles of the American party of Virginia," above the signature of a committee appointed for that purpose; but as the principles are practically the same as those contained in the letter of Mr. Flournoy, we will omit them here. The reader who is interested in the history of the American party will find an ably written defence of their position in the series of articles known as the "Madison Letters,"[1] the author of which was Alexander H. H. Stuart of Virginia. The champions of the secret order maintained that not only was our civilization in danger of destruction from the foreign refuse, who annually migrated

[1] See Clusky's *Political Cyclopedia.*

hither, and American labor forced into competition with the cheaper imported labor, but that the teachings of the Romish Church asserted the temporal as well as the spiritual power of the Pope, and that the articles of her faith were in conflict with the oath of a naturalized citizen to support the Constitution of the United States, and the renunciation of all allegiance to any foreign potentate.

It was freely urged, as it has been in recent years,[1] that the sovereignty of the Pope was opposed to that of the people, and that his commands, with the devout Romanist, demanded a higher allegiance than our Constitution and laws, and that the settled policy of that Church was opposed to a free press and our system of free schools. Unfortunately, the defiant attitude assumed by various Catholic sympathizers tended to confirm another charge, often made, that Romanism meant religious intolerance and was opposed to religious liberty.

The editor of Brownson's *Quarterly Review* had bluntly declared: "Protestantism of every form has not and never can have any rights where Catholicism is triumphant." The *Rambler*, another leading Catholic journal, had said: "You ask if he [the Pope] were lord in the land, and you were in a minority, if not in numbers, yet in power, what would we do to you? That we say which would benefit the cause of Catholicism; if expedient, he would imprison you, banish you, fine you, possibly hang you — but be assured of one thing, he would never tolerate you for the sake of the 'glorious principles of civil and religious liberty.'" And in the *Shepherd of the Valley*, another sectarian paper, was to be found the following in its issue of November 23, 1851: "If Catholics ever gain an immense numerical majority, religious freedom in this

[1] See "Our Country," by Rev. Josiah Strong, D.D., Chapter V.; also teachings of the "American Protective Association."

country is at an end. So our enemies say. So we believe."

Among the campaign documents circulated throughout Virginia, during the campaign of 1855, was a letter of Bishop McGill of Richmond, in reply to a similar one from James Lyons, Esq., a prominent lawyer of Richmond and a brother-in-law of Wise, the character of which will be explained by the response of the bishop, which was as follows: —

"The letter, which you have addressed to me, contains three questions, to which you ask an answer, with a view to publication. First Question: 'Whether the Catholics in Virginia do acknowledge any temporal allegiance to the Pope?' To this I answer, that unless there be in Virginia some Italians who owe allegiance to the Pope as a temporal Prince, because they were born in his States, and are not naturalized citizens of this country, there are no Catholics in Virginia who owe, or acknowledge, any temporal allegiance to the Pope.

"Second Question: 'Whether if this country could be, and was, assailed by the army of the Pope (if he had one), or by any other Catholic power, the Catholic citizens of this country, no matter where born, would not be as much bound to defend the Flag of America, her rights and liberty, as any native-born citizen would be?'

"Answer: To me the hypothesis of an invasion of our country by the Pope seems an absurdity; but should he come with armies to establish temporal dominion here, or should any other Catholic power make such an attempt, it is my conviction that all Catholic citizens, no matter where born, who enjoy the benefits and franchises of the Constitution, would be conscientiously bound, like native-born citizens, to defend the flag, rights, and liberties of the Republic, and repel such invasion.

"Third Question: 'Whether the performance of that duty would conflict with any oath, or vow, or any other obligation of the Catholics?' Answer: Catholics, reared in the Church as such, have not the custom of taking any oaths or vows, except the baptismal vows, 'to renounce the devil, his works and pomps.' Persons converted to the faith, or those receiving degrees in Theology, may be required to take the oath contained in the creed of Pius IV. of obedience to the Pope, which, as far as I know, has always been understood and interpreted to signify a spiritual obedience to him as head of the Church, and not in obedience to him as a temporal prince. Bishops, on their consecration, also take an oath, which in our country is different from the old form used in Europe. But none of these vows, oaths, and no other obligation of which I am aware, conflicts with the duty of a citizen of the United States to defend the flag and liberties of his country. In conclusion, allow me to state that as we have no article of faith teaching that the Pope, of divine right, enjoys temporal power as head of the Church, whatever some theologians or writers may have said on this point must, like my answers to your inquiries, be considered as opinions for which the writers themselves only can be held responsible."

Mr. Flournoy, although the candidate of the American party for governor, took no part in the campaign, and the canvass of the Know-nothings was conducted through the medium of the press, the Richmond *Whig* having earnestly enlisted in their behalf, as well as through the secret councils of the order, which were organized with wonderful efficiency. The failure of Mr. Flournoy to take the stump, although in accordance with the policy of his party, was a matter of regret to many of his friends, as he was a persuasive and effective speaker, and would have gained hun-

dreds of votes for his cause. With undiminished zeal Wise continued his tour of the State, throughout the months of January, February, March, and April, and during the early part of May, delivering speeches that stirred the hearts of the Democracy and revived their drooping spirits. The canvass of a State like Virginia was no easy matter, as it was wretchedly supplied with railways and intersected by the Alleghanies and Blue Ridge, and travel to the county court houses was largely by private conveyance, over roads which still answered the description of Tom Moore's lampoon: —

> "Ruts and ridges,
> And bridges
> Made of planks,
> In open ranks,
> Like old women's teeth!"

In his addresses Wise did not confine himself to the issue of Know-nothingism alone, but dwelt at length upon his favorite topic of public improvements and the industrial development of the State. Oftentimes his hearers, who came expecting to hear a political discussion solely, were entertained for hours by a dissertation upon the minerals, woods, and water-power of the State, the encouragement of manufactures, and the need of improved transportation facilities, etc. He pledged himself, first of all, to maintain the credit of the State unimpaired, and declared, "If I be elected governor of Virginia, then, I tell you bluntly and briefly, if it be necessary to tax you to defend her honor, I will commend taxation, though it make us groan.[1] Next to public credit, next to the honor of the State, are her great public works. Your works have been begun without regard to their relative impor-

[1] Speech at Alexandria, as reported in *New York Herald.*

tance. You have not completed one before you have begun another and another. Your public works are without termini. Your canals and your railroads are like ditches dug in the middle of a plantation, without outlet at either end. You appropriate for them to-day, neglect them to-morrow, and leave the appropriations of the day after to-morrow to repair decay. It is time that some one or two, or as many as you can, of the public works of the State of Virginia should be completed, in order to ease the taxation of the public. It is time they should be completed in order to render some profit to the State. All that the State of Virginia has been wanting has been to reach out her arms to the great West — to tap the Ohio River — to join the Big Bend of the Ohio River with your rivers in the East. You have reversed in times past the order of true policy. You have said: 'Let us have capital, let us have population, and then you will have a city.' But you never will have capital, you never will have population, until you have the internal improvements to build up a city. You want commerce. You have bays, quays, roadsteads, which would float the navies of the world; but you have no seat of commerce — no centre of trade has yet pointed its spires to the heavens on the soil of Virginia. That is because you have completed none of your public works. Whatever difference of opinion, then, may have been as to the commencement of your works of State improvement, now that they are begun, now that millions have been spent and wasted upon them, now that you are obliged to be taxed in order to complete them, the sooner you submit to the taxation to complete your primary works the better.

"And the most expeditious and certainly the most profitable way of completing your works of secondary importance is to complete those of primary importance. If, then, elected governor of the State of Virginia, I shall

use all the influence which I can wield consistently with the public credit, and with the condition of the people, to expedite the completion of all the works of primary importance in the State. Next to your public works and your commerce, your agriculture is the most important. The four great cardinal sources of production of national wealth are commerce, agriculture, manufacturing, and mining. We have sixty-four thousand square miles, as rich in every element of commerce, in every element of agriculture, of manufacturing, and mining as any other sixty-four thousand square miles on the face of the globe; and yet, with all four powers in her hand, Virginia has, thus far in her history, relied upon one source alone. On Chesapeake Bay, from the mouth of the Rappahannock to the capes of the Chesapeake, you have roadsteads and harbors sufficient to float the navies of the world. From the River of Swans, on whose margin we are, down to the line of North Carolina, you have the Potomac, the Rappahannock, the Piantatank, from Mobjack Bay to James River and the Elizabeth River — all meeting in the most beautiful sheet of water of all the seas of the earth. You have the bowels of your western mountains rich in iron, in copper, in coal, in salt, in gypsum, and the very earth is rich in oil, which makes the very rivers inflame. You have the line of the Alleghany, that beautiful blue ridge which stands, placed there by the Almighty, not to obstruct the way of the people to market, but placed there in the very bounty of Providence, to milk the clouds; to make the sweet springs which are the sources of your rivers. And at the head of every stream is the waterfall murmuring the very music of your power. And yet commerce has long ago spread her sails and sailed away from you; you have not, as yet, dug more than coal enough to warm yourselves at your own hearths; you have set no tilt hammer of Vulcan to

strike blows worthy of gods in the iron foundries. You have not yet spun more than the coarse cotton enough, in the way of manufacture, to clothe your own slaves. You have had no commerce, no mining, no manufactures. You have relied alone on the single power of agriculture: and such agriculture! Your sedge patches outshine the sun. Your inattention to your only source of wealth has scarred the very bosom of mother earth. Instead of having to feed cattle on a thousand hills, you have had to chase the stump-tailed steer through the sedge patches to procure a tough beefsteak. And yet, while your trust has been in the hands of the old negroes of the plantation, while the master knows as little as his slave about the science — applied science — of agriculture, while commerce and manufactures and mining have been hardly known, and agriculture has been neglected, — notwithstanding all that, and notwithstanding the effect of this has been that you have parted with as much population as you have retained, notwithstanding all this, I say, old Virginia still has a million and a half of population left within her limits. She still has her harbors and rivers and her water-power, and every source of wealth which thinking men, active men, enterprising men, need apply to."

He urged the need of a complete system of public education, such as was contemplated by Jefferson, and a State school of scientific agriculture. Virginia, he described as being "in the anomalous condition of an old State that has all the capacities of a new one — of a new State that has all the capacities of an old one." On the subject of slavery, he pointed out the steady growth of abolitionism throughout the North, and declared that the Know-nothings were abolitionists in disguise, which assertion seemed in a measure confirmed, by the large number of extremists throughout the North and New England who were promi-

nent in the secret order. He was unsparing in his denunciation of this class, and of what he considered the encroachments upon the rights of the South, and in referring to an extract which he read from a sermon of James Freeman Clarke, in which the latter had observed that "Northern enthusiasm, when fully aroused, has always been more than a match for Southern organization," exclaimed: "Oh! gods! Northern conscience! Take a shark skin, and let it dry to shagreen — skin the rhinoceros — go then and set the silver steel and grind it, and when you have ground it, then take the hone and whet it till it would split a hair, and with it prick the shagreen or the shark skin, and then go and try it on Northern consciences! . . . What is the result of such preaching, such teaching, such printing?" asked Wise, alluding to the tirades of the abolitionists. "What has been the result of the pulpit, the schoolhouses, and the press at the North upon this subject? Gentlemen, but a short time back, New England — Massachusetts especially — had but one ism within her limits, and that was Puritanism, the religion of the Old Covenanters and Congregationalists — Puritanism, full of vitality, full of spirituality — Puritanism that made even the barren rock of Plymouth to fructify, that made the New Englanders a strong people, that made them a rich people, that made them a learned people. But since they have waxed fat, since they have begun to build churches by lottery, begun to moralize mankind by legislation, begun to play petty providences for the people, begun to be Protestant Popes over the consciences of men, begun to preach 'Christian Politics,' such as you have heard, Puritanism has disappeared, and we have in place of it Unitarianism, Universalism, Fourierism, Millerism, Mormonism — all the odds and ends of isms — until at last you have a grand fusion of all those

odds and ends of isms in the *omnium gatherum* of isms, called Know-nothingism. . . . Now where did it come from? It is no new thing. It is no strange thing. Although it is a wonder here, it has been operating for years in Old England. You that will go to a book-store and buy Dickens's novel of 'Hard Times' will see a portraiture of the thing, and how it has operated in a country with an aristocracy and a queen, with lords proprietors of factories and of lands, which they rent to middlemen who grind down the operatives. There, in England, the secret association of the operatives against grinding capital, I grant you, has done much good. There, there is some necessity for it; there, where men's noses are held to the grindstone by oppression; there, where all the luxuries are free, and all the necessaries of life are taxed; there, where the operative is made to bear all the burdens of society; there, where there is a crowned head and an aristocracy — there, dark lantern, secret association, test oaths, have brought forth some reforms. Well, seeing its effect in that country — Exeter Hall — the abolitionists of England send it over to the preachers of 'Christian Politics' in Boston and New York, to apply its machinery to the North and the non-slaveholding States."

In discussing the anti-Romanist attitude of the Know-nothings, Wise said: "You tell the people that Catholics never gave aid to civil liberty; that they never yet struck a blow for the freedom of mankind. Who gave you alliance against the king of England? Who but that Catholic king, Louis XVI.? He sent you from the court of Versailles, the boy of Washington's camp, a foreigner who never was naturalized, but bled at the redoubt of Yorktown. And not only did Lafayette bleed at the redoubt of Yorktown, when Arnold, a native proved, like Absalom, a traitor, but when the German, De Kalb, fell at the field

of Camden, on Southern soil, with fourteen bayonet wounds transfixing his body, and, dying, praised the Maryland militia, Gates, the Yankee native, ran seventy-five miles without looking behind. And not only that: In that intense moment when the Declaration of our Independence was brought into Carpenter's Hall by Rutledge and Franklin and Jefferson, and laid upon the table — that holy paper, which not only pledged life and honor, but fortune, too — realize that moment of intense, of deep, of profound interest, when the Independence of this land hung upon the acts of men; when, one by one, men arose from their seats and went to the table to pledge lives and fortunes and sacred honor, — at length one spare, pale-faced man arose and went and dipped the pen into ink and signed 'Charles Carroll,' and when reminded that it might not be known what Charles Carroll it was, that it be known that it was a Charles Carroll who was pledging a principality of fortune, he added the words 'of Carrollton.' He was a Catholic representative from a Catholic colony. And, sir, before George Washington was born, before Lafayette wielded the sword or Charles Carroll the pen for his country, six hundred and forty years ago, on the 16th of June, 1214, there was another scene enacted on the face of the globe, when the general character of all charters of freedom was gained — when one man — a man called Stephen Langton — swore the barons of England, for the people, against the orders of the Pope and against the power of the king — swore the barons on the high altar of the Catholic Church at St. Edmondsbury, that they would have Magna Charta or die for it, — the charter which secures to every one of you to-day trial by jury, freedom of the press, freedom of the pen, the confronting of witnesses with the accused, and the opening of secret dungeons — that charter was obtained by Stephen Langton

against the Pope and against the king of England; and if you Know-nothings don't know who Stephen Langton was, you know nothing sure enough. He was a Catholic archbishop of Canterbury. I come here not to praise the Catholics, but I come here to acknowledge historical truth, and to ask of Protestants what has heretofore been the pride and boast of Protestants, — tolerance of opinion in religious faith. All we ask is tolerance. All we ask is, that if you hate the Catholics because they have proscribed heretics, you won't outproscribe proscription. If you hate the Catholics because they have nunneries and monasteries and jesuitical secret orders, don't outjesuit the jesuits by going into dark-lantern secret chambers to apply test oaths. If you hate the Catholics because you say they encourage the Machiavellian expediency of telling lies sometimes, don't swear yourselves not to tell the truth. Here are the oaths — the oaths that bind you under no circumstances to disclose who you are or what you are, and that bind you not only to political, but to social proscription. Here is your book [holding up a copy of the American ritual] — your Bible which requires of you to stick up your notices between midnight and daybreak. I don't object to secrecy. I am a member of a secret order, and I am proud to be a brother Mason; and I am at liberty by my order to say that as to its ends, its purposes, its designs, Masonry has no secrets. Its ends, its purposes, its aims, are to make a brotherhood of charity amongst men. Its end is the end of the Christian law of religion. I know not how any Mason can be a Know-nothing. Masonry binds its members to respect and obey the laws of the land in which we live; and when the Constitution of the United States declares that no religious test shall be made a qualification for office, Masonry dare not interpose by conspiring, in a secret association, to attempt to make

a religious test a qualification for office. When Virginia has an act of religious freedom — an act that is no longer a mere statute law, but is now a part of the organic law, and which says that no man shall be burdened for religious opinion's sake — Masonry dare not conspire to burden any man for opinion's sake. Masonry has no secrets but the simple tests by which it recognizes its brotherhood. It is bound to respect the law and to tolerate differences of opinion in religion and politics. I do not complain of secrecy, but I complain of secrecy for political objects. What is your object? It is to assail the Constitution of the United States, to conspire, to contradict the Constitution and laws of the land; it is to conspire against the Constitution and laws, and swear men by test oaths — the most odious instruments of tyranny that intolerance and proscription have ever devised. It is not only to proscribe Catholics and foreigners, but it is to proscribe Protestants and natives, too, who will not unite with you in proscribing Catholics and foreigners. It is further than that: It destroys all individuality in the man. You bring in your novitiate, you swear him to do — what? To give up his conscience, his judgment, his will, to the judgment and the conscience and the will of an association of men who are not willing that others should enslave them, but by their test oath enslave themselves."

In alluding to the triumph of the abolitionists throughout the Northern States, and their threatened invasion of Virginia, Wise said: —

"No man loves and adores the Union of this land more than I do. I have been taught to venerate and to cherish the Union of these States. It is the holiest of all holy things. I would gladly give my life, my blood, as a sacrifice to save it if required. But I know that the main pillars of the Union, the main props and supporters of

this palladium, are the pillars of State rights and State sovereignty. If you place me with your sword in hand by that great pillar of Virginia sovereignty, I promise you to bear and forbear to the last extremity. I will suffer much, suffer long, suffer almost anything but dishonor. But it is, in my estimation, with the union of these States as it is with the union of matrimony. You may suffer almost anything except dishonor; but when honor is touched the union must be dissolved. I will not say that. I take back the words. I will not allow myself to contemplate a dissolution of the Union. No, we will try to save it. But when the worst comes to the worst, if compelled to draw the sword of Virginia, I will draw it; and by the gods of the State and her holy altars, if I am compelled to draw it, I will flesh it, or it shall pierce my body. And I tell you more: we have got abolitionists in this State. If I should have to move, some of the first, I fear, against whom I should have to act would be some within our own limits. But if forced to fight, I will not confine myself to the State of Virginia. My motto will be: —

> "'Woe to the coward that ever he was born
> That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn.'"

In conclusion, Wise declared, in referring to his canvass against the Know-nothings: "Tell them distinctly there shall be no compromise, no parley. I will come to no terms. They shall either crush me or I will crush them in this State."

On the 7th of May, after having been "on the stump" since early in January, during which time he had travelled over three thousand miles, Wise concluded his tour of the State at Leesburg, the county-seat of Loudoun. His labors had told heavily upon him despite his steel-spring energy, and he was much worn and exhausted from

the effects of excessive speaking. An amusing story, relative to his appearance at this period, was formerly current in Virginia, and appeared in print a few years ago, in *Harper's Magazine*,[1] from which we reproduce it here.

During the course of his campaign, he visited the town of Liberty, in Bedford County, for the purpose of addressing the people of that neighborhood on the political situation. He was received with great éclat by the citizens of the town and was, of course, introduced to all the local notables, without regard to party. Among these was a Mr. Foggy who resided at the foot of the Peaks of Otter, a gentleman who was not awed the least when in the presence of greatness. The following colloquy ensued between them: —

Mr. F. "Mr. Wise, I am glad to see you."

Mr. W. "Mr. Foggy, I am happy to make your acquaintance."

Mr. F. "But I am sorry to say that I can't vote for you for governor."

Mr. W. "I am sorry for that, Mr. Foggy; but as this is a free country, every man has a right to vote as he pleases."

Mr. F. "I tell you how I feel about it, Mr. Wise. When I was a young man, I was what is called a thimble-rigger, and I went to all the hoss races in the neighborhood with my thimbles and ball, crying out, ''Tis here, and 'tain't there, 'tain't there and 'tis there,' a-foolin' many a gawkin' chap outen his money. Wa'al, for years at all these races, a little hoss named Waxy had been winnin' all the stakes every time. An' he allers come out ahead. Wa'al, when I war a-workin' one day as usual with my thimbles, I noticed the ugliest, scrawniest, long-legged, sharp-hipped lookin' critter led on the track I ever saw;

[1] See *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. LXX., December, 1884.

an' he war called Wee Hawk. I soon found he war entered agin Waxy, and as they thought it war for a joke, big odds were offered agin him. I looked him all over, an' though he war a hard-lookin' cuss of the hoss kind, I noticed thar war fire in his eye, and he war winkin' like he'd been thar before. I looked at my pile, and thinks I to myself, 'Now if I bet on Waxy an' win, it won't amount to much; but if I bet on Wee Hawk an' win, I'll have a pile worth talkin' of. I looked agin at old Wee Hawk, an' seein' the fire in his eye a-flashin' more and more, I concluded I'd risk it. Wa'al, when old Wee Hawk war brought out alongside Waxy, you oughter heard the guyin' the crowd give his rider. 'Take 'im off.' 'Look out for the crows.' 'Fasten some hay on a stick ahead of his nose,' and the like, war heard on every side. All this time Waxy war prancin' around, everybody feelin' sure he'd win. Wa'al, as I war a-sayin', when they war led out to start, Wee Hawk began to ruffle his feathers, and as the sayin' is, 'snuffed the battle from afar,' and it took three men to hold him. An' when the judge said, 'Go!' you oughter seen old Wee Hawk a-straightenin' out his long legs an' neck, an' lightenin' out as if he war another Diomed or Sir Archy, which war great racin' hosses in old times. Waxy war nowhar, an' come out more than six lengths behind Wee Hawk. The fellows who had been yellin' to give him to the crows war not crowin' so much when they found they had to hand over to me, an' it war the worst-beat crowd you ever saw. Wa'al, now, Mr. Wise, I never did see a man look so much like a hoss as you do like Wee Hawk; an' though I can't vote for you, I'll bet my pile on you."

Mr. Wise, observes the narrator, laughed heartily at the comparison, and the result soon proved that the "fire war thar."

From Leesburg Wise repaired to Washington City to await the battle at the polls on the 24th of May. While resting there from his labors, he addressed the following letter[1] to the people of Virginia, dated May 10, 1855.

"FELLOW-CITIZENS:—I have now finished the canvass of the State. On the 7th inst., at Leesburg, I met my last appointment. Incessant and excessive labors for 127 days have so impaired my health and strength that I must desist from further effort and seek rest. I retire from the 'stump' the less reluctantly because I may now justly claim that I have faithfully tried to do my part, and I can confidently leave the rest to the unsubdued and unterrified Democracy and its loyal hosts. Never were the sound conservative, conscientious, and stake-holding Republicans in Virginia better organized and more aroused than they are at the present time. They have been deserted by a few who left their party for its good; but, in turn, the very flower of the old opposition of Whiggery, respectable in times past for its profession of conservatism and its love of law and order, have chosen the elect Democracy, with all the ills they complain of it, rather than to fly to those they '*Know not of!*'

"The *personnel* of the party was never more purified, and the numerical majority was never larger than it promises to be at the coming election. As in 1801 the Democracy stood 'like a wall' and rolled back the tide of federalism, so now it stands and will roll back the tide of fanaticism! It will prove itself to be the visible invincible! It is roused and will rally to the polls ten thousand voters more than ever gave the *viva voce* before! And the *viva voce* will rend the veil from the 'invisible' and defend the freedom and independence of the elective

[1] See Hambleton, pages 353, 354.

franchise and the Constitution and the laws against the conspiracy of the dark lantern.

"It will forbid any power in Virginia to interpose between our conscience and our God.

"It will save the Protestant churches from the pollution of party politics, and conserve their powers of truth for the pulling down of strongholds, free from the taint and violence of persecution. It will trust in God, and defend the Christian faith from intolerance, and allow poor humanity to indulge in the virtues of charity and peace on earth and good-will to all men.

"It will not only oppose any 'legislative enactment' to interfere with the rights of the members of any church as citizens, but it will deny the power of the legislature to annul the new Constitution, which has made the act of religious freedom irrepealable. That act is now organic law. And the Democratic conservatism will allow no party nor power to set up a higher law and say that a man shall be burthened, when the Constitution says he shall *not* be burthened, for reason of his religious opinion, by being excluded from eligibility to office, or by removal from office because of his religion or the place of his birth.

"It will prevent the repudiation of the right of naturalization, for which the nation poured out its blood and treasure for three years in the second war of Independence with Great Britain.

"It will defend the State right to regulate citizenship. It will not deny to the oppressed a home, nor prevent the population 'of these States' still requiring hundreds of millions of immigrants, who bring with them hundreds of millions of money.

"It will allow the poor, as well as the rich, to come and 'drink of the waters' of liberty freely. And it will

remember that all are not criminals whom European despots call such and send away from troubling their dominions. It will take by the hand other criminals besides John Mitchell, and feel for others in the prison-houses and dungeons of the Old World besides him who once was tenant of Olmutz!

"It will jealously guard against the European influence which is insidiously sent from Exeter Hall in Old England to Williams Hall in New England to invade America in the name of an 'American' party; and it will watch the oppressor, not the oppressed, abroad, as did Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson!

"It will defend the freedom and independence of the elective franchise against the conspiracy which would bind voters by test oaths to reject men of a particular religious faith, marked for proscription, and which would not leave suffrage as free to elect as to reject those whom the Constitution and the laws have made eligible to office.

"It will especially guard the office of governor from the avowed intent to wield the appointing power so as not to obey the limitations of qualifications for office fixed by the Constitution, but to obey rules of appointment established by an irresponsible and authorized Secret Oligarchy, formed to set up the *Higher Law* of its own prescription for its own exclusive and selfish ends.

"It will see that the oath itself of the governor's office is not perverted by sectarian bigotry to set up a religious test as a qualification for office. It will defend the General Government from the consolidation which would establish itself on what is called the *independence* of Congress.

"It will defend public policy from the faith of the American system, Harbors, Rivers, and Pacific Railroads and Protective Tariffs and Internal Improvements by the

General Government, now again advanced by a Winchester Council of the American party. It will defend the State against agrarianism, free-soilism, and abolitionism now threatening to invade the South from Northern non-slaveholding Councils of Know-nothingism. It will defend society against the demoralization of a cabal sworn to practise dissimulation and perfidy between man and man. And it will defend religion against the demons of Antichrist! With perfect and abiding confidence in the power of Truth and Democracy, of a purified, exalted, and triumphant majority for these impregnable positions, I go home to Accomack and await the polls of the people. I cannot do so without thanking thousands of the sections of the State through which I have passed for their uniform hospitality, kindness, and respect, and without saying that the chief gratification with which I part from a daily intercourse with the masses of the people is that I have endeavored to sow the seeds of truth only in the popular mind, and I trust that they will be fruitful of blessings to individuals, to the State, and to the country."

On the 24th day of May, 1855, what had been one of the most exciting campaigns that has ever occurred in this country came to an end, and the *viva voce* of the people of Virginia was given for the Democratic standard-bearer. The total vote of the State was 156,668, of which Wise received 83,424 votes, and Flournoy 73,244, being a majority of 10,180 for the former. Throughout the Northern States the result in Virginia had been watched with intense interest, the Know-nothings having carried the governors and legislatures of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, California, and Kentucky; and all eyes were turned toward the Old Dominion as the natural gateway, or "entering wedge," to the Southern States. The result of the Virginia election

spread like wild-fire, and Wise was called upon in the city of Washington at Brown's Hotel, by an immense throng of his admirers, before whom he appeared, and amid the frequent interruptions of the Know-nothings present, declared in eloquent tones, "I have met the Black Knight with his visor down, and his shield and lance are broken." In referring to the triumph of "Sam" in the Northern States, he said, "He might live in the land of secret ballot, but he could not survive the *viva voce* of the people."

The triumphant march of the secret order in America was thenceforward broken, and the "dark lantern" had lost its attractiveness, for in addition to Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi gave their verdict against the new movement, and Know-nothingism, instead of successfully invading the South, received an overwhelming defeat. But one circumstance detracted from Wise's gratification at the result in Virginia; namely, his native county Accomack had gone against him, but he had turned the tables upon his opponent, Flournoy, by carrying Halifax, the latter's county. The result in Accomack was explained, not only by the free-soil sentiment that exists there but by the close intercourse commercially and otherwise with Baltimore, where the Know-nothings held full sway, and the further fact that Wise had not been able to visit the eastern shore during the canvass and to contradict certain adverse rumors which the northern Methodists had circulated against him. Upon his arrival in his native county he was greeted by immense crowds, who gathered about him to congratulate him on the result, and he said in a public address to his fellow-citizens in alluding to the vote in Accomack, "The mother may forget the son, but the son will not forget the mother."

On June 29 Wise wrote in a letter to his friend, Senator George W. Jones of Iowa: "My policy from first to

last was to strike so fast and thick at 'Sam,' that he was kept on the defensive all the time. The man who defends in politics is half whipped. I have often been taken for an impulsive man to my advantage. The enemy was surprised that I never stopped to defend a position, but kept pressing constantly upon his centre until it was broken. It was a desperate battle, Jones. As late as February we were beaten twenty thousand votes. Nothing but Napoleonic tactics could save the field. I won't march to Moscow after them. But the North must not cross the Virginia line with its worse than icy cold 'isms.'"

In summing up the causes which led to the overthrow of Know-nothingism in Virginia, it would be unjust not to acknowledge the valuable services of the press, prominent among which were the Richmond *Enquirer*, edited by Roger A. Pryor, and the *Examiner*, edited by Robert W. Hughes, while yeomen service was rendered by such able speakers as Shelton F. Leake, John B. Floyd, Patrick Henry Aylett, James Lyons, Richard K. Meade, Elisha W. McComas, William H. Harman, Henry L. Hopkins, and others. Nor were the old-line Whigs altogether lacking in their support of the Democracy, for there were many who refused to ally themselves with the new secret order. However, it is no disparagement of any of these, whether Democrats or Whigs, to assert that Wise had been from first to last the central figure for the canvass, and his eloquent voice had served more than all others combined to animate and inspire the Democratic hosts and break the ranks of the enemy.

Although the American party had the boldness to put forward Millard Fillmore for the presidency in 1856, yet the force of the movement had been spent, and from the beginning it had served no other end than to delay, for a short while, the inevitable conflict between the sections,

which, however, it was powerless to prevent. In the hour of its first successes, Horace Greeley had remarked that it had "about as many of the elements of persistences as an anti-cholera or anti-potato rot party would have." The attempted evasion of the slavery question, at a time when the issue had to be met, and its lack of clearly defined policies as to public affairs, justified this observation, apart from the anachronism presented by a secret oath-bound order in a free republic. As Professor Alexander Johnston has written of the political conditions in 1856, "the first wave of the Republican tide from the West had washed nativism almost out of New England," as in fact it was rapidly doing throughout the North, and the American organization thenceforward played but an insignificant part upon the public stage which had been cleared for the great tragedy soon to be enacted.

CHAPTER XIII

URGED TO BECOME A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. INAUGURATION AS GOVERNOR. ADVOCATES BUCHANAN FOR PRESIDENT. CONFERENCE AT RALEIGH. THE CEREDO COLONY IN VIRGINIA. VIEWS AS TO THANKSGIVING DAY. IMPROVEMENT AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT OF VIRGINIA, AND CAUSES THAT HAD RETARDED IT STATED. VIEWS ON SUBJECT OF AN OYSTER TAX, AND STATE INSURANCE. STATE ARMS, FINANCES, ETC.

THE peaceful retirement, afforded by his home in Accomack, furnished Wise the much-needed rest after the arduous duties which he had performed on the hustings. The Virginia election had not only been anxiously watched, on account of its effect on the success of the American party in the Southern States, but the triumph of Wise had forthwith caused his name to be widely discussed in connection with the Democratic nomination for the presidency to be made in 1856. Mr. Buchanan, who, at the time, was residing abroad, as the American minister at the Court of St. James, had expressed to personal friends his great gratification at the election of Wise, and the pleasure it would afford him to see the former chosen as the Democratic standard-bearer in the approaching presidential contest. Wise does not appear at first to have entertained any very serious views in regard to the election of himself or any other Southern man to the presidency, and in July, 1855, he wrote from "Only," in Accomack,

to his friend, Senator George W. Jones of Iowa: "The thought of running for the presidency has never troubled my dreams, sleeping or waking. No, that is beyond the permission of the politicians. They will manage that matter all their own way, and I will be content to see that they are compelled to look to the good of our common country." And in September of the same year, in a letter to Robert Tyler, who then resided in Philadelphia, and who was anxious to bring forward his name, he wrote:[1] "I have no idea that any slaveholding Democrat can get the next, or any, nomination hereafter for the presidency. Free-soilism will run rampant over all considerations of Constitution, or Union, or country. My only fear is that it will tempt and frighten the time-serving aspirants of the South to distract and divide, and it may be to paralyze us. For myself, I have no compromise to make with it, and would, by the Eternal, shoot any Southern traitor who would bargain away our property, and our *honor* especially, to its demands. And thus resolved, I mean to continue to act as if I was not thought of for any place of political preferment. There shall be no scramble in Virginia or the South, if I can help it, for the nomination of the presidency. I will not consent that my name shall be used to divide our people, and my friends shall act with Hunter's, or it shall not be my fault. I shall urge the preparation of the State for events which are casting their substance, more than their shadows, before them; and if the worst comes to the worst, I will not wait on Virginia soil to fight the battle, — the African war shall go into Africa." Although at first not inclined to consider his own nomination within the range of probability, he readily succumbed to the notion, after the

[1] "Letters and Times of the Tylers," by Lyon G. Tyler, Vol. II., page 521.

manner of American politicians generally, and was flattered by the letters that poured in upon him, as well as by the notices in the public press.

On the 1st of January, 1856, he took the oath of office as governor, without any inaugural ceremony, and entered upon the discharge of his duties. A few days later he wrote to his friend, George Booker of Hampton: "I find my office no sinecure. We got in the Government house on the 8th inst., and on the 1st the whole city rushed my liquor so free that the footing of the bill frightens me." At this time he still had hopes of his own nomination, but later on became convinced of the impracticability of putting forward any Southern candidate.

The national convention of the Democratic party assembled at Cincinnati in June of that year. Whether the nomination of Buchanan was due to Wise's influence, as stated by Von Holst, or not, he had undoubtedly much to do with the bringing about of that result. Wise had espoused the cause of Buchanan on account of the vote of Pennsylvania, and in a speech delivered at a ratification meeting in Richmond declared, "She [Pennsylvania] alone of all the middle and northeastern States stood firm for Democracy, she alone of the Northern and non-slaveholding States of largest Federal strength and size remains true and reliable." The fact that the electoral vote of that State numbered 28, and the impracticability of nominating a Southern man, made it necessary, in Wise's opinion, to form a political alliance with Pennsylvania, and indicated Buchanan as the logical candidate. The nomination of Frémont as the Republican or Free-soil candidate brought the slavery question directly before the people, despite the fact that the American party had the temerity to put forward Fillmore, and the issues were clearly defined. Apprehensive of what would follow the election of Fré-

mont, Wise addressed the following letter to Governor Ligon of Maryland: —

"RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, September 15, 1856.

"To His Excellency, THOMAS W. LIGON, *Governor of Maryland:*

"*Dear Sir:* — Events are approaching which address themselves to your responsibilities and to mine as chief executives of slaveholding States. Contingencies may soon happen which would require preparation for the worst of evils to the people we govern. Ought we not to admonish ourselves, by joint counsel, of the extraordinary duties which may devolve upon us from the dangers which so palpably threaten our common peace and safety? When, how, to what extent may we act, separately or unitedly, to ward off dangers if we can, to meet them most effectually if we must? I propose that as early as convenient, the governors of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee shall assemble at Raleigh, North Carolina, for the purpose generally of consultation upon the state of the country, upon the best means of preserving its peace, and especially protecting the honor and interest of the slaveholding States. I have named the States only having Democratic executives for obvious reasons.

"This should be done as early as possible, before the presidential election, and I would suggest Monday the 13th of October next. Will you please give me an early answer and oblige

"Yours most truly and respectfully,

"HENRY A. WISE."

Similar letters were addressed to the governors of the other Southern States with the exception of Kentucky and Missouri.

The meeting occurred at Raleigh, but only the governors of North and South Carolina were present, besides Wise. Most of them had written letters approving the objects of the conference, but were prevented from attending; others thought any action unwise, especially as the governors of Kentucky and Missouri, who were not Democrats, had not been invited to participate, and hence the meeting would be regarded as a mere Democratic movement. Of this conference, Wise afterward, in 1873, wrote in a letter to Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts (see Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power," Vol. II., page 521): "My anxious desire and most zealous motive was to do all I could to prevent intestine war and guard against disunion; and, if that could not be done, to provide for the safety and protection of Virginia in a war which might come, and which I was sure would come, unless a convention of the States could be assembled to avert its dangers. . . . I shall die in the conviction that if a convention of all the States could have been held, war would have been averted."

No action was taken at the Raleigh meeting, though it had the effect, as Wilson remarks, of alarming many conservative men at the North, who were prevented thereby from voting for Frémont. The election of Buchanan over Frémont served to postpone for a time the conflict, which otherwise might have sooner arisen.

We may be pardoned if we narrate here an episode in the history of the slavery contest but little known, and which is of interest, if for no other reason than on account of its projector, and the line of speculation that it awakened as to what might have been its results. In the year 1856 Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, the able and indefatigable head of the Emigrant Aid Society, had completed his work of colonization in Kansas and made sure the triumph of the free-state

men. It was the purpose of Thayer, after his victory over the pro-slavery sympathizers, to turn his attention to Virginia, and buy up large tracts of land in that State and settle them with members of the Society. It was even contemplated to purchase whole counties in tidewater Virginia, which had become thinly populated and worn out by the exhaustive methods of agriculture in vogue there, and fill them with free-state settlers. Early in 1857, after lecturing at various points throughout the western portion of the State, Thayer founded a colony called Ceredo, in Wayne County, on the Ohio River. Here a large sum of money was expended, and over five hundred settlers were located. Wise was appealed to by Albert Gallatin Jenkins, a resident of Green Bottom, not far distant, to prevent the founding of an abolition colony in Virginia, and in reply to a letter from the latter wrote:

"RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, August 24, 1857.

"DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 15th inst. was received this morning, and I reply to it immediately, that 'Mr. Eli Thayer's emigration scheme,' in western Virginia or anywhere else, has never been submitted in any manner whatever to my approval or disapproval. What the scheme is, for any part of Virginia or elsewhere, I am not definitely informed, and the agents of no such emigration scheme have ever addressed me on the subject, directly or indirectly, and its friends, whoever they be, have no authority whatever for the use of my name in its favor. A newspaper report to that effect, in some Cincinnati journal, was lately contradicted by the Richmond *Enquirer*, with my authority.

"I am 'cognizant' of no 'matter appertaining to the origin, objects, and probable results of this enterprise,' which have not been given to the public. Officially, I

have nothing to do with the subject, except it be made apparent, by proper and sufficient proof, that combinations or associations are formed, in or out of the State, to cause invasion or incite insurrection, or to prevent the execution of our laws, especially those for the protection of property in slaves. Any association or combination, formed under any pretext, coming into our limits with the avowed or manifest purpose and act of impairing the value of property in slaves, would be against the laws of the Commonwealth, which I will 'take care shall be faithfully executed.' No such association or combination has my approbation, and it will have to encounter all the power vested in me by the constitution to resist and overcome any such unlawful intent or purpose, and to enforce the execution of the laws. But in saying this, I disclaim all meaning to interfere with peaceful and lawful immigration into the limits of our Commonwealth. Our State settlers do develop her vast resources; and I would, from policy and without fear, encourage immigrants to come to our waste lands and improve them, to increase our population, our wealth, our revenue, and our State and Federal strength. And so conscious am I of the power of Virginia to protect and defend her institutions and the persons and property of her citizens, in her own limits at least, that I would neither feel nor betray any fear, if felt, which would repel lawful immigration and settlement. That State must be weak, indeed, which would, from mere apprehension, arrest the progress of her development lest she could not preserve her peace, protect her persons and property, and enforce her laws. I have no fear, therefore, that any emigration scheme intended to affect Virginia can endanger either her honor, her possessions, or her peace in her own limits.

"No matter what may be the newspaper rumors, how-

ever calculated to alarm the timid or to excite the excitable, or to add fuel to the fires of agitation, my counsel is calmly to invite settlers to our lands; to offer them every facility and favor of good neighborhood; to give them all the protection of peace; to encourage them in increasing plenty, by multiplying the hands and vocations of labor — and to allow them to abide with us under our laws so long as they will obey those laws, and respect all rights under them. Indeed, I know of no laws, State or Federal, which do not require this rule to be observed toward all immigrants of good behavior. The right to remove from one State and to settle in another, complying with the laws, is a reciprocal right of the citizens of the respective States, under the Constitution of the United States. Why not calmly wait, then, for *the fact*, as it may arise? If the act and the intent of immigration shall manifest themselves to be unlawful, we have the power to enforce the laws; and if lawful, we ought to encourage settlement, and are bound to extend protection to innocent and lawful immigrants. At all events, let us be manly in our actions and not move from the promptings of mere apprehension and fears.

"These are briefly my views, and I am grateful to you for the opportunity of calling them forth.

"Yours truly,

"HENRY A. WISE.

"HON. ALBERT G. JENKINS."

It is hardly necessary to add that the Ceredo colony was never interfered with, and the enterprise only languished on account of the lack of support from the North.

Another letter of Wise, equally as characteristic of the man as that above quoted, was one addressed to Mrs.

Sarah J. Hale, of Philadelphia, editor of the "Lady's Book," in response to a request from her that he appoint a day of thanksgiving, by virtue of his office as governor.

"Richmond, Virginia, September 24, 1856.

"Madam: — . . . Never was there a time when this nation more needed the efficacy of prayer, against some of the preaching and practices of some of the churches which profess to be Christian, than at this critical period of imminent peril. But Virginia is peculiarly opposed to any the remotest connection between the action of Church and State. We recognize Christianity in every form of State, except in any form of worship; that is left to the people, freely to be exercised without any interference by the State, and the State permits no interference with it by any religions among the people. I cannot but approve of this disconnection, to this extent, and will never venture in this State or Republic to invoke religion, officially or politically, on any occasion except as the laws authorize, as a sanction of appeals to the consciences of men and to the forms of certain proceedings, judicial or otherwise. I bow to God and His Son Jesus Christ and to His Holy Spirit in all things; but the governor of Virginia is not authorized by her laws to call upon the people to bow to authority in heaven, or on earth, besides their own authority. This is no infidel or anti-Christian sentiment, but one founded on a zealous sense of preserving the Church pure from the State, and the State free from the Church: upon the rule to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's, and to keep spiritual things unspotted from the world. This theatrical, national claptrap of Thanksgiving has aided other causes in setting thousands of pulpits to preaching '*Christian politics*,' instead

of humbly letting the carnal kingdom alone and preaching singly Christ crucified.

"You are welcome to publish this hasty letter."

At the period of Wise's occupancy of the governorship of Virginia, the subject of internal improvements consumed a large share of public attention. For a long period the development of the Commonwealth had been almost solely on agricultural lines, and that of the most primitive and wasteful character, the opposite of intensive farming or improved agriculture. Though manufacturing enterprises had been undertaken at an early period, they had never flourished on any large scale, as they were unsuited to the economic and social condition of the people. At the present time, it hardly appears to admit of a reasonable doubt that this state of things was directly traceable to the institution of negro slavery; and that but for that incubus, Virginia, with her wealth of minerals, water-power, and lumber, would have rivalled Pennsylvania and Ohio, if not New York, in her development in wealth and population. At a commercial convention held in the city of Richmond, as far back as the year 1838, the report of the committee on manufactures showed that there was at that time about $11,000,000 invested in manufacturing enterprises. Wheeling, Petersburg, Fredericksburg, and Richmond were the chief manufacturing points, and the largest amount was invested in the first-named place, which was located on the Ohio, and practically a western town. Petersburg, which was largely settled by a class of thrifty Scotchmen, had been the first town east of the mountains to embark in manufacturing, and was followed later by Fredericksburg and Richmond. The report of the committee alluded to the natural advantages of the State for manufacturing, viz. coal, iron, and limestone in wonderful juxtaposition, mild

climate, water-power, cheap labor, etc., and advocated internal improvements and improved transportation and banking facilities. That there was great need of these last was unquestionably true. There were no home lines of vessels plying between Virginia ports and Europe, or South America, and foreign ship-owners derived the profit from whatever commerce was carried on.

In a letter addressed to a prominent citizen of Norfolk, on the subject of a line of steamers between Virginia and South America, Wise wrote, under the date of October 15, 1858: ". . . When minister of the United States at the Court of Brazil for nearly four years, from the beginning of 1844 to the end of 1847, whilst Gallego and Haxall flour commanded twenty-four milreis per barrel, the Trieste, Chili, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore flour commanded twenty-two, twenty, and eighteen milreis, on an average. The French bakers bought the Richmond flour as a priming for their bread, so superior was it in whiteness and gluten, and, under proper inspection, it continues to command the markets of South America. But the ships which carry that flour from Virginia to Rio are all built in Baltimore, New York, or further north. There they are manned, rigged, and victualled. They come to City Point for our flour and spend nothing amongst us while loading, for they come provided for the voyage. Their owners make the freight, the dunnage, and exchange, and, above all, they bring back the return cargoes, not to us, but to Baltimore or New York, to be distributed, and the coffee comes through these ports to our people at retail prices. Until lately, I repeat, not a pound was imported into Virginia, not a Virginia bottom was employed in this trade, and not a port or place of Virginia sent a bag to the interior, but we were consumers at retail prices in the very city of Richmond which ground the flour that bought the

coffee." The truth contained in these statements had resulted in a realization of their situation by the merchants of Richmond, and prior to the war they had invested a considerable sum in vessels employed in the Brazilian trade, and Richmond had become a large coffee market. In a letter to E. Lacouture, Esq., which was laid before the legislature, on the subject of the establishment of a line of vessels between Virginia and France, Wise wrote as follows of the material condition of Virginia, under date of April 12, 1857: —

"In the first place, I call your attention to the fact that our first early settlers were all planters, and the earliest interest of our people was a plantation interest. This was something more characteristic than an agricultural interest simply. It was an occupation of land in very large extent, by liberal proprietors, who cultivated staple crops of tobacco, grain, and cotton, by slave operatives, whom they were encouraged by Great Britain to import from Africa, during the whole time of our colonial existence. This in itself was opposed to the concentration of capital and population necessary to generate trade and commerce.

"At the same time the mother country discouraged the navigation and commercial interest of all the colonies, and monopolized the carrying trade almost entirely to herself.

"Again: Looking at the map of Virginia, you see the whole Atlantic lowlands watered by the Potomac, the Rappahannock, the Piankatank, the rivers of Mobjack Bay, the York, the James, and the Roanoke, streams rising in the great Appalachian chain of mountains and running a few miles only apart from each other in parallel lines, from west to east, and all of them except the last emptying into the grand reservoir of the Chesapeake Bay, which entirely cuts off the main eastern peninsula. Thus all the

eastern and first settled part of the territory was found naturally divided into no less than seven distinct peninsulas, especially from each other, by eight considerable bodies of navigable waters. Up all these waters the tonnage of Great Britain came and found facilities of shipment everywhere, deep water, wharfage, and accessibility to navigation up to the very steps of the Blue Ridge, or the Alleghanies.

"This also tended to diffuse population and capital and prevented the concentration of either at any one point, to form a city for purposes of commerce. Every plantation found a landing at its own fields, or near in its neighborhood, and but a shipload had to be collected at any one locality; — such was the convenience to and from market of the earliest settlements in eastern Virginia.

"Again: When population moved westward, it crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains into a rich and beautiful valley running north and south, which has no natural outlet but at its northern terminus in our limits, and it had to pour its products out of our marts into those of the adjoining State of Maryland, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay. And when it crossed the next and parallel ridge of the Alleghanies, it settled upon rivers flowing westward into the great basin of the Mississippi, and had to send its products by the Monongahela and the Guyandotte and the two Kanawhas and the Sandy, to float on the Ohio, to build up Pittsburg and Cincinnati and New Orleans, cities of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Louisiana.

"Thus, by every geographical and geological cause were our people segregated into separate communities and divided from each other and all mutual commercial dependency. Thus at the beginning, from the character of their settlers and interests and of their operatives in labor, from the nature of their various territory, from both physical

convenience and necessity, the habitudes of our people were formed anti-commercial. They grew up a planting and purely pastoral people, segregated and isolated in a way utterly opposed to the concentration of population and capital, to the building of cities and of ships, and to the encouragement of the mechanic arts, all depending upon commerce. . . . By the operation of these causes we have begun and kept ourselves an agricultural people, producers of the raw material, relying on manual labor in planting and grazing, and as yet left commerce and mining and manufacturing and the mechanic arts to the concentrated population and capital and skill of other people. Thereby we have lost nothing, but the world has gained a great deal, and we have fulfilled a mighty destiny in the moral and political field, greater than the achievements of trade and arts in the physics of other States. We have no cities, but we have a meliorated country populace, civilized in the solitude, gracious in the amenities of life, and refined and conservative in social habits. We have little associated, but more individual wealth than any equal number of white population in the United States. We have no mechanic arts, but are better able, *en masse*, to own their utensils than the people are who manufacture them. Our labor in the past has been and at present is better employed than to manufacture them ourselves. We have no commerce, that is, we are not our own carriers, but we supply the very pabulum of commerce, which would not be so largely and well supplied if we were to turn traders. We are not wanting in a body of laboring white yeomanry, but our operatives are chiefly slaves, an inferior race, who are blessed by a patriarchal government of benign domestic rule which supervises every want and provides for it; and this affords a class of masters who have leisure for the cultivation of morals, manners, philosophy, and politics,

which has given the nation its heroes and sages and its blessings of free government, and its wisdom of administration in the field and in the cabinet."

The above is, on the whole, an accurate description of the causes that had led to the then condition of Virginia; but in adverting to the opportunities for culture among the country gentry of the State and the many good traits of manhood nurtured under its patriarchal system, the important fact, generally lost sight of by Southern statesmen, was overlooked; that the commerce and manufactures of the North were building up great cities, which would in time become the centres of civilization on our continent.

Wise's first regular message to the legislature was addressed to that body upon its assembling in December, 1857, and he did not neglect to urge upon them, in accordance with the course of his predecessor, Governor Johnson, the need of liberal appropriations for railways, turnpikes, and canals. When we consider not only the financial troubles of this period, but the fact that Virginia had no great centres of trade within her limits, and that her people had always followed agricultural and not commercial pursuits, the material development of the Commonwealth between the years 1845 and 1860 was truly remarkable. In 1848 energetic men, residing in the southwestern section of the State, obtained a charter to cross the mountains into Tennessee, with the Virginia and Tennessee railroad, by many regarded as a chimerical project at the time; and the year following, the officers of the Virginia Central road (now the Chesapeake and Ohio) amended their charter, with the purpose of traversing the Blue Ridge and Alleghanies, and reaching out to the Ohio River. Many other lines of railway and works of improvement had been begun; but, owing to the thinly settled character of the country and lack of great individual wealth,

liberal subscriptions on the part of the Commonwealth were necessary to successfully complete them. Unfortunately for the State, among other so-called improvements, to which larger appropriations were made, was the James River and Kanawha Canal, the pet enterprise of Washington, in which millions were sunk, after Moncure Robinson and other competent engineers had pointed out its inutility in an era of railway transportation. Wise, like many other Virginians, still adhered to the idea of the union of the Atlantic seaboard and the Ohio, through this medium. Among the means advocated by him for increasing the revenue were a tax on the oyster grounds and a system of State insurance analogous to the Swiss method. His views on these subjects are embraced in the following extracts from a message laid before the legislature: —

"By the laws of the State from 1780 down to this date, 'all unappropriated lands on the bay of Chesapeake, on the seashore, or on the shores of rivers and creeks, and all the beds of rivers and creeks, continue to be common to the people of the State. And the limits and bounds of the several tracts of land lying on the seashore, the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers and creeks thereof, and the rights and privileges of the owners of such lands, shall extend to ordinary low-water mark, but no further, unless where a creek or river, or some part thereof, is comprised within the limits of a lawful survey.' Thus, from low-water mark outwards into the waters of the State, their beds have been reserved as public domain, and been made continually common to the people of this State. And by the unvarying decisions of the circuit and supreme judges of the federal courts down to the case of Smith, owner of the sloop *Volant*, plaintiff in error *vs.* the State of Maryland, December term of the supreme court of the United States 1855, 'whatever soil below low-water mark is the subject of ex-

clusive propriety and ownership, belongs to the State on whose maritime border and within whose territory it lies.' And this soil is held by the State subject to and in trust for the enjoyment of certain public rights, among which is the common liberty of taking fish, as well shellfish as floating fish. And this right is a *jus publicum* to the citizens of the State to which the soil belongs, and that State may regulate the enjoyment of the right or the fisheries.

"The right to pass laws regulating navigation and its incidents belongs to Congress; but the regulation of taking fish, floating or shell, in its waters, belongs to each State respectively. Virginia may not prohibit the citizens of other States from transporting her fish in their vessels; but she may reserve the monopoly of taking her fish in her own waters to her own citizens. And to guard the enjoyment of that exclusive right and to preserve the fish and their spawn from destruction, she may pass regulations and levy a tax from which she may derive a revenue.

"The smallest tax upon the oyster fisheries in her limits would yield a very considerable annual revenue. The soil upon which the oysters grow extends over a space of more than 2000 square miles. About 16,000 tons of licensed vessels belonging to our citizens, and at least five times that number of tons belonging to citizens of other States, making in all 96,000 tons per annum are engaged in the oyster trade of Virginia. That amount of tonnage accounts for more than 25 to 30 millions of bushels of oysters taken and carried away from the public soil of Virginia every year. The oysters are worth from 20 cents per bushel at the place where taken, to 50 cents per bushel in the market at wholesale. A tax of two cents per bushel on 25 millions of bushels would yield a gross revenue of $500,000 per annum, to be collected under inspection laws, by not more than four small steam cutters,

at an annual cost of not more than $20,000 per annum for them, and a cost of fees for licenses not exceeding $30,000 per annum, leaving a net revenue for this *jus publicum* of $450,000 per annum.

"The second involuntary source of revenue is the policy of insurance of all lives and property of her own citizens, by the State. It is strange that whilst banking and lotteries, and like subjects, have been placed by legislation within the category of sumptuary laws, the subject of insurance has been omitted by the States in a confederacy, cutting them off from revenues by duties, customs, and excises. Why not allow our citizens to replenish their own treasury, by becoming mutual insurers to each other? Why not resort to a source of revenue where the very tax protects and insures the very property which it burdens? Why not allow the contributions, which are now voluntarily poured in large sums into the coffers of private companies, chiefly out of the State, to be voluntarily poured into the State treasury to lessen involuntary taxation? Why not let the public expenditures be borne by the wealth of the State, willing to pay them, rather than set the poor, who are unable and unwilling to bear them, clamoring against taxes, which must now alone uphold public credit and construct our public works? There can be no more fraud and favoritism against a policy by the State than against a policy by private companies; and allowing the largest percentage for losses by both, still a large revenue would be yielded. There need be no cost for assessment of value insured, for the rule need be to pay only for actual loss within the amount insured. The cost of inquiry as to actual loss may be as simple and as cheap as a writ of *ad quod damnum* to ascertain by the verdict of a jury: 'Is there fraud? Is there gross neglect? What is the amount of loss?' Subjects

not known to private insurance may be embraced in a State's policy. We live in an age of the lucifer match, and arson is too easily perpetrated not to be a crime remarkably rife in this day and night. Wheat in the garner, crops in the field, as well as houses, might be insured. Policies would be multiplied in proportion to the greater guarantee by State rather than by private security. No compulsion would be necessary, or allowed. All would be free to insure or not, but if they insure, prohibit them from negotiating a policy on any property or life in the State, except at the office of the State treasury, at every country court-house."

The plan of State insurance above outlined has never been acted upon in Virginia, and in all probability never will be; but it is a strange fact that up to the present time no oyster law has been enacted, which while preserving that great source of wealth, the oyster grounds and rocks, would at the same time yield the State an ample revenue, such as it is well capable of producing. Whenever the subject has been introduced in the legislature, the interests of the State at large have been sacrificed to those of a few thousand tongmen and fishermen dwelling along the salt water. "The oyster banks," wrote Wise in 1857, "will pay a better bonus than the banks of a paper currency. An oyster mine is a richer source of profit to labor than any mine of coal, copper, silver, or gold. If our oyster beds had been mines of metals, they would not have been so neglected by legislation as a source of revenue." At another time he declared that the game and fish of the Chesapeake and its tributaries were more valuable than the gold of California, and it is possible that time may yet prove this claim to be much nearer the truth than one who has not investigated the subject would suppose.

Among the subjects to which the attention of the legislature was early directed by Wise was the need of a reorganization of the State militia system, which at that time was weak and inefficient; and he also strenuously urged the manufacture and purchase of modern muskets, those at that date, with a few exceptions, being flint-locks of the most antiquated pattern. These he recommended should be altered to percussion, threaded in the barrel to shoot a conical ball and be made self-priming. It was not, however, until after the period of the John Brown raid, in the autumn of 1859, that the legislature awoke to the need of a properly organized and equipped body of militia.

On the subject of the supply of arms at this period, Wise wrote in after years:[1] "I looked carefully to the State Armory; and whilst I had the selection of the State quota of arms, I was particular to take field ordinance instead of altered muskets; and when I left the gubernatorial chair there were in the State Armory, at Richmond, 85,000 stand of infantry arms and 130 field-pieces of artillery, besides $30,000 worth of new revolving arms, purchased from Colt.

"My decided opinion was that a preparation of the Southern States in full panoply of arms and prompt action would have prevented civil war. The story is told, and still believed by some, that Mr. Floyd, whilst Secretary of War under Mr. Buchanan, distributed a large supply of arms to the Southern States. The story is a doubtful one; but, if true, it is certain that none of the arms were supplied to Virginia, and the misfortune of this State was that her whole militia system had been destroyed by an unprecedented dereliction of duty and by the folly of her legislature. A prompt, bold, defiant, armed multitude

[1] "Seven Decades of the Union," page 250.

would have prevented war, I repeat, but the peace policy prevailed in Virginia; whilst the cotton States were bent on what they insanely imagined would be peaceful secession, — mistaking Cotton for King, or even money or credit!"

The financial troubles, which came to a crisis in 1857, retarded somewhat the amount of State appropriations at this period to public works, though the banks whose notes were due for revenue were required to redeem them in specie, to avoid any danger of a deficit in the treasury. Among the reasons given by Wise for the need of public works was the importance of building up a centre of trade in Virginia, which was not possible without them.

In alluding to the State banking system he wrote: "The exchange is obliged to be in favor of the centre. Consequently, when our issues go to the centres to purchase supplies, they there pay a discount, and then are returned upon us to draw specie. This double operation of a tax goes on against us quarterly, upon a large per cent of our circulation. And this tax is paid by our people, chiefly for the accommodation of the traders of the large towns and for the benefit of the dealers in exchange. This makes the issue of bank paper immensely costly to a purely agricultural people. If they issued no paper of their own, the circulation of the centres would supply the medium for sending our products to market. It would be at par at its locality of issue and it would not return upon us for specie, but would rather draw specie for us." While opposed to the revival of a national bank, he favored the adoption by the various States of a uniform system, without altering the Constitution, a financial scheme similar to what in our day has been proposed by various commercial organizations.

Despite the exactions of his office, Wise had found time to study attentively national affairs; and during the spring of 1858 wrote and published an elaborate historical and constitutional treatise on the subject of "Territorial Government." This work was called forth by a letter from his friend, William F. Samford, Esq., of Auburn, Alabama, requesting his views, and was published in the form of a reply to the latter. Throughout its pages, he strenuously maintained that Congress not only had the power, but that the duty devolved upon it, to protect the rights of persons and of property, including slaves, in the Territories of the United States. He argued that the Territories, however acquired, were common to all, for confederate uses and purposes, governed by Federal legislation, and that the Constitution of the United States secured equality and community of rights, privileges, and immunities, within their limits. In support of this construction, he cited numerous illustrations from the acts of Congress organizing various Territories. The treatise, though hastily prepared, during intervals snatched from business cares, was an able discussion of the subject of the power of Congress over the Territories; and will repay the student of our history who has the industry to peruse its pages, treating as it does of a theme no longer invested with any degree of popular interest.

During the autumn of 1855, Wise was requested to deliver a lecture upon the subject of slavery, in a course held at Tremont Temple, Boston, but, unlike Robert Toombs, saw fit to decline the invitation, in the following letter: —

"Only, near Onancock,
"Accomack County, Virginia, October 5, 1855.

"Gentlemen: — On my return home, after an absence of some days, I found yours of the 19th ult., 'respectfully

inviting me to deliver one of the lectures of the course on slavery, at Tremont Temple, in the city of Boston, on Thursday evening, January 10, 1856; or, if that time will not suit my engagements, you request that I will mention at once what Thursday evening, between the middle of December and the middle of March next, will best accommodate me.'

"Now, gentlemen, I desire to pay you due respect, yet you compel me to be very plain with you and to say that your request, in every sense, is insulting and offensive to me. What subject of slavery have you 'initiated' lectures upon? I cannot conceal it from myself that you have undertaken, in Boston, to discuss and decide whether my property in Virginia ought to remain mine or not, and whether it shall be allowed the protection of laws, Federal and State, wherever it may be carried or may escape in the United States; or whether it shall be destroyed by a higher law than the constitutions and statutes!

"Who are you, to assume thus such a jurisdiction over a subject so delicate and already fixed in its relation by a solemn compact between the States, and by States which are sovereign? I will not obey your summons nor recognize your jurisdiction. You have no authority and no justification for thus calling me to account at the bar of your tribunal, and for thus arraigning an institution established by laws which do not reach you and which you cannot reach, by calling on me to defend it.

"You send me a card, to indicate the character of the lectures. It reads:—

"'Admit the bearer and lady to the Independent Lectures on Slavery. Lecture committee, S. G. Howe, T. Gilbert, George F. Williams, Henry T. Parker, W. Washburn, B. B. Mussey, W. B. Spooner, James W. Stone.'

"It is indorsed:

"'Lectures at the Tremont Temple, Boston, 1854–55. November 23, Hon. Charles Sumner, Rev. John Pierpont, poet. December 7, Hon. Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio. December 14, Hon. Anson Burlingame. December 21, Wendell Phillips, Esq. December 28, Cassius M. Clay, Esq., of Kentucky. January 4, Hon. Horace Greeley. January 11, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. January 18, Hon. John P. Hale. January 25, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Esq. February 8, Hon. Nathaniel P. Banks, Jr. February 15, Hon. Lewis D. Campbell, of Ohio. February 22, Hon. Sam Houston, of Texas. March 1, Hon. David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania. March 8, Hon. Charles W. Upham.'

"All *Honorables* and *Squires*, except those who are *Reverends!* The card does verily indicate their characters by simply naming them. And your letter, gentlemen, is franked by 'C. Sumner, U.S.S.' With these characteristics, I am not at a loss to understand you and your purposes.

"You say, 'during the next season, a large number of gentlemen from the South will be invited,' etc., etc. I regret it, if any others can be found in the slaveholding States to accept your invitation. You plead the example of General Houston. It is the last I would follow. I have no doubt that you accorded very respectful attention to him last winter and were very grateful for his services in your cause.

"You offer 'one hundred and fifty dollars to be paid to the lecturer, he bearing his own expenses.' Let me tell you that Tremont Temple cannot hold wealth enough to purchase one word of discussion from me there, whether mine here shall be mine or not; but I am ready to volunteer, without money and without price, to suppress any insurrection and repel any invasion which threatens or

endangers the State Rights of Virginia, or my individual rights, under the laws and constitutions of my country, or the sacred Union, which binds Slave States and Free States together, in one bond of National Confederacy and in separate bonds of Independent Sovereignties!

"In short, gentlemen, I will not deliver one of the lectures of the course on slavery, at the Tremont Temple, in Boston, on Thursday evening, January 10, 1856; and there will be no Thursday evening between the middle of December and the middle of March next, or between that and doomsday, which will best accommodate me for that purpose.

"I give you an immediate answer, and at my earliest convenience indicate to you that 'the particular phase of the subject' that I will present is, deliberately: to fight if we must.

"Your obedient servant,

"HENRY A. WISE."

In a different tone was the following letter written in response to an invitation to address the Mercantile Library Association of Boston.

"ONLY, NEAR ONANCOCK, VIRGINIA,
"November 11, 1855.

"GENTLEMEN: — Yours of the 2d inst. was awaiting my arrival at home yesterday, from a temporary absence at Washington City. I gratefully acknowledge the compliment of your invitation to deliver one of a course of lectures, during the present winter, before the Mercantile Library Association of Boston. I am well assured of the highly respectable character and of the laudable objects of your literary association, and no body of the kind could have been more honored than you have been by the illustrious orators and statesmen who have shed upon your

lectures the lights of their great minds. I have no doubt, too, of the 'cordial welcome' I would receive from 'very many' of your hospitable citizens; but it is not in my power, gentlemen, to accept your invitation. The situation of my private affairs, and the duty of preparing for months to come for new scenes of public service, will engross all my time and attention the whole of the coming winter. I have been compelled to decline every call of the same kind from many quarters in my own State, and other States besides yours.

"I sincerely regret this the more, because I have *never yet set my foot* on the beloved soil of that portion of my country called New England. This has not been owing to any antagonism on my part toward that favored section. Massachusetts, especially, I have been taught to venerate and cherish as the elder sister of Virginia. When I reflect upon their attitudes and relations in the darkness and gloom of the night of revolution; when I listen to their hails, sister to sister — Virginia and Massachusetts, Massachusetts to Virginia — in the 'times which tried men's souls'; when I watch the fires kindling on the heights of Boston, and see Virginia going forth across the rivers and over the land, by the sea, leading her best-beloved son by the hand, dripping blood and tears at every step there and back, leaving *him* there on post to guard your very city, and to make the oppressors evacuate it; and when I contrast this picture with the present state of things in our Confederacy, which makes you assure me 'that the feelings of the people of Massachusetts toward my State are not those of antagonism,' — I gush forth in anguish and ask, Why a necessity for such assurance? Why any antagonism between these, the devoted States of Hancock and Washington? May God in his mercy and in love guide them as of yore! May they ever be cemented

in union by the blood of the revolution! And whenever another night of gloom and trial shall come, may they hail and cheer each other on again to victory, for civil and religious liberty.

"Yours truly,

"HENRY A. WISE."

Wise had approved the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which repealed the Missouri Compromise, the first act, in his opinion, to violate Washington's injunction not to recognize geographical lines, and which had made a border between the North and South and begun a separation of the States. In a letter to a Democratic meeting in New York, he wrote from Accomack on this subject, under date of October 18, 1855: —

"The Constitution, and not any temporary and temporizing compromise statute, is the true and only standard of national right. The Constitution, in its strict sense, and not according to the latitudinarian construction of a loose Federal majority; the Constitution, which leaves all powers not expressly granted where it found them, the reserved rights of the sovereign States; the Constitution, which created certain Federal relations and rights of private citizens, among the most important of which is perfect equality between citizens of the respective States on the common grounds of Federal jurisdiction; perfect comity between the citizens of State and States, and common property between them in the national domain and dominion; the Constitution is the law of our Confederacy. It is no respecter of persons; it holds all alike, and equally under its protecting guardianship wherever it applies. It pries not into your private possession, nor into mine. It knows not whether you own one species of property, or I another. It recognizes us only as citizens of coequal State sovereignties, who are confederated under its shield, and it provides protec-

tion for whatever right belongs to either of us on ground which belongs to both. The mere municipal authority, the Congress, cannot deprive States and their citizens of this equality, this comity, and this common property of the Confederacy.

"If you may go to the common Territory with what is rightfully yours in New York, I may meet you there with whatever is lawfully mine in Virginia. Congress may not say that I shall not migrate with slave property and hold it there; for if they may say that, they may, in like manner, say that you shall not go there with horses and household goods and hold them; and if they may declare against the right of either, they may invade inalienable rights and enact laws not within the competency of legislation.

"The sovereign act of defining what shall and what shall not be tenable property by the citizen can be determined only by the conventional power of the people, forming organic law — a Constitution changing a Territory into a State. Until the new State comes into being, no power upon earth can lawfully deprive you of your horses and household goods, or me of my slave, in Kansas, unless the private property be taken for public use with just compensation. And, gentlemen, you say truly, 'that the peace and quiet of the country demand that it should be left to the people of the Territories to determine for themselves,' what their constitution of government shall be, not only in respect to slavery, but every other local question. The public peace is endangered by this 'disturbing subject.' It is a practical question of right and threatens to be one of force. Force has already been exerted 'on the border,' and in the face of this danger there is an organized 'Fusion,' which must, if persisted in, compel a resort to arms in order to resist evil spirits, combined to repeal the

'Kansas-Nebraska bill, and to reëstablish the Missouri Prohibition.'

"Prior to 1819-20, the Constitution reigned supreme on this subject. It was then invaded by a repealable, partial, sectional statute, called the Missouri Compromise. It was the first separation of the States; it first sectioned the country like a survey of the public lands; it first said to the people the dividing language of Lot and Abraham — to some 'go North' to some 'go South'; it was the first line which divided North from South, more in feeling than in fact. Did it not make a geographical demarkation — a line of latitude, — the boundary of legal limitations and determine that what was constitutional on one side of it, should be unconstitutional on the other side of it? No, said its friends at the time of its passage, it leaves slavery to be governed by the law of climate. It is a climatory, not a territorial or sectional line. It means to 'follow nature,' to let Jack Frost be king of the subject; as slavery was profitable south, and as frost pinched negroes' toes and fingers too sharp north of 36.30 for it to be profitable there, the question never should be raised con-slavery south, nor pro-slavery north of that line of latitude. Well, admitting this to be a more consistent and rational construction of the 'agreement to disagree,' did the 'fanatics of fusion' so abide it? Never! In every phase of the Compromise, first and last, they have broken its letter and spirit. Incessantly they have raised the question con-slavery South and North, East and West, everywhere. In the States and Territories and District, in the Indian country, on the train *in transitu* between States, Districts, and Territories, on the acquisition of territory, on the organization and admission of States into the Union, on questions of peace and war, ever, everywhere, always, in season and out of season, they have raised the question against slavery, until they have,

on various occasions, nearly raised the very demon of civil war and disunion! They have harbored English emissaries; raised foreign funds; wielded associated influence and capital; wearied Congress with petitions; fatigued the public mind with compromises; filled it with reviling and abuse; pensioned press, pulpit, preacher, teacher; run underground railroads; spirited away runaways; have scattered broadcast tales of holy horrors; painted on the stage scenes; written log-cabin novels; lectured, ranted, rioted, until they have made us a divided people, until they have cut the continent in two by a line of border feuds; until they have separated our churches; set us apart socially, at the watering and other places, and until they have engendered a sectional antagonism more becoming enemies in hostile array than tolerant neighbors even, much less 'united brethren'—children of one father—children of a common country, the only children the Father of that country ever had, whose farewell is still our warning!

"Within the year I have stood on the rock of Point Pleasant overlooking the grave of Cornstalk, the battle-ground between the Indian and the Long Knife, fattened by the blood of the conquest, whereby Virginia secured the eminent domain of the whole Northwest Territory. There before me spread out that vast domain, now a giant group of civilized sovereignties, empire of power, a compact tier of free States! Who made them free States? Their mother slave State, Virginia, by her deed of cession, on her own conditions, with a liberality large as a love of continental country, made Ohio and her sisters of the Northwest Territory free States. Hers was no Wilmot Proviso. It was a whole and entire grant to freedom, the first ever made upon earth like it, and made before the Constitution of the United States was formed.

After 'a more perfect Union' was formed, a permanent, uniform, universal, organic law began to reign. It left the domestic institutions with the States. It defines the only cases where the Federal authority can intervene. One of the cases is that of a slave flying from one State to another, he shall be restored to his master. By a double tier of laws, Federal and State, by constitutional and by statute laws, the master may reclaim him. And yet, gentlemen, though thus fortified by laws, organic and legislative, State and Federal, I might as well have a thousand dollars floating on a chip in the Ohio River, as to own a slave worth that sum on the Virginia shores of that river! What then? The laws do not reign! The very free soil which Virginia first consecrated on the continent is made the underground for the railroads of her runaways!"

Although he had long been a supporter of Mr. Buchanan and an extreme antagonist of the antislavery party, Wise was strongly opposed to the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, which, while it had declared in favor of slavery, had failed to submit that instrument to a vote of the people. In a letter replying to an invitation to address a meeting of Anti-Lecompton Democrats, in Philadelphia, Wise wrote under the date of February 6, 1858: —

"And why impose this Constitution of a minority on a majority? *Cui bono?* Does any Southern man imagine that this is a practicable or sufferable way of making a slave State? Who believes now that Kansas will be made a slave State, or kept one for any time, by the admission of this Constitution? Who will carry a slave there now to become a bone of contention in a border war? The sport of violence and fraud and force like that which has so long endangered person and property and political fran-

chise, in that unhappy battle-ground of sectional feuds? To what end is this to be done, if speedily it is to be undone with State authority, created to drive slave property from the Territory?

"We have proudly, heretofore, contended only for equality and justice; but if this be wantonly done without winning a stake — the power of a slave State thereby — it will be worse than vain. It will be snatching power *per fas aut nefas*, to be lost 'speedily' with the loss of something of far more worth than political votes — our moral prestige. If we are not willing to do justice, we can't ask for justice; if we can't agree to equality, we must expect to be denied it. It is our bull goring the antislavery ox. Suppose we had had a majority of slaveholders in that Territory; suppose a minority of abolitionists had gotten the census and registry into their hands and had kept fifteen out of thirty-four counties out of the convention; suppose they had formed a Constitution with a clause prohibiting slavery, and had sent it to Congress without submitting it to a majority of the legal voters; or suppose they had submitted all parts of the Constitution to the popular vote, except the one clause prohibiting slavery, knowing it would be voted down if submitted to the majority of the people; suppose such a 'boot on the other leg' had been submitted to Congress, and we had then heard the absoluteness of a convention contended for by Black Republicans, demanding of Congress to sustain the doctrine of 'legitimacy.' I tell you that every Southern man would have been in arms and would have been roused to the shedding of blood, rather than submit to Congress, fastening upon a majority of pro-slavery people an arbitrary rescript of a mere convention, unauthorized to proclaim its Constitution without an express grant. This is the same principle, accompanied by trickery and fraud.

We are willing 'to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.' The Southern people ask for no injustice, no inequality.

"We are told that 'prompt admission' of Kansas as a State will end the agitation in Congress and localize it in Kansas. What is the Kansas question? Is it local to Kansas? No. It never can be local again. It has pervaded all places and all classes in our country. Let Congress indorse this schedule of legerdemain, let the South insist on it, let the Northern Democracy be required to consent to the injustice, and the precedent becomes of universal application and citation against us for all time. Not only will the example plead, but it will be a plea in continuous cases of similar import and danger, rising successively as long as our vast Territories to the Pacific shall be filling up. It comes up again and again, every year, from Territories extending from Mesilla Valley to Dacotah. Flatter not ourselves, then, that any mode of adjustment will do because it is the 'speediest' for Kansas. It is all-essential that the settlement shall be just and right and equal. If not, it is sure to be mischievous to that party which has snatched power without right and done wrong that good may come of it. To do justice is always the best policy. If all would 'demand only what is right and submit to nothing that is wrong,' injustice and oppression could never be perpetrated or tolerated.

"The ulterior effects of adopting the Lecompton Constitution, with its schedule annexed, will be worse than referring back the question to the territorial decision. It will arraign this administration and the Democracy and the South, for demanding more than its right and for forcing resistance to wrong. It will be jagging the lion of a majority whilst the hand of a minority is in its

mouth. It will return the chalice to our own lips, when the Kansas question again and again arises in North Texas, in New Mexico, in Mesilla Valley, and in all our boundless domain of unsettled and fast-settling territory. It will drive from us thousands of honest Democrats in the North, who can willingly stand by us for justice and equality, but who must leave us when we demand more and refuse justice and equality to others. It will raise the Black Republican flag over the Capitol in the next struggle for power, and that, then, will raise the last dread issue of union or disunion! Are not some aiming to drive us to such extremities as will raise that issue past being laid?"

CHAPTER XIV

THE JOHN BROWN INVASION. HIS TRIAL AND EXECUTION. WISE'S DESCRIPTION OF HIM, AND MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE. THE REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE. UNVEILING OF THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AT RICHMOND

ALTHOUGH the bitter sectional conflict, which raged at this period over the slavery issue, boded ill for the future peace of the country, yet no people were ever more completely taken by surprise than were the peaceful inhabitants of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, when the news spread abroad on an October day, in the year 1859, that the United States arsenal and armory at Harper's Ferry had been seized by a band of insurrectionists, who held the town in defiance of the legally constituted authorities and were shooting down unoffending citizens in cold blood.

John Brown, who had long contemplated an attack on the institution of slavery in Virginia, entertained the belief that some mountain fastness in the Appalachian range would be the proper stronghold from which to begin his plan of emancipation. The career of Brown in Kansas has been so often treated by various writers in describing the border warfare that existed in that Territory, that it would be idle, as well as foreign to our purpose, to treat of it here. Suffice it to say, that in regard to the much-discussed Pottawatomie massacre, it is now admitted by Brown's admirers that he took an active part in that bloody affair. On the night of May 24, 1856, a Mr. Doyle and his two sons, who resided at Pottawatomie, were taken

from their beds, whereupon the father was shot dead by Brown, and the two younger Doyles stabbed and hacked to death with swords in the hands of the sons of Brown. A man named Wilkinson was dragged from the bedside of his sick wife, carried out and killed, close enough to the house for his wife to hear the struggle and final shot; and a farmer named John Sherman underwent a similar fate. The champions of Brown find their justification for his acts in the character of the times, and the alleged necessity of retaliatory measures, on the part of the free-state men, who resided in Kansas at that period. It is customary, however, to credit Brown with the sympathy and aid of the antislavery leaders who migrated to Kansas, yet the recently published works of such men as Governor Charles Robinson, Eli Thayer, and Amos A. Lawrence go to show that the methods employed and the ends sought by Brown were, in many respects, diametrically opposed to those pursued by the more conservative free-state men. Robinson and Thayer, the two men whose work in Kansas had done most to insure the admission of that Territory as a free State, had throughout counselled obedience to the laws and respect for constituted authority. They waged a stubborn contest, it is true, and were prepared to meet force with force, but to their credit be it said, they sought to act within the pale of the law and by peaceful methods. The Hon. Amos A. Lawrence of Massachusetts, to whose business knowledge and zeal the Emigrant Aid Society was indebted for the large amount of capital necessary to the conduct of their undertaking, furnished Brown with the money to go west in 1855, and further aided him by paying off a mortgage on the latter's farm, located in the wilds of the Adirondacks. In an address delivered before the Massachusetts Historical Society in May, 1884, Mr. Lawrence said: "It fell to me to give John

Brown his first letter to Kansas, introducing him to Governor Robinson and authorizing him to employ him and draw on me for his compensation, if he could make him useful in the work of the Emigrant Aid Society. But very soon Governor Robinson wrote that he could not employ him, as he was unreliable, and 'would as soon shoot a United States officer as a Border ruffian.'

"When he was a prisoner at Harper's Ferry, I wrote to Governor Wise, advising his release on the ground that he was a monomaniac and that his execution would make him a martyr. The answer to this letter was very creditable to Governor Wise. Afterward, when in Washington about the Kansas troubles, I spoke of it to Mr. Pierce, the ex-President, who was there at the time, and he asked to see it. So I ordered it sent to him; but it was never returned.

"John Brown had no enemies in New England, but many friends and admirers. He was constantly receiving money from them. They little knew what use he was making of it, for he deceived everybody."

Of a similar character is the description of Brown's Kansas career, given by Governor Robinson in his interesting work entitled the "Kansas Conflict," and by Eli Thayer, in his not less valuable contribution to American history, the "Kansas Crusade." The latter has applied to him Moore's description of Al Hassan: —

> "One of that saintly, murderous brood,
> To carnage and the Koran given,
> Who thinks through unbelievers' blood,
> Lies their directest path to heaven;
> One who will pause and kneel, unshod,
> In the warm blood his hand hath poured,
> To mutter o'er some text of God
> Engraven on his reeking sword."

"John Brown," writes Thayer in his "Kansas Crusade," "arrived in Kansas nearly two years after the conflict

there against slavery began. He was a great injury to the free-state cause and to the free-state settlers. He said, 'I have not come to make Kansas free, but to get a shot at the South.' He wished to begin a civil war. He was the pupil of the Garrisonites and afterward their God."

It is unnecessary to repeat again the oft-told story of how John Brown, after carefully planning his Virginia raid, with the counsel of friends gathered at Chatham, Canada, rented the Kennedy farm, located a few miles from Harper's Ferry, on the Maryland side of the Potomac; and how for a few months preceding his attack he occupied himself and his lieutenants in collecting arms, ammunition, and stores of all sorts, and in familiarizing himself with the inhabitants and general character of the country about him.

On the night of Sunday, October 16, 1859, Brown set out with a party of twenty-two men, all armed, for Harper's Ferry, located on the Virginia side of the Potomac, at the confluence of the Shenandoah River with the former.

Although the idea has long prevailed that Brown's party consisted of only twenty-two men, yet there is good reason to believe that his followers exceeded this number and that, through some miscalculation in the plan of the attack, the remainder of his men were prevented from uniting with him at the proper time. On the day following the seizure of the armory and arsenal, Brown informed several of his prisoners that before noon on that day he expected large reënforcements, and this expression was not understood as applying solely to the slaves whom he expected to come to his support. In the opinion of Mr. Andrew Hunter of Charlestown, who acted as the prosecuting attorney during the trial of Brown, the arrival of his expected reënforcements was prevented by the prompt action of a volunteer company from Charlestown, which,

at an early hour on Monday morning, marched to a point on the Potomac above Harper's Ferry, where they crossed the river and proceeded down the tow-path to the mouth of the bridge, thus preventing Brown's escape, or assistance reaching him from the direction of the Kennedy farm. This view is confirmed by the fact that Brown and Stevens, seeing the approach of the volunteers along the tow-path, mistook them for friends, and started out to meet them, which resulted in the latter's being shot.

Throughout Monday Brown had held possession of the town and continued his bloody work unabated; directing the movements of his men, wearing the sword Frederick the Great is said to have sent to Washington, and which had been captured at the farm of Colonel Lewis Washington, a few miles distant from the Ferry, who had been taken prisoner by Brown. Two significant facts had thus far characterized the fury of the Kansas leader, the first man shot by Brown's men had been an innocent, unoffending negro and, contrary to the cherished expectation of Brown, no slave had joined in his attempted insurrection, except one or two whom he had captured and who had accompanied him under compulsion. Despite his previous visits to Virginia for the purpose of familiarizing himself with the conditions and habits of the slaves, Brown had shown himself a less penetrating judge of their character than Frederick Douglass, himself an ex-slave, and who had warned the former that he need not look for assistance from that element of the population.

It is a fact of general knowledge that on Tuesday morning a body of United States marines, who had been ordered to Harper's Ferry and were commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee, battered down the doors of the engine house and captured the remainder of Brown's party, along with their chief. Rumors of the outbreak had reached Richmond on

Monday morning, and orders were immediately issued by telegraph by Wise to the militia of Jefferson County to hold themselves in readiness. About seven o'clock that evening, news of a far more alarming character was received, and the wires brought the intelligence that a large number of marauders had seized the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, with all its arms and ammunitions and were proceeding to arm the slaves and endeavoring to incite them to the murder of the whites.

On an hour's notice, the First Virginia Regiment, accompanied by the governor, set out for Harper's Ferry and were joined at Washington by another force from Alexandria. Owing to delays at Washington and at the Relay House, Wise did not arrive with the volunteers until one o'clock P.M. on Tuesday, after the insurgents had been captured. In a message subsequently addressed to the legislature, he wrote: "I immediately examined the leader, Brown, his lieutenant, Stevens, a white man named Coppie, and a negro from Canada. They made full confessions. Brown repelled the idea that his design was to run negro slaves off from their masters. He defiantly avowed that his purpose was to arm them and make them fight by his side in defence of their freedom, if assailed by their owners or any one else; and he said his purpose especially was to war upon the slaveholders and to levy upon their other property to pay the expense of emancipating their slaves. He avowed that he expected to be joined by the slaves and by numerous white persons from many of the slave as well as the free States."

As Brown's intention to incite the slaves to resistance was denied by him during the course of his trial, it is worthy of note that his attention was called by Mr. Andrew Hunter to his earlier statements made to the governor and himself, which Brown attempted to explain

by saying that he had spoken before the trial without preparation, and under stress of the excitement, and unintentionally conveyed a wrong impression. After his conviction and prior to his execution, Brown addressed a note to Mr. Hunter, published in the newspapers at the time, in which he reaffirmed his first statement made in the presence of Hunter and Wise.

So much has been written, by abolition sympathizers, of alleged indignities to which Brown was subjected by the Virginia authorities, that we may be pardoned for quoting Von Holst, one of Brown's most ardent admirers, as well as one of Wise's severest critics. In alluding to the interview of Senator Mason and Wise with Brown, that author writes: "In contrast with so many Northern journalists, and to some extent with Vallandingham, the two Virginians proved themselves perfect gentlemen on this occasion. Neither the subject-matter nor the manner of their questions could either irritate or insult the prisoner, who was severely wounded and suffering violent pain."[1]

In giving his impressions of Brown in an impromptu address to the Virginia militia on his return to Richmond, Wise said: "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw cut and thrust and bleeding and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, and indomitable;

[1] It was the above circumstance that furnished the basis for the following extract from Emerson's lecture on "Courage": "The true temper has genial influences. It makes a bond of union between enemies. Governor Wise of Virginia, in the record of his first interview with his prisoner, appeared to great advantage. If Governor Wise is a superior man, or inasmuch as he is a superior man, he distinguishes John Brown. As they confer, they understand each other swiftly; each respects the other. If opportunity allowed, they would prefer each other's society and desert their former companions. Enemies would become affectionate."

and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners, as attested to me by Colonel Washington and Mr. Mills, and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous; but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, except the free negroes with him, are like him. He professes to be a Christian, in communion with the Congregationalist Church of the North, and openly preaches his purpose of universal emancipation, and the negroes themselves were to be the agents, by means of arms, led on by white commanders. . . . And Colonel Washington says that he [Brown] 'was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand and held his rifle with the other and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm and to sell their lives as dearly as they could.'"[1]

[1] The Rev. H. Clay Trumbull, in a recent book entitled "War Memories of a Chaplain," relates the following incident in connection with General Alfred H. Terry, who was stationed in Richmond as military governor of Virginia shortly after the war: "On one occasion, General Henry A. Wise, governor of Virginia, at the time of the John Brown raid, came into the office to apply for the intervention of General Terry to repossess him of a building on his lands in the eastern part of the State. In the course of the conversation, it came out that that building was now occupied as a school for little negroes, taught by a daughter of old John Brown, whom he had hanged. The disclosure of this fact caused a friend of General Wise, who was present, to comment on the strange turn of affairs by which, within six years from the execution of John Brown, the governor who hanged him was imploring the help of the United States government to drive one of John Brown's daughters out of the governor's house, where she was teaching little negroes. To the surprise of all, General Wise responded earnestly: 'John Brown! John Brown was a great man, sir. John Brown was a great man!' Henry A. Wise was man enough to realize that God's ways of working seem different when looked back upon in accomplished history, and when seen distortedly coming toward us through the mists of personal prejudices and fears."

Brown and his associates had been committed to the jail at Charlestown, and at the October term of the Circuit Court a joint indictment was found by the grand jury against him, along with Stevens, Shields, Green, Coppie, and Copeland. The indictment contained four counts, viz.: 1st, Treason; 2d, Inciting slaves to insurrection; 3d, Murder; 4th, Murder with John Copeland as accessory. Although, when first brought before the examining court of justices, Brown had proclaimed that he did not want a trial, yet when the time came he had able counsel to defend him, who urged delay, and sought to take any advantage furnished by the technicalities of the law. At the conclusion of the trial, and before sentence was pronounced, Brown, when asked if he had anything to say, arose, and in the course of his address said: "I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected."

On the 19th of November, a petition for a writ of error to the Circuit Court was presented to the Court of Appeals of Virginia by Messrs. Samuel Chilton and William Green, counsel for Brown. The reputation of these two members of the bar is in itself a guarantee that no defect, if any, in the record was lost sight of, but the Appellate Court, which consisted at the time of Judges John J. Allen, William Daniel, R. C. L. Moncure, George Hay Lee, and William J. Robertson, denied the petition after a careful inspection of the record of the lower court. It has been so often charged, by the sympathizers of Brown, that his trial was a farce, and conducted regardless of the forms of law, that it is worth while to bear in mind the high character and reputation of the judges who sat upon the supreme bench of Virginia at that time.

That Brown was not only humanely, but kindly treated

during the period of imprisonment at Charlestown, is shown by an abundance of testimony, the statements of abolition fanatics to the contrary notwithstanding. The Hon. Andrew Hunter, the prosecuting attorney, wrote: "My instructions from Governor Wise were to see that every comfort and privilege consistent with their condition as prisoners should be afforded them. This was religiously done, and the charge to the contrary is utterly false. Over and over again, in accordance with my instructions from Wise, I told him [Brown] that anything he wanted, consistent with his condition as a prisoner, he should have." The jailer of Jefferson County at the time, a man named Avis, was repeatedly thanked by Brown for his many acts of kindness to him, and the latter, in his will, further remembered Avis by leaving him his Sharp's rifle and pistol.

In a letter to the Hon. Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, dated November the 15th, 1873, Wise wrote on this subject: "I required him to be treated with the utmost humanity; but, after an attempt of one of the prisoners to escape, he was very strictly guarded, and no one was allowed to have an interview with him, except under the eye of the guard. His guard had his instructions under General Willaim B. Taliaferro, as humane and refined a gentleman as ever had command of men and custody of prisoners. His wife had special leave to visit him, and, by my orders, was escorted from Harper's Ferry to Charlestown by a mounted guard of cavalry, to protect her from any indelicacy of treatment, much more against any insult. No insult to her was attempted, and to make sure of proper treatment to her in the interview with her husband, General Taliaferro in person stood sentinel with the guard, and kept every one at respectful distance. I visited John Brown but once after his incarceration to await his trial. I especially desired to ascertain whether he had any com-

munication to make to me other than he had already made. He repeated mostly the same information, expressed his personal regard and respect for me, thanked me for my kindness in protecting him from all violence and in providing for his comfort. He complained of some disease of the kidneys, and I tendered him the best aid of physician and surgeon, which he declined, for the reason that he was accustomed to an habitual treatment, which he had already provided for himself. He talked with me freely, and I offered to be the depositary of any confidential request consistent with my honor and duty; and when we parted he cordially gave me his blessing, wishing me every return for the attentions to him as a prisoner. This was some time before his execution, which I did not attend. In my opinion, his friends are mistaken in the belief that he sat up the most of the night before his execution writing, etc. There was no need of that, for before his execution, after the date of his arrest, and even after the date of his conviction, he had abundant time and opportunity to write at his leisure a full account of the raid. He was perfectly firm and composed, except when touching his sorrows for the wrongs done to his sons in the Kansas wars. Then he was at times bitter, but the reports to me were that he slept well and quietly all the time of his imprisonment. He was especially grateful to me for doing all I could to prevail on the legislature to pardon one of his gang, a youth named Coppie. You know that by the constitution of Virginia of 1850, the governor could pardon in all cases except treason."

After the conviction of Brown, letters by the thousand poured in upon Wise, urging his pardon. Many of these were from anonymous writers, threatening in their tone, unless their demand was acceded to; others were from men of standing, who, while admitting the justice of the

sentence, deemed it ill advised to hang Brown, as it would make him, in popular estimation, a "martyr." In his message to the legislature, which did not assemble until after Brown's execution, but prior to that of his associates, Wise wrote: "Sudden, surprising, shocking, as this invasion has been, it is not more so than the rapidity and rancor of the causes which have prompted and put it in motion. It is not confined to the parties who were the present participators in its outrages. Causes and influences lie behind it more potent far than the little band of desperadoes who were sent ahead to kindle the sparks of a general conflagration; and the event, sad as it is, would deserve but little comment, if the condign punishment of the immediate perpetrators of the felonies committed would, for the future, secure the peace which has been disturbed, and guarantee the safety which it has threatened. Indeed, if the miserable convicts were the only conspirators against our peace and safety, we might have forgiven their offences and constrained them only by the grace of pardon. But an entire social and sectional sympathy has incited their crimes and now rises in rebellion and insurrection, to the height of sustaining and justifying their enormity. . . . The strongest argument against this unnatural war, upon negro slavery in one section by another of the same common country, is that it inevitably drives to disunion of the States, embittered with all the vengeful hate of civil war. As that Union is among the most precious of our blessings, so the argument ought to weigh which weighs its value. But this consideration is despised by fanaticism. It contemns the Union and now contemns us for clinging to it as we do. It scoffs the warning that the Union is endangered. The Union itself is denounced, as a covenant with sin, and we are scorned as too timid to make the warning of danger to it worthy

to be heeded. . . . We know that we have many sound and sincere friends in the non-slaveholding States. It may be that they are most numerous far who abhor and detest such wrongs as these; but it is not to be disguised that the conservative elements are *passive*, whilst the fanatical are *active*, and the former are fast diminishing, whilst the latter are increasing in numbers and in force. But where is the evidence that the conservative elements are the most powerful? . . . Alas! turn where we will, and to what we will, we find that the judgments of the Courts only are with us, but they have lost all reverence and respect, and we are left without protection, and the Supreme Court of the United States is itself assailed for not assailing our constitutional defences. . . . Though the laws do not permit me to pardon in cases of treason, yet pardons and reprieves have been demanded on the grounds of, first, insanity; second, magnanimity; third, the policy of not making martyrs. As to the first, the parties by themselves or counsel put in no pleas of insanity. No insanity was feigned even; the prisoner Brown spurned it. *Since his sentence*, and since the decision on the appeal, one of his counsel, Samuel Chilton, Esq., has filed with me a number of affidavits professing to *show ground for delaying execution, in order to give time to make an issue of fact as to the sanity of the prisoner.* How such an issue can now, after sentence confirmed by the Court of Appeals, be made, I am ignorant; but it is sufficient to say that I had repeatedly seen and conversed with the prisoner, and had just returned from a visit to him, when this appeal to me was put into my hands. As well as I can know the state of mind of any one, I know that he was sane and remarkably sane, if quick and clear perception, if assumed rational premises and consecutive reasoning from them, if cautious tact in avoiding disclosures

and in covering conclusions and inferences, if memory and conception and practical common-sense, and if composure and self-possession are evidence of a sound state of mind. He was more sane than his prompters and promoters, and concealed well the secret which made him seem to do an act of mad impulse, by leaving him without his backers at Harper's Ferry; but he did not conceal his contempt for the cowardice which did not back him better than with a plea of insanity, which he spurned to put in at his trial at Charlestown. As to the second ground of appeal: I know of no magnanimity which is so inhumane, and no inhumanity could well exceed that to our society, our slaves as well as their masters, which would turn felons like these, proud and defiant in their guilt, loose again on a border already torn by a fanatical and sectional strife, which threatens the liberties of the white even more than it does the bondage of the black race. As to the third ground: Is it true that the execution of our laws, fairly and justly administered upon these confessed robbers, murderers, and traitors, will make them martyrs in the public sentiment of other States? If so, then it is time, indeed, that execution shall be done upon them, and that we should prepare in earnest for the 'irrepressible conflict' with that sympathy which, in demanding for these criminals pardons and reprieves, and in wreaking vengeance for their refusal, would make criminals of us. Indeed, a blasphemous moral treason, an expressed fellow-feeling with felons, a professed conservatism of crime, a defiant and boastful guilty demoniac spirit combined, arraign us, the outraged community, as the wrong-doers who must do penance and prevent our penalty by pardon and reprieve of these martyrs. This sympathy sent these men tools to do the deeds which sentenced them. It may have sent them to be martyrs for mischief's sake; but the

execution of our laws is necessary to warn future victims not again to be its tools. To heed this outside clamor at all was to grant at once unconditional grace. To hang would be no more martyrdom than to incarcerate the fanatic. The sympathy would have asked on and on for liberation, and to nurse and soothe him, whilst life lasted, in prison. His state of health would have been heralded weekly as from a palace, visitors would have come, affectedly reverent, to see the *shorn* felon at hard labor, the work of his hands would have been sought as holy relics, and his parti-colored dress would have become, perhaps, a uniform for the next band of marauders. There was no middle ground of mitigation. To pardon or reprieve at all was to proclaim a licensed impunity to the thousand fanatics, who are mad only in the guilt and folly of setting up their individual supremacy over law, life, property, and civil liberty itself. This sympathy with the leader was worse than the invasion itself. The appeal was: it is policy to make no *martyrs*, but disarm murderers, traitors, robbers, insurrectionists, by *free pardon* for wanton, malicious, unprovoked felons! I could but ask, Will execution of the legal sentence of a human law make martyrs of such criminals? Do sectional and social masses hallow these crimes? Do whole communities sympathize with the outlaws, instead of sympathizing with the outraged society of a sister sovereignty? If so, then the sympathy is as felonious as the criminals, and is far more dangerous than was the invasion. The threat of martyrdom is a threat against our peace and demands execution, to defy such sympathy and such saints of martyrdom."

After the assembling of the legislature in December, 1859, a few days following Brown's execution, various petitions were presented to that body, praying that the sentence against Stevens, Coppie, and other of Brown's

associates might be commuted to imprisonment in the penitentiary, and in the case of Coppie, Wise used his influence to secure this end. It is said that the legislature would probably have done this in the latter's case but for the powerful speech of Isbell, the senator from Jefferson and Berkeley, delivered against it.

From the time of the raid at Harper's Ferry until after the execution of Shields, Green, Coppie, Stevens, and Copeland, on December 16, a force of militia, varying in numbers from several hundred to sixteen hundred at one time, was kept on duty at Charlestown and neighboring points along the Potomac. The presence of this number of military on duty has often been remarked upon and pointed out as an indication of the weakness attaching to the institution of slavery, on the one hand, and on the other, as an evidence of Wise's love of display and rodomontade, and an attempt on the part of himself and others to make political capital out of the affair. But there seems to be no good reason to doubt that the exigencies of the occasion and the exposed condition of the border counties necessitated the assembling of a considerable body of troops, in and around Charlestown, and that the failure to do so would probably have resulted in a further shedding of blood. Concerning this subject, Mr. Andrew Hunter wrote: "As justifying the assembling of so many troops at Charlestown and in the neighborhood, I deem it proper and especially in justification of Governor Wise, to state that very soon after the prisoners were arrested, and while the trials were progressing, I learned (and he through me), from Brown's intercepted correspondence and from various other sources, that there were combinations being formed in various parts of the United States, chiefly in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky, of armed parties for the purpose of coming on here and releasing

the prisoners." The papers contained in Brown's carpet-bag, together with others, were formally laid before the legislature; and on January the 26th, 1860, the joint committee of the two branches of that body, appointed to consider the subject of the Harper's Ferry raid, submitted their report, prepared by Alexander H. H. Stuart, the chairman of that committee: —

"The evidence before your committee is sufficient to show the existence, in a number of Northern States, of a widespread conspiracy, not merely against Virginia, but against the peace and security of all the Southern States. But the careful erasure of names and dates from many of the papers found in Brown's possession renders it difficult to procure legal evidence of the guilt of the parties implicated. The conviction of the existence of such a conspiracy is deepened by the sympathy with the culprits, which has been manifested by large numbers of persons in the Northern States, and by the disposition which your committee are satisfied did exist, to rescue them from the custody of the law.

"Near five hundred letters, addressed to Governor Wise, after the arrest of Brown and his confederates, have been inspected by your committee. Many of these were anonymous and evidently written in bad faith, but the greater number were genuine letters, apparently from respectable sources. In some instances, the authors professed to state, from their own knowledge, and in others, from information which they credited, that there were organizations on foot, in various States and neighborhoods, to effect the rescue of Brown and his associates; and they, therefore, urged the governor to concentrate a sufficient military force about Charlestown (the county seat of Jefferson) to frustrate all such purposes. Several ministers of the Gospel and other citizens, who valued the peace and

harmony of the country, appealed to Governor Wise, as a measure of humanity, and to save the effusion of blood, to assemble such a body of troops around the prison as would intimidate the sympathizers from attempting a rescue.

"They justly foresaw that even an abortive attempt, attended with loss of life, would, in all probability, be followed by disastrous consequences to the peace of the country.

"Pending the trials and after the conviction of the prisoners, a great many letters were received by the governor, from citizens of Northern States, urging him to pardon the offenders, or to commute their punishment. Some of them were written in a spirit of menace, threatening his life and that of members of his family, if he should fail to comply with their demands. Others gave notice of the purpose of resolute bands of desperadoes to fire the principal towns and cities of Virginia, and thus obtain revenge by destroying the property and lives of our citizens. Others appealed to his clemency, to his magnanimity, and to his hopes of future political promotion, as presenting motives for his intervention in behalf of the convicted felons. Another class (and among these were letters from men of national reputation) besought him to pardon them on the ground of public policy. The writers professed to be thoroughly informed as to the condition of public sentiment in the North, and represented it as so favorable to the pardon or commutation of punishment of the prisoners as to render it highly expedient, if not necessary, to interpose the executive prerogative of mercy, to conciliate this morbid popular opinion in the North.

"The testimony before the committee amply vindicates the conduct of the executive in assembling a strong military force at the scene of excitement; and the promptness

and energy with which he discharged his duty merit and doubtless will receive the commendation of the legislature and people of the State. . . . The invasion of a sovereign State by citizens of other States confederated with subjects of a foreign government, presents matter for grave consideration. It is an event without a parallel in the history of our country. And when we remember that the incursion was marked by distinct geographical features; that it was made by citizens of Northern States on a Southern State; that all the countenance and encouragement which it received, and all the material aid which was extended to it, were by citizens of Northern States; and that its avowed object was to make war upon and overthrow an institution intimately interwoven with all the interests of the Southern States, and constituting an essential element of their social and political systems, — an institution which had existed in Virginia for more than two centuries, and which is recognized and guaranteed by the mutual covenants between the North and the South, embodied in the Constitution of the United States, — every thoughtful mind must be filled with deep concern and anxiety for the future peace and security of the country."

The report closed with a strong appeal to the conservative element of the North, and an allusion to the devotion of Virginia to the Union, as true as it was beautiful.

It is doubtless true that the mass of intelligent, conservative people at the North recognized that Brown had committed crimes, for which he deserved the full penalty of the law; and few, if any, of the members of Congress at the time condemned his punishment as unjust, though some thought that it would have been better, as an act of policy, to have had him adjudged insane. Neither is it to be wondered at that the political convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln for the presidency, in 1860,

resolved that Brown was a criminal. But when we remember the character of the events of the period and the situation of the Southern people, it is but natural that they should have viewed the subject as they did. Throughout the North, public meetings had been held, bells tolled, and orations delivered, proclaiming Brown a hero and a martyr, and that Virginia was but another Algiers. It became matter of common notoriety that Brown's plans had long been known and approved by men like Gerrit Smith, Theodore Parker, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sumner, Henry Thoreau, Wendell Phillips, Governor John A. Andrew, and others. Emerson had said in his Salem speech: "It would be nearer the truth to say that all people, in proportion to their sensibility and self-respect, sympathize with John Brown." And when to the vast concourse assembled in Tremont Temple the day of Brown's execution, the Hon. John Q. A. Griffin declared that "The heinous offence of Pontius Pilate, in crucifying our Saviour, whitened into virtue when compared with that of Governor Wise in his conduct toward John Brown," the sentence was far from displeasing his auditors, and it, with similar declarations, was approved by many newspapers. The Hon. Eli Thayer is authority for the statement that when John Brown arrived in Kansas, he said, "I have not come to make Kansas free, but to get a shot at the South." Though he did not live to see it, he played no insignificant part in bringing about that result, on a scale even greater, perhaps, than he had dreamed.

In narrating the gathering storms that hovered over a portion of Wise's administration, we have omitted to mention two patriotic occasions over which he presided, memorable in the history of Richmond and Virginia. During the month of July, 1858, the remains of James

Monroe had been brought from their resting-place in New York, accompanied by the gallant Seventh Regiment, under the command of Colonel Duryee, and interred in Hollywood Cemetery, in the presence of a vast concourse of people, in the soil of his native State.

On the 22d of February, preceding that event, had occurred a patriotic outpouring of the people, such as had never before been witnessed in Virginia. The superb equestrian statue of Washington, designed by the artist Crawford, was unveiled; and despite the bleak, wintry day, the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds. As the governor of the State, it fell to Wise to welcome the vast multitude, and standing amid the falling snow, he spoke as follows: "Virginia has called the Nation, its Elders and Councillors; her sister States, their Governors, Lawgivers, and Judges; her own People and all the children of this Confederate Family of Freedom, to assemble this anniversary birthday around the Monument she has raised to the memory of that son whose wisdom, valor, virtue won the grandest, proudest, purest of all earthly titles, 'Father of his Country'! In her name I bid you all — all! welcome to the gathering around Virginia's Monument to Washington.

"Magic name! If none other under heaven can draw us to each other, that talisman can touch the chords of unison, and clasp us hand to hand and bind us heart to heart, in the kindred heirship of one Patriot Father! — Before that august name Feud and Faction stand abashed; Civil Discord hushes into awed silence; schism and sections are subdued and vanish; for in the very naming of that name, there is the sweet concord of Love, Veneration, Gratitude, Duty, Patriotism, and Self-devotion; in it there is the harmony of peace and the power only of victorious war, and the spell of Order and Liberty and Law,

and the strength and beauty of *National Union.* It typifies all that there is and ought to be of goodness, greatness, and majesty in that country we call 'Our Country'! — the United States of America. And that country is the best type of its father.

"We will, then, this day gather together the National Affections and bind them as American fasces around this Statue erected by the Mother State to the Father Son. Virginia —

> "'Parent of valor, cast away thy fear!
> Mother of men, be proud without a tear!'

What a theme! What a scene for men and angels.

"May our God, in whose bosom he rests, who guarded him in our country's battles and who guided him in our country's councils, vouchsafe that his spirit may continue to hover over the land he saved and perpetuate it peaceful, powerful, plentiful, and free, through all vicissitudes of storm and sunshine, until earthly monuments shall moulder into dust and humanity shall triumph over the probation of Time, or Time itself shall be no more."

CHAPTER XV

PURCHASES "ROLLESTON" NEAR NORFOLK. DECLINES TO BE A CANDIDATE BEFORE THE CHARLESTON CONVENTION. SUPPORTS BRECKENRIDGE AND LANE. OPPOSES SECESSION AND FAVORS "FIGHTING IN THE UNION." THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION OF 1861 AND WISE'S PART IN IT

PRIOR to the expiration of his term as governor, Wise had determined to make his home on the western side of the Chesapeake, on account of the inaccessibility of his farm in Accomack; and during the fall of the year 1859 purchased from his brother, John C. Wise, a fine estate in Princess Anne County, consisting of about nine hundred acres of land. This place, called "Rolleston," was located on the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River, some seven miles from Norfolk, and in former years had been the home of the descendants of William Moseley, who, having emigrated to Virginia in 1649, had obtained the land as a grant, and here built his dwelling-house named for "Rolleston Hall," the seat of the Moseleys in Staffordshire.

In October, 1859, Wise wrote in a letter to his friend George Booker, of Hampton: "I have sold my land in Accomack—got $18,000.00 cash for 'Only' and have about $4,000 more to sell. This and stocks and other means make me about $35,000 besides my negroes. Out of this I must pay every dollar of debt, from 5,000 to 8,000 dollars, and start again. I can't go back to law, except in

fancy cases, and must rely on land and negroes. I have about $28,000 to invest. I want to put 12,000 or 15,000 in land—about 8,000 or 10,000 in negroes—leaving some $5,000 in cash for a margin. This will enable me to work eighteen or twenty hands, men and boys, of effective field force, and to wield that force I must have a good located farm in good condition." [1]

The Rolleston estate was finely timbered and had a good saw and grist mill on it, and would doubtless have been an excellent investment, if purchased at any other time. Here Wise retired, immediately after the expiration of his term of office at Richmond, but it was not long before his name was again prominently connected with political affairs. His followers were anxious that he should be brought forward as a presidential candidate, and his cause was strongly championed by the Richmond *Enquirer* and other papers throughout Virginia and the South. The Virginia Democratic Convention assembled in the spring of 1860 for the purpose of selecting delegates to represent the State, in the Charleston Convention, but declined to express a preference for any candidate; and it is probable that the followers of R. M. T. Hunter were in a majority in that body, though Wise was doubtless the more popular among the people at large. In a letter, written for the press, in April, 1860, he said: "Whomever else the preference has been expressed for, it has not been expressed for me. Without the voice of Virginia clearly and indisputably declared for me, I decline to allow my name to be presented primarily before the Convention for a nomination. In no event am I willing that it shall cause any division of the vote of our delegation. I beg

[1] The records of Princess Anne County show that he owned twenty-one slaves in 1860—a number much above the average held in that locality, which probably did not exceed three or four negroes to a planter.

my friends, therefore, not to offer my name, but to unite cordially with the majority of the delegation and to present the vote of the State a *unit* before the Convention." In accordance with his wishes he was not placed in nomination, at Charleston; and the action of that Convention has been too often described, and is too familiar to every reader of American history, to be repeated here.

Along with the majority of Southern Democrats, Wise gave his support to the ticket headed by Breckenridge and Lane; and in a speech delivered at Norfolk, during the campaign, said: "Squatter sovereignty, when analyzed, is nothing in effect but the same infamous Lecompton tyranny which attempted to compel a people to be all one way. In Kansas, by the odious Lecompton Constitution, the people were allowed to vote *for* a constitution, *but not against it.* They were allowed to vote *against* nothing but slavery. This doctrine Mr. Douglas opposed most righteously and I backed him with all my might, in maintaining the popular sovereignty to decide pro and con on a State constitution, without intervention from any quarter. And now he claims the power in a majority of settlers to exclude the property of a minority. If he excludes their property, he excludes them. The slave-owner himself won't go to Kansas, if he may not take his slaves with him. What is the result? Why, that none but non-slaveholders will go there. This is certain from the very nature, or difference in the nature, of slaveholding and non-slaveholding population. A with 50 slaves and B with 20 from Virginia emigrate to Kansas. They have taken 72 people from us to Kansas. They will require 1280 acres of new land at least. Thus 72 people from a slave State will cover that space, and how many votes will they have? Why, but 2. Five Emigrant Aid Society men go out

from Vermont, with flocks and herds, and settle 40 acres each — 200 acres in all, and they will count 5. If the 5 may exclude the 70 slaves, by voting 5 to 2, the two masters will never go there and have their slaves caught in this territorial trap. Thus the 5 are left the monopoly of the Territory. The effect of squatter sovereignty is to prevent all competition in settlement and compels all to be free soilers. The truth is, that these doctrines of Mr. Douglas are but short cuts to all the ends of Black Republicanism. The only difference between Lincoln and Douglas is, that Lincoln claims the power and duty of *Congress* to abolish slavery in the Territories; and Douglas *practises intervention* and preaches non-intervention by Congress, but claims that a territorial legislature, a mere creature of Congress, a most subordinate Federal authority, can intervene to abolish property in slaves. It is safer for us to contest the power in Congress. We can't risk our slaves to contest it in the Territories. In Congress we are represented and in the Kansas legislature we can't be."

In adverting to the possible action of Virginia, in the event of Lincoln's election, Wise declared: "In torturing suspense I shall wait upon her resolves, and pray God they may be worthy of the example of '98 and '99. If she does not meet the issue and come up to the mark of self-defence and self-respect, I will look to another and another and another, until some one sovereign does raise the rightful flag of Revolution. Revolution is the word. I take Mr. Douglas at his word. Secession is revolution, but revolution is not secession. I will not nullify, I will not secede, but I will under sovereign State authority fight in the Union another revolutionary conflict for civil liberty, and a Union which will defend it. Mr. Madison knew his own faith better than South Carolina did. His Everett

and Ingersoll letters admitted that his rule of State rights, already cited, necessarily led to conflict of judgment, and of modes and measures of redress, and if pressed to its ultimate results would end in revolution, logically and practically end there. It will be revolution, then, and to bring it on I do hope that no one slaveholding State will wait for another. If it must come, let it come as soon as possible."

At a public meeting and barbecue held in Princess Anne County during the latter part of October, he made a speech setting forth the ills under which the South had suffered, and declared that the utterances of Lincoln and Seward that "the government cannot endure half slave and half free," — that "an irrepressible conflict existed between slave and white labor," and "that the country must become all one or the other," would in the event of the former's election be equivalent to an open and official avowal, by the people of the North, that the rights of the South, under the Constitution, were to be disregarded. He offered a set of resolutions, which were enthusiastically adopted, for the appointment of committees of safety, in each magisterial district, and for a State convention, to meet at Richmond immediately upon Lincoln's election being made known. The Princess Anne meeting created considerable comment at the time and the Richmond *Whig* announced in flaming head-lines, that "Revolution" had been "Recommended and Begun in Virginia." But the meeting cannot be said to have reflected the views of the vast majority of the people of the State, who deprecated war in any event; and who were, moreover, opposed to anticipating any overt act on the part of the Federal Government. Months and months had passed, after Lincoln's election, and the cotton States had all seceded, before the Virginia Convention, which was largely

made up of Whigs and Union men, at last passed an ordinance of secession, upon receiving the announcement that Sumter had fallen and Lincoln issued his call for troops.

The views of Wise were considered peculiar, as he favored neither secession nor peaceable acquiescence in the triumph of the antislavery and sectional party. His opinions of the proper course to have been pursued are contained in the following letter, dated "Rolleston," near Norfolk, Virginia, December 1, 1860, and addressed to a friend in Georgia.

"DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 22nd ult. was late coming to hand, I now thank you for it. As to my doctrine of 'fighting in the Union,' it is one of true policy.

"1st. If a sovereign State is *judge* of the *infraction* as well as of the *mode* and *measure* of redress, she may remain in the Union to resent or resist wrongs as well as do so out of the Union.

"2d. If other States have infracted the Union, not she, the State wronged is bound to defend the Constitution and Union against those who have infracted the one and threatened the other. Logically the Union belongs to those who have kept, not those who have broken, its covenants.

"3d. The Union is not an abstraction; it is a real, substantial thing, embracing many essential and vital political rights and properties. It has *nationality*, *lands*, *treasury*, organization of *army*, *navy*, *ships*, *dock-yards*, *arsenals*, etc. Shall we renounce these rights and possessions because wrong-doers attempt to deprive us of other rights? Is it not cowardly to renounce one right to save another? Are these rights not as precious as the mere right of property in negroes? But,

"4th. If you secede you not only renounce the Union and its possessions, but you fail to unite your own people, because you do renounce these rights. Wake a man up to destroy the Union and Constitution and he will stare at you and turn away. But tell him that the Constitution is infracted and the Union threatened by Black Republicans, and call on him to aid you in defending both against those who would destroy both, and he will act heartily with you.

"5th. Then how is this to be done? The 3d clause of the 10th section of the 1st article of the Constitution of the United States permits a State to keep troops and ships of war in time of peace, and to engage in war, when actually invaded, or when in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay. Now are we not actually invaded? Is our danger not imminent? Does it admit of delay? May not a sovereign State secede? Will it not be revolution and war in either event?

"I say, then, stick to all your rights, renounce none, fight for all, and save all!"

Though these views were commended by the Richmond *Whig* and a few men of prominence, they cannot be said to have had any considerable following in Virginia.

The electoral vote of the State was cast for Bell and Everett, the candidates of the Constitutional Union party, in 1860; and the old-line Whig and Union men had, like those of Tennessee and Kentucky, pursued this course, in an earnest effort to prevent a sectional conflict, the brunt of which they knew would be borne by the border States. Every consideration, both of sentiment and self-interest, caused Virginia to dread a civil war and disruption of the Union. As the eldest of the original thirteen States, she took an intense pride in the government, to the formation

of which she had contributed so large a share of ability and patriotism; while her geographical position, midway between the North and South, on the Atlantic seaboard, indicated all too clearly that her soil would be the scene of the fiercest strife, in the event of war.

The special session of the legislature, which met at Richmond in January, 1861, had called a Peace Congress of all the States, in a vain but earnest endeavor to keep the peace and preserve the Union; commissioners had also been appointed to wait on Mr. Lincoln and urge a postponement of hostilities for sixty days; and a State Convention was called to consider the crisis with which the people of the Commonwealth were then confronted. This last body, among the most memorable ever assembled on her soil, met in the city of Richmond, on the 13th of February, 1861, and for two months discussed the various propositions presented, with a view to adjusting the relations existing between Virginia and the Federal Government, on a basis alike honorable to both. The foremost men of the Commonwealth, Whigs and Democrats, sat side by side, to take counsel as to the course of their mother State.

Wise, though but a short time resident in the county of Princess Anne, had been nominated, without solicitation on his part, to represent her people, and though he made no canvass was elected by a large majority. Shortly after the assembling of the Convention, he was appointed to a place on the most important committee of the body, that on Federal Relations, which embraced among its list of members Robert Y. Conrad, John B. Baldwin, Robert E. Scott, William Ballard Preston, Lewis E. Harvie, William H. McFarland, Robert L. Montague, Valentine W. Southall, Waitman T. Willey, James C. Bruce, James Barbour, William C. Rives, Samuel McD. Moore, and

others, prominently identified with the past history of the State.

Within a few days after the Convention met, commissioners from South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi appeared before the body and earnestly and eloquently pleaded with it to cast in the lot of Virginia with that of her Southern sisters, and join the Confederacy, newly formed at Montgomery. But while a majority of the delegates believed in the constitutional right of a State to withdraw from the Union, they were opposed to being needlessly dragged into a quarrel, not of their making, as well as to being coerced by the Federal Government. Of the twenty-one members who composed the committee on Federal Relations, sixteen were avowed Union men and, at the commencement of the session, like a great majority of the delegates, favored any sort of delay or compromise, in preference to the horrors of war. Wise was one of the minority of five and, although at first opposed to secession, believed in putting the State in a condition to defend herself and repel invasion. From the first he does not appear to have entertained a belief in any peaceable solution of the difficulty and, on February 18, 1861, wrote in a letter to his son, Richard A. Wise: ". . . I am confident there are a number who would vote for abject submission and abolition of slavery to-morrow. But I still have hope. A committee on Federal Relations is appointed — twenty-one, of which I am one. I had a hopeful conference yesterday with some of its members from whom I received some considerable consolation, but I now see that the fate of slavery is doomed in Virginia and we have no hope but in actual Revolution."

The committee did not submit a report until March 9, and then but a partial one, accompanied by several minority papers and substitutes, indicating considerable division of

sentiment as to the proper course to be pursued. A lengthy debate ensued, which lasted for weeks and which was participated in by nearly all of the prominent members. The report of the committee, which set forth the wrongs under which the Southern States were suffering and proposed various constitutional amendments and compromises, as well as a convention of the border States to be held at Frankfort, Kentucky, was ably discussed in all its details. Wise submitted a substitute at the time the main report was presented, demanding of the various States satisfactory guarantees for the protection of slave property, which were to be given prior to October 1, 1861, and in the meanwhile it was to be recommended that neither the Federal Government nor seceded States should commence hostilities, and that the former should reduce the force at all forts in the Southern States to a number requisite for garrison duty only, pending this period. It was further provided that the Commonwealth should be immediately placed in a complete state of military organization for defence; and that it should be forthwith submitted to the people to determine whether, if the demands of Virginia were not satisfactorily responded to, or civil war commenced on the part of the Federal Government, within the period named pending the efforts for adjustment, they would or not resume the powers granted by them under the Constitution of the United States; and that the Convention should place itself immediately in communication with the border slaveholding States for conference and coöperation.

During the anxious weeks of delay which followed, the members of the Convention were derided as "submissionists," by the secessionists throughout the Commonwealth, and the state of feeling among this last element was well illustrated by a clever satire which was published at the

time in the Richmond *Examiner*, under the title of the "Parliament of Beasts." The writer, a civil engineer named Lorraine, cleverly caricatured the various delegates, comparing them to different animals, who were represented as rendering homage to King Abe, the chief of the orang-outangs.

On the 4th of April, Lewis E. Harvie, the member from Amelia County, and who along with ex-President Tyler and the brilliant Holcombe of Albemarle was considered among the leaders on the disunion side at this time, moved that the committee on Federal Relations be instructed to report an ordinance of secession; which motion, however, was defeated by a vote of 88 to 45, indicating the large preponderance of Union sentiment, even at that date. Wise, although opposed in the beginning to secession, voted for Harvie's resolution, as the drift of events naturally identified him with this element, despite the fact that he had favored "fighting in the Union" and the assumption of an attitude of armed neutrality on the part of Virginia, between the government at Washington, on the one hand, and that at Montgomery on the other.

Wise's idea of "fighting in the Union" was not the prevailing sentiment among the members on either side of the Convention, as his views on this point were regarded as eccentric and peculiar; and those of the delegates who no longer remained attached to the government at Washington approved of Virginia casting in her lot with the Confederacy.

During this period of doubt and apparent unwillingness to take her stand, Virginia incurred the harsh criticisms of her sister States, both North and South. But to the utter failure of the Peace Conference and the unsatisfactory report of the commissioners from Virginia, appointed

on the 8th of April to confer with Mr. Lincoln, were to be added still more ominous events, when the wires brought the news that Sumter had fallen and Lincoln's call for troops to invade the South had been made.

As late as April 10, Wise, although among the "fire-eaters" in the Convention, had said on the floor of that body: "As to parting from the Union, in my affections I shall never do that. As to leaving its flag, whenever I leave this Confederacy, this North Star Confederacy, which makes the needle tremble northward, sir, I shall carry the flag of the Old Union out with me; and if I ever have to fight, so help me God, I will fight with the star-spangled banner still in one hand and my musket in the other. I will never take any Southern cross or any palmetto for my flag. I will never admit that a Yankee can drive me from the Union and take from me our Capitol! I will take from him forts, I will take from him flags, I will take from him our Capitol, I will take from him, if I can, my whole country, and save the whole." But while his idea up to this time had been to fight in the Union, if possible, he had never denied, but on the contrary stoutly contended for, the right of a State to withdraw and resume her delegated powers, whenever she saw fit to do so.

The vast majority of the members of the Convention had been Union men, almost to the very last, but to the stanchest Whig, as well as Democrat, the conception of a Union meant a sisterhood of co-sovereign States, and not a consolidated government held together by force and arms. Whatever may have been the true construction of the Constitution, or what the faith taught elsewhere, the States-rights principles had been those enunciated by the Virginia statesmen; and the idea of the Federal Government, the creature of the several States and an agent of limited and derivative powers only, attempting to coerce

and invade its creators, was repugnant to the teachings of her statesmen and the instincts of her people. With her past history and beliefs, she was bound to make the cause of the Gulf States her cause, when at last the crisis came, and circumstances which she could not control compelled that she should take her stand. That her soil would be reddened by the blood of contending hosts and her fields devastated could not change this fact. The men who voted for the ordinance, offered by William Ballard Preston, on April 17, 1861, could with truth utter the words of the great Athenian: "I say that if the event had been manifest to the whole world beforehand, not even then ought Athens to have forsaken this course, if she had any regard for her glory or for her past or for the ages to come."

By the 16th of April, the news of Sumter and of Lincoln's action had spread abroad in Richmond, and the excited state of public feeling was shown, not only by the Confederate flags to be seen here and there, but by a spontaneous gathering, or "people's convention," assembled in Metropolitan Hall, ready to anticipate the passage of the ordinance by the official body sitting near by. This measure had been offered that day by Preston of Montgomery County, and though the Convention had adjourned without taking a vote, it was now apparent that on the morrow the die would be cast.

The story of the capture of Harper's Ferry, and the manner in which the movement was inaugurated by Wise, has been so graphically narrated by a participant[1] in some of the scenes, that we have introduced it here, though in slightly condensed form: —

"After many weeks of very trying debate, principally participated in by Robert E. Scott and John B. Baldwin

[1] General John D. Imboden.

on the one side, and Henry A. Wise on the other; and after the committee, by a vote of 13 to 8, had rejected the proposition of Mr. Wise to take a stand of armed neutrality between the Federal powers of Washington City and the Confederate powers at Montgomery, and to fight in the Union against the invasion of either by the other, and to prevent the troops of either from crossing the territory of Virginia; and when it had become manifest that the people in the State were becoming impatient at the inaction of the Convention, Wise, worn down by overwork and anxiety and despairing of any fair adjustment or prompt action, was walking from the committee, the sittings of which were held in the Mechanics Hall, on Bank Street, and met Captain J. D. Imboden on the pavement, near Tenth, next the Capitol Square. After a pleasant salutation, Wise spoke to Imboden of his impatience at the delay of the Convention, and of the dark prospect of events, and said, 'Do you remember, sir, what passed between you and me, when I was governor, at the moment when you thanked me for the order permitting you to have two brass field-pieces for your company of artillery at Staunton?'

"Captain Imboden replied, 'Yes, I do, sir,' and repeated that he was bound to obey the call of Wise for those guns whenever made. Wise then said: 'What was a joke then, is earnest now. I want those guns with which to aid in the immediate capture of the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry; can they be had with all the men you can raise?' Captain Imboden replied, 'They can, and if you say so, the men shall be raised and the arsenal shall be taken.' Wise then inquired, 'What boys, reliable and brave, are in town?' Imboden named several and promised to look immediately for others, and Wise told him to notify as many such as he could find in the city, to meet

him at the Exchange Hotel at about seven o'clock P.M. At the hour named Captain Imboden had assembled, in a room on the first floor of the hotel passage to the left of the entrance as you go in, Oliver Funsten, Richard Ashby, Turner Ashby, John S. Barbour, Alfred Barbour, John A. Harman, and J. D. Imboden, who were joined by Wise. Wise stated to them the object of calling them together. Turner Ashby asked what was proposed. Wise replied that the first thing required was some official, or semblance of official, authority, to make the movement, and proposed the appointment of a committee of three to wait on Governor Letcher and to ascertain whether he would support or countenance, at least, an attempt to secure the arms and munitions of war at Harper's Ferry. The proposition was at once adopted; and J. D. Imboden, Oliver Funsten, and Alfred Barbour were appointed the committee, and the meeting waited for their report about an hour, when they returned and reported briefly that Governor Letcher declined to entertain or consider the matter, as he was under some informal pledge not to do so or promote any hostile action against the United States, without first apprising the Convention and conferring with it. Wise then said, 'Well, gentlemen, you have heard the report; are you willing and ready to act on your own responsibility?' The meeting unanimously voted to act without official authority, and Turner Ashby, addressing Wise, said, 'You have been governor of Virginia, and we will take orders from you, sir, as if you were now governor; please draw your orders.' Wise immediately drew, in writing, a brief plan of action and the orders conformable thereto. Mr. Alfred Barbour was then superintendent of the arsenal at Harper's Ferry; he was directed to repair to the arsenal at once and to prepare the operations there. Turner Ashby was despatched at once to Fauquier to rouse the

Black-Horse Cavalry there. Captain Imboden was instructed to move his company of artillery at once, and John A. Harman was sent to Staunton to rally all the volunteers he could to move with Imboden's artillery. At this moment Milton Cary came into the meeting and was requested to see to railroad transportation; went out and brought in Colonel Edmund Fontaine, the president of the Central Railroad, and transportation was arranged. Whilst the meeting was in session, Wise received a telegram saying that Federal troops were on their way to Harper's Ferry, which was read. All were ordered to report promptly to Wise and to move at once, — that night, — and the meeting adjourned *sine die*. The whole time of the meeting for report and all did not occupy more than three hours, and it adjourned about eleven P.M.

"In passing through the vestibule of the hotel where the baggage is received and distributed, the clerk handed Wise a despatch. It was from William H. Parker, then of Norfolk, now of Northampton, and to this effect: 'The powder magazine here can be taken, and the Yankee vessels can be captured and sunk, so as to obstruct the harbor. Shall we do it?' Wise wrote at once, 'Yes,' showed the telegram and answer to Mr. Holcombe, standing by his side, and despatched it. The next morning he awaited telegrams at the hotel and received one from Captain Imboden, at Gordonsville, saying he was there with the volunteers under General Harper, and his guns, pressing forward to Harper's Ferry. Wise immediately hastened to the Convention then in session. For some weeks previously telegrams had been announced to that body, with the view of hastening its action, until, at last, they lost their effect and had become an object of derision. As soon as one was named, voices would exclaim: 'Another Democratic alarm!' Immediately upon reach-

ing his seat, Wise addressed the president and said: 'Mr. President, I arise to announce no 'Democratic telegram,' but to say to you and this body that I know that armed forces are now moving upon Harper's Ferry to capture the arms there in the arsenal for the public defence, and there will be a fight or a foot-race between volunteers of Virginia and Federal troops before the sun sets this day!' And he asked the Convention whether it would sanction and support the movement on foot. If a hand grenade had been thrown in among the members, it could not have caused more consternation. Wise said no more, but went to Mr. Holcombe and Mr. George W. Randolph, told them what he had done and urged them to see Governor Letcher and to prevail upon him to reënforce the volunteers and to sanction their movement. They went immediately to the governor's room and returned quickly, requesting Wise's presence with Governor Letcher. He went forthwith to the governor's chamber and inquired what he [Governor Letcher] would do? He answered that he would back the movement then and issued orders at once.

"After a very short conference Wise returned to his seat in the Convention. Mr. Robert Y. Conrad was on the floor, protesting warmly against the movement, as unauthorized and illegal, involving, in fact, all the consequences of treason, and the whole people in a war to which the most of them were opposed. Mr. John B. Baldwin and others, but especially Mr. Baldwin, followed in a strain of awful lamentation and forebodings; denounced the act as a usurpation, as revolutionary and disturbing to peaceful measures, and interfering with the labors of that Convention toward compromise and conciliation. He asked who had assumed to instigate and organize so rash a folly? Whoever they were, he could not, for one, sanction or countenance their disastrous and un-

authorized action. Wise rose and announced that he, and he alone, had originated and ordered the movement and assumed its whole responsibility; and he inquired of Mr. Baldwin whether he would or not, now that the movement was on the march, aid the people, who had waited on the Convention too long in vain, in seizing arms for their own defence. Mr. Baldwin said that he could not, and he hoped the Convention would not partake in any such fearful responsibility. It was not the act of the people, and those who had assumed to act for the whole State must, if they had made for themselves a bloody bed, lie upon it and take all the consequences, which he apprehended would be sad and fatal. They should not have his sanction, or aid, or countenance. As yet it was not known to him or the Convention of what portion of the people the volunteers were composed.

"Wise then rose and said: 'Mr. President, I have often heard old Augusta [1] boasted of as the *heart* of Virginia. Heretofore I have been content to acquiesce by silence, in this claim of her preëminence over other members of our body politic, as a sort of political if not poetical license, for I always accorded her the highest rank among the sections of the State; but now I know, I feel in every fibre of every extremity of my body that she is the heart of Virginia. I feel her grand and noble pulse throbbing through every nerve, and kindling emotions in my heart of admiration and gratitude. Let me tell the gentleman from Augusta [Mr. B.] that the patriotic volunteer revolutionists, whom he consigns to bloody beds, are his constituents of Augusta, — his friends and neighbors of Staunton. They are the men who are marching under my orders to take up their own arms for their own defence! The self-sacrificing Kenton Harper is leading his neighbors and

[1] Augusta County was the home of Mr. Baldwin.

command to all the dangers and risks of taking Harper's Ferry, and the question is: Shall they be doomed, unsupported, to bloody beds?'

"This appeal silenced Mr. Baldwin; he looked aghast; he dropped his austere mien of reprehension at the movement; and the whole body (then in secret session) was thrown into bewildering excitement by Mr. Baylor, Baldwin's colleague, rushing by, almost over seats and down aisles, making his way to Wise. It might be to assail him, but no; it was to grasp his hand, with tears streaming down his cheeks, and exclaiming: 'Let me grasp your hand! I don't agree with you, I don't approve your acts; but I love you! I love you!'"

On the eve of the passage of the ordinance, it appeared probable that a number of members, from what is now West Virginia, would retire. A member of the Convention, Judge John Critcher, thus describes a scene in which Wise arraigned their leader for this contemplated withdrawal. "It was plainly premeditated. Before he [Wise] arose, I noticed his suppressed agitation. Ex-President Tyler, who knew what was coming, turned his chair about ten feet in front of Wise, with his back to the president of the Convention. As Wise proceeded with his arraignment of Summers, Mr. Tyler lost control of his feelings and tears trickled freely down his cheeks. The speaker was supernaturally excited. His features were as sharp and rigid as bronze. His hair stood off from his head, as if charged with electricity. Summers sat on the left of the chair, white and pale as the wall near him. It was the most powerful display of the sort I ever witnessed. I have heard Wendell Phillips, Beecher, Mr. Clay, Daniel O'Connell, Lord Brougham, Sir Robert Peel, Thiers, Guizot, and Lamartine; but never witnessed any display of eloquence like this, and in this opinion Mr. Tyler con-

curred. I have often wished that Wise's remarks could have been preserved."

It was in vain, during the excited debate that ensued in the secret session, that the extreme Union men remonstrated, and that old John Janney, of Loudoun, the president of the body, left his seat, and with tear-dimmed eyes and a voice trembling with emotion, pleaded with the Convention not to sever the tie that bound Virginia to the Federal Government, and lay bare his beautiful home to the invader.

The adoption of the ordinance by a vote of 88 to 55, on the afternoon of the 17th, left no doubt in the minds of the members as to where their paramount allegiance was due; and the instrument was then, or later on, signed by all the delegates, with the exception of about six or eight from the western part of the State. Governor Letcher, who on the night of the 16th had ordered a secession flag which had been placed over the Capitol to be hauled down, forthwith took active steps to place the Commonwealth in a condition of defence. From that time forward the sentiment of the people living within the present limits of Virginia may be said to have been a unit in favor of resisting invasion by the Federal Government. Political differences had been forgotten: —

"Then none were for a party,
Then all were for the State."

CHAPTER XVI

WAR. THE CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN VIRGINIA

After signing the ordinance of secession, Wise had returned to his farm near Norfolk. His health had been wretched for some time, and upon his return to "Rolleston" he was confined to the bed by sickness, and his physical condition, advanced age, and total lack of military training would have afforded him a ready excuse for not enlisting in the army; but he was not a man to fail to bear arms in a conflict which he had advocated as necessary to resist the aggressions of the North. During the month of May he offered his services, by letter, to the government formed at Montgomery, Alabama, and was commissioned a brigadier-general in the provisional army of the Confederate States. As soon as his health and household affairs permitted, he left home for Richmond, to confer with the authorities and to be assigned to duty in the field.

He was present at the serenade tendered President Jefferson Davis and family shortly after the latter's arrival at the Spotswood Hotel, on June 1, and in the course of a brief speech upon that occasion, said, in alluding to the duties and necessities of the hour: —

"The man who dares to pray, the man who dares to wait until some magic arm is put into his hand, the man who will not go unless he have a minie or a percussion

musket, who will not be content with flint and steel, or even a gun without a lock, is worse than a coward, — he is a renegade. If you can do no better go to a blacksmith, take a gun along with you as a sample, and get him to make you one like it. Get a spear — a lance. Take a lesson from John Brown. Manufacture your blades from old iron, even though it be the tires of your cart-wheels. Get a bit of carriage spring, and grind and burnish it into the shape of a bowie knife, and put it to any sort of a handle, so that it be strong — ash, hickory, oak. But if possible get a double-barrelled shot-gun and a dozen rounds of buckshot, and go upon the battle-field with these. If the enemy's guns reach further than yours, reduce the distance; meet them foot to foot, eye to eye, body to body, and when you strike a blow, strike home. Your true-blooded Yankee will never stand still in the presence of cold steel."

The importance of western Virginia to the Southern cause was early perceived by those in authority; and both political and strategic reasons rendered it necessary that a large and efficient force should be despatched to that region, in order to hold it for the Confederacy. Enough has been said, in a previous chapter, to illustrate the lack of association and community of interest, between eastern and western Virginia, to make it unnecessary to more than allude to it again. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, but one railroad — the Baltimore and Ohio — traversed the latter section of country; and the Virginia Central road, which ran westerly from Richmond, though designed to connect the Chesapeake Bay with the Ohio River, did not at that time extend beyond Jackson's River, which is within the present limits of Virginia. Thus the line of the Alleghanies made the western portion of the State extremely inaccessible from eastern Virginia, while

it was a comparatively easy matter, for the Federal authorities to throw a large force into that district by way of Pennsylvania and Ohio. The presence of Northern troops and their occupancy of the route afforded by the Potomac River left, as the only two practicable entrances into western Virginia from the east, the one by way of the Staunton and Beverley pike and that of the James River turnpike, which last ran westwardly via the White Sulphur Springs and Lewisburg and over Gauley Bridge into the Kanawha Valley.

General Robert S. Garnett, a distinguished officer, had been ordered to take command of the force sent to Beverley; and in response to an order received from General S. Cooper, the adjutant and inspector-general, issued on June 6, 1861, Wise proceeded to western Virginia, having been commissioned to raise a command to be known as the "Wise Legion" and directed to proceed to the Kanawha Valley and to rally the people there, to assist in repelling the invasion of that country. Although he had never "set a squadron in the field," and was entirely without military training or knowledge, yet his selection for this post of duty had not been made without reflection on the part of Generals Lee and Cooper.

The condition of affairs in the Kanawha Valley, and indeed throughout western Virginia generally, rendered it highly important that an officer should be sent there having the confidence of the people of that section in order to hold them with Virginia, instead of the North. Wise was, perhaps, better equipped for this phase of the undertaking than any other brigadier in the Confederate service, and had it been possible, under the circumstances, to accomplish this task, it is probable that he would have done so; but the work was undertaken too late, when the Federal troops were already in possession of impor-

tant points and when the Confederate forces were poorly organized and equipped.

The order of General Cooper, directing Wise to proceed to the Kanawha Valley, contained among other information the following: "You must needs rely upon the arms among the people to supply the requisite armament, and upon their valor and knowledge of the country, as a substitute for organization and discipline." The task of enlisting and fitting out an effective force, under these conditions, and by an officer of no previous experience whatever, was far from being an easy one at best; but the difficulty was still further increased by the general disposition of the inhabitants of western Virginia to sympathize with the Federal Government.

On June the 13th Wise was joined at Staunton by the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, a time-honored volunteer company of that city, at that time under the command of his eldest son, O. Jennings Wise. For some days previous Wise himself, who had left Richmond without a man or a gun to accompany him, had been in the neighborhood of Covington and the adjoining country, beyond Staunton, engaged in the work of recruiting for his regiments; but the Blues were the first regularly equipped organization to join him, and with them he proceeded to Jackson's River, the terminus of the Virginia Central Railroad, and from that point to Lewisburg, the seat of Greenbrier County, where he arrived on the afternoon of the 14th, and established a camp. Along the entire route the company had been enthusiastically greeted by the people, who assembled at the railway stations to cheer them as they passed along; and at Goshen the ladies presented a flag to the soldiers.

The work of recruiting was pushed forward as rapidly as conditions permitted, and Wise promptly issued an ad-

dress urging the inhabitants to come to the defence of the State. On July 8, 1861, he reported the troops under him as numbering about 2700 in all. Of these, some 1300 were organized in two regiments, in addition to which there were seven independent companies of about sixty men each, a battalion of about 400, and three companies of mounted rangers numbering 170 men. He had received valuable assistance in the work of recruiting and organizing his command, from Colonel Christopher Q. Tompkins in western Virginia, and Colonel J. Lucius Davis who remained in Richmond for that purpose, at the time when Wise left for the Kanawha region. Both Tompkins and Davis were graduates of West Point and officers of merit. The Legion was also joined by several officers, who had served with distinction under Walker in Nicaragua, among them Colonels Charles F. Henningsen and Frank Anderson, the latter having performed a daring exploit in the capture of Castillo, in that country, with but forty-eight men. The career of Henningsen eclipses that of Captain John Smith in its adventurous character; for he had participated in numerous European wars, before he came to America, as the companion and friend of Kossuth. His marriage to a niece of Senator Berrien of Georgia brought him into contact with the Southern people, and he served first under Walker in Nicaragua, and later on in the Confederate army.

During the early part of July, Wise advanced into the Kanawha Valley, by way of the Gauley Bridge, and threw up intrenchments at Tyler Mountain, about five miles west of Charleston, which last place is located at the confluence of the Elk and Kanawha rivers and is the only town of importance in that region.

The Federal troops selected for the invasion of the valley, from the western entrance, consisted of a number of

Ohio and Kentucky regiments, though the latter had been recruited from the district just opposite Cincinnati and were in reality Ohioan, in everything except the name. The whole were under the command of General Jacob D. Cox, and had been concentrated at Gallipolis and Point Pleasant at the mouth of the Kanawha, where it empties into the Ohio River. From the latter place the movement up the valley was commenced on the 11th of July, and the main body of the Federals, under Cox in person, ascended the river in steamers as far as navigable, detachments having been thrown out on either bank; while one regiment had been ordered to proceed from Guyandotte, some seventy miles below the mouth of the Kanawha, and another to land at Ravenswood, about fifty miles above, and advance by way of Ripley. The total force commanded by Cox numbered between three and four thousand men, who in equipment and supplies vastly excelled the hastily organized and wretchedly fitted-out troops under Wise, many of whom were armed with old-fashioned flint-lock muskets.

A detachment of the Richmond Blues had been sent on a reconnoitring expedition to Ripley, and similar expeditions had been undertaken in various directions; but there was no real skirmishing until July 16, when two mounted companies of Wise's troops, numbering 120 men and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel John Clarkson, encountered a detachment of 200 of the enemy's infantry, along the pike in the neighborhood of the Pocataligo, and drove them to the mountain top, killing eight and wounding a number of others. At this date the Confederates were posted on both sides of the Kanawha as high as the mouth of the Coal River, which flows in a northwesterly direction, and empties into the former stream below Charleston. At these points, as well as on the Elk

River and at Gauley Bridge, Summersville and on the Birch River, Wise had stationed his men to await the approach of the enemy, who were advancing by the way of the Guyandotte road and up the Kanawha. While the numerous mountain passes and beetling cliffs which characterize this section offered many points apparently easy to defend, yet numerous lateral roads entered the valley from every direction, rendering an attack from the flank and rear highly probable at any time. The eastern gateway to the valley was at Gauley Bridge, which spanned the river of that name, just above where it unites with the New to form the Kanawha. It was necessary that this point should be carefully guarded, as well as the road by way of Summersville and Suttonsville, across the Birch and Powell mountains, which was the one subsequently taken by General Rosecrans to Carnifax Ferry; while the force then operating under McClellan against Garnett rendered it imperative that Wise should carefully guard against having his retreat cut off at the eastern end of the valley. The correspondence of McClellan since made public shows that from the beginning of the campaign he had kept this purpose steadily in view, and in a letter to Cox, dated July 2, 1861, wrote, "Endeavor to keep the rebels near Charleston until I can cut off their retreat by movement from Beverley."

On the afternoon of July 17, a body of five hundred Confederates, under Major George S. Patton, encountered, at Scary Creek below the Coal River, some twelve hundred of the Federal troops commanded by Colonel Norton, of the Twenty-first, and Colonel Lowe, of the Twelfth Ohio Infantry. A deep ravine separated the hostile forces, and in the early part of the action the Confederates were thrown into some confusion owing to an attempted flank movement of the enemy, but were quickly rallied by the gallant

Patton, who unfortunately about this time was shot through the left shoulder by a minie-ball and unhorsed. This young officer was a distinguished graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and, at the commencement of hostilities, had promptly raised a company for the defence of his native State; and later on, at the battle of Winchester, gave up a life full of promise, on the altar of his country. The Federals, by means of superior artillery, succeeded in silencing two iron sixes opposed to them, but the infantry of the Confederates were well handled by Captain Jenkins, upon whom the command devolved after the wounding of Patton. After a sharp engagement the Federals were handsomely repulsed, about thirty of them having been killed and a number taken prisoners, among whom were Colonels Norton, Woodruff, De Villiers, Lieutenant-Colonel Neff, and Captains Austin and Ward. The retreating columns were pressed for some distance, but were able to cross to the north side of the Kanawha and encamped near the mouth of the Pocataligo River. Wise immediately resolved to follow up the victory gained at Scary Creek, and advanced that night with three troops of cavalry and 650 infantry and artillery; but finding three regiments of the enemy strongly intrenched behind the Pocataligo, and provided with adequate artillery, and being without such pieces himself, abandoned the idea of attack.

Events were now transpiring elsewhere which necessitated the latter's withdrawal from the Kanawha region. The disastrous retreat of General Garnett's command, after his defeat at Rich Mountain, rendered it highly perilous for Wise to remain where he was, with Cox in his front; for he was in imminent danger of being attacked from the rear by McClellan and having his command crushed between these two armies. In obedience to orders

received from General Cooper at Richmond, he fell back from Charleston on the 24th of July, and on the 27th crossed the Gauley River, burning the bridge there behind him, which act was rendered necessary owing to his deficiency in means of transportation.

Except to fell a few trees here and there, nothing had been done to prevent the prompt occupation of the upper end of the valley by Cox, who had advanced as far as Charleston the day after Wise retired; and later, on the 29th of July, had taken possession of Gauley Bridge, about thirty-eight miles distant, at which place he accumulated supplies, determined, as he states, to stand a siege if necessary. The retreat from the Kanawha Valley, by the force under Wise, had been made in good order and without serious loss. Within half an hour, however, after he had fallen back from Tyler Mountain, the enemy took possession and nearly succeeded in cutting off a regiment composed of about seven hundred State volunteers, under Colonel Tompkins, at Coal River. The latter succeeded in making good their escape, though they were compelled to abandon and fire the steamer *Maffet*, in which they were moving up the Kanawha, which stream was navigable to a point some ten miles above Charleston.

From the Gauley Bridge, Wise had proceeded along the James River turnpike to the White Sulphur Springs, about seventy miles eastward, and not far from the town of Lewisburg. It was at that time apprehended that the enemy, who it was evident would form a line of communications between Weston and Gauley Bridge, would advance by way of Lewisburg, with the object of threatening either the Southwestern, or the Virginia Central Railroad, and it was, therefore, deemed advisable to make a stand in the vicinity of the last-named town, until a union between Wise's force and that of Floyd, or Loring, could be ef-

fected. It was, moreover, in a high degree imperative that Wise should without further delay refit and reorganize his wretchedly equipped force, who were sadly deficient in blankets, clothing, arms, ammunition, and means of transportation, and were without tents and, in many instances, shoes to their feet. A fairly accurate idea of the condition of the force can be had from the subsequent report of Wise to the War Department, in which he says: "It was a secret which neither of us [Colonel Tompkins and himself] dared to tell in the Kanawha Valley, that at no time of the whole sixty days while we were marching and countermarching, posting and counterposting, scouting and fighting, day in and day out, in a valley the hardest to defend and the easiest to be attacked in the topography of the country, could we at any time have fired in any general action ten rounds of ammunition in our joint commands."

The already miserable condition of his troops was to be still further increased, while at the White Sulphur, by an epidemic of measles, which raged among them to such an extent that, at one time, their number of effective men was reduced nearly fifty per cent.

On the 5th of August, Wise was joined at the Springs by General John B. Floyd, commanding a brigade which he had raised mostly in the southwestern part of the State, having been early commissioned as a brigadier-general in the Confederate service, and who, on account of the date of his commission, was Wise's senior in rank. Floyd promptly determined to move into the Kanawha Valley, against the enemy, of which plan of campaign Wise did not approve. In his opinion, it was the better policy to draw the enemy to the eastern verge of the wild mountainous country lying this side of the Gauley, and known as the Fayette Wilderness, thereby forcing upon

them some forty miles of wagon transportation, away from their base of supplies, rather than that the commands of Floyd and himself should penetrate the district, and have themselves to undertake this hauling and marching over mountain roads. From the outset of the campaign there appears to have been a lack of harmony between Floyd and Wise, and the latter had applied to General Lee to separate his legion from that of Floyd, it having been originally intended as an independent partisan force; this, however, General Lee declined to do, and urged the necessity of united action.

On the 13th of August, General Floyd, who was then at Meadow Bluff, and had assumed command of all the forces intended to operate against the Kanawha Valley, ordered Wise to join him with his troops; but owing to lack of supplies and transportation, and the sickness among the men, which had largely unfitted them for service, it was not until the 16th that Wise marched to Big Sewell Mountain with his first and second regiments, leaving his third regiment, then not in marching order, and a regiment of State volunteers under Colonel Tompkins, in need of refitting, to follow as soon as possible.

On the 19th, Wise was ordered by Floyd to proceed with his force, on the day following, along the turnpike from Sewell Mountain in the direction of the Kanawha, and in response to this command advanced about fifteen miles in the neighborhood of the Sunday road leading to Carnifax Ferry. Here his scouts reported that they had been fired upon, and Lieutenant-Colonel Croghan, who had been sent forward along the James River turnpike with a detachment of cavalry, had a skirmish with the enemy near Piggott's Mill, and another in the vicinity of the Hawk's Nest, about six miles east of Gauley Bridge, where he encountered a considerable force, and was obliged to retire.

On the evening of the 21st, the commands of Floyd and Wise were united at the foot of Gauley Mountain, and after a conference between the two brigade commanders, it was decided that Wise should proceed, at three o'clock in the morning, to attack the enemy at Carnifax Ferry, on Gauley River, some twenty miles above where it unites with the New to form the Kanawha. Floyd, in the meanwhile, was to hold the front on the turnpike, and join Wise at the ferry, after covering the train and artillery which had been left at Dogwood Gap. The movement was promptly executed by Wise, who left Piggott's Mill at 3.30 o'clock in the morning, and, after a seventeen-mile march through mud ankle-deep, found that the enemy had crossed the river, having first destroyed one of the two ferry-boats, and sent the other adrift over the falls. Shortly after Wise's arrival at the south of the ferry, Floyd, who had been informed during the night that the force of the enemy stationed at this point had marched to the mouth of the Gauley, made a forced march, by a shorter route than the one taken by Wise, without notifying him, and came up with him early on the morning of the 22d instant. Having joined to his command three pieces of artillery, a detachment for the guns, and one hundred horse belonging to Wise, Floyd crossed the Gauley by means of the sunken ferry-boat, and ordered Wise, with the remainder of the latter's command, back to take position on the turnpike to check the enemy.

On the 25th of August, Floyd, becoming aware that the Seventh Ohio Regiment, under Colonel E. B. Tyler, was approaching the direction of the ferry, having been despatched thither by Rosecrans, determined to attack, and ordered Wise to send one of his regiments to support him. Although the command of Wise was barely sufficient, as he states, to hold the turnpike road, yet he had prepared

to reënforce Floyd on the morning of Sunday, the 25th, when firing was heard in the direction of Piggott's Mill, near the foot of the Saturday road leading to Carnifax from the James River pike, and some fugitive cavalrymen coming in reported the advance of the enemy. At that time the force of the latter under Cox consisted of two regiments at Gauley Bridge, another along the Kanawha to cover the steamboat communications, while an advance guard of some eight companies was thrown forward along the turnpike, between the Bridge and the Hawk's Nest, where the roadway passes through a series of narrow defiles. A small body of Floyd's cavalry had imprudently advanced into the passes beyond Piggott's Mill and had narrowly escaped capture. Wise immediately started a force of infantry and three artillery pieces on a double-quick march, which caused the enemy to fall back in the vicinity of the Hawk's Nest. About sunrise on the morning of the 26th, Floyd with his own force and the two volunteer regiments under Tompkins and McCausland, which had been detached from Wise, fell upon Tyler, who had advanced as far as Cross Lanes, within two miles of the Confederate camp, and dispersed his regiment, which was completely taken by surprise. The enemy lost some twenty or more killed and one hundred captured. Floyd, who remained on the north side of the Gauley, was now on the line of communication between Rosecrans and Cox, the former having established a chain of posts from Weston by way of Suttonsville, with a considerable force at each, prepared to unite with Cox at Gauley Bridge. Anticipating an attack, on the 31st, Floyd wrote Wise to further reënforce him; but owing to sickness and want of forage for the cavalry, the available force under the latter's command had been reduced to scarcely eighteen hundred effective men, with which he had to guard the

turnpike in front of Cox, as well as watch the approaches from the south side of the New River. This caused him to address a reply to Floyd, explaining the situation, and asking a reconsideration of this command; but receiving a second order late in the day, stating that the enemy was advancing, Wise moved to Carnifax, leaving only a small guard at Dogwood Gap. Upon arriving at the cliffs overlooking the ferry, another communication from General Floyd was delivered to him, in which the latter stated that from more recent information he did not consider a union of their forces necessary at that time, and ordered him back to Dogwood Gap, whither Wise marched during the afternoon. His men were weary from their march, but Wise announced to them his intention to take the Hawk's Nest on the following day, in order, as he states, that he might gain possession of Liken's mill to grind wheat and corn for his troops, and also secure the approaches to Miller's ferry, leading across the New River, which would enable him to communicate with the volunteer troops under General Chapman, on the south side of that stream.

On the 2d of September, Wise marched from Dogwood Gap to Hamilton's, within a half-mile of the Hawk's Nest, from which place he advanced along the pike, driving the enemy beyond Big Creek, a distance of some thirteen miles; but the latter being reënforced, Wise fell back to Hamilton's and encamped there and at Westlake's Creek, guarding the ferry. From this time until September the 10th, the date of the battle of Carnifax Ferry, the position of Floyd and Wise continued practically unchanged, the former remaining north of the Gauley and the latter holding his position on the turnpike in the vicinity of the Hawk's Nest, in front of Cox. Reports reached Floyd on the 9th of the approach of Rosecrans, who was marching with three brigades from Clarksburg, apparently either to

join Cox at Gauley Bridge, or to attack the Confederate force at Carnifax Ferry. This caused Floyd in turn to order Wise to send troops to his support, and the regiment under Colonel Tompkins was immediately despatched, in response to this message, though it had been sent to Wise but two days previously as the result of an urgent demand from him. The further order of Floyd, that Wise send him one thousand men from his legion, the latter was obliged to decline to comply with; as, owing to sickness and other causes, his effective infantry had been reduced to about twelve hundred, and artillery to two hundred, while six out of eight companies of cavalry had been sent over New River to Loop Creek and Coal River. About the hour of noon on the 10th, Wise received a communication from Floyd, inquiring why his order of the previous day had not been complied with, and peremptorily ordering the former to send one thousand infantry and a battery of artillery with all possible speed. To this last Wise answered from Hamilton's, near the Hawk's Nest: "Mr. Carr has just handed me yours of to-day at 12.05 M. It found me here, called to meet an advance of the enemy, who are reported to threaten my picket at the Hawk's Nest, and all my force of three regiments of infantry, a corps of artillery, and two companies of cavalry are under arms, to prevent, if possible, an obvious attempt to turn our right flank and pass us at the turnpike, most probably to gain Carnifax Ferry in your rear. Under these circumstances I shall, upon my legitimate responsibility, exercise a sound discretion whether to obey your very peremptory orders of to-day, or not."

Floyd had thrown up temporary intrenchments near Carnifax, in a position that was sheltered by woods and undergrowth from the enemy's view. Rosecrans, who had proceeded by the way of Summersville and had that

day marched seventeen and a half miles, with three brigades of his troops, began a reconnoissance of Floyd's position about three o'clock in the afternoon, and a spirited engagement was commenced which lasted until nightfall. The Federal forces and especially the Tenth and Thirteenth Ohio regiments, the former under Colonel William H. Lytle, and the latter commanded by Colonel William S. Smith, assaulted as vigorously as the nature of the ground would permit, but were repulsed by Floyd, whose men behaved with coolness and courage. The Federal casualities amounted to 17 killed and 141 wounded, while Floyd's loss was inconsiderable.

At eight P.M. on the night of the engagement at Carnifax, Floyd despatched an order to Wise to reënforce him with all the latter's troops save one regiment, which message was received after the hour of midnight; but on the morning of the 11th Wise advanced toward Carnifax, and when about halfway to the ferry received verbal orders to return to Dogwood Gap. During the night of the engagement Floyd, on account of his precarious position and the superior force with which he was confronted, had determined to withdraw his command to the south side of the Gauley, which was successfully done under the cover of darkness. The movements of both Floyd and Wise have been here described with what would appear to be unnecessary detail, but the latter has been so frequently censured for his conduct during the campaign, and for his alleged failure to support the former at Carnifax Ferry, that we have thought best to give the actual occurrences as reported in the volumes of war records.

Floyd had been commissioned a brigadier in the Confederate service prior to Wise, and, as his ranking officer, it was undoubtedly the duty of the latter to render prompt obedience to his orders. That he assumed the responsi-

bility of declining to do this, on the date of the Carnifax engagement, is true, yet when we consider his situation at the time of the receipt of this order, the circumstances would seem to indicate that his action was dictated by sound judgment. Cox had thrown forward a considerable force along the James River pike east of Gauley Bridge, which troops Wise was at this time engaged in holding in check. From a point on the pike eleven miles east of Gauley Bridge the Saturday road leads to Carnifax Ferry, and five miles further on the Sunday road enters the pike from the same place. By either of these roads Cox could easily have moved up to Floyd's rear, on the south side of the Gauley, entirely cutting off his retreat and rendering his capture well-nigh inevitable. The official report of General Rosecrans shows that Cox had been instructed to operate in the direction of Floyd, and Wise was correct in believing that Cox had conceived the plan of advancing by the Saturday or Sunday road. The Gauley River, in the vicinity of Carnifax, penetrates a deep, mountainous gorge, with a continuous fall for a distance of twelve or fifteen miles.

The descent to the ferry from the north side is described by General Rosecrans as " by a narrow wagon-track, winding around a rocky hillside. The ascent from the other side is by a road passing up the Meadow River, which is in a deep rocky gorge, the bottom being little wider than the bed of the river, and the side ascending precipitously to the height of nearly three hundred feet. For two miles the road gradually ascends until it reaches the top of the hill, when the country becomes high, rolling, and partially cultivated."

In a lengthy report, addressed to the Hon. Judah P. Benjamin, the Secretary of War for the Confederate States, Wise wrote as follows in reference to the crossing

of the Gauley at Carnifax: "From the first mention of the occupation at Carnifax Ferry, I urged upon General Floyd the importance of that ferry, as commanding the stem of all the roads to the rear on the turnpike. To this end we could hold it on the left bank or south side of Gauley with a very small force, say 250 men, if their rear were well covered, so as to prevent the approach of the enemy toward them from the turnpike. By holding that stem and advancing our forces to the foot of the Saturday road, and to where the Chestnutburg road enters the turnpike (the mouths of the Saturday and Chestnutburg roads being near each other on opposite sides), we could have forced the enemy to approach on the turnpike alone in single column and could have met him with our concentrated defences, without much danger of having our flanks turned. It was utterly unmilitary to have crossed Carnifax Ferry, unless General Floyd had force enough to advance. I warned him that this would compel him to divide his command, already too weak when combined; that if he crossed, the enemy might advance upon him from Summersville, from Gauley Bridge up the Gauley, and from Gauley Bridge up the Saturday road, thus attacking him with superior numbers front, flank, and rear. Whilst he would be too weak to withstand the front and flank attack on the right bank of the Gauley, I would be too weak, perhaps, to prevent the enemy from falling on his rear on the left bank of the Gauley; that his ferriage, too, was insufficient for the retreat of his command; whereas, if we took the position I advised, we would hold Miller's ferry also, on the New River, and could spur the enemy at Cotton Hill, Montgomery's ferry, at the Loop and from Coal River, all the way down the left bank of the Kanawha, and compel the enemy to withdraw a considerable portion of his force from Gauley

Bridge; that as long as he insisted on crossing that ferry and thus exposing himself, it would be impossible for me to reënforce him from across the river, without exposing the safety of both commands to the same disaster of having our retreat cut off."

On the evening of the 12th of September, a conference was held between Floyd and Wise at the former's camp, as a result of which orders were issued to fall back to the top of Big Sewell Mountain, about seventeen miles east of Dogwood Gap, and thirty-two miles from Gauley Bridge. In accordance with the above, the commands retreated to Sewell Mountain, with the exception of six companies of Wise's cavalry, numbering 240 men in all, under Colonel J. Lucius Davis, who had made a successful raid on the south bank of the Kanawha, to within a few miles of Charleston, and had successfully repulsed a detachment of the enemy on the 12th of September. The joint commands of Floyd and Wise reached Big Sewell on the 14th, the former encamping on the summit of that mountain, while the latter selected a position on the eastern slope, or what is known as Little Sewell, at the place afterward called Camp Defiance, and which is said to have been one of the strongest points between the Alleghanies and the Ohio. On the 15th and 16th Floyd was engaged in throwing up earthworks on the Big Sewell, but suddenly determining that his position was not a tenable one, owing to its exposed character, retreated on the night of the 16th, with about three thousand men, to Meadow Bluff, in the direction of Lewisburg. Wise was without suitable wagon trains to follow up Floyd's retreat, without abandoning valuable provisions, and this, together with the wet weather and the dissatisfaction among the troops at the idea of retiring farther in the face of the enemy, caused him to resolve to make a stand on

Little Sewell, and to disregard the order of Floyd to prepare to bring up the latter's rear. "Here," wrote Colonel Henningsen, "it was impossible for an enemy to bring more than two guns or a thousand men to bear on any part of his position; and on every point, within a few minutes, General Wise could bring six of his eight pieces and two-thirds of his force into play, besides the advantage of intrenchments. In addition, most of the officers of the Legion spoke openly of resigning if compelled to retreat any further. On the 18th, General Wise addressed the troops of his Legion, stating substantially that hitherto he had never retreated but in obedience to superior orders. That here he was determined to make a stand. That his force consisted only of seventeen hundred infantry and artillery, and that the enemy was alleged to be fifteen thousand strong. That this he did not believe, but that his men must be prepared to fight two or three or several to one, and even if the enemy were in the full force stated, the position admitted of successful defence and he was determined to abide the issue. He warned them that they would probably be attacked front and rear for successive days, and he called on any officer or soldier who felt doubtful of the result, or unwilling to stand by him in this trail, to step forward, promising that they should be marched at once to Meadow Bluff. This speech, delivered successively to the three regiments of infantry and to the artillery, was received with the wildest enthusiasm. Not one solitary individual in the Legion failed to respond, and the spirits of the corps were raised and maintained at the highest fighting pitch. The provisions and baggage wagons were withdrawn into safe positions and the camp on all sides strengthened. In this attitude the Legion remained till about the 20th, when it was strengthened by the arrival of Captain Romer's artillery

company, with one gun, and one Virginia, one North Carolina, and three Georgia companies, which swelled the forces of the Wise Legion to over two thousand men."

On the 21st of September, General Lee, who had joined Floyd at Meadow Bluff, wrote to Wise urging the union of the latter's troops with those of the former. In his letter Lee expressed the opinion that Floyd's position had the advantage over that at Little Sewell, in that it commanded the Wilderness road and the approach to Lewisburg, which he thought the aim of Rosecrans. Wise in his reply expressed his willingness to unite with Floyd, at whatever point might be thought best, but requested General Lee to examine his position at Little Sewell before ordering him back to Meadow Bluff. In addition, Wise pointed out that it was improbable that the enemy would advance by the Wilderness road instead of the turnpike; and he estimated their number at about seven thousand men, whom he thought the joint forces of Floyd and himself amply able to check at Little Sewell. General Lee rode over to Wise's camp the following day, and after inspecting his position, directed him to hold it until further orders. The peculiar formation of Little Sewell prevented the possibility of a flank movement, as any attack there had to be made directly in front, up a narrow gorge, between precipitous mountain sides. The surface of Big Sewell, on the other hand, was a large flat area exposed on the sides.

The site of Floyd's camp, twelve miles to the eastward at Meadow Bluff, beyond the fact that it covered the approaches to Lewisburg, possessed no natural advantage whatever and his earthworks had been constructed in a low-lying field, where they were inundated by the first rainfall.

On the afternoon of the 23d, the enemy appeared, and began driving in the Confederate pickets. Wise promptly notified General Lee at Meadow Bluff, who

does not appear to have at first credited the report that the enemy were advancing in full force, and it was not until the afternoon of the 24th that Lee, in response to further information from Wise, arrived at Little Sewell with a reënforcement of four regiments. "By this time," wrote Wise, "the enemy had received reënforcements swelling their numbers probably to more than six thousand, and their scouts pushed close to our lines, occasioning frequent sharp skirmishes, in all of which our men and officers acquitted themselves to my entire satisfaction."

On the afternoon of the 25th, while under fire on the field, Wise received an order from the President to transfer his command to Floyd and report at Richmond, and the following morning set out for that place, where he arrived two days later. The severe exposure to which he had been subjected for months, in a mountain country during a rainy season, brought on an illness, which confined him to his bed for some weeks. After regaining his strength he submitted his report to the War Department, detailing his movements in western Virginia. The campaign in that section had not been a successful one and Wise had failed to meet the expectations of his admirers. More than one circumstance had made against Confederate success beyond the Alleghanies, and General Lee himself was destined to return to Richmond later on with greatly diminished reputation. It can hardly be said that the assignment of either Floyd or Wise to command in the Kanawha region was dictated by the soundest judgment, and political motives doubtless largely controlled in their selection. Wise had been too long in public life to divest himself of his former habits all at once, and his letters during this period often suggest characteristics begotten by campaigning of another sort. His excitable temper and apparent lack of appreciation of the prompt obedience

required of a soldier by his superiors in command were, doubtless, a source of frequent annoyance and embarrassment to both Generals Lee and Floyd; yet it is idle to endeavor, as some Southern writers have attempted, to fasten the failure of the western Virginia expedition upon him. The true reasons for this failure are to be found in a variety of unfavorable conditions, rather than in the faults of any one officer. The Federals had been much more prompt than the Confederates in occupying this territory, which was far more accessible to them; and after the defeat of Garnett by McClellan, the real key to the Kanawha Valley was lost to the South. Had the force under the last-named officer been held at bay, the Confederates could without much difficulty have retained control of that valley as far westward as the Ohio; and it is probable that a considerable number of its inhabitants would have enlisted in the Southern army.

Throughout the campaign Wise had retained unabated the confidence of the troops under his command, and if he was deficient in military training, he did not lack true courage, or the faculty of inspiring his men with zeal for the cause in which they were engaged, under circumstances the most trying. One other talent of the military leader he possessed in more than an ordinary degree. He had excellent topographical knowledge and the faculty which enables some men to know instinctively the course of mountains, rivers, and streams; while his thorough understanding of the various roads, in the section where he was operating, enabled him to correctly determine beforehand the route that would be taken by the enemy.

CHAPTER XVII

ROANOKE ISLAND

AFTER recovering from a severe illness of some weeks' duration, Wise reported to the War Department by letter from Rolleston, dated November 18, requesting that the forces comprising his Legion be ordered to the point where he was to serve. By an order issued December 21, he was assigned to the command of the military district composed of that portion of North Carolina lying east of the Chowan River, which section was attached to the department of Norfolk, under the command of Major-General Benjamin Huger. Early in January Wise reported for duty to General Huger at Norfolk, and on the 7th of the month assumed command, with headquarters at Roanoke Island. From a military point of view, this post was of incalculable importance to the Confederacy and, as Wise pointed out, it "was the key to all the rear defences of Norfolk." Moreover, as he truly said, it unlocked the Albemarle and Currituck sounds, eight rivers, four canals, and two railroads; and guarded more than four-fifths of all Norfolk's supplies.

For some reason, but probably on account of the fact that the command of the island had been constantly transferred from one officer to another, the defences had been almost wholly neglected, and it was at this period in danger of capture by the Federal force at Hatteras Inlet, as well as by the Burnside expedition then being fitted out.

Wise immediately began a careful reconnoissance, in company with Colonel H. M. Shaw of the Eighth North Carolina Infantry, the officer he had found in command; and through the courtesy of Flag-Captain Lynch, commanding the naval fleet, passed in the *Sea Bird* through the channels on either side of Roanoke Island. The military defences of the island consisted of three turfed sand forts on the west side, near the upper end facing Croatan Sound, with a similar fort on the east side a few miles farther down, while about the centre was a redoubt some seventy or eighty yards in length thrown across a causeway and facing south, flanked on either side by marshy ground. The positions of these forts had been badly selected. In the opinion of Wise they should have been constructed on the islands of marshes, at the south end, where the channel was very narrow, and with batteries at Hommock's and Pugh's landings. Wise, after carefully informing himself of the needs of the island for proper defence, hurried back to Norfolk and urged upon General Huger its unprotected condition and the need of pile-drivers, dredging machines, ammunition, artillery, and barges for the transportation of troops and supplies. He returned to Roanoke Island on the 11th, and set to work with the limited means at his command to put the island in a state of defence. In response to his urgent calls, Huger wrote that he did not consider a large force necessary, and Mr. Benjamin replied that the stock of powder at Richmond was very limited, adding, "At the first indication, however, of an attack on Roanoke Island a supply will be sent you." On the 15th of January he wrote as follows to the Secretary of War: "I am sure you will not judge me importunate when I inform you that I returned from Roanoke Island to Norfolk last Saturday. I hasten back, after a short reconnoissance, to

apprise headquarters and the Department that there are no defences there, no adequate preparations whatever to meet the enemy, and to forward all the means in my reach as speedily as possible to make the key of all the rear of Norfolk, with its canals and railroads, safe. Inside of Hatteras Inlet I found twenty-four vessels of light draught, eight of which are steamers, said to carry four guns each. They are at farthest but thirty miles from Roanoke Island and can reach there in four hours or less, to attack five small gunboats under Captain Lynch and four small land batteries, wholly inefficient. Any boat drawing seven feet water, or less, can pass the Croatan Sound as far off as one and one-fourth miles from any battery, and the enemy's guns can silence our batteries there in a very short time. Neither battery is casemated, and our men there are untrained to heavy pieces mounted on navy carriages. The moment the enemy passes Croatan Channel, the North Landing River, North River, Pasquotank, Chowan, Roanoke, Alligator, and Scuppernong rivers, and the Dismal Swamp and Albemarle and Chesapeake canals will be blockaded effectually, and Norfolk and Portsmouth will be cut off from supplies of corn, pork, and forage. The force at Hatteras is independent of the Burnside expedition. No matter where the latter is, the former is amply sufficient to capture or pass Roanoke Island in any twelve hours. Let me say, then, sir, that if we are to wait for powder from Richmond until we are attacked at that island, that attack will be capture, and our defeat will precede our supply of ammunition. The case is too urgent for me to delay speaking this out plainly at once."

Finding that his written appeals for munitions of war and men were unheeded by General Huger and the War Department, Wise hastened to Richmond, to confer with the authorities there and urge the necessity of immediate

preparation. While in western Virginia, he had raised his Legion to fifty-five companies of all arms, divided into three regiments of infantry, eight cavalry and four artillery companies, numbering in all some twenty-five hundred effective men. It had been understood, at the time that he was ordered to Richmond from Camp Defiance, that his Legion was to be restored to his command in the east; but up to the date of which we write, this had not been done. In response to his appeals for reënforcements, and that his Third Regiment of Infantry be ordered to report to him, along with the rest of his troops, Mr. Benjamin replied that he had not the men to spare at the time. "I then urged," says Wise, "that General Huger had about fifteen thousand men in the front of Norfolk, lying idle in camp for eight months, and that a considerable portion of them could be spared for the defence of the rear of Norfolk, and especially as my district supplied Norfolk and his army with nearly or quite all of its corn, pork, and forage; that reënforcements at Roanoke Island were as absolutely necessary to the defence of Norfolk as forces in its front, and that particular or special posts should not be allowed to monopolize nearly all the men, powder, and supplies." The final reply of the Secretary to this demand was a peremptory order, issued on January 22, directing Wise to proceed immediately to Roanoke Island and assume command of the troops there. Wise forthwith repaired to his post, after a short delay in Norfolk, caused by lack of transportation facilities. Of the state of affairs at the island at the time Wise wrote in a subsequent report: "My two regiments (the First and Second of the Legion, numbering seventeen companies and less than eight hundred men) had preceded my arrival, and for want of quarters on Roanoke Island, occupied Nag's Head. It was absolutely necessary to maintain some sufficient force

there to make and protect a ferry across Roanoke Sound to the island to secure a comparatively safe depot for provisions, stores, etc., and to guard the beach against the landing of the enemy north of Oregon Inlet. We commenced immediately to procure lighters for the ferry, to repair the bridge, and to make a magazine. Early on Friday, January 31, I visited Roanoke Island, meeting Colonel Shaw at Weir's Point. I gave him the necessary orders to forward the pile-driving, to construct breastworks at Suple's Hill, and to keep strong guards at Hommock's, Pugh's, and Ashby's landings, on the south end of the island. I returned then to Nag's Head on Friday and ordered every preparation there. At neither post were there any tools to work with, no axes, shovels, spades, nails, etc., and requisitions had been made in vain for them both at Richmond and in Norfolk. Neither place had any teams, except two pairs of broken-down mules at the island and some weak and insufficient ox-carts. The consequence was that men had to carry everything on their shoulders and no work could be accomplished, and in the evening of Friday a cold rain had set in, which lasted until the evening of the 5th instant.

"On Saturday evening, the 1st instant, I was seized (while attending to duty) with a high fever, resulting in an acute attack of pleurisy, threatening pneumonia, from which I was unable to rise until late on the evening of the 8th instant, but from bed continued to issue orders and to despatch preparations for the enemy, and on the morning of the 6th the enemy appeared off the southern end of the island."

The fleet organized by Major-General Ambrose E. Burnside, for the purpose of effecting lodgements along the southern coast, by means of which troops could penetrate the interior, had embarked from Annapolis on January 5,

1862, for Fortress Monroe, from which point they sailed for Hatteras Inlet, the entrance to Pamlico Sound. The transports accompanying the naval fleet had a capacity for carrying fifteen thousand troops, who were divided into three brigades under Generals Foster, Reno, and Parke. The fleet, which consisted of sixty-five vessels, presented an imposing spectacle as it came in sight off the lower end of the island.

On the morning of the 7th, the Federal gunboats entered Roanoke Sound, and by eleven o'clock were opposite the island, and engaged with the Confederate fleet and the batteries alongshore. The insignificant tugboats of Commodore Lynch were compelled to retire up the sound, though they managed to keep up a brisk fire, and during the afternoon the enemy succeeded, under cover of the gunboats, in landing all of their force a short distance above Ashby's, with the exception of one regiment which was gotten ashore the following morning.

Colonel J. V. Jordan, of the Thirty-first North Carolina troops, was in command of the small force stationed at Ashby's, where it had been anticipated the enemy would attempt to land. Between this point and the actual place of landing, which was a short distance above the former, lay a large marsh, impassable for artillery; and fearing that he might be cut off, Jordan ordered a retreat to Suple's Hill, about a mile and a quarter above, where the redoubt previously mentioned had been thrown across the main road, or causeway, leading up the centre of the island.

In obedience to orders from Wise, Lieutenant-Colonel Frank P. Anderson of his Legion left Nag's Head early on the morning of the 7th, for the island, with two companies of the Forty-sixth, and ten of the Fifty-ninth Virginia regiments, in all about 450 men, and for some reason, probably deficiency in means of transportation, it was

six P.M. before they were marched to the earthwork across the main road, whither Jordan had fallen back.

Owing to the sickness of Wise, who was still ill and confined to his bed at Nag's Head, the command of the island devolved upon Colonel Shaw, whose entire available force, "exclusive of the companies on duty at the several batteries, amounted to 1434, rank and file"; which number was made up of men belonging to the Eighth and Thirty-first North Carolina and the Forty-sixth and Fifty-ninth Virginia regiments.

Early on the morning of the 8th, the pickets reported the approach of the enemy, and about seven o'clock a general engagement was begun, Shaw soon opening with his artillery stationed at the redoubt, which consisted of three guns only, — one twenty-four-pounder howitzer, one eighteen-pounder field-piece, and one six-pounder. Colonel Anderson meanwhile had deployed three companies on his right and left, in the swamp, under the commands of Captains Wise on the left and Coles of the Forty-sixth on the right and Lieutenant Hazlett of the Fifty-ninth Virginia Regiment. The three brigades of the enemy, with General Foster in the centre and advance, and Generals Reno and Parke on the left and right respectively, numbered probably fifteen thousand men, and were supplied with several pieces of artillery from the boats. The Federals were able to penetrate the low marshy ground which lay south of the redoubt; and the struggle continued until 12.20, when the artillery ammunition of Shaw being exhausted and his right flank turned by the brigade of Reno, he was compelled to yield the place. In his report of the engagement Colonel Shaw says: "With the very great disparity of forces, the moment the redoubt was flanked I considered the island lost. The struggle could have been protracted and the small body of brave

men, which had been held in reserve, might have been brought up into the open space to receive the fire of the overwhelming force on our flank, which was under cover of trees; but they would have been sacrificed without the smallest hope of a successful result."

Captain O. Jennings Wise and Captain Coles, in command of the Confederate skirmishers thrown forward on the right and left, had fallen while engaged in bravely cheering on their men. The former, though dangerously wounded in the thigh and breast, had been carried by his comrades to a boat near the head of the island and the party were endeavoring to escape to Nag's Head, on the opposite beach, when they were fired upon by the men of the Ninth New York Regiment and compelled to return. Captain Wise was twice shot while his men were carrying him from the field, and his four wounds, several of which were severe, left no hope of his recovery.

Late on the afternoon of the engagement, General Wise, who was then lying ill with pneumonia at Nag's Head, was placed in a wagon and driven fifteen miles up the beach, accompanied by a small remnant of his men who had escaped, and three companies under Colonel Richardson, who had remained at Nag's Head during the fight. From the Canal Bridge, the tug *Currituck* was despatched under a flag of truce to Roanoke Island, to inquire for the killed and wounded, and to obtain the bodies of Captains Coles and Wise and Lieutenant Selden.

Upon the return of the boat, from her sad errand, Wise directed that the coffin containing the remains of his son be opened. "The old hero," wrote an eye-witness, "bent over the body of his son, on whose pale face the full moon threw its light, kissed the cold brow many times and exclaimed, in an agony of emotion, 'Oh, my brave boy, you have died for me, you have died for me.'"

Wise proceeded with his handful of troops northward, by way of Currituck Court-House, and was later joined by his artillery under Colonel Henningsen, which last had never reached him at Roanoke on account of an interruption of his orders by General Huger. After placing obstructions at the mouth of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, Wise, deeming it impossible for him to withstand an attack of the enemy with his mere handful of men, fell back to Great Bridge, in Norfolk County, where he arrived on the morning of the 16th, after a three days' march through a steady rain.

A few days after the battle at Roanoke Island, Wise wrote of himself in a letter to Huger: "Providence sharply prohibited me from sharing the fate of my brave, devoted troops, but I can sit in my saddle now. I am happier at the post of duty than I could be at home now wailing for its best scion, cut down in its full vigor; and, God willing, I never mean to leave the remnant of my men again until I see them recruited and proudly reanimated." But despite his eagerness to serve, the hardships of the campaign had told upon him in his feeble condition, and the leave of absence, which was shortly accorded him, came at a time when he stood in sore need of it. On account of the fact that the disaster at Roanoke Island had broken up the organization of his Legion, General William Mahone of the Second Brigade was ordered to assume command of the district, and Wise was granted a furlough, after which he was to be assigned to the command of General Joseph E. Johnston.

From Great Bridge Wise wrote to the Secretary of War on February 21, 1862, detailing at great length a history of the events prior to the engagement at Roanoke Island, as well as a report of that affair, and demanding a court of inquiry as to the defences of this post and the responsi-

bility for the disaster. A resolution was passed by the Confederate House of Representatives requesting Mr. Benjamin to lay Wise's report before that body, which was done; and a committee was appointed to investigate the affair, which, after an elaborate examination of all the facts and circumstances, submitted a report, commending the energy and foresight of Wise and completely exonerating him from all responsibility for the defeat sustained by the Southern troops, and closed by attributing the failure of the defence to General Huger and Mr. Benjamin.

A curious bit of unwritten history has come to light in this connection. Some years after the war, Mr. Benjamin, in a letter to Colonel Charles Marshall, stated that he had directed General Huger to send powder from Norfolk to Roanoke Island, but had been informed by the latter that if he obeyed this order, Norfolk would be left without ammunition. Mr. Benjamin then says: "I consulted the President whether it was best for the country that I should submit to unmerited censure, or reveal to a congressional committee our poverty and my utter inability to supply the requisitions of General Wise, and thus run the risk that the fact should become known to some of the spies of the enemy, of whose activity we were well assured. It was thought best for the public interest that I should submit to censure."

It is superfluous to add that the above statement reflects the highest credit upon the patriotism of Mr. Benjamin, but there appears no reason to doubt that the committee was right in concluding that it was easily within the power of General Huger to have transported to Roanoke Island arms and ammunition, as well as a part of the large force under his command who were then idle in camp at Norfolk.

The Confederate squadron at Roanoke Island consisted

of eight vessels, two of which were side-wheel river steamboats and the remainder screw tugboats, mounting one thirty-two-pounder rifled gun each. In consequence of their hastily improvised character, the war-ships under Lynch came to be dubbed the "Mosquito fleet," and though the officers and men aboard conducted themselves handsomely during the engagement, it is hardly necessary to comment upon the absurdity of sending such a collection of tugs to meet the Burnside expedition, instead of using them to transport troops and supplies, through the canals leading from Norfolk into the waters of North Carolina. Had this been done and proper fortifications constructed at the marshes, off the south end of the island, even the formidable fleet of Burnside could have been kept at bay.

CHAPTER XVIII

WRITES TO GENERAL LEE ADVOCATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MARINE BATTERY BY THE CONFEDERACY. ASSIGNMENT TO COMMAND A BRIGADE. TAKES PART IN BATTLE OF MALVERN HILL. STATIONED AT CHAFFIN'S BLUFF. ANECDOTE OF GENERALS LEE AND WISE. WILLIAMSBURG EXPEDITION. ORDERED TO SOUTH CAROLINA. A WAR-TIME AURORA BOREALIS

FROM Great Bridge Wise returned, as has been elsewhere stated, to his home at Rolleston, near Norfolk, having been granted a furlough of some days in order to recruit his broken health. While on this leave of absence, he witnessed the great naval fight on the 9th of March between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*, which occurred in Hampton Roads, not far distant from his home. On the 3d of May, 1861, not long after Virginia seceded, but before she had formally united with the Confederacy, Wise wrote to General Lee describing the model for a marine battery devised by Commodore James Barron, and which the latter had in former years exhibited before the naval committee of the House of Representatives over which Wise had presided. Barron presented his model to Wise, and at the outbreak of the war the idea of such an ironclad, as a means of harbor defence, at once suggested itself. General Lee, in his letter of reply to Wise, which was dated May 24, 1861, stated that he had been induced to lay the latter's communica-

tion before the executive council, but that owing to the numerous duties then pressing upon them, and with their limited means, they were unable to undertake the construction of such a vessel at that time.

A few days later Virginia had been joined to the Confederacy and, early in June, the Hon. Stephen R. Mallory, the Secretary of the Navy, requested Lieutenant John M. Brooke to design an ironclad; and as a result of the latter's inventive genius, the frigate *Merrimac* was raised at Norfolk and converted into the *Virginia*, the distinctive features of which were the "submerging the ends of the ship and the eaves of the casemate." Wise was mistaken in thinking that through his letter to General Lee, the remodelling of the *Merrimac* had been begun,[1] as Lieutenant Brooke was not familiar with Barron's design; although it is quite possible that the letter was afterward referred to Secretary Mallory, and suggested to him the practicability of an armored vessel as a means of harbor defence. Mr. Mallory had been chairman of the committee on Naval Affairs in the United States Senate, and his experience in matters of the sort had made him quick to see the advantage of a ram constructed after the design of the *Virginia.*

Wise reached Richmond on the 18th of March, and for some weeks was occupied with the investigation of the Roanoke Island disaster by the Confederate Congress, from whom he received the most enthusiastic endorsement as to his conduct throughout. The command of his Legion, which body had suffered severely, had been taken from him, and it was through the influence of General Lee that he was assigned to the command of a brigade in May, 1862. The remainder of his Forty-sixth and Fifty-ninth regiments were restored to his command, and to these

[1] See "Seven Decades of the Union," pages 279–282.

were added the Twenty-sixth and Thirty-fourth Virginia regiments, the whole being organized into a brigade of infantry. To the four regiments, commanded by Colonel R. T. W. Duke of the Forty-sixth, Colonel William B. Tabb of the Fifty-ninth, Colonel Powhatan R. Page of the Twenty-sixth, and Colonel J. Thomas Goode of the Thirty-fourth, were added two batteries of artillery under Major A. W. Starke, commanded by Captains Armistead and French, with a few cavalry for vedettes. The force was stationed to guard the batteries at Chaffin's Bluff, about seven miles east of Richmond and on the river road, while the battles around that city were in progress.

On the morning of June 30, Wise, in response to a verbal message from General Theophilus H. Holmes, but without orders, voluntarily joined the latter's command, with two regiments of infantry and two companies of cavalry, at the Dill house, near New Market. His men shared the fortunes of that division during the three days' fighting at Frazier's Farm and Malvern Hill, but were posted too far around toward the river, on Lee's extreme right, to take an active part in these engagements. After this Wise returned to Chaffin's, at which point as well as at the Diascund and White House, his brigade did post duty for sixteen months, guarding the entire peninsula from Richmond to Williamsburg on the James, Chickahominy, and Pamunkey rivers.

Just prior to the battles around Richmond an amusing incident had occurred at Wise's headquarters. Before relating the story, however, we will state what we have hitherto omitted; namely, that Wise was a hard swearer, and his army career had not diminished his propensity to indulge this habit. A farmer named Taylor, who lived on the Osborne turnpike, a few miles east of Richmond, had complained of depredations on his vegetable patches

by the troops, and guards had been stationed by Wise to prevent further foraging expeditions of this character. One day Taylor came to Wise, in a state of considerable rage, and complained that the guards were not doing their duty, and that the soldiers continued to steal his vegetables. Wise told him that the men were doing the best they could to protect the property, but Taylor continued to denounce the soldiers, which resulted in the former delivering him a lecture on the sacrifices and privations of the troops, and concluding by the announcement that he intended to withdraw all guards, and that he must take care of his own truck patch. Taylor, much incensed, mounted his horse and rode away shaking his fist at Wise, and calling out that he intended reporting him to General Lee. Not long after, the latter rode up, accompanied by General Longstreet, and as the two were dismounting Wise advanced to meet them. General Lee greeted him in a very stern manner, and said: "General Wise, I have a grave charge against you to investigate. I have been informed that you have disobeyed general order No. — and have allowed your men to depredate on the truck farms hereabouts; but, sir, I must have your version of the affair, for the credibility of the witness against you is called into question by the fact that he told me that you *swore* at him. Now, sir, knowing you as well as I do, I cannot believe this to be true." Wise looked at him intently, and observing a suppressed smile, put his hand on General Lee's shoulder and replied, "Well, General Lee, if you will do the praying for the Army of Northern Virginia, I'll be damned if I will not do the swearing."

The brigade remained in camp at Chaffin's and at points along the peninsula, during the winter of 1862–63, but early in April of the latter year were ordered to make a divertisement in favor of Longstreet in his operations

around Suffolk, in Nansemond County, and to prevent the enemy from sending reënforcements from Yorktown against him. Wise thus describes the expedition: —

"I was ordered to move as low down as practicable toward Fortress Monroe, and to threaten the enemy as close as possible and do him all the damage in my power, without risking a battle unless certain of victory. Knowing that the enemy had moved up in force to the redoubts around Williamsburg, I pressed with all the available force at my command — three regiments, the Twenty-sixth, Thirty-fourth, and Fifty-ninth, a few cavalry of the Holcombe Legion, and Rives's Battery of artillery, all numbering eleven hundred effective men — to the Six-Mile ordinary, on the James City road. There I issued orders to the Fifty-ninth to proceed after nightfall to College Creek, to cross that creek after the setting of the moon at one o'clock A.M., and, passing through Tetter's Neck, to gain the Cheese-Cake Church on the Warwick road, and thence to attack the headquarters and stores of the enemy at Whitaker's mill, five miles in the rear of the redoubts at Williamsburg; whilst I, with the Twenty-sixth and Thirty-fourth regiments, and Rives's Battery and the squadron of cavalry, would attack Williamsburg at daybreak. The whole force of Colonel William B. Tabb, at the head of the Fifty-ninth, was 210 men of his regiment and 8 of the James City cavalry belonging to Fitz Lee's command on furlough, numbering in all 218 men, to perform this hazardous movement in the rear of the enemy. It was known and reasonably supposed from the distance and the ground under ordinary circumstances, that six hours would enable the movement to reach the rear of Whitaker's mill by daybreak, at a pace of only two miles per hour, and that thus the attack would commence simultaneously front and rear. Colonel Tabb's orders further were that, in the event he

succeeded in destroying the enemy's stores at Whitaker's mill, he should march quickly and directly upon the rear of the redoubts at Williamsburg, which we would storm or feign to storm in front and on their left flank. The Fifty-ninth, after receiving orders and taking a little rest, proceeded promptly to College Creek, waited there until the moon went down and crossed into Tetter's Neck, passing within some of the sentinel posts of the enemy, near the Hospital Cemetery, when lo! they found themselves tangled in the timber of that Neck felled by the enemy so as to form obstructions worse than that of regular abattis. Instead of being able to move at a pace of two and a half miles an hour, they could not advance more rapidly than a mile an hour in the darkness of the night, and this delayed their reaching the rear of Whitaker's mill until nearly eight o'clock A.M. At daybreak we advanced upon the front and entered Williamsburg, and the enemy opened in full fire from the redoubts. Colonel Powhatan R. Page was ordered with eight hundred men of the Twenty-sixth and Thirty-fourth to quietly move down a ravine to the left of the redoubt on the enemy's left, and one section of artillery, two companies of infantry, and the squadron of cavalry were kept in the front. Nothing was heard of Tabb's movement to the rear, and the enemy in the redoubts and mounted were reported twenty-six hundred strong. One section of artillery under Rives was pushed forward in front of the enemy's left redoubt, and thus the fight continued until eleven A.M., when a single shell cut down three of Rives's artillery horses and shattered one of his gun-carriages. Still, nothing was heard of Tabb, and there was danger of a charge from the enemy and of the loss of the damaged gun. Immediately, the order was given to withdraw the section from the field, Page was recalled, and we fell back in good order, with but little

loss, just out of the town, and were in position there when about one o'clock P.M. we saw the immense column of smoke rising from the conflagration of the enemy's quarters and stores at Whitaker's mill, and then knowing that Tabb was successfully at his work, we rapidly returned to the town and met him in timely retreat. He had burned all of their munitions and provisions, making in all from three to five hundred thousand dollars' worth of the enemy's property destroyed and captured, without the loss of a man. We remained for days relieving the distressed inhabitants, saved a large amount of property for many families, and returned without loss, to meet the approval of the War Department and of General Elzey at headquarters."

His post of duty at Chaffin's Bluff had denied Wise the opportunity to participate in the battles against McClellan, or those fought the year following; and while the army of northern Virginia was winning imperishable renown, he was compelled to serve at a point affording no opportunity for distinction, and to see officers of inferior rank appointed to positions above him, almost daily. It was the policy of Mr. Davis to give to West Pointers the preference in the service, and he was, moreover, in all probability not favorably inclined toward Wise personally, as the latter strongly disapproved of the civil administration of the Confederacy, and did not hesitate to denounce it unsparingly. In the opinion of Wise, Davis was not the man for the position he held, and he did not fail to express himself on this point as on all others, and naturally enough this did not increase Wise's chances of promotion. Both he and his men had chafed under the comparative inactivity imposed upon them at Chaffin's Bluff, though Wise never suffered the time passed in camp to be wasted, and the brigade had perfected its drill to a high degree of efficiency, while the men were required

to construct an inner line of defences, which last, according to General Ewell, saved Richmond during the summer of 1864, and caused that officer to address a letter to Wise acknowledging the service performed by him. The men were also employed in gardening, tanning leather, and other useful avocations, until September, 1863, when the welcome order was received to proceed to Charleston. Of the camp life prior to this period, Wise afterward wrote: "Our supplies whilst at Chaffin's were vastly aided and improved by 'the old folks at home' in King and Queen, Gloucester, Matthews, Essex, Accomack, and Northampton. The latter counties had to run a blockade through narrow passes in the smallest craft, at night, but they sent clothes and medicine and food. Essex and Matthews and Gloucester poured out their cornucopias upon us; but oh! shall I ever forget the little hen-coop carts of King and Queen. They were constantly coming packed to the top of their cover-hoops always with good things from the dear mothers and sisters and wives at home! . . . One of those little carts, hauled by a pony, was like an open sesame: it was full of hams and chickens and eggs and melons and cakes and cider and home-made wine and letters and socks and blankets. And the memory of its fulness is nothing to that of its pathos. Not a company got its home greeting that some poor soldier did not bring to me some choicest present of the sweets he so seldom got, compared with my own opportunities. 'Why, my good comrade, keep 'em for yourself, you need them more than I do.' But no, he wouldn't, he couldn't eat them if I did not take part, and hear what the 'old woman' or the children said about us. God bless my true-hearted, humble, brave privates who loved for me to taste their morsels of good things. There was no generosity like theirs. It forgot everything but self-sacrifice and devotion, cheerfully made and paid."

The brigade reached Charleston in September, 1863, having been ordered to report to General Beauregard to take part in the defence of the South Carolina coast. Of his services under the above-named officer Wise subsequently wrote: —

"The command preceding that of Beauregard had an effective force of forty-five thousand men, to defend the department from North Carolina to the Cape of Florida; whilst Beauregard had for the same defence only about seventeen thousand effective men. This compelled a distribution of forces very wide apart, and hardly in supporting distances, so large were the districts and extended the coasts of the command. To our brigade was assigned the duty of guarding the entire district lying between the Ashley and the Edisto, with the exception of James's Island. On the Atlantic front it extended from the Stono to the Edisto, including John's Island, Kiahwah, Seabrooks, Jehosse, King's and Slau's islands and the Wadmalaw. At first, our headquarters were at Wappoo, and then farther south at Adams's Run, and extended from Willtown on the Edisto to the Church Flats on the Stono, posting Willtown, the Toogadoo, the Dahoo, King's Island, Glen's Island, Church Flats, and the Haulover, near the mouth of the Bohicket on John's Island, besides the forces in reserve at Adams's Run. It was a very laborious and hazardous defence of a coast indented for every mile almost by waters accessible, not only to the war steamers, but to the land forces from Morris's Island in the occupancy of the enemy. In every emergency these troops did their whole duty promptly, successfully, and with the approbation and commendation of their superiors. Their duties were constant and active during the whole period from September, 1863, until March, 1864, in doing guard duty in the most exposed situations, and in details upon

extensive earthworks, at many and various points. But they were not left to non-combatant work alone. They had two memorable opportunities of showing their alacrity and bravery in the fields of battle. The two war steamers, *Marble Head* and *Pawnee*, were too curious in running up the Stono to peer at a Quaker battery, which had been placed above the mouth of the Abbepoola, to deter the enemy, and Colonel Page commanding, with Major Jenkins of the South Carolina troops, and Colonel Del. Kemper of the artillery, were ordered to drive them off. This they did with gallantry, riddling the *Marble Head*, but the *Pawnee* got a cross-fire on our batteries and forced Page to fall back, but he fully effected the purpose of the expedition and won my most hearty thanks. He was one of the coolest men I ever saw under fire. On his dull sorrel horse, he rode about the field under showers of shot and shell, without turning his head, or giving it a twitch even at the sound too near of that awful aerial whisper: 'where is he? where is he?' before an explosion which crashed as if heaven and earth were coming together. His mounted unconcern was so marked that it did not escape the notice of that cool and gallant soldier Major Jenkins, the brother of the lamented General M. Jenkins, of South Carolina. After the fight was over he asked the gallant Page how he could be so unflinching, without a dodge, amidst such bursting of bombs and whispers of danger all around him. His answer was beautifully characteristic, showing the great integrity of his courage: —

"'I didn't dodge, sir, because I am so deaf I didn't hear them before their explosion!' A braggadocio would have pocketed the compliment as belonging to his steady nerves. He claimed nothing which did not belong to him, and his courage was too honest and real not to assign

his apparent indifference to danger to the true cause, — his deafness.

"But there was a much greater and more important instance trying the promptness and the pluck of these men. The enemy designed its attack upon Florida, and a large fleet left the mouth of the Stono, conveying troops for the South. It was uncertain for a time what their point of destination was, when a servant of General Gillmore was captured by my 'Rebel Troop,' as it was called, on John's Island. He was brought in to me as a prisoner of war. He was a light mulatto, who described himself as the son of a slave freed by the Barnes family, near Frederick, in Maryland. He was General Gillmore's cook, was purveying for the general's table on Morris's Island, and he got lost on the Wadmalaw. He was an exceedingly plausible fellow, and after a close and searching examination professed to be wholly ignorant of the design of the Stono expedition. At last he was overcome by my refusal to receive or treat him as a prisoner of war. What then? He was made to apprehend that he would be turned loose, unmolested, to shift for himself. Fearing many imaginary dangers, — that he would be shot as a straggler from the enemy, or be caught and sold as a slave and might never see his wife and family again, — he made a full disclosure which proved in the sequel to be true, and enabled General Beauregard to forward reënforcements to General Finnegan. Just before these reënforcements were to depart for Florida, General Alex. Schimmelfinnig with six thousand men crossed over the bars to Seabrook Island, and surprising the picket at the Haulover from that island to the main, he advanced up the Bohicket road and nearly reached the headquarters of Major Jenkins, in command at that point, twenty-five miles from Adams's Run. Major Jenkins had no force but two companies of our brigade and

Humphreys's troop of South Carolina cavalry. The enemy divided into two columns of three thousand each, the one moving up the Bohicket road, and the other moving to the right over the Mullet Hall Creek which heads very near the left bank of Bohicket. The three thousand on the Bohicket road were gallantly met by Humphreys and two companies of infantry, Jenet's and another, and were so closely fought by them as to make them move very cautiously, and to give time for Colonel Page to reënforce Jenkins from John's Island bridge with a portion of the 26th, and this small force, fighting for thirty-six hours, saved Jenkins's headquarters and prevented the enemy from getting to the Abbepoola road, and made him, in fact, retire past the defile at the head of Mullet Hall, when I reached that defile with reënforcements from the Fifty-ninth, the Forty-sixth, and Thirty-fourth, making our whole force but nine hundred men. Seeing that the three thousand of the enemy were crossing the Mullet Hall, over the temporary bridging of the channel of that stream, and that they were trying to reach the defile in our rear, we fell back to what is called the 'Cocked Hat,' a short distance west of the defile and of the Abbepoola road, and there took position and opened fire from two batteries upon the columns of the enemy advancing on the Bohicket road; the three thousand on the Mullet Hall threatening our left. In half an hour after the fight began, nine hundred of Colquitt's brigade, bound to Florida, left the railroad cars at Church Flats and reënforced our command. They were posted on the left to check the enemy at Mullet Hall Creek, whilst our nine hundred repulsed the attacking columns on the Bohicket road. This was done handsomely, without loss save to the enemy. They fell back after several hours' fighting, and the next morning we could see their strategy. They expected us to pursue them past the defile at the

head of Mullet Hall, when their forces on our left were to close in upon our rear. We were not to be caught in such a snare, and they were glad to retire in the night as they came. For this the command was highly commended by the report of Colonel Harris and the orders at headquarters. Colquitt's men proceeded the next day on their way to Florida, and were soon followed by our Twenty-sixth and Fifty-ninth, to join Finnegan, who met the enemy of the Stono fleet and conquered them gloriously at Olustee."

Some months prior to leaving Chaffin's Bluff, Wise had received a letter from a dear friend, Mr. John G. Chapman, an artist then residing in Rome, who wrote that his son had made his way to America and joined the Confederate army, and begged Wise to endeavor to locate his whereabouts, if possible. After many unsuccessful attempts, Wise finally succeeded in learning his address and getting into communication with him, as a result of which young Chapman came to Virginia and joined the Fifty-ninth Regiment of his brigade. At the outbreak of the war, he had landed in New York and at first served in the western army under General Albert Sydney Johnston at Shiloh, where he was badly wounded. Conrad W. Chapman, like his father, was an artist of great talent, which soon came to the knowledge of General Beauregard, who had him detailed to paint the various fortifications in and around Charleston. While serving in South Carolina he painted excellent panels, illustrating the camp scenes and incidents of army life, as well as the characteristic features of the Southern seacoast. In the spring of 1864 he ran the blockade from Charleston, carrying these pictures with him to Rome, where fortunately they were preserved, as they constitute not only the best, but probably the only authentic collection of paintings on the Confederate side executed during the war.

In March, 1864, having obtained a furlough, Wise returned to Virginia to visit his family and look after his private affairs. His home at Rolleston had been seized when Norfolk fell into the hands of the enemy, in 1862, and his wife, at the time we write of, was visiting his daughter, Mrs. Hobson, who resided at a plantation called "Eastwood," some twenty miles west of Richmond, in Goochland County, which was reached by means of the James River and Kanawha Canal. A younger daughter, who accompanied Wise from Richmond on the trip made on the packet boat to Goochland, thus describes their arrival, and the visit from which so much pleasure had been anticipated:[1] —

"The carriage from 'Eastwood' was awaiting us. The lights from the country store glinted on the vehicle, its harness and trappings, and the horses, chilled by the nipping air, pranced and fretted in the darkness, impatient to be off. It was but a moment's wait for the newly arrived mail, and then our host entering the carriage with us, the team, handled by 'Ephraim,' a famous driver, sprung away under his master hand, wheeling us at an exhilarating gait to the Hobson homestead. Along the public road beside the canal, through 'Eastwood's' outer gate, up the long hill to the highlands, past the tobacco barns, we sped, until at last we caught sight of the homestead, all its windows ablaze with loving welcome, looming up in its grove of oaks, half a mile away.

"One may fancy what the feelings of my father were at such a time. For the past three years he had been in active service in the field; first in West Virginia, then at Roanoke Island, where he lost his first-born son; afterward on the Virginia Peninsula; and, finally, at Charles-

[1] "A War-Time Aurora Borealis," by Ellen W. Mayo. *Cosmopolitan*, June, 1896.

ton, South Carolina. At last, with his furlough, the prospect of a short period of peace and domestic quiet seemed fairly to open up to him. Mr. Plumer Hobson, our host and his son-in-law, had been prevented by ill health from entering the army. His inability to volunteer was a great mortification and distress to him. As if to make up, in another form, for the military service he could not render, he devoted himself and his means throughout the war in every way possible to charity and hospitality. It was, therefore, with peculiar satisfaction that he greeted us now, showing by every means in his power his desire to make our visit as happy as possible.

"We noticed, as we drove along in the starlit night, that the northern sky was aflame with what we all supposed to be the Aurora Borealis; but our thoughts were too much concentrated upon the lights blinking at us from the 'Eastwood' grove to pay much attention to the lights in the heavens. Wide apart flew the yard gates for us as we reached them; and wider still the great doors of the mansion house, as the wheels ceased their grinding in the gravel before the house. Joyous faces peered out into the night. Merry, happy greetings met us on the threshold. Within, the warmth of great wood fires, and the good cheer of a delicious supper, banished from our party every thought of war. What a feast it was! Coffee from Mrs. Seddon's; sugar from Mrs. Stanard's; sorghum from somebody else. The cook had made the biscuits so light that they almost flew out of the plates; and the cow, in honor of our coming, had given down nothing but cream. The good old general, as he looked over this array of luxuries, bade good-by, for a time at least, to camp life, tin plates, canteens, Nassau bacon, sweet-potato, coffee, rice, 'Hoppin'-John,' and 'Hoppin'-Jinny,' 'cush,' and all the horrible makeshifts of food he had endured for months at the front.

"If I enjoyed the snowy pillows awaiting, what must he have felt? For the first time in many months he tucked himself away, at midnight, in a Christian bed, with linen, lavender-scented sheets, and warm, soft blankets, to dream of days gone by, when, at his own home by the sea, in time of peace, with oysters, terrapin, and canvasbacks for the feast, judges and statesmen and even presidents had been his guests. He sank to rest, in fancy hearing the sound of the salt waves at his home, and the sighing of the winds through the seaside pines. I, happy and contented beyond expression, lost consciousness wondering what we would have for breakfast. Before us all stretched a vista of thirty days of peace! No matter what might be beyond.

"I dreamed. For a long time I glided upon smooth waters, watching ever-changing landscapes of beauty. I was not on the canal nor on a canal-boat. It was a beautiful lake, a painted boat with snowy sails, and I was accompanied by gay companions and merry music. Then of a sudden the scene changed. I was back on the miserable packet. It was dark. I was in the stuffy cabin. A fearful thumping was overhead. A drunken man on deck was trying to burst open my trunk and throw it overboard. I awoke. The pounding continued. It was some one beating on the oaken doors of the house and loudly calling for the general. Dressing hurriedly, the family was soon collected in the hallway listening with bated breath. A soldier of the general's command had come up with us on furlough. His home was some miles beyond us in the back country. He had ridden thither and solved the mystery of the Aurora Borealis; for right around his home he had come upon the bivouac of the raiding party of Dahlgren. Even as he sped back to warn us he had heard 'boots and saddles' sounded. He had ridden

rapidly to tell his dear old general of the danger; and, at the moment he was speaking, the enemy, according to all reasonable calculation, was coming on the same road by which he had arrived, and not over two or three miles behind him.

"The news chilled every heart among us with the sense of imminent peril. The ashes on the hearth, where last night's revelry was held, lay dead. Our dream of peace and rest was over. The dogs of war were once more baying on the hot scent, and we were the quarry pursued. If the men escaped with their lives, they would be lucky. The women and children, in another hour, would be defenceless, at the mercy of ignorant slaves and hostile soldiery. There was hurrying for the stables. In an incredibly short time 'Pulaski,' the blind war-horse of the general's dead son, and 'Lucy Washington,' Mr. Hobson's thoroughbred riding-mare, were at the door. They were not a moment too soon. But for an episode they would have been too late. The two plantations adjoining ours on the west were owned by Mr. James M. Morson and Hon. James A. Seddon, Secretary of War. Dahlgren's original purpose is said to have been to cross the James River at either Jude's Ferry, which was on the Morson place just above, or at Mannakin Ferry, three miles below us, and to approach Richmond by the south bank of the James. Whether it was or not, his force entered the Morson and Seddon plantations instead of coming straight on to 'Eastwood,' and there lost considerable time firing buildings and appropriating horses.

"Mr. Seddon's house was in full view, not a third of a mile away. It was by this time broad daylight, and from the portico where I stood, the troopers of Dahlgren were plainly visible, galloping about the stables and barns and setting fire to the buildings, the smoke from which already

began to rise. Of course, the first thing the Union soldiers learned from the negroes was that General Wise, the man who hung John Brown, was at 'Eastwood.' For 'Eastwood,' then, they started in full career, just as my father and Mr. Hobson rode out of the 'Eastwood' yard, making for a heavy body of woods lying in the direction of Richmond. My father knew the ground thoroughly, and parted from us bidding us feel no apprehension. 'For if,' said he, 'I can gain the woods before they overhaul me, I have no fear of my capture, or failure to reach Richmond in time to give warning.' And away they went, plunging across the ploughed fields, just as, from the Seddon place on the opposite side of the farm, the enemy's troopers came galloping, hundreds of them, flying like birds, it seemed to me, — fences and closed gates offering no obstacle to their headlong rush. 'Have no fear,' father had said, as he rode away. Oh, no. Of course, I had none! There I stood, almost frantic, as a Union soldier dashed up, with drawn revolver, and demanded to know where the man was who hung John Brown. I can see him as plainly now as then: his flea-bitten gray horse, his McClellan saddle, his very expression as he sat there sidewise, talking so insultingly. I see the flashing eye and hear the voice commanding me to tell the truth. I clutched at the child beside me, and even as I spoke I could see out of the corner of my eye, over the trees which concealed him from the trooper, my father disappearing in the woods. I declared most solemnly (God forgive me) that my father was in Charleston, South Carolina. Anxiety and excitement excluded fear of God or man. As a reward, I was informed that I lied, the trooper adding that he would capture him if he had to chase him to ——. 'Take your —— white head into the house,' said he, threateningly, and I gladly accepted his in-

vitation. From the upper windows I beheld the handsome barns of 'Dover' and 'Sabot Hill' in flames. About the stables the troopers were shifting saddles from their own jaded horses to Mr. Hobson's animals. Ephraim, inflamed with liquor, was marched hither and thither under cover of pistols and required to deliver everything under his care; and poor 'Bob,' who had been working on fortifications about Richmond, when asked about them, exclaimed, 'Lawd, master! Dey is a hundred and fortyfications aroun' dat place.'

"Their stay with us was short. They took all our horses, Ephraim and several other slaves; but, on the whole, we fared much better than our neighbors. Nothing at 'Eastwood' was burned; and after the raiding party went to pieces below Richmond, most of the horses were recovered. Poor father, with his knowledge of the topography of the country, had no trouble in reaching Richmond, by shorter routes than and far in advance of the Dahlgren party. Going directly to the War Department, he with great difficulty convinced Secretary Seddon of the real situation. The Department had no warning whatever of the raid, and Mr. Seddon seemed utterly incredulous at first. But once convinced, the local reserves under Colonel McAnerny were called out and met and repulsed Dahlgren about five miles above Richmond. The collision took place about dusk. The cavalry charging the infantry line failed to observe an old ice-house in their front. Into this a man on a flea-bitten gray horse plunged headlong. I have never ascertained definitely whether he was the gentleman I met that morning still pursuing my father in the direction then indicated. Between our place and Richmond was Mannakintown, with important coal-pits, ironworks, and a ferry. Opinions differ as to whether Jude's Ferry or Mannakin Ferry was the original objec-

tive point of Dahlgren. He crossed the river at neither place, but held to the north bank. The fate of the raid is known, and I will not repeat it. The orders found on Dahlgren's body have gone into our historical archives. The bitterness of those days has passed away. Two days after the visit of Dahlgren, father and Mr. Hobson came ambling quietly through the farm from the direction of Richmond, rising in their stirrups now and then to observe carefully what the angry little war-cloud had swept away in its passage; and, as the dear old fellow resumed the enjoyment of his interrupted furlough, with a merry allusion to his narrow escape, we all felt grateful to God that it was no worse, and that we were left unharmed."

CHAPTER XIX

ORDERED BACK TO VIRGINIA. FIGHT AT NOTTOWAY BRIDGE. THE BATTLE OF DREWRY'S BLUFF. THE FIRST DAY'S ATTACKS ON PETERSBURG

On the 3d day of May, 1864, an order was issued relieving Wise from duty in the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, and directing him to proceed with his brigade by rail to Richmond to take part in the defence of the Confederate capital. The Fifty-ninth Regiment, which, under Colonel William B. Tabb, was in advance, encountered a force of from 2500 to 3000 Federal cavalry of Kautz's command, with six pieces of artillery, at Nottoway Bridge. The last-named officer was engaged in destroying the lines of communication in south-side Virginia. Tabb, who had at his disposal 600 men, had taken up a position at the southern end of the bridge and stubbornly resisted the approach of the enemy; but finding that the latter had turned his right flank and gained his rear, he fell back to a small redoubt, about 300 yards from the end of the bridge on the north side of the stream. Although this movement involved the loss of the bridge, which was quickly fired by the enemy, the force under Tabb was able to repulse the attack in front of the redoubt, and the assailants were driven back, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. The brigade reached Petersburg without further interruption, and was assigned to the command of General Whiting.

Wise thus describes the services performed by himself and men at this period: —

"General Lee was at that time confronted by Grant at the Rapidan. General W. H. C. Whiting was placed in command of the defences of Petersburg, embracing the line of heavy fixed batteries supported by two small local battalions, about 150 militia, one Georgia battalion, and our brigade of infantry.

"General Beauregard took his position with about 8000 effective men at Drewry's Bluff, and all these forces were confronted by Butler's army of the James intrenched at City Point and at Cobb's in Howlett's Neck. On the 14th of May, 1864, he presented his plan of strategy to the War Department, at the head of which then were Mr. Seddon and General Bragg. Lee had about 45,000 effective forces; Beauregard about 15,000; and the plan he presented was for Lee to fall back upon the outer defences of Richmond and send to him, Beauregard, 15,000 reënforcements, making, with his own, 30,000 men with which to attack and conquer Butler, gain City Point, cross the James, and attack Grant on the left and rear, whilst Lee should attack him in front. Thus Grant would have been cut off from the James below Richmond, Petersburg would have been relieved, and Grant's force of about 120,000 then could have been assailed front, flank, and rear by 60,000 men under the two choicest generals of the Confederate army. This plan, unfortunately, was rejected by the President, and immediately thereafter General Bragg sent to General Whiting an order saying that General Lee was pressed very hard by Grant, and needed all the reënforcements which could be forwarded to him to save Richmond; and the defence of the capital being much more important than that of Petersburg, he was ordered with all despatch to report with all his available forces at Richmond. This

order was submitted to me, his second in command, by General Whiting, for my opinion as to its execution. It was signed by General Bragg officially. I read it with care, and unequivocally gave the opinion that it should not be obeyed, for the reason that to abandon Petersburg was to abandon Drewry's Bluff, and to abandon the latter was to abandon Richmond. General Whiting declared that that was his own opinion, and ordered me at once to make the best preparation for the defence of Petersburg to the last extremity in my power. I state these facts because it has been denied that General Bragg ever issued such an order. It was read and considered by another besides General Whiting and myself. In two hours from the time it was received, and whilst I was issuing orders for the defence of Petersburg, General Whiting again sent for me to wait on him at his quarters. The moment I reported he handed me an order to him from General Beauregard at Drewry's Bluff, to the front of which point Butler had advanced. The substance of that order was that he, Whiting, was with all his available forces on both sides the Appomattox, Martin's and Wise's Brigades, numbering in all about five thousand men, to cross the Appomattox and take the road across Campbell's Bridge by the coal pits, and join his right before daybreak the next morning, when he would attack Butler. In a few hours after this order was received, another order from Beauregard changing this came, ordering (J. G.) Martin's and Wise's Brigades to be at Dunlop's, on the Richmond and Petersburg turnpike, before daybreak the next morning, and thence at daybreak to move to the sound of Beauregard's guns.

"It is lamentable to add that, owing to causes which affect the reputation of a brave and accomplished Confederate commander, who died nobly in battle afterward, General Whiting did not move as promptly as he might.

The two brigades were at Dunlop's before daybreak, and there awaited his orders until more than an hour by sun. They were moved then, and found the reserve of the enemy under General Terry in barricade at the Walthall Railroad junction with the Petersburg Railroad and the turnpike. Martin's Brigade was on the right and Wise's on the left, crossing the turnpike on which the enemy had thrown up their works. They were immediately charged, driven from their breastworks, across Bakehouse Creek up the hill to their artillery, and in their flight their guns barely escaped capture. All their provisions were captured, and the brigades were passing on to the rear of the army retreating before Beauregard, when they were halted by General Whiting and ordered to fall back. But for this sad hindrance, the causes of which were fully reported, the victory of Beauregard would have been one of the most signal and decisive during the war. As it was, it was very decided in capturing six thousand[1] prisoners and in shutting Butler up, as General Grant said, in Howlett's Neck, 'like a fly in a bottle.' On the morning of the 17th the two brigades joined Beauregard's army, and from the 18th to the 28th of May, for ten days, there was heavy fighting on the whole picket lines, one-third of our brigade being required at a time to picket its front, making every day almost a general battle. At last the order came to charge and take the enemy's outer line at Howlett's, and it was captured from Ware Bottom Church on the James to the front of Cobb's on the Appomattox.[2] The part

[1] Wise was evidently misinformed on this point, as the prisoners captured did not number more than one-third of this.

[2] The late Colonel Carter Braxton of Newport News, Virginia, who commanded the battalion of artillery on the Howlett line occupied by the Wise Brigade in the early summer of 1864, used to laugh heartily over the following story, which he was fond of relating: —

One day he saw a number of Yankees in his front and was about to

borne by Martin's and Wise's Brigades upon the enemy in their front was without failure and a perfect success; six hundred of the Wise Brigade, under that perfect tactician, Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Council, of the Twenty-sixth, led the charge, supported by Martin, who was supported in a third line by the remaining portions of Wise's Brigade. The six hundred carried the front before either brigade came up; so rapid and so undaunted was this charge of the six hundred it was Balaklava-like. This charge was made in open field for one-half a mile, under 110 guns, against a full line of infantry in parapet. The men, though falling 'like leaves in Vallombrosa,' moved steadily up under the point-blank fire until within ten or twenty paces, when the enemy threw down their guns and cried for quarter. The reply was 'too late!' 'too late!' and the havoc which followed was appalling. The six hundred passed beyond the line taken and had to be recalled. No more could be done but hold that line. After this line was captured and settled firmly, General Wise was sent with but one of his regiments, the Forty-sixth, and a Georgia battalion to support the local forces on the lines of Petersburg. His whole force was 800 men, including 113 militia under the gallant Colonel F. H. Archer, to defend a line of six and a half miles. Alas! when he came to count his brigade, numbering 2400 men on the 16th of May, he found the roster reduced to 1350. In the charge at Howlett's the Ben McCullock Rangers,

open on them, when Wise told him not to fire, and insisted that they were some of his men. Braxton accordingly did not fire, but still claimed that they belonged to the enemy's force. Wise then said, "Wait, Colonel, I will find out," and proceeded to climb over the breastworks and advanced close to the body of men referred to, they allowing him to get tolerably close before firing on him. Wise turned around deliberately and called to Colonel Braxton, "Open on them, Colonel, they are *not* our men." This Braxton did successfully and drove them off, Wise in the meantime having walked back into the works without getting hurt.

the best scouts of the army, were reduced from seventy-four to thirty-eight, and the Accomack Company from seventy-two to thirty-seven."

By a special order issued June 1, Wise was detached from his brigade, and directed to assume command of the forces in the district lying between the James and Roanoke rivers, exclusive of the defences immediately around Richmond on the south side of the James. This involved, in short, the defence of Petersburg, the natural gateway to Richmond, which was soon to be the objective point of Grant's invading columns. General William Farrar Smith relates[1] that he was once in company with General John Newton, a Virginian by birth, who, placing his finger upon the map at the point designated Petersburg, remarked "There is Richmond," and the former has truly observed, in this connection, that the more the map of Virginia is studied, the clearer will this truth appear. The Petersburg Railroad running south from that place, together with the South-side Road to Lynchburg, and the Danville Railroad, near by, constituted the main arteries by means of which Richmond and the Confederate forces were furnished with supplies, and with these lines in possession of the enemy, the fall of Richmond must soon follow. This fact was soon to dawn upon General Grant himself, who having sacrificed, between the Rapidan and James, the lives of almost as many Union soldiers as Lee had men in his army, realized that with the James River open as far up as City Point, and with that place as a base of supplies, it was more practicable to proceed against Richmond from the rear than in front.

Although it was not until after the slaughter at Cold Harbor that Grant began his crossing of the James, yet,

[1] Unpublished address delivered before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.

in the meanwhile, Petersburg was menaced by the force under Butler, from whose front Beauregard had been ordered to withdraw a part of his command — Hoke's Division — to reënforce Lee on the north side of the James. Butler, having resolved upon a movement against Petersburg, issued orders on the 8th of June directing Major-General Gillmore, with a large body of infantry, accompanied by thirteen hundred cavalry, under General August V. Kautz, to cross the Appomattox, by means of a pontoon bridge at the Point of Rocks, and proceed against the city by the various roadways leading thither from that direction. Butler apparently was well informed as to the weakness of the force stationed there and correctly surmised that a prompt, vigorous movement would have been crowned with success. To defend a line extending from the Appomattox to the Jerusalem plank road, nearly six miles in length, Wise had one regiment of his brigade, the Forty-sixth, under Colonel Randolph Harrison, Sturdivant's Battery of artillery, Hood's and Batte's battalions, and a miscellaneous force of infantry, composed of old men and boys, together with a part of the Seventh Regiment of cavalry, under Colonel Taliaferro, — in all about 900 infantry, 125 artillery, and 150 effective cavalry, — the whole amounting to less than 1200 men. General Butler's statement as to "the grave and the cradle being robbed in about equal proportions" to compose the force opposed to him, was not only true, but the jails and hospitals were in like manner required to yield up their quotas.

The patriotic old men and boys of the town had organized themselves into a reserve force, under the command of the gallant Colonel Fletcher H. Archer, and had been well drilled for the defence of the Cockade City. Colonel Archer relates a story of how when Wise came to Peters-

burg to take command, he rode out to inspect the lines, and appearing at the camp of the reserves inquired for the commanding officer, who happened to be absent at the time. He was told by the adjutant that the commandant had gone to Petersburg. "Yes," replied he, "and if the Yankees were to come, you would all be there in less time than it would take a cannon-ball to reach there." But the reserves were to give a different account of themselves a few days later on. Early on the morning of the 9th, Gillmore crossed over the Appomattox, a part of his infantry, under Colonel Joseph R. Hawley, advancing, by way of the City Point road, a similar force, under General Edward W. Hinks, proceeding along the Jordan's Point road, while the cavalry under Kautz moved in a southerly direction from the river, in order to swing around and attack the Confederate right. The whole force under Gillmore numbered upward of forty-five hundred men, and had they been handled with intelligence and vigor, the capture of Petersburg would have been effected beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Confederate pickets were driven in at an early hour, together with the handful of cavalry under Colonel Taliaferro, but on this occasion, as subsequently during the attacks on Petersburg, the Confederates, by a seemingly reckless use of their scant force in front of the breastworks, no doubt deceived the enemy as to the number of men stationed behind them. Mr. Ropes[1] has laid considerable emphasis on this point, in treating of the siege of Petersburg, and upon the day of Gillmore's attack many of Wise's men followed this plan. Owing to the longer distance which he was compelled to traverse, Kautz did not reach the Confederate lines until some hours after

[1] Address by John C. Ropes, Esq., on first day's attacks on Petersburg. Unpublished manuscripts Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.

Hawley and Hinks, who, either on account of not having heard from the former, or from the appearance of the redans in front of them, did not make a combined assault on the works. The following passage from a narrative, written by Wise, describes the main events of the day: —

"They pressed hard upon the left, for three or four hours, and then suddenly attacked the militia on my extreme right, with a detachment numbering one thousand,[1] which were handsomely received by Archer; but they broke through his line, one half of them taking the road into Petersburg, and the other the road leading to Blandford. Graham's Battery accidentally, at the City Water Works, met the first, and a curious force drove back the latter. I had detailed all who could possibly do momentary duty out of the hospitals, calling them the 'Patients'; and from the jail and guard-houses all the prisoners, calling them the 'Penitents'; and the two companies of 'Patients' and 'Penitents' moved out on the Blandford road, while I advanced with three companies of the Forty-sixth from our left; and the enemy on that road, seeing the head of the column of 'P. P.'s' advancing in their front, and my three companies bearing on their right flank, wheeled to the right-about at once and retired; and Graham's Battery repulsed the other party advancing upon the city. This was done with a loss of thirteen killed and a few wounded, of the militia. Petersburg was thus barely saved on the 9th; and the defence was so critical that I demanded additional forces, and General Beauregard at once reënforced my command with my Twenty-sixth Virginia, and nine companies of the Thirty-fourth."[2]

It should also be stated in this connection that the timely

[1] This was the cavalry force under Kautz which attacked on the Jerusalem plank road about noon.

[2] Roman's "Life of Beauregard," Vol. II. page 224.

arrival of General James Dearing, with his regiment of cavalry, about the time that the outer works were carried by Kautz, materially aided in saving the day, as his command were promptly hurried through the city by their efficient commander, and their appearance near the city limits followed by a charge upon the enemy probably induced the Federals to withdraw.

The armies of Lee and Grant continued to face each other at Cold Harbor until the 12th of June, when the latter began his movements to the south side of the James. On that night the Eighteenth Federal Corps, under General W. F. (Baldy) Smith, marched to the White House on the Pamunkey, where they embarked aboard transports for Bermuda Hundred, at which place they arrived during the afternoon and night of the 14th. To Smith's Corps, supplemented by twenty-five hundred cavalry under Kautz, was assigned the duty of making the initial attack on Petersburg, which it was proposed should begin early on the morning of the 15th. The number of troops under the command of General Smith on that date exceeded, according to the estimates of Generals Grant and Butler, seventeen thousand, although General Smith himself says that his infantry barely aggregated ten thousand effective men, which, with the cavalry under Kautz, would make a total of about twelve thousand five hundred of all arms. At this time, Wise had for the defence of Petersburg an effective force of only twenty-two hundred men, including his Twenty-sixth and Thirty-fourth regiments, which had been returned to him by Beauregard as previously stated, along with a small cavalry command under General James Dearing. The line of works defended by the Confederates during the first attack on Petersburg, and known as the Dimmock line, ran in a direction from the Appomattox a little south of east, over low ground, to the City Point

Railroad, "and then, turning sharply, mounted the high ground and ran along a series of crests, for about a mile and a half from Battery No. 5 to Battery No. 12"; when it was drawn back, in a semicircular form, to a point on the river west of the city. According to General R. E. Colston, who was present and gallantly assisted in the defence against Gillmore's attack, these redans differed entirely from the shortened and formidable works which were later on constructed by General Lee's army. "With the exception of a few lunettes and redoubts at the most commanding positions," wrote that officer, "they were barely marked out, and a horseman could ride over them without difficulty almost everywhere, as I myself had done, day after day for weeks, just before the fight." [1] On the morning of June 15th Wise's troops were posted from Battery No. 1, on the Appomattox, constituting his left, to Butterworth's Bridge, on the Jerusalem plank road, which allowed but one man to every four and one-half yards. From the bridge to the river on his right flank, a distance of nearly five miles, the lines were without troops to man them, and a well-executed movement by a cavalry regiment of the enemy, in this quarter, would have rolled up the Confederate right flank during the first day's attacks on Petersburg; for though Dearing's cavalry were posted in this direction, it was merely to give warning of the enemy's approach. But these were the days of direct assaults and not of turning movements. At daybreak on the morning of the 15th, the three divisions of infantry under Smith, numbering fully fifteen thousand men, and the cavalry of Kautz, twenty-five hundred strong, had crossed the Appomattox at the Point of Rocks and were on the march to capture the Cockade City, while

[1] Article by General Colston in "Battles and Leaders of Civil War," Vol. IV.

Lee was yet on the north side of the James, and the main body of Beauregard's forces were confronting Butler on the Bermuda Hundred line. About two miles east of the Petersburg lines were stationed Graham's Battery of artillery and the cavalry companies under Dearing. These were posted behind a hastily constructed earthwork in Baylor's field near the forks of the Broadway and City Point roads, which, according to General Hinks "commanded the (City Point) road, as it debouched from the wood and swamp near Perkinson's saw-mill." Dearing had dismounted his handful of cavalry and deployed them as infantrymen; and upon the cavalry of Kautz coming in sight, a well-directed fire was opened against the latter, which caused them to fall back. Hinks, who was in the rear of Kautz, pressed forward with his infantry after a reconnoissance of the ground. In his report of the affair he wrote: "The wood and swamp, through which was a creek, were extremely difficult of passage, but the advance was finally made by most of the regiment, though furiously assailed with spherical case, canister, and musketry along the whole line. Some confusion, however, arose among the regiments upon the left of the road, and a few of the men fell back to the open space of ground." From the edge of the woods to the works was, according to General Hinks, about four hundred yards over open, rising ground where the attack was made, which was met by Dearing with great stubbornness.

It was after eight A.M. when the work was carried, and this delay of Smith's columns proved to be of incalculable advantage to Wise, who with his meagre force was awaiting the enemy's advance. About ten A.M., the hot skirmish fire in front indicated the approach of Smith's Corps, and shortly after, his three divisions arrived in front of the Confederate works, "covered the river, Jordan's Point

and City Point roads, and were drawn up in line of battle, with Martindale in the low ground on the right, Brooks in the centre, and Hinks on the left. The two latter opposed the eastern front from Battery 5 to Battery 10; and it was against this front that active operations were directed. These works presented a very formidable aspect to the troops. They were situated on commanding crests, and the forest was felled in their front, so as to expose advancing lines to their fire for half a mile, or more. Numerous pieces of artillery swept the field of fire rapidly and with precision, and a strong line of skirmishers in secure rifle-pits, well advanced in front of the works, kept up a spirited and effective fusillade. These circumstances necessarily resulted in the deploying of divisions under cover of the forest, at such a distance from the works that difficulty was encountered in making connections, as the lines converged from a very extended arc; and to reconnoitre with effect, and to place batteries where they could aid the assaulting parties, required that the lines should be advanced to exposed eminences, and that these positions should be held all under a sharp fire — which was a work of difficulty and delay." [1]

Wise had assumed command in person of the lines from Batteries 14 to 23 inclusive, while his right toward the Jerusalem plank road was intrusted to General Colston. At twelve M. Kautz approached the Confederate centre, apparently with the object of threatening the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, and dismounting, moved up as infantry; while about the same time Hinks threw forward a brigade, deployed as skirmishers under Colonel Duncan in front of Batteries 9 and 10. Wise had, in consequence, closed his line from the right to support the Thirty-fourth

[1] Report by Colonel T. L. Livemore of Hinks's division, belonging to unpublished manuscripts of Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.

Virginia, under Colonel Goode, and stationed Hood's Battalion on the left to reënforce Colonel Page, commanding the Twenty-sixth Regiment. To the urgent call of Wise for reenforcements from the north side of the Appomattox, the reply came that they would be sent and to hold on at all hazards. The massing of the enemy along the crest in Jordan's field necessitated the concentration of his force in that direction by Wise, where they were hotly engaged. From Battery No. 5 Captain Nat Sturdivant, the embodiment of energy and bravery, raked the field with his artillery, doing most effective work, and when about one P.M. Duncan's Brigade advanced in front of the Thirty-fourth Regiment and took the Confederate rifle-pits, the regiment charged and drove them out. "Again," wrote Wise, "the enemy retook the pits and were again driven out; and when they advanced the third time upon the pits the whole regiment leaped the parapets and gloriously repulsed them." The deadly fire of Wise's artillery had delayed Smith in completing his alignment between the three divisions of Martindale, Brooks, and Hinks, who were posted from left to right in the order named, and it was two o'clock before the line of battle was formed. Kautz, who continued to press on the Confederate lines in the direction of the railroad, was successfully repulsed, and finally withdrew about 5.30 P.M.

Throughout that long, hot June day the men of Wise's Brigade fought with what General Beauregard described as "unsurpassed stubbornness," resisting the advance of the enemy, who outnumbered them fully seven to one. A part of the afternoon was spent by General Smith in carefully reconnoitring the ground, which he did in person with great care and intelligence. The Confederate line in the quarter of Batteries 5, 6, and 7 was very badly located, and General Beauregard, upon first inspecting it, is said to have

condemned its extension. Here, as upon other occasions, the troops were to pay the penalty of occupying a salient. The ground in front of these redans was seamed by a series of gullies; and a deep ravine which ran between Batteries 6 and 7 had been discovered by Smith while making his reconnoissance. The general assault which he had planned to take place about five P.M. was delayed by the artillery horses having been sent, by some mistake, to the rear to be watered, and it was after seven when the attack was made. The plan of assault, as described by Colonel Livemore, was the German method of throwing forward heavy lines of skirmishers, in lieu of lines of battle, which was, according to that officer, first employed on an extended scale by General Smith. Burnham's skirmishers plunged into the ravine above described, between Batteries 6 and 7, while the three divisions of Hinks, Brooks, and Martindale advanced in line of battle, and the protection afforded by the ravine enabled the skirmishers to gain the rear of the Confederate line and flank Battery 5, against which Brooks's division was hurled, while almost simultaneously Hinks's command "rushed forward, as the movement on their right was seen to begin, and under a heavy fire carried Battery 7 with loud cheers."

Though assailed in front and on the flank, which last the enemy were able to do successfully, through the capture of these batteries and by turning the guns against the other redans, Wise continued the unequal struggle with singular obstinacy; but the enemy succeeded in taking the works from Batteries 3 to 11 inclusive. The capture of the last of these, however, Battery 11 at the Dunn house, was not effected until about nine o'clock that night. The day had been one full of anxiety for Wise, as he rode from point to point, along the lines, giving his orders and speaking words of encouragement to his men.

Upon the conduct of his command had depended the fate of Petersburg and Richmond, and the confidence reposed in them had been more than justified. They had not only made a glorious struggle against overwhelming odds, but though the outer line had been partly lost, the day had been saved; for shortly after the works were captured, the Fifty-ninth Regiment of Wise's Brigade, which had been on the north side of the Appomattox, came to his assistance, and the division of Hoke, which had been sent to reënforce Lee's veterans at Cold Harbor and had rendered heroic service in the defence of Richmond, arrived, and Hagood's Brigade, which was in the advance, was hurried forward on the City Point road to take position on the left. After penetrating the works between Batteries 6 and 7 the enemy had succeeded in turning the right of the Twenty-sixth and the left of the Forty-sixth Virginia regiments, and the former suffered considerable loss, among them Lieutenant-Colonel Council, who was captured, while Colonel Randolph Harrison of the Forty-sixth was seriously wounded.

The Confederates fell back a short distance, in the rear of the abandoned works, and, during the night of the 15th, threw up a small epaulement along a new line, extending from Battery No. 2 "through Friends' field to the woods, and thence through them across the road leading to Dunn's house, and thence on the road to Webb's[1] house." But this made the left of the Confederate line, occupied by Hagood, in echelon, thrown forward on the left and exposed to enfilading fire, and at daybreak on the 16th Hagood withdrew the regiment stationed in Batteries 1 and 2 to the west side of the creek. This intermediate

[1] The Webb house is the same as the Shands house, and is situated about three-quarters of a mile beyond the Dunn house in the direction of the Baxter road.

or temporary line of the Confederates ran south from the Appomattox along the ground west of Harrison's Creek, being the chord of the arc of the abandoned works; and was the line defended during the 16th and 17th of June, after which time the permanent line was occupied. Beauregard, finding it impossible to longer occupy the Bermuda Hundred line and to hold Petersburg at the same time, ordered the evacuation of the former, during the night of the 15th, and on the morning of the 16th the force defending Petersburg consisted of the divisions of Hoke and Johnson, about ten thousand effective men, of all arms; the former being stationed on the left toward the Appomattox, with Johnson on the right, the whole covering a distance of some five miles. Wise, with his brigade, was posted to the right of Clingman, his (Wise's) right resting on the apex of a high hill, between which and Webb's house was a deep ravine and a gap in the line a quarter of a mile in length. Although no longer in command in the field, Wise remained (during the 16th) with his brigade, which formed a part of the heroic force who were now defending Petersburg not only against Smith's Corps, but in addition that of Hancock, who had arrived about dusk on the previous day, while Burnside came up about noon on the 16th, and Warren at nightfall on the same day. Prior to Warren's arrival, Hancock had under his command three Federal corps, numbering upward of sixty thousand men, to assail Beauregard's dauntless veterans. Much censure has been heaped upon General Smith for his failure to take Petersburg on the night of the 15th, before the arrival of the divisions of Hoke and Johnson, and had he exhibited the daring energy of Wellington at Badajos, he could have undoubtedly accomplished that task, but Smith had been misinformed as to the number of men who were defending

the lines in front of him, and the perils incident to an advance after nightfall caused him to determine to halt where he was, and await the arrival of Hancock's Corps before proceeding further.

Throughout the 16th Wise's fagged men were again called upon to defend the Cockade City against overwhelming odds, and gallantly repulsed the assaults made in their front that afternoon. Wise urged General Johnson to fill the gap at the ravine on his right, which, however, was neglected with sad results. Before dawn on the 17th Potter's Division was formed in this ravine, and swept over the works to the right of Wise, occupied by Johnson's Brigade, capturing a number of prisoners and exposing Wise's flank. His men, however, stood firmly and drove the enemy back, without flinching. In this attack, the gallant Colonel Powhatan R. Page of the Twenty-sixth Regiment was killed, and Captain George D. Wise, the brigade inspector, received a wound which proved fatal. Wise remained on the field with his brigade until noon on the 17th, when in obedience to orders he repaired to his headquarters in the city, as commander of the district. The command of his brigade, after the death of Page, devolved upon Colonel J. Thomas Goode, of the Thirty-fourth Regiment. This officer, after graduating at the Virginia Military Institute, had served in the United States army prior to the war, but upon the secession of Virginia tendered his services to his native State. During the 17th the brigade again rendered effective service, in repulsing the attack of Wilcox, maintaining their place with great gallantry; but late in the afternoon Ledlie's Division carried a portion of the intrenchments on their right, and turned the right of Wise's Brigade, consisting of the Forty-sixth Virginia Regiment, and compelled it to fall back about one hundred yards to the edge of a wood in

their rear, where, however, it soon rallied and quickly charged the works, carrying them as far as the left centre of the regiment, and were still advancing, when Major J. C. Hill, who had leaped upon a traverse, fell wounded, and the hot fire of the enemy caused the regiment to fall back a second time. The flagstaff had been shot in two pieces, and the colors perforated by eighteen bullet-holes, while the flag-bearer Rogers was dangerously wounded. The men were rallied a second time by Captain John H. White, and Gracie's Alabama Brigade coming to the rescue the enemy were driven back with great loss. The Thirty-fourth Virginia Regiment of Wise's Brigade had maintained their place in the line and served as a pivot, on which the Forty-sixth was rallied. Their loss, however, had been severe, and of the twelve field-officers of the brigade nine had been either killed, wounded, or captured during the attacks on Petersburg.

On the night of the 17th Beauregard fell back to a line marked off in the rear of Taylor's Creek, which was the one occupied from that date to the commencement of the retreat to Appomattox Court-House.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the heroic resistance of Beauregard's men during these first days at Petersburg, while the Army of Northern Virginia was on the north side of the James; and on the 9th and 15th of June the defence of the city had devolved upon Wise, to whom the credit of having twice saved the gateway to Richmond is justly due. Nor should the stubborn valor, as well as the numbers of the attacking forces, be overlooked. It has of late been the custom of certain Northern writers to disparage the temper of Grant's army at this time, and to describe it as lacking in spirit and without the fierce impetuosity that characterized it at the commencement of the Wilderness Campaign. It is probably true that the

long series of direct assaults from the Rapidan to Cold Harbor had taught the men the danger to be apprehended from this character of attack and that it had lessened in some degree their recklessness, if not their confidence in their commanding officers; but the number of fierce assaults on the Petersburg lines during the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of June, 1864, and the list of the killed and wounded among the Union troops, justifies the conclusion of Mr. Ropes, that the failure to take Petersburg was due to the officers and not to the men. Of the Federal soldier at this time it may be said that he "dared do all that might become a man," and had he been under the command of a general with a clear idea of the nature of the duty to be performed, and the numerous assaults of these early days been conducted with concert of action on the part of the various division commanders, Petersburg would have fallen, and the war ended shortly thereafter. But no criticism of these early movements can detract from the valor of the troops engaged. Of the conduct of his men at this time General Beauregard has written: "No event of our war was more remarkable than the almost incredible resistance of the handful of men who served under me at Petersburg, on the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of June, before the arrival of General Lee. They knew they were fighting more than seven times their number. In fact, the disproportion of the first day had been much greater; and opposed to them were some of the finest and best disciplined Federal corps. They (my troops) had had no regular sleep, and had hardly had a scant meal once in twenty-four hours. And yet the courage, the endurance and spirit of these men never quailed. They fought unremittingly until the end — until their opponents ceased to fight. Not one of them had left his post, except, perhaps, to remove the dead body of a fallen comrade, or to

have bandaged his own wound. I am proud to think that I was the leader of such troops. My own regret is that the name of each of them is not inscribed on the memorial tablets of history."[1]

[1] *North American Review*, Vol. CXLV. page 515, "The Battle of Petersburg," by General Beauregard.

CHAPTER XX

THE BATTLE OF THE CRATER. GRANT'S ATTACKS ON LEE'S RIGHT IN MARCH, 1865. THE RETREAT TO APPOMATTOX. SAILOR'S CREEK. SURRENDER OF LEE'S ARMY. WISE PAROLED

THE life of the trenches had now begun for the troops before Petersburg, and the pick and shovel were substituted for the bayonet, until the affair of the Crater on July 30, 1864. Meanwhile Wise's Brigade had remained under the command of Colonel Goode, the former having established his headquarters, as the commander of the district, at the Dunlop House in Petersburg. At the time of the mine explosion, early in the morning of the 30th, the brigade occupied the eminence south of the Baxter road, about one hundred yards from the scene of the explosion, and as the enemy's masses moved on the open ground up to the breach, the former poured in a deadly fire upon them. Colonel Goode, according to the report of General Bushrod Johnson, caused the Fifty-ninth Regiment to be formed in a ditch running at right angles to the main work, "and when the enemy attempted some five times to form in rear of the breach for the purpose of charging to the right, and after they had planted four colors on the line, by which the movement designated was to be made, the Regiment under Captain Wood, and the Twenty-sixth Virginia Regiment under Captain Steele, with the Twenty-second and the Twenty-third

South Carolina regiments, and two guns of battery near the junctions of the Baxter and Jerusalem plank roads, opened with a fire that drove them precipitately back to the Crater. In this way the conflict was maintained from five till nearly ten A.M. with coolness and steadiness by determined men and officers on both flanks of the breach, and with a success worthy of much praise and with great damage to the enemy." At about ten A.M. the brigade of Mahone, which had been brought some two and a half miles from the right, arrived, and made the gallant charge by which the Confederate line was reëstablished.

In the month of November, 1864, Wise rejoined his brigade, and during the winter of 1864–65 shared with his men the discomforts and hardships of the trenches.

"Early in March, 1865,[1] we were ordered to Lee's extreme right at Hatcher's Run. Then commenced the preliminaries of the retreat, strong guards near Burgess's Mill, where the plank road crossed our line. On the 28th of March the firing became hot and heavy; we felt that something had given way on our left. Sheridan's mounted infantry (miscalled cavalry) was bearing on Five Forks, and General Pickett was advanced to that point at the head of Gravelly Run fork, on the White Oak road; and General Meade's corps of twenty-five thousand men was advancing in our front across Arthur's Creek. Ransom's and Hunton's brigades were taken from our division to reënforce Pickett at Five Forks, and Evan's old brigade of South Carolina, then commanded by General W. H. Wallace, and our brigade, were left alone at Hatcher's Run. On the 29th of March our brigade was ordered into line of battle at the point near Burgess's Mill where what is called the Military road forks with the plank

[1] Address delivered by Wise in Gloucester County, Virginia, in 1870, on the Career of Wise's Brigade.

road to Dinwiddie Court-House, and General Wise was ordered to advance quickly 'on the Military road, to Gravelly Run, guiding by the centre, and to fight everything in our way.' We threw the Thirty-fourth and Forty-sixth on the right of the road, and the Twenty-sixth and Fifty-ninth on the left. Within six hundred yards from the place where the brigade was ordered forward, we struck the enemy obliquely, diverging from left to right. They were in four lines, which we charged and broke, and drove the first upon the second and the second upon the third, until the four lines were massed in our front, in a dense growth of pine thicket on the right and a heavy growth of oak, with an undergrowth of Black Jack, on the left of the road, at the distance of ten to twenty paces on the left and thirty on the right. But the line of the enemy being so much longer than our own, the angle at which we struck them gave them an enfilade fire on our left; nevertheless, under the order to lie flat and shoot from a rest on the elbows, we maintained the dreadful conflict for one hour and a half, when the Fifty-ninth and Twenty-sixth were obliged to break; but they soon rallied on General Wallace in reserve at the Forks, came up again with his brigade to the aid of the Forty-sixth and Thirty-fourth, until Wallace and the Twenty-sixth, Fifty-ninth, and Forty-sixth were again broken and gave way, leaving the Thirty-Fourth alone under fire, where it stood and fought to within thirty paces of the enemy's artillery, until thrice ordered to retreat. We fell back again to the parapet at Hatcher's Run, rested the 30th there, and on the 31st again were ordered to fall in on the left of McGowan's Brigade and charge the enemy. The Fifty-ninth were left to guard the trenches, and the Twenty-sixth, Thirty-fourth, and Forty-sixth went into the charge. They, with McGowan's Brigade, did good execu-

tion in staggering the overpowering columns of Meade, and in delaying their advance to Five Forks. In these two fights a number of the best and bravest fell among the killed and wounded, among whom were Lieutenant-Colonel Harrison, of the Thirty-fourth; Captain Barksdale, of the Fifty-ninth; and Lieutenant Barksdale Warwick, of my staff, who died with a smile of the *gaudia certaminis* on his face, struck whilst waving his sword and shouting 'Charge! Charge!'

"On the night of the 1st of April, we fell back across Hatcher's Run to Sutherland's on the South-side Railroad and pressed forward after Hunton, to reënforce Pickett at Five Forks. On Sabbath morning, the 2d of April, we reached Church Crossings, and were kneeling to God, under the prayers of Chaplain W. E. Wiatt of the Twenty-sixth, when an order announced the defeat of Pickett at Five Forks and that we must fall back to the Appomattox. On Sunday at noon we reached the Namozine Creek, and lodged our right on its banks. The enemy came up immediately, whilst we were throwing up breastworks, and Sheridan's cavalry sounded the bugle-notes of charge until nightfall, from a heavy wood in our front. This was but a feint to deceive Fitz Lee's dismounted cavalry on our left. At dark the enemy pressed decidedly upon him, when he called for reënforcements from the infantry. We ordered the Fifty-ninth down the breastworks immediately, leaped them before reaching the cavalry, formed at right angles to the breastworks on the enemy's left, and scattered them at the first volley. That night we crossed the Namozine, and the next day, the 3d of April, crossed the Winticomack Creek, and as we reached the defile of Deep Creek near Mannsboro, Sheridan's cavalry, in position at the defile, opened a galling fire upon our advanced guard. The Fifty-ninth had been ordered to assist in bringing up

the rear, and thus we consisted then of the Twenty-sixth under the younger Perrin, the elder having been badly shattered to pieces at the charge of Howlett's the year before; the Forty-sixth under Captain Abbott, Colonels Harrison and Wise being both wounded and exempted, and the Thirty-fourth under Colonel J. Thomas Goode. Immediately upon the fire we turned the head of our column obliquely to the right through an open field to a curtilage of houses, where the Twenty-sixth and Forty-sixth were posted, and the Thirty-fourth was deployed to the open ground on our right, to decoy a charge upon it passing the front of the other two regiments behind the houses. The decoy succeeded. The enemy had dismounted, tied their horses on the other side of the creek some six hundred yards off, and charged on foot obliquely by the houses, upon the Thirty-fourth, until they came close in front of the Twenty-sixth and Forty-sixth, which burst upon their right flank so sudden and so sharp that they broke and fled, and were so pressed by the three regiments that they could not reach their horses and mount in time to prevent a severe loss of men and horses. Here we were halted for the entire line to pass, with orders to bring up the rear. Thence we passed on by Amelia Court-House, Jetersville, and Deatonsville, zigzagging from right to left and from left to right, and skirmishing the whole way until we came to the forks of Sailor's Creek, near Jamestown, and the High Bridge, on the 6th of April. What was left of our division, Wise's Brigade of Virginia, and Wallace's of South Carolina, were posted on the left of Pickett's Division, then reduced to an inconsiderable number by the stampede at Five Forks. Corse's Brigade and Ransom's had stood their ground there well, and suffered very much. Whilst in position at the forks of the road when the baggage train passed to the right and the artillery

to the left, we were ordered to detail two regiments to guard the left of Wallace's Brigade; the Twenty-sixth and Fifty-ninth were detailed, and when the order came, as it did, to join Pickett on his left and attack the enemy, we had but two regiments, the Forty-sixth and Thirty-fourth, to go into the fight with. We came in half-rifle range of the enemy near the east fork of Sailor's Creek on our left; Wallace's Brigade came up between our two regiments and the east fork, when we found that the enemy were coming up on our left, and we were annoyed by an enfilading fire. In our front was a curtilage of houses, dwelling, kitchen, barns, stables, and tobacco-houses, reaching a half-mile, and with a large graveyard enclosed by a rough stone wall, all filled by the enemy, who were pouring in a fire so galling that we were compelled to lie down in the copse of pine where we were posted. The enemy had broken the forces under General Ewell, and were then pouring down upon our left. Under these circumstances, we detailed two companies from the Thirty-fourth, under Captain William Jordan, of Bedford County, to drive off the sharpshooters who were enfilading our left, which duty he did with signal efficiency, and Colonels Abner Perrin and Tabb coming up at the time to the left of Wallace, they were ordered to support Jordan with the Twenty-sixth and Fifty-ninth regiments and to push the enemy until they came opposite their right flank in our front. The moment they did so we charged in front upon the stone wall and houses, and Perrin and Tabb and Jordan charged upon the enemy's right flank, and we broke them thoroughly, and drove them some one and a half to two miles, unassisted by either the forces of Wallace or Pickett, when Colonel (R. P.) Duncan, of General Anderson's staff, ordered us to fall back to Pickett's rear to form at right angles to his line and to retreat to the road of our march.

"We had already formed and begun to move in his rear before Pickett's whole command stampeded, leaving our artillery in the enemy's hands, and they were exploding our caissons in a lane in our front. We pressed forward across a branch of the west fork of Sailor's Creek, and were surrounded by the enemy entirely on our rear and left and halfway down our front. Wallace's Brigade broke and fled to a woods on our right. We pressed up a hill in our front, halted behind a worm-fence on the crest, fired three volleys to the rear, and retreating again, moved quickly down the hill, putting it between us and the enemy in our rear, and poured three volleys obliquely to the left and front, broke the enemy and got out. Here the Twenty-sixth showed its exemplary drill. Perrin gallantly rallied his regiment, and upon its nucleus we formed and seized the whole brigade in sight of the broken enemy. After rallying and forming, we poured three volleys into the woods where Wallace's Brigade were ensconced, and it raised a white flag and came out to us and formed and marched with us safely off the field, and gained our road past the enemy. Anderson, Pickett, and (B. R.) Johnson had left the field before we cut through and gone on to the High Bridge and Farmville. At one o'clock at night we reached the High Bridge and found it shut down. After getting over it we marched a mile or more on toward Farmville, and bivouacked until the morning of the 7th. We were overcome by exhaustion, and without food or refreshment of any kind. There was no water but the pools, as red as brick-dust, in the soil of that region. Colonel J. Thomas Goode, Captain Jordan, and myself washed or cooled our faces and hands in the same pool the next morning, and neither of us had a handkerchief or towel to wipe with, and consequently the paint of the red water remained on our faces and at the edges of

our hair; and during the night a soldier of the Thirty-fourth found me sleeping without a blanket or coat on the chilling earth — the enemy had captured my orderly and body-servant, with my cloak and two of my horses — a wounded man at Sailor's Creek had escaped on my riding-horse proper, and the noble private, whom I don't know, wrapped me, more dead than alive, in his coarse gray blanket, pinning it on with a wire pin, both of which I have now, and the gold of Ophir could not buy them. With a face painted like an Indian, with the gray blanket around me, and with the Confederate Tyrolese hat on — not off, as ridiculously stated — and muddy all over, I put myself on foot at the head of the two brigades and marched on the railroad to near Farmville. There an officer of General Lee met me and ordered us to move to him, then in sight on his gray. Turning the head of the column to the right, down the railroad embankment, we marched across the open field to where he was sitting in his saddle, with General B. R. Johnson on his horse a little in the rear. The latter had fled from Sailor's Creek and reported me killed and the whole division cut to pieces and dispersed. As I moved up with the two brigades I saw that General Lee was suppressing a laugh. I knew he had a sub-vein of humor, which he was hardly concealing when he saw my appearance — that of a Comanche savage. He was right; I was savage and looked like an Indian, and waited not to be accosted, when I exclaimed with an oath: 'General Lee, these men shall not move another inch unless they have something more to eat than parched corn taken from starving mules.' He smiled with great blandness, and said: —

"'They deserve something to eat, sir. Let them, without taking down the fence, move to the trees on yonder hill, and they shall be filled for once at least. And you,

General Wise, will pause here a moment with me.' When the brigades passed on, he turned to me and said, 'You, sir, will take command of all these forces.' There were no organized forces, but the two brigades I came up with, in sight; there were thousands of disorganized troops in all directions without order or command. I protested that I could not take such a command. I had no horses. He ordered me to get a horse, and make all the stragglers and disorganized men fall into my ranks.

". . . And I first went to breakfast, and then to the work which wound up at Appomattox on the 9th, when and where I signed the paroles of more than 5000 men besides those of my own brigade. . . . Alas! how few were there at last of those who were comrades with us at first. There were less than 1000 left of the 2850 returned from Charleston in May, 1864. Less than half were paroled of 2400 who charged at Howlett's. Their last, after fighting in nineteen battles, was their most glorious charge; and they fired the last guns of the infantry at Appomattox."

Of Wise's part in the retreat to Appomattox, Major-General Fitzhugh Lee wrote in his final report: "The notice of the commanding general is also directed to Brigadier-Generals Henry A. Wise and Eppa Hunton, commanding infantry brigades, and who were more or less under my command until Amelia Court-House was reached. The disheartening surrounding influences had no effect upon them; they kept their duty plainly in view, and they fully performed it. The past services of General Henry A. Wise, his antecedents in civil life, and his age, caused his bearing upon this most trying retreat to shine conspicuously forth. His unconquerable spirit was filled with as much earnestness and zeal in April, 1865, as when he first took up arms four years ago, and the freedom with which he exposed a long life laden with honors

proved he was willing to sacrifice it, if it would conduce toward attaining the liberty of his country."

On the day following the battle of Sailor's Creek General Robert E. Lee had promoted Wise to the rank of major-general; and when a day or two later it was found that the Army of Northern Virginia would have to be surrendered, the former, in conversation with Wise, told him that as he was particularly obnoxious to the Federal authorities, he was at liberty to look out for himself, if he so desired. This the latter declined to do, replying that he would share the fate of his men; and he, furthermore, agreed with General Lee that it was their duty to remain in Virginia, and aid in the restoration of civil government among her people.

CHAPTER XXI

SCENES AT THE SURRENDER. GENERALS MEADE AND CUSTER. WISE VISITS HIS SON AND FRIENDS IN SOUTH-SIDE VIRGINIA. HIS HORSE, PAIR OF MULES, AND AN AMBULANCE SEIZED. FINDS HIS HOME IN POSSESSION OF THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU. OIL PAINTINGS AND FURNITURE STOLEN. ANECDOTE OF GENERAL BUTLER. CORRESPONDENCE WITH GENERAL LEE IN REGARD TO PROCLAMATION OF AMNESTY. INDICTED FOR TREASON. LOCATES IN RICHMOND, AND RESUMES PRACTICE OF LAW. CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS DAUGHTER, AND THE HON. FERNANDO WOOD. VIEWS OF THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN VIRGINIA. ADVICE TO THE YOUNG MEN OF THE STATE

GENERAL MEADE, commanding the Army of the Potomac, and General Wise were brothers-in-law, the former having married Margaretta Sergeant, eldest daughter of the Hon. John Sergeant, of Philadelphia, and sister of the second Mrs. Wise. The relations existing between the two families had been of the closest sort, particularly those between Generals Meade and Wise.

The former had at one time resigned from the army, and procured through the influence of the latter a more lucrative position in the United States Coast Survey service. Afterward, through Wise's good offices, Meade was transferred to the Engineer Corps of the army, and assigned to duty at Detroit, where he lived when the war came on.

For the first time in eight years the two met at Appo-

mattox, and their meeting was most touching and affectionate. By his tenderness and solicitude for Wise, Meade disarmed every feeling of estrangement, and after calling in person and greeting General Wise with all the warmth of old friendship, and observing that he was dismounted, he sent his young son, Colonel George Meade, with an ambulance and pair of mules, laden with every necessary and luxury, with instructions to place the outfit at the disposal of General Wise to convey him to his home, and to be turned over to the nearest government officer when General Wise had no further use for them. When General Meade returned to Richmond, his first care was to visit the female members of General Wise's family, and tender them all that love and courtesy could suggest. Writing to Wise in June, 1867, introducing Mr. Ropes, the historian, General Meade said: —

"I reciprocate all your kind feeling. The war never changed my good feeling for you, and never in the smallest degree diminished the gratitude I have always felt to you for the many acts of kindness received at your hands when you had the power to do me service, and when I attacked Petersburg on the 16th and 17th of June, 1864, when we ought to have whipped you, and I learned from prisoners that you were in command, painful and embarrassing as was the knowledge, yet it did not for an instant stay my determination to drive you across the Appomattox if I could, and I am only sorry for my sake, as well as yours, that I did not succeed, for it might have brought an earlier termination of the horrid war and the terrible slaughter then prevailing.

"So, also, at Gettysburg I think it must be evident to intelligent men on both sides that it was a great misfortune that I could not have accomplished a more decisive result, because with such a result peace might have

been brought about two years earlier than it was. By the by, has your conscience never disturbed you for your agency at Gettysburg? for you know if it had not been for your kindness in having me reappointed to the army, I should not have been in command on that field so fatal to your cause.

"Do believe me when I say *old* times are *present* times with me so far as you and yours are concerned, however much we may differ as to what has occurred or is occurring."

The cordial feelings manifested in this letter continued between the two until the death of General Meade, which occurred shortly before that of General Wise.

General Wise had a quick sense of humor, and told a story well. An episode which occurred at the surrender at Appomattox was frequently repeated by him with keen relish. His brigade was actually engaged for some time after the order for the cessation of hostilities was promulgated. In fact, he lost several valuable officers in the interim between the issuance of General Lee's order to cease firing and the time it reached the lines. He delighted to tell that when the orders came his men "did not know they were whipped, and had the Yankees on the run." On receiving the orders, firing ceased, the men stacked arms, and he, learning what was going forward, walked a short distance down the road alone. He was dressed in an old overcoat with a large cape, and wore a slouch hat. As was his custom when under excitement, he was chewing tobacco vigorously. Just as he was returning to his command, a dashing young Union cavalry officer, magnificently mounted, came down the road at a hard gallop, his yellow hair floating in the breeze, and his whole manner betraying excitement, as he called out to General Wise, "Surrender! surrender!" Wise, without

as much as "shifting his quid," continued his walk until the officer came abreast of him, and then putting his arms akimbo, and rocking his body in a fashion peculiar to himself, said, with inimitable drollery, "Ain't you a *little late?* I surrendered about an hour ago." The officer was no other than the gallant Custer, who had been leading the flanking movement, and did come in a little late at the death, as they say in fox hunting.

The things which most surprised General Wise at the surrender at Appomattox were the desire of the Union soldiers to see him above all others; the lack of any evidence of personal malignity shown towards him; and the large number of his foes who expressed the warmest interest and personal regard for him. Especially was this so among the New York troops, many of whom were Irishmen, who seemed to have retained for him the liveliest affection for his fight against Know-Nothingism in 1855. The courtesy of two young officers on General Humphreys's staff made a deep impression upon him, and to the day of his death he kept their card stuck in the corner of the shaving glass of his portable dressing-case, where it still remains. They sought him out, made themselves known, told him of their lifelong admiration, and begged the privilege of ministering to his wants in any way in their power. He thanked them, and protested that the only thing he needed was a good pocket-knife. Soon after their departure an orderly appeared with the finest knife to be procured, and a hamper of the choicest delicacies obtainable. The names of these young officers were Lieutenant Stickney and Lieutenant Feary. Thirty years afterward, his son, residing in New York, met Lieutenant Feary, who recalled the incidents of Appomattox with great vividness, was much gratified to hear that General Wise had preserved the card, and, speaking of the impression which Wise

made upon him, said that his memory always reverted to him as one of the most remarkable men he ever met.

In the task of paroling the army, General Wise was also brought into constant relations with the late General John Gibbons, who conceived for him the highest regard.

Wise remained at Appomattox until paroled, and on the 12th of April proceeded to Halifax Court-House, the home of his son, the Rev. Henry A. Wise, who was the rector of the Episcopal Church at that place. After a visit of some weeks at the home of his son he made his way on horseback to Mecklenburg County, where he visited two friends of former days, — Captain Robert Y. Overby, who resided near the Buffalo Lithia Springs, and the Hon. Mark Alexander, whose home was also near by. The country throughout south-side Virginia presented a sad aspect at this time; for, in addition to the devastations of war, straggling parties of Sheridan's cavalry continued to pillage the homes of the farmers, and had carried off numbers of horses and live-stock.

A few months after the capture of Roanoke Island, in February, 1862, the Confederate troops had been compelled, in consequence, to evacuate Norfolk, as they were menaced by the force of the enemy to the southward, as well as by that at Fortress Monroe. About a year later the United States authorities took possession of Wise's farm called Rolleston, on the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River, which they continued to occupy after the cessation of hostilities, having established a colored school there, and quartered large numbers of negroes on the place under the auspices of the Freedman's Bureau. Thus, after laying down his arms at Appomattox, he found himself, at the age of fifty-nine years, a prisoner of war on parole, impoverished and without a home; and although he employed the Hon. John S. Millson, a prominent attorney

of Norfolk, to represent him, there appeared to be little prospect at that time of recovering his property. From Mecklenburg County he proceeded to the home of a friend in Isle of Wight, whence he wrote, on May 30, to his son-in-law, Dr. Garnett: —

". . . My land has been advertised, but I hope to have it yet and have retained Millson as my attorney, and will wait until William Parker comes back from the Eastern Shore, before I go to Norfolk. I am enjoying myself here catching fish and crabs. I will try to send you some. We caught a rockfish yesterday weighing seven and one-half pounds and one to-day, twelve pounds. John [1] went to Smithfield to-day and took the oath under my advice, with instructions to keep it sacredly. I, of course, have not and will not take it, until I know my full status before and after taking it, and I am not sure that I will be permitted to take it. I shall not ask to do so. The negroes here and on the peninsula are allowed every license at present, but will soon be put to work. Some gentlemen just arrived here from Elizabeth City informed me that President Davis is undoubtedly *in irons*, and they say it is reported that General Robert E. Lee is arrested. This is but to terrify the people of the South, and I have no fear, — nothing but total impoverishment and the loss of National Republican liberty. For myself I fear nothing, be the consequences what they may. I shall carefully and conscientiously abide my parole, and not attempt to escape any fate that may befall me, and shall walk abroad as best I can, with the purpose not to leave my county, or the State of Virginia. Tell Mary I received her letter on getting here, dated since yours. Give her my blessing for herself and children, and say she must write regularly to me through

[1] His son John Sergeant Wise.

Mr. A. G. Newton, Atlantic Hotel, Norfolk; or to White and Sales, Norfolk. God bless you all."

Wise arrived in Norfolk on the 28th of June, and on the day following addressed an application to General Howard, setting forth that his home had been seized by the government authorities, and requesting that it be restored to him in accordance with the terms of his parole, he having surrendered on the condition that he be allowed "to return to his *home* and to remain there unmolested in all respects, as long as he obeyed the laws." This application was later on returned, with the endorsement of Generals Mann and Terry (the former commanding the sub-district of Norfolk and the latter the department of Virginia) to the effect that he would "be treated as a Rebel prisoner of war, with no rights that he [Terry] is bound to respect, save those appertaining to a person in that condition"; and further that he "had not been pardoned by the President"; and that he had abandoned his home "in order that he might, to better advantage, engage in rebellion and civil war." It seems strange that even at this day there are to be found those who approve of such acts of confiscation, but in the "Life of William Lloyd Garrison,"[1] published by his children, we are told that: "The dramatic incidents of the war had been many and striking, and each month brought its fresh example of retributive justice, of strange contrast and coincidence. There was the occupation of General Lee's estate at Arlington as a freedman's village (with its Garrison and Lovejoy streets) and national cemetery; of John Tyler's and Henry A. Wise's residences, by schools for colored children — the daughter of John Brown teaching in the latter, with her father's portrait hanging on the wall," etc.

[1] "Life of Garrison," The Century Co., Vol. IV. page 133.

The so-called "retributive justice" continued in Wise's case for several years after the war, when, in 1868, by an order obtained from General Canby, his home was restored to him. The estate in the meanwhile had been stripped of nearly all its timber, while the fences and many of the outbuildings had been destroyed by the negroes. Prior to its occupancy by the protégés of the Freedman's Bureau, the furniture, bric-à-brac, pictures, and household articles of every sort had been seized by the military authorities, and a large quantity of them carried to Fortress Monroe, for the use of the garrison quartered there. In the summer of 1866, Wise obtained an order from General Schofield for the recovery of these articles and sent his nephew Lewis Warrington Wise, along with an old housekeeper who had resided many years in the family, to Old Point, in order to identify them. Upon his arrival at Fortress Monroe, on August 30, Mr. L. W. Wise presented this order to General Miles, the officer in charge of the post, who stated that he was on the eve of leaving for a short while and would be succeeded in command by General Henry S. Burton, and suggested that he (Mr. Wise) wait until his successor was installed, which the former concluded to do. Every courtesy was extended by this last-named officer, and full opportunity afforded him to search the officers' quarters, where numerous pieces of furniture, books, china, and household articles were found. A year later such of the articles as remained were delivered to one of his sons by General William Hayes, then in command of Fortress Monroe.

Prior to the war Wise had collected a number of valuable oil paintings, most of which were the gifts of friends, and pieces of bric-à-brac, which were left at his farm when it was suddenly abandoned in the spring of 1862 at the announcement of the enemy's approach. Among the paint-

ings was the original of Herring's "Village Blacksmith," which, fortunately enough, was cut out of the frame by one of his sons, and wrapped on a roller. Wise had come into possession of the picture as the successful subscriber to the American Art Union, and after the war, when much in need of money, sold it for fifteen hundred dollars. It was recently sold in England for many times that sum. He was not so fortunate, however, in saving others, and a valuable set of Dutch drinking scenes by Teniers, and an exquisite Bacchante by Pauline Laurent, went to adorn the walls of some unknown lovers of fine art. Some years ago, the last-named picture was discovered in Washington at the home of General ——, who was induced to return it by a suggestive note from General Schofield, then the Secretary of War. Various pieces of bric-à-brac, too, have turned up from time to time in different quarters. One day in Washington, about fifteen years ago, General B. F. Butler, who was associated with John S. Wise in a lawsuit, turned to the latter, with whom he was quite friendly, and remarked, "Wise, it's very curious, but I have a cup at my home made from the timber of the old *Constitution*, and which has your father's name engraved upon it; it was presented to him by Captain Percival. I cannot, for the life of me, imagine how I came by it." "It is not curious at all. I'll explain that to you very easily," replied the other. "You stole it when you were down at Norfolk during the war. Send it back, and purge your conscience to that extent, at least, General." The pair laughed heartily, and General Butler shortly afterward returned the cup.

During the summer of 1865 Wise's name, along with those of General Lee, Mr. Davis, and a number of other prominent Confederates, was presented to the grand jury of the United States District Court at Norfolk, and in-

dictments for treason were found against them. Although extremely anxious that he might be brought to trial, no further steps were ever taken by the authorities and a *nolle prosequi* was subsequently entered.

In a letter to General Lee, dated Richmond, August 5, 1865, Wise wrote: ". . . I have not applied for pardon. First, because I cannot consent to countenance 'Test Oaths.' Second, because those tendered to me I cannot conscientiously take under my present impressions of their force and effect. Third, because I was earnest and honest in my convictions that I was right and I am not yet convinced to the contrary and cannot admit therefore, under oath, either impliedly or expressly, that I was wrong, by the very fact of petitioning for pardon. Pardon implies, *ex vi termini*, guilt, crime — in this case the high crime of treason. I don't admit it and can't imply it by any act of mine. I was not a traitor to my country and cannot become a traitor to myself. By this I don't mean to censure comrades who have petitioned for pardon; in such extreme cases as ours each must judge for himself alone. On the one hand, whilst my holding out may seem to reflect on the course of comrades who have given in to the terms of amnesty; on the other, their giving in will certainly increase the chances and degrees of pains and penalties against any of us who hold out. Not to follow your example either way will reflect upon any officer whom you have commanded. It is important, therefore, to me to know what your action has been and will be in this respect. . . . I have, I know, no claims on your attention, other than the respect and gratitude of one who ever devoted his best endeavors and improved every opportunity allowed him, from first to last of our great but vain struggle, to make it successful and glorious under your leadership."

In reply to the above inquiry General Lee wrote from his brother's home, near Cartersville, in Cumberland County, under date of August 21, 1865: —

". . . As you ask to be informed what my course has been under the proclamation of the President of the United States of the 29th of May, 1865, I would state that in accordance with one of its provisions, I applied, on the 13th of June, for the benefits of amnesty, and the restoration of all rights and privileges extended to those in its terms, but have not yet received an answer to my application."

It is said that General Lee, in view of the position he occupied among the Southern people, deemed it best to pursue a course which he considered would tend to allay all sectional feeling; but upon being indicted at Norfolk, he withdrew his application. Wise never applied for the benefits held out in the President's proclamation, nor took an oath of any sort; nor did he ever cast a vote in any election after the war, his disabilities never having been removed. The amnesty act which was subsequently passed by Congress he described as "not amnesty but *damn nasty*."

"The United States have not enough money to bribe me," he wrote to a New York editor in 1870, "nor force enough to drive me to take, touch, or taste a test oath, that most odious instrument of tyranny; 'before I would permit my forefinger and thumb to touch the pen to sign it, my right hand should be cut off at my wrist, and be nailed to a guide-post to point the way to a gibbet.' So Pettigrew said concerning the test oaths of nullification in South Carolina, and so I say to the test oaths prescribed by Congress. I said all I meant, meant all I said, and tried my best to *do* all I said and meant for 'the lost cause.' What is 'the lost cause'? Ah! would only that the host of voters in the United States would 'do truth and come to the light,' and see that the Confederacy is not the only

cause lost. The Constitution is lost; the Union defined by it is lost; the liberty of States and their people, which they both at first and for half a century guarded, are lost. I am anxious only that the truth should be told and felt. I wish to live only a little while to see the true spirit of constitutional liberty and laws under a free *republic* of States and their people revived, and I pray to be ready to go then, when my only Master in the universe calls. I am willing, freely willing, and more than anxious that all men of every race shall be as free as I wish, or claim to be; but, whilst slaves are being made free, I protest against freemen being made slaves!"

On account of the seizure and possession of his farm by the government authorities, which they continued to hold until the year 1868, Wise concluded not to return to the vicinity of Norfolk, and mainly on his wife's account decided to locate in Richmond, where he proposed resuming the practice of law in order to support himself and family. During the fall of 1865 he resided temporarily in a house owned by his son-in-law, Dr. Garnett, but in January, 1866, rented a dwelling in Manchester, on the south side of the James River from Richmond, where he lived that year. This house was surrounded by a large yard, with shade trees and a good garden, and here he could not only indulge his passion for gardening, but be much more comfortable in his straitened financial condition than in Richmond, where living was more expensive.

On December 5, 1865, he wrote from Richmond to Mrs. Garnett: —

"Yours of the 3d instant was received by me to-day and touched me sweetly, though mournfully, and all your dutiful conduct, my child, has ever affected my heart. I had no birthday cake, no gathering of my household, for now, alas! I have none, and but a bare remembrance of

what I once had, and how bare I am of every comfort now. I did not, therefore, regret your absence, though your companionship is always pleasant to me whenever we can be happy together."

And on December 24 of the same year, he wrote as follows: —

"Here I am down in the dining room by a good fire, this Sabbath morning before Christmas, full of mist and rain and dirt and black mire under feet, whilst all, as usual, are not out of bed. I am thinking of you, and a thousand things full of sad memories and yet not without some hopes. Your letter to Sister [his wife] and others for the past week, and the Doctor's to his brother, of which he told me last night, seem to indicate that you and he are not happy in Washington. I beg you not to repine. I don't think that Richmond will for years offer pleasant and profitable homes for any one of the old Virginia people — God bless them. The professions are clogged and the people are poor and there is nothing but borrowed capital wherewith to pay, and that is very scarce; and the people are changed. The same people are not the same they were before the war, and I see not how this state of things is to improve for a year or more. So, my child, try to be content and reconciled to your lot in a land you don't prefer; there is no preferred land now."

While he felt keenly the changed condition of affairs in Virginia, especially as regarded himself, he was not a man to sit idle and lament his broken fortunes; and early in 1866 we find him resolutely at work, engaged in the practice of his profession. That this was not an easy task for a man who had abandoned the law years before needs no proof; but it is difficult for us at the present time to appreciate the embarrassments under which Southern men past the meridian of life labored, who had to begin

life anew in 1865. The rooted land was there, it is true; but in all else how changed! Not only did there exist that indefinable, as well as apparent, sense of desolation which characterizes a people defeated in a civil conflict; but the end of an era had come; a civilization had been overthrown, and "Military District No. 1" was to take the place of what once had been Virginia. To give up all one's previous habits of thought, and to see those things profaned which hitherto we have regarded as sacred, is not easy even in early manhood; but to the aged, the ordeal is rendered many times more difficult. The ante-bellum Virginian loved above all things the freedom of the country, and "elbow room," as he would have expressed it, and for a man of Wise's temperament, in his sixtieth year, to take up the humdrum routine of the modern professional man was far from congenial to his taste and inclinations. With the energy characteristic of him, however, he devoted himself assiduously to his profession, and before a great while enjoyed a fairly lucrative practice. For some years after the war he was associated with his nephew George D. Wise and Judge E. H. Fitzhugh, but in 1869 dissolved his connection with them, and entered into a partnership with his son John Sergeant Wise, who had come to the bar in 1867. That partnership continued until his death. It is probably no exaggeration to say that a lawyer has never long engaged in political life without relaxing in some degree the habit of close legal reasoning; and what Judge William D. Shipman has declared of Roscoe Conkling is in an even greater degree true of Wise; namely, that his public career had "deprived him of much of the wholesome discipline which his ardent and exuberant nature so much needed to compact his faculties, and steady and clarify his judgment."

"However little active and constant employment in the legislative or executive departments of our government may demoralize the ethical side of a man's nature, there can be little doubt that it is unfavorable to 'that purification of the intellectual eye' so important to a practising lawyer."[1] Wise, like Conkling, had given up the best years of his life to politics, and though better known in that connection, was a successful practitioner; for, though he had suffered the disadvantages above named, he was, nevertheless, well grounded in the principles of law. It can be said of him that his client's cause was his own, and he threw into the contest whatever of earnestness and learning he possessed. The same independence and fearlessness which were characteristic of him in the other walks of life were illustrated at the bar. And while he had become more or less unfamiliar with the forms of legal procedure, he retained first rank for his knowledge and power of enforcing the legal principles of his cases. Generals Stoneman, Canby, and Terry, when in command at Richmond, frequently sent for General Wise, and sought his counsel and advice, for, while he delighted to call himself "an unreconstructed rebel," his knowledge of the people was unequalled; his advice was always sound; the course which he recommended was sure to be honorable, and no man was more trusted by friend and foe alike.

At the close of the reconstruction era in Virginia, and when the military was at last to become subordinate to the civil authority, a conflict arose in the city of Richmond over the office of mayor, between George Chahoon, a military appointee, and Henry K. Ellyson, who had been elected by the city council. For several days the city was in a state of disorder, each claimant endeavoring to exercise

[1] Memorial sketch of Roscoe Conkling by William D. Shipman.

the functions of mayor; and the matter was finally taken to the courts. Wise accepted employment as one of Chahoon's counsel. The case arose at a time when the Virginia people had long chafed under military rule, and under circumstances which almost precipitated a riot and race war, and Wise received unstinted abuse for appearing as an advocate of Chahoon's claim to the office. At one time he was housed with his client in one of the police stations of the city, surrounded by an infuriated populace and a body of the Ellyson police, who had cut off the Chahoon contingent from food and water, and where his own life was by no means safe. He unhesitatingly expressed his fearless scorn and contempt for the spirit which would deny a litigant the best attorney he could afford to employ, and gloried in his defiance of the clamor against him. The case was finally decided by the Court of Appeals of Virginia in April, 1870, and the desire to hear the reading of the opinion attracted a large crowd to the court-room, located in the Capitol building. The strain upon the floors proved too great, and a disaster occurred in which fifty-eight people were killed. Fortunately for Wise, he was not present at the session of the court, having been detained by an accidental circumstance at his office.

From the end of the Civil War up to the date of his death, Wise was never again a participant in public affairs, although an anxious observer of events and an occasional contributor to the press during the painful period of disorder and maladministration which followed the clash of arms. On February 12, 1866, he wrote from Richmond to his old friend Hon. Fernando Wood of New York, as follows: —

"The past and the present both justify me to myself in appealing to you, sir, for such information and counsel, if you have it, as will relieve my mind and heart

of the painful doubt and anxiety which oppress them respecting the fate not only of the Southern States and people, but of the Republic, and of the civil liberty which it was created to establish and defend. My own views are, in a word, *nothing* in my present position to be heeded even, much less to be made known with any hope that they would prevail. You know my position before the war: '*To fight in the Union*, under the express letter of the Constitution — to take up arms by the sovereign authority of States — to repeal invasion and to suppress 'insurrection.'

"I assented to secession on the grounds of Mr. Madison, that it was at most but a revolutionary remedy in the conflict of sovereignties among the States of the *Union;* that if successful it would preserve constitutional limitations, defend the right of self-government, and secure civil liberty; and if unsuccessful, that it would leave us at least as we were *ante bellum*, under the ægis of the Constitution of the United States, as the supreme law of the nation and all its parts, the Confederate States remaining bodies politic, or sovereign States, still in the Union.

"The revolution of sovereignties was unsuccessful, never consummated Confederate independence, and never for one moment took a single State out of the Union, but left each and all as they were under the Federal Constitution, bound by its compacts and protected by its provisions and guarantees. By the result of the war the Union was not *restored*, for it was never destroyed or broken; it was not to be '*reconstructed*,' for it was already constructed by the Constitution; States were still States; citizens were still citizens; Federal rights and relations were still the same; obligations and duties were the same; privileges and protection and penalties were all the same, *just simply because the Constitution of the United States* was still the same, and the Union was still the same, as neither had been destroyed,

though the former was heavily *assailed*, and the latter had been often violated; the one stood the shock and test of arms, and the other still reigns the supreme law. Such, fairly stated, I apprehend and hope to be the position of President Johnson, founded on the laws of civil war among sovereign States.

"Can you inform me, then, why, that war having ceased, peace has not been proclaimed? Why the writ of *habeas corpus* has not been restored? Why civil jurisdiction has not been allowed to take cognizance of all cases belonging to the courts of law and equity under the Constitution? Is the war power to continue after war itself has ceased? Are arms to be employed still, long after the ordinary process of the judicial tribunals can be executed? Are the civil laws to be continued suspended? Are original and sovereign States to be *provincialized* and 'territorialized'? Is the Constitution of the United States itself to remain suspended until some power or other can or shall *form a new National Government?* I might add inquiry to inquiry further, but these are enough, and I confess to you that I have seen nothing from any quarter as yet shedding light on these momentous questions. Whether I look to the Federal Executive, or Congress, or Judiciary, or to the country at large, all is dark. I see a lurid light only in the camps of the army, still surrounding our very homes and firesides. Can you, from your stand, point me to any clear, unclouded prospect to cheer the patriot heart which longs to see the *old Union and old Constitution* respected, and honored, and obeyed as they really exist, and have ever since 1787 existed, without any reconstruction?

"A year ago you implored the Southern people to return to the Union on a basis of equality and fraternity. This you did from the hall of the House of Representatives, where we have no representatives now, whilst we are

paying heavy excise duties and other taxes. During the war you were manfully opposed to it, but you were for the return of the South, and for the Union on an amicable adjustment of all questions at issue; you do not believe that the differences existing were either irreconcilable, or to be determined and adjusted only by the sword. The main difference, that of slavery, has been since determined forever *vi concitata belli.* I am convinced that it could never have been settled in any other way, and that for that reason the war itself was providential; it was God's war, and who on earth dares gainsay it. It has fixed the Union firm on its base, unless it has unfixed the Constitution. But if the war has destroyed the latter, it has destroyed the former, forever. Why have you been silent so long? What is the state of national affairs, present and prospective? Let me hear from you soon."

Mr. Wood replied, February 19th, 1866, as follows: —

"You say, correctly, that I have been silent on national politics since my speech of February last, in Congress, in which I implored the Southern people to return to the Union. I have been purposely so. During my absence in Europe last spring and summer, the war abruptly closed, the Executive was more abruptly changed, and the consequences of these events precipitated upon the country a condition of things to comprehend which few minds were capable. I thought that silent observation would the better enable me to understand and appreciate this new order of public affairs, and to reach a conclusion which, however unimportant to others, would at least be satisfactory to myself. I have reached this conclusion, and having been thus called upon in your letter of the 12th inst., will give it in reply. The form of government established by the present Constitution was not the first created after independence, nor was it republican. The first was that

established by the Articles of Confederation, making a league of colonies, which, in 1788, was replaced by the present form, enlarging the central authority, but retaining much of the Confederate characteristics; but this was, nevertheless, essentially a Confederacy, and not a Republic, in the true sense. The Republic form 'is that of a State in which the sovereign power is in the representatives elected by the people.' This was not nor is yet our system according to the theory of State government. The States are republican, but not the Federal Union. Two sovereign powers cannot exist within the same government. If sovereignty was retained by the States, it could not have been imparted to the Federal authority. Opposite views as to the relative strength of these authorities have existed ever since. There was sufficient in the anomaly of the system to divide statesmen and parties as to its nature. Opposing sectional differences on this and other essential questions increased with time, and finally plunged the whole country into war. No one difference caused the war. There was a combination of antagonism, including those of a social, commercial, and partisan character. All of these questions were issues between the parties to the contest. An appeal was taken to the highest of all human tribunals, and a decision has been rendered from which there can be no further appeal. We are concluded by the result. It is true the Constitution remains as it was; and it is also true that, though the war power has ceased, the war power is still invoked, and the South kept in a state inconsistent with peace and repugnant to the Constitution. But I look upon this as but the period which intervenes between the rendering of final judgment and the settlement of the case as to the precise points which have been decided. It is an interregnum, to be followed by such measures as will adapt the fundamental form of govern-

ment to the new order of things; and incorporate into our system the principles thus established by force of arms. As you well state, both State sovereignty and slavery have been determined against. For the former we must hereafter have unity; for the latter freedom. Whether you and I will it or not, or whatever may be men's opinion as to the true construction of the Constitution with reference to these two great questions, it is folly to disguise the fact that hereafter there can be no such issues. The new Americanism opens up before us, and common sense demands that we should conform to it. Now, what follows? State sovereignty being dead, unity follows. The people of the whole Union are one, and the majority is that one. This, you will say, is consolidation, and so it is, but not a consolidation inconsistent with free government nor with republicanism, nor does it imply that States, as such, shall not continue North and South, with all needful jurisdiction over domestic rights. Slavery being dead, freedom follows. This is one of the difficulties now in the way of the complete restoration of peace. There is a doubt in the minds of some as to the points settled by the decision on this question. It is held, on the one side, that it means something more than merely exemption from physical bondage, that it has been determined that all men shall hereafter be free and equal, comprehending equality of political and every other right known to the law. An appeal to arms to decide social issues is the most radical of all measures, and we should not be surprised if the victors should seek to avail themselves of the advantage gained to carry out their doctrines to the extreme extent which the opportunity affords.

"I note what you say as to the present lamentable condition of the Southern people, and admit the force of your description of their oppression and deprivations. How

could it be otherwise? The storm through which they have just emerged may have disappeared, but not its effects. The violence of that hurricane has left its marks deep in the recesses of the Southern heart. Besides, the very doubt to which I have referred as to the extent of the application of the principles settled by the war, produces irritation on one side and oppression on the other. Until these are finally disposed of, much of this will continue. Nor can executive legislation nor judicial action prevent. Time, and time alone, can restore the lost rights of which you complain. But this time will be very much curtailed by a speedy realization and appreciation of the fundamental change effected.

"The South has not lost any substantial right by the war. It has gained much. Its homogeneity and unity with the people of the whole Union have been secured. Sources of discontent have been removed, and the door opened forever for the establishment of fraternal relations with other parts of the Union, not heretofore existing. She cannot be kept down. Her teeming soil; her climate of rare adaptability to culture; her brave and generous population; her peculiar monopoly of an indispensable product, with free institutions, and free intercourse with all the world, — she will speedily recover, not only her ancient prosperity, but possess an additional advantage which the new order of things will necessarily promote.

"I am aware that there are positions assumed and declarations made in this letter which may render me liable to the charge of inconsistency. If any thus accuse, let them remember that no partisan associations, nor opinions existing before and during the war, should continue when the whole aspect of public affairs and the promises upon which they were founded have been altogether changed. I was opposed to the abolition of

slavery, because I believed, and yet believe, that as it existed in the Southern States, it was a physical blessing to the black race. I was opposed to the war for the reasons you so truthfully state, and because I thought the Union could be maintained without bloodshed — that the questions at issue were susceptible of amicable adjustment, and because I saw that the South would be vanquished and overpowered, and reduced to a state of subjugated dependence. This is now over. Slavery has been abolished; the war is ended. The great questions which made issues between political parties have ceased, and a new and entirely different order of public affairs has ensued. My desire is that we shall realize this change and conform to it. It is folly to fight over the *dead past* when the *live present* and the *great future* open so brightly and beautifully before us.

"I want America to fill her mission. She is the fixed corner-stone of universal liberty throughout the world. With this principle laid deep and broad in our own institutions it should be our aim to extend it to those oppressed elsewhere, until despotism ceases, not only on this continent, but throughout *the civilized universe.*"

During the autumn of 1866, Wise resumed his residence in Richmond, having rented the house built and occupied by Chief Justice Marshall on the street of the same name. Here he installed his household goods and gathered his family about him. On December 23 of this year he wrote to his daughter, Mrs. Garnett, as follows: —

"I write this morning that my letter may reach you in time to say 'A Merry Christmas to you all,' merry, my child, in every sense of peace and plenty, and especially of trust in a good and gracious Providence. We, at least, are spared, and to be spared is an unspeakable blessing. I can't help feeling this Sabbath, after the *years of sacking*, more than

merely grateful that not one of mine will this anniversary of a Saviour's Birth be without bread and something wherewith to be joyful. Let us be, then, happy in what we have left, and be hopeful that we are spared not in vain. I begin now to feel that there are a peace and pleasure in communing with you more as a companion and friend than as a child, or younger sister. You, Mary, have been with me now many years a companion of joy and grief, upon which we can together look back not without many sacred thoughts of solemn sweetness; and that sweetness is sweeter than the 'honey or honeycomb.' I have this morning been thinking of my earliest family, and of *all* the little ones as they have come and grown, or are gone, and of whom you were the first and are still left. For that I am grateful, my child, for you have ever been a comfort to me. I wish I could send you all my thoughts and affections and love, which would make you comforted; but you know them all and can dwell upon them and think of them and cherish them with me, though we be apart so far. Strengthen yourself by improving these thoughts and feelings during this solemn time. I will try to do so too, and we will think and feel in communion this Christmas.

"I have been on a tour of court campaigning for a month at Williamsburg and at King George Court, and though suffering much discomfort and catching cold, I made enough to meet Christmas bills, and to gain breath for another day of labor and to live for the day."

Although often importuned to become again a candidate for public office, Wise refused to allow the use of his name in that connection. As a friend, Governor Cameron wrote of him: "The very foundations of his political faith had been uprooted, and all that he believed most sacred in the fabric of our institutions had been destroyed. He made no moan of vain complaining, applied himself diligently to the

practice of a profession long ago laid aside for the broader field of statesmanship, and in the training of his children took a careful interest. But the mainspring of his life was broken. His mental and moral machinery could not be put in gear with the new order of things. . . . 'And, great God! sir,' he said to me one day, 'we must now lick the hand that hath smitten us, and vote for Horace Greeley as a Democratic President. Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?' This last was the hair that broke the camel's back. And the heart in him was glad exceedingly when Virginia refused to ratify what he called 'the unholy and unnatural compact,' but gave her electoral vote to General Grant instead."

But if he ever cherished hopes of Grant's administration they were destined later on to be shattered, and on January 25, 1875, he wrote to a friend: —

"General Grant had an opportunity, after being freed from Stevens, Stanton, Seward, and Greeley, to have inaugurated a patriotic policy, which would have poured balm into the wounds of war and have restored halcyon days of peace to the South. I had a hope at one time he would allow the good genius of the country to be his genius, and if he had he would have left his office and left this world for a better, happy and blessed. But he has proved himself to be but a military martinet — has obeyed the orders of that hydra monster Congress, and has 'broken owners.' After carrying out a persecuting attorney-general's law and sending Sheridan to raid a legislature, I give up all hope in him. But Congress has lost its prestige and power; he will be turned neck and heels out of office. The owners of the real wealth of the nation are surely and strongly about the work of reforming the currency, and a revolution is commenced which can't go backward, and which will certainly build up a new order

for a new era. This is my only hope of saving the republic, its laws, and its liberty."

While entirely without sympathy with the Radical party in his own State, Wise, on the other hand, did not approve of the method of rehabilitation devised by the Conservative organization to bring Virginia back into the Union; and he contributed a series of letters to the press disapproving the action of what was known as the "Committee of Nine." The constitutional convention which assembled in Richmond, during the winter of 1867–68, under the auspices of the military authorities and known as the "Underwood" Convention had been largely controlled by the "carpet-bag" element of politicians reënforced by ignorant negroes, and a clause had been adopted by which probably ninety per cent of the adult white population would have been disfranchised, rendered ineligible to any office, and incompetent to sit on a jury either in a civil or criminal case. Moreover, it appeared probable that with negro courts and juries, the property of the former slaveholding element would be confiscated under the forms of law. The presidential election of 1868 had indicated very clearly that the negro would be given the suffrage by the party in power, and in the opinion of the element of Virginia people represented by the "Committee of Nine" it was the part of wisdom and common sense to accept "universal suffrage and universal amnesty," rather than "*universal suffrage and universal disfranchisement.*" The committee held numerous conferences with the committees of the Senate at Washington (the bill approving the Underwood Constitution having passed the House of Representatives), and with General Grant, who in many respects proved himself a generous friend of Virginia. Through their efforts, the test oath and disfranchising clauses of the new State constitution were

defeated, on the condition that Virginia would ratify the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. It was a bitter pill for the people of Virginia to swallow, their opinions in regard to the evils to be apprehended from negro suffrage having in no wise changed, and nothing but what they conceived to be the necessity of looking the situation fully in the face prompted them to this course of action. There were, of course, many irreconcilables, who could not bring themselves to approve it, or see the virtue of such a plan. General Jubal A. Early narrowly escaped a personal difficulty with Colonel John B. Baldwin, a member of the committee, to whom he remarked that they reminded him of a game of whist, where the players having gotten into the nine hole and being unable to win the game by *honors* had to depend on *tricks*. Wise believed that, with a little more patience and a firm faith in the obligations of a written constitution and in a returning sense of justice and patriotism on the part of the party in power, many of the evils threatened could be averted. "If either is forced upon me," he wrote, "I am not to blame; but I will be blamed by myself and my heirs forever if I take either, *by and with my own consent*, *or for and in consideration of a price*. I would as soon barter honor or charity *for a price*. If Virginia is to be forced, she will be pitied; but if she *consents*, or *sells her honor*, her oath will never be taken that *she was violated*. Let her take death, I say, rather than dishonor. There is no political sentimentalism in this, but common sense and faith in the moral law; and some experience in political events teaches me it is policy and expediency thus to abide in our own continence. Gentlemen say it is to be forced on us, and therefore they consent. My reason for not consenting is, that it is to be forced on us." And again he wrote: —

". . . But do 'prominent gentlemen' say that our people can't bear to abide longer in the present state of things, and can't wait for reasons and patriotism and a love of constitutional liberty, to resume their reign? I reply that our people are not made of that stuff which can be 'fatigued into compliance' by an unmitigated usurpation and tyranny. Whoever can be are already slaves fit for the chains of white slavery and negro domination. The people can appeal to the supreme judicial tribunals. But 'prominent gentlemen' think, perhaps, that the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States cannot be relied on for unintimidated and uninfluenced justice. To that I can say at least that they have not been appealed to, as they ought to have been, long ago, to settle the questions arising under the reconstruction acts of Congress. In the 'Reign of Terror,' under the elder Adams, the Supreme Court of the United States was almost suspended, and the State and Federal judiciaries were in a much more fearfully disturbed state than they are now; and yet the spirit of justice frowned down political disorder and brought the most beautiful order out of chaos. The present Chief Justice Chase is not the debauched Justice Chase of 1801. If we can do no better, we can, I confidently believe, appeal with certainty at least to our present bench, against unconstitutional laws. The decisions of the Supreme Court thus far have not been of such a character as to make me distrust either the wisdom, or learning, or purity of our judges. I prefer to appeal rather to them to throw over and around us the shield of the Constitution, than to crouch before Congress with humiliating consent to their usurpation. But will 'prominent gentlemen' go the full length of saying, what is so rife in the lips of all who are ready to 'consent' and to 'surrender,' 'there is no longer any Constitution of the United States'? I hope not. It is

at least our only sheet anchor. It is not the fault of that instrument, the wisest ever drawn by mortal pen, that evil days have come upon this nation. The assaults of enemies upon us are made upon it, as heavy as upon us. The blows at us may excite no sympathy and no relenting of our foes; but there is a redeeming spirit in the love of constitutional liberty which will defend the charter of the rights of all, and make all, before long, feel the necessity of rallying to the restoration of its supreme authority, even as if it were our shield and buckler. Death has stricken down the most deadly enemy to it, the only man who has ever openly proclaimed in the teeth of his oath to support it that he was urgent to act 'outside of its pale' in the passing of laws. Do 'prominent gentlemen' fear that the majority of the Northern people and their officials are such monsters? If that be true, then the nation is given over to judicial blindness and we are all in the blackness of the darkness of despair! And is that not really the rationale of the course of proceedings by 'prominent gentlemen'? Do they not give up the legitimate and constitutional remedies? Do they sufficiently rely on the constancy and endurance of our people? Do they give up judicial relief? Do they give up the Constitution and its guards and guarantees? Have they lost all trust and confidence in the Northern members of the Union to which they are seeking to be restored? Then I say they are men of despair, and are not such as ought to assume to defend their own rights, much less the rights of all. Neither desperate nor timid men can be relied on to save a people in our distress. They had better take up their own defence in their own hands, and calmly await the effects of not only the memories of the past but of the hopes of the future."

In regard to the status of the negro as affected by the

results of the war, Wise believed that as the slave had been freed and made a citizen enfranchisement would follow emancipation; or, in the words of Senator Lamar, "that universal suffrage being given as the condition of our political life, the negro once made a citizen cannot be placed under any other condition."[1] In a letter to a friend, dated July 25, 1872, he wrote: —

"I was ever and am now a friend of the colored race. They were too peaceable and orderly and respectful of the laws of God and humanity for me now not to be grateful to them for their conduct during the war. I would not enslave them or their children again, if I could; and I could not if I would. I, therefore, heartily adopt as well as acquiesce in the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. I regret that amendment was not regularly adopted by competent authority, free to act, when all the States could be parties to it; and I wish now to see it adopted by the Union, in due form, when all the States can act without constraint by the force of arms. I am more than convinced now that slavery is so great a national weakness, if not wickedness, that it should never be tolerated by any people who would themselves be free and strong enough to defend their right of self-government. But I cannot consent to act with any party which sustains the Fourteenth Amendment or the measures to carry it out, or which denies the sovereign right of State self-government. This is not the time or place to assign my reasons for that faith. It is enough to say that I can barely submit to it whilst enforced by superior power; but it shall never have my free consent or sanction."

A new and younger order of men had assumed the control of affairs in Virginia at this period, which under all

[1] See article on this subject by Senator L. Q. C. Lamar, *North American Review*, March, 1879.

the circumstances was probably for the best, as the political upheaval had brought about absolutely changed conditions. The derangement of the entire labor system of the State, the onerous burden of debts both public and private, the dismemberment of the Commonwealth by the formation of another State within her territorial limits, and complex questions too numerous to mention, demanded for their solution not only the exercise of ability and patriotism on the part of those in power, but required men adapted to the new era which had supplanted the old régime.

Virginia alone of the original thirteen States had suffered the humiliation of witnessing a large part of her territory torn from her by a radical Congress, and the State of West Virginia formed, which Wise in his epigrammatic way dubbed "the bastard offspring of a political rape." Thenceforward the Alleghanies and not the Ohio became the western boundary of the State. Although he favored the payment of the old Virginia bonds, dollar for dollar, Wise was probably the first to recommend the petitioning of Congress by the two States and their creditors, to assume the debt of Virginia. The Federal Government was, in fact, deeply in debt to Virginia, and in ceding the Northwestern Territory — her splendid gift to the Union — she had stipulated "that the necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by this State in subduing any British posts or maintaining forts or garrisons within and for the defence, or in acquiring any part of the territory so ceded or relinquished, shall be fully reimbursed by the United States."[1] In his interesting history of the debt controversy in Virginia, Mr. Royall observes in this connection: "The United States Government accepted her grant upon the express understanding that it would repay her these expenses,

[1] 1 Virginia R. C., page 40.

which it has never done. With their accumulated interest these expenses would be a very large sum now." The justice of Wise's idea so commended itself to Mr. Blaine that he subsequently became its earnest advocate.

But if, as Governor Cameron has written, Wise's mental machinery was out of gear with the new political conditions that existed in Virginia, nevertheless, no one was quicker than he to perceive the stern necessity for a change in the agricultural and industrial methods which had previously prevailed, and in an address delivered at the dedication of the Stonewall Cemetery at Winchester, in January, 1867, he said: —

"The plantation interest is gone, and farming, embracing every variety of products instead of a few large staples, — arboriculture, horticulture, and stock-feeding and grazing, and cultivating on a small scale none but the most improved lands, and these tilled to the square inch by the most able, intelligent, and skilful laborers, hired at a rate which close farming only can afford, — must be substituted, and will change and immensely enrich the whole system of our agriculture. This is not a matter of theory, but it is a stubborn fact, a stern necessity which we must look steadily in the face, with the resolution, industry, and perseverence to conform to the change. It is repulsive to our habits, awkward and burdensome at first, and we were wholly unprepared for it. But we have no alternative and must abide the result. How abide it? Fold our arms and cry out, 'What can we do?' 'We have no capital.' No; there is blessing beyond measure in this change. Nothing but fire and blood could have driven us to it, and it has shown what a *weakness* to our people African slavery was. Its weakness was so great that itself amounted to wickedness. Nothing but *negrodom* ever could have conquered such a people as were the masters

of Virginia slaves! The faith of Jackson foresaw this: the war was inevitable, it was providential. Nothing but war could have shocked us out of this weakness into a new strength and vigor. We had to fight, and had to surrender, too; but it was in the end to be a noble, a great and incalculable victory. It was to build anew thousands of cottages, hamlets, and towns and cities where heretofore stood lone mansions of masters whose broad-spread acres were scourged by slaves. It was to improve labor by a price laid upon it; it was to bring an eye over every inch of soil and to fructify it by the watchful interest and active attention of its own proprietor; and it was to increase a white population that would be numerous and strong and give the land its greatest pride, a solid Caucasian yeomanry, instead of being filled by ignorant, lazy slaves of a degraded race! Do you say that this will overdo farming? I reply that farming, the production of bread-stuffs, fruits, and grapes, can't be overdone. The more farming less will labor and living cost, and a people can't be but strong that can and will produce its own bread and meat and clothing cheap, and the more plentiful the cheaper. The lands will pay all the laborers worthy of their hire that you can put upon them, and the old problem: 'How little labor for how much land?' will be more than solved by its opposing problem: 'How much labor on how little land?' Like Agricola at Rome, on one-tenth after division to nine sons, you shall realize more than was made before on the whole. Don't call out for Hercules, don't cry to the North nor to the money-changers for capital — a curse of the times that sells consciences and soils honor, and betrays comrades and country — but put your own shoulders to the wheel! Oh! young men who have fathers with naught now left but negro-scourged tobacco and wheat fields, burthened with old debts enough to break the hearts of honest men and

make them bow in want with sorrow to the grave — pull off your broadcloths — bare your arms — blister your hands until blisters become callous, to plough and reap the plenty which earnest labor will surely bring home to pay debts and provide comfort and maintain manly independence! You have no longer the host of slavery's drones to feed and clothe; your expenses now are comparatively small. Only be self-denying, determined, and work! You need not fear that there will be too many of you in the field. But if there are, those not wanting and not willing there can find occupations now multiplied and varied beyond what plantations afforded, to try their fortunes on. Mining, manufacturing, commerce, mechanic arts, will now open avenues for skill and enterprise; and improvements in all these will soon pay professional avocations higher fees and wages than ever compensated them before.

"Have your fathers thousands of acres of land which now yield no income and cannot afford to pay labor for their cultivation? Lay off the garden spots, scrape the mounds of humus all around every curtilage, compost your wasted manures for the little space you can till, and sell or rent out or let lie out every impoverished acre. Aye, do better, — *advertise to select emigrants that you will gladly give to them one half your superfluous lands and help them build and fence them, if they will come and settle the other half.* Their settlement will make the other half far more valuable than was or is the whole. They will give you neighborhood and life, and bring to you new lights, and be your source of most efficient labor and of richest returns. Abandon '*one ideas*'; here it is wheat, there it is tobacco, yonder corn and potatoes, and somewhere else it is brandy and goober-peas. Go to the fields and be taught by your own experience; learn of other crops and prepare your own fertilizers from the forest leaves and pine tags and straw

and from well-fed cattle and pig pens. Don't stand on the river bank like the fool of Horace and wait for the waters to pass by before you cross this Rubicon. Don't wait to manure until you can get capital to buy guano. Borrow not at all, but work, and you will have wherewith to lend. The faith of Jackson saw this, that the war would put our young men to work. No more fair hands! No more lazy morning hours! No more cigars and juleps! No more card-parties and club-idleness! No more siren retreats in summer, and city hells in winter!

"The hard necessity which presses down upon our people may change the Virginia character in some lamentable respects, but it will also happily strengthen it in other important traits. It will dispel some weaknesses which, though grand and noble, impeded the power and progress of the State. Of the true old Virginian it may well be said: —

> "'High-minded he was ever, and improvident,
> But pitiful and generous to a fault;
> Pleasures he loved, but Honor was his idol.'

"To young Virginians I would say: High-minded, pitiful, and generous be as were your fathers; honor must ever be your idol; but be *just* before you are *generous;* and let a life of mere *pleasure* and all *improvidence* now cease."

CHAPTER XXII

HABIT OF SWEARING. LOVE OF PARADOX. TEMPERAMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS. ESTIMATE OF HIM AS A PUBLIC MAN, AND HIS POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE SLAVERY QUESTION. VIEWS ON THE CIVIL WAR. HIS ORATORY. FONDNESS FOR WHITTLING AND GOOD LIVING. RELIGIOUS VIEWS. LOVE OF THE COUNTRY. SICKNESS AND DEATH. TRIBUTES OF JUDGE CRUMP AND OTHERS

A WELL-KNOWN French author, M. Blouet (Max O'Rell), has observed that the different members of the human race are rarely pious and profane at one and the same time, and that the Anglo-Saxon alone combines these qualities without taint of hypocrisy. Like certain men in his day, Wise had the habit of writing prayers to be read in his family at religious worship, and like many others he could give utterance to violent expletives when irritated.

Upon one occasion during the war, while in camp near Chaffin's Bluff, he was seated in his headquarters tent writing away diligently on a prayer to be sent to his wife for family use, when his son and a young officer, who were amusing themselves at a game of seven-up, while lying under the fly of the tent, became engaged in a dispute over the cards. Their loud conversation broke in upon his religious meditations so abruptly that he turned aside from his labor, and in emphatic language called out: "*Damn*

it, don't make so much fuss; you interrupt all continuity of thought."

Wise had grown up in the country in Virginia, at a time when swearing was by no means an uncommon habit; and when provoked to anger he did not mince words. In this connection, Governor Cameron has written of him as follows: —

"A recent writer in the *Century* dilates on General Wise's sometime lapses into profanity as though he had been inordinately or exceptionally addicted to that habit. This is not so; and so to represent him is to caricature a very great and admirable man, by exaggerating a mole into a cancer, as if a portrait of Pitt should show nothing but a great wine-bottle, or one of Grant only a Brobdignagian cigar. Undoubtedly, though, there was a picturesqueness and muscularity about our governor's oaths which forbid their entire exclusion from a faithful picture."

A somewhat severe critic, in discussing his life and career, has written:[1] —

"We sometimes find intellect of the highest order abused by a fondness for paradox, and a disposition to make strong and startling effects by sudden contradictions of the received opinions of the public, and novelties of literary style. So great is this affliction of Governor Wise that the peculiarity of his conversation is never to agree with any opinion that is advanced; no matter what that opinion is, no matter how firmly fixed the commonplace may be in the ordinary judgment of men, he makes a point to go off at a tangent, to dissent for the sake of argument, and to discharge the abundant vivacity of his mind in eloquent dissertations at variance with his audi-

[1] "The Life and Times of Robert E. Lee and his Companions in Arms," by Edward A. Pollard.

ence. His 'table-talk,' as brilliant as that of Coleridge, is equally as rambling, inconsistent, and yet, after all, rather showing a vivacity of intellect than an insincerity of conviction. Men who can talk well on all sides of a question are often sincere for the moment in what they profess to believe, and persuade themselves as well as the audience to accept the novelty of their opinions. Yet this disposition of mind, entertaining as it may be, and partaking of a certain sort of genius, is an affliction — at least, it borders on a moral infirmity; it reduces the intellect that should command by its convictions to the evanescent triumphs of the brilliant disputant. Such have been the triumphs which General Wise has achieved, rather than those of the deliberate and trusted statesman. His disordered and inconsistent political life; his strain after novelty in whatever he speaks or writes; his almost matchless command of language, and an eloquence rich, affluent, but often disfigured by word-coinage, and an affectation of carelessness mixed up with classical severity, are marks of an afflicted intellect that, with better training, might have conquered fortune, and made him a reputation that would have been a possession forever."

The above criticism, while unduly severe, contains within it a certain amount of truth; for Wise, undoubtedly, lacked symmetry of character, and was in many respects erratic, and wanting in the even balance which we associate with a really great man. Doubtless, he had frequent occasion to ponder the lines of the Scotch poet: —

> "Whether thy soul
> Soars fancy's flights, beyond the pole,
> Or darkling grubs this earthly hole
> In low pursuit,
> Know, prudent, cautious self-control
> Is wisdom's root."

Yet in judging the character of such a man we should not fail to make due allowance always for temperament in attempting to arrive at any just conclusion. He was largely a creature of impulse, and a man whose acts found their springs in the promptings of his nature, rather than in premeditated design. His temperament was a remarkably mercurial one, his temper exceptionally excitable, and his bump of combativeness developed in an extraordinary degree. Probably a slender body, thin arms and legs, a large and over-active brain, and an imperfect digestion, rendered more so by the constant habit of chewing tobacco, go a long way toward accounting for these traits. It is manifestly incorrect, however, to judge the acts of such a man by those of the more quiet and self-contained, who, after all, probably oftentimes, exercise a much less degree of self-control; and as motives are to be counted of more importance than acts, so it is by this test that the life and character of such an one should be tried.

How shall we estimate his political career, and what place will history accord to the ante-bellum leaders of the South? An author is generally expected to give his conclusions as to the subject of a biography, though to give these intelligently is by no means an easy task; and if we have not already conveyed a correct impression, we shall probably fail now. Though the men of the South of Wise's generation had, to a certain extent, the problems of modern society to work out, in common with the people of other lands, yet it is also a fact that the questions growing out of the institutions of negro slavery overshadowed in importance all others with which it fell to their lot to deal. That this question should have become the touchstone, by which well-nigh all others were tried, was inevitable in the very nature of things, however much we may incline at first glance to deplore the circumstance. Slavery

had gradually become interwoven into the web and woof of the social fabric, and to the complications arising out of this institution were added a race problem the gravity of which could not well be put aside. We shall fall into an old and very common error if we fail to keep these points well in view, for the emancipation of the Russian serf furnishes no analogy to the problem growing out of negro slavery.

The Southern statesman of the Revolutionary era had written the charts of our liberties, and stamped his impress upon the institutions of his time. His place in history it is too late to question now, and we all know how he deplored slavery, and how we can quote passage after passage from his speeches and writings in which he holds up the frightful evils growing out of that institution. When we read these and turn to the lives of the men who flourished from 1835 to 1860, either consciously or unconsciously we are apt to institute a comparison between them, a comparison, too, by no means favorable to the latter. Our Revolutionary sires lived under the stimulus of a great crisis, at a time when it was their custom to recur to first principles and ponder the natural liberties of mankind, and when under the influence of the political and social upheaval much of the old order was changed. Slavery, though, did not share this wreck of old things, and along with a number of beautiful and highly moral observations which were bequeathed to us in connection with it, the solution of the problem was likewise handed down, — a problem which increased in its fearful import at every decade, as the number of slaves grew larger year by year. The ante-bellum Southern statesman was in no wise responsible for the existence of the institution, but he found it here and could no more escape its influences than he could avoid breathing the air about him.

His revolutionary sire had not spared him the curse, but left the question as he found it, to be met and solved by his children. Perhaps it would be very wrong to censure the former for not bringing about emancipation. He had a great work to do, and he did it nobly, but that he left much undone is also true. We know that had he agitated this question in 1787, our country could never have been formed. It is the merest commonplace to say that a man should be judged by his circumstances and surroundings, but to no class of men was this truth more applicable than to those of Wise's generation. Judge Henry St. George Tucker, his law teacher, had written in his "Commentaries" on Blackstone, and had taught in his law school at Winchester: "Slaves[1] were imposed upon the people of these States by an unwise and cruel policy, which our forefathers in vain attempted to resist, until the revolution enabled us to abolish the horrible traffic in African slaves, by the earliest acts of the independent government. An immense slave population had accumulated in the meantime, whose complexion is destined to preserve forever the distinction between the two races resident in the Southern country. To emancipate the slave in the present condition of the Southern States, and either to allow or to deny to him equal privileges, would soon array one race against the other, and sow the seeds of exterminating civil wars. We are, therefore, compelled to keep that wretched class of men in servitude, from a sad necessity, unless some feasible plan can be devised by the statesman and philanthropist for their gradual emancipation." The above extract may be said to fairly state the views of thoughtful Virginians at the time when Judge Tucker wrote, and his teachings were

[1] Tucker's "Commentaries," Vol. I. page 75.

those imbibed by Wise. That there was a contrast in the opinions expressed on this subject by the Southern leaders (during the period leading up to the Civil War) is true, and popular judgment had, outwardly at least, changed somewhat; for the South had been placed in the attitude of the defender of slavery. Extremes begot extremes, and it is no difficult matter to trace, in the speeches and writings of the public men who lived in the period between the year 1835 and the Civil War in the South, a growing intolerance and resentment of outside interference with this question. Perhaps it was true in some instances that from long familiarity with the institution, people had grown so accustomed to it as to lose sight of its more objectionable and repulsive features; yet this cannot be said to be generally true, nor would it sufficiently explain the change in the temper of Southern opinion, even if it had been. Until human nature shall have become constructed on a radically different plan from that which we know at present, it is not probable that any class of property holders will hear with patience insults and gibes heaped upon them, or preserve their equanimity while they are at the same time told that their possessions are held in violation of the law of God and man. The Southern publicist had resisted by every lawful means the introduction of negroes into the Colonies, and Virginia had taken the lead in the movement to suppress the African slave-trade, and had witnessed a well-nigh solid New England delegation record their votes in favor of its continuance. The fact that the agitation was carried on by the people of one section against those of another, and that, too, by the same people whose ancestors had been the chief importers of negroes, undoubtedly added much to the bitterness engendered by the controversy. Probably it may be said with truth that the arguments of Mr.

Henry George against the justice and right of holding land as private property have never been fully answered. His followers were already far more numerous and respectable than the abolitionists in 1835, and it may be that in time to come they will constitute a majority of the qualified voters of our land. If this should ever be the case (and who is prepared to gainsay it?), the crusade, against private property will be fiercely waged and full use made of the moral argument, but he is indeed an irrepressible optimist who hopes to see the change brought about in peace and quietness. And if, perchance, the ownership of land should cease in one section of the Union from a purely economic reason, and the former landowners of that portion should paint in glaring colors the great enormity and moral guilt of landholding, the shackles of which their neighbors had not cast off, it is not probable that such a course would conduce to the continuation of friendship and brotherly love. Yes, the South had grown defiant; it had come in a measure to defend that which it naturally viewed as an affair peculiarly its own. It was to learn the truth of the poet's lines: —

> "Arouse the tiger of Hyrcanian deserts,
> Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
> Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
> Of wild Fanaticism."

Probably no man realized more keenly than Wise the ill effects of slavery, and how it had retarded the development of his State and section. He had, along with many men of his time, favored the African Colonization Society, and while in Brazil had labored for the repression of the slave-trade there. In the Virginia Convention of 1850–51, he had told some plain, blunt truths in regard to the workings of the institution; and a man who declared that

"black slaves make white slaves" could hardly believe in the institution *per se.* Yet it must be said that it is by no means difficult to quote numerous extracts from his speeches and writings, from the tone of which it would appear equally, if not more, natural to arrive at exactly the opposite conclusion; and he engaged at times in much wild and extravagant talk. His excitable temper and disposition, when irritated, to run into extremes are largely the explanation of this, and are the only sort of excuse, too, that can be given for his having indulged, just prior to the war, in some of the silly attempts made among a certain class of Southern people to disparage Yankee courage. Wise was essentially a type, although an extreme one, of the defiant attitude of the South of 1860, and bitterly resented outside interference with that which he considered peculiarly a State and not a national question, and from interfering with which it was the duty of the North to abstain. In common with the best men of his generation in the South he loved the Union of the States, and impartial history will record of the Southern man of 1861 that it was the growth of circumstances beyond his power to control which placed him in conflict with that government to the support of which he had contributed even more than his share of patriotism. "As to patriotism in the broadest sense, that is, belief in American institutions, there is no better patriot in the land than the Southern man, and, paradoxical as it sounds, he was never more intensely American than when he was trying to divide the United States that he might have a place where he could work out his own interpretation of these ideas without interference."[1] It has been said of the ante-bellum Southern leader that he never rose to the national conception of the

[1] "The Old South Still," by Captain Edward Field, Fourth Artillery U. S. Army, *United Service Magazine* February, 1896.

Constitution, and that his talents were those which tend to conserve existing institutions merely. It would not be difficult to point out many fallacies in these statements; but if he failed to perceive what some writers term the *growth* of the Constitution, and still adhered to the old landmarks, a disposition to "prove all things" may be as much of a virtue as an error, in a government which has been described as carrying more sail than anchor. If in the eyes of his opponents he laid too much stress upon the letter of the law and seemed at times to forget that the Constitution, like the Sabbath, was made for man, he was but following the teaching of his Revolutionary sires when, finding his rights disregarded, he fell back upon that fundamental organic law which he had been taught to reverence as the sheet anchor of our safety.

The biographer of Mr. Justice Lamar gives the latter's description [1] of a debate which occurred upon the floor of the Senate between Mr. Seward of New York and Mr. Hammond of South Carolina. Seward had declared in exultant tones that the power had departed from the South, and "that henceforth the great North, stronger in population and in the roll of sovereign States, would grasp the power of government and become responsible for its administration." To these remarks the senator from South Carolina made answer: —

"Sir, what the senator says is true. The power has passed from our hands into yours; but do not forget it, it cannot be forgotten, it is written upon the brightest pages of history, that we, the slaveholders of the South, took our country in her infancy, and, after ruling her for near sixty out of the seventy years of her existence, we return her to you without a spot upon her honor, matchless in her splen-

[1] "Life of L. Q. C. Lamar," by Edward Mayes, pages 89, 90.

dor, incalculable in her power, the pride and admiration of the world. Time will show what you will do with her, but no time can dim our glory or diminish your responsibility."

"Southern society to-day," writes Captain Field, "is one of the many proofs that you cannot fill up without to some extent levelling down. It is so in every department of life. We pat ourselves on the back when we contrast the present conditions in England and America with what existed one hundred and thirty years ago. Yet it is an open question whether those who now rule in either country can be compared with the governing class of Wolfe and Chatham, the men who expelled France from India and America and made England the arbiter of the world. In Southern society forty years ago all the juices of the soil went to produce one flower, but to-day we sadly miss that flower."

In a speech delivered at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, on June 17, 1873, Wise gave utterance to the following views in regard to the war between the States: "The time has not yet come to view that war calmly and philosophically. But this I will venture to say of it now: that it did what no other human power could have done, — it cauterized and cured the worst curse upon some of the fairest portions of the continent, and removed the only incubus upon the development of the southern part of the Eastern Terminus of the Great Belt. One of nature's poems is *flowing water*, with power in its current to clarify itself and purify its springs and streams. The stagnant pool is thick, malarious, and fetid; but springs and streams are usually clear and clean, and life-giving and life-sustaining. So with the watershed of this continent; it cleared and cleansed its Southern Geography of the malaria of African bondage. That cause alone made the Southern

States stagnant. The globe would not be habitable, if its oceans were not agitated by storms, evaporated by the sun, congealed by frost, and cleansed by perpetual currents. And as of the currents of air and of the waters, it may be said, that they often conflict with each other, yet their very cyclones and whirlpools are made by God's providence to give motion and purification and life; so of our Civil War it may be said, I hope, in time to come, that it gave a New Life to the country and all its parts, which may atone for the many precious lives which were taken away by its fire and sword. Nothing but intraterritorial war could have given this New Life; and it was sent by God, not only because the Exodus of Slavery had come, but to make the motion of commerce and arts and migration southward. The two Virginias will now be filled with population from abroad and from other States at home, and the whole South will soon be strong enough to do a great moral duty on their part." As his purpose had never been originally to secede from the Union, so he believed that the destiny of his people was wrapped up in its future, and were he alive he could with truth repeat the lines of his friend, James Barron Hope: —

> "Give us back the ties of Yorktown,
> Perish all the modern hates;
> * * * * * * *
> The safety of the Union
> Is the safety of the States!"

He had an abiding faith in the principles for which the South had fought as he conceived them, and never doubted that they would in the end triumph, if constitutional liberty is perpetuated in America.

"A Lost Cause! If lost, it was false; if true, it is not

lost!" — was the faith that abode with him, and the sentiment to which he gave utterance.

Once in alluding to his own career, he said: "Sir, I never was afraid of the people. If I have any strength before the people and with the people, I don't owe it to any ability, perhaps to no great merit, moral or intellectual of any sort, — no great merit but one; namely, that I never in my life was afraid to differ with my constituents, and I never was afraid to tell them so." He belonged to that class of men who like to go among the plain people, and who derive their greatest social pleasures from association with them, and was himself a natural democrat.

The fragments of his speeches that have been preserved render it difficult for us to appreciate the effect they produced at the time of their delivery, and they do not read well. He had remarkable earnestness of manner, a ready flow of words, and whatever his faults of style he was never commonplace. The people of our own generation are far less susceptible to the influences of oratory than those who preceded us, and the ante-bellum Virginian enjoyed it to a degree which we do not witness in our modern workaday world. Indeed, oratory with him corresponded to what the opera and theatre are to the modern resident of large cities. Wise's style was not the swelling, majestic one of Webster, which Senator Hoar has termed a "ponderous Latinity," but rather "nervous Saxon" poured forth in a torrent-like flow of words, and accompanied by great vehemence of manner. In the moments of his loftiest flights we might apply to him his own description of the glowing eloquence of Sargent S. Prentiss:[1] —

"He rose higher and higher, went up, and up, and on,

[1] Memoir of S. S. Prentiss, edited by his brother, Vol. II. page 61.

and on, and on, — far, far away like the flight of the carrier-pigeon! It was the music of sweet sounds, and anon it was the roar of the elements. Figures bubbled up and poured themselves forth like springs in a gushing fountain, which murmur and leap awhile amid mountain rocks, then run smooth and clear through green and flowery valleys, until at length, swollen into mighty rivers, they roll onward to the ocean! The human reeds bowed and waved before his blasts, or lifted their heads and basked in his sunshine." James Barron Hope, the graceful poet, and no ordinary judge of oratory, thus describes[1] the effect produced upon him by Wise's presence and eloquence: —

"A Virginian 'intus et in cute,' there he stands! His forehead broad and ample; his dark[2] hair abundant to wildness; his jaw that of a gladiator, strong and inflexible; his lips thin, well-cut, and resolute; his large, generous mouth full of a rare variety of expression; his profile such as you see on antique medals of demigods and heroes, and his face pale, but not sickly — Roman, — Roman of that Rome wherein the leaders shaped the institutions and *not* the institutions the leaders.

"I can see him at this moment as he held me there with his hazel eyes, which were now those of a prophet, or a seer.

"I can hear him as I stand, as he held me with his voice, that had now the melancholy tone of a pine swept by the wind and now the ring of a trumpet that calls to battle!

"In his grand moments of inspiration there was an air as of eternal youth about his animated features and sinewy

[1] "Lecture on Virginia," by James Barron Hope.

[2] Wise's hair in early life was a light flaxen, but grew darker with advancing years.

frame, as though a ray from another world had fallen on him, at once the light and forecast of immortality!

"He was indeed an orator! Not only an orator, but a statesman, wise, able, and sagacious! Not only a statesman, but a soldier, tried, true, and faithful, and as the years roll on his form now heroic will become colossal in its proportions worthy of a statue to be cleft out as was the statue of the Lion of Lucerne."

Of his conversational powers a friend has written: "Even in the course of casual conversation the richness and copiousness of his vocabulary excited wonder and admiration. I heard him once upon a railroad train telling to some chance travelling companion the story of the sinking of the *Cumberland* by the *Merrimac*, and it was as if listening to the declamation of a page from Homer, so sonorously and in such poetic phrase fell the unpremeditated narrative. The closing words haunt me yet: 'And as she sank, sir, and the waves closed over the living and the dead, the sound of the last gun furnished a requiem for the brave; and it came muffled, dank, and despairing, like a voice from the caverns of the deep.'"

The last years of Wise's life were spent in Richmond, at the house formerly known as the Freeland homestead, which stood upon the corner of Fifth and Cary streets. To this he removed about the year 1873 and continued to reside there up to the time of his death. Richmond at that date had not become so closely built up as at present, and there were still left a few old-fashioned houses with enclosures about them large enough to contain a garden and flowers. The Freeland house was one of these, and he was able, on a limited scale, to indulge his taste for gardening, of which he was extremely fond, and it was his habit in the spring of the year to work with his hoe before breakfast, after his return from market, whither he re-

paired at an early hour. At that place he knew every huckster and driver of a market cart; as well as all the boys in his neighborhood, many of whom still remember a spare old man, with piercing eyes, and beaver tilted back upon his head. He probably found his greatest recreation, however, in carving canes and jackstraws with his penknife, in which he displayed much skill. He would sit before his fireplace cutting alligators, Turks' heads, Punches and Judies, and the like, on the head of a stick to be presented to some friend; or else making a set of jackstraws for the children, or a salad spoon and fork; and whenever he went to Virginia springs he would be out on the mountain sides gathering sticks for these purposes. He also found great pleasure in carpentering, for which he had a decided talent; and on his death-bed amused himself cutting out and rigging up the model of a two-masted schooner.

Like most old-fashioned Virginians hailing from the salt water country, he liked good eating, and particularly those things furnished by the Chesapeake. He enjoyed a barrel of oysters from his native peninsula, or a dozen diamond backs which he would delight in preparing according to the method known in his section of the State. His views on this point, which cooks everywhere would do well to follow, were embraced in a saying attributed to Judge ———, a noted character and oddity living on the eastern shore.

"Well, sir, it's all very well to talk about fixin' up your tarrapin with spices an' things; but give me my tarrapin straight. You first bile him till the under shell comes off easy; then you take out the gall-sac, an' butter him, an' put pepper an' salt on him, an' then you have a tarrapin that *is* a tarrapin." Although by no means a gourmand, Wise liked salads and other dishes which he would com-

pound with great care. One of his special weaknesses was for slaw. During the war he was at one time critically ill with pneumonia and placed under the strictest regimen by his physician. He awoke one night about the hour of twelve and a craving for slaw possessed him to such an extent that he called his man servant, a venerable old negro named Harry, and told him to procure a fine head of cabbage without delay. The expression on old Harry's face at the announcement of this order was a study, and he began to protest, but the order was repeated in a peremptory manner, and the cabbage brought. When a few hours later on the doctor appeared on the scene, an empty bowl and the remains of a few leaves and stalk on the table suggested what had happened, and the physician gave it as his opinion that he would be a dead man — but he lived to tell the tale.

During his last years Wise wrote and published a work entitled: "Seven Decades of the Union," illustrated by a memoir of John Tyler, being a treatment of American history from 1790 down to the period of the Civil War. Although not prepared perhaps with as great a degree of painstaking as it might have been, it is nevertheless a most interesting and valuable addition to the political and historical literature of the country, particularly as regards the period of Mr. Tyler's administration.

During these closing years he served as a member of the Virginia-Maryland Boundary Line Commission, appointed for the purpose of ascertaining the correct line across the Chesapeake between the two States, a subject with which he was very familiar, but with this exception he never held or sought a public position of any kind.

To a friend — the Rev. Peyton Harrison, who had written to him on the subject of religion — he replied in the following letter: —

"On my return last Friday from an absence of several weeks, I found your kind and very acceptable letter of the 29th ult.

"In reply I have to say, that more than fifty years ago and ever since, I had and have still the most anxious as well as serious thoughts about the salvation of my soul. Your question about 'a convenient season' is too vague: it means little but a common error, which I can't descant upon now. Repentance has always been playing false to me, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ has ever abided and now still more than ever abides with me. I put my whole trust in Him who is 'All in All.' I *know* that my Redeemer liveth. I delay not and await His time. If I fail or fall, it will be on my knees clinging to Him on the cross. But this to you is all liable to great misapprehension, and I must stop writing and you must call, going or coming from Prince Edward; come and spend the night with me in Richmond — my wife will rejoice to see you on such a mission — and then we can talk 'face to face.' I regret you missed me both times in Baltimore."

In a letter to a friend who had lost a much-beloved daughter, he wrote: "You will henceforth eagerly seek to go to your Father in Heaven, because He has now in His bosom your 'lamb.' The 'Lamb of God' is the Shepherd of the 'lambs' of earthly love. Oh! how satisfying as well as consoling is that blessed *assurance* of Christian Faith and Hope! And there is something else in this assurance which is *now a reality: we do not lose the precious ones who go before us even whilst we abide in the world of sin and suffering.* Not for all the dross of earth would I, my dear companion in grief, exchange the holy bliss and blessed comfort of communing with their spirits whilst I am still waiting for Death, amidst tears and trials of this life. Ah! in one sense of little import they *are* gone —

but gone from sin and trouble and suffering and temptation. They are gone to a Heavenly Home of Rest and Truth and Eternal Bliss. They still speak to me, without a pang or shadow of passion. They are ever smiling upon us and beckoning us away from earth to join them in realms of joy and gladness."

Life in Richmond, or in fact in any city, was uncongenial to him, and during the last year of his life he was contemplating the purchase of a home in his native county, where he hoped to spend the brief remainder of his days, and to hear once more the soughing of its pines and the beating of its surf against the shore, where he could inhale the salt breezes which he loved. It was probably during a period of these reflections that he copied the lines of Praed found among his papers: —

"Scene of my best and brightest years!
Scene of my childhood's joys and fears!
Again I gaze on thee at last;
And dreams of the forgotten past,
Robed in the visionary hues
That memory flings o'er all she views,
Come fleeting o'er me! — I could look
Unwearied on this babbling brook,
And lie beneath this aged oak,
And listen to its ravens croak,
And bound upon my native plain,
Till fancy made me boy again!
I could forget the pain and strife
Of manhood's dark, deceitful life;
I could forget the ceaseless toil,
The hum of cities and the coil
That interest flings upon our hearts,
As candor's faded glow departs;
I could forget whatever care
It has been mine to see or share,
And be as playful and as wild
As when, a dear and wayward child,

I dwelt upon the fairy spot,
All reckless of a bitterer lot.
Then glee was high, and on my tongue
The happy laugh of folly hung,
And innocence looked bright on youth,
And all was bliss and all was truth.
There is no change upon the scene,
My native plain is gayly green,
Yon oak still braves the wintry air,
The raven is not silent there;
Beneath my foot the simple rill
Flows on in noisy wildness still.
Nature hath suffered no decay;
Her lordly children! where are they?
Friends of my pure and sinless age,
The good, the jocund, and the sage;
Gone is the light your kindness shed,
In silence have ye changed or fled;
Ye and your dwellings! — yet I hear
Your well-known voices in mine ear,
And see your faces beaming round,
Like magic shades on haunted ground.
Hark! as they murmur down the dell,
A lingering tale those voices tell;
And while they flit in vacant air,
A beauteous smile those faces wear.
Alas! I turn my dreaming eyes;
The lovely vision fades and flies;
The tale is done
The smile is gone
I am a stranger, and alone."

The year 1875 had been a successful one for Wise in the practice of his profession, and he felt much encouraged from a business standpoint, but his poor health and attacks of sickness indicated that the end was not far off. On January 7, 1876, he wrote from Richmond, to his daughter, Mrs. Garnett: —

"MY DEAR CHILD: — Yours of the 31st was what I expected, and have always regularly and punctually received from you, a repetition of your affectionate reverence and dutiful attention. It hasn't been neglected. On the contrary, it touched me now more than ever; now that I know death has grappled my windpipe, and I am weakening every day under the fatal grasp. I am no better in fact, but stronger than when you were here. I suffer exceedingly from my cough, and worse from its effects on my enlarged hernia. . . . I wish I had recollected your mother's birthday, but what matters it? She is a saint, or there are none around the throne of God. Oh! Mary, how vividly now all the time the past comes up to me and over me, its reminiscences constituting my whole religion. The sweet memory of your mother more than anything else assures me that I am not to be cast out. She and Obie[1] are above, and waiting on my case and waiting for me."

Although his health improved for a short while, he was confined to the house on the 1st of April, where he lingered until the 12th of September, the time of his dissolution. His mind remained bright and clear to the last, and a short while before his death he was talking to his son, and giving him advice concerning the rearing of his children. "Take hold, John," he said, "of the biggest knots in life, and try to untie them — try to be worthy of man's highest estate — have high, noble, manly honor. There is but one true test of anything, and that is, is it right? If it isn't, turn right away from it."

His funeral services were conducted from St. James Protestant Episcopal Church, by his friend, the Rev. Joshua Peterkin, and appropriate honors paid his memory

[1] His son, O. Jennings Wise.

by his comrades in the Confederate Army, the local militia, and various civic organizations. At a meeting of the bar of the city, his lifelong friend, Judge W. W. Crump, after dwelling upon his career in public life, as a lawyer and soldier, declared that he had never known a man more public spirited than the deceased. "There was never a time when he was not ready to stem any tide of corruption and wrong. He was, in truth, a knight-errant, armed cap-a-pie for every fray, and especially against every wrong, oppression, and corruption that had existed in his day. In his whole life he had never been found heading majorities, or running with crowds, that easy way of gaining popularity, but he was ever seen fighting for the right against wrong. No matter who differed with him, there was no man who could not lay a wreath upon his grave and say, 'Here lies a true, disinterested patriot.' Nor was he wanting in the gentler traits. A warmer heart than his never beat. To the weak, the young, the helpless, the downtrodden, he was especially a friend; and they would drop as sincere tears upon his grave as ever fell."

Another admirer has recently written: "To me in memory he reappears a knightly figure of a heroic age, single-hearted, lofty-minded, honest, generous, brave, — a noble product of the loins of the Commonwealth he loved so well. Virginia's epitaph upon his tomb might fitly be: 'To grateful mother, never truer son.'"

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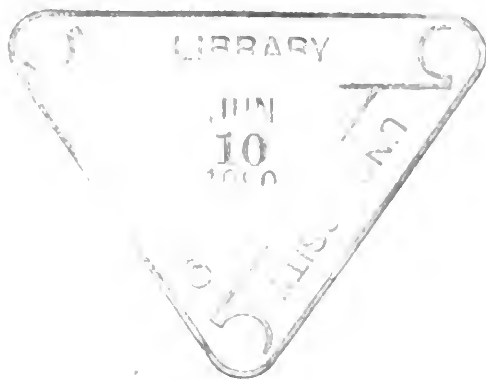

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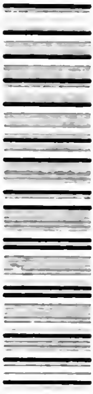
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