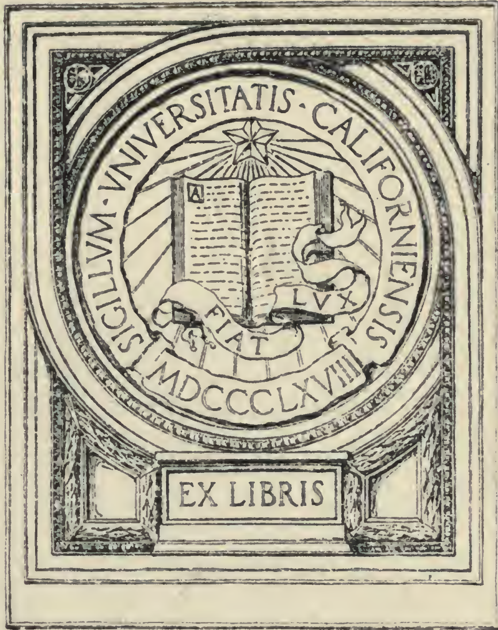
THE LIFE AND VENTURES OF THE ORIGINAL JOHN JACOB ASTOR

ELIZABETH L. GEBHARD



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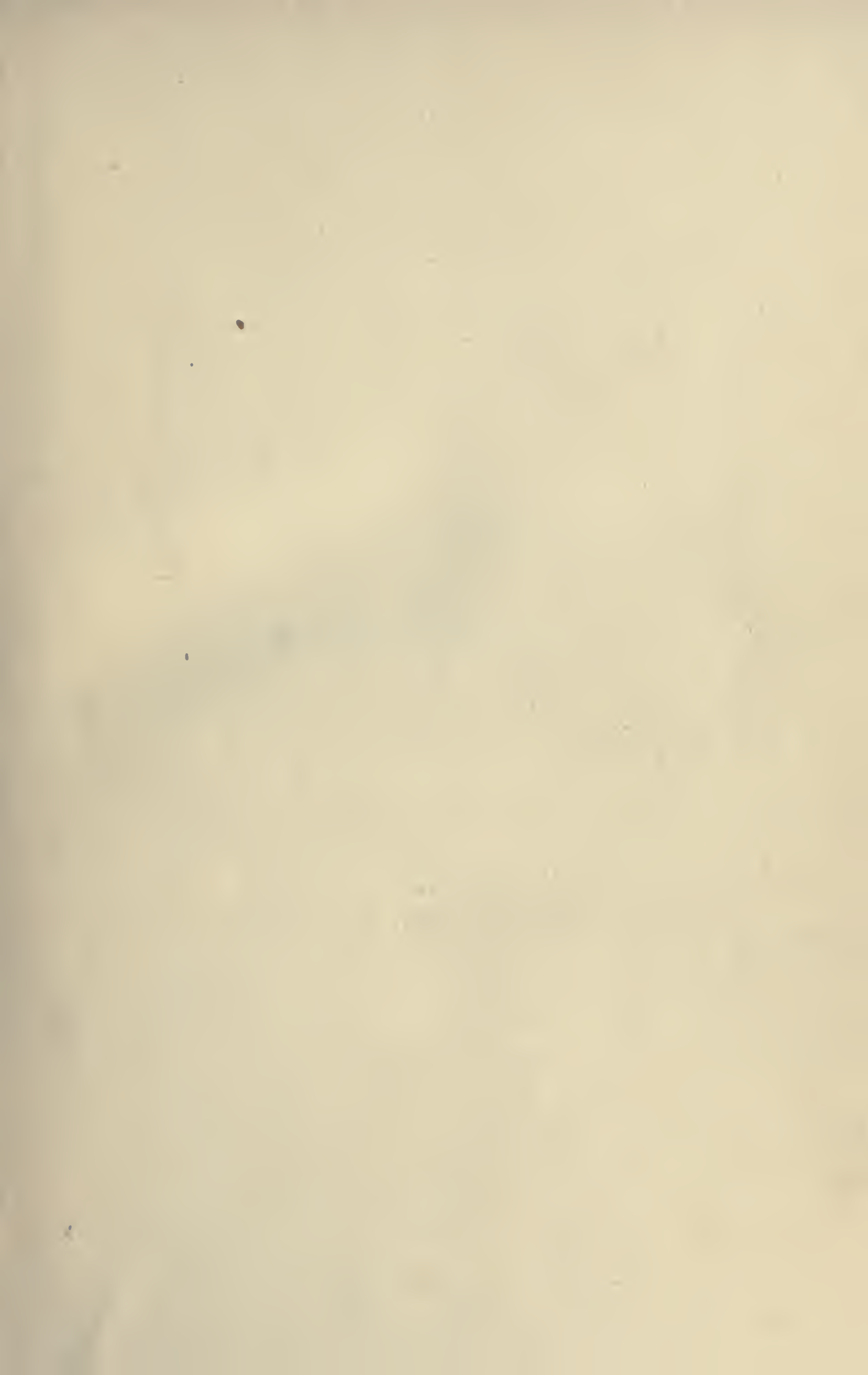

The Life and Ventures

of the original

John Jacob Astor

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John Jacob Astor

The Life and Ventures
OF THE ORIGINAL
JOHN JACOB ASTOR

By ELIZABETH L. GEBHARD

Author of "The Parsonage Between Two Manors."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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ELIZABETH L. GEBHARD

U. C.
ACADEMY OF
PACIFIC COAST
HISTORY

TO THE BOYS

WHO COURAGEOUSLY WORK THEIR OWN WAY

THIS BOOK IS

APPRECIATIVELY DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

John Jacob Astor was pre-eminently the opener of new paths, a breaker of trails. From his first tramp alone through the Black Forest of Baden, at sixteen, his life never lost this typical touch. In America, both shores of the Hudson, and the wilderness to the North-west knew his trail. The trees of the forests west of the Mississippi were blazed by his hunters and trappers; and his partners and agents planted through this vast region the flag of the American Fur Company. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were invisibly lined by the path of his vessels. His were the first American ships to habitually circle the globe, trading around the earth. With his far-sighted vision withdrawn from distant scenes, and centered on Manhattan Island, he led the way toward the upbuilding of the largest, and most important city in the new world.

Emboldened by Walter Barrett, the racy writer of "Old Merchants of New York," who assures his readers, that "no man would enjoy the publication of the true facts concerning his life, more than Mr. Astor, himself, were he alive," I have not hesitated to give the initial steps in this great man's career, feeling that humble and arduous as they were, they held the key-note to his later successes.

Whoever breaks for his fellows new and valuable

paths, serves his countrymen and the generations which come after him in a peculiar manner. It has been my endeavor to give some history of John Jacob Astor's service in this direction, in the pages which follow, as well as to offer some account of the personal character, aspirations and ideals, which governed this remarkable man.

In compiling this history, the writer has gleaned information from many sources. Letters and descriptions written from Waldorf, Germany, have made the little town very real. A Chronicle of the House of Waldorf; The Journal of Rev. Johann Heinrich Helffrich, (A diary of his voyage across the Atlantic in 1771); The Records of the German Reformed Church in New York; and an article on John Jacob Astor, in Harper's, 1865, have all shed light on the German side of John Jacob Astor's life.

Beside these, I have consulted: Old Merchants of New York, by Walter Barrett, Clerk; (Joseph A. Scoville); The Astor Genealogy, by Joel Munsell's Sons; The Todd Genealogy; National Encyclopedia of American Biography; Historic Families of America, by Walter W. Spooner; Prominent Families of New York, edited by L. H. Weeks; Famous Families of New York, by Margherita Arlina Hamm; John Jacob Astor, by William Waldorf Astor, Pall Mall Magazine,

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The Life and Ventures of the Original John Jacob Astor

CHAPTER I.

A PIVOTAL DAY.

IT was Palm Sunday in Waldorf in the spring of 1777. A long line of boys and girls walked in procession down the village street toward the Protestant Church. The girls were in white, and the boys in their best suits. Above their heads, birds were singing, and within the fence palings one could see early spring blossoms, in the flower gardens for which the village was famous.

John Jacob Astor walked in the boys' column till they reached the church door, and disappeared under the entrance, which read: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." John Jacob, in common with the other young people confirmed that day, had been taught to read and write, to

cipher as far as the "Rule of Three," to learn the catechism by heart, and sing the church hymns,—according to the mandates of Valentine Jeune, their school teacher,—"so that the windows should rattle." In all these accomplishments the boy was proficient, and his teacher felt a pardonable pride in him, not only in the examination which took place within the church that morning, but also in those studies which did not come under the Rev. John Philip Steiner's eye.

After the children had all been examined, the rite of confirmation was administered, and they partook of their first communion. It was a momentous occasion for all these young people. It meant the end of school life for many of them, and the beginning of larger things. As they came out into the noon sunshine after it was all over, one could see in their faces mingled relief and awe. Their fourteen-year-old mile-stone was passed, and in some of their countenances there was a look of eager expectancy toward the future. John Jacob's face held no such hopeful expression as he moved forward among the rest. When he had turned about, one saw that he was a stout, sinewy lad, with a well-developed forehead and deep-set eyes, and a firmness about the mouth and chin which balanced the patience in his glance. He also had his boyish dreams, but they were unlikely of fulfillment, so this time of elation to others,

was but one more day of endurance to him.

Confirmation Day always closed with festivity, and in the gathering of kinsfolk, many plans were laid for the future of the young graduates. Part of the boys and girls were to become servants; others were to be apprenticed; while a very few left the village school for seats of broader learning.

Becoming an apprentice in a German town of those days, was like sending a boy to an individual tutor of mechanics. The expense of his education in his chosen field, or that which his parents had selected for him, varied according to the occupation. A master-carpenter or blacksmith charged his apprentice a premium of sixty or seventy dollars to teach him his trade, a cabinet-maker asked one hundred, and it was useless for a boy to aspire to be the maker of musical instruments or clocks, unless his father was able, and willing, to pay at least two hundred dollars for his education in this special callling.

This Palm Sunday saw John Jacob's final appeal to his father, in regard to his start in life. He did not want to be a servant or a common laborer, and his father had laid up no money toward apprenticing his youngest son to some master mechanic. In fact, Jacob Astor, John Jacob's father, had no wish for his son to follow any business but his own, which was that of a

butcher. He needed the boy, especially in the approaching harvest, and it was not his way to make plans far ahead. To John Jacob's entreaties, he turned a deaf ear, and baffled and disappointed, the lad felt himself condemned to an occupation he hated, without present remuneration, or future hope.

John Jacob's life during his first thirteen years had held much that was jarring and disappointing, and only a very scant amount of the usual joys of boyhood. Jacob Astor, as has been said, was a butcher by trade, and felt it to be a business that any man might embrace with content, and even self-congratulation. As it was carried on in Waldorf, it contained certain emoluments and pleasurable accompaniments dear to the elder Astor's jovial soul. That which it lacked, he did not concern himself about. His happy-go-lucky disposition did not trouble itself unduly with the vicissitudes of life. Fresh meat was considered a luxury in Waldorf and the vicinity. It was a custom for every farmer to provide a fatted pig or calf for the harvesting. As this joyful season approached, the village butcher traveled about the neighborhood, stopping a day or two at each farm to kill the waiting stock, and convert the meat into appetizing sausages, bacon, and salted beef. A reputation for ability in this direction, made the butcher a welcome guest at the merry-mak-

ings, and Jacob Astor's life, through the six weeks of harvesting, was full of a certain type of homage, and successive weeks of conviviality.

By far the larger part of the year, however, followed the harvest, and during this time Jacob Astor's business dropped to its lowest ebb, and the larder at home corresponded with the decline in trade. These seasons of scarcity were relieved, occasionally, by the great church days—Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, baptisms and weddings,—or when a birthday overtook a member of some family, prosperous enough to make a feast, and call in Jacob Astor's services. John Jacob had accompanied his father since he was a child, on these annual tours through the neighborhood, but did not find in them an inspiring life work.

Still, childhood under the most adverse conditions has many alleviations. There had been three other boys in the Astor household, George, Henry, and John Melchior, and while the four boys were home, and their mother lived, they all found times of enjoyment, and loyal interest in their native home and surroundings.

But each of the older ones, in turn, had left his village home to seek his fortune. The eldest boy was the first to go. He had made his way to London, where he had an uncle engaged in the business of making musical instruments, under the firm name of Astor and

Broadhead. Henry Astor went next, across the ocean to the "New Land" beyond the sea, and lastly John Melchior found employment in Germany. Only little John Jacob was left, and he, as well as the older three, had inherited his mother's industrious and economical ways, and longed to use them in some profitable calling.

That the mother of John Jacob was possessed of a strong character, marked capability, and sterling virtues, was amply shown in the starting of four sons, in the midst of untoward surroundings, toward successful and honorable manhood.

Waldorf

CHAPTER II.

THE FOREST VILLAGE ON THE OLD ROMAN ROAD.

WALDORF was one of seven "forest villages," bordering an old military road of the Romans, which led from Spires to Italy. The names of the seven towns through which the old road passed, suggested a still earlier and Celtic origin. In 638 only a hunting castle stood upon the site of Waldorf. Later a number of dwellings were erected around the castle, and in 750 a church was built. In the middle ages the little town had been surrounded by a wall.

John Jacob Astor was five years old when the forest villages refused their share of the labor in reconstructing the Waldorf toll-bridge, claiming that the road was a public highway. Surely this road had earned the name of a public thoroughfare through successive centuries of service. In the years which followed the revolt regarding the toll-bridge, John Jacob often heard the ownership of the road, and obligations concerning familiar objects, discussed in this land grown hoary with age.

In such a region there was much to awaken a boy's curiosity, and set his thoughts to speculating on those who had lived here before him. It is easy to imagine that the time-honored names, which the boy found already attached to various places in and about the little town, had been the gathering places of generations of children; and that he, in turn, found that "the boys' path" led woodward way, that the "row of trees", the "middle stone", the "fire-hedge", and the "thorn hedge," referred to places he would like to know, and that "behind the castle," and "the gypsy place" still held mysterious charms for the children of Waldorf, as they had for the children before them. What boy does not know all the paths that lead to the interesting objects in his neighborhood?

The town had many acres of forest, tall beech and oak trees, luring the young people to their cool depths on half hoildays. Among the trees was one that had a story of its own. It was called the Carl-Louis beech, since the Elector Carl-Louis, on a hunting trip, had once taken two young beeches, a black and a white, and twisted them together, till they had grown like one tree, and only showed a small opening near the ground.

There were other matters of mystery further in the wood. Old walls, places where the walls were caved in, subterranean passages, well-pipes, remnants of

earthern jars with the name of the maker, "Victorinus," upon them, and Roman coins of different sizes, all dated far back, some of them to the time of the Emperors.

John Jacob and his brothers had delighted in the discovery of these relics of armies that had passed that way, and earlier peoples, who had inhabited their land, as an American boy does to-day in the stone arrow heads of our own Indians. But over the three mounds in the town forest the most speculation ran rife. Were they old burial places? When did the people begin to call them "the three little hills?" To be sure there were more than three mounds, but there were three that rose high above the remainder of the fourteen hills, and between them all ran the forest road.

These mounds gave favorable limits for a race, elevations from which to spy out a boy hiding from his comrades in the forest, opportunities for an embryo orator to address his audience, or a would-be general to order the march of his men down the very road the Romans had trod in the centuries past. In fact, these mounds, with their crowns of trees, were among Waldorf's glories, and a gathering place for her boyish population, until the sun sank low and the shadows lengthened, and some lad with a more imaginative temperament than the rest, grew fluent in regard to the

old warriors probably lying under their feet, when the groups would scatter, and the mounds be left in solitude, their silent curves forming dark landmarks under the stars.

John Jacob had left his cold shivers over these "little hills" years behind him, and leagues away, when it was really proven that beneath the hard-beaten sand of one hill, a dense, hard, yellow clay formed a tomb, within which a woman's skeleton had lain for centuries. Two jewels were found upon her breast, and her hands and arms were stretched straight down at her sides. A larger mound contained a more capacious grave—that of a warrior. A single-bladed knife lay diagonally across his body, one arm bent toward it,—so keeping in touch with his trusty weapon, even in death. Two metal buttons, adorned with rosettes of some white substance resembling gypsum, lay near his feet, evidently having ornamented, or held together some foot covering. At the belt and shoulder were other metal decorations, and a gold ear-ring near his left ear.

Some fragments of vessels of a very primitive make, unglazed, with black and red stripes on the outside, lay scattered about the grave. A large bone of some animal, probably placed there as a "dead man's meal" lay between his legs. Under the skeleton of this mighty man of long ago, had been placed various bones of

larger and smaller animals, all of which had passed through the consecrating fire of sacrifice, before the distinguished person had been laid to rest upon them. Could the boys who played on the mounds in John Jacob's time, have known of the discoveries to be made under their feet, it is probable many a boyish hand would have made the earliest excavations.

The Astor boys looked forward eagerly to the annual street fairs of Waldorf, which emptied the houses of the little town while they lasted, and turned both old and young into the open air. At these times the narrow streets, paved with stone from house to house, were almost impassable. Everything was offered for sale from cheap gewgaws to family Bibles. Waldorf, with its windows filled with flowering plants, and its long, sloping, red-tiled roofs, with tiny windows reaching to the peaks, made a picturesque background for these festive yearly sales. The events of the street fairs, and the purchases made then, were talked over for many a day afterward, certain articles of utility and ornament in the homes always dating back to some one of these annual celebrations.

Some of the family Bibles bought at street fairs in Germany reached America. Descendants of the Conrad family of Philadelphia have in their possession a rare old family Bible bought at a Frankfort street fair,

a translation of Martin Luther's, handsomely illuminated and illustrated. The book gives not only a record of the early ancestors of the family, but also the name of the vessel in which they sailed to America, and of the Captain and crew. The account of the passage includes the hymns sung, and prayers offered on the voyage.

John Jacob sometimes carried grain to the old Thorn Mill with its four water wheels. Hovering around the mill, and watching the water dash over the wheels, paid for a hot walk with a heavy bag upon one's shoulder. It had been an ancient law that the town of Waldorf was to furnish a scale and provide a box alongside of the mill. In this box the miller was to keep a constant supply of flour. When the boy took grain to be ground he placed it on the scale, but he did not return with it the same day. According to the rule of the mill, he was to make a second trip for his flour on the third day after, finding it in the same place.

If the town failed to keep a scale, then the miller was to ride from door to door, while the grain was loaded on his wagon, and he in turn, was expected to return it ground to its owner on the third day after.

There were acres of vineyards, meadows, fields and sand-pits, flower-gardens and vegetable gardens, in Waldorf; and, forestalling the day when the waste lands should be watered by irrigation, Waldorf's

chronicler mentions among its blessings, "seventeen acres of brooks and ditches".

John Jacob was accustomed to the holding of large estates by his neighbors. One manner of dividing these great farm holdings was by "marking stones," which occasionally bore the armorial design of the family who owned the estate. One of John Jacob Astor's own name, Felix Astor, is noted as leasing an estate for hunting purposes; while in 1741, "Mr. Astor, landlord of the Lion Inn" bought a "small lordly Manor," which formerly belonged to the vintage of Wersau.

Records of the Astor family give evidence that John Jacob Astor's ancestors were French Huguenots, driven like many of their kind, upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, to find refuge in Germany. In the family history still further back, there had been brave Knights, who risked all, even life itself, in fighting against superior forces for a cherished ideal.

The residence of the Astor family in Germany had begun three generations before the boy's time, and John Jacob's small world was filled with the traditions, events, and diversions of the "seven forest villages," which also afforded him his outlook on life.

CHAPTER III.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL AND THE OLD CHURCH BELLS.

THE Rev. Johann Stumpf, who was the minister in charge of the Roman Catholic Church in Waldorf about the middle of the eighteenth century, was so impressed with the healthful climate, and material advantages of the town, that he put himself on record in a number of Latin verses, whose translation gives us some insight into the advantages John Jacob Astor gained by spending his boyhood days in Baden.

"Walldorf, a market place of the Palatinate,
A beautiful and nourishing place—may God preserve Walldorf,
An incomparable place, because no word rhymes with Walldorf.
If the people of Waldorff are called "Maerker",
(Those who derive benefits from a common wood-lot)
The people of Walldorf are thereby only lauded and praised.
They listen to God and His word,
And this is something that pleases God;

Everybody wants to live at the place having five
"W's,"
And Walldorf is well-favored by God for this,
For it has all the five "W's" together—
(Walt, Waiz, Wein, Wasser, Weid)
Woods, wheat, wine, water, and hunting grounds.
The people of Walldorf are happy people;
God be praised, Walldorf has many gifts;
May God keep Walldorf in his grace,
Through the merits of St. Peter, the patron-saint,
As written, 2. Peter 1:15."

The poet added to his verses the following explanation:

"Johann Stumpf was pastor in Walldorf for twenty-five years, and in honor of Walldorf, and out of love for it, he has written the above verses in the famous year of war and death 1734."

The seal of the town of Waldorf honored the oak tree, and further Latin verses dwelt upon this fact, including a touch of history. In translation they read:

" 'What does the vow under the oak tree signify'? I
ask the seal.
The oak signifies the strength of the vow.
Truly, he is a healthy person, who is as healthy as the
oak tree;
There is scarcely a place as healthy as Walldorf.

The air is agreeable to every gentleman, no matter
what the condition of his body is.
It is said that oaks attain an age of five hundred years.
Walldorf existed long before the city of Heidelberg.
The age of Walldorf has been, and is, and will be like
that of the oak;
O, that the days of my life were so deeply rooted, and
of such long duration!
See the archives of the church!
See the court-records!''

The Rev. Johann Stumpf's satisfaction with his parish has given us a vivid picture of the superiority of John Jacob Astor's native town.

The school which John Jacob attended through his childhood, was founded by the Church, and was served alternately by Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran school teachers, according as each party was dominant in the state for the time. The boy was most fortunate in having Valentine Jeune, one of the best of the pedagogues of that day, fall to his lot. The teacher of the village school was a French Protestant, like John Jacob's own ancestors. He had fled from his country during the reign of Louis XIV. Valentine Jeune was a progressive and sympathetic teacher, and bestowed a generous amount of personal attention upon his scholars. Together with the Rev. John Philip

Steiner, the Protestant minister of Waldorf, he succeeded in indelibly planting the doctrines of the Reformation in the minds of his pupils, which principles swayed John Jacob Astor's life to its close.

The school was supported by the town, but every child added his mite, as he came each day laden with two sticks of wood.

One of the objects that attracted John Jacob's attention on the way to school, was the old bell-tower of the Roman Catholic Church. The lad's interest in the bells of his town was equal to that of all his kind. What boy does not climb a bell-tower before he has reached manhood? Who among them does not long to feel his hand on the bell-rope, and be responsible in his own strength and muscle, for the peals which ring out over the house-tops and die away in the valleys?

John Jacob's attachment to the bells of Waldorf was intensified by the stories of the old men of the village, who made their clanging music the key-note of many a tale of the past. There were three bells in the old Roman Catholic Church tower when John Jacob was a boy. The heathen tribes had rung these same three bells, when they lived in this vicinity, before the Christian religion was introduced. The sweet sounds had floated over hills, and wound their way through grassy dells in honor of some pagan goddess, till they

reached the groves and forests, the heaths and mountains where the early Germans loved to worship. It was easy to pass from the tales of the bells to the wonders of the mythical past, and the boys half believed still in the elves and nixies, dwarfs and giants, which had pervaded the earth and air and water in the old heathen days.

These bells had rung out paeans of rejoicing over the early Christian Gospel, and pealed for Roman Catholic dominion. Nearer to John Jacob's own time they had sounded brave notes for the Reformation.

The three bells had not always kept each other company, though one might have thought them welded together by centuries of united action. During the thirty years' war, the two larger bells were taken to Philippsburg by the enemy, and held in the arsenal there, to the grief of the villagers. During the war only the small bell was left in the tower to call the people to worship, or ring out the scant causes of rejoicing during these troublous years.

The time came, however, when the captive bells were redeemed for one hundred florins, and brought back to Waldorf. Alas! the bell-tower had been struck by lightning and burned, while bereft of its music, so for many years the bells stood silent in the church, while a generation grew up who had never heard their sweet

chimes, and looked upon their silent forms as relics of the past, whose mission had been accomplished.

But with the return of peace, a sense of safety, of recurring crops unspoiled by an alien army, and of dawning prosperity, turned the villagers' thoughts toward homely joys once more. They would rebuild the old tower and hang the bells in their places. As in days gone by, they should be the key-note of the town's rejoicing.

So it came about that John Jacob Astor was more fortunate than the children of the thirty years' war, or of the years immediately succeeding it. He grew up with the chimes of the old bells in his ears. He had heard them peal in times of rejoicing, and listened to them toll in times of grief. They were alive to him, as to every other boy in the village, with love of home and native land, with the sweep of enthusiasm, or the wail of woe. Their musical notes pulsed through his heart, and found there answering echoes.

Waldorf was rich in history, pleasant in situation, healthful, and full of matters of interest to a boy, yet John Jacob Astor longed to leave it for a broader life, a wider horizon.

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING YEARS.

THE two years succeeding his fourteenth birthday were somber cycles of time for young Astor. It was a time when his thoughts ran riot, aims and aspirations and longings overtaking each other, and stretching out longing arms into the future. Life seemed full of boundless possibilities, always just beyond his reach. These visions haunted him night and day, tormenting him in proportion to his inability to take one step forward, or cherish one tangible hope. He felt like a prisoner in his own town, a captive in his own home.

The life of the village ceased to interest him. Where once he had felt loyal pride in her institutions, now all seemed flat and tasteless. Nor was this state of mind produced entirely by disappointed ambition. The boy had much natural cause for depression. Within a few years his mother had died, and his father had married again. As an old chronicler puts it, the new wife "loved not Jacob or John Jacob."

The wife and mother in this hap-hazard household had been its mainspring and inspiration. From his

mother John Jacob had received most that made his life worth living. Her provident, industrious ways had caused their little to go as far as possible, and had surrounded her youngest son with a sense of warm-hearted affection, which created a home atmosphere, and in some measure made up to him for the scantily furnished larder.

There had been little ones added to the family in these later years, but there was no increase in the exchequer. So unhappy was life in his own home, that rather than sleep in his own bed, young Astor often spent the night with a friend, preferring to rise before daylight, in order to appear at his own door, ready to assist his father at the accustomed hour.

During these years he formed the habit of absenting himself from the social gatherings of friends, and in his hours of leisure went away to brood by himself. There were doubtless many reasons why it was not easy for him to join in the village festivities, and possibly in these seasons of loneliness, his thoughts fled across the seas, and for a time he forgot the adverse conditions about him.

Letters were not frequent in those days, but when they came, they bore momentous news—family stories covering long periods, tales of thrilling adventure, and accounts of how the world was making history. John

Jacob boasted in after years, that he had once walked forty-five miles to get a letter that had come from a brother in England or America. It was thought that the news of Burgoyne's surrender lighted a spark in the boy's mind, that burned secretly brighter and brighter, till he at last left his German home.

A spark of hope from any favorable source was invaluable to him just at this time, for there were still two long years before him, full of patient effort to assist his father in the business he so disliked, and also to fulfill home duties in such a way as to conciliate his step-mother. One of these home duties was the care of the little sisters who had come with baby gladness into this depressing home.

Though all beside failed the boy, though there was no one at this important period of his life whose thought was bent either on his happiness or advancement, the baby sisters were like stars of promise of good things to come. The warm, affectionate nature of the lonely lad went out to his little charges, and the feeling of a soft baby hand in his hardened boyish palm, struck straight to his heart, melting the bitter feelings which his environment engendered. He could always be trusted to care for the children.

It has been seen that occasional letters came to the Astor family from England and America. There was

THE OLD REFORMED CHURCH AT WALDORF

A WALDORF HOUSE
WITH ITS HIGH PEAKED ROOF
Photographs Taken by the Rev. John G. Gebhard, D. D.

also another source of information regarding the "New Land," which kept its memory bright in John Jacob's heart.

The year the boy was born, July 17th, 1763, the Rev. John Frederick Gebhard, the old pastor of the Reformed Church of Waldorf, died, and the Rev. Philip Steiner succeeded him. The old pastor had baptised the three older Astor boys, and for years counted the Astor family among his parishioners. After his death, his widow stayed on at Waldorf for some years, with her children. Her eldest son, John Gabriel Gebhard, was thirteen years John Jacob Astor's senior, so when he left Waldorf for a college course in Heidelberg University, John Jacob was but a little fellow of five years old.

Heidelberg was only about eight miles from Waldorf, and John Gebhard came and went to and from his mother's home, on holidays and at other convenient times. A college student always brings a touch of the college life back with him to his home town, and Heidelberg was rich in interest over and above the usual university student's stories.

Young as he was, John Jacob's eyes would open wide at the tale of the great tun in the cellar of the Schloss, on which the students were wont to climb. A barrel thirty-six feet long, and twenty-four feet high would

hold many a student upon its curved outer surface, as well as forty-nine thousand gallons within. It had only been built about a dozen years when John Jacob was born, so it was still a great and recent wonder to the young people of that day.

A Waldorf boy would glory in the magnificence of Heidelberg Castle, rather than listen to tales of imaginary grandeur. It had been struck by lightning when John Jacob was a baby, and by this time had become one of the grandest ruins in Germany.

After his course at Heidelberg, young Gebhard studied theology for a season in the University of Utrecht, and there he met John Henry Livingston, from America, a most able young man, and an earnest student. Naturally, word of the young American theologian of good family reached Waldorf, and the trip across the ocean seemed the more possible, because the ocean was being crossed both ways.

When John Jacob was eight years old, their old pastor's son set sail for America. His mother was almost heart-broken, yet laid no hand upon him to detain him, giving her best to the service of God. The heart of his father's old congregation was with the young minister in his momentous undertaking, and equally with the mother in this great separation. John Jacob was not

likely to forget that day, or the wave of sympathy that swept the village.

The going of the Rev. John Gabriel Gebhard to America was the more note-worthy, since he went in company with two other young men, John Helffrich and John Helffenstein, half-brothers, who had also been students of the University of Heidelberg.

The three Johns were going to preach the Gospel in the "New Land," not a foreign land in the usual language of missions, but to carry the good tidings of salvation from the birthland of the Reformation to the "New Land," whose population was growing rapidly, but whose clergymen were few. They all signed themselves, as was common at that period, "V. D. M." Ministers, or Servants of the Word of God.

John Helffrich kept a journal of the voyage, whose main points doubtless were retold to the Helffrich and Gebhard homes, and were shared by friends in the native towns of all three young men.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN HELFFRICH'S JOURNAL.

THE type of information that came back to the waiting youths in the old world, who longed to make the great venture and cross the seas, is to be found in John Helffrich's journal.

The three young ministers set sail from Amsterdam on September 6th, 1771, "at nine o'clock in the morning," as Helffrich accurately states. At twelve the same day they stuck fast on a bar, and needed a ship of lighter tonnage to tow them off. The second day they ran into so severe a storm that all fires were put out, and the Captain's baby was fed upon soup cooked over a lighted tallow candle. Their initial troubles were not yet over, for they collided with a ship, which struck them "once real hard before they had left the dangerous Zuyder Zee."

A touch of humor ensues as the young Domine sets down: "Sept. 16th. Arrived at the harbor of New Castle. Sept. 17th. We went on shore with the 'Chalaise.' Here we were constantly followed by a crowd of people. They kissed the baby. We were expected to kiss theirs."

Almost every other entry tells of wind and storm, violent rocking of the ship, no sleep and a second collision. On Sunday, the 6th of October, "in company with a large number of ships" they "sailed with the tide out of the harbor into the North Sea." So terrible was the storm, young Helffrich states, "that the sails were furled, the top masts were taken down, the helm was lashed and the ship was given over to the mercy of the wind and waves. The waves came rolling mountain high; soon we were in the heights; soon in the depths; soon on one side; soon on the other, the waves beating into the cabin." Many chickens and ducks were lost, and the passengers felt it was fortunate that their ship was a strong one.

"It was terrible to hear the roaring of the wind and the waves. When the waves struck the vessel, they sounded like the thunder and roar of cannons, and we committed ourselves altogether to the Divine Providence."

The distance they should have covered in three days had taken fourteen, but at last on the morning of October 21st they sighted France and England, and entered the English Channel without further mishap. Here they discovered that more than one hundred ships had been wrecked during the recent storms.

For a time there were quieter days, then on Novem-

ber 9th, once more they were in the teeth of a gale, the passengers in the haste and danger helping to furl the sails. Twice they were struck by whirlwinds, breaking the cabin windows, drenching Mr. Gebhard, and causing his companions to betake themselves quickly to the tops of chests and trunks.

Their fears were increased by the Captain's orders to load their guns. The only guns available at the moment were two, a double-barrel and a single-barrel, the possessions of Dr. Doll, a cousin of Mr. Helffrich's. The danger proved to be from "a water-spout towering up to the sky," endangering their vessel should it descend upon them. The method of dispersing these water-spouts was by separating the air by shooting off guns. The young theologian was not content with the German name alone, but gave in this instance, and various other cases, the Latin for the phenomena seen.

A diversion was caused a few days later by the Captain, pilot, cabin boy and three sailors diving into the ocean and taking a swim, evidently doing some special stunts for the benefit of the passengers, as they "swam on back, and side, and stomach, stood up in the water, and even turned somersaults."

On the West Sea (the Atlantic) they encountered another great storm, and "the cook was swept away from his fire-place and almost washed overboard."

They had now been on the ocean more than two months and food was getting scarce. Their last pig but one was killed on the 27th of November. For eight days they had had no veal, only bacon and pease. All the flour they had tried to save was spoiled by the rats, and John Helffrich exclaims, "What shall become of us! But God will help."

A passenger and a sailor were let down the ship's side for a swim, but did not go far, for they found themselves near a school of man-eating fishes.

They had a little skirmish with a French ship, whose Captain called upon them to run up their flag, and threatened them with his loaded cannon. The Captain of the German ship assured his passengers, had the French Captain fired, "he would have taken his wind from him, grappled with his ship and settled the matter in a hand-to-hand fight." But the French vessel, fortunately, went on its way, with nothing worse in the way of hostile demonstration than threats.

Twice ghostly signs were heard and seen. "Once at evening, while the sails were being turned, the Captain, the pilot, and a German sailor heard, on the middle mast under which they stood, a mournful voice, as though a dying person repeated the words, 'O, yes,' three times, the last very weakly." On another night a sailor saw a woman clad in white on the fore-deck.

December brought more storms. "Part of the fore-mast was broken, and much cordage was torn." The center of the middle-mast was cracked, and the ship's "cut-water" (prow) was broken. The food was also growing less and less palatable.

A pleasant event a week later, was the catching of their first fish on a hook, a dolphin weighing forty or fifty pounds. The "half-starved ship's load" found the food most appetizing. In the stomach of the dolphin was a flying fish. A young whale also sported about the ship, whose length was about forty feet. He was gray above and green underneath. Later, they ran into a great school of man-eating fishes, as far as eye could reach.

Christmas day was unhappily emphasized by increased hunger and thirst. On that day they began to divide the water, two and one-half cups apiece. Out of this portion each person was expected to give a part for his tea and soup. Added to this was a small glass of wine. Their thirst, increased by the salt and putrid meat, of which they were scarcely allowed enough to keep soul and body together, was almost unendurable. A few pease were left which they had twice a week. A common variety of food was a soup made of chopped cold meat, biscuit and water.

They were really suffering by this time, and still

ten days from New York if all went well. Soon after this they hailed a ship from Boston, bound for the south on a whaling expedition, and their Captain found he had only missed his bearings by a few miles all through the voyage.

Passing another water-spout on January 31st, they "prayed devoutly that God might keep it from them." Young Helffrich sets down on this last night of the old year: "To-night at seven o'clock, twelve o'clock at home, we wished the friends a "Happy New Year!" During the first week of the new year they encountered a fierce storm, and "the waves frequently swept the fore-deck." A final disaster was the washing overboard of the last pig. The storm tore the top-sail, but, by good fortune, drove them toward land.

The last three entries after their long, stormy voyage, are briefly full of the happiness of successful consummation.

"Jan. 13th. This morning we saw the shores of New Jersey. At eight o'clock this evening we saw the light of a tower on the shore. It is lighted every evening to guide the ships. We ran hard by a sand-bank at twelve o'clock this night, and to our great joy, cast our anchor in the harbor."

"Jan. 14th. In the morning at eight o'clock we entered the harbor, and at two o'clock we were on the land in America."

The following sentence closes this brief but vivid account of a long and hazardous sea voyage.

"Thou, God, hast helped us through the storm and tempest.
Help us also in that which we here propose to do."

The substance of such a diary, sent home to Waldorf in the guise of a letter, furnished conversation over the counters, and in the fields, and by the firesides, for many a day, and a boy with his heart set on adventure, would thrill with the wonders and dangers of the deep, held back in the dark hours of the night by awe of storm and hunger, mutiny and man-eating fishes; pressed forward in the daylight, by the fierce charm of the sea, and the wonders of distant shores.

John Jacob Astor fed on every scrap of news regarding the "New Land" which came to him, forgetting while the dream lasted, his own inability to take a step toward it. Life's vision was large in those days, even though the daily environment was cramped and strained.

John Helffrich, who wrote his journal of a four-months' voyage, said little regarding himself and his companions, being absorbed in the wonders unfolding before him. Waldorf, watching in the account for news of their young townsman, would find it only in the scant references to numerous times when John Gebhard stayed long on the deck in the teeth of a coming storm, or clung to the cabin window which commanded a circumscribed outlook upon the raging ele-

ments, and so, over and over again, evidently to his companions' enjoyment, got a thorough wetting with sea water. The two Johns, who were brothers, seem to have been of a more cautious temperament, taking their stations near trunks and chests which furnished high ground in time of deluge.

After a long interval, Waldorf learned that John Gebhard had sought out John Henry Livingston on his arrival in America, being glad to grasp a familiar hand, and that their old pastor's son had been appointed to the churches of Whitpain and Worcester in Pennsylvania. John Helffenstein found a charge at Germantown, in the same State; while John Helffrich became the capable and self-sacrificing over-shepherd of a group of churches, including Kurtztown, DeLange, Weissenberg, Lowhill, and Heidelberg, in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.

A few years afterward word reached Waldorf, that their young townsman had become the pastor of the German Reformed Church in New York, and John Jacob Astor saw a second link of comradeship in the land of his vision. Some phase of its unreality dropped away with each youth who crossed the ocean, and remained near the well-known seaport of New York.

Through Benjamin Franklin's kind mediation, let-

ters came and went safely to and from the little town and America across the sea.

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVING HOME.

WHEN young Astor was sixteen, his slowly matured plans reached a climax. He had waited two years for muscle to harden and manhood to develop. Now his decision was made. Without money, and without knowing a word of English, John Jacob Astor resolved to go to America. Since there was no hope of financial aid to smooth his passage thither, he set his sagacious head to laying a path for his feet. His plan was to work his way to London, and there spend as long a period as necessary, earning and saving money, and learning the English language.

One of the stories that had floated back from the "New Land" to the old homes, had for its import, the fact that immigrants were viewed in the light of prey on foreign shores, that one needed to be very wise and sharp on his own account, not to be cheated. How could a country lad of Baden hope to compete fairly in such a game, unless he understood the English language, and had some financial backing to make him independent of would-be deceivers? These benefits John Jacob

Astor decided to make his own, before he lifted his foot from the shores of the old world.

Naturally, Jacob Astor tried to hold his last son from leaving home, but when he could no longer move the boy to his way of thinking, he gave a reluctant consent to his departure.

Waldorf was nearly three hundred miles from the sea-port in Holland, from which young Astor would take ship for England, but the little town was also close to the great Black Forest, where large quantities of timber were cut. Instead of being floated, this timber was rowed down the Rhine by sixty or eighty men to a raft. These men were paid generous wages as the work was hard.

John Jacob Astor by this time was a stout, strong youth, very well set up, though a little under size. He felt he could compete successfully with the average oarsman on the Rhine, and in this way earn the money to take him to London.

He set out from home on foot upon the eventful morning, with a bundle of clothes hung from a stick over one shoulder, and about two dollars in his pocket. He meant to walk to the river only a few miles distant. Saying good-bye, at last, wasn't exactly easy, much as he had longed for the day of departure to come. The privations of life in Waldorf grew small

in his eyes, and natural affection for home and kindred threatened to turn his going into a sad event, rather than a joyous release.

His friends watched him out of town, down the road to the Rhine, one more boy leaving his native village to be swallowed up by the great world, or to lift his head above the rest and be heard from again.

Valentine Jeune belonged to the class of school teachers of whom Martin Luther's was an honored example. Luther's teacher was accustomed, when he entered the school room, to bow first to the boys in the room, and next to the girls. "For in these boys before me," he said, "I see the future burgomasters, lawyers, doctors, merchants and theologians of Germany, and in the girls the mothers of great men."

Young Astor's old teacher came to say good-bye with the rest, and as the boy was lost to sight, he turned to those near him, and said: "I am not afraid for John Jacob; he'll get through the world. He has a clear head, and everything right behind the ears."

The composed, intelligent look in the boy's eyes, as he bade his friends good-bye in manly fashion, bore out his teacher's opinion.

Then Waldorf went back to its store-keeping and farming, its brewing and baking, its home-making and

teaching, and its raising of boys, and John Jacob Astor strode on toward the Rhine.

The road over which he walked was cultivated on either side. Early vegetables were putting out green shoots, and the wealth of clover and beautiful wild flowers made a pleasing path for his feet. After a little he passed men and women working in the fields. Loaded carts went by drawn by cows, and children eyed him as they walked along. Each of his fellow countrymen wished him "Guten Morgen," but John Astor hardly heard them. His eyes were full of tears, and his heart thumped till it seemed to fill his throat. His feelings, which he had proudly held in check as he left his home town, had swept back to overwhelm him.

When he reached a secluded place, he sat down under a tree near the road, the red-tiled roofs of Waldorf still in sight in the distance. In spite of the hardships of his boyhood, all that had been dear and uplifting and kindly returned to his remembrance, and met there the current of outgoing aspiration, the flood-tide of hope for the future. The largeness of life took possession of him, and laid hold of the heart of his young manhood. He found himself, under the tree on the Rhine road, and there he made three resolutions: "To

be honest, and industrious, and not to gamble." After that he went on with fresh courage.

The young traveler found other adventurers at the water's edge, also ready to earn their passage to England, as oarsmen on the rafts, for it was a favorite method of covering this part of the journey. Rowing the great logs was hard work, but each oarsman had his hope and his destination.

Most of the workers were young, and all were full of large expectations. Altogether they had a merry time of it, cheering their toil with jokes and songs by night and day. John Jacob entered into the new occupation with enthusiasm, glad of all the muscle he had gained and toughened carrying heavy baskets for his father. Food was supplied them on the journey, and the stop-offs to build camp fires in the forest, with their promise of hot food and drink, were looked forward to as happy oases in the trip.

On the fourteenth day after leaving home, young Astor found himself at a Dutch sea-port (probably Amsterdam) with ten dollars in his pockets, a larger sum of money than he had ever possessed before. He took passage for London, where he landed a few days later, totally unfamiliar with place or language, but fortunate in having an older brother to pave the way for him. Though John Jacob and his brother George had

not seen each other for years, they met with true German warmth, and George Astor assisted his younger brother to procure employment, probably in the flute and piano manufactory of Astor and Broadwood.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

DURING the next four years, John Jacob Astor became what American boys to-day call a "digger." He was not afraid or ashamed of hard work of any kind, but gilded it always with dreams of success ahead. It was the means to a desired end, and nothing was too great a task if it helped him to move toward his ideal.

A Lutheran clergyman of Baden, writing of John Jacob Astor at this time, assures his readers that young Astor brought to London, "A pious, true and godly spirit, a clear understanding, a sound youthful elbow grease, and the wish to put it to good use."

The path to success is divided by mile-stones of possible attainment. During his life in London John Jacob Astor kept three aims before him, or rather four; to earn and save money, to learn the English language, and to obtain all the information he could about America. In entering upon this course of action, he found himself handicapped in having no trade, his wages in consequence being very small. Though he was at work at five in the morning, and labored with

all his might through the day, saving every penny possible, it was nearly four years before he could think of crossing the ocean.

These were years, however, full of tangible benefits outside of earning money. The boy was gaining experience in many ways. Learning the English language was not as difficult as he had anticipated. Spending his days in a work-shop with English mechanics, and having few German friends, he was almost forced to the use of the new tongue. In six weeks he had progressed so far, that he could make himself understood along necessary lines of communication. Before he left London he could speak the English language easily, though keeping the German accent of the Fatherland.

Obtaining trustworthy information about America was more difficult. Maps, geographies and books of travel were scarce, and these few contained many erroneous statements. A home-keeping Englishman of that day, looked upon America as composed of a group of rebellious colonies, making a great ado over a paltry tax, and as markedly disloyal to the mother country. The persuasive eloquence and generous championing of America and her people by Fox and Pitt, Burke and Sheridan in the House of Commons, may have occasionally filtered in sparkling sentences through the work-shops of England, reaching the one in which

John Jacob worked; but his main source of information lay in casual meetings with men who had crossed the Atlantic, or with those who re-told the stories of the voyagers. Naturally many of these tales were of a grotesque character, and unreliable to build upon for future action.

At rare intervals Henry Astor wrote from New York one of his infrequent letters. He was already established as a butcher in a small way, wheeling home his purchases of sheep and calves from the Bull's Head, in a wheel-barrow, and ready to laud America's possibilities to his younger brother.

By September, 1783, John Jacob Astor was possessed of a good suit of clothes cut in the English fashion, and about seventy-five dollars in money, the total result of four years' hard work, strenuous endeavor, and the closest economy.

It was during this month that news reached London, that Dr. Franklin and his associates, after two years of negotiations, had signed the treaty which settled the independence of the United States. Dr. Franklin was fond of predicting that when the independence of America became an accomplished fact, many young men of intelligence, fortune, and family, would seek the shores of the New World in search of the broad careers it would offer.

He did not suspect that a German youth, hardly more than a boy, was waiting the final move in the Treaty of Peace, in a London work-shop, resolved to grasp one of these careers, which the New World held out for those who knew how to take them.

By November, 1783, John Jacob Astor was ready to set sail for Baltimore. He was now twenty years old, and prepared to take the next step in his life plan. His capital for such a venture was small, but he expended it with a wise caution which suggested a clear business head.

A third of his savings he invested in seven flutes. Carrying these with him, he one day approached Captain John Whetten—who at the time was mate—aboard his ship, saying he wished to immigrate to America, and asking for a steerage passage. The mate was pleased with the young German's appearance, and after some little conversation, advised John Astor to sail on another vessel then in port, which would probably offer him a more comfortable berth.

Young Astor took Whetten's advise, and engaged passage in a ship commanded by Captain Jacob Stout, a most popular English Captain, who enjoyed telling in after years, that he first brought over John Jacob Astor to America. The young immigrant paid twenty-five dollars for his passage, preferring the sailor's fare

of salt beef and biscuit to a larger outlay of money. The remainder of his capital, about twenty-five dollars, he carried with him in the form of money.

The joy that welled up in his heart as he felt the planks of the ship beneath his feet, which was to carry him to the land of his heart's desire, lifted him into a new world. The bustle all about him, the smell of tar and briny water, the orders of Captain and mate, the hustling of sailors, and expectant passengers, the creaking of the ship, all became a part of his thrills of joy in having really started his journey to America.

But his time of rejoicing soon passed into days and nights of anxiety. The voyage proved to be as long and tempestuous, as that of the three Johns from his own neighborhood years before. November gales and December storms tried the little craft to its limit, and gave John Astor many uncomfortable days and sleepless nights.

Still the days brought much of interest to the young voyager, besides their vicissitudes. Walking on the quarter deck, near the main hatch, he sometimes overheard the talk of officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, who were aboard. These scraps of conversation, seasoned with adventure, naturally whetted his appetite for more.

They reached Chesapeake Bay in January, 1784, but

found it full of floating ice as far as eye could reach. The winter storms drove the ship crunching in between the ice cakes till it seemed as if she would be broken to pieces. On one occasion of great danger, young Astor appeared on deck dressed in his new English suit, answering the surprise of his fellow passengers with the remark, that if he escaped with his life he would save his best clothes, and if he lost his life, his clothes would be of no further use to him.

When they were within one day of port, the wind died down, the cold increased, and in the morning they found themselves hard-locked in a sea of ice. For two months they were ice-bound, and presumably young Astor exchanged his highly valued suit of clothes for one less prized.

Provisions gave out, and the passengers were only relieved when the ice extended to the shore, and became strong enough for safety in passing to other ships, and to the land. Many of the passengers were venturesome enough to start shoreward over the rough, uneven surface. Picking their way landward, in the face of the biting wind, sometimes with the sunshine on their backs, often with the fine ice crystals cutting their faces, they at length reached shore, and journeyed by land to their destinations.

This method of traveling was not within the means

of young Astor, and he was obliged to remain by the ship. Two months are a long time to wait, with good fortune possibly turning her favors in other directions, since the would-be venturer is not at hand. However, both ice-locked ships and frozen harbors sometimes hold fortune in their grasp, and John Jacob Astor's preparation for the new life was not hindered by these seeming obstacles.

Among the passengers in the same plight with himself, was a German with whom young Astor had made acquaintance during the voyage. Speaking the same tongue drew them together, and each confided to the other much of his past history, and future hopes. The stranger had also been an immigrant to America a few years before. He had bought furs from the Indians and boatmen coming to New York from the river villages. At length he had gathered together quite a little capital, all of which he invested in skins, and took them himself to England, where he sold them at a large profit. The proceeds he invested in toys and trinkets, with which to continue the trade on his return.

Day by day, as they waited for the ice to break up, the two young men discussed the fur trade, his fellow passenger, after strongly advising John Jacob Astor to take up the business, initiating him in many of its important points. He told him of the respective prices

of skins in America and London; instructed him where to buy, how to preserve, pack, and transport the peltries. He gave him the names of special dealers in New York, Montreal and London, and told him the season of the year when furs were most abundant.

All this was most interesting to young Astor, but it seemed to him to call for a greater capital than he possessed. It was a surprise to him to learn that with a basket of toys, or even cakes, a man could buy valuable skins on the wharves, and in the country near the city, which could be sold with profit to New York furriers. But better than this, when it could be arranged, was a connection with a London house, where furs brought four or five times the amount of their cost in America.

For the first time in his life, John Jacob Astor had an opportunity to learn a trade without the stipulated premium he had always lacked. He was learning a business in the middle of an icy bay, with his workshop an ice-bound ship, and for a teacher a fellow-passenger with himself.

Young Astor determined to lose no time when the occasion offered, to enter this profitable business, and meanwhile laid away carefully the valuable information which had come to him so unexpectedly. The little memorandum book in which he jotted down the

points given him by his fellow traveler, is said to be still in the possession of the Astor family.

The hardest, thickest ice will perforate in time, and waste away in the warmth of the bright sunshine of late winter and early spring. After two months the ice in the Chesapeake grew porous, and broke into broad fields and endless cakes, and then moved out into the ocean. The passengers watched the breaking up with mingled feelings of anxiety and pleasure; but as the water cleared, they hailed the breezes in their sails, and the motion beneath their feet, as release from captivity.

After landing in Baltimore the two friends traveled to New York. The waiting time on shipboard and the journey to the city, had almost exhausted John Jacob Astor's purse, but he still had his seven flutes. Once more in a brother's house, he received a warm welcome, as did also the kindly and generous companion of his voyage.

CHAPTER VIII.

AMERICA.

BENJAMIN Franklin had been right in his prophecy concerning America. There was rejoicing among the liberal-minded in the old world over the signing of the Treaty of Peace, and younger Europe turned its eyes eagerly toward free America. The westward tide set in. Parton, writing of that period, says: "Men of family and fortune; widows seeking chances for their children; young adventurers with small 'ventures' of goods and capital; and hosts of poor men who sold their all, or mortgaged their labor to pay their passage, hastened to embark for the land of promise."

John Jacob Astor found teeming life on every side in New York. His own feet seemed winged as they trod on the soil of this free country, and the joy of himself as a part of the new world went to his head like wine.

His brother Henry lived over his shop, and in his house John Jacob Astor found not only a warm welcome, but experienced counsel. Henry Astor had advanced from the wheel-barrow stage in his business,

and acquired a horse. He had prospered, while the old Tory families and a host of British officers required their tables supplied with fresh meat each day, but with the British evacuation of the town, and the return of the impoverished Whigs, his trade had declined. Nevertheless, he offered his younger brother a position as clerk in his business, but John Jacob, who had fled from the butcher's trade in Waldorf, was not inclined to resume it in this land of opportunity, so he declined the offer, and they considered other occupations.

George Diederich was a German baker, who had known young Astor in his own land. Finding him looking for employment, he engaged him to peddle cakes, cookies and doughnuts. The young man lived for some time in his employer's house in Queen St. (now Pearl). The Diederich house, which had been standing during the Revolutionary war, was a fine old mansion, rich in quaint wood carving, and one of the houses noted for its frequent entertainment of General Washington.

Peddling cookies and doughnuts was a respected occupation of the day. All the large bakers sent their apprentices out to offer for sale these luxuries of the oven. John Jacob had gained some experience in the culinary line at home, and so could help with the baking, as well as serve as a capable salesman. Tradition

says that during his stay with Diederich the latter's business doubled.

The story is told that on one occasion in his later years of prosperity, John Jacob spoke slightingly of the distillery business, which occupation engaged the attention of his sister Catherine, and her husband. Catherine resented it with sisterly frankness, dropping easily into her native brogue. "Yacob vas noding once hisself," she exclaimed, indignantly, "put a paker boy, und solt preat und kak."

One did not hide an aspiration in his heart in America, for someone was continually rubbing one's elbow, who had the like. There was a fellow feeling for great expectations on every side, and John Jacob Astor often found a fellow sympathizer where he least expected it. Everyone had his adventurous story behind him, and his hopes ahead. One of these tales came to young Astor through a fair customer.

Abraham Bininger, whose parents were natives of Zurich, Switzerland, had set sail as a child with his father and mother, a generation before, for Savannah, Georgia. Two days before they landed, both his father and mother died. On the same vessel was the celebrated John Wesley, who saw that the boy was taken to the Whitefield Orphan Asylum, where he was kindly cared for during his childhood.

Later, a large number of Moravians, who immigrated to Philadelphia from the Southern city, carried young Bininger with them, and educated him in their faith. He became a missionary to St. Thomas, in the West Indies. Arriving at his destination, he was told that no one would be allowed to preach to the slaves, who was not a slave himself. Undaunted, he immediately sent a letter to the Governor of St. Thomas, offering to become a slave that he might carry the offer of salvation to the negro race.

His letter eventually reached the King of Denmark, who was so moved by its appeal, that he gave his permission for the young missionary to preach to any class in St. Thomas.

Of this stock came Abraham Bininger, the son of the missionary, who had been apprenticed to a tanner and leather-dresser in "the Swamp" in New York. He served his seven years, but did not like the business sufficiently to remain in it. At twenty-one, he decided he would rather earn his living as a day laborer, than continue his present occupation. About this time he married Kate Embury, a niece of the great Methodist preacher.

The young woman was beautiful and capable, with a good head for business. A laborer's wages were not ample, and the young wife proposed to assist her hus-

band by setting up a business stand outside her door, upon which she could keep her eye as she went about her household duties. The scene of this new home and business venture combined, was in old Augustus Place, now City Hall Place.

At first the young matron only sold a few cakes, cookies, and candies, but business prospered, and she added cabbages, potatoes, fruits, tobacco and snuff. She felt an increasing pride, as she called upon her young husband to guess at nightfall what the profits had amounted to during the day. It had been a great day when they added groceries to their stock, and she asked Abraham to bring home seven pounds of sugar at night, to be retailed by the pennyworth on the morrow.

Katie Bininger's husband was not the only person who brought her provisions for sale. John Jacob Astor appeared each morning with fresh cookies, cakes and rusks in his basket. Similar ambitions moved the young German lad and the young bride. John Astor was not simply carrying a basket of rusks, in his own eyes. He was eagerly walking a path whose every step led to financial success. Katie Bininger was not keeping a two-penny grocery stand. She was beginning to build a fortune for her husband.

The tang of the early morning air coming in from

the bay, the spirit of the times, and the hope in their hearts, were all fused together in the glances that shot from their eyes, as the cakes changed their places from John Jacob's basket to Katie's counter. The words they flung at each other, in the haste of the morning sales, also spoke of future expectations. Nothing was supposed to remain as it was with these young people. Every day was to show progression, and the great thing about these dreams was, that they came true.

Both of these youthful merchants had pluck, push and skill, and they never allowed any of them to grow rusty for lack of use. John Jacob might tell Katie of the wonderful swimming of Robert Goelet, the fat son of the iron monger, who could lie upon his back, with his hands under his head, and float upon the water as securely as if on a feather bed; or Katie might tell John Jacob that she had heard his brother Harry's wife called "de pink of de Bowery," a compliment spicy with association with the clove pinks which abounded in all the Dutch gardens—but these were mere civilities. Their real object in life was getting on.

The streets themselves held a charm for the country-bred boy. There were venders of many strange commodities on the Bowery. Colored women, with flaming bandanna kerchiefs, tied in a peak on their heads West India fashion, and wearing clean white aprons, sat at

the corners of the streets selling hot corn on the ear. On each side of them was a cup, one containing salt and the other butter. A more appetizing breakfast could scarcely be conceived than these ears of hot corn, eaten as one stood.

John Astor could hear the musical voices around a corner, or half way down a block, "Hot corn, hot corn! Here's your lily white corn," and they drew his willing feet nearer.

One old woman, on the corner of Hester and Bond Streets, sang her call in rhyme:

"Hot corn, hot corn!
Some for a penny, and some for two cents.
Corn costs money, and fire expense,
Here's your lily-white corn."

Trays of baked pears swimming in molasses, held by the stem while eaten, were also a Dutch street dainty, whose succulent sweetness tempted the passer-by.

Nor was it food alone which was sold along the wayside. The genuine "sand man," familiar to all the childish world, sold Rockaway sand for sanding eating-house floors, and those of both kitchen and parlor in the Dutch vrouw's home. On the parlor floor the sand was worked with a broom into all sorts of fantastic shapes, and the door was shut upon this artistic glory until some state occasion. Negroes sold straw for fill-

ing beds; and peddlers pure spring water from Greenwich village, for two cents a pail.

It was like the street fairs at home when John Jacob Astor first began to tread New York thoroughfares; but before long the streets became familiar, and he wended his way amongst the unusual sights and sounds as if he belonged there, but always looking beyond them to his next step on the road to success.

CHAPTER IX.

BEGINNING THE FUR BUSINESS.

WHILE he was in the employ of George Diederich, and delivering his cakes to the smaller shops in the city, young Astor was keeping his eyes and ears open for an opportunity to enter the fur business. This had become his chief ambition.

The way opened in a few weeks. Robert Bowne, an aged and benevolent Quaker, long established in the business of buying, curing and selling peltries, needed a clerk, and considered John Jacob Astor's application favorably. He was engaged at two dollars a week, and again found home and board in the family of his employer. The new clerk began work the next day, and discovered that his start in the fur business called for a generous amount of the elbow grease, of which his old teacher had recommended his pupil as possessed. He beat furs that day and many a day after, during the summer which followed, for an important part of the fur trade lay in preventing moths from destroying the soft hair on the skins.

John Jacob Astor set himself with all his heart to learning the business, on the principle that knowledge

is power. He was moral, temperate and industrious, and to these foundation qualities, he added incessant activity in acquiring a knowledge of furs, fur-bearing animals, fur-gathering Indians, fur-abounding sections, fur-dealers and fur-markets.

Often bear and beaver skins were brought directly to Bowne's store by hunters, trappers and Indians. Country boys who had trapped or shot some animal whose skin was of value, brought their prizes with them, or sent them by some larger collector of furs. Skins had an actual money value easy of access in those days, the time not being long past, when farms were bought and sold for a stated number of bear or beaver skins.

Young Astor questioned the traders, large and small, when he had a chance, losing no opportunity of procuring information. He made for himself a specialized course as a fur student, finding his teachers in everyone who came his way with a grain of knowledge to offer. With such faithfulness to business, the young man grew in the esteem of his employer. His salary was raised, and before long he was sent on short excursions into the surrounding country, for the purpose of gathering skins from the farmers and country stores. In time these trips were extended to Northern and Eastern New York.

In 1785 he made his first trip into the wilderness, as a purchaser of furs from the friendly part of the Six Nations. Once more he thrilled over a "venture" into the unknown. With a pack of German toys on his back; and clad for rough tramping, he started up country. He was strong, and capable of great endurance, and these trips tested his strength to the utmost.

Sometimes he tramped along newly-made roads, rough clods under his feet but a bright sun over his head, the signs of recent settling all about him. Farm-houses were usually far apart, and he often ate his dinner, which had been stored away in a corner of the pack on his back, under some tree of the forest, grown unhindered where it stood for centuries, till the white man's road had been laid past it.

From elevations he caught sight of chimneys in the distance, and turned into the woods, on a chance of procuring stored-up skins at the farm-houses hidden among the trees. Indian trails intersected each other on both sides of the Hudson. Beaten by the feet of red men for scores of years, they proved a better footing than newly-made roads.

Along these foot-paths he sometimes found small camps of Indians, and in the season they were almost sure to have skins in small quantities awaiting barter. Each day's tramp revealed facts regarding land and

homesteads; settlers of many languages; haunts still held by the red men; the best places to secure peltries; and the most profitable opportunities to buy them.

Nothing escaped young Astor's eyes or ears. Though on his employer's business, he was also on a voyage of discovery, whose results would affect his future life.

The Indian was a great bargainer, and Astor needed to study his subject well to get the best in a change of commodities. He was familiar with the handicap of an unknown tongue in a strange land, and he set himself in his leisure hours, to studying the Indian language. Friendly Indians on his travels, or around a camp fire at night, showed solemn interest in these attempts of the young white brave to utter their gutturals, or learn their sign language.

Young Astor kept this up for six years, attaining greater proficiency each trip. "At the end of that time he could converse intelligently in the languages of the Mohawk, Seneca, and Oneida tribes. It is said he was the first fur dealer to win this advantage, and it gave him great prestige among the red men, and was of marked pecuniary value to him."

Besides acquiring the Indian signs and languages, the young trader developed rare ability in selecting goods which would tempt the savages, and induce them to part with their valuable peltries. He also exercised

much patience and skill in conducting the tedious bargaining bouts, with which the Indians always preceded a sale.

The furs procured from the Six Nations, he employed Indians in carrying to the Hudson, where they were placed on one of the sloops which plied the waters of this beautiful river, and taken to the docks in New York. The sloop journeys down the Hudson were sometimes long, occupying from one to two weeks, according as the voyagers were favored by the elements; but young Astor cherished in his heart the joy of a full harvest, and could afford to sail at the beck of wind and tide. The sloops bound for the city often carried old salts, who were well acquainted with broader waters, and the long pleasant days and moonlight nights, or intermittent times of storm, found the young trader listening to many a sea yarn, and gathering by the way, valuable scraps of information to be put in use later on.

So successful was the young traveler on these journeys, that he was intrusted with the responsibility of the annual trip to Montreal, in the place of his employer. Montreal was the chief fur market of the country, and above Albany the path thither lay through the wilderness. With his accustomed pack on his back, John Jacob Astor walked from Albany to Lake George.

Here he hired a canoe, and paddled up the long, beautiful length of the lake. The scattered islands, the green-tinged waters, reflecting the mighty forests climbing its sides, the nights spent in the shelter of some friendly cove, formed an enjoyable part of the journey. Rolled in a blanket, lying in the bottom of his boat or on a mossy bank, the starry glory of the sky, the water dashing into white foam against some far rocks on the shore, lulled the youthful traveler to rest, his wearied body insuring him sound sleep.

Yet life was not all repose even in the silent night, for the sound of crackling bushes, or loose rolling stones, might mean a bear in the underbrush, a panther sliding between the forest growths, a deer stalking through the night, or the more welcome sounds made by smaller game. A clear, bright fire on the shore, kept animal life at bay, and though young Astor might find porcupine quills scattered about when morning came, he passed through his journey safely.

Doubtless he added salmon, trout, and pike to his meagre bill of fare when they could be caught, enjoying, with a young man's keen hunger, this appetizing fare from what is now Paradise Bay, or Sabbath Day Point. But for the most part the young fur-gatherer pushed on, intent on his business.

By canoe and portage he made his way along the lit-

tle stream that connects Lake George with Lake Champlain, looking with curious eyes upon Fort Ticonderoga, whose surrender was demanded from the English Captain in charge, by Ethan Allen, "in the name of Almighty God and the Continental Congress." Continuing the journey by canoe to the head of Lake Champlain, he ultimately reached Montreal. The furs secured here were shipped to England, since the law forbade the importation of furs from Canada to the United States.

During the year he was with Robert Bowne, young Astor began a little trading on his own account, for the most part buying skins from those who brought furs to market, by way of the sloops and other vessels lying in the harbor.

Meanwhile the Astor flutes did not sell very fast. There were two other dealers in New York who sold harpsichords, pianos, and barrel organs; and Dodd, of 66 Queen Street, made a specialty of other musical instruments. Without a place of business of his own, the young German finally left his flutes to be sold on commission at the printing office of Samuel Loudon, of the "New York Packet." This custom had been established with the dawn of the first newspapers in New York.

The advertisement: "German Flutes of a superior

Quality to be sold at this Printing Office,'' appeared occasionally in the paper until March, 1785, when supposedly the flutes were disposed of, the money turned into skins which were sent to England, permanent arrangements being made for the shipping of furs, and a consignment of musical instruments from Astor and Broadwood brought to New York on the return trip.

Patience and perseverence seemed to be inexhaustible in the well from which John Jacob Astor drew, but long as was the well-sweep, it always brought up a bucket, full and running over.

CHAPTER X.

NEW YORK A LITTLE CITY.

WHILE with Robert Bowne, young Astor was making acquaintance not only with hunters, trappers, and fur-gatherers from up country, but also with shippers to foreign ports, and with the rising men of New York. Life was forming itself about the young immigrant in recognizable shape. The Quaker shippers and men of standing in the Society, naturally came under his observation in this Quaker stronghold.

John and Robert Murray were among the most noted of these men. The two brothers had owned more ships before the Revolutionary War than any other men in the country. Robert Murray had also been singled out as one of the five persons wealthy enough to own a coach, which in order to avoid an appearance of undue pride, he called "my leather conveniency." John Murray, the elder, had died soon after the war, but Robert had a son John, and a second son, Lindley, the grammarian. All the Murrays were deeply interested in philanthropy. The elder John had a country home

out by the old Powder House and Sunfish Pond, near Twentieth Street, very far up town, while Robert owned the whole of Murray Hill, which was named after him.

John Jacob Astor was becoming acquainted with his surroundings even as distant as the Murray home.

Perhaps the most significant fact connected with the Murrays, was a society of which John Murray, Jr., was treasurer. Events dated back with the New Yorkers of that day, to before, or after the war. As early as the Revolutionary War, "The Society for Promoting the Manumission of the Slaves, and Protecting Such of Them as have been Liberated," had been formed, and met at the Coffee House, with John Jay as President. Its committees were formed largely of Quakers—the names of Samuel Franklin, John Keese, Willett and Jacob Seaman and William Shotwell being among the number. So early did abolition societies begin in the new world! Fresh arrivals to American shores found much to consider here, besides a chance to get on in the world.

The old Quaker Meeting House stood at this time in Liberty Street, that is, the building stood forty feet back, with a long yard in front. New York did not count her square feet of land as carefully then as now, and there were gardens both in front and rear of many

homes,—cheerful gardens full of flowers, that spoke of the native lands of the occupants of the houses attached. The sending of flower seeds over the seas, was a trace of sentiment that traveled in the holds of the ships, that touched the shores of both the new and the old world. There were vegetable gardens, too, planted after Dutch and German, Scotch and Huguenot, English and Welsh fashion.

The Dutch housewives leaned over their doors which were cut through the middle, and watched the comings and goings of their neighbors in restful moments, or spoke a friendly word to a passer-by, when not engaged in household duties, while their husbands smoked their pipes in peace on their own front stoops in the cool of the evening.

In 1786 the city only counted twenty-three thousand inhabitants and was a neighborly place. Everyone knew the man or woman who passed him on the street, and even at the Battery, the favorite walk of pedestrians, one was familiar not only with "the Battery walkers," but with the children who played on the grass as well.

While young Astor was meeting many new people, there were those nearer to him by ties of blood and native country, who held his interest, and others to be found for the effort.

His brother Henry was prospering in these days. The beautiful young wife whom he had married, he, as well as others according to Katie Bininger, delighted to call "de pink of de Bowery." His pride in his young wife caused him to bring her home many presents of gay dresses and ribbons, so that she rivalled even the unquestioned charm of a clove pink. The young matron was industrious as well as beautiful, and found ways to help her husband in his business. They continued to live in good old Dutch fashion over their shop.

Henry Astor had conceived the idea of driving out of town, fifteen or twenty miles, and purchasing droves of cattle on their way to the city; later selling the animals to less enterprising butchers at an advanced price. In this way, and by other avenues of trade, his fortune was increasing, and seemed likely to eclipse that of his younger brother.

The German Reformed Church,—an offshoot from the Reformed Dutch Collegiate Church of New York,—of which the youthful Rev. John Gabriel Gebhard had become pastor, while John Jacob Astor was yet watching for a way to open for his own coming to America, still stood on Nassau Street between John Street and Maiden Lane. While opposing sentiments were growing hot in the city before the war, the young Domine

had expressed himself frankly and loyally, from his pulpit, as on the side of the Colonies. In a city invested by the British, such sentiments were not favored in private, much less from the public desk, so the young man, after a two-years' pastorate in New York, had been among the loyal third of the inhabitants, who left this British stronghold for a purer and more patriotic air.

He had gone with his little family to Kingston, and a short time afterward became the pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church at Claverack, New York, in the Lower Van Rensselaer Manor. The German Reformed Church, in common with many others, had been closed during the war, though in this case through the influence of the Hessians in command, the church had not met the indignity of being turned into a riding school or prison by the British, but was preserved in an exceptionally good condition.

After the war was over, the intrepid young Domine was called back to his old charge, but being settled by this time in his new home, in one of the most charming sections along the Hudson River, he declined the call, and John Jacob Astor did not find his fellow townsman in the German Church in New York.

He did find an earnest young minister by the name of the Rev. John Daniel Gross, and heard preaching in

his own mother tongue, as well as the singing of German hymns, which moved his music-loving soul.

He also found Baron Steuben among the members of this church—a man of whom all German-Americans were proud. He was a prominent figure in the city at this time, in both public and social life. Among other positions of honor which he held, was that of Vice President of the Society of the Cincinnati.

CHAPTER XI.

STARTING IN BUSINESS FOR HIMSELF.

ABOUT two years after John Jacob Astor's arrival in America, in 1785, he married Miss Sarah Todd, daughter of Mrs. Sarah Todd, a widow, who lived at 81 Queen Street, (now Pearl) not far from George Diederich's, though on the other side of the street.

Young Astor had saved a few hundred dollars, and in 1786, hired a couple of rooms from Mrs. Todd, and set up in business for himself. One of the possibilities of the fur trade in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was, that though it admitted of wide expansion, it could be entered upon with very small capital.

The young merchant furnished his shop with German toys and knicknacks, and a few musical instruments, paying cash for skins of muskrats, raccoons, and those of other animals, selling them again at a good profit. The proprietor of the little shop worked tirelessly. He could not afford a clerk, and with the assistance of his wife, did all the labor connected with the business himself. Every farmer's boy on the out-

skirts of the city, occasionally had a skin to sell, and bears abounded in the Catskill Mountains. A large part of New York State was still a fur-bearing country. Even Long Island, near at hand, added her quota of skins. John Jacob Astor bought, cured, beat and packed his peltries. From dawn till dark saw him engaged in some part of the fur trade. His indomitable ardor never waned. He was still upon the lower rounds of the ladder, but climbing.

He tells a story of himself at this period. A new row of houses on Broadway was exciting the interest of the city, owing to their unusual size and beauty. As the youthful merchant passed them one day, he said to himself, "I'll build sometime, a grander house than any of these, and in this very street." Yet while he prophesied great things for the future, the present held his unswerving interest and attention.

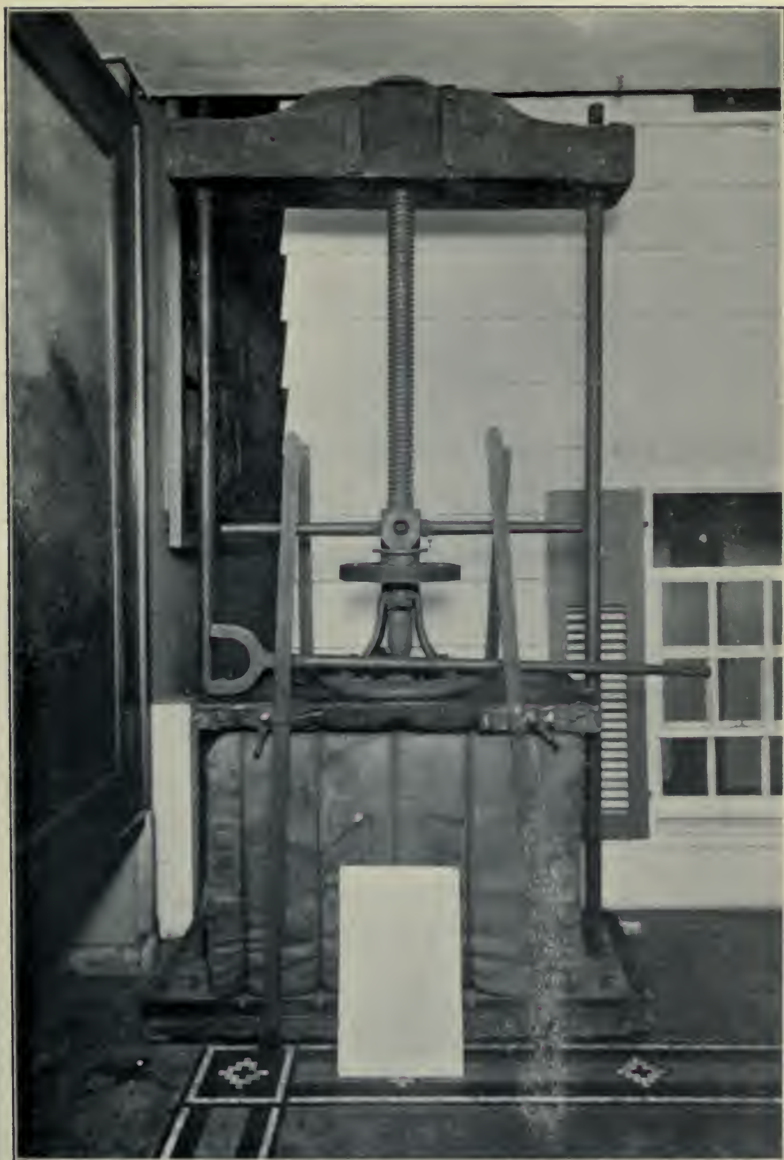
When the proper season of the year came around, he shouldered his pack and started on his collecting tours. Cakes, toys, paints and trinkets, cheap jewelry and birds, making up a pack of surprising attractiveness to the red men. He is said to have walked over every road, and traversed every Indian trail and bridle path in New York State, in search of furs, climbing mountains, wading or swimming creeks or rivers, if they lay be-

tween him and the tents of the Mohawks, Senecas, Oneidas, or other Indian tribes.

He learned to know broad stretches of country, the fording places of rivers and streams, and the positions of the Indian settlements. These Indian settlements were not always stationary. A little colony of tents would be packed up and moved afar between sunset and sunrise; so that the young trader needed not only to locate his fur-market, but to reckon on flood and drought, full harvests and rumors of war, as well as many another motive, which might cause his journey to any particular point to be in vain.

He formed a partnership with Peter Smith, father of Gerrit Smith, who was at that time a poor youth like himself. Together they tramped all over the ground from Schenectady to Utica, when the latter city was in the making, bartering the goods from their packs for furs at the Indian settlements on the route; the Indians aiding them in carrying their heavy burdens back to Schenectady, or all the distance to the Hudson River. They sold their peltries in New York, and when their stock was exhausted, again penetrated the forests of the frontiers to replenish their supplies.

"Many a time," related a gentleman of Schenectady, "have I seen John Jacob Astor, with his coat off, unpacking in a vacant yard near my residence, a lot of



THE ORIGINAL FUR-PRESS
Used in the Fur Business of John Jacob Astor
Made in 1805

furs he had bought dog-cheap of the Indians; beating them out, cleaning and repacking them in more elegant and salable form, to be transported to England or Germany, where they would yield him a large per cent on the original cost.''

After a time Peter Smith settled in the Mohawk valley, opening an Indian trader's store in the corner of his house in Utica to supplement the fur business, but he still sent furs to John Jacob Astor, in New York.

His fearless partner continued his numberless tramps through the wilderness, becoming still more familiar with hills and valleys, the long miles skirting the Hudson, and the shores of the great Lakes. With a clear vision of the future, he pointed out sites of great towns, particularly those of Rochester and Buffalo, one with its harbor on Lake Erie, and the other on Lake Ontario. While he was making these predictions of large and prosperous cities, there were only a few scattered houses at Buffalo, and Indian wigwams at Rochester.

On his shorter excursions into the country collecting skins from house to house, or on his trips up the Hudson, he became a familiar figure as he trod the post-road, stopping at farm-house doors, or passing the time of day with farmers in the fields. Landing a shoulder of skins upon a good dame's neatly sanded floor, was not over-pleasing to a Dutch housewife; but his comings

and goings are still remembered at Albany, and Kingston, and Claverack, and many another Hudson River town and village, in the stories passed down to children's children.

At Claverack he found more than a stranger's welcome. The little old knocker on the parsonage door led him into a family circle of friends. Going or coming from his northern trips,—either along the post-road, or by Captain Abraham Staats good sloop "Claverack," which dropped him at Claverack Landing, after which he would make nothing of a tramp of four miles along the beautiful Claverack Creek,—he was pretty sure to stop over for a meal or the night at Domine Gebhard's.

His former townsman had by this time an interesting family of boys and girls, who found Mr. Astor's stories full of delightful thrills. His coming was to them a red-letter day, more entertaining than the most exciting written tales of adventure.

Such a story as that told by the father of General Wadsworth, would find a sympathetic audience in this household. Mr. Wadsworth once met John Jacob Astor in the woods of Western New York, with his wagon broken down in the midst of a swamp. His gold had rolled away into swamp-grass and mud, and he had just saved himself from being swallowed up in the soft

ooze. He succeeded in reaching solid ground covered with mud, and possessed simply of an axe, which he had saved from the wreck by continuing to hold it over his shoulder.

Such an event never meant defeat to John Astor, and he imbued his audience with his own dauntless courage, causing them to rejoice with him over his life, and his one possession,—the axe.

Sometimes his stories were of friendly Indians, and newly-discovered collections of furs, of chipping the bark of trees to mark his path through unknown forests, of wonderful speed made in the canoes by Indian paddlers. Or he told of salmon or wild bird, caught by rod or gun, and cooked over an open fire for men whose appetites had the keen edge of long tramping and postponed food.

Tales of shooting rapids in a birch bark canoe gave a breathless thrill to his young listeners; but for the fur trader himself, the number and value of the peltries he had shipped to New York, was the the test of the success of his journey.

John Jacob Astor's broken English was dropped in this household, for the pure German their old teacher had taught both host and guest in the village school in Waldorf. Old times, well-loved people and objects, familiar incidents of the past, were all talked over.

The German Reformed Church of New York was a subject of mutual interest, and also came under review.

There were always fellow countrymen crossing the great deep, and something new to tell them at each meeting. On the Livingston Manor, in a place called Taghkanic,—where Domine Gebhard preached four times a year, to a mixed audience of Dutch and German,—he had found families from Baden, near Heidelberg, like themselves. It was also about this time, that John Jacob Astor joined the German Society in New York, a society that counted among its members, during this period and later, Jacob Schieffelin, David Grim, John B. Dash, Sr. and Jr., Jacob Mark, and many others of the prominent men of his own nationality in America, as well as those who were working toward a prosperous future.

It was hardly a strange land when one met an old neighbor from across the sea, on almost any trip abroad. After all, they were both Americans, men who had thrown their loyal all in with this new nation. Domine Gebhard was not only preaching in three languages to five, and sometimes six congregations, but he was also establishing an educational institution, in Washington Seminary, to train the youth of the young nation; and John Jacob Astor, on his part, was building up the commerce of his adopted country.

From stories of hairbreadth escapes from wild animals, and curious intercourse with the Indians, in which the boys were interested; through old-world recollections, and present-day ardent patriotism,—which subjects claimed much of the attention of their elders,—there was probably no more welcome climax for a music-loving German guest, than the Domine's playing, and the melody of his wife's sweet voice, as she sang from a book of eight hundred pages, the songs of the Fatherland and the hymns of John Jacob Astor's boyhood, in his own tongue.

CHAPTER XII.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S HOME AND FAMILY.

JOHN Jacob Astor's start in business for himself in Queen Street, as has been seen, was the sequel to his marriage to Miss Sarah Todd, the daughter of Mrs. Sarah Todd, a short time previous. Miss Todd brought her husband not only a good social connection, as a relative of the Brevoort family, and a dowry of three hundred dollars, but also a mind equal to the intricacies of his advancing business, and a perception and indefatigable industry, which were a great assistance to him in its details. Mrs. Astor, though possessed of great amiability, was a decided character, and was intensely interested in her husband's enterprises. John Jacob Astor said of his wife at a later period, that she was the most perfect judge of furs in his business, learning to know them in the early years of her married life, as he had himself, by personally handling and caring for them.

She had been living in New York during the Revolutionary War, and had known much of this trying period. She also remembered some of the momentous

incidents that took place in the birth of a nation. Among these were the withdrawal of the British garrison, and General Washington's arrival in New York on his famous white charger, accompanied by Governor Clinton. The Continentals entered the city with their banners flying, and bands playing "Yankee Doodle,"—triumphant,—though they showed the ravaging effects of a seven years' war. The line of march was through the Bowery and Pearl Street, so passing the Todd residence, but the conquering army of the young nation held too large a place in the hearts of the loyal citizens of New York, including the women and children, for them to patiently await their coming. Eagerly, they went some distance out of town to meet and welcome their heroes, and a portion of the Todd family was a part of this welcoming host.

The early domestic life of the young couple was simple, as befitted young people with their way to make in the world. Their first child, Magdalen Astor, and their second child, were probably born in the Queen Street home, with a grandmother, as well as a mother, to surround them with loving care. There were burdens and trials of many kinds in the home during these first years, and the life of so adventurous a man as her husband, was likely to bring Mrs. Astor many anxieties, as well as days of rejoicing and elation.

Through them all she proved a loyal and loving help-meet. The mother of this family was an earnest Christian woman, and reared her children with reverence and respect for religious ideals. The husband and wife were as one in these cardinal sentiments, and their marriage was a peculiarly happy one.

One of Mr. Astor's earliest business advertisements appeared in the "New York Packet" under date of May 22nd, 1786.

"Jacob Astor, No. 81 Queen Street, Two doors from the Friends' Meeting House, has just imported from London an elegant assortment of musical instruments, such as Piano Fortes, spinnets, guitars; the best of violins, German Flutes, clarinets, hautboys, fifes; the best Roman Violin strings and all other kinds of strings; music books and paper, and every other article in the musical line, which he will dispose of on very low terms for cash."

By January 10th, 1789, the following advertisement still offered musical instruments, but the fur business was brought more prominently forward.

"John Jacob Astor,
At No. 81 Queen Street,
Next door but one to the Friends' Meeting House,
Has for sale an assortment of
Piano Fortes of the Newest Construction,
made by the best makers in London, which
he will sell at reasonable terms.
He gives cash for all kinds of Furs
and has for sale a quantity of Canada
Beavers and Beavering coating, Raccoon Skins,
and Raccoon Blankets, Muskrat Skins, etc., etc."

For several years after this Mr. Astor continued to sell musical instruments, till at last, having found the fur business more profitable than music, he turned his musical instruments over to Michael Paff, who succeeded him in this branch of his business.

Mr. Astor's business continued to prosper, he himself superintending all parts of it to the minutest detail. One of his mottoes was: "If you wish a thing done, get some one to do it for you; but if you wish it done well, do it yourself."

In 1789 Mr. Astor made his first purchase in real estate, two lots on the Bowery Lane, for which he paid "two hundred and fifty pounds (about six hundred and twenty-five dollars) current money of the State of New York." It was a cash purchase, and the deed was signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of his brother Henry.

In less than a year he made a second purchase, this time of a dwelling house and lot on Little Dock Street (now a part of Water Street). In 1790 he appeared in the city Directory as—"Astor, J. J., Fur Trader, 40 Little Dock Street."—Already the fur business was taking precedence of the musical instruments.

Though England had agreed in the treaty in 1783 to evacuate all the fortified places within the boundaries of the United States, British garrisons still held

Detroit, Mackinaw, Oswego, Ogdensburg, Niagara, Iron Point and Dutchman's Point on Lake Champlain, keeping open the natural highways between Canada and the United States. The fur trade was consequently in the hands of the men who had access to these posts, and while they held the posts, John Jacob Astor could only carry back to the city, such furs as he had secured by tramping the Eastern half of the State of New York, and the skins, collected from the friendly part of the Six Nations.

Even in these narrow boundaries, however, his business was growing, though both the fur trader and Captain Cooper, the father of Peter Cooper, who had a small hat factory in the same street, and purchased many a beaver skin from Astor, would have bought their skins cheaper, could Astor have ranged freely over the western country. Peter Cooper, who was just about a head taller than an ordinary table at this time, assisted in the hat-making by pulling the hairs out of rabbit skins.

Henry Astor had continued to prosper. His "corner on cattle," which greatly displeased his fellow butchers, to a certain degree controlled the New York market. He had a stall at this time in the Fly Market, a position of considerable importance and pecuniary advantage.

John Jacob Astor did not always have an easy time

in money matters, while carrying on his business ventures. He often had to pay Nathaniel Prime, in Wall Street, very large interest, and "a large commission in getting long paper discounted."

During his years of striving, he often called upon his older brother for a loan or an endorsement. Henry Astor was not fond of borrowing, or lending to anybody. On one occasion John Jacob needed two hundred dollars very badly, and went to his brother and asked him to loan him that sum. Henry told him he would give him one hundred dollars, if he would promise never to trouble him in that way again. The younger brother needed more money at once, and was likely to many another time, and if John Jacob Astor made a promise, he kept it. He balanced the gift in his mind, with the prospect of unwilling loans, and decided to take the one hundred dollars and keep to the agreement.

During the next three years, two children, a girl and a boy were added to the Astor family, Eliza and William Backhouse, both probably being born in the house in Little Dock Street. The boy was named for a prominent merchant of the city, who had befriended John Jacob Astor during his early years in America.

After this increase in his family, in the early nineties, Mr. Astor moved his home and his business to 149 Broadway. During these years he held the office of

trustee in the German Reformed Church, and the Consistory met at various times in his house.

CHAPTER XIII.

INDEPENDENCE DAY WHILE IT WAS NEW.

AT about this period there came to America, a young Scotchman, named Grant Thorburn, who opened a shop in Liberty Street. A few years later, and for many years after, John Jacob Astor was his neighbor, having moved his own business to the same street. An interesting letter, written in Mr. Thorburn's later life, tells the story of his first Fourth of July in America, and gives several other facts, which suggest the type of life and events, which were familiar to those who peopled the little city of New York in 1794.

By this time the city contained forty thousand inhabitants. Broadway began at the Battery and terminated at the head of Warren Street. According to an old writer: "Either at church or market, we saw each other often at that period. New York was, in fact, a city of brotherly love."

Grant Thorburn's letter is dated:

"New Haven, 6th June, 1861.
Fourth of July.

"The first one I saw in New York after I arrived from Scotland, the Fourth of July, 1794.

"I landed in New York on the 16th of June, 1794, then in my twenty-third year, but being very small, I looked ten years younger. A wrought nail-maker by trade, I had my shop in Liberty Street, between Nassau and Broadway. The school belonging to the "Society of Friends" kept on the opposite side of the street. When the boys arrived before school doors were open, they assembled in my shop, which was a large frame building, and I was the only occupant. Here commenced a friendship with the sons of the Leggetts, the Foxes, the Franklins, the Wrights, the Willets, etc., which thirty-five years after, put eighty thousand dollars in my pockets,—but we'll describe the Fourth of July, 1794.

"On the morning of the Fourth the bells rang one hour at sunrise, and thirteen guns were fired on the Battery, at the foot of Broadway, at eleven o'clock. A company of old veterans marched from the Park to the Battery, and fired another salute at twelve. They wore the old tattered uniforms and pinched up cocked hats, which they wore when fighting by the side of Washington, at the battle of Monmouth. Some had lost a leg, some an arm, and others leaned on crutches. In 1801, when Jefferson became President, I saw some of these men dismissed from the Custom House in New York; their places were filled by imported patriots; but such is the gratitude of a model Republic.

"At three o'clock P. M. the Cincinnati Society dined at the Coffee House, which stood on the corner of Wall and Water Streets. The Society was composed entirely of Revolutionary Officers, and their sons. They dined on the first story. The windows were opened, and a

cannon, called a six-pounder, fired a shot when each gun-toast was drunk.

"At four P. M. I stood at the lower end of the Fly Market, foot of Maiden Lane; people were stepping aboard a small boat, which the oarsmen said was the Brooklyn ferry-boat. It held twelve passengers, and was rowed by two men. After waiting fifteen minutes for the passengers, we started. A strong tide setting in carried us up as far as Grand Street. We made Long Island shore near the Wallabout, then rowed down close on the Long Island shore, and landed in Brooklyn, after a passage of one-hour and ten minutes.

"I stood for the first time on Long Island. I looked through the four winds of heaven, standing on the wharf. I was not able to count over twenty dwellings in all directions. About one thousand feet from the wharf right in the middle of the road, stood an old Dutch Church. The wagons going to Newtown drove on the right; the wagons going to the river, drove on the left of the church. The church stood in the days of Governor Stuyvesant.

"I went forward on the road toward Newtown. A thunder storm commenced. I took shelter in a cottage by the wayside. After conversing half an hour with the inmates, the rain ceased. On returning I noticed a field of Indian corn on the wayside, the leaves and tassels hanging full of large drops of rain; the sun was going down, which made the raindrops like pearls. It was the first time I had seen corn in the blade. I thought it looked a field which the Lord had blessed. We had sky rockets in the Park at eight P. M. which closed the Fourth of July, 1794."

A second young man came to New York in the nineties, though not from the old world, with whom John Jacob Astor was destined to be closely associated in

after years. John Robbins, like John Astor, longed to see the world, and try his hand at making his fortune. One day he was lucky enough to catch a muskrat. He skinned it and took the skin with him to Philadelphia, bartering it for two books—one a copy of Robinson Crusoe and the other a Bible. We have the record that the Bible was still a treasured possession in his old age.

John Robbins had an older brother Enoch, who was a shipping merchant in Old Slip, New York. His ships were not large, but he loaded them with all kinds of provisions, pork, beef, onions, etc., and sent them to the West India Islands.

"About one hundred ships came into New York in those years, of which forty were square-rigged and sixty sloops. Boats were extensively used and of course were all built here. The square-rigged vessels did not probably average over one hundred and ten tons each and not over one quarter were built and owned in New York. The largest vessels owned in New York in 1796 were about two hundred and fifty tons burden. One of two hundred was considered a large ship."

Soon after young Robbins reached New York, his brother Enoch loaded the brig "Mary" with staves for wine casks, dried codfish, and other commodities to make an assorted cargo. Then he dispatched the ves-

sel from New York to Bilboa, in the Bay of Biscay, with his brother John as supercargo. The United States was at war with France, and a French privateer came very near capturing the "Mary," in which case John Robbins' story would have had a different ending.

It required three months to sell the cargo at Bilboa, after which the "Mary" sailed to Lisbon and disposed of her staves, and took on board, instead, a quantity of gold and silver for New York. The exporting of silver was forbidden by the Portugal government, but John Robbins had a special belt made, and every time he left the ship, he returned with a thousand Spanish dollars. In this way he gathered sixteen thousand dollars.

Then the "Mary" got under sail for St. Ubes, where she loaded with salt and returned to New York, having made a most successful voyage. The salt sold for a dollar a bushel, and John Robbins had also saved several hundred dollars.

Now that he had a small capital, he decided to give up the sea, and embark as a dry goods merchant, but not until he had learned the trade. Pearl Street was a fashionable shopping district in those days, but though John Robbins made application at store after store, he failed to find a position. At last he reached Henry Laverty's, where he asked for a clerkship, offering to work without salary in order to learn the busi-

ness. Mr. Laverty accepted the offer, and after this the young Philadelphian slept in the store on the counter, rising at daybreak to open the shop and sweep it out, after which he arranged the dry goods in the windows.

A clerk in those days went through a regular course of learning the business. He first delivered goods, keeping account of the marks and the number of packages. He also received goods, again taking account of the marks and packages. A part of his task was to copy letters, and when he could do this neatly and expeditiously, he was promoted to making duplicates of letters to go by the packets. Next he copied accounts, after which he was entrusted with the responsibility of making the accounts. A clerk who had mastered these details, instructed and inspected the work of later arrivals. All these duties were the acknowledged path toward becoming a successful merchant.

At night, John Robbins closed the store and betook himself to his bed on the counter, having led a most active day. Meanwhile he was learning the qualities and values of dry goods. When his time was up, Mr. Laverty offered him first a salary, then a partnership, but young Robbins refused both, having fully decided on going into the business for himself. He resolved at the start not to run into debt, so refused good offers

of credit, starting in a modest way by carrying home his own purchases from an auction. He steadily prospered in the business, in which he had so conscientiously perfected himself.

John Robbins' mother was a capable, old-fashioned Dutch woman, who lived behind a Dutch door. With the upper half of her door swung in, and leaning over the lower half, she loved to watch what was going on in the street. Besides her neighborly sociability, she was long remembered by her son's friends, for her culinary skill—the flavor of her coffee, and the delectable taste of her pies and cake leaving a long trail of happy remembrance behind them.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRAVERSING THE WILDERNESS.

THE greatest event of the year in the fur trade, was the trip to Montreal, and the subsequent journeys into the wilderness. During the early years in which John Jacob Astor carried on his own business, he made trips each spring or summer to Canada, and shipped the furs purchased to London, as up to 1794 the law still existed against importing from British possessions.

His walks through the forests of Lower Canada, New York, and Michigan, guided by *coureurs des bois*, were full of novel experiences and exciting adventure. Dash, energy and skill, characterized these wood-runners, who, while they were wild, reckless, and daring, were also familiar with the climate, wide tracts of country, and the haunts of the Indians. These qualities made them invaluable adjuncts to John Jacob Astor's projects. He, himself, was ever ready to follow where they led.

They started on their tramps with packs on their backs, which besides arms and ammunition, were partly

food and partly goods to be traded with the Indians for skins. Various kinds of berries and small fruits were to be found in their season, as well as game in the woods and fish in the streams, but their main object was securing peltries, and the rough and barren country over which they traveled did not always offer even a slight nourishment for hungry traders.

One such traveler describes leagues of the journey after this fashion: "The road of the portage is truly that of heaven, for it is straight, full of obstacles, slippery places, thorns and bogs. The men who pass it loaded, and who are obliged to carry over it bales, certainly deserve the name of men. This villainous portage is only inhabited by owls, because no other animal could find its living there, and the cries of these solitary birds are enough to frighten an angel, and to intimidate a Caesar."

The packages carried weighed anywhere from sixty to ninety pounds. In the spring with these on their backs, the travelers made twenty miles or more a day over the rugged country. During these trips John Jacob Astor visited encampments on the St. Lawrence and at Saginaw Bay, as well as those in the heart of the woods. Surprising an Indian settlement, or being met by outrunning red men with skins over their shoulders, the trader's task was only begun.

The Indian disposition was suspicious. Rival traders had played upon the fears and the cupidity of these men of primitive nature, each representing his opponents as unreliable. Fire water had often been used to excite them still further. In their dealings with the red men, the traders were frequently called upon to quell disorder by a show of fierce anger or force, but John Jacob Astor's tact, and uniform fair dealing, as well as his entire avoidance of the use of spiritous liquors, caused his interchange of trade with the Indians, to be most uniquely successful.

He exercised the utmost care in avoiding a separation from his guides in the great Northern forests. In some instances of this kind, the lost trader had not been found for many months, until some hunting party came, by chance, upon his wasted body in some lonely shelter, where, too weak to go further, he had lain down to die. There were others more fortunate, who had strayed from their guides, but after their ammunition gave out had been able to sustain life on frogs and roots, hawks and an occasional find of nests of small eggs, until they came across a vacant wintering cabin of some absent trader, where they eked out a bare subsistence until help came.

Such occurrences were not uncommon, nor were the sufferings alone those of hunger. Shoes worn off the

feet by rough walking, made further search for guides or companions a painful experience. The finding of a pair of socks or shoes in an empty cabin, or the making of moccasins for the lost hunter by some friendly Indian woman, were looked upon as godsends.

Though the purchase of a canoe in these Northern woods had been made in return for a knife, still there were other occasions when the red men looked for presents from the white men, with a degree of eager expectancy which amounted to a demand. Failing of the gifts they desired, in many instances they were ready to steal and plunder.

In planning the miles to be covered before nightfall, or ere they were caught in the teeth of a storm, John Jacob Astor often found their destination a considerable distance further on, for it was the custom of the voyaguers to count leagues by the smoking of their pipes. One pipe was supposed to be a league's length, and the accustomed stopping place for a rest. In point of fact, a man pulling at a pipe usually found it empty in two miles instead of three.

Planning, watching, circumventing, bartering in such a way as would leave a friendly feeling, and an opening for trade the ensuing year, John Jacob Astor found use for all his skill and finesse. It was this type of trade on a large scale that gave the fur companies of

the North the name of "The Lords of the Lakes and the Forests." Many of these "Lords" carried on homes of rude splendor, and ruled the country round about, in fact, if not in name.

John Jacob Astor discovered other "free traders" in these remote woods and water-ways besides himself. There was John Johnson who came from Ireland in 1792, having heard of the romantic life of the fur trader. He set out from Montreal and made his way into the interior, settling on the South side of Lake Superior, as an independent trader.

There is a romantic story of his falling in love with the beautiful daughter of Wagobish, the "White Fisher," whose domain extended to the Mississippi. The "White Fisher" made his sugar on the skirts of a high mountain. There John Johnson first saw his eldest daughter, a beautiful girl of fourteen, who was rambling with a cousin on the east side of the mountain. At the base of a steep cliff the young girls found a long flat piece of yellow metal, too heavy for them to lift. They decided it belonged to "The Gitche Manitou," "The Great Spirit," and left the place hastily in superstitous awe. It was afterward suggested that some Southern tribe, which had immigrated to the North, may have built here an altar dedicated to the sun, a remnant of which the young Indian girls had

accidentally discovered John Johnson fell precipitantly in love with the Indian princess, whom he met under such unique circumstances, and lost no time in asking her hand in marriage from the chief, her father. But "White Fisher" was not pleased with the marriages made after the country fashion, and asked that Johnson return to Ireland for a time. If, after a sufficient period of probation, the lover's affection remained the same, he would give his consent to their marriage.

John Johnson consented to the conditions, and going back to Ireland, disposed of his property there, to return after the allotted time was past, to the wilds of America, where he claimed his bride. They settled at Sault Sainte Marie, where the fur trader built a comfortable home, which contained, among other civilized furnishings, a good library. His grounds were laid out in beautiful gardens of flowers and vegetables, and stretching afar in this boundless estate, was a wide plantation of Indian corn. In this oasis in the wilderness, John Johnson carried on the important life of a fur trader.

George and Charles Ermatinger, two other independent traders, sons of a Swiss merchant of Canada, both settled at Sault Sainte Marie. They were men of great energy, courage and local influence. The two

brothers had a large fur-trading establishment on the south side of the river, opposite the rapids. The two families and their children, their trading establishment, their grist mill, and their stone mansion, made quite a settlement of their own. But John Jacob Astor's objective points were not the settlements, but the forests and the water-ways.

His journeys through the wilderness in search of furs were full of hardships, hairbreadth escapes, and the thrill of adventure. There fell to his lot also great wonders of nature, of which he loved to speak in his later days—the primitive forests into whose depths he was at times the first white man to penetrate; the quiet of the evening broken by some gigantic tree of the woods, falling with a crash among the branches of its fellows, moved by no human hand; the plaintiff cry of the loon in the lonely solitudes; the glorious song of birds wafting brilliant plumage over his head at sunrise, or the eagle soaring against the blue sky.

The Indians, themselves, in all their glory of wilderness costume, with their peculiar sign language, formed no mean part of the picturesque, as well as the commercial, in these travels. They sometimes entertained their white employers by rare exhibitions of woodlore, and the fantastic sights to be obtained from nature's gifts.

They were accustomed to set the fir trees on fire by piling a great number of dried limbs near the trunks. When lighted, an almost instantaneous blaze shot to the very tops of the tall trees, making a most beautiful and brilliant spectacle at night. The Indian reason for this illumination was, that it might bring fair weather for a journey. There was interest in plenty for the fur-trader to entice him on his way toward his destination, an eager watching for the next marvel of nature, and ultimately the hope and expectation of a good trade.

The final point aimed at by the traders, voyageurs, and wood-runners, was Grand Portage, which ended on a bay of Lake Superior, partially sheltered by a rocky island. Here there were extensive wharves, a fort, and several trading posts. The portage was a well-made road, nine or ten miles long, which had been built to avoid the falls of Pigeon River. John Jacob Astor was one among the hundreds interested in the fur business, who made a bustling life of this important half-way meeting place, at certain seasons of the year.

The crowds came and went in two streams. One stream flowed in from Montreal, leaving in May and returning in September, in canoes of four tons' burden, each carrying eight or ten men. As these voyageurs traveled the least hazardous part of the way, and lived on

cured rations, they were called "Goers and Comers" or "Pork Eaters."

The second stream of men turned inland in canoes of about half the size of those that made the start from Montreal. These latter were purchased from the Indians. The fare of these men was largely the dried meat of the buffalo, known as pemmican, except as they varied it with game shot by their own guns, or fish from the streams.

These were the daring *coureurs des bois.* After August 11th, the hurry of the season began. Woodrunners, carrying one hundred and fifty pounds, portaged their burdens over the ten-mile road, and were often known to make the portage and return in six hours, carrying goods of commerce or skins each way. The canoes which embarked from the north side of the portage for the far-off fur stations, were manned by four or five men, and were loaded with two-thirds goods and one-third provisions. Launched upon a small river, they continued through successive portages, lakes and rivers, westward or northward.

John Jacob Astor bought his beaver and otter skins at Grand Portage from the Red River district, his marten, mink and musquash from other sections far inland. Traders who journeyed themselves to these far-away posts found much of the primeval life of the forest, be-

side the peltries they sought from Indian collectors. Dr. Coues, in editing the journel of Alexander Henry, Jr., a young trader of the Northwest, gives a sketch of the life of the Red River section.

"February 28th, 1801. Wolves and crows are very numerous, feeding on buffalo carcasses which lie in every direction. I shot two buffalo cows, a calf, and two bulls, and got home after dark. I was choking with thirst, having chased the buffalo on snow shoes in the heat of the day, when the snow so adheres that one is scarcely able to raise the feet. A draught of water was the sweetest beverage I had ever tasted. An Indian brought in a calf of this year, which he found dead. It was well grown, and must have perished last night in the snow. This is extraordinary; they say it denotes an early spring.

"March 5th. The buffaloes have for some time been wandering in every direction. My men have raised and put their traps in order for the spring hunt, as the raccoons begin to come out of their winter quarters in the day time, though they retire to the hollow trees at night.

"On the eighth it rained for four hours; fresh meat thawed. On the ninth we saw the first spring bird. Bald eagles we have seen the whole winter, but now they are numerous, feeding on the buffalo carcasses."

Grand Portage was often spoken of as "the general rendezvous of the fur traders." The fort was built on a grassy flat at the edge of the bay, overshadowed by a rocky hill of great height, and was four hundred by five hundred feet. Within, there were dwelling houses,

shops and stores, stables and gardens—the houses made safe from hostile attack by rows of palisades, a foot and a half in diameter, sunk three feet in the earth and rising to a height of fifteen feet above ground.

When the fur merchants from Montreal gathered here each summer, with their hosts of attendants, they entertained guests from the camps in the wilderness, as well as others from nearer districts, who remembered their hospitality through many a day of succeeding hardships. "We were feasted on the best of everything, and the best of fish, and met the gentlemen from Montreal in good fellowship," wrote one young wintering partner, of this hospitable gathering place.

This was the summer session of "the Lords of the Lakes and the Forests," a body of great financiers and accomplished traders, courageous and daring, yet tactful in their management of the Indians; as a whole treating them fairly, except through short periods of unwise leadership. They were men who ventured in new lands and untried fields, and with the venture won a magnificent success. One of these men who ventured was John Jacob Astor, independent trader in the fur country.

CHAPTER XV.

BY CANOE THROUGH THE GREAT LAKES.

THROUGH the early years of his life as a fur merchant, John Jacob Astor was his own agent at the frontier trading stations, where he made arrangements for the delivery of large quantities of furs. These posts were not always reached by tramping through the wilderness. At least a long stretch of the journey was by canoe.

He traversed the Ottawa and the Great Lakes with Ontario voyageurs, who were a hardy race of men, with a large share of the romantic in their composition. Many of them were Iroquois Indians or half-breeds, though French-Canadians also possessed great skill in handling the boats.

The voyageurs wore a coat made of a blanket, leather leggings to the knees of their cloth trousers, and moccasins of deer skin. From their braided belts of many colors were suspended their knives, tobacco pouches, and other convenient implements. Their language was composed of a mixture of French, English and Indian phrases.

The voyageurs of French descent retained the gayety and lightness of heart of their ancestors, which appeared again even in the half-breeds. Mutually obliging and kindly disposed, adventures and hardships shared together, seemed to have accentuated their friendship for each other. John Jacob Astor found the good humor of these boatmen unfailing, their patience and courage on long, rough expeditions only surpassed by their love of the camp fire and the full pot; their dexterity with the paddles only exceeded by that of the song and dance, when Dame Fortune threw the faintest opportunity for festivity in their path.

Their canoes, constructed out of carefully selected, thin, but tough sheets of birch-bark, made water-tight along the seams with pitch, were both light and strong, though frail in appearance. The Indians called them a gift from the Great Spirit, and were proud of their ability to paddle their employers swiftly and safely through streams and rapids. A heavier type of canoe, capable of carrying four tons of trading goods, was built for the freight.

Their start on a journey full of peril and daring ventures, was considered a fateful day by the voyageurs. No less so was it for John Jacob Astor, the trader. Even more unknown were the rivers, and the waters of the chaining lakes, to the great venturer.

The employes were tempted to drown their qualms regarding adverse fate, by copious draughts of liquor, but this was forestalled by keeping them busy, and unaware of the exact hour of departure, till the last moment. But there is an inner signal that strikes such hours, and the women and children and dogs knew it, without being told. The human side was ready for a sad farewell, and the dogs for a howling sympathy.

The stout-hearted voyageurs did not allow their spirits to droop for long. The charm of adventure laid hold of them, their spirits swung easily from grave to gay, and cheers followed the boatloads that struck out from shore while at the word of their leaders, the men's voices blended in a song of good luck. The story of the "Three Fairy Ducks" was a favorite, and sung with a lively chorus:

"Behind the manor lies the mere,
Three ducks bathe in its waters clear,
En roulant, ma boule,
Roule, roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant, ma boule roulant,
En roulant ma boule."

The dash of the paddles voiced the excitement of the crews.

There were various resting places as the boats went on their way, but one of the most noted was the shrine

of Ste. Anne, the patroness of the Canadian voyageur. Here he made confession, and left such relics and votive offerings as he was able. Nor did it seem incongruous to him after these deeds of devotion, to indulge in a grand carouse in honor of the saint, and for the prosperity of the voyage. Whether his gifts were much or little, the voyageur never failed to offer the melody of his voice, the homage of his heart. Thomas Moore, moved by the rythm of the voyageur's song, translated it into:

> "Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
> Our voices keep tune, and our oars keep time,"

with the refrain:

> "Row, brothers, row; the stream runs fast,
> The rapids are near, and the daylight's past."

The heavier canoes going to Grand Portage from Montreal, which was a distance of eighteen hundred miles, were manned by eight or nine men to each bark, and could carry besides the baggage "sixty-five packages of trading goods of ninety pounds each, six hundred pounds of biscuit, two hundred pounds of pork, three bushels of peas, two oil cloths to cover the goods, a sail, an axe, a towing line, a kettle, a sponge to bail out water, and gum and bark to repair vessels." Sunk to within six inches of the water, and propelled by

strong arms, they covered about six miles an hour, when weather conditions were favorable.

John Jacob Astor, in common with the fur merchants of Canada, imported suitable goods for the trade from England, stored, packed and accompanied them to their destination at the right time. Exchanging trading goods for furs, he in turn packed these and shipped them to England. Goods likely to attract the Indians, and induce a generous exchange in skins, possessed a character of their own. "Coarse cloth of different kinds, milled blankets, arms and ammunition; linen and coarse sheetings; thread, lines and twine; common hardware; cutlery and ironmongery, brass and copper kettles, silk and cotton handkerchiefs, hats, shoes and stockings, calicoes and printed cottons—and in particular, blue beads."—were among these desirable articles of trade. As the red men never closed a bargain, unless they considered they had the advantage, the choosing of acceptable trading goods was very important.

As the boats swept up the Ottawa, though the work was hard, exhiliration increased rather than diminished. One song followed another, changing from rollicking to tender, and then to one of inspirational power.

A characteristic love song of the voyageur's of the

early days, freely translated by Mrs Henry Malan, is full of the spirit of the time:

"With a heart as wild
As a joyous child,
Lived Rhoda of the mountain;
Her only wish
To seek the fish,
In the waters of the fountain.
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

The stream was deep,
The banks were steep,
Down in the flood fell she;
When there rode by,
Right gallantly,
Three barons of high degree,
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

'O, tell us, fair maid,'
They each one said,
'Your reward to the venturing knight,
Who shall save your life,
From the water's strife,
By his arms' unflinching might.'
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

'Oh! haste to my side,'
The maiden replied,
'Nor ask for a recompense now;

When safe on land,
Again I stand,
For such matters is time enow.'
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

But when all free
Upon the lea,
She found herself once more,
She would not stay,
And sped away,
Till she reached her cottage door.
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

Her casement by,
That maiden shy,
Began so sweet to sing:
Her lute and voice
Did e'en rejoice,
Like early flowers of spring.
Oh, the violet, white and blue!

'Oh, my heart so true
Is not for you,
Nor for any of high degree;
I have pledged my truth,
To an honest youth,
With a beard so comely to see.'
Oh, the violet, white and blue!"

A beard was evidently a sign and seal of the dashing and brave, and withal, romantic voyageur lover.

As a portage was reached, the man in the bow jumped quickly into the water, to prevent the canoe from grating on the bottom. Lifting it to their strong shoulders, the bowman and steersman carried it to shore, while the middle men tied their slings to the packages, and swung them on their backs to bear over the portage. Each act was full of enthusiasm, and performed with the quick deftness of accustomed labor.

The trees were often blazed to show the exact spot where portage commenced. A day's journey might include the climbing of high mountains, and the piercing of dense forests, making the hard trail at times with so little food in their stomachs, that they were constantly hungry.

Occasionally the carrying paths were shorter, and led around waterfalls and impassable rapids, or skirted torrents and precipices. The portages were so fraught with peril that they frequently became burying grounds. Sometimes priests, who had traveled the same hard paths with a chapel on their backs, instead of goods of commerce, had erected an altar beside the way. The birch trees, where the portage struck the streams, were stripped of their bark, for here the canoes were mended.

These canoe trails bore many names, among them a few that bespoke the glory, as well as the hardships of

PORTAGE

UNLOADING

By permission of Sampson Low, Marston and Company

the passage, "the portage des Roses," where the wild roses grew; "the portage de la Musique," where some rippling stream sung as it danced along, were among the former. One of the well-known paths from Montreal skirted an oak grove, and led across a flooded meadow. Father Dablon, who traveled it in common with the voyageurs, said "the path led through paradise, but was as hard as the road to heaven."

When the weather was calm and serene, and the paddles dipped in exact time to the voyageur's melodious strains, John Jacob Astor found his journey in search of furs full of pleasureable sensations, followed by thrilling exercises of mind which were the traders' portion, as they ran the rapids, either with boats lightened according to the depth of the water—while part of the goods went by land—or when they took the risk and ran down the whole load.

There were places of great danger on the Upper Ottawa River. Dr. Bigsby, an early traveler in this section of the country, tells of a ravine or chasm in which the Ottawa ran, which "is so narrow and deep that the sun rises very high before it shines on the water, and hardly at all in winter." He continues: "Many rapids occur, but the most serious is that of Brisson. It is very swift and turbulent. As our canoe turned round and round in it, in spite of all our men could do, the sight

of thirteen wooden crosses lining the shore, in memory of as many watery deaths, conveyed no comfort to my mind."

"Deep River" and the "Narrows of Hell Gate," came in for somber stories, and superstitious awe and dread. Running rapids, injuring and mending canoes, building camp fires, distributing provisions, quieting discontent, holding the enthusiasm until success was won, were all a part of John Jacob Astor's experiences on these long and hazardous trips.

Camp fire stories were full of actual tragedies as well as superstition. Sometimes a voyageur pointed out the exact spot where a fur trader had been swept to his death by a fierce eddy. One tale of danger and death was matched by another, and these stories told on the edge of a dense forest usually culminated in actual ghost stories, particularly that of Wendigo, a spirit who had been condemned to wander over forest and stream because of crimes committed, who occasionally took on the form of an outcast, and sought for human food among the trader's party. With such superstition deeply seated, each day's journey was sure to close at sunset, lest unluckily, the crew be met by this sinister apparition.

John Jacob Astor was forewarned in somber detail of the danger of rapids, whirlpools, and deceptive cur-

rents along the Ottawa, and the more mysterious dangers that haunted the shadowy woods. Yet the heart of the forest had its pleasant surprises, as well as fearsome stories. Dr. Bigsby was surprised one day to meet along a rocky portage, a young lady, a genuine nymph of the forest, with no hint of disaster about her. He tells of the unexpected meeting in an interesting way:

"I had a great surprise at the portage Talon. Picking my steps carefully, as I passed over the rugged ground, laden with things personal and culinary, I suddenly stumbled upon a pleasing young lady, sitting alone under a bush in a green riding habit, and white beaver bonnet. Transfixed with a sight so out of place in the land of the eagle and cataract, I seriously thought it was a vision of:

'One of those fairy shepherds and shepherdesses,
Who hereabout live on simplicity and water cresses.'

"Having paid my respects with some confusion, (and very much amazed she seemed), I learned from her that she was the daughter of an esteemed Indian trader, Mr Ermatinger, on the way to the Falls of St. Mary with her father, and who was then with his people, at the other end of the portage; and so it turned out. A fortnight afterward I partook of the cordialities of her home, and bear willing witness to the excellence of her tea, and the pleasantness of the evening."

John Jacob Astor traveled hundreds of miles by canoe and portage in these journeys—trips that involved great daring and supreme hardships—between his start at Montreal, and his arrival at the copper rocks

of Lake Superior. He worked with his men in the removal of bales of goods, before the canoes were taken over the rapids; his practiced eye pierced the depth of the water, as the boats were lightened to exactly the right weight to avoid the rocks beneath the surging waves. Yet paddling against cold head-winds, a boat would sometimes strike a stone, and nearly upset, or tear a dangerous square from her bottom. In these cases, men and goods were all in danger of sinking beneath the waters before they reached shore, when only the energy and skill of the French voyageurs and Indian half-breeds saved goods and provisions before the boat sank.

These were journeys full of tense courage and hair-breadth escapes, of muscles strained tto the utmost over successive portages, or one of unusual length. What wonder that the songs in the quiet waters smoothed the way, and heartened the voyageurs for the next hardship!

That John Jacob Astor accomplished the feat of shooting the dashing rapids of the St. Mary's River in a birch-bark canoe, with a couple of Indians, would suggest that pure love of adventure sometimes stirred the great merchant's heart, and fired his brain.

Skirting the north shore of Superior was part of these canoe journeys, and though near their destina-

tion, danger attended them to the close. There were trading posts along the shores, where the fur trade was at its height, but the waters of the lake were deep and cold, and often stirred by angry winds, while its rocky banks offered fresh risks.

Most carefully the voyageurs picked their way along, knowing well that a man who fell into the icy lake was seldom rescued, and a boat split open on the jagged rocks beneath the water, meant loss and death.

Lake Superior had its weird legends, too, of Inini-Wudjoo, a great giant, and of the hungry heron who devoured the unwary.

Grand Portage was the goal of the Montreal voyageurs till the end of the century. Here great encampments were made on the grassy slope around the walls of the fort, and the surrounding water was alive with canoes. Here the east and west met—the *couriers* of the wild western woods, and the courageous boatmen of the east. Adventure was in the air. There were tales of separation and meeting; narration of weeks of hardship and daring encounters with wild animals; of hunger, and of the full kettle over the camp fire. But most of all, vast packs of peltries changed hands, and hundreds of laboring men were engaged in making and pressing bales of furs, while the clerks of the fur companies were occupied in marking them.

We have no evidence that John Jacob Astor was at Grand Portage on July 4th, 1800, but Daniel Harmon, a young New Englander, a clerk of the Northwest Company, gives a spirited account of events there on Independence Day, similar to those other traders must have seen during their own visits to the fort. Harmon says:

"In the daytime the natives were permitted to dance in the fort, and the Company made them a present of sixty gallons of shrub. In the evening the gentlemen of the place dressed, and we had a famous ball in the dining room. For music we had the bagpipe, the violin and the flute, which added much to the interest of the occasion. At the ball, there were a number of the ladies of the country, and I was surprised to find that they could conduct themselves with so much propriety, and dance so well."

While the voyageurs and wood-runners loaded and unloaded, they feasted and contended; the air was rife alternately with disputes and jocularity. John Jacob Astor and his fellow traders carried heavy responsibility amid the general feasting and sociability. For them it was not only a venture of wind and tide, of fierce rapid and tedious portage, but a venture in skins and peltries, whose number, selection and price, whose suitable handling and packing, and safe convoy back over the hazardous route, was to mark the measure of their success in the fur business.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXTENDING THE FUR TRADE.

THE early part of John Jacob Astor's life was a struggle, in which anxiety and disappointment often played a prominent part, yet he was never conquered by discouragement. Each failure impelled him to more active self-improvement, to a more comprehensive study of the world. He was most assidious in his pursuit of commercial knowledge, and never tired of enquiring about the markets of Europe and Asia, the ruling prices, the goods to be bought, and the standing of business houses.

As he journeyed through the woods of the distant frontiers, in his search for furs, he had discovered where he might establish fur stations to advantage, along the borders of Canada and in the region of the Great Lakes; and later employed a host of trappers, collectors and agents. He organized routes for his men on Long Island; in New York State along the present line of the Erie Railroad; through New Jersey and Northern Pennsylvania; from Albany to Buffalo; and up the Hudson to Lake Champlain, and on to Montreal.

A remarkable fact about these trails of the fur trader was, that nearly all were along the lines of future railways, which terminate in New York to-day.

Between 1790 and 1800, Mr. Astor's business developed with remarkable rapidity. New York continued to be his headquarters, where the great fur merchant himself rose early, lived plainly, and was indefatigable in his activity. His habits were methodical, and he constantly added to his knowledge of finances on a large scale, while he mastered the minutest details of his business.

That John Jacob Astor was as keen a judge of men as of skins, added a large factor to his success, and caused the men in his employ, both in the counting room and in the fur country, to render him the best service of which they were capable.

Before the close of the century his interests reached to the Mississippi, then the limit of settlement in the United States. He had ceased to send his furs to England in other men's vessels. Beginning by chartering a ship, with his brother-in-law, Captain William Whettan in command, his cargo was sold at a large profit, and the vessel returned laden with Astor and Broadwood musical instruments, and goods to be used in the fur trade. Soon he was able to buy a ship of his own,

and his ships multiplied until he had a fleet of a dozen vessels afloat.

One of Mr. Astor's clerks was William W. Todd, a nephew of his wife's. He entered the Astor office as a clerk when a boy, and continued in Mr. Astor's employ for several years. Cornelius Heeney was a clerk with Mr. Astor at the same time, and William Roberts at a later date. When young Todd was sixteen, Mr. Astor sent him to Canada to buy furs. It was a journey of three or four weeks to Montreal. Seven days were spent on a sloop making the trip up the Hudson to Albany, then four more in an open wagon to Whitehall. Here he was blocked by a snow storm for nine days. After this he walked about fifty miles, at the rate of twelve miles a day. Young Todd enjoyed his trip up the Hudson and on to Lake Champlain, although of a strenuous nature, as much as Mr. Astor had at an earlier period. There was the zest of adventure about this form of traveling, which any live boy would have enjoyed.

But these trips were not a summer holiday, and the young man became rich in practical experience, when he found himself wrecked on Lake Champlain. Perhaps the catastrophe, though not fatal, left its mark upon him, for his succeeding journey on foot through the wintry forests so exhausted him, that while crossing

the St. Lawrence on the ice, he sank down numbed with cold, and was unable to proceed further.

At first he was not missed, and would undoubtedly have perished, had not a companion discovered his absence. Turning back over the icy trail, they found the young man unable to walk, and carried him across to the other shore. Mr. Astor had given his nephew letters to the priests in a college in Montreal. Here he remained, studying French for six months, at the end of which time he wrote his uncle that he was tired of Canada, and obtained permission to return home.

It was not an idle season the lad had spent, aside from his studies; for the young clerk made constant trips alone to neighboring Indian villages, buying up all the skins they had on hand—northern beaver, raccoon, marten and deer skins, both Indian-dressed and in the hair. One trip took him to the villages by the Lake of Two Mountains, where he bought up all the marten skins to be gotten. From this excursion he baled up about five hundred peltries, and the journey which began so disasterously, was turned into a marked success.

A clerk in Mr. Astor's employ had various occupations. Young Todd, when back in New York, was one day sent down to Tammany Hall to sell bucktails. Members of the Tammany Society were in the habit of

wearing the tale of the deer in their hats, on certain festive occasions, which gave them and their supporters in New York State the name of the "Bucktail Party."

Another clerk of Mr. Astor's was sent to Communipaw on an equally interesting errand. This time it was not to sell, but to buy wampum from the Dutch "by the bushel," to be used in purchasing skins from distant Indian tribes.

A string of wampum six feet long was worth four guilders (one dallar and a half.) Six feet was as much as a man could reach with his arms outstretched. A bit of Indian shrewdness in selling wampum, was to select their largest and tallest man for a measuring stick.

The Dutch were in the habit of purchasing wampum, since it was exchangeable currency between them and the Indians, and on Sunday the collecting bags attached to long poles, gathered a full harvest of these Indian sheckles.

Some of the Indians on Long Island made a business of forming the sea shells into Indian money and ornaments, calling this Indian mint, "The Land of Shell." The larger part of this currency was made from periwinkles and clams, or the inside of oyster shells. The shells were rounded into proper shape, and became the paper money of the Indians. All fur traders provided

themselves with wampum, before they undertook to trade with the red men for skins. The current value of the round shells, used in this way, was six beads of white, or three heads of black wampum, for an English penny.

The furs collected by Mr. Astor's agents were shipped to England. On the return voyage the ships brought over English merchandise, on both of which cargoes he made large profits. In spite of an ample business success, Mr. Astor's home remained unostentatious. It was not until 1800, when he was said to be worth a quarter of a million, that he gave himself the luxury of a home apart from his business.

In the years immediately following the turn of the century, his store was at 71 Liberty street, and his house at 223 Broadway, on the site of the old Astor House. Here he continued to live for a quarter of a century. Increased wealth did not produce increased self-indulgence. Mr. Astor's pleasures were simple. He enjoyed a pipe, a glass of beer, and a game of checkers.

The simplicity of his life allowed him to glide into a millionaire, without the knowledge of those about him. "A story he enjoyed telling was that of a young bank clerk, who questioned one day the sufficiency of his name on a piece of mercantile paper. Mr. Astor asked him how much he thought he was worth.

"Evidently the clerk felt his own importance, and was ready with an answer that fully betrayed his ignorance of the financial status of the man before him. Mr Astor then drew him on to give an estimate of how much several other well-known merchants were worth, and the young man replied, gauging each in turn according to his style of living.

"'Well,' said Mr. Astor, 'I will not name any figure, but I am worth more than any sum you have mentioned.'

"'Then,' returned the clerk, glibly, 'you are a greater fool than I took you for, to work hard as you do.'"

This answer sent the fur merchant away chuckling, for he always enjoyed a joke. "He had great contempt for the style of living which used up the incomes of prosperous years, without regard to inevitable times of commercial collapse. He had also a strong disapproval of illegitimate speculation, especially gambling in stocks."

In the later nineties Mr. Astor still arose early, as his custom continued to be through life; but in spite of a vast and most varied business, whose details were all held in his capable hands and masterful brain, he often left his office in the middle of the afternoon, and after an early dinner, mounted his horse and rode over

the island, resting nerves and brain while he breathed in the salt breezes from the bay, or the fresh country air of the roads leading out of the city.

It was John Jacob Astor's own feet which led him to the fur country, discounting hundreds of miles in the search after, and the purchase of furs; but it was his good horse that carried him over Manhattan, and started him on the road to an ownership in land, equal to any of the manors granted to American settlers by foreign Crowns.

Mr. Astor was an enthusiastic Mason, and belonged to Holland Lodge No. 8. In 1798, we have the record that he was a Master Mason. In 1801, he became grand treasurer of the Knight Templar Encampment, and was Sir John Astor.

The secretary of the Trustees of the German Reformed Church still continued to record, in 1803, that "Consistory met with John Jacob Astor in his Broadway home."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EAST INDIA PASS NO. 68.

JEFFERSON'S administration held out a welcoming hand to all the world. The world, in return, accepted the invitation, bringing with it, consciously or unconsciously, the material for the making of an empire. Ardent hope, strong resolution, unlimited perseverence, many times wealth and power, were thrown with generous hand into the brew-pot of a new nation.

A willingness to venture was an important quality in those whom the eastern hemisphere sent to the western. On Jefferson's Inauguration Day, a man who had seen the Great Lakes was far-traveled. When Jefferson retired in 1809, John Jacob Astor was planning his expedition to the Pacific coast by land and water. Such far-reaching enterprise was a great stimulant toward settling the western half of the continent, and developing the nation's resources.

The year 1800 saw celebrated ventures in the Chinese and Eastern trade. It was at this time that Mr. Astor sent his first ship to Canton. But previous to this event,

there is a story told of how his path across the ocean was made plain, which reads like a fairy tale.

Mr. Astor was once asked by a business acquaintance what special transaction, or particularly fortunate hit, gave him his start as a financier. The great capitalist never claimed superior sagacity or intelligence over his fellows, and replied with his story of small beginnings, which led to large results.

Some years previous to the end of the century, he had accumulated a large quantity of fine furs, unsalable in the American market. All the common furs, muskrat, mink, rabbit, squirrel, etc., which he and his agents had gathered, he had no trouble in disposing of in the city at good prices. But the more expensive skins, which had been bought with the rest, were unsalable in any large quantity in New York, and he had packed them away in casks in his cellar.

At this time he had no business agent in London to send them to, and did not want to ship them at a risk. He talked the matter over with his wife, and together they decided it would be best for him to sail for England himself, with his special lot of furs, and act as his own agent in selling them. The result of the trip was uncertain, and to economize as much as possible, he made the journey as a steerage passenger.

London, however, proved a good market for his choice furs, and he disposed of them at a high price. He then set himself to purchase a return cargo of trading goods, which would be desirable in the eyes of the Indians and hunters, and such other merchandise as would insure a profit in the New York market.

After making preparations for shipping his goods by a vessel bound for New York, he found that his ship was not ready to start, and he was likely to be detained a couple of weeks. He devoted his unexpected leisure to looking about London, and picking up all the information possible, especially whatever would be of advantage to him in his own line of business.

One of the most important places he visited was the great East India House. The offices and warehouses both possessed a special charm for him. As usual, he asked questions of any one about the place, who was willing to answer. One day he asked one of the porters what the name of the Governor was. In reply the man gave a German name very familiar to Mr. Astor.

"Is the Governor an Englishman?" enquired John Jacob Astor, incredulously.

"He came from Germany when he was a boy," replied the porter.

This was enough for the German-American. He resolved to meet his fellow-countryman, and watching

for a favorable opportunity, sent in his name. By good fortune he was admitted to the great man's presence, and lost no time in recalling the past to the Governor's memory.

"Isn't your name Wilhelm ———?" the fur dealer asked. "Didn't you go to school in such a town?"

"I did, and now I remember you very well. Your name is Astor," the Governor replied.

After this they had a cordial talk over old school matters, and boyhood days, ending with an invitation for Mr. Astor to dine with the acquaintance of his youth. The invitation was declined for the time, but the following day the two men met again. In the course of conversation the Governor enquired of Mr. Astor whether there was not something he could do to aid him, but the American fur dealer replied that he had already sold his skins, and bought his return cargo. Neither did he need cash or credit, so he gratefully declined the offer so kindly made.

At their final meeting the Governor expressed a desire to make his old school friend a gift, and offering Mr. Astor a package, said, "Take this; you may find its value." After which the two fellow-countrymen parted with true German warmth.

The package handed Mr. Astor contained a Canton Prices Current, and a Permit which enabled the ship

that carried it, to trade freely at any of the ports held by the East India Company.

While he was grateful for the consideration shown him, the Governor's gift at this time did not suggest the value to Mr. Astor's mind that it did later. He owned no ships, and had never had any trade with the East Indies, and was making no plans in that direction. Yet he bore back across the ocean the piece of parchment, which was destined to be the foundation of his vast shipping interests, a trade amounting to millions, and which was to circle the globe. The Permit was No. 68.

It is probable that Mr. Astor did much thinking concerning this bit of parchment during the long days of the voyage, realizing its value under certain conditions. Upon arriving at home, it seems to have been an early and important matter of discussion between himself and his wife.

"I have no ships, and it is of no present use to us," he said.

Mrs. Astor's ready wit proposed that her husband go and have a talk with James Livermore, who was engaged in the West India trade, and owned some very good-sized vessels. Mr. Astor considered his wife's advice worth taking, and called on the ship owner, show-

ing him the East India Pass, and Canton Prices Current.

"Now," said he, "if you will make up a voyage for one of your largest ships, I will loan you the Pass and the Prices Current, on one condition. You are to furnish ship and cargo, but I am to have one half the profits for my pass, and for suggesting the voyage."

The West India merchant scoffed at what he called a one-sided proposition, and apparently gave it no serious thought. Mr. Astor went home and told his wife the result of his visit, and for a time the matter was dropped.

Meanwhile the West India merchant was turning the subject over in his mind. He had been successful in the West India trade, and here was an opening for the East Indies. At that time no American vessels traded at Canton. The East India ports were as tightly closed to American commerce as if they had not existed.

Mr. Livermore's meditations and calculations ended in a return call on Mr. Astor.

"Were you in earnest?" asked the ship owner, "when you showed me the Pass of the East India Company?"

"I was never more so," replied Mr. Astor.

Again they talked the subject over, Mr. Livermore finally agreeing to enter into the undertaking, practi-

cally at the terms that Mr. Astor had offered in the beginning,—that in return for his Pass and Prices Current, he was to have one-half of the profits of the voyage, and no expense.

The ship for the initial American trading voyage to the East Indies, was selected, her cargo consisting largely of ginseng, lead, and scrap iron. She also carried about thirty thousand Spanish dollars.

Sailing for China, she arrived safely at Whampoa, a few miles below Canton, where she anchored, "loading and unloading her cargo as freely as if she had been a vessel belonging to the East India Company."

The ginseng, which cost twenty cents a pound in New York, sold in Canton for three dollars and fifty cents a pound. Lead brought ten cents, and scrap iron a very high price. The return cargo contained tea, that sold in New York for one dollar more a pound than it cost in the Canton market.

When the accounts were settled, Mr. Astor's share of the profits was fifty-five thousand dollars, in silver. This was packed in barrels and sent up to his store. Mrs Astor is said to have enquired what the barrels contained. "The fruit of our East India Pass," replied her husband.

Mr. Livermore returned the Pass to its owner, and with his share of the profits of the voyage, Mr. Astor

bought a ship, which he loaded with an assorted cargo, and started his own vessel to China, having fully awakened to the value of the Governor's gift.

At the Sandwich Islands they made a stop, to take on water and a fresh supply of provisions, and the Captain seized the opportunity to lay in a fresh store of fire wood. At Canton, a mandarin was among their visitors. He noticed their fire wood, and asked the price of it. The Captain showed amusement at the question, but said he was open to an offer. The mandarin offered five hundred dollars a ton, and every stick of it was sold at that price.

The fuel intended for fire wood, proved to be sandal wood. The sandal wood sale was kept a profound secret for seventeen years, Mr. Astor holding the monopoly of the trade in this valuable commodity. During this long period no other trading vessel of England or the United States found out the secret.

It was not discovered till a Yankee captain conceived the idea of following one of Mr. Astor's ships, and watching what occurred on the voyage. After that the sandal wood trade was shared by a Boston ship-owner.

Mr. Astor occasionally made voyages to London in his own ships. During these trips he made a most care-

ful study of China, and the far-Eastern trade, from the English standpoint.

It is an interesting fact, that Mrs. Astor was a still better judge of furs than the great fur merchant himself. It was she who selected the cargoes for the Canton market, whose successful sale gave proof of her ability. When the Astors became wealthy, she was accustomed to ask her husband a generous price an hour for giving her judgment in the selection of furs, knowing well that her skill and perception were an assistance to him in his commercial operations. Mr. Astor is said to have given his wife whatever she asked for her cooperation.

Mr. Astor continued his commercial relations with China for twenty-seven years, sometimes with loss, generally with gain, and occasionally with enormous profit. China was the best market for furs in the world, but his shipping was not confined entirely to the skins which he exported. There were also return cargoes of rice, tea, matting and other articles, for which there was an urgent call in America, and upon which large profits were to be made.

John Jacob Astor was America's pioneer merchant in the China trade. Following in his wake were a hundred other merchants, who made large fortunes in the years which followed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NEW CENTURY.

THE departure of the Astor ships was directed from New York, their owner always giving his captains and agents explicit and minute directions in regard to the management of the expedition. If these directions were accurately followed, the voyage was usually a prosperous one.

In those days of sailing packets, with commercial restrictions peculiar to the times, with no telegraph, cable across the ocean or wireless, and with postal communication very irregular, the organization and conduct of these ocean ventures, with their possibility of accidents and delays, called for most comprehensive foresight and sagacity on the part of the managing head of this world-wide commerce. Mr. Astor was in the habit of forming his plans with the utmost deliberaiton, but when really under way, he carried them forward with nerve and dispatch, and with an easy grasp of every detail.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the fur trade was very profitable, and of vast extent. Six mil-

lion peltries were estimated to have been sold annually, the skins varying in value from fifteen cents to five hundred dollars.

Nearly every gentleman in Europe and America wore a beaver skin upon his head, or a part of one. Good beaver skins could be bought from the Indians for a dollar's worth of trinkets. In London the same skin brought twenty-five English shillings. These twenty-five English shillings invested in English cloth and cutlery, brought a return in New York of ten dollars. So the beaver skin rolled up money as it traveled, and the fur trade was a good business.

Mr. Astor's ventures to China, as has been stated, were often most fortunate. A fair profit on a voyage to the East was thirty thousand dollars. He was the first American merchant to conceive the idea of habitually trading around the globe, sending super-cargoes with American furs to England, from there carrying British merchandise to China, and returning to America with tea. Sometimes this order was reversed, and his ships sailed westward, but eastward or westward, they circled the globe, and were gone the larger part of two years. In speaking of Mr. Astor, Philip Hone, at one time Mayor of New York, wrote in his "Diary": "The fur-trade was the philosopher's stone of this modern Croesus, beaver skins and musk rats furnishing the oil for

the supply of Aladdin's lamp. His traffic was the shipment of furs to China, where they brought immense prices, for he monopolized the business; and the return cargoes of teas, silks and rich productions of China brought further large profits; for here, too, he had very little competition at the time of which I am speaking. My brother and I found in Mr. Astor a valuable customer. We sold many of his cargoes, and had no reason to complain of a want of liberality or confidence. All he touched turned to gold, and it seemed as if fortune delighted in erecting him a monument of her unerring potency." At that time a tea merchant of large capital, had an advantage which Walter Barrett, an old writer, explains.

"A house that could raise money enough thirty years ago, (the first quarter of the nineteenth century) to send two hundred and sixty thousand dollars in specie, could soon have an uncommon capital, and this was the working of the old system.

"The Griswolds owned the ship 'Panama'. They started her from New York in the month of May, with a cargo of perhaps thirty thousand worth of ginseng, spelter, lead, iron, etc., and one hundred and seventy thousand in Spanish dollars. The ship goes on the voyage and reaches Whampoa, a few miles below Canton, in safety. Her super-cargo in two months has her loaded with tea, some china ware, a great deal of cassia or false cinnamon, and a few other articles. Suppose the cargo is mainly tea, costing about thirty-seven cents per pound on the average.

"The duty was enormous in those days. It was twice the cost of the tea at least; so that a tea cargo of two hundred thousand dollars, when it had paid duty of seventy-five cents a pound, which would be four hundred thousand dollars, amounted to six hundred thousand. The profit was at least fifty per cent on the original cost, or one hundred thousand dollars, and would make the cargo worth seven hundred thousand dollars.

"The cargo of tea would be sold almost on arrival, (say eleven or twelve months after the ship left New York in May), to wholesale grocers, for their notes at four and six months, say seven hundred thousand dollars.

"In those years there was credit given by the United States of nine, twelve and eighteen months! So that the East India or Canton merchant, after his ship had made one voyage, had the use of government capital to the extent of four hundred thousand dollars, on the ordinary cargo of a China ship.

"No sooner had the ship 'Panama' arrived, or any of the regular East Indiamen, then the cargo would be exchanged for grocers' notes, for seven hundred thousand dollars. These notes could be turned into specie very easily, and the owner had only to pay his bonds for four hundred thousand dollars duty, at nine, twelve or eighteen months, giving him time to actually send two more ships with two hundred thousand dollars each to Canton, and have them back again in New York before the bonds on the first voyage were due.

"John Jacob Astor, at one period of his life, had several ships operating in this way. They would go to Oregon on the Pacific, and carry from thence furs for Canton. These would be sold at large profits. Then the cargoes of tea for New York would pay enormous duties, which Astor did not have to pay to the United

States for a year and a half. His tea cargoes would be sold for good four and six months' paper, or perhaps cash; so that for eighteen or twenty years, John Jacob Astor had what was actually a free-of-interest loan from the government, of over five million dollars.

"Astor was prudent and lucky in his operations, and such an enormous government loan didn't ruin him as it did others."

The fur trade engrossed the thought of the men of those days, as the gold mines did a later generation. It gave employment to many thousands, and among the great merchants connected with it, there was intense competition. The fur sales of the Astors held spring and fall at a later date, brought crowds of fur dealers from all over Europe to attend them. As long as life lasted, John Jacob Astor had a warm affection for beautiful and costly furs, and for years was accustomed to have a handsome specimen hanging in his counting room.

Beaver, mink, sable and otter filled the great Northern forests when the fur trade began, but as the hunters spread each year in great numbers over the fur country, beating the woods, and trapping their game, gradually the abundance of fur-bearing animals diminished, and in some places became extinct.

This result of the great fur trade, sent the hunters in pursuit of new waters and forests, as yet unmolested by white men, where the fur-bearing animals still

throve and multiplied. Woods and streams were scoured, further and further west, until the fur trade reached the Mississippi and Missouri, and finally stretched from ocean to ocean.

Although John Jacob Astor's tea business was secondary to his fur business, he combined the two as he circled the globe. He is said to have made by his voyages, "four times as much as the regular tea merchants in their most prosperous days. At this time there was not so great a variety of fancy teas. Black tea was called souchong, and green, hyson skin; but occasionally a ship would bring to New York a few packages of young hyson or hyson."

It was the custom of the day to hold auction sales of tea upon the wharves. Advertisements and handbills were distributed among the probable purchasers, and punch often contributed to the éclat and hilarity of the occasion. When there was an "open market" the day ended with large profits for the tea merchant.

To accommodate his tea business, Mr. Astor owned an immense tea warehouse on Greenwich Street, between Liberty and Courtland Streets.

The ships that sailed the Pacific carried many articles besides furs and specie, and tea. The Howlands were a typical firm of shippers and we have a description of their freight: "They sent out cargoes valued as high

as two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, made up to Valparaiso, Lima and Mazatlan. The cargoes were composed of everything from a cambric needle to a hoop-pole, packed in small barrels so they could be carried later on mules' backs. There were wines, bales of domestic fireworks, Chinese fire-crackers, gunpowder, muskets, lead, crimson and scarlet crepe shawls, plain crockery and fine china,''—in fact, a regular department store of to-day.

With each ship went the super-cargo, who was usually a clerk in the employ of the house which he represented, who had been with them for some time, and was familiar with their methods of business. To the super-cargoes of these early days, belongs the credit of establishing American commercial houses in foreign ports. At first their mission was to sell their cargoes and buy return cargoes, accompanying them to New York. But after a time it was found that an agent was needed to remain permanently at the foreign port, and the super-cargo was the man who best understood the situation.

The first super-cargoes to Canton became in later years the principal American merchants in China. The large capital called for in the East India business, prevented the average merchant from trading in that part of the world.

While American ships were sailing around the world, it is interesting to note, that the regular packets employed between Falmouth and New York, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, still bore English names. "Earl of Leicester," "Princess Elizabeth," "Lord Charles Spencer," "Lady Arabella," "the names of all of King George's family, ministers, and officers of the Crown." These packets with royal names, were hardly as large as a North River sloop, and made but two voyages a year, but the time was not far away, when both the size and names of the vessels plying between the United States and England changed, and "North America," "Independence" and "Washington" were among the cognomens that replaced those of royal lineage.

Mr. Astor had been living for some years now at 223 Broadway, in a house built by Rufus King, when he was United States Senator, before he became ambassador to the Court of St. James. For a time his office was in Vesey Street. During the war of 1812 and for many years afterward, he had his store at 69 Pine Street, corner of Pearl Street, which gave him the opportunity of going from the dooryard of his house into his store.

This Broadway home had an open piazza supported by pillars and arches, where its owner was accus-

tomed to sit in the cool of the afternoon after an early dinner. Here he continued through the years, to play scores of games of checkers, of which he was very fond; to enjoy his glass of beer and his pipe; and later, with his good road-horse, to start on his rides over Manhattan Island, which had become a settled custom.

The old Bowery road, bordered with the residences of the Dutch aristocracy,—low, picturesque houses with high stoops, surrounded by guarding trees and masses of shrubbery, beneath whose shade whole families sat in the cool of the day, while children rolled hoops and played marbles on the sidewalk,—was familiar ground; as was also Bleecker Street, where blackberries and roses ran riot within and without the garden walls.

Beyond St. Mark's church was open country. The Stuyvesant meadows led on to farms and market gardens, varied by thickets and swamps, while the rider occasionally passed fine old country seats in the midst of broad acres. Greenwich village was two miles from the town of New York, and a traveler was apt to take the road through Greenwich avenue, but no road was too remote or unfrequented to be traversed by John Jacob Astor and his good horse. So the island became more and more familiar to the future great landowner.

An evening at the theatre was also among the great merchant's recreations. He warmly appreciated the dramatic performances of Edmund Kean and Charles Mathews, and the musical genius of Garcia and Madame Malibran; and when attendance at the old Park Theatre was a popular evening recreation, Mr. Astor found rest and refreshment in witnessing a good play.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VISION THAT CROSSED A CONTINENT.

NAPOLEON Bonaparte sold Louisiana to President Jefferson, for the United States government, in 1803.

The fifteen million dollars paid for a far greater territory than the State that goes by that name to-day. The Louisiana which Jefferson purchased, stretched westward "from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the border of the British possessions on the North to Mexico on the South."

This new possession doubled the national territory, and more than doubled the national vision. Only the outskirts of the Louisiana of those days had been visited by white men, but Jefferson was not the type of man to let this unknown region of great possibilities go unexplored.

He wanted to know a great many facts about the new land,—how the country lay, what great rivers watered it, what mountains capped it, what its wealth of animal, vegetable, and mineral life might be; and most important of all, in taking initial steps on the

American continent, what tribes of Indians were to be found there, and their tendency toward peace or war.

In a message to Congress, the President wrote: "An intelligent officer, with ten or twelve chosen men fit for the enterprise, and willing to undertake it, taken from posts where they may be spared without inconvenience, might explore the whole line, even to the Western Ocean, have conferences with the natives on the subject of commercial intercourse, get admission among them for our traders as others are admitted, agree on convenient deposits for an interchange of articles, and return with the information required in the course of two summers."

Congress favored the enterprise, and thereupon the President planned an exploring expedition, headed by his private secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, together with Captain William Clark.

They started for St. Louis in the fall of the same year, laden with provisions, camp outfit, fire-arms, and gifts for the Indians. To these were to be added material for keeping detailed journals by several of the party, the "paper of the birch" being recommended, as "less liable of injury from the damp than common paper."

The party was gone nearly three years, camping three winters in the wilderness. It was a wonderful

journey, full of hardships; full also of inspiring discoveries. They ascended the Missouri in boats, reaching the great falls, upon which no other white man had yet looked. Tracing the great river to its sources, they more than once found themselves forced to choose their way between two or three forking streams. Making the most careful examination in advance, they moved bravely forward; fortunate each time in selecting a correct water-course.

Captain Lewis named one of these branching streams "Maria's River" after his young cousin, Maria Wood, left far back in the east. "It is true," he wrote, "that the hue of the water of this turbulent and troubled stream but illy comports with the pure, celestial virtues of that lovely fair one, but on the other hand, it is a noble river."

The Missouri at its initial source—a spring of ice-cold water, issued from the base of a low mountain. Just before reaching it, "McNeal, one of the party, stood with one foot on each side of the river, thankful, he said, 'that he had lived to bestride the mighty, and heretofore deemed, endless Missouri.' "

They crossed the Rockies, which they called "the Stony Mountains," with the guidance of the Shoshoni Indians, a member of whose tribe they had with them, Sacojawea, a young woman who had been captured by

the Minitarees five years earlier, and who had gained her freedom, and now with her husband, Charbonneau, the interpreter, were members of the exploring party. They passed over the mighty range through the deep gorges of the Bitterroot Mountains, a trail through which the Indians had passed from time immemorial, from the head waters of the Missouri to the head waters of the Columbia.

Their joy was great when they struck a navigable branch of the Columbia, which eventually brought them in sight of the Pacific Ocean. Here Captain Robert Gray, of Boston, had preceded them in 1792, in his discovery of the great river, which he had named after one of his vessels, "the Columbia." When Lewis and Clark reached the mouth of the Columbia, they knew they had accomplished their purpose. They had carried the American flag across the continent, and reached the spot where Gray had planted the flag by way of the sea.

John Jacob Astor was among those who awaited the result of this journey of exploration with intense interest. Cook and Gray and Vancouver had told of "sea otter, seal and beaver in large numbers to be found on the shores of the Pacific." Lewis and Clark's story of three years in the fur country would settle many things for the great fur merchant.

He did not wait for the official report of the leading explorers, but read eagerly the journal of Patrick Gass, one of the members of the expedition, which was published as early as 1807.

The party had seen great herds of buffaloes, one in particular so large that it occupied the whole breadth of a river a mile wide, and it had taken an hour for the herd to pass by. They had discovered Indian tribes, previously unknown, some of them wretchedly poor, and some with good homes and plenty of horses. One of the latter, a traveler could often buy for a few beads.

They learned that there was a wealth of furs to be obtained by trading with some of these Indian tribes; for elks, bears, antelopes, beaver, big-horn sheep, and deer abounded on this overland route to the sea.

This would make it possible to shift the fur market from the partially exhausted forests of Michigan and Canada, to the broad sweeps of the unexplored land now known as Oregon, Washington, Vancouver's Island, and British Columbia. At the same time the demand for furs in China had reached vast proportions.

A great scheme had been forming in John Jacob Astor's mind, simultaneously with the journey and discoveries of the explorers. The development of this broad American domain, would be advanced by the

strengthening of his posts along the Great Lakes to the Mississippi, the forming of a new line of fur stations along the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains, and still others by way of the Columbia to the Pacific, with "a great central collecting and distributing station at St. Louis." The latter place was a frontier town, whose inhabitants were already engaged in the fur trade.

There could be a settlement at the mouth of the Columbia River, and one of the Sandwich Islands might be procured as an intermediate station. It would be possible to open communication with all these points, through a line of vessels connecting New York, the Sandwich Islands, the fort at the mouth of the Columbia, the Russian station further North, and China and India across the ocean.

Mr. Astor laid his project before President Jefferson, who recognized in it a scheme for giving America control of all the fur trading on her Northern and Western borders, and he promised the financier to lend all the governmental aid legitimately in his power.

The social and political side of the enterprise warmly appealed to Jefferson. At the time, the country only contained seventeen States, and not one of these was west of the Misissippi. The opportunity for the favorable settlement of American citizens along the pathway which Mr. Astor would open up, and the advantage to

them of a successful business senterprise on a large scale, already at home in the wilderness and along the waterways, struck Jefferson's humanitarian sympathies and ideals.

In speaking of Astoria, later, Jefferson said: "I considered as a great public acquisition the commencement of a settlement on that point of the Western coast of America, and looked forward with gratification to the time when its descendants should have spread themselves through the whole length of that coast."

In 1808, John Jacob Astor obtained a New York Charter, for the American Fur Company, under which name he was to carry on his vast enterprise, and to which he subscribed its entire capital of one million dollars.

Meanwhile the war between England and France had caused so much disaster to American shipping, through the capture of their ships by first one, then the other of the combatants, that Congress laid an "embargo" in 1807, forbidding American shipping from leaving American ports.

This was still less pleasing to American merchants with shipping interests, than fear of possible capture on the high seas. John Jacob Astor found himself in the same plight with the rest of the shippers. All American ships were lying idle at their docks. The

owners were equally idle without, but boiling within. Still "not an oyster boat had been allowed to go outside of Sandy Hook" when August 13th, 1808, the "Commercial Advertiser" contained this brief line of soul-stirring news.

"Yesterday the ship 'Beaver,' Captain Galloway, sailed for China."

Walter Barrett continues the story:

"Every one who knew anything at all about shipping, knew that the ship 'Beaver' was built and owned by John Jacob Astor, and that short paragraph caused a prodigious ferment among ship-owners, when they were fully convinced that a ship of Mr. Astor's had really put to sea, on a long India voyage.

" 'Why should one ship-owner be favored and not the rest?' they questioned in a chorus.

"The reply was the astonishing statement, that Mr. Astor had obtained special permission from the President of the United States, to send his ship 'Beaver' with thirty seamen on a voyage to Canton, in order to carry home a great Chinese Mandarin. Many believed that John Jacob Astor had picked up a Chinaman in the Park, made up the story, obtained permission from the President, and got his ship out to sea before his plans were suspected.

"A rival house wrote a letter to President Jefferson, telling him 'that the great Chinese personage was no Mandarin—nor even a Hong Kong merchant—but a common Chinese dock loafer, smuggled out from China.' They also stated that 'he had departed from China contrary to the laws of that country; that when he reached home he would put ashore privately from the 'Beaver,' and that his obscure condition in life

would probably be his only chance of escaping a summary death.'

"It was likewise hinted that if the Government had been surprised into giving this permit, that they could rectify their error, and vindicate the honor of the Administration by arresting Astor, and causing him to take the consequence of his action.

"It was a difficult case. The motives of the President in granting permission could not be ascertained. It was the general opinion that it was a dodge on Mr. Astor's part. What helped to give color to this belief, was the fact that the successful ship-owner had offered a month before, to make contracts with other merchants to bring home goods from Canton as freight. No one doubted that it was his intention to sail for China at a time when other merchants were restrained by the embargo.

"The 'Commercial Advertiser' came out with a caustic editorial in reference to the 'strange permission of President Jefferson.'

"Next day the owner of the 'Beaver' became aroused and wrote the following letter:

" 'To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser:—

" 'I observed in your paper of the 13th instant, an article inviting public attention to a transaction (as you state it, of a most extraordinary character) relative to the ship "Beaver" and the Mandarin.

" 'If whoever wrote that article will give me his name, and if he is not prejudiced against any act of the Administration, nor influenced from envy arising from jealousy, he shall receive a statement of facts relative to the transaction in question, which will relieve him from the anxiety under which he appears to labor for the honor of the Government, and the reputation of all concerned. He shall be convinced that the Government has not been surprised by misrepresentation in

granting permission, and the reputation of those concerned cannot be in the slightest degree affected.

" 'By giving the above a place in your paper, you will oblige,

" 'Your humble servant,
" 'JOHN JACOB ASTOR.'

"Mr. Astor's friends dropped in upon him that evening at his home on Broadway, and congratulated him upon his letter.

"The author of the editorial in the 'Advertiser' does not seem to have divulged his name, and Mr. Astor never made any further public explanation.

"The 'Beaver' made a great voyage, returning home with two hundred thousand dollars more than she carried with her. She made two other Canton trips, one in 1809, and another in 1810, and was one of the ships connected with the great American enterprise."

CHAPTER XX.

THE VOYAGE OF THE TONQUIN.

IN his scheme for controlling the fur trade of the Northwestern coast of America, and from there sweeping the Pacific, John JJacob Astor planned as has been seen, for a great trading post on the Pacific coast, approached by an overland route across the Rockies on the one hand; and by his ships sailing around Cape Horn to reinforce and supply the enterprise on the other.

He also designed to carry supplies to the Russian Fur Company further North, which heretofore, had been dependent on transient trading vessels, which had been reckless in their dealings with the natives.

After collecting a ship-load of furs on the Pacific coast, his vessels were to sail for China, and there exchange furs for teas and other commodities. With a fresh cargo, their final voyage was to New York, with their valuable freight, soon to be turned into money, having been two years in circling the globe. By means of the western posts, Mr. Astor hoped to draw to America the enormous trade of the Orient.

John Jacob Astor knew his principal rival in his great venture would be the Northwest Fur Company. They already had some stations in New Caledonia beyond the Rockies, but these were further North, and Mr. Astor hoped to win their co-operation in his new scheme, rather than enter into a competition, which would only result in the fierce rivalries that had injured the fur companies in the past. The American fur merchant, therefore, invited the Northwest Company to join him in this fresh enterprise, but finding his overtures rejected, he proceeded to interest a group of men, well acquainted with the fur trade, in his project, and formed the Pacific Fur Company in 1810.

The promoter himself was to provide all vessels, provisions, ammunition, arms, goods, and all other things needed for the enterprise, providing they did not exceed the sum of four hundred thousand dollars. One half of the one hundred shares of stock Mr. Astor was to hold, the remaining half to be distributed between his partners. For a trial period of five years, Mr. Astor would also bear all losses, after which they would be borne by the partners according to the number of shares they held. One of the partners, Wilson Price Hunt, a man of sterling qualities of character, and a native born American citizen, had been engaged on the western frontier in furnishing Indian traders with

goods and equipment, and had gained much knowledge of Indian tribes, and the country which they inhabited. Mr. Hunt was appointed leader of the overland expedition from Montreal, with the responsibility of establishing posts along the route, and sending out groups of trappers. Eventually, he was to act as Mr. Astor's chief agent at Astoria.

Four other partners, all Scottish Canadians, Alexander McKay, Duncan McDougal, David Stuart and his nephew, Robert Stuart,—all men of experience in the fur trade, and two of them previously connected with the Northwest Company,—were to sail around the Horn, meeting the land party at the mouth of the Columbia. Meanwhile, Duncan McDougal was to act as Mr. Astor's proxy until the arrival of Mr. Hunt.

Captain Jonathan Thorn, an able seaman and skilled navigator, was placed in charge of the Tonquin, in which the four Scottish partners, together with twelve clerks, and a number of artisans, were to sail. The exaggerated reports which were circulated in regard to the wealth to be obtained on the Columbia, induced prominent merchants to seek for their sons appointments in the new company. Indeed, more positions were asked for, than there were openings to be filled, and many desirable young men were turned away.

Added to those already mentioned, were thirteen Canadians, nine of whom, with Mr. McKay as commander, loyal to the traditions of their calling, set out from Montreal to show "the States" a genuine crew of Canadian voyageurs, in one of their picturesque canoes. They embarked on the 26th of July, in gala array, their hats trimmed with ribbons and feathers; and by river and portage reached Lake Champlain, where after "well calking their seams," they traversed the length of the Lake, and again portaged their canoes to the Hudson. One fine summer day they plied their oars merrily down the river, singing their French boat songs past village and farm house, indulging occasionally in a war-whoop to startle the staid Dutch residents along shore. They closed their exhibition as they swept around New York in a still summer evening, with their songs echoing along wharves and docks, and up the intersecting streets. They were full of bravado and recommended themselves as ready "to live hard, lie hard, eat dogs,"—or endure any hardships.

Mr. Astor addressed a letter to the four partners about to embark on the Tonquin, enjoining them to cultivate harmony and unanimity, and suggested that all differences be settled by a majority vote. "If you find the Indians kind," he wrote, "as I hope you will, be so to them. If otherwise, act with caution and

forbearance, and convince them that you come as friends.''

In a letter of instruction to Captain Thorn, he closed with the sentence: ''I must recommend you to be particularly careful on the coast, and not to rely too much on the friendly disposition of the natives. All accidents which have yet happened there, arose from too much confidence in the Indians.''

On the morning of the 8th of September, 1810, the Tonquin put to sea. Almost from the start there were disagreements between the Captain and the partners. The Captain had a naval officer's contempt for the merchant service, and was annoyed and irritated, as he wrote Mr. Astor, at the daintiness of his cabin passengers with regard to their food; the familiarity between partners and voyageurs; the fresh interest of these scribbling young men in every small detail of the voyage; and their willingness to delay their passage by stopping on any attractive coast. To him, the partners seemed to show but small sense of the great purposes and aims of the voyage, and they in turn, found him crusty and domineering.

Gabriel Franchére, one of the young men who was keeping a journal, speaks frankly of their pleasure in setting their feet on solid land, after continuous storms at sea, and that while stopping at the Falkland Islands,

with the hope of obtaining a fresh supply of water, two of the partners and some of the voyageurs, who had been allowed a boat, wandered over the island killing geese and ducks, an agreeable addition to their bill of fare. That they prolonged their pleasure until they came very near being left behind by the Tonquin, was looked upon in vastly different light by Captain Thorn and the hunters.

The vessel made good time, and doubled Cape Horn on Christmas Day, and Franchére mentions that on this date he could "read on deck at midnight, without artificial light." By the early part of February, they sighted the Sandwich Islands. Visits of ceremony were exchanged with the King of the Islands, the partners returning his visit clad in plaids and kilts. It was a part of Mr. Astor's plan to establish friendly relations with the islanders, and at some future date purchase one of the islands as a fur station, since their position made them important stopping places on the way to China, or the Northwest coast of America.

While diplomatic negotations were going on between the partners and the King, Captain Thorn was engaged in laying in supplies of goats, sheep, hogs and poultry, besides water and vegetables; which to his practical mind seemed of greater importance.

Running through severe storms, they arrived safely

in sight of their destination on March 22nd, 1811, having sailed twenty thousand miles since they left Sandy Hook, occupying in all one hundred and ninety days.

They found the waves beating in furious surges over the bar at the mouth of the Columbia. In finding a channel through which they might enter, twice over a boat-load of men were lost in the breakers, or carried away by the fierce current,—initial disasters keenly felt by all on board. Though they searched the sea with glasses, and scoured the shore later, only two of their comrades were afterward found alive.

The ship was at length safely anchored in Baker's Bay, within Cape Disappointment, which terminated in a high point of land crowned with pine trees. This promontory formed the north side of the entrance to the Columbia. Four Indian tribes inhabited the near neighborhood, living chiefly by fishing, their canoes cut from the trunks of single trees, sometimes as long as fifty feet. The adventurers selected a site for their establishment, on a tongue of land called "Point George," which had a very good harbor.

"We imagained ourselves in the garden of Eden," wrote Franchére. The forests seemed to us delightful groves, and the leaves transformed to brilliant flowers."

Goods were landed, trees cut down, thickets cleared away, the angles of the fort traced; after which a resi-

ENTRANCE TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER
THE TONQUIN CROSSING THE BAR, MARCH 25TH, 1811

dence, store-house, and powder-magazine were erected out of logs covered with bark. They had brought timbers for a coasting vessel, and these were put together, while others of the party made garden and sowed vegetable seed, to supply their future needs.

The post was named "Astoria" after its promoter and supporter, and thus was founded the first United States settlement ever begun on the Pacific, and John Jacob Astor's vast enterprise seemed to be well started.

While looking for a suitable site, McKay and McDougal had visited the village of the Chinooks, the flat-headed tribe who were their nearest neighbors, and made acquaintance with Comcomly, their one-eyed chief. They were hospitably received with a feast of fish and game, after which Comcomly's wife and daughters devoted themselves to the entertainment of their guests.

McDougal had introduced himself and his companion as two chiefs of a great trading company, and Comcomly had sufficient familiarity in trading with the whites, to recognize the value of an alliance with the new establishment.

Three months later the Tonquin sailed on her first business venture. According to Mr. Astor's orders, she was to coast along toward the north, and enter the various harbors, in order to procure as many furs as

possible from the Indians, touching at Astoria in the autumn, and picking up such furs as they might have gathered during the summer, before making her way to Canton. Alexander McKay accompanied the ship as supercargo, taking young Lewis with him as ship's clerk. There were twenty others of the party also on board.

The Tonquin had hardly sailed out of sight, when reports reached those at the fort, that a party of white men were building houses at the second rapids of the Columbia. A reconnoitering party was at once sent up the river as far as the falls, meeting with some warlike Indians on the way, whom they were fortunate enough to appease with gifts; but no rival company was discovered, and the little party returned.

The report was later confirmed by two Indians, that the Northwest Company was building a trading post on the Spokane River, where it joined the Columbia. Preparations were immediately made to advance a counter check to this post on the Spokane, and David Stuart with eight men and a supply of goods, were nearly ready to set out, when a canoe manned by white men, with the British ensign flying, stopped in front of the fort.

Their leader proved to be David Thompson, who had been despatched by the Northwest Company the previ-

ous year, to forestall Mr. Astor on the Columbia. Half of his party had deserted him east of the Rockies, but he had crossed the mountains with eight men. Duncan McDougal received Thompson cordially, entertaining him while he staid, and fitting him out for his return with goods and provisions, to the marked disapproval of other employes of the Astor Company.

Stuart and Thompson set out together on their trip up river. They passed high rocky shores and low marshy islands, wildly dashing falls and rapids, and many bays and indentations. Tall pines lifted themselves to the skies from the uplands, sometimes two or three hundred feet in height, and of large girth. Out of trees such as these the Indians fashioned their longest canoes.

Thompson suggested a number of good sites for a post as they traveled along, but Stuart did not trust his adviser. However, he stopped at one of these favorable points until Thompson was out of sight, then moved on, choosing the position of his own trading post about one hundred and forty miles from the Spokane River. From the drift wood that collected in quantities in the bends of the river, they built a house, and thus established the first interior post of the American Trading Company.

On their way they had passed an interesting fishing center, which afterward became a place of considerable importance in the adventures of the little colony. The "Long Narrows," three miles in length, was the great fishing place of the Indians. Here salmon abounded in the river in large numbers, and Indians, standing on the rocks scooped them up in nets hung from long poles. The village of Wish-ram at the head of the Long Narrows, proved to be an Indian trading mart, from which center, salmon,—dried, cured, and packed,—was exchanged with the tribes from the Rocky Mountains, for horses, bear grease, quamash, and other articles of the interior; and with the tribes from the mouth of the Columbia, for the fish of the sea coast, roots, berries, wappatoo, and goods and trinkets obtained from trading vessels.

The Indians of Wish-ram were a piratical band as well as good traders, given to taking toll of all who passed through the Long Narrows.

Some rumors of a conspiracy among the Indians, caused the Astorians at the fort to hasten their defenses for refuge. In a few days their dwelling house and magazine were surrounded with palisades ninety feet square, flanked by two bastions on which were mounted four, four-pounders.

In the midst of this anxiety, a report reached them

of disaster to the Tonquin. The rumor was not credited until repeated later by a second tribe of Indians, who had come to fish for sturgeon at the mouth of the Columbia.

The Tonquin had made her way up the coast buying furs when offered. At one of her stops an Indian, named Lamazee, was engaged as interpreter. About the middle of June the ship entered Nootka Sound, and anchored at a large Indian village called Newity. Though the interpreter warned Captain Thorn against the natives of this section, they at first seemed friendly, and Mr. McKay, who had a wide experience with savage tribes, accepted the invitation of one of the chiefs, and spent the night on the island.

The next morning the Indians came aboard to trade, bringing an abundance of sea-otter skins. Captain Thorn spread out his blankets, knives, beads and fish hooks, but the Indians asked exorbitant prices for the skins, and at last an old chief, following the Captain back and forth with a roll of furs, began to jeer and banter him on the mean prices he offered. Whereupon Captain Thorn lost his last remnant of patience, and grasping the skins, threw them in the Indian's face, ordering him and his companions from the ship. The old chief left in a passion, and the rest of the Indians followed breathing vengance.

Early the next morning they again appeared alongside, their grievances apparently forgotten. They were unarmed and appeared friendly, holding up skins for sale. Mr. Astor's directions to only allow a few Indians on board at a time had been forgotten, and the officer of the watch allowed as many as would to clamber upon deck.

Immediately the buying and selling commenced, the Indians allowing the white men to set the prices. Many of them purchased knives. Canoe load after canoe load arrived till the deck was full of savages, whose friendly aspect began to give place to scowls and menace. Lamazee, the interpreter, suspected that weapons were hidden in bundles of furs. Mr. McKay became alarmed and suggested that the ship be gotten under way at once.

The anchor was nearly up and the sails loose, when the Captain ordered the ship cleared. With a fierce yell Indian knives and war-clubs were brandished in every direction. Not a man of the ship's crew was armed. Young Lewis was the first to fall, receiving a deadly blow that knocked him down the companionway. Mr. McKay sprang to his feet, but was knocked over board and killed from the canoes. Captain Thorn made a desperate fight with nothing but his clasp knife for a weapon, but was stabbed to death on his own deck.

The Astorians fought bravely and recklessly, but unarmed, they stood no chance in the fierce onslaught. Five sailors who had been aloft, let themselves down by the rigging, and dashed for the steerage hatch. Here they broke through into the cabin, where they found young Lewis. Barricading themselves, they opened a fire with their muskets that soon cleared the deck. The Indians fled leaving their dead behind them. The rest of the day and night all was quiet. The Tonquin lay still in the bay, her sails loose and flapping in the wind, no sign of life upon her.

The Indians no doubt meant to avenge the insult that had been offered them, but they had also sworn to be avenged on the next ship that entered the Sound, because of the cruel action of an earlier skipper, who had marooned twelve of their tribe on a barren coast hundreds of miles away. The next ship to enter the Sound was the ill-fated Tonquin.

Cautiously the Indians paddled about the ship once more when day dawned. One man appeared on deck and motioned them aboard, then disappeared. There seemed to be nothing to fear, and the swarming Indians boarded their prize. In the midst of their exultation, with a thundering noise the ship blew up, carrying into eternity, over two hundred savages, and with them any

adventurer who may still have been alive upon the vessel.

This terrible revenge has been variously attributed to Lewis, the young secretary, and to Weeks the armorer. who had been mortally wounded while escaping from the rigging. Ross Cox is authority for the statement that the four sailors, who escaped in a boat early in the morning, lighted a slow train before leaving the ship. All four sailors were later captured and killed by the Indians. The interpreter was saved, though made a slave. He escaped months later, and brought the detailed story of the bloody tragedy to Astoria.

The loss of the Tonquin, with all on board, was a grevious blow to the infant trading post. Back in New York, Mr. Astor, remembering his careful instructions, awaited news which did not reach him for many months. When it did, he spoke of it as a "calamity the length of which he could not foresee."

He sought however immediately for a remedy; and the same evening appeared at the theater, strong and composed. A friend expressed his surprise at his calmness, after such disastrous tidings.

"What would you have me do?" was the staunch reply. "Would you have me stay at home and weep for what I cannot help?"

With the loss of the Tonquin and her crew, it was

felt that something must be done to emphasize the strength of the remainder of the post. In this emergency, McDougal gathered the chieftains who were believed to have been in the conspiracy, and told them he had heard of the treachery of some of their Northern brethren toward the Tonquin, and was planning vengeance.

He said their white camp was small in number, but mighty in medicine, "In this bottle," he declared, "I hold the smallpox safely corked. I have but to draw the cork, and let loose the pestilence to sweep man. woman and child from the face of the earth."

The chieftans knew the dire effects of smallpox among their people, and they begged that the wrong doing of other tribes should not be avenged upon them, swearing friendship to the white men.

McDougal promised as long as the whites were unmolested, the vial of wrath should remain sealed, but should enmity be shown, the cork would at once be drawn. This event won McDougal the name of the "Great Smallpox Chief."

A large house of stone cemented with clay, was finished by October. The schooner which they had been building, was also launched and christened "The Dolly," in honor of Mrs. Astor.

A detachment from David Stuart's post arrived with

favorable accounts of their camp, but the decision of their leader was to divide the little force, since there might not be provision for all during the winter. David Stuart, with three other stout-hearted men, remained for the winter in the depths of a savage wilderness, seven hundred miles from the main body of the adventurers.

The long rainy season was just ahead, and the Indians drew into the shelter of the forest further inland. With their departure provisions became scanty, and the adventurers had need to depend on the precarious hunt of one of the natives who had not abandoned them, when the rest of their countrymen retired. The ordinary price of a stag, when they were lucky enough to get one, was a "a blanket, a knife, some tobacco, powder and ball, besides supplying the hunter with a musket." The Dolly was also sent on foraging expeditions.

But in spite of all drawbacks, the little post of Astoria kept up its courage, and ushered in the year 1812 with a beating of drums, discharging of cannon and the hoisting of colors. A good dinner was served, and the Canadian voyageurs ended the celebration by dancing till three in the morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

OVER THE ROCKIES TO ASTORIA.

WILSON P. Hunt, of Trenton, New Jersey, whom Mr. Astor had selected to lead the expedition overland, and locate his intended chain of forts, was a man of decision and resource. Associated with him was Donald McKenzie, another partner, who supplemented Mr. Hunt's qualifications by ten years' service in the Northwest Company, a knowledge of woodcraft and Indian character in the open.

Hunt and McKenzie arrived at Montreal on June 10th, 1811. Both here, and later at Michilimackinac and St. Louis, the influence of the Northwest Company was so strong, that Mr. Hunt found difficulty in obtaining the best quality of men for the journey, but when the party was made up, the voyageurs were proud to include themselves in "a new company that was to eclipse the Northwest."

At Mackinaw they were reinforced by an energetic young Scotch partner, Ramsey Crooks; and at St.

Louis, by Mr. Joseph Miller, and an additional number of hunters and boatmen.

They left the latter place in three boats, a Mackinaw barge; a Schenectady barge such as were in use on the Mohawk; and a Mississippi keel boat; all provided with masts and sails to be used if the wind were favorable. The difficulties of their course up the Missouri found the voyageurs at their best. Plying their oars, drawing their boats along shore, or wading in the shallow water, they were patient and fertile in expedient, whipping up their flagging courage with cheerful boat songs.

Four hundred and fifty miles up the Missouri, at Nodowa, where they arrived Nov. 16th, they decided to make their winter camp, and two days later the river froze above them. Here they were joined by another partner, Robert McLellan, a daring Missouri trader, and John Day, a hunter from Virginia. Game was plenty and leaving his party well-cared for, Mr. Hunt made a trip back to St. Louis, where he secured Pierre Dorion, a French half-breed, who had accompanied Lewis and Clark across the mountains, as interpreter, upon condition of their accepting his Indian wife, and two small children as members of the party.

On their journey back to camp they met Daniel Boone, the famous old hunter of Kentucky, who gloried in keeping in advance of civilization,—a sentinel of the

frontier. Though in his eighty-fifth year, he had recently returned to his headquarters, the little French village of Charette, with nearly sixty beaver skins as trophies of his hunter's skill. He watched them off from the river bank, no doubt feeling that he would once have been a part of the expedition.

After the rainy season was over at Nodowa, they broke camp and continued their journey. In all they counted sixty men, for they had been joined by two scientists, Mr. John Bradbury and Mr. Nuttall; and also,—as they were several times afterward,—by hardy trappers and hunters, singly or in pairs, who overtook them in canoes or in the depths of the wilderness. These fearless wanderers were glad to join themselves to an expedition which accorded with their own views and type of life.

They breakfasted one morning at the mouth of the Platte River, where they found the frame of a skin canoe, in which a section of an Indian war party had traveled the river. At night the reflection of burning prairies hung in the sky. Once a band of eleven Sioux warriors, stark naked, with tomahawks in their hands, sprang with a fearful yell into their camp. They were on guard, and seizing the intruders found this was a special exploit to cover the disgrace of having failed in war. The Indians were allowed to go, only with a

threat of sure death if they were caught in any act of enmity.

Moving on, Mr. Hunt's party camped at Omaha, a village of eight lodges, consisting of tents of buffalo skins painted red or yellow, and adorned with figures of horses, deer and buffalo,—and sometimes human faces. In writing to Mr. Astor at this stage of the journey, Mr. Hunt reported that "the Indian tribes along the river are at continual war with each other, in its most bloodthirsty and cruel forms."

Mr. Hunt pressed forward as rapidly as possible, that they might pass quickly through the danger belt, where they were continually informed that warlike Indians were waiting near at hand to oppose their progress. They avoided the banks of the streams, and hunted only on the islands. On one of these they killed three buffaloes and two elks. It was May now, and the prairies were carpeted in brilliant colored flowers, while the buffalo, elk and antelope had woven paths among the trees and thickets, resembling highways.

A month later they discovered Indian spies on a bluff, who galloped off to give notice of their presence. There proved to be six hundred savages in all set on preventing their approach. To pass them was impossible, and Mr. Hunt's party prepared to fight, but the loading and discharging of two howitzers

mounted on the boats, had a marked effect among the Indians.

Buffalo robes were raised above the red men's heads, then spread on the ground as an invitation to a conference, and what had looked like a bloody affray ended in a peace council with the Sioux. Mr. Hunt's party explained their intentions to join their brothers, at the great salt lake in the west. Presents of corn and tobacco softened the chieftain's heart, and he, in turn, explained that they were opposing the passage of supplies and ammunition to tribes with whom they were at war.

Another time, having refused some Indians presents, to the extent they claimed, they were again looking for attack, and dividing the party, took the channels either side of a long island, in order to watch the opposite banks. Mr. Hunt's party, finding themselves far up a narrow channel in shallow water, turned back. At this moment two pistol shots, the signal of danger, sounded from the opposite stream, and they discovered the bluffs over their heads, and opposite the end of the sand bar which they must pass in returning, filled with warriors armed with bows and arrows. The situation was critical in the extreme. The opposite party, who had progressed much further up their channel, knew

the danger would be upon their comrades before they could reach them.

Mr. Hunt's company having no alternative, dauntlessly approached the point of danger, and to their surprise, the Indians threw away their weapons and plunged into the water, crowding around the boat and trying to shake hands. The relief was immense, to find these Indians the friendly Arickaras, Mandans and Minatarees out against the Sioux. Again the peace pipe was smoked, the Indians offering assistance when their village was reached.

As the adventurers advanced, the broad wastes were more and more alive with herds of buffaloes. Sometimes they moved in long processions, and sometimes gathered in groups. At times the shores were lined with the great animals, and many crossed the streams near enough for the marksmen to reach them with their guns. Besides the buffalo there were many deer, gangs of elk, and troops of graceful antelopes.

John Day caught an antelope by lying down flat in the grass, with his handkerchief waving gently from the end of his ramrod. The antelope drew curiously nearer and nearer, until within range of Day's rifle; then his fate was sealed.

Arriving at the village of the Arickaras, they found preparation under way for a council. Mr. Hunt stated

again their purpose in traveling through the country, and asked for horses with which to pursue their journey, offering generous payment in goods. The left-handed chieftain promised friendship, but said they had not the number of horses to spare. Whereupon, Gray Eyes, another chief, declared he could supply Mr. Hunt with all the horses he might want, for if they lacked the requisite number, they could easily steal more.

Horses were put through their paces, and the Arickaras rode about showing their dexterity and horsemanship. When a horse was purchased by the whites, the tail was cropped as a mode of distinguishing ownership. A victorious war party returned with scalps while the sale was going on, and there was wild exultation among the Indians. Arraying themselves in paint and feathers, and embroidered buffalo robes sometimes fringed with the slender hoofs of young fawns, they celebrated the victory with intense excitement, mingled with weeping and wailing for those who had fallen.

Some of Mr. Hunt's men having listened to the stories of the trackless desert, the lack of food and water, and the Indians lurking in the defiles of the Black Hills, beyond which rose the stern barriers of the Rockies, lost heart and prepared to desert; but the plan was discovered and frustrated.

They had only been able to purchase eighty-two horses from the Arickaras, and set out with most of them laden with Indian goods, beaver traps, ammunition, Indian corn and other necessities. Each of the partners and the interpreter were mounted, but the men were forced to travel afoot. An interpreter for the Crows, a thievish tribe who infested the skirts of the Rocky Mountains, was discovered in a lonely hunter, and thus equipped the party set out.

They had been advised to take a more southerly route than that of Lewis and Clark, and directed their course first toward the south, and later toward the northwest, in order to avoid the Blackfeet Indians, a ferocious tribe, who put to death all white men who fell into their hands.

Traveling over immense prairies, they reached what they called the "Big River," and camped there several days, to lay in a supply of buffalo meat; and were also able to buy some extra horses from friendly Cheyennes.

An intrigue was discovered headed by the Crow interpreter, who was planning to steal large amounts of trading goods and horses, and join the Crows in the mountains; consequently a close watch was kept on both interpreter and men. Pierre Dorion and two others who were lost for days, in spite of the great signal fires

built to guide them by columns of smoke. They came into camp at last, weary and bedraggled. About this time Mr. Hunt won over the interpreter to the Crows, by giving him permission to join that tribe when they came across a party of them, and offering him horses and goods when he left them.

At the edge of the Black Hills they found black-tailed deer and big-horns abounding, and sometimes discovered themselves to be in the haunts of the grizzly bear. Both Indians and whites considered the grizzly big game. John Day shot one of these fierce animals, but another poor fellow had a different experience. He was a poor shot, and after much practicing at marks, had killed a buffalo, to his joy. Returning to camp with rare bits of its meat to prove his victory, he found himself chased by a grizzly. Dropping the meat he ran at break-neck speed. But the bear ignored the meat, and kept up the chase until the hunter was almost overtaken, when he had the good fortune to reach a tree, which, dropping his rifle, he hastily climbed, and the grizzly took up his watch beneath. All night long the hunter held to his cramped position, supremely thankful when daylight came, to find the enemy gone. His return to camp was not what he had expected, but still had its compensations.

They traveled toward the mountains over a rough

and rugged Crow trail through the hills, where they found neither water nor game, and lived mostly on a very small allowance of corn meal. After long tramping, a stream was hailed with devout thankfulness as were also the buffaloes on its banks. For days they directed their march toward a high mountain which proved to be one of the Big Horn chain, one hundred and fifty miles away.

The interpreter to the Crows led them through the mountain trail, and although the weather was frosty and the path rugged, they found grassy glens and sparkling brooks, as well as berries and currants by the wayside. They ran across a whole party of Crow Indians going their way, men, women and children all mounted, and for a time were forced to travel together. In the end the Crows outstripped the adventurers, and they were glad to see them disappear, accompanied by the interpreter.

Once a small party of Flatheads and Snake Indians became their guides for a couple of days, camping near them at night, and joining them in the hunt the next day. They crossed and recrossed the windings of the Wind River for eighty miles. Turning toward a stream to the southwest,—hoping to find buffaloes on its banks, —from a high hill the guides pointed out three snowy mountain peaks, above a fork of the Columbia river,

which hunters called "The Three Tetons." This announcement was met with great rejoicing, and Mr. Hunt named the peaks the "Pilot Knobs," since they were to become their guides for some time to come.

Within the next few days they struck a branch of the Colorado, called the Spanish River, abounding in geese and ducks and signs of beaver and otter, and on one of its small tributaries found the last of the buffalo herds. Camping here, they hunted and jerked meat for five days, since this would probably be their final supply until they reached the fish of the Columbia. Here they saw Snake Indians killing buffaloes with arrows. Coming up with them, they were able to buy both dried meat and beaver skins from them, and make arrangements for future trade in peltries.

On the 24th of September, they drew near to the "Pilot Knobs," having reached the heights of the Rocky Mountains, and were overjoyed to have their guides point out to them, a little later, the Lewis or Snake River in the distance, the great south branch of the Columbia. On reaching this stream they felt the harder part of the way was covered, and from now on they would be on the home stretch, but they little guessed what was before them.

This stream was joined by one of greater width and swifter current, which they called the "Mad River." Here

it was decided they would change horses for canoes, part of the men being detailed to fell trees of sufficient size for canoes, others to march along the stream for several days and examine its navigable possibilities.

At the head-waters of the Columbia, Mr. Astor's plans for trapping began, and trappers were paired off and supplied with horses, provisions, traps, arms and ammunition, with which they were to trap for months on the neighboring streams, bringing their collections of peltries to the mouth of the Columbia, or any intermediate post which might be established. To the surprise of all, Mr. Miller joined one of these trapping parties.

Finding the Mad River unnavigable, they were advised by their guides to make for the post established the previous year by Mr. Henry, of the Missouri Fur Company, on an upper branch of the Columbia. Two Snake Indians guided them to the abandoned post, over an intervening ridge of mountains in the face of four days' wind and snow. They gladly took possession of the deserted log huts, which Mr. Hunt determined to make a trading post.

Ten days later, on the 18th of October, they had completed fifteen canoes and the party embarked, leaving their horses in charge of the two Snake Indians with rewards for their care. The tributary on which

they started out ran into the broader Snake River, which very soon was full of boisterous rapids, running beneath steep precipices. Sometimes they were obliged to pass their canoes down cautiously by a line from the perpendicular rocks. They had reached an unknown wilderness of vast mountains, unexplored by white men, with no wigwams on the banks and no canoes on the streams.

The solitary beaver proved the undisturbed character of his surroundings, by choosing his home along the route they traveled. The party had covered two hundred and eighty miles before they began to run across small bands of Indians, who fled at their approach. The voyage became even more rough. One of the canoes struck a rock, split and overturned, with the loss of the steersman, one of the most competent of the Canadians. This catastrophe cast a gloom over the whole company.

They had now arrived at a terrific strait only thirty feet wide, between ledges of rock two hundred feet high, the compressed river whirling and boiling in a great whirlpool. The adventurers gave it the name of the "Caldron Linn."

Exploring parties were sent out to examine each side of the river, and one of the companies trying to run the rapids, lost all four canoes and their equipment. There were now only five days' provisions left, and it

was decided to divide the party. McLellan, and Reed one of the clerks, each with a few companions, continued further down the bank of the river; Mr. Crooks, with five others, retraced their steps toward Fort Henry. If the latter party did not meet with friendly Indians or provisions sooner, they intended to go back after the horses; Mr. McKenzie with five men moved northward, in hopes of finding the main stream of the Columbia. If they found adequate help for the whole party, they were to return. If not, they were to shift for themselves and meet at the mouth of the Columbia.

Meanwhile the thirty members of Mr. Hunt's party left behind, turned their attention toward obtaining provisions, which were principally beaver in very small numbers. They also set to work to make nine caches, in which to hide their baggage and merchandise. Before these were completed, Mr. Crooks' party and two of Reed's men returned, having found that they could not reach Fort Henry and return in the course of the winter, and that the river was impassable. With their several avenues of escape closing about them, they gave the place the name of the "Devil's Scuttle Hole."

They decided to set out immediately on foot. A vast tractless plain destitute of food or water, lay ahead of them if they abandoned the river, and they agreed to keep along its course. Their provisions, consisting of

Indian corn, grease, portable soup, and a small amount of dried meat, were getting very low, yet with their blankets, ammunition, and trading goods, amounted to twenty pounds for each man.

Mr. Hunt, with eighteen men, besides Pierre Dorion and his wife and two children, kept to the right bank of the river, while Mr. Crooks and his party took the left. The way was so hard and precipitous that it was days before they could get down to the water-side, and their suffering was intense.

Once Mr. Hunt's party met two Shoshoni Indians. whom they persuaded to take them to their camp, which they found to be tents of straw, looking like haystacks. The women, frightened at the white men's appearance, hid their children under the straw, and Mr. Hunt entering one of the tents, perceived the bright eyes of the papooses peering out at him.

They continued to meet small bands of Indians, from each of which they bought one or two dogs and a little dried meat, all the Indians could spare from their own scanty winter supply. Once they dropped down thirty miles on a smooth current, but the waters became turbulent again, and they resumed their rugged path.

Mr. Hunt made every effort to purchase a pack horse to relieve his men but failed, until a battered tin tea-kettle closed a bargain with an old Indian. A little

later their leader was fortunate enough to purchase a horse for his own use, for a tomahawk, a knife, a fire-steel and some beads.

In an evil hour they took the advice of some Indians and struck inland across the prairies, only to meet the most intense suffering for lack of both food and drink. When their thirst seemed past endurance, a merciful rain fell in the night, and the men eagerly scooped up the water from the hollows in the sand. After traveling thirty-three miles the next day, they had nothing for supper but a little parched corn. Again they met Indians and bought a dog and a little fish, and "fared sumptuously," but the Indians could not direct them further than to tell them that the Columbia was still far off. On the 27th of November, the river they were following led them into the mountains, through a rocky defile. Before entering this defile they were able to buy two horses for a couple of buffalo robes, from a party of Indians. Traveling on with difficulty, sometimes fording icy streams, they faced snow storms and waded through snow up to their knees, unloading the horses to get them by narrow places.

Meeting neither Indians nor game, they were compelled to kill a horse. "The men found the meat very good," Mr. Hunt wrote Mr. Astor, "and, indeed, so should I, were it not for the attachment I had for the

animal." A black-tailed deer, a beaver, and another horse each tided them over a starving time.

Pinched with hunger, they struck camp in a wild snow storm, their provisions entirely gone. Fortunately they succeeded in finding a group of pines. Felling these, they made huge fires and once more killed a horse to appease their hunger. They had now traveled four hundred and seventy-two miles since leaving "Caldron Linn."

On the 6th of December, they discovered Mr. Crooks' party on the opposite side of the river asking for food. A kind of canoe was made of the skin of the horse partaken of the night before, by distending the hide with sticks or thwart pieces. A Canadian crossed with a part of the horse meat, bringing Mr. Crooks and the Canadian, LeClerc, back in a starving condition. This party had met more vicissitudes and eaten even less food that Mr. Hunt's.

Turning back in despair, they had discovered Mr. Hunt, who decided to retrace his steps to the last Indian camp they had passed, hoping to buy horses for food. Upon his refusal to leave Mr. Crooks behind in his weak condition, all of Mr. Hunt's party, except five men, moved on. All day Mr. Hunt and his companions traveled slowly without eating, at night making a tantalizing meal of beaver skin.

Overtaking the advanced party, they all came in another day to an Indian camp, where many horses were grazing. The Indians fled, and Mr. Hunt's party lost no time in killing, cooking and eating a horse, and sending meat by horse-skin canoe to Mr. Crooks' party on the opposite bank. Enough trading goods were left in the Indian lodge to amply pay for the horses they had taken to prevent starvation.

They found a camp of friendly Shoshonies on the little stream where they had previously camped, who sold them a couple of horses, a dog, and some dried fish, roots and dried cherries; then invited the whole party to winter with them, though they were unwilling to provide a guide for the trail over the mountains.

Mr. Hunt felt it would be certain death to take his party over the mountains without a guide, but to remain where they were after so long a journey and so great an expense, was "worse than two deaths." He taunted the Indians with lack of courage and tempted them with a gun, pistol, three knives, two horses and a little of every article they possessed, until one of them offered to be their guide.

John Day was unable to travel, and Mr. Crooks remained behind with him, being provided with a share of the horse meat. On the 24th of December, having been joined by Mr. Crooks' party, they turned their

backs on the Snake River, and struck out westward toward the mountains. They were soon having only one meal of horse flesh in twenty-four hours, and two of the men were so weak they had to be carried, and Mr. Hunt shouldered an extra pack.

Famished and faint of heart, they pressed on until joyfully they came upon an Indian camp, with horses and dogs. Purchasing four horses, three dogs and some roots, they set about getting a good meal, a preliminary feast to the ushering in of the New Year of 1812, which the Canadians celebrated as usual, forgetting for the time the hardships of the way. Excessively toilsome traveling led toward the gap in the mountains through which they must pass. On the other side they found a milder climate, but some of the men were so fagged, they dropped behind. What was the joy of the main party to find an Indian camp in a green valley, with numerous lodges and hundreds of horses, and the information that the Columbia was only two days' march further on.

The stragglers caught up here, and they had news of McLellan's and McKenzie's parties passing down the river. These Indians looked upon the prospect of future trade with great pleasure, and promised to hunt the beaver assiduously. The party struck the Columbia some distance below its junction with the Lewis and

Snake Rivers, and were overjoyed at reaching this waymark on their pilgrimage. Dog meat, which they had learned to like, and salmon could be procured from the Indians on the Columbia.

Rumors of a great house surrounded by palisades came to them from these natives, and also the grief at their non-arrival at Astoria. At Wish-ram they found the Indians tricky and dishonest, and needing close watching. Here Mr. Hunt heard for the first time of the loss of the Tonquin, which he only half believed, but it gave him great disquietude. Canoes were obtained at the lowed end of the Long Narrows, and after a windy voyage they came in sight of the little colony of Astoria on February 15th, 1812.

The joy of the travelers after eleven months' wandering in the wilderness, where the sight of an Indian wigwam had been a rare pleasure, can easily be imagined. The route traveled by Mr. Hunt and his party carried them over three thousand six hundred miles, though in a direct line the distance was only eighteen hundred miles.

There were shouts of joy from all the canoes as they crossed the little bay and pulled into land, where all hands hastened down to greet them. The voyageurs hugged and kissed each other, and expressed their pleasure in a noisy fashion. Among the first to wel-

ASTORIA, ON THE PACIFIC COAST, 1812

From a Painting on the Hudson River Day Line Steamer "Washington Irving"

Courtesy of the Artist, Herbert W. Faulkner

come teh wanderers were McLellan, McKenzie and Reed, whose account of their journey, hunger and thirst and other hardships, were similar to those of Mr. Hunt's party, with the difference that they had overtaken each other, and traveling together in a smaller party, had found it easier to provision all.

They had been saved once from starvation, cowering under a rock in a snow storm, by a big-horn sheltering itself above them under a shelving rock. With the utmost caution, Mr. McLellan, being a very good shot, and the most active of the party in their starved state, had circled above the big-horn till his aim killed it on the spot, after which it was rolled down to the famished group below.

Since they crossed the mountains before the heavy snows, they had reached Astoria a month earlier than Mr. Hunt's party. Thus all were accounted for, except Mr. Crooks and John Day, for whom they felt but slight hope in their weakened condition.

A day of jubilee was celebrated, in which colors were hoisted, guns were fired, and the men who had so long subsisted on horse and dog meat were treated to the best the post afforded, the festivities closing with the usual dance of the Canadian voyageurs at night.

CHAPTED XXII.

CARRYING DESPATCHES TO MR. ASTOR.

THE winter had passed quietly, though because of the scarcity of game the post was frequently put on short rations. With the approach of spring, a tiny fish called tecan, then sturgeon, and after that salmon, abounded, affording ample provision for the colonists on the Columbia shores. There were also berries and wild cherries; land birds flew over their heads; and for the hunter and trapper this was a country of rich harvest. Stags, fallow deer, black and grizzly bears, antelopes, big-horn, beaver, sea and river otter, muskrat, fox and wolf were all to be found in this country which Mr. Astor had chosen as the center of his great enterprise.

The Chinooks, over whom Comcomly ruled, were keen traders, inquisitive and fond of ridiculing strangers, but their abstinence from intoxicating liquor gave them precedence over other tribes.

When spring opened, activities commenced. Robert Stuart was sent with supplies to his uncle's camp at Oakenagan; two clerks with eight men, were commis-

sioned to go back to "Caldron Linn" and bring the goods from the caches; and an ineffectual attempt was made to send despatches to Mr. Astor.

Hearing an English voice on the bank one May day, they found it belonged to Mr. Crooks, who, with John Day, had reached Astoria at last through incredible hardship. The joy of these men in once more being a part of the Astoria party was inexhaustible.

Mr. Astor began preparations for sending his promised annual ship in Astoria, in 1811, before he had yet heard from the Tonquin, or the land party under Mr. Hunt. In October the Beaver put to sea with a valuable cargo for the post at the mouth of the Columbia, the trade along the coast, and the supplies for the Russian establishment further north.

Mr. John Clark, the partner who embarked, five young clerks and fifteen laborers, were all American citizens. They were also accompanied by six Canadian voyageurs. Captain Sowle's instructions corresponded with those given to Captain Thorn—"to be careful in his intercourse with the natives, and not to permit more than one or two to board at a time."

They were to stop at the Sandwich Islands, enquire the fortune of the Tonquin, and make sure the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia had not fallen into hostile hands. If all were well, he was to take a

large number of Sandwich Islanders along with him. After landing the portion of his cargo intended for Astoria, he was to continue to New Archangel with the supplies for the Russian post, where he would receive peltries in exchange. Returning to Astoria, he was to collect furs there and along the coast, and the proceed to China.

On reaching the Sandwich Islands, they heard rumors of the fate of the Tonquin, and fears that no establishment had been formed. Anxiety was felt for both the land and sea parties.

The Beaver sailed on, but on reaching the Columbia showed the utmost caution. Four times they fired signal guns over three days, and to their great joy they heard an answer on the third day, and beacon fires were burned all night. Even then Captain Sowle was cautious in entering the bay, for fear there might be treacherous foes behind the guns.

Toward noon, an Indian canoe and barge approached them, the canoe holding Comcomly and six Indians, the barge McDougal, McLellan and eight Canadians. On the 9th day of May, 1812, the Beaver crossed the bar with these smaller boats as pilots, and anchored in Baker's Bay. Not the least part of the joy in the arrival of the ship, as Franchére states, was receiving letters from home.

With the arrival of the Beaver new life and vigor appeared in Astoria. Two parties were immediately formed under McKenzie and Clark, to establish posts above the forks of the Columbia, where rivalry from the Northwest Company might be expected. A third party under David Stuart, was to carry supplies to Oakenagan. It was most important the despatches should be gotten through to Mr. Astor in New York, and Robert Stuart was chosen this time for the responsible mission. Though he had not crossed the mountains himself, he was given as campanions John Day, Ben Jones, a Kentuckian, and two Canadians, who had been in Mr. Hunt's party. Messrs. Crooks and McLellan also accompanied the little party east. Stuart himself was young and vigorous and competent.

All the parties left Astoria on June 30th, and kept together until by dint of vigilance and caution they had passed safely through the piratical Narrows without loss. Having bought horses from friendly Indians, the returning party were ready to start on their long journey.

Robert Stuart trusted to the more favorable season to save his party from the perils and extremities which had befallen Mr. Hunt the winter before; but summer also had its trials. The winter streams were dried up, and mosquitoes thronged their passage by day, and pre-

vented sleep at night. They suffered greatly from thirst, and found that several of the caches made by Mr. Hunt's men at "Caldron Linn," had been opened and plundered.

Falling in with a band of Snake Indians, one of them hugged and kissed Robert Stuart's horse, saying it had been stolen from him. The horse was a fine animal that the young partner had meant to present to Mr. Astor when he reached New York. The young Indian was offered attractive gifts if he would accompany the party as guide, which offer he eagerly accepted, only to decamp in the night, with his own, and Robert Stuart's horse.

In early September they had some trouble with a party of Crow Indians, and turned their course in consequence, keeping vigilant watch for their enemies. Three weeks later, early one morning, a sudden cry of "Indians! Indians! to arms! to arms!" sounded. A mounted Crow, with a red flag, galloped to a neighboring hill with a small troop of savages whooping and yelling. The frightened horses dashed toward the flag-bearer, attracted by the red banner.

At the same time Indian yells sounded in the direction of the baggage. Rushing to secure this, the first half of the Indian party put spurs to their horses and all galloped off, followed by the panic-stricken camp

horses. It was all over in a few minutes, and Robert Stuart's brave band were left horseless, to travel over vast distances of rugged mountains, and parched and foodless plains. John Day had given out early in the journey, his mind having been weakened by the fierce struggles of the previous trip, so the little party only numbered five.

There was nothing to do but set out on foot, though they dropped down the "Mad River" for ninety miles in a canoe. Finding themselves in the vicinity of the dangerous Blackfeet Indians, they turned quite out of their course to avoid them, suffering from hunger, both through fear of using a gun in this hostile region, and also because the small amount of provisions they could carry with other loads, soon gave out.

Once, after traveling three days without food, with four days' march ahead over a barren plain, one of the Canadians wanted to draw lots. Mr. Stuart indignantly declined to consider the horrible proposition, but passed a sleepless night of anxiety. To their joy, the next morning they discovered an old run-down buffalo bull near them, which had lagged behind the rest. So starved were they that they ate of the raw meat before there was time to cook it.

On the Spanish River, they bought an old pack horse from a party of Snake Indians,—all the thieving Crows

had left them,—and loading it with all the meat it could carry, started on. Sometimes they were compelled to camp on the open prairie without fire, and the October nights were keen and cutting.

They built themselves a winter cabin in the bend of a river sheltered by cottonwoods and willows, and killed many of a herd of buffalo, which came tramping through the woody bottom land, jerking the meat in large quantities for winter use.

In five weeks they were visited by a band of Indians in war-paint and feathers. They were in pursuit of the Crows, who had robbed them, and were nearly famished. The jerked meat went to meet their necessities. On the unwilling departure of their guests, though in middle December, it was thought best to leave their comfortable winter nest and be many miles distant when the Indians returned. Fortunately their guests had failed to steal their old pack horse.

A forced march of fourteen days, over three hundred and thirty miles, carried them into desolute prairies, and they were compelled to retrace their steps three days' journey, to a grove of cottonwood trees on the margin of another stream, with buffaloes in evidence near at hand. Here they built a second cabin, and laid in a fresh supply of meat, pausing in their labor to celebrate the New Year of 1813.

These celebrations of the ushering in of the New Year were repeated year by year in wilderness lodges; posts of the fur traders; in trading vessels on the high seas. The turnings of the tide of time into a fresh channel with new hopes, seemed never to fail of importance to the adventurers of those days, particularly when the party included the light-hearted Canadian voyageurs, who ever looked upon the opening of the New Year as a festival too happy to be omitted.

As spring opened they continued their journey on foot, with the faithful old pack horse, who had covered his bones with flesh, and strengthened his muscles during the winter. Now the prairies were clothed with green and stocked with game. Buffalo covered the country, and wild geese and duck abounded, but the streams continued too shallow to float a canoe.

The long tramp was growing irksome, and they watched for any sign of a change. A special kind of grass, prairie hens, driftwood with the mark of an axe upon it, and an island which was supposed to be within one hundred and forty miles of the Missouri, all gave them fresh courage. Three days further on, they met an Indian who told them their conjecture was correct, and added an amazing piece of information—that the United States and England had been at war for a year, during which time the events of the out-

side world had not reached the depths of the wilderness.

Exchanging the old pack horse at an Indian village for provisions and a skin canoe, which they changed later for two old wooden canoes found at a deserted camp, they made the two hundred and fifty miles to Fort Osage. Here they were entertained most hospitably by Lieutenant Brownson, the greatest luxury they met being bread, which they had not tasted for a year.

On the 30th of April they arrived at St. Louis, where for a time they were the center of interest, since they brought the first news of Mr. Hunt's party, and of the new establishment at the mouth of the Columbia.

The terms of the agreement with Russia, the opening negotiations concerning which were begun in March, 1811, and involved the voyage of an agent to Russia and return, were ratified by Mr. Astor in 1813. The arrangement bound the two companies to respect each other's trading and hunting grounds, and to furnish no arms or ammunition to the Indians. They were also to act together for mutual protection against rival aspirants for their advantageous positions.

The American Company was to carry the Russian post provisions and supplies and to receive peltries in return. If agreeable to the Russian Governor's wishes, the American Company was to convey the

Russian furs to Canton, sell them on commission, and return with the proceeds, or such freight as they might order. The agreement was to stand for four years, and to be renewed at the end of that time, if both parties concurred.

Mr. Astor planned to place small coasting vessels of his own at Astoria, which would ply along the coast on short voyages, and have a vast advantage over ships that must come long distances.

He looked forward to making Astoria the great center of the American fur trade on the Pacific, and the nucleus of a future American State. That a fortune should be spent in materializing these hopes, seemed but natural to this man of vast enterprises and gigantic courage.

But war had already broken out between the United States and Great Britain, before Mr. Astor ratified his important agreement in 1813, and with the war came added anxieties regarding a venture which had already tested the far-reaching vision of the great venturer to a marked degree.

In this dilemma, Mr. Astor wrote to Captain Sowle at Canton, directing him to carry supplies to Astoria, and remain there until orders came from Mr. Hunt, who was in command at the post. Meanwhile the war went on.

Not a word arrived from Astoria. The loss of the first despatches and Robert Stuart's prolonged journey on foot, had increased the already lengthy time of waiting for news. Nothing had been heard from Mr. Hunt since he left the Arickara village, and there were floating rumors of his party having been cut off by the savages.

Mr. Astor's hope and faith needed to be of the staunchest, to send out another expensive expedition in the face of so great loss in the past and equal uncertainty in the future. Yet whatever his anxiety, his courage did not falter, and presently he was fitting out the Lark to go to the relief of the little settlement.

Just at this point, Mr. Astor was informed that the Northwest Company was about to start an armed ship to form a factory at the mouth of the Columbia. This report caused the President of the Pacific Fur Company great anxiety. The men in his employ at Astoria were largely Scotchmen and Canadians, the American influence being dependent on Mr. Hunt's safe arrival. There was also possibility of the British government sending an armed force against the post.

In this emergency, Mr. Astor appealed to Mr. Monroe, Secretary of State, for protection from the United States Government. He gave the commercial importance of the settlement, and the significance it might assume

as a place of shelter to American shipping on the Pacific. He only asked that "the American government would throw forty or fifty men into the fort at his establishment, which number would be sufficient for its defense until he could send reinforcements overland."

No reply came to his petition, though the letter was repeated which pointed out Astoria's influence in extending United States power on the Pacific coast. The Lark put to sea in March, 1813.

Mr. Astor wrote to Mr. Hunt by way of the Lark, saying: "I always think you are well, and I shall see you again, which, heaven I hope will grant." He warned him to be on guard lest the Northwest Company surprise and attack the post; and expressed his indignation at the return this company had made for his own frankness and generous offers.

"Were I on the spot," he said, "and had the management of affairs, I would defy them all; but, as it is, everything depends on you and your friends about you. Our enterprise is grand, and deserves success, and I hope to God it will meet it. If my object were merely gain in money, I should say, think whether it is best to save what we can and abandon the place; but the very idea is like a dagger to my heart."

Month after month passed by, without any change in the uncertainty which hung over the enterprise. The strain began to have its effect on Mr. Astor's spirits. He was sitting one gloomy evening thinking over the

loss of the Tonquin and the fate of her unfortunate crew, and fearing equal calamity might have overtaken other parts of the expedition, when the evening paper was handed him. Glancing down, his eye caught the words which announced Mr. Stuart and his companion's safe arrival at St. Louis, with the news that Mr. Hunt and his party had reached the mouth of the Columbia. For a time the clouds dispersed, and Mr. Astor again hoped for the complete success of his plans.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ENGLAND'S TROPHY.

AFTER the departure of the four "brigades" from Astoria, on their various missions, in the spring of 1812, it was decided by the partners that Mr. Hunt should sail in the Beaver for New Archangel "to make an exact commercial survey of the coast," to carry supplies to the Russian post, and complete arrangements with the Russian Governor, returning in October, as the vessel pursued her course to the Sandwich Islands and Canton.

The Beaver set sail in August, and her departure combined with that of the various brigades, left the adventurers at Astoria small in numbers. The fishing season was on, and the Indian tribes which gathered, were not over-respectful toward the poorly garrisoned post. Comcomly, however, was a good friend, having discovered that it was to his interest to ally himself with the whites, and act as an intermediate trader between them and more distant tribes.

The autumn passed, and December and January, 1813, without the return of the Beaver. Grave fears

were entertained that she had been wrecked or met with a similar fate to that of the Tonquin. Mr. McDougal had ceased to enjoy his position as commander, and was full of gloomy despondency.

While in this mood, McKenzie returned from his post with ill news. He had found his position in a poor hunting and trapping country, among unfriendly Indians, and had considered abandoning it. Journeying to Mr. Clarke's post for consultation, he met there an unwelcome visitor in Mr. John McTavish, of the Northwest Company. McTavish had with him President Madison's proclamation of war, and told the Astorians he had a fresh supply of goods, with which he expected to carry on a vigorous opposition to the American Company. He brought his news to a climax by informing the partners of the armed ship, Isaac Todd, which was to be sent to the mouth of the Columbia, to take possession of the trade of the river, and that he was ordered to join her there.

McKenzie had deposited his goods in caches, and with his entire party returned to Astoria. McDougal and McKenzie thereupon held a council of discouragement. They decided that the Beaver was lost; that they would get no further help from the United States, since all ports would be blockaded; that they could expect nothing from England but hostility; and they deter-

minded to abandon the factory at Astoria when spring came, and return across the Rockies. There were a few clerks at the council besides the partners, but they had no votes.

When this decision was sent to David Stuart and Clarke, it met with immediate opposition. These two men had been very successful at their posts, and had gathered large quantities of peltries. They considered it cowardly to abandon the undertaking at the first difficulty,—an enterprise that had called for so great an effort, and enormous financial outlay. They made no preparations to join the retreating partners, but instead returned to their new and prosperous posts, with the intention of holding them.

As the time of the spring rendezvous at Astoria approached, Mr. Clarke packed his furs on twenty-eight horses, and started with a portion of his party for the mouth of the Columbia. On his way back to Astoria he met with a band of Nez Perces Indians, who had greatly troubled him with pilfering on the way out. Mr. Clarke had with him a silver goblet, sent as a present from Mr. Astor to Mr. McKay, the partner who had perished in the ill-fated Tonquin. Since its owner was no more, it had remained in Mr. Clarke's possession, greatly to that gentleman's pleasure, and he was accustomed to drink from it with a lordly air, then

lock it up in its case. Forgetting the lock one night, the glittering cup was gone in the morning. It was the climax of much that had gone before, and the thief being discovered, was treated with great severity. In this, as in many other cases, it was afterward feared that the revenge of the Indians followed the punishment of their offences.

On arriving at Astoria, Mr. Clarke found another brigade, which had come in ten days earlier, also laden with numerous packs of beaver. The adventurers were gathering the first fruits of the great enterprise. The returning partners found Mr. McDougal making active preparation for departure on the 1st of July, having notified the men at Astoria nine days previous. The fresh arrivals were indignant at this action, taken without their consent, though their coming was daily expected. McDougal's whole attitude suggested a lack of loyalty to the cause which he represented.

McTavish and his party had arrived a few days before, and were being treated with the utmost hospitality. Without help from the Astorian stores, and the good will of the Indians influenced by McDougal, they would have been compelled to leave the position they had taken, for the Isaac Todd did not appear.

Clarke and Stuart had not brought the horses and provisions McDougal had requested, and in sore dis-

appointment, he was forced to give up his plan for abandoning the fort that year. Meanwhile the influence of their fellow partners began to have its effect on the loyal two, and at length their consent was gained, though reluctantly, to leave the country the following year.

After this decision, the men scattered again to their various posts, in order to purchase horses and provisions, and as many peltries as their means would allow, and also to send provisions for the winter to Astoria. As they now had more clerks than they could use, Ross Cox, Alexander Ross, and Donald McLellan were freed from their engagement, and went into the service of the Northwest Company.

Mr. McTavish carried with him, on his return, a letter to be forwarded to Mr. Astor, signed by the four partners, which told of the non-arrival of the annual ship; the probable loss of the Beaver; their scarcity of goods, and their doubt of receiving further supplies; their ignorance of the coast, and the trade of the interior being unequal to the expense; the rivalry of the Northwest Company; and their intention to abandon the undertaking on the 1st day of June of the ensuing year, unless supplies came from Mr. Astor, with orders to continue.

Clarke and Stuart felt this was not a wholly fair

statement concerning the interior trade, but were over ruled by the other two partners.

Mr. Astor's anxieties had not decreased in the interim. The second annual ship, the Lark, had sailed in March, 1813, and only two weeks later he had received word that through the influence of the Northwest Company, the British Government had ordered the frigate Phoebe to accompany the Isaac Todd. They were to sail for the mouth of the Columbia, capture the American fortress, and plant there the English flag.

It was at this time that Mr. Astor sent his second letter to the Secretary of State, giving this latest intelligence. The Government was at last awakened to the necessity for protecting this foothold of American interest on the Pacific, and ordered the frigate Adams sent on the service. Mr. Astor immediately fitted out the Enterprise with supplies and reinforcements, to accompany the frigate.

In June, he received a letter from Robert Stuart telling him of his successful return east, and of Mr. Hunt's safe arrival at Astoria, and giving flattering accounts of the whole venture. The relief to Mr. Astor's mind was so great, that—"I felt ready," he said, "to fall upon my knees in a transport of gratitude." There was also word of the safe arrival at the Columbia of the Beaver.

This ray of sunshine preceded a cloud, for just as she was ready to start for Astoria, the Adams was imperatively needed on Lake Ontario; and even the Enterprise, which Mr. Astor decided to risk sending on alone, was held at New York by a blockading British force off the Hook.

The Lark, and the relief she carried, now became Mr. Astor's one hope, and if they had known it, that of Astoria as well.

McDougal seems to have been in constant fear of a rising of the savages against his poorly garrisoned fort. This is given as his reason for an act of diplomacy, in asking the hand of Comcomly's daughter in marriage. A romantic account of the affair harks back to the time when McDougal, exploring the surrounding country, was storm-bound in Comcomly's abode. At this time his daughter, the Indian princess, is said to have charmed him with her efforts for his entertainment.

Comcomly was nothing loath to consider the American commander in the light of a son-in-law, but his motive for such an alliance was not sentimental, but commercial. The conferences were long and intricate, and in the end much American trading goods was exchanged for the hand of the dusky maiden.

There were feasting and dancing at the wedding, and Comcomly became a very frequent visitor at his son-in-

law's, making use of the conveniences of civilization freely, especially those of the blacksmith shop, which served the needs of his tribe in many ways.

The honeymoon was hardly over, when Gassacop, a brother of the bride, came running in one day, to say that a ship was at the mouth of the river. Immediately there was immense excitement. Was it the Beaver, or the annual supply ship? Was it the Isaac Todd, or was it an English frigate come to capture the fort? Or possibly, was she simply an independent trader?

Every eye was directed toward the entrance of the river, anxious to know whether they were to welcome a friend, or prepare for war. As the vessel crossed the bar, they recognized the American flag, and with a great shout of joy, the cannon from the fort united in the greeting. At nightfall, Mr. Hunt stepped on shore, and the rejoicing knew no bounds. Few of the Astorians had believed him to be still alive.

The Beaver had landed at New Archangel in about two weeks from the time she started from Astoria, but the negotiations in disposing of the vessel's cargo, and obtaining the returns, took so long that it was October before the bargain was closed. Mr. Hunt was to have been paid for his goods in seal skins, but there were none at the New Archangel fort, so it was necessary to proceed to a seal-catching factory, on the island of St. Paul, in

the sea of Kamchatka. It was the 31st of October when they arrived at St. Paul. Here the natives lived in cabins that looked like canoes, the jaw-bone of a whale being used as rafters. Across this were laid pieces of driftwood covered with long grass, the skins of animals, and earth.

Mr. Hunt found shelter here while he overhauled and inspected great heaps of seal skins. When approved, the peltries were conveyed in large boats made of skins to the ship, which stood some little distance out at sea.

While on shore one night, a great gale came up, and in the morning the ship was not to be seen. It was several days before she appeared, her sails much damaged by wind and storm. Mr. Hunt hastened to re-embark, but here found new perplexity.

He was expected at Astoria, according to the plan marked out by Mr. Astor. The possibility that he might be needed there, and that a large amount of peltries were probably awaiting him, afforded important reasons for sailing straight for that port. The doubt, on the other hand,—whether, with her rent and tattered sails, the Beaver could make the Columbia River at this season, and cross the dangerous bar with her valuable cargo,—was augmented by the risk they were taking in reaching Canton at a time of bad market, both

for the sale of peltries, and the purchase of a return cargo.

In this dilemma, Mr. Hunt decided to go directly to the Sandwich Islands, and there await the annual ship from New York, in which to take passage to Astoria, while the Beaver sailed on to China. At Woahoo, the ship was repaired, and set sail for China, January 1st, 1813, leaving Mr. Hunt on the island. Alexander Ross, in his journal, gives the Captain of the ship, not Mr. Hunt, the credit for this unwise decision.

Captain Sowle found Mr. Astor's letter at Canton, "giving him information of the war, and directing him to carry the intelligence to Astoria." In the Captain's reply, he refused to comply with his orders, saying, "he would wait the return of peace, and then come home." With Mr. Hunt on the Sandwich Islands, Captain Sowle and the Beaver at Canton, and the Astorians waiting for both, Mr. Astor's most carefully-laid plans were going awry, while one order after another was disregarded.

Captain Sowle was offered one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the furs, that had cost him twenty-five thousand in trading goods, but refused it; a profit which would have been greatly increased by a return cargo, the knowledge of which would have lifted the downcast Astorians. After this prices went down, and

the Captain borrowed money, and laid up his ship to await the return of peace.

Month after month Mr. Hunt waited on the Sandwich Islands. It was not till the following June that he heard of the war with England, from Captain Smith of the Albatross, arrived from China. He now understood the non-arrival of the annual ship, and at once chartered the Albatross to carry him and supplies to Astoria, where he arrived in August, a little over a year after leaving the fort.

Mr. Hunt's surprise was extreme when he learned of the decision to abandon Astoria. He pointed out the success of the late voyage, and the arrangements made with Russia, but soon found that the matter had gone too far for his influence to serve as a counter check. Most discouraging reports of the trade with the interior were also presented to him.

He had from the first been somewhat overwhelmed by the enormous expense involved, and was correspondingly disheartened by the heavy losses. Not fully comprehending the wide area of Mr. Astor's business operations, and his custom of operating with large amounts, the losses seemed ruinous. When brought reluctantly to acquiesce in the partners' decision, his one care was to bring the business to a close, with as little further loss to Mr. Astor as possible.

There was a large quantity of valuable furs to be disposed of, and thirty-two natives of the Sandwich Islands to be conveyed back to their country, and they needed a ship. It was resolved that Mr. Hunt should sail in the Albatross in quest of such a vessel, and should return by January 1st, with a fresh supply of provisions. If Mr. Hunt should not return when expected, certain arrangements should be made with McTavish for a transfer of such men as should be disposed, to the Northwest Company, the latter becoming responsible for the wages due them, on receiving an equivalent in goods. Mr. McDougal proposed that in case of Mr. Hunt's non-arrival, arrangements with Mr. McTavish be left entirely to him.

Mr. Hunt reached the Marquesas safely, but found it impossible to obtain a ship, in the face of the report that the British frigate Phoebe, a store ship and two sloops of war, had set sail for the Pacific, bound, it was supposed, for the Columbia river. In this suspense, Mr. Hunt was held at Marquesas until November 23rd, when he sailed in the Albatross for the Sandwich Islands.

Meanwhile the Lark, so eagerly watched for, had met with storms that had wrecked her, and Mr. Hunt found such of her crew as were saved, at Owyee, where he arrived on December 20th. Orders sent by Mr. Astor

on the Lark, was immediately carried out. A brig was purchased for ten thousand dollars, called the Pedler, and Captain Northrop, of the Lark, was put in command. In a month they sailed for Astoria, with the purpose of removing the goods and valuables as quickly as possible, to the allied Russian settlement on the Northeast coast, and so prevent them from falling into the hands of the British.

A few weeks after Mr. Hunt set sail in the Albatross, Mr. McKenzie started with two canoes manned by twelve men, for the posts of Stuart and Clarke, to inform them of the new arrangements of the partners. Before he had gone a hundred miles he met a fleet of ten canoes sweeping down stream under British colors, the Canadian oarsmen singing as usual as they rowed.

It was McTavish and another Northwest partner, with seventy-five men in all, on their way to meet the Phoebe and the Isaac Todd, when they should arrive at the mouth of the Columbia. They had Mr. Clarke with them as a passenger.

Mr. McKenzie's party turned about, and in the night, the two partners of the Pacific Fur Company decided to start before daybreak, and warn their own post of the coming arrivals. When they were ready to move they found they had companions in this advance jour-

ney, in a small number from the Northwest party, including McTavish himself.

There was nothing to do but accept the situation, both parties reaching Astoria on October 7th. The Northwest Company encamped near the fort, and hoisted the British colors. Whereupon the young Americans in the fort were for running up the American flag, but were prevented by McDougal. They were astonished at the prohibition, and indignant at the attitude of the Northwesters. The next day McDougal read his men a letter from his uncle, Mr. Angus Shaw, a partner of the Northwest Company, in which the coming of the Phoebe and the Isaac Todd was announced, "to take and destroy everything American on the Northwest coast."

McDougal had not correctly guaged American loyalty. The clerks, who were citizens of the United States, were already deeply indignant at "having their national flag struck by a Canadian commander, and the British flag flowed, as it were, in their faces." They were excited and angry at the taunts of the Northwesters, and were ready to nail their colors to the staff and defy everything British.

The frigate could not get within many miles of them, they said, and they would finish their boats with their cannon. But these youths were not in command, and

a calculating head that felt no such patriotic pride, was making preparations to turn over the goods and peltries, both in Astoria and the interior, to Mr. McTavish. The Americans looked on with wrath and scorn. To them McDougal was acting a disloyal part.

The Northwest party had lost their ammunition, and had no trading goods to exchange for food. The Astorians had provisions and the protection of a fort; sixty men with arms, ammunition and boats; and even should the frigate appear, they still could retreat to the interior to some place of concealment with their valuables.

But McDougal was not to be moved by courageous counsels, and on the 16th of October "the furs and merchandise belonging to Mr. Astor were sold to the Northwest Company, for about one-third of their value," those who purchased setting the prices. McDougal took the position "that he made the best bargain for Mr. Astor that circumstances would permit; the frigate being hourly expected, in which case the whole property of that gentleman would be liable to capture."

In spite of these professions, many of those present at the transaction felt that McDougal's course, in the face of difficulty and danger, bore no resemblance to the courageous, self-sacrificing and conscientious action

of Mr. Hunt, David and Robert Stuart, and others of the Astorians.

Mr. Astor, writing to Mr. Hunt afterward, said, "Had our place and our property been fairly captured, I should have preferred it. I should not feel as if I were disgraced." McDougal, soon after this incident, became a member of the Northwest Company.

On the 30th of November, a sail was sighted off Cape Disappointment, and a ship of war came to anchor in Baker's bay. Since there was no merchant vessel accompanying it, there were grave doubts to which nation it might belong. In this emergency, McDougal showed most unexpected initiative. Two barges were loaded with packages of furs bearing the Northwest mark, and hurried off to Tongue Point, three miles up the river. There McDougal would signal them, and should the ship of war prove to be an American, they would have a good start in getting away into the interior.

McDougal, himself, launched a canoe and started for the ship, telling his men to pass themselves off as American or British as the case might be. The British sloop of war, Raccoon, of twenty-six guns, had brought Mr. John McDonald, a partner of the Northwest Company to Astoria. The Phoebe and the Cherub had been turned off in search of Commodore Porter, who was doing mischief among the British whale ships, and the

Isaac Todd had separated from the others in a storm off Cape Horn.

The Raccoon had continued on its way to Astoria, in full expectation of the profit to be gained by the capture of the post. Their disappointment and chagrin was great when they found that through a commercial arrangement, their anticipated booty had become the property of the Northwest Company, which had been instrumental in sending them on this fool's errand. Captain Black is said to have exclaimed at this juncture: "The Yankees are always beforehand with us."

Old Comcomly, with a train of Chinook warriors, came in war-paint to fight beside their white friends.

"King George," said Comcomly, "has sent his great canoe to destroy the fort, and make slaves of all the inhabitants. Shall we suffer it? The Americans are the first white men who have fixed themselves in the land. They have treated us like brothers. Their great chief has taken my daughter to be his squaw; we are, therefore, one people."

It would be an easy matter, he said, to kill all King George's men who tried to land. The ships could not get within six miles of the fort. Those who came in small boats they would shoot down under cover of the woods as they set foot on land.

But McDougal assured his bewildered father-in-law

that their war-like assistance was not needed, and advised them to go home and wash off the war-paint, and return and help receive the visitors courteously. On the 12th of December, 1813, Captain Black "took a British Union Jack and caused it to be run up to the top of the flag staff; breaking a bottle of Maderia, and taking possession of the establishment and country in the name of his Britannic Majesty. He changed the name of Astoria to Fort George."

Comcomly and his Indians were present, still failing to understand the situation. The old chief no longer swelled witn pride over his white son-in-law, but said his daughter had made a mistake; "instead of getting a great warrior for a husband, she had married herself to a squaw."'

The Pedler anchored in the Columbia River in February. When Mr. Hunt learned of McDougal's commercial bargain, he expressed his indignation in the strongest terms, and immediately made an effort to get some of the furs back. This, McDougal told him, would be possible at an advance of fifty per cent. This overture, in connection with the discovery that McDougal had secretly been a partner of the Northwest Company since December 23rd, at the same time continuing to act as Mr. Astor's agent, though two partners of the American Fur Company were present, did not allay Mr. Hunt's anger.

In contrast to the action of McDougal, Ross Cox's and Alexander Ross's enconiums of Mr. Hunt,—which testify to his being "a conscientious and upright man, a friend to all and beloved by all,"—stand in strong relief.

Mr. Hunt's main thought now was to obtain the papers of the Pacific Fur Company, and bring the whole business to a close. This he accomplished by April, sending the bills and drafts to Mr. Astor by some of his associates, who were about to make the land journey to New York; having been given the opportunity by Mr. Hunt to accompany him by sea, or go home by land. Among the men who crossed the Rockies were Clark, McKenzie and David Stuart of the partners, and Gabriel Franchére, one of the clerks who wrote a journal of the whole venture.

Mr. Hunt embarked on the Pedler with three of the clerks. Franchére gives an added fact learned from Mr. Seton, who was one of the clerks who sailed with Mr. Hunt. "They sailed from the Columbia to the Russian establishment at Norfolk Sound, and while there Mr. Seton learned from Captain Pigot, of the English signal ship—'Forester', that after despatching the Lark from New York, fearing that she might be intercepted by the British, Mr. Astor sent orders to his correspondent in England, "to purchase and fit

out a British bottom, and despatch her to the Columbia to relieve the establishment." Franchére comments: "This shows the solicitude and perseverence of Mr. Astor." All the travelers arrived in time at their destination, bearing their stories to the President of the Pacific Fur Company.

Mr. Hunt subsequently returned to St. Louis, and became Governor of the State of Missouri.

After peace was restored in 1814, Astoria, with the surrounding country, reverted to the United States. A law passed in 1815 prohibited "all traffic of British traders within the territory of the United States." This seemed to be the opportune time for Mr. Astor to revive his favorite enterprise, but the Northwest Company was now in full possession of the Columbia, and any effort to dislodge them, would have brought about a bloody contest.

Mr. Astor, therefore, did not think it wise to revive the undertaking without the protection of the American flag. He accordingly "made an informal overture to Mr. Madison, the President of the United States, through Mr. Gallatin, offering to renew his great venture and to re-establish Astoria, provided it would be protected by the American flag, and made a military post; stating that the whole force required would not exceed a Lieutenant's command."

The application was favorably received, but nothing was ever done about it, and the pivotal moment for American re-occupation of Astoria was allowed to pass.

Koch, in writing the "Story of Astoria" in the Magazine of American History says: "Of course Mr. Astor expected his venture to be a profitable one; but he seems to have been of the same class of merchants as those who founded the British empire in India. The grandeur of the undertaking appears to have moved him far more than its prospective profits."

The plan which circled world-wide about Astoria, has been called, "One of the grandest and most comprehensive ever formed by the mind of man." That it failed did not mean the death of its beneficial effects. The great scheme pushed the questions of boundaries and international rights; and brought within American interest and influence the newly purchased land beyond the Mississippi, whose unexplored rivers and plains went by the name of Louisiana. The question of dominion over the vast territory beyond the Rocky Mountains, after threatening to disturb our peaceful relations with Great Britain, was eventually settled by mutual concessions, and Mr. Astor had the supreme satisfaction, before the end of his life, of knowing that "the flag of his country waved over Astoria."

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR AND THE WAR OF 1812.

MAGNIFICENT as the Astorian scheme was, it did not occupy Mr. Astor's entire attention during the years between 1810-1815. Nor was his belief in the great future of the United States shaken by the failure of his enterprise.

He showed his patriotism in practical acts of national value. "In June, 1812, the merchants of New York memorialized the Government in favor of the embargo, and although for a time it almost annihilated the commerce of the port, the name of John Jacob Astor headed the list."

"From the beginning of the war, the support of the treasury of the United States came chiefly from the middle States. A loan of sixteen million dollars was authorized by Congress in December, 1812." Albert Gallatin, who had immigrated from Geneva, Switzerland, in his boyhood, coming to America with a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, and thereafter becoming a large land-owner in Virginia, was Secretary of the Treasury. His conduct of the office is said to

have "ranked among the finest illustrations of financial ability known." His influence "saved the loan."

David Parish and Stephen Girard in Philadelphia, and John Jacob Astor in New York, all personal friends of the great financier, "took over ten millions for themselves and their friends." All of these men who risked their treasure for their country were foreign born.

"Mr. Astor upheld the Government as the largest individual subscriber to the United States loans of that period." The young man,—who shortly after his arrival in America, found it impossible to obtain a loan of two hundred dollars, and compromised with his brother Henry, for a gift of one hundred, and a promise never to borrow of him again,—in middle life willingly made a loan to his country of millions of dollars.

The great shipping merchant was fortunate in receiving several cargoes of tea during the war, which had escaped capture by the British cruisers. All the dry goods merchants bought goods of the large shipping houses, often whole cargoes from the vessels which had successfully run the blockade, and come into port. Shipping goods were also smuggled through Canada.

Mr. Robbins had been steadily prospering in business since he learned the dry goods trade of Henry Laverty. He and John Jacob Astor were warm friends, and both of them were directors in the celebrated Globe Insur-

ance Company. Mr. Robbins was one of those who purchased entire cargoes of Mr. Astor, the two men frequently conducting large commercial transactions in a most laconic manner.

At one time Mr. Robbins had bought an enormous quantity of nankeens, valuable goods of that day, of John Hone and Sons. The only remaining lot in the market was held by Mr. Astor. Mr. Robbins was determined to avoid competition, so went around to Mr. Astor's store, 69 Pine Street, corner of Pearl, and told him what he wanted. The proprietor led the way to a long counter in the center of the store, dusted its surface, and laid down a sample of the nankeens.

"How many have you?" asked Mr. Robbins.

Mr. Astor named the quantity.

"What is your price?"

The price was given.

"I'll take them all," said Robbins.

"Have them to-day?"

"Yes, send them up to 450 Pearl Street."

The author of "Old Merchants of New York," who tells this story," says Mr. Astor: "He asked but one price, and he never departed from it. He represented everything as it was, and never deceived anybody. He never told a lie to sell a lot of goods, even by implica-

tion. They were always found to be as he had represented them."

At times, Mr. Robbins joined with another merchant in the purchase of a cargo of valuable French goods, silks, velvets, laces, etc., which were much sought after by the fashionable world, and profit upon them had been known to reach three hundred per cent.

The dry goods merchants also sent orders by the merchant vessels, for other commodities besides those connected with their trade. Laverty and Gantley imported rare French Spode, and dainty cathedral clocks, with chimes in the Belfry of Notre Dame and vases delicate in design, and exquisite in workmanship.

Mr. Astor's one extravegance is said to have been in providing himself, at any cost, with news and information which would keep him in intimate touch with his operations all over the globe. A striking instance of this habit, was that of his receiving intelligence from Montreal, by special relays, of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, December 24th, 1814, which restored peace between Great Britain and the United States. This was two days earlier than the news reached the American Government, to which it gave him great pleasure to make the announcement.

Charles Astor Bristed, a grandson of John Jacob Astor, tells of an incident connected with this Treaty

of Peace. "After the Treaty of Ghent was concluded, Mr. Astor said to his friend, Albert Gallatin, 'I am very much pleased with all that you gentlemen (the Commissioners) have accomplished, but there are some things which you ought not to have left undone. You should have settled more definitely the question of the Columbia territory.'

"Mr. Gallatin was a most able and long-headed man, but even he did not appreciate the correctness of his friend's view, and attributed to personal feelings, the importance which Mr. Astor attached to the subject. He answered with a smile: 'Never mind Mr. Astor, it will be time enough for our great-grandchildren to talk about that in two hundred years.'

"'If we live,' replied John Jacob Astor, 'we shall see trouble about it in less than forty years. Mr. Astor lived to see his prediction verified within the given time."

One who knew Mr. Astor well, said of him. "He saw further into the interests, capacities and destiny of the country of his adoption, than those who were at the head of the government."

With the return of peace, and the withdrawal of the British squadron from New York, Mr. Astor resumed his regular consignment of furs to England and China,

and continued his shipping activities until his retirement from commerce in 1827.

John Jacob Astor's Captains were men whose reputation shone with no borrowed luster. The great shipowner's choice of men to serve in his far-reaching ventures, was usually so wise, that to be one of Astor's Captains spoke volumes in itself. John Whetten, who in his early manhood, had advised young Astor what ship to take to America, was later one of his Captains. Through Mr. Astor's marriage with Miss Sarah Todd, who was the sister of John Whetten's mother, the two young men had become relatives.

Augustus DePeyster is said to have taken to the sea in his boyhood as naturally "as a duck to water." He sailed a number of voyages with Captain John Whetten, and also with Captain Cowman, whom his employer was in the habit of calling his "King of Captains." Captain Cowman was a very severe, stern man, but a good sailor, and a skilled navigator. Such training was likely to serve young DePeyster in good stead, and he passed from sailor to mate, and then to Captain, in Mr. Astor's employ.

He fought French privateers and came off victorious, sailed with his owner on board as passenger to Europe, and had the honor of commanding the brig "Seneca" belonging to Mr. Astor, which caried the "Proclamation

of Peace in 1815, in fifty-five days to the Cape of Good Hope, and then to Java, and China''. Captain De Peyster continued in the China trade until 1828. He followed Captain Whetten as Governor of the Sailors' Snug Harbor at Staten Island, and could spin a sea yarn excelled by none.

Captain Isaac Chauncy was another of these noted Captains. He was energetic and fearless, and made several successful voyages to the East Indies as a commander of Mr. Astor's vessels. Captain Chauncy was later head of the New York Navy Yard, appointed chief in command of the waters of the Lakes, and superintended the forming of the Navy. His gallantry was conspicuous in engagements off Tripoli.

John Jacob Astor, John Robbins, Nathaniel Prime, and John Hone, once served as a committee to look into the advisability of a loan asked for by the State of Ohio. This State of the middle west, had witnessed the success of the Erie Canal, and wished to follow New York in the matter of internal improvements.

Commissioners came on to Wall street to raise money, first applying to Nathaniel Prime, and he advised putting the matter in the hands of the four financiers mentioned.

The committee held a session extending over a night and a day, looking over Ohio's papers, carefully examin-

ing every document, and searching into the laws of the State. After their long and discriminating examination and consultation, they voted in favor of loaning the State the financial assistance she asked for, provided Ohio's Legislature would insert in the law creating the loan, a clause which they mentioned, concerning taxation.

Upon receiving their answer, the commissioners started for the Capital of Ohio. The Legislature was in session, and it promptly amended the law as requested by the money-kings of Wall Street. Then the agents returned to New York, and obtained all the money Ohio needed.

As time passed, Mr. Astor was frequently consulted by the United States Treasury upon financial subjects; and entered into correspondence with Henry Clay, James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson, President Madison, and Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, on varied questions of finance.

In 1816 Mr. Astor was appointed a Director of the Bank of the United States, Mr. Gallatin was also a director of this bank, and out of these days of service together, a still warmer friendship grew up between the two men, causing them to be frequently seen in each other's company.

CHAPTER XXV.

LANDLORD AND AIRLORD.

WHEN John Jacob Astor, as a young immigrant, first became familiar with the streets of New York, one old writer describes it as a "snug, leafy town, of twenty-five thousand inhabitants."

These had settled for the most part below Courtland Street. By 1800, the city had more than doubled its population, and had grown a mile up the island. The successful fur dealer, of keen brain and clear vision, felt assured that this doubling of population, and covering of space would repeat itself, and acting on this supposition, began to buy real estate.

He had no interest in dwelling houses, or business places, but sought farm land, which often caused his friends to banter him on throwing away money on pasture land, so far from the compact part of the town.

The haystacks of the Bayards stood on a broad sweep of land which is now Lower Broadway, but they were glad to sacrifice good crops, for what seemed to them greater profits, in the shape of two hundred and three hundred dollars a lot, from John Jacob Astor.

John Semlar and his wife sold their East Side farm and ropewalk for twenty thousand dollars, and most of the vast Astor property on the East Side to-day, is built upon the Semlar meadows and cornfields.

Not all of the property Mr. Astor bought was well-cultivated land. Much of it was marsh and rock, and the sellers of those days, considered themselves fortunate in getting a fair price for ground which must, of necessity, prove unproductive. It was a rich opportunity, a real estate boom, in which those wishing to exchange farm or occupation, hastened to offer their land for sale. Mr. Astor's best friends pleaded with him not to risk a fortune already won, in a venture whose success depended on the growth of a city, whose popularity might any day turn into some new channel. Their advice was in vain. The man who had reckoned chances over seas, and across continents, trusted his own acute judgment in this nearer venture.

Property that seemed to the onlookers worth retaining, Mr. Astor parted with. In one instance, he sold a Wall Street house for eight thousand dollars. After the papers were signed, the purchaser seemed inclined to congratulate himself over his bargain at the seller's expense.

"Why, Mr. Astor," he said, "in a few years this lot will bring half again its present value."

"Very true," replied the financier, "but now you shall see what I will do with the money. With eight thousand dollars, I will buy eighty lots above Canal Street. By the time your lot is worth twelve thousand dollars, my lots will be worth eighty thousand dollars." This prediction was in the end fulfilled. A portion of Governor Clinton's Greenwich country place, was acquired by the great land-buyer, and is now covered by wholesale buildings.

Medcef Eden and John Cosine both inherited broad acres of farm land, the former in 1797, the latter in 1809. The Eden farm extended on the old Bloomingdale road, now Broadway, from Forty-second to Forty-sixth Streets, stretching in a diagonal line north-westward to the Hudson River. The heir of this valuable estate seems to have frittered it away, and Mr. Astor, improving his opportunity, purchased it.

The charming old Eden homestead, with gambrel roof, wide porch, and deep chimney, shadowed by great trees, did not suggest city streets. Neither did the broad, hospitable carriage road, bordered with great elms that led to it, or the sun-kissed pond reflecting the tender greens of spring, or the rich autmn hues, in its quiet depths. City streets through the Eden farm! Only John Jacob Astor could see them! As soon have

expected them, some thought, in the first garden that went by that name.

Mr. Astor continued to buy farms. The Cosine farm came into his hands through the chancery courts, and extended from Fifty-third to Fifth-seventh Streets, on Broadway, and westward again to the Hudson River.

John Jacob Astor was fast acquiring land along the river front and backward, equal to that of the great Manors further north. The land, however, was not to be portioned out in leases to small farmers, as that of the Manors, but was to be squared off into city streets, which its purchaser saw in his dreams.

John Jacob Astor always believed in the supreme destiny of New York, and he himself gave it a mighty impetus toward that destiny. Two great Astor Hotels stand on the old Bloomingdale road to-day, and westward hundreds of dwellings occupy the old Eden farm; and hundreds more have been erected on the farm of John Cosine.

Trinity Corporation was land poor in Mr. Astor's time, and many a sale of lots on the church farm were made to Mr. Astor, enabling them to meet current expenses, pay salaries, build parish schools, and care for their poor.

One of Trinity's ninety-nine year leases, covering a third of its great farm, was held by Aaron Burr. Rich-

mond Hill was famous in those days, with the silver-tongued Burr as host, and his brilliant daughter, Theodosia, as its charming hostess. The place itself was picturesque, with wide stretches of wild land, including swamps, rocky ledges and barren commons, lying all the way from Canal Street on to Bloomingdale. But Aaron Burr lived recklessly and extravagantly, and between heavy mortgages, and his quarrel with Hamilton, ruin stared him in the face. The city was moving up toward Richmond Hill, and John Jacob Astor bought the place for one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, thus smoothing for a time the roughness of Aaron Burr's checkered career. Worthless as the purchase seemed at the time, it was one of Mr. Astor's most valuable investments.

These acquisitions were made with such judgment, as frequently to be sold after a few years, at double or treble the original price. The idea that the great land-buyer never parted with his purchases, is contradicted by the estate books, which record the sale of many plots of land, during the buyer's lifetime, and still more by his descendants, during the remainder of the century. That this was a species of farming that paid, was proved many times over during the succeeding years.

Mr. Astor's land speculations were not confined entirely to the prospective city of New York, for through

THE PICTURESQUE

THE FARM EXTENDED FROM FORTY-SECOND TO FORTY-SIXTH STREET,

"From the Mural Decoration by

THE OLD OFFICE OF THE ASTOR ESTATE

IN PRINCE STREET

Courtesy of the

EDEN FARM
AND FROM BROADWAY TO THE HUDSON RIVER
Edward G. Unitt in the Hotel Astor"

HOTEL ASTOR
SITUATED ON THE OLD EDEN FARM

S. S. McClure Company

one of his operations, he acquired the legal title to one third of Putnam County, New York State.

This large tract of land belonged to the estate of Roger and Mary Morris, who having remained loyal to Great Britian during the Revolutionary War, forfeited their right to the property. They fled to England at the close of the war, and the State sold their land to loyal American farmers.

But it appeared that the original owners had only a life interest in the estate; that the property really belonged to their heirs, with all the houses, barns, and other improvements that had been made. Naturally the heirs felt they had some claim which the State was bound to recognize, and after a thorough examination of the papers concerned, by the best legal talent of the day, John Jacob Astor bought the rights of the heirs, in 1809, for one hundred thousand dollars.

Roger Morris was dead, and Mary, his wife, was aged and infirm, and it was not until 1815 that Mr. Astor pressed his claim. The farmers living upon the land, were aghast. The estate covered fifty-one thousand, one hundred and two acres, divided among seven hundred families, who were relying on the titles given them by the State of New York.

Commissioners were appointed by the Legislature to look into the matter, and finding Mr. Astor's claim a

wholly legal one, asked for what sum he would compromise. The value of the land was estimated at six hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars, and Mr. Astor offered to sell his claim for half that sum, but his offer was not accepted.

The case lingered through several years, being brought up again in 1819, when Mr. Astor repeated his previous offer, with interest added, and again no agreement was reached.

Meanwhile the lives of farmers and town's people, with their fear of ejectment, from what they had every reason to consider their own property with a clear title, was not enviable. It was not until 1827 that a test case was tried, in which Daniel Webster and Martin Van Buren stood for the State, and Emmet, Ogden, and probably Aaron Burr, though he did not appear in the trial, for Mr. Astor. Daniel Webster used all his customary eloquence in his client's behalf, but it is said that one sentence, of the opposing counsel: "Mr. Astor bought this property, confiding in the justice of the State of New York, firmly believing that in the litigation of his claim, his rights would be maintained," practically decided the case. The Legislature finally agreed to Mr. Astor's own terms, and he received about half a million dollars from the State. The present owners were se-

cured in their titles, and peace settled over a large community.

John Jacob Astor showed faith in New York as no man had ever done before. He discounted its future as he bought lots, either far north beyond the city limits, or on the east or west sides, where scattered cottages set down in the middle of lots, did not suggest future orderly and well-built streets. Mr. Astor's own faith in the city's future, went a long way toward insuring that future.

The judgment of the shrewdest business man of his day drew others after it, and they in turn, were emboldened to embark upon ventures, that depended for their success upon the city's growth.

Capital from Europe sought investment in New York, and men from all over the United States were drawn to the rising town. Year by year this era of confidence increased, until about 1825, when New York began to take on her metropolitan aspect, and exert an influence abroad as well as at home, an influence which has gathered strength with each passing year. At this time Mr. Astor was a multi-millionaire, and an interest in his ventures and successes attracted the whole world.

It has been said that if this great fortune had been acquired in Europe, it would doubtless have been utilized in "founding a family, building grand mansions,

laying out miles of beautiful grounds, posibly buying a title;'' but here in America, its mere business use benefitted the people. As New York grew, there was nothing she needed so much as houses, comfortable homes within the means of ordinary people. John Jacob Astor built houses as well as bought land, built them well, and fitted them out with the improvements of the day, kept them in good condition, and asked fair rents.

In the rapid growth of the city, there was an opportunity to impoverish the working men and those in moderate circumstances, through the imposition of exorbitant rents, but the great landlord's course controlled the situation, and the city, and its citizens profited thereby.

Notwithstanding the extent and success of Mr. Astor's other business, the increased value of his real estate operations, was the largest factor in the accumlation of his immense fortune. He is said to have ''purchased land almost with a gift of prophecy.''

Though this great German-American financier, did not follow his mother-country in using his wealth to set up a grand family estate, he did import from the old world the idea of leasing his land. The larger part of his vast possessions were neither sold again, nor used personally for building purposes, but leased for periods

LONGACRE (TIMES) SQUARE
A Part of the Old Eden Farm. After a Drawinc by Jules Guerin
Courtesy of the S. S. McClure Company

of twenty-one years, the lessee, after paying a reasonable land rent, being expected to build houses, make improvements, and pay taxes at his own expense.

A satisfactory tenant could generally renew his lease, and so continue in possession of home or business. The system was never popular in the new world, either as exercised between landlord and tenant in the cities, or between Lords of the Manors and the farmers on their great estates in the country. In the latter case it led to the Anti-rent War.

John Jacob Astor, however, was not called upon to meet a war of his tenants. He simply allowed his land to lie idle, until some tenant, forced by its favorable location to rent it for business purposes, set aside his prejudices, and paid the rent asked, renewing the lease at the end of twenty-one years, or leaving the dwellings and other improvements to add to the value of the great landlord's estate. Some of John Jacob Astor's descendents have improved on this old system of leases, and when a lease expires, offer the land with its buildings to the lessee at reasonable terms, before attempting to sell to others.

John Jacob Astor and his son, William B., occupied for years the same office, a little one-story building on Prince Street, just east of Broadway. Here both gave most careful attention to the mammoth business of

which they were proprietors. William B. early became a partner with his father in the fur business, and of real estate was said to have been even a better judge than the elder Astor.

The Thompson farm, the most valuable of the Astor purchases, extending east and west of Fifth Avenue from Thirty-second to Thirty-sixth Streets, and upon which the Waldorf-Astoria now stands, was William B. Astor's purchase.

The elder Astor invested two millions in real estate. At his death the value of his property of this class, was said to be twenty millions. Yet this marked accretion in value was not due to the great landlord's efforts. He simply bought his land in what seemed to him the prospective line of advance of the city. Then he gave the town time to grow.

The city fathers eventually laid out streets through his farms, and occasionally added parks. When DeWitt Clinton, through his project of the Erie Canal, diverted the enormous trade of the West to New York, and with the business, increased the population by hundreds of thousands, one of John Jacob Astor's dreams of New York's future came true.

Homes on Astor land were a necessity, in order to house the incoming multitudes. Railroads and steamships and immigration all made larger and more fre-

quent calls upon it, and the farm lands rapidly became city streets. Grassy meadows that had only been worth hundreds in the hands of their original owners, grew to the value of thousands in the ownership of the great landlord.

Hills where boys had flown kites were leveled with the ground; stretches of land, where ball games had flourished, became city blocks; rippling streams, which the old-time kissing bridges had spanned, and whose transparent depths had mirrored many a love scene, were filled with earth, and made the path of many feet.

So the city grew, always along the surface of the ground, which John Jacob Astor had bought by foot and rod. But stored away in Mr. Astor's tangible possessions, and unsuspected in his realistic dreams, was an inheritance he never guessed.

The projectors of the elevated road and the subway carried the city in great strides up to, and through John Jacob Astor's farm lands; and one morning after the elevator had been proved a success, the old landlord's heirs awoke to find thmselves lords of acres in the air.

In 1830, John Jacob Astor was the only man in New York worth a million dollars. In 1900, the Astor estate had risen in value to considerably over two hundred million dollars.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ASTOR FAMILY.

SEVERAL of the Astor family came to this country from Germany. Henry Astor led the way, and after him came John Jacob, and two sisters. The first of the sisters, Catherine, had been married to George Ehninger, a cordial distiller in Germany. Her husband continued his chosen calling after his arrival in America, but met his death through an accident in the distillery.

His widow was married a second time, to Michael Miller, to whom she taught the business, after which they carried it on together. Catherine Astor had several children by her first husband, one of whom joined the expedtion to Astoria, going out on the Beaver.

The second sister married John D. Wendel, who was for some time in John Jacob Astor's employ, but eventually embarked in the fur business for himself, in a store in Maiden Lane. His son, John D. Wendel, Jr., also started with his uncle.

Mr. Astor himself had seven children. His eldest daughter, Magdalen, married Adrian B. Bentzen, in

1807, a native of Denmark, and Governor of the Island of Santa Cruz. Several years later being left a widow, she married a second time, Rev. John Bristed of Dorchester, England. Mr. Bristed had studied law, and practiced the profession to some extent in his native land. He continued his practice in partnership with Beverley Robinson after coming to New York, attaining in the profession both distinction and success. He was also an author of considerable note, when he found the consummation of his life work in the Gospel ministry.

The second child in the Astor family, and eldest son, who was his father's namesake, was a great grief to both parents, since he early showed signs of arrested development, caused by an unfortunate accident. To a man whose heart was bound up in his children, this was a crushing blow. The boy was most tenderly cared for, and sometimes is said to have had periods of restored mentality, when he wrote verses of some merit.

Before long other children came to brighten the Astor home, till the house was full of young faces and happy voices. In all, there were four girls and three boys, two of whom, a boy and a girl died in childhood. William B. Astor thus became his father's heir from his boyhood days. The youth on which so much depended, was educated at Göttingen. His tastes drew him toward the society of literary men, and he showed some

talent in this direction himself. Had not so large a business fallen upon his hands, his life might have had quite a different outcome.

Father and son were most congenial. Their first office in Vesey Street, extended back so that the rear wall was on the line with the north side of their old home in Broadway. The firm carried the name of "John Jacob Astor and Son".

At this time William B. lived at 17 State Street. Later, when the houses on Broadway, and the office in Vesey Street, were torn down to make room for the new hotel, the firm moved their office to Prince Street. Meanwhile, Henry Astor had died childless, and left his nephew a large amount of valuable property. William B. was a very rich man even during his father's lifetime.

After both father and son retired from the China trade in 1827, William B. Astor devoted himself to operations in real estate, lending his aid generously, to the great charities of the city. His gifts to hospitals, churches, asylums, and charitable societies during his lifetime, were said to be over a million dollars. He married in 1818, Margaret, daughter of General John Armstrong and Alida Livingston.

During the war of 1812, the third daughter, Dorothea, married Walter Langdon of New Hampshire.

Eliza, the last to marry and leave the home nest, followed in her mother's footsteps, and was noted for her piety and benevolence. She was greatly missed, both in her own home and the city, when she married Count Vincent Rumpff, of Switzerland.

The Count was minister of the German Free Cities, at Paris. Here he met, and fell in love with Miss Astor. Afterward Count Rumpff came to America as minister from the Hanseatic towns, and negotiated a commercial treaty with Mr. Clay, who was Secretary of State under President Adams. Eliza had no children.

The wife of John Jacob Astor, and mother of his children, was a most devoted helpmeet, working side by side with her husband during the strenuous years of their early married life, sharing with him griefs, anxieties, and disappointments; and rejoicing, with the whole hearted sympathy of a generous nature, in his successes.

Her piety was sincere and ardent. Next to her Bible, which she read daily, she was devoted to "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

Mrs. Astor's life closed several years before that of her husband. She passed to her reward in 1834, in her seventy-third year, after fifty years of an unusually happy life.

Those bound to him by blood held a warm place in John Jacob Astor's heart. His children found him a loving father. Each of his daughters, on her marriage, received from him a liberal marriage portion. Mr. Astor had several grandchildren before he died, and these, in their turn, discovered the path to their grandfather's heart to be an easy incline.

Julia Ward Howe tells in her "Reminiscences", of the marriage of John Jacob Astor's granddaughter, Emily, a daughter of William B. Astor, to her eldest brother, Samuel Ward. Julia Ward officiated as bridesmaid, and describes gracefully the rich white silk which the bride wore, a scarf of some rare lace in place of a veil, and her forehead glistening with a diamond star, the gift of her grandfather Astor.

Mr. Astor was a warm lover of music, and occasionally gave musical entertainments, when some noted singer could be procured. Mrs. Howe also speaks of visiting his house frequently, after marriage had united the two families. Both Julia Ward and Emily Astor had cultivated musical voices, and the old gentleman enjoyed listening to their singing. After taking part one evening at one of his musical entertainments, and greatly pleasing their host, he said to them: "You are my singing birds."

Listening to a brilliant waltz on another occasion, he

observed: "I heard that at a fair in Switzerland years ago. The Swiss women were whirling about in their red petticoats."

The young women were able to sing in Mr. Astor's native tongue, and occasionally it was his pleasure to join them.

The old custom of New Year's calls was still at its height in these days, and Julia Ward Howe remembered a New Year's day early in the thirties, when a gorgeous yellow chariot drew up before their door, from which John Jacob Astor, a stout, elderly gentleman, alighted, and came in to pay his compliments to her father. The ladies of the family received on these occasions, and it was a day of generous hospitality, and a reviving of pleasant associations and memories.

The living descendents of the first John Jacob Astor, who carry his name in the United States to-day, are William Vincent Astor, Ava Alice Muriel Astor, and John Jacob Astor, children of the late Colonel John Jacob Astor, who perished in the sinking of the Titanic, and Henry Astor of an earlier generation.

William Waldorf Astor, a cousin of Colonel John Jacob Astor, resides in England, as do also his sons, William Waldorf Astor, Jr., and John Jacob Astor, and his daughter, Pauline Astor, wife of Captain H. Spender Clay. These families also have children. William Wal-

dorf Astor, eldest son of the eldest son, owns the larger part of the Astor estate in New York.

Besides these, the descendents of John Jacob Astor bear the names of Aldrich, Boreel, Bristed, Carey, Carroll, Chanler, Chapman, de Groenice, Delano, de Notbeck, de Steurs, Drayton, Emmet, Jay, Kane, Keefer, Langdon, Lowndes, Phillips, Pallandt, Phelps, Roosevelt, Rumpff, Stevens, Townsend, Tyler, Van Alen, Ward, Wilks, Wilson, and Zborowski.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ASTORHAUS.

FROM 1820 to 1822, and from 1829 to 1834 Mr. Astor resided in Europe. Soon after his arrival on the continent, he made an extensive tour of Germany. Here was the land of his birth, and the home of his boyhood, and he was drawn, perforce, to his native village of Waldorf.

The little town belonged to the old, old world. It had not changed in these years that had been full of opportunity and achievement for one of its children. The way thither was the same. There were the long plats of vegetables and clover, and the beautiful wild flowers which John Jacob Astor remembered as a boy. The women were still hoeing in the fields beside the men, making bright spots in the landscape with their red skirts; the carts were still drawn by cows.

There were, also, the same red tiled roofs, with small windows like eyes among the tile; the narrow streets, with the stones laid from doorstep to doorstep; the old street pumps nine feet high, unto the top of which no child could grow, though he might one day reach the

handle; and the old cemetery, where his mother had been buried in the lonely years of his childhood.

All of it appeared to John Jacob Astor as if he had left it but yesterday. The old church brought back that pivotal Confirmation Day, when he was fourteen, and life seemed to turn backward upon itself, offering no hopes for the future to the boy aquiver with the desire to go forward.

There were the roads he trod as an unwilling assistant in his father's business, and the lanes where he carried the little ones of the family, searching for amusement for them, and quietness for himself.

The highway leading out of Waldorf toward the Black Forest, no longer looked like a road of fate,—a pathway of magnificent possibilities, with awe-inspiring distances between,—but simply a stretch of country roadway on which the sun shone, the birds sang, men and women and cows worked, and children called after the stranger a cheerful "Guten Morgen."

It was during the period of Mr. Astor's second stay abroad, that the excavations were made in the mounds of his old playground on the Roman road. It may well be imagined that the revelations of what lay buried beneath the grassy hills found an interested spectator in the old Waldorf boy.

Mr. Astor had already made financial provision for

the surviving relatives in his old home, but something of all that this visit meant to the German-American, was later shown in the bequest which gave expression to the thoughts of his heart on his return to his native village.

It was not till after his death that the town became aware of the gift of her son. John Jacob Astor had set apart fifty thousand dollars to build an institution for the benefit of the poor of Waldorf. A nephew of Mr. Astor's and one of his executors, appeared in the village one day, prepared to pay over the money to those who were to have the institution in charge. Before night every house in the little town was agog with the news.

As the days passed, it was found that there was to be a Board of Supervisors composed of residents of Heidelberg,—professors from the University and clergymen,—but the real management of the Home was to be placed in the hands of the clergy of Waldorf, the burgomaster, the physician, a citizen named every three years by the Town Council, and the Superintendent of the institution, who must be a teacher by profession.

Considerable time elapsed while the plans were being perfected, and the accumulated interest on the fund eventually went a long way toward building the Home,

so leaving the larger part of the bequest to be permanently invested for the support of the institution.

They named it, when finished, the Astorhaus. The two main objects of the Home were, the care of the poor, who, through age, disease, or other causes, were unable to work; and the education and moral uplifting of young people, who were without means. Children needing the care of the Home were admitted at six years old, and from that time until they were fifteen, were trained in habits that would stand them in good stead in after life. The trend of their dispositions and tastes was observed, and each one was taught a trade by which he could afterward earn an honest livelihood. Instruction in agriculture, market-gardening, the care of vineyards and animals were also added, fitting them for these occupations if they showed any bent in these directions. Children of any and all religious creeds were to be admitted.

The boy who had lain awake nights puzzling how he should get his own start in the world, thus smoothed the way to a life-work for many other boys. Nor were the aims of the Astorhaus to be entirely along industrial lines. The blind and the deaf and the dumb were to find succor here, and a nursery for very young children, who had been left destitute, was also contemplated.

THE ASTORHAUS IN WALDORF

The Astorhaus was finally opened on January 9th, 1854, with becoming ceremonies, and continues its beneficent work to the present day. In the chapel of the building, there hangs an excellent portrait of Mr. Astor, and here each year on the anniversary of his death, a commemorative service is held. The boys and girls who have gone out from this institution equipped for life, have had reason to remember with gratitude the boy who had to forge his own hard way, and who turned back during a successful life, to make the road less difficult for their young feet.

It is not strange, that with this village blessing always before his eyes, the Rev. C. W. Stocker, pastor emeritus of the old church, was moved to write of John Jacob Astor:

"Although married to an American lady, and himself an American, so that he could scarcely speak his mother tongue fluently any more, he nevertheless remained German in his heart, and it is said always had a longing for his mother country.

"Astor was of medium height, broad shouldered and sun-burned. His eye betrayed a restless activity, and he was accustomed to answer the conversation of others with a melancholy smile; his whole appearance was of a reticent, seriously-minded and melancholy man. He did a great deal of good, saw things in the right light immediately, and was incredibly quick at figuring; so that, in spite of enormous losses which he suffered, he left a large estate at his death.

"Few people were as quiet, precise and upright as he was, holding the memory of his friends sacred."

The marked sobriety of which the Rev. Mr. Stocker speaks, was doubtless magnified at this time by physical suffering. Mr. Astor's intimate friends often spoke of his enjoyment of a good joke, though he showed also an undercurrent of sadness.

After visiting Germany, Mr. Astor spent some time in Paris, where General Armstrong, the father of Mrs William B. Astor, had been American minister. In his spare hours during his active business life, he had acquired some knowledge of French, and now in his more ample leisure, he set himself to learn Italian, both languages adding greatly to the pleasure of his travels.

He spent two winters in Italy, enjoying the wonders of art in Rome and Naples, interested in Pompeii, and charmed with the beauties and soft air of Southern Europe. The world of living men also drew his notice, and from some of those who had wielded unusual power in the world of statesmanship and diplomacy, he received marked attention.

He was presented at the Court of Charles the Tenth; and also at that of Louis Philippe; at Naples he witnessed the accession to the throne of young Ferdinand II. He had also the pleasure of meeting Guizot in Paris, and Metternich in Vienna.

These years of foreign residence were not entirely spent in travel or brief sojourns. Mr. Astor purchased a villa on the Lake of Geneva named Genthod, where he passed his summers reveling in the exquisite beauty of the lake shores, and the clear blue tint of the water, reflecting over again the grandeur of the scenery, even to Mont Blanc, fifty miles away.

His daughter Eliza was with him at these times, and together with her husband, a courtly gentleman of the old school, they spent happy summers surrounded by the beauty of the Swiss Lake.

In Europe, as in his adopted country, Mr. Astor drew from his surroundings a wealth of vivid impressions, which he enjoyed at the time, and laid away for future reflection. But the life of the new world had grown very dear to the man who had helped to make it, and he gladly returned to America in 1834.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOMES AND NEIGHBORS.

ON the site upon which the Astor House stood for many decades, John Jacob Astor lived in a large double house for a quarter of a century. This house was 223 Broadway. On either side of him the length of the block, the substantial three-story brick houses were occupied by men who were well known to their day and generation.

Aaron Burr moved from 221 Broadway to Richmond Hill, the same year John Jacob Astor took up his residence in the block, and in this house Michael Paff established his celebrated picture gallery. Two hundred and nineteen Broadway was occupied successively by the brothers, Walter, and Colonel John Rutherford, who belonged to an eminent family connected with the merchant interests of New York. Colonel John Rutherford built his house before the Revolutionary War, and opened the street, though he changed the size and architecture of his dwelling during the yars he was Mr. Astor's neighbor. He had been one of the Colonial Council and a member of the Colonial Assembly, his

family intermarrying with the Alexanders and Stevens of Hoboken.

The house adjoining Mr. Astor's on the other side had been the residence of General Moreau when he first came to New York, but for years Alexander S. Stuart, a famous merchant of that day, was Mr. Astor's neighbor, to be succeeded by Cornelius Roosevelt, and later by David Lydig, one of the daring old race of merchants who built up New York.

The father of the last occupant of the house, Philip Lydig, had been a native of Germany of good family, and upon coming to America engaged in the wholesale flour business, with large mills near West Point, and commodious buildings for carrying on his extensive operations in New York.

David Lydig followed his father in the business, owning a house in New York, and a country-seat near West Farms, Westchester County. Country-seats were considered a necessary part of an establishment in those days, and in many cases became valuable property for future generations.

The Lydig sloops sailed between the mills and the city home, and were often taken from the business route to give the friends of the family the pleasure of excursions through the Highlands, the trip sometimes extending as far as Albany.

The enjoyment of these leisurely sloop journeys, with their parties of chosen friends, is to be found in many a diary and letter of the period. The sense of personal hospitality from the owner of the sloop, the genial camaraderie of the Captain and officers, the exchange of wit and humor and the matching of stories between guests, filled these trips with a peculilar type of enjoyment.

The exquisite scenery of the Hudson, unspoiled by modern schemes, awoke enthusiasm along its many miles, as the voyagers sailed near its wooded banks, or watched the wild birds in their flight; lay idle in some shaded cove during the heated hours, or swung forward with the wind in every sail, a dancing boat on the blue waters.

Night often found them sheltered under some guarding bank, a thousand candles overhead; or storm-bound, they dropped anchor in some safe retreat, while they watched the waters whipped into yeasty foam and curling white-caps in the broad spaces beyond.

One of the greatest charms of these sloop journeys was the visits made upon friends all along the river front. Welcomes were warm from the families of these scattered estates, who claimed each other as neighbors, though miles intervened. Stables full of road-horses, the stages on the post-road, and the private ownership

of sloops on the river, over-rode distance for these leisurely folk, as successfully as steam cars and trolleys and automobiles do to-day.

David Lydig was both President and Treasurer of the German Society, to which John Jacob Astor belonged, as Baron Steuben had been before him. He served in various capacities in nearly every prominent bank and insurance company, for half a century.

Just beyond the Lydig home, on the corner of Barclay Street, there resided during the early years of the Astor family's residence here, Richard Harrison, a noted lawyer, and also Attorney General. When he died in 1809, John G. Coster, a retired merchant, bought the house and lived side by side with Mr. Astor for twenty years. When the great financier decided to fulfill the resolve of his young manhood, and build a more elegant mansion than that which, at an earlier period, had excited such marked comment and admiration, he seems to have had but little difficulty in acquiring the houses on this important block of Broadway, upon which he himself lived.

But when he reached the house on the corner, which had been the home of John G. Coster for nearly as many years as he himself had lived in the block, he found an obstacle that even his determination could not surmount. This was the last building lot required by Mr. Astor upon

which to build his magnificent hotel, but Mr. Coster could not be prevailed upon to part with it at any price. Money was no object with him, for he was one of the five wealthiest men in New York. Mr. Astor made one offer after another, only to have each in turn declined, the old gentleman positively declaring he meant to spend his remaining days in his old home. In all his previous purchases, Mr. Astor had kept his object a secret, but Mr. Coster's persistent refusal to sell forced him to reveal his purpose.

"Mr. Coster," said he, one day, "I want to build a hotel. I have all the other lots, and I need the ground on which your house stands. With the money I will pay you, you can go up Broadway beyond Canal Street, and build a palace. Now name your price."

Mr. Coster then gave the real obstacle to the sale. "The fact is," he replied, "I can't sell unless Mrs. Coster consents. If she is willing, I will sell for sixty thousand dollars. You can call to-morrow morning and ask her."

When morning came Mr. Astor made the proposed visit on Mrs. Coster, and put his question, as prearranged.

"Well, Mr. Astor," replied the old lady, as if conferring a great favor for no adequate return, "we are

such old friends that I am willing to part with my home for your sake."

So Mr. Astor at length accomplished the purchase of the last house and lot on the block, and Mr. Coster took his old friend and neighbor's advice, and built a spacious mansion of granite a mile up Broadway, where he lived the remainder of his days.

Mr. Astor used to tell the story of the whole transaction with great amusement, particularly that part in which the old lady consented to sell him her house at twice its value, under the head of a personal favor. The negotiations, which ended in the purchase of this pivotal house on the block, extended over two years.

When the financier's own dwelling was torn down, he moved to a broad two-story brick house opposite Niblo's, and near his office in Prince Street. Upon the front door of this new abode was a large silver plate, with the simple inscription, "Mr. Astor." By this time the name was so well known that it required no explanatory given-name to distinguish the owner.

Philip Hone writes in his "Diary," under date of April 4th, 1834: "John Jacob Astor has just returned from Europe. He comes in time to witness the pulling down of the block of houses next to that on which I live, where he is going to erect a *palais royal*, which will cost him five or six hundred thousand dollars."

This racy writer thought that the Astor House would "remain a monument to the great financier for centuries to come."

"The corner stone," according to "The Constellation" of July 19th, 1834, "of this fine building was laid on the 4th instant, at 6 o'clock A. M., in the presence of about a hundred spectators. A box was deposited beneath the stone with a silver tablet in it, containing the following inscription:

'CORNER STONE OF THE PARK HOTEL
Laid the 4th of July, 1834,
The Hotel is to be erected by JOHN JACOB ASTOR.
BUILDERS:
Philetus H. Woodruff, Peter Storms, Campbell & Adams.
SUPERINTENDENTS:
Isaiah Rogers and William W. Burwick.
ARCHITECT:
Isaiah Rogers.'

"The daily papers of the preceding day—the last number of the "Mechanics' Magazine," containing a full portrait of Lafayette—and Goodrich's picture of New York—were also deposited in the box."

The dimensions of the building-to-be, follow, and its style of architecture.

ASTOR HOUSE 1836

ASTOR HOUSE 1912

Courtesy of Alfred H. Thurston, the Last Proprietor of the Astor House

When the Astor House was finished, it was a solid and imposing structure, the admiration of both Europeans and Americans. A short time after its completion Mr. Astor and his son, William B., stood in City Hall Park admiring its magnificence.

"Well, William, what do you think of it?" asked the happy owner of an accomplished dream.

His son expressed his warm appreciation and admiration of this last achievement of his father's.

"William, it is yours," returned the father, to the untold surprise of his son. A few days later the property was turned over to William Backhouse Astor, for "one Spanish milled dollar, and love and affection." There was never any doubt of John Jacob Astor's love and affection where his children were concerned. The Astor House proved to be thoroughly successful, and a gift for which William B. had ample reason to be grateful.

The hotel remained a monument to its builder for the larger part of a century, but it was the life that passed in and out of its doors, both while it bore the name of the Park Hotel, and later of the Astor House, that gave it its greatest glory.

Clay and Webster and Abraham Lincoln were among the names on its registers, oft repeated. The men, whose heart's blood went to the making and saving of a nation,

trod its corridors. Those the new world fain would honor were fêted at its hospitable board.

Dinners were given to Jennie Lind and in honor of Burns; to Captain Sands and the officers of the frigate St. Lawrence, by the Common Council of New York, to Governor Louis Kossuth, by the Press; and to many another man and woman famous in the first half and middle of the century. Even to its very last days of existence as a hotel, the Astor House gathered its devotees,—the bridge engineers at a farewell luncheon, at the one table where they had lunched for twenty-five years; and the Municipal Club of Brooklyn, at a farewell dinner; while men and women gathered from many cities to spend the last night in the old Astor House, rich in historic memories intertwined with the nation's growth.

One of Mr. Astor's early purchases was a thirteen-acre farm, overlooking Hell Gate. Here he built a handsome country residence, near 88th Street and Second Avenue. Perhaps he remembered, pleasantly, the Todd House on Pearl Street, where he won his bride. The land here had also extended to the water's edge, with an old-fashioned garden upon its banks, and the East River always in sight.

Washington Irving wrote of the Hell Gate home:—
"Mr. Astor has a spacious, well-built house, with a lawn

THE BURNS FESTIVAL BANQUET
HELD AT THE ASTOR HOUSE, JANUARY 25TH, 1859
Courtesy of Alfred H. Thurston

in front of it, and a garden in the rear. The lawn sweeps to the water's edge, and full in front of the house is the little strait of Hell Gate, which forms a constantly moving picture."

CHAPTER XXIX.

LITERARY FRIENDS AND BUSINESS COMPANIONS.

THOMAS Jefferson believed the United States was to be a great and populous country; Henry Clay was enthusiastically in favor of internal improvements by the National Government. With both of these men, and others of like view, John Jacob Astor was in entire sympathy. Probably no man ever had more unbounded faith in the future of the American continent than the great financier. Ultimately, he believed, that the country would develop over a vast range of wealth and power. Jefferson and Clay wrought politically for the well-being and advancement of the nation; John Jacob Astor led the nation along the road of continental development.

Mr. Astor never took any active part in politics, but he was for many years a supporter of the old Whig party, and held its magnetic leader, Henry Clay, in warm regard both from a personal and political standpoint. He never was happier than when the celebrated orator was his guest.

"The Mill Boy of the Slashes," who, in working for the support of his family, often rode a pony to Daricott's mill, with a rope for a bridle, and a bag of wheat or corn-flour for a saddle, appealed to the man whose boyhood had been similar.

They had both been in favor of the War of 1812, and aided and upheld it by their diverse talents. They believed this war had "transformed the American Republic from a feeble experiment into a real power, full of brains,—and menace, if need be."

The story is told that when Henry Clay ran for President the third time, the committee called on Mr. Astor for a contribution to the campaign fund. He is said to have responded to their request:

"I am not interested in these things now. Those gentlemen who are in business, and whose property depends on the issues of the election, ought to give. I am an old man. I haven't anything to do with commerce, and it makes no difference to me what the Government does. I don't make money any more."

"Why, Mr. Astor," one of the committee replied, "you are like Alexander, when he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. You have made all the money, and now there is no more money to make."

The old man's eyes twinkled at the keen repartee, and with a chuckle of amusement, he said:

"Very good, that's very good. Well, I'll give you something." He thereupon drew a check for fifteen hundred dollars, which, though it did not elect his old friend to the Presidency, still stood for a sign of the friendship between them.

Although Mr. Astor had a reputation for making close bargains in business transactions, his confidence in the United States and its future, often led him into financial acts which surprised his fellowmen. When the founders of the National Bank of New York were procuring subscribers to its stock, and still needed a large sum, Mr. Astor offered to complete the amount, provided they allowed him to choose the President. The commissioners willingly acceded to his request, and he presented the name of Albert Gallatin, who continued as President of the Bank for many years, Mr. Astor becoming one of its largest depositors.

"When the New York Life Insurance Company was robbed of its entire surplus of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, in 1834, Mr. Astor made a gratuitous loan sufficient to enable it to continue business."

Another story is told of a financial transaction with Gerrit Smith, the son of John Jacob Astor's early partner. During the panic of 1837, Mr. Smith was in need of ready money, and procured a loan from Mr. Astor of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, giving as se-

curity a mortgage on a certain piece of property. Mr. Astor's check was received, but through the carelessness of the county clerk, the papers were not sent to him. After several weeks a letter arrived from the financier, enquiring into the matter. An examination was made, the fault located, and the transaction satisfactorily concluded, but it remained a matter of interest to many that Mr. Astor had loaned a quarter of a million dollars, simply on Gerrit Smith's bare word.

As the great financier's more active years passed by, he found hearty enjoyment in a group of scholarly friends. He seems a strange figure in this inner circle of literary life. His fund of anecdotes, his stories of adventures in the wilds, and ventures in the world of finance, gave a vivid charm to his conversation. To the alert and imaginative minds of his friends, they were like discoveries in a new world to the explorer.

But to John Jacob Astor, the man of action and daring, the man who followed his visions personally into the virgin forests, or with ships and men and money over seas,—what did he find in these men of letters?

Fitz Greene Halleck, Washington Irving, Joseph Green Cogswell, and others who gathered at his fireside, were all travelers. Mr. Halleck had visited France, Switzerland, Germany, and the British Isles during the same years that Mr. Astor had spent abroad. Dr.

Cogswell added to his knowledge of European countries and people, a trip to India made just after his graduation from Harvard. Here were interests in common, but there seems to have been a still closer tie than that formed from kindred topics of conversation.

Perhaps, as Mr. Astor's own active life ceased, he asked for himself the eyes of others, whose visions of great things were still clear and far-reaching, albeit they led into the realm of the intellectual and imaginative, rather than the world of actual adventure or business. Here there were still worlds to conquer, and the little coterie of friends spent happy days in one another's company.

Halleck, the poet, was one of the most charming conversationalists of his day, a man full of humor, anecdote and fancy; handsome, graceful and cultured. He spent seventeen years as a clerk in the Astor office. The old gentleman became very fond of him, and after a time invited him to reside with him, and take charge of his affairs. They passed months together at Mr. Astor's country seat, to the pleasure and satisfaction of both men.

The author of "Burns" and "Marco Bozzaris" was beloved in England, Scotland and America. His poetry won the hearts of men, and caused them to erect monuments and statues to him after his death, at which

time the literary world, the President and his Cabinet, and a host of plain people, all did him honor; but during his life-time it was the common, daily task of a book-keeper in Mr. Astor's counting room, which gave him his livelihood.

Halleck used to rally Mr. Astor upon his wealth, assuring him if he, himself, had two hundred dollars a year and was sure of it, he would be content. To the amusement, and somewhat to the surprise of Halleck's friends, the old man took the joker at his word, and left him in his will, an annuity of two hundred dollars. William B. Astor, however, augmented his father's bequest to Mr. Halleck by an additional gift of ten thousand dollars.

Mr. Astor's intimacy with Washington Irving dated back to their early years. Irving's warm, genial nature appealed to the softer side of the character of the great financier. He loved to have the whimsical story-teller and the able historian in his home and at his table; and visited the author, in turn, in his home in Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson. As long as such activity was possible, Mr. Astor delighted in excursions over his old hunting grounds on the Hudson River, and reveled in the magnificent scenery of the Catskills and the Alleghanies.

In his days of leisure, Mr. Astor had gathered about

him a library of choice volumes, his preference tending to biographical and historical subjects. During the long winter evenings, he delighted in tracing through the pages of some book the life of a man of action or daring, or following with deep interest the growth and progress of the nations.

In these years the great Bininger groceries on Maiden Lane had proved the worth of Katie Bininger's dreams, as the Astor ships and furs and real estate, had shown the determination of John Jacob Astor to succeed. Philip Hone, an old friend and companion in some past financial ventures, was at times a guest at Mr. Astor's table. Mr. Hone was thoroughly acquainted with the capitalist, and is one of the men who paid tribute to the uniform fairness and justice of Mr. Astor's business dealings.

Joseph Green Cogswell, the learned editor of the "New York Review," came intimately into Mr. Astor's life at a later period than his other friends. Dr. Cogswell visited New York during the winter of 1838, and wrote from there: "During my present visit to New York, I have seen a good deal of old Mr. Astor, having dined with him twice at his own house, and three times at his son's. He is not the mere accumulator of dollars, as I had supposed him; he talks well on many subjects, and shows a great deal of interest in arts and lit-

erature. I met Halleck there often, and some other pleasant visitors."

Mr. Astor became so fond of the presence of this learned and companionable man, that he asked him more than once to make his home with him. Part of the charm of Dr. Cogswell's society lay in his ability to converse with Mr. Astor in German, thus adding to the pleasure of other congenial topics, that of harking back to Mr. Astor's native land and childhood's home.

Mr. Astor drew about him, besides these intimate friends, James G. King, Henry Brevoort, Samuel Ward, Samuel B. Ruggles, Daniel Lord and others among the eminent and scholarly men of the day.

This man of wealth was of the opinion, shared by other foreigners who have been eminently successful in this land of opportunity, that there was no cause for poverty in a country which offered the poorest a chance to earn an honest livelihood, and even to attain a competency.

In spite of these views, the great financier gave money to charitable objects, but for the most part his benevolence took a practical turn. One reads of fathers who sought employment for their sons with Mr. Astor, which, in many instances, proved to be the road to prosperity for captains, clerks, and supercargoes. George Merle, of one of the old shipping firms, and

George and William Wallace Bruce, were among Mr. Astor's clerks.

Moses Taylor was the son of Mr. Astor's rent collector, and went to sea when very young. After serving his time, he started a small shipping business of his own. It is said that his father's employer always "backed up" young Taylor when he needed aid. In after years, Taylor became President of the City Bank, and a millionaire on his own account. John D. Wendel was a clerk for his uncle in early life, and William W. Todd was connected, for a number of years in his young manhood, with the Astor fur business.

Numerous other clerks remained many years in Mr. Astor's employ, finding their positions still held for them in old age, grey hairs proving no impediment to earning a livelihood in Mr. Astor's service.

CHAPTER XXX.

WRITING "ASTORIA."

THE long, quiet days spent in his country home on the East River, gave John Jacob Astor leisure for fresh plans, but with advancing years and health impaired, these schemes lacked the personal initiative of an earlier period. Mr. Astor acted through others in these days.

The following letter, written by Washington Irving to his nephew, Pierre Munroe Irving, explains much that follows in connection with the writing of "Astoria":

"My Dear Pierre:

"John Jacob Astor is extremely desirous of having a work written on the subject of his settlement of Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River; something that might take with the reading world, and secure to him the reputation of having originated the enterprise and founded the colony, that are likely to have such important results in the history of commerce and colonization.

"The old gentleman has applied to me repeatedly in the matter, offering to furnish abundance of materials in letters, journals and verbal narratives, and to pay

liberally for time and trouble. I have felt aware that a work might be written on the subject, full of curious and entertaining matter, comprising adventurous expeditions by sea and land, scenes beyond the Rocky Mountains, incidents and scenes illustrative of Indian character, and of that singular and but little known class, the traders and voyageurs of the Fur Companies. Still I am so much engrossed with other plans that I have no time for the examination of papers, the digesting of various materials, etc., and have stood aloof from the undertaking, though still keeping the matter open.

"Since I have heard of your inclination to return to New York, however, it has occurred to me that you might be disposed to take this subject in hand; to collate the various documents, collect verbal information, and reduce the whole to such form that I might be able to dress it up advantageously, and with little labor, for the press.

"In an interview which I had with Mr Astor, a day or two since, in which he laid before me a variety of documents, I accordingly stated to him my inability at present to give the subject the labor that would be requisite, but the possibility that you might aid me in the way I have mentioned; in which case I should have no objection to putting the finishing hand to the work. The old gentleman caught at the idea, and begged me to write to you immediately. He said he would be willing to pay you whatever might be deemed proper for your services, and that, if any profit resulted from the sale of the work, it would belong, of course, to the authors.

"I lay this matter before you, to be considered in contrast or in connection with your other plans. If you take it in hand, it will furnish you with employment for at least a year, and I shall take care to secure your being well paid for your current time and labor; the

ultimate profits of the work may be a matter of after-arrangement between us.

"Mr Astor is a strong-minded man, and one from whose conversation much curious information is to be derived. He feels the want of occupation and amusement, and thinks he may find something of both in the progress of the work. You would find him very kindly disposed, for he was an early friend of your father, for whose memory he entertains great regard; and he has always been on terms of intimacy with your uncle Peter and myself, besides knowing more or less of others of our family. Halleck, the poet, resides a great deal with him at present, having a handsome salary for conducting his affairs.

"When you have thought over this matter, and made up your mind, let me hear from you. If you determine in favor of it, the sooner you come on the better."

It is perhaps the only contradiction in an eminently masterful and materially successful life, that Mr. Astor should have been so eager to give to the world the history of the venture that failed. Washington Irving says of him, that in this enterprise Mr. Astor had turned from the desire for personal aggrandizement, and was aiming at a great national benefit, and that also, in his heart was a desire for fame. If into this great scheme he had put the grandest ideals of his life, he might reasonably have hoped and expected that out of the ashes of seeming failure, phoenix-like, would rise a winged success, of which he himself had planted the foundation.

It was the story of this continent-wide, ocean-circled, golden-streaked foundation that he wished the friend of

his youth to tell, in the glowing language of a pen that never wrote in somber hues, but in all the rainbow colors of a boundlessly sympathetic imagination.

Pierre Irving consented to undertake the task of collecting and arranging material, provided he could be assured of two thousand dollars in payment for his co-operation. He declined any remuneration from the sale of the book itself.

The work alloted to the nephew by his uncle, was broad in extent, and accurate in detail. Mr. Astor supplied, as he had promised, papers, letters and journals, written by those who had been employed in the enterprise, including accounts of journeys across the Rockies by routes before untraveled. There were various works in French and English, whose study would throw light on the region beyond the Rocky Mountains, particularly on the Columbia River; descriptions of animals and plants and scenery; adventures by sea, and tales of traders, trappers and hunters; of Indian warriors, their characters, personal traits and costumes. Mr. Astor himself, as well as the Northwest traders who occasionally visited him, offered a rare fund of anecdotes and descriptions.

An experience of Washington Irving's youth had given him some insight into the type of life he was to portray. At twenty, Irving was a student in the law

office of Josiah Ogden Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Ludlow Ogden owned some wild lands on the Oswegatchie, and proposed to lay out a town on its shores. Irving was invited to join a party of seven who were making an expedition to Ogdensburg, Montreal and Quebec. With this purpose in view, they took a sloop to Albany, traveling afterward by wagons over bad roads, through thick woods, or by fields where burnt stumps of trees alternated with the fallen giants of the forests. They often alighted and walked in preference to jolting in the wagon.

At Black River they embarked in a scow, and found in this mode of travel fresh diversions as well as discomforts. Irving gives a humorous account of coming upon two canoes one day, in full pursuit of a deer, that was swimming in the water, and joining in the hunt:

"The deer made for our shore," wrote Irving. "We pushed ashore immediately, and as it passed, Mr. Ogden fired and wounded it. It had been wounded before. I threw off my coat and prepared to swim after it. As it came near, a man rushed through the bushes, sprang into the water, and made a grasp at the animal. He missed his aim, and I, jumping after, fell on his back and sunk him under water. At the same time I caught the deer by one ear, and Mr. Ogden seized it by a leg. The submerged gentleman, who had risen above the water, got hold of another leg. We drew it ashore, when the man immediately despatched it with a knife. We claimed a haunch for our share, permitting him to keep all the rest."

The party still had a sixty-mile journey before reaching Ogdensburg, which they made in wagons. They met with heavy rains, impossible roads, dirty huts and collapsing tents in the midst of downpours. Sometimes there were almost hurricanes, in which trees swayed and fell, and exhausted horses caused them to tramp in mud knee deep. Once they were twenty-four hours without food.

On the banks of the St. Lawrence they were quartered in some rude buildings, belonging to a ruined French fort. Here the party spent happy days rambling in the woods, fishing about the rapids, paddling in Indian canoes on the St. Lawrence, and visiting Indians who still lived on islands in the river. "Everything," writes Irving, "was so grand, and so silent, and so solitary. I don't think any scene in life ever made a more delightful impression upon me."

At last the party reached Montreal, the great head of the fur trade, and were fêted in a very grand manner by some of the partners of the Northwest Fur Company. "At their hospitable board," says Irving, "I occasionally met partners and clerks and hardy fur traders from the interior posts; men who had passed years remote from civilized society, among distant and savage tribes, who had wonders to recount of their wide and wild peregrinations, their hunting exploits,

and their perilous adventures and hair-breadth escapes among the Indians. I was at an age when the imagination lends its coloring to everything, and the stories of these Sinbads of the wilderness, made the life of a trapper and fur trader perfect romance to me.''

Mr. Astor asked that the forthcoming book should bear Washington Irving's name, and that he should prepare the vast amount of material gathered for the press. Pierre Irving and Fitz Greene Halleck were invited to be Mr. Astor's guests in town during the winter of 1834. Their host looked upon the review of his great enterprise as a pleasant occupation for the months of frost and snow, and indeed it covered these months, and more which followed. At the close of his task, Pierre Irving received three thousand dollars from Mr. Astor, to which his uncle added another thousand.

When Mr. Irving first reviewed the wealth of material collected by his nephew, he felt at once that he would be able to make of it ''a rich piece of mosaic.'' He writes of ''rough-casting'' some of the chapters in June of the following year, and speaks of Pierre Irving as an ''excellent pioneer.'' In August of the same year, he was ''getting the narrative into frame,'' and building his ''snug little Dutch nookery'' on the Hudson.

Irving spent much of his time after this as a guest

of Mr. Astor, until "Astoria" was completed. In September, he wrote:

"For upwards of a month past I have been quartered at Hell Gate with Mr. Astor, and I have not had so quiet and delightful a nest since I have been in America. Here the old gentleman keeps a kind of bachelor hall. Halleck, the poet, lives with him, but goes to town every morning, and comes out to dinner. The only other member of the family is Charles Astor Bristed, one of his grandchildren, a very fine boy of fourteen years of age. Pierre Munroe Irving has been a guest for several weeks past, but has recently returned to New York. I cannot tell you how sweet and delightful I have found this retreat,—pure air, agreeable scenery, a spacious house, profound quiet, and perfect command of my time and self. The consequence is, that I have written more since I have been here than I have ever done in the same space of time. Within the last month I have written more than a volume, and have got within a half dozen chapters of the end of my work, —an achievement which I did not expect to do for months. Of course, there will be much to be done afterward, in extending some parts, touching up others, enriching and embellishing. It will make two good volumes—probably octavo; and Pierre Munroe thinks it will be more liked than anything I have lately written."

The later months of 1835, and earlier part of 1836, Irving was still at Mr. Astor's home busily engaged polishing and perfecting his work. Mr. Astor was building a new house in town which was not finished, so with Washington Irving and his nephew Pierre Irving, to keep him company, they were passing the winter

JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S HOME IN 88th STREET NEAR THE EAST RIVER
HOUSE IN WHICH WASHINGTON IRVING WROTE "ASTORIA"
From a Print in Valentine's Manual

months in the country, facing Hell Gate in its boisterous wintry aspect.

Again, Irving writes: "Mr. Astor does everything in his power to render our residence with him agreeable, and to detain us with him * * * * In consequence of having so much leisure and quiet, I have been able to get on famously with my new work, and hope to finish in the course of a few weeks."

In February, 1836, Irving was completing the book that meant so much to his old friend, the author, and the reading world. "I am giving my last touches to the Astor work. It is this handling, which, like the touching and toning of a picture, gives the richest effects. I am interested and pleased with the work, and feel that the labor that I am now bestowing upon it will contribute greatly to its success."

The book, when finished, proved to be a great gratification to Mr. Astor, and was received by the reading public with marked enthusiasm. By many, on both sides of the sea, it was considered to be Washington Irving's greatest work.

"Wolfert's Roost," now commonly known as Sunnyside, Irving's many-gabled home on the Hudson, had grown simultaneously with "Astoria", and soon after the book was published, we find Mr. Astor surprising

Irving by a two days' visit in his "Dutch nook" near Tarrytown.

Washington Irving was a most genial and kindly host. His cordial manner, his warm affection for his friends, and his flights of humor on the slightest occasion, made it a rare pleasure to be his guest. In fact, so enjoyable did Mr. Astor find his stay under the roof of his old friend, that he promised to repeat it as soon as it was good sleighing. From Hell Gate to Tarrytown was not an impossible distance in a sleigh for those days, and the homes at either end of the journey afforded a warm welcome to either guest.

Irving's intercourse with the great capitalist was purely that of friendship, rather than a business relation. Once during the years of their intimacy, Mr. Astor sold Irving a share in a town founded on Green Bay, Michigan. The land advanced in value, but Irving's share was not sold. After the investment had proved unsuccessful, the seller, of his own free will, took back the share and returned the original purchase money.

Irving's refusal to receive any remuneration from Mr. Astor in return for his work on "Astoria," whose publication in itself brought the author gratifying returns, was said to have been offset by Mr. Astor's appointment of Washington Irving as one of his executors. Acting in this capacity in regard to the Astor

fortune, netted Mr. Astor's old friend a sum exceeding any he had received for his works, except the "Life of Columbus."

Among the relics of Mr. Astor's fur-trading days, still preserved, are two medals, such as it was customary for fur companies to bestow on Indian Chiefs, both as marks of favor, and also a sign and a seal of the strength and power of these companies. One of the Astor medals contains a portrait of the great fur merchant, circled by the words, "President of the American Fur Company," of which corporation Mr. Astor was not only President, but the whole company, the title being used to extend and facilitate his operations.

The second medal contains two clasped hands, with the words above and below, "Peace and Friendship," and these, in turn, enclosed by two pairs of tomahawks and pipes of peace. "Fort Union" and "U. M. O." is the circled lettering, the initials standing for "Upper Missouri Outfit," the whole being the name applied to a trading post on the Yellowstone, which later became a Government post. Both medals are pierced with a hole, and have evidently been worn proudly suspended from some savage chieftain's neck.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FOUNDING THE ASTOR LIBRARY.

THE circle of literary friends which Mr. Astor had gathered about him, brought a charm and zest into his later years. Halleck's inimitable conversational powers; Cogswell's mastery of his mother tongue, and his wide and varied learning; Irving's warm affection and sparkling humor; and his nephew, Pierre Irving's eager interest in all Mr. Astor had planned regarding the great Astorian enterprise; the keen intelligence of his own grandson, Charles Bristed, who absorbed, as only a boy can, through known and unexplored channels, the information. adventure, humor and imagination of this rare group of men, all conspired to produce an ideal atmosphere.

Pierre Irving writes of dining at Mr. Astor's at a time when the conversation turned upon ghosts. Several stories were cited, whose reliability had been credited by eminent men. A guest present voiced his surprise that neither Scott nor Dendie, writing of these mysteries, had mentioned the story of Major Blomberg.

Two officers had been detailed to sit up with a body

in the West Indies. As the night advanced, one officer had passed into an adjoining room, while his companion remained with the body. To the great surprise of the watcher, he saw the corpse slowly rise and approach him, and presently begin to speak. The story told by this visitor from the secret world, was of a great wrong which had been kept secret. He had been permitted to return, that amends might be made. The apparition bade the astonished watcher call his companion, and then told of a secret marriage to a girl in Ireland, who was expecting a child; gave the name of the clergyman who married them, and told how they could obtain evidence. The guest had seen the sworn statement, testifying to the truth of the story he had related.

Mr. Irving took the position that the man was not really dead, and that the wrong rested so heavily on his conscience as to rouse him from a stupor. He ended the serious discussion of the subject by his aggrieved statement, that he, himself, had been hardly treated by the ghosts; that he had made efforts to gain their attention more than once, but always failed.

Mr. Astor added much curious information and many unique experiences to the conversations which scintillated from the group about his table.

But the intercourse of these friends did not begin and end with anecdotes and ghost stories. In these

years of leisure, Mr. Astor's still active brain was revolving a new idea. He wished, as he ultimately confided to his son and the circle about him, to express his grateful feelings toward the city in which he had so long lived and prospered, by some permanent and valuable memorial.

Dr. Cogswell urged the founding of a free public library, which was warmly seconded by the remainder of the group of friends. Mr. Astor's decision was promptly taken in favor of this plan. From the time the library was suggested, it formed a double tie between him and his literary friends.

In 1839, Mr. Astor added a codicil to his will bequeathing three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the library he wished to found, but later, perceiving that this sum would hardly suffice for carrying out the broad schemes already planned, he added another fifty thousand. About this time the great financier had begun to withdraw permanently from the business world, which gave him greater leisure for plans connected with his benevolent purpose.

Very soon Dr. Cogswell commenced to purchase "curious, rare and beautiful books" for the library that was to be. Mr. Astor placed sixty thousand dollars in his hands, with special view to some libraries abroad about to be offered for sale.

When an invitation to reside with Mr. Astor was again repeated, Dr. Cogswell accepted, "in the hope of advancing the great project" which lay very near his heart. An agreement was reached in which Mr. Astor offered Dr. Cogswell "fifteen hundred dollars a year, and a convenient office in town, his regular business to be working for the library, and an occasional appropriation of an hour or two by Mr. Astor, when he so desired."

Mr. Astor now gave Dr. Cogswell *carte blanche* to buy books at any time, when they could be had on good terms, if suitable for the library. Dr. Cogswell took up his work in a house adjoining Mr. Astor's, going with him to Hell Gate in the summer, and continuing to be the old gentleman's kindly and sympathetic companion for the rest of his life. As years passed by, Mr. Astor became more infirm, and Dr. Cogswell spent a larger portion of his time with his old friend. Writing from Hell Gate in 1843, he speaks of being provided with every comfort, and for entertainment:—"Every pleasant day we take a steamboat, and while away three or four hours in the inner or outer bay." Dr. Cogswell's devotion to Mr. Astor was reciprocated, not only by the old gentleman himself, but also by the family he had so long been a part of, be-

tween whom and himself there was a warm and tender regard.

Many plans were made for the library, both as to the building and the gathering of books. Architects, masons and contractors were consulted. Both officially and unofficially, the project was present in the intercourse between Mr. Astor and his literary associates for a number of years. They planned together, that this should be a cosmopolitan library of reference for scholars, and naturally, in a matter that lay so near their hearts, Mr. Astor's friends were anxious to see the plans materialize before their eyes.

But in the man of great enterprises the blood was growing sluggish. Advancing years and feeble health were producing a natural reluctance to lifting new burdens, and though he was urged again and again, by both Irving and Cogswell to begin the work, whose completion in his life-time they felt would bring him great satisfaction, the donor of the Astor Library evidently believed that the practical labor of founding the institution was for younger hands than his.

During these later years Mr. Astor enjoyed being read to, and found in these discerning friends able and vivid interpreters of the world of books, whose opening vistas were his delight.

In 1842 Washington Irving was appointed minister

THE ASTOR LIBRARY

to Spain. It was his desire that his old friend, Joseph G. Cogswell, should be appointed as secretary of the legation. Just as he had attained his desire, Mr. Astor awoke to what the absence of both of the friends of the library would mean for so long a period. He thereupon stepped in with a promise to immediately go on with the library, and the offer to Cogswell of the position of librarian of that embryo institution.

This change in arrangements was a disappointment to Irving, and a sacrifice to Cogswell, but the library held a warm place in Irving's heart, and he was unwilling to stand in the way of an appointment so eminently suitable. He was also in keen sympathy with the sacrifice Dr. Cogswell was making in the cause of "good learning in the land."

So Washington Irving sailed for Spain with Alexander Hamilton, Jr., as his secretary, and Dr. Cogswell remained in this country to become the very able and untiring organizer and manager of the Astor Library, and eventually to visit the literary centers of Europe, to make as complete a collection as possible of the books which would meet the needs of advanced students.

The building was erected in Lafayette Place, New York City, and the Library was opened January 9th 1854, at the same date of the opening ceremonies of the Astorhaus, in Waldorf, Germany. For nearly two

generations the Astor Library was a source of reliance and enjoyment to scholars and literary men; both to those who were climbing the lower rounds of the ladder, and also to many who were already famous.

It has been literally "a scholars' court of appeal," and among the earliest of the great city philanthropies for the assistance of whoever would use its benefits. For many years the descendants of its founder continued their gifts to the institution,—in land for additional buildings, in donations and bequests of large sums of money, and in the addition of valuable books and paintings.

By the incorporation of the Astor Library with the New York Public Library during recent years, the Astor Library has not ceased to exist, nor to continue its beneficient work. John Jacob Astor, as one of the earliest of New York's philanthropists, still offers through this great modern library, thousands of valuable books of reference, gathered with utmost painstaking, through the years of half a century. The struggling youth in the world of letters may still find assistance here, through the generosity of the man who was once a struggling youth himself.

The years between Mr. Astor's first thought of an offering of public benefit to the city of his adoption, and the final completion and opening of the Astor Library,

INTERIOR OF THE ASTOR LIBRARY

were years of seed-planting in the removal of abuses, in help for the needy, and assistance to those who were trying to climb into better conditions. During these years Israel Corse, a Quaker leather-dealer in the "Swamp," was the leader of a devoted band of men who rid New York of the lotteries which were sapping its life. Through their united efforts, the selling of lottery tickets became a crime.

The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor was organized in 1843, and incorporated in 1848. Five Points Mission had its inception during the same period. The New York Free Academy, which was later expanded into the University of the City of New York, was opened in 1849; the Y. M. C. A. in 1852; the Children's Aid Society in 1853; the St. Luke's Hospital in 1854; and the corner stone of Cooper's Union was laid the same year.

Among the great crowds of the old-world population, which had sought the shores of the "New Land," with hope and large expectations in their hearts, were many who had not met with success. Some could not adapt themselves to new conditions; others were not rugged enough for the rough life of a new country; some had been trodden upon by the fierce striving of others in the race; while a large number had simply not made

good, and their children started life as handicapped as their parents before them.

This was the bright dawn of a day when men turned from wholly self-aggrandizement, to consider the less fortunate or striving brother at their elbow,—turned, with what for their time, were munificent gifts in their hands.

All honor to the men who, like John Jacob Astor, took these first steps along a path that has made a half-century glow with a wealth of organized charities and philanthropic endeavors! In comparison with our own time, the gifts may not seem large, but they broke a trail which has opened out into a great white light of beneficent enterprise.

CHAPTER XXXII.

GATHERING THE THREADS TOGETHER.

LIKE the ships ever sailing by his home, at the gate of Long Island Sound, bound for some safe harbor, so Mr. Astor's life glided quietly away in this ideal retreat for the evening-tide. He had passed the turmoil and the storms of life, and the dangerous reefs, and was sailing into port. The great venturer died on the morning of March 29th, 1848.

The funeral took place from the home of his son, William B. Astor, in Lafayette Place, being conducted according to the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, in which church many of his children and grandchildren were communicants. The pall bearers, David B. Ogden, Judge Oakley, Washington Irving, Ramsey Crooks, Isaac Bell, Sylvanus Miller, James G. King, Albert Gallatin, Jacob Taylor and Philip Hone, represented by their names and personalities, their sympathy and co-operation in the varied interests and activities that had filled the life of this remarkable man. Bancroft Library

The gathering of Mr. Astor's great fortune, with its daring ventures, and ultimate successes, had been a

matter of interest to a vast number of people during his lifetime. How he had disposed of it at his death, held their attention no less. In the course of sixty years, John Jacob Astor had accumulated an estate, which was variously estimated to be from twenty to thirty million dollars. He was accustomed to say: "The first hundred thousand dollars—that was hard to get; but afterwards it was easy to make more." Not over two million of his large fortune came as the fruits of the fur business, lucrative as that business had been.

By far the larger part of the first Astor estate, was the result of the founder's clear-sighted vision as to the future of New York city, and in consequence, his large investments in real estate. As has been already said, Washington Irving, together with other of Mr. Astor's friends, were made his executors, and also trustees of the Astor Library.

Much as the great financier loved and admired his adopted country, he had retained a few old world ideas, which had not been shaken by the experiences of life, or a different environment from that of his youth. The bulk of his property he passed down to his son, William B. Astor, who had already inherited a large fortune from his uncle Henry Astor, making him the richest man in the new world.

The blood tie was very strong in this German-

American. The most generous instincts of his heart were wound about his family and those near of kin; and not only his son, William B., but all others connected with him, children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, were remembered in his will, with an evident desire to comfortably provide for them all. Even the descendants of the brother who had stayed in Germany, John Melchior Astor, were left annuities.

For his unfortunate son he made careful provision,—in the building of a house for him in Fourteenth Street, near Ninth Avenue, which was to be his for life, with ample provision for the most solicitous attention. A pathetic touch in this particular bequest, was the clause which stipulated that if his son should ever be restored to the use of his faculties, he was to have an increased yearly income of one hundred thousand dollars. This fond hope of a father's heart was never fulfilled, but the tenderest care for the unfortunate one was evidenced in the plans made for him.

Mr. Astor's legacies to benevolent objects were as wise and practical as they had been through life. The four hundred thousand dollars for the Astor Library was the largest bequest, followed by the fifty thousand dollars for the Astorhaus in his native village. To the German Society, which he joined soon after coming to America, and to which he was ever loyal, he gave thirty

thousand dollars, "on condition of their investing it in bond and mortgage, and applying it for the purpose of keeping an office, and giving advice and information, without charge, to all immigrants arriving in New York, and for the purpose of protecting them against imposition." This element of looking backward, and smoothing the rugged path for others, over which he, himself, had courageously trodden, was conspicuous in the great financier's plans and bequests.

To the Home for Aged Ladies he gave thirty thousand dollars. The Blind Asylum and Half-Orphan Asylum, and the German Reformed Church, of which he was a member, were also remembered. The will was considered by many to show "good sense and good feeling," and where it failed to meet certain obligations, Mr. Astor had left his son William B., a living representative, who in a number of cases added to his father's bequests; and as years went by, continued his interest and his gifts to the benevolent objects in which his father had been interested.

From youth to old age John Jacob Astor had a remarkable personality. His formative years held unusual phases of character building. There were the years of impressionable boyhood when he held bravely to a star of hope, which shone only fitfully in the gloom of his environment. There were years in an unknown coun-

try, with a strange language about him, when he clung to a purpose which required unending industry, unwearied patience, unswerving loyalty to the right. Believing in these years "that knowledge was power," he used every means at his command to train his mind for future usefulness. Once more he stood the test in a strange land, surrounded by hundreds of visionaries and schemers, and young men who had thrown off the yoke of home influence, to live a free life in a free land. Here again he bent his energies to the acquisition of knowledge through all the avenues open to him, and these avenues of education and cultivation grew in number as his life broadened and progressed.

It was these early years and tests, which in the end, identified the name of John Jacob Astor with ideas of honesty and industry, boundless energy and untiring enterprise. To these, he added, as his life was more and more intertwined with that of his adopted country, —patriotism and public service.

Something of an inherited courage and daring, projected into new channels, called John Jacob Astor out from the old life, and imbued him at an early age with a vision of success. Earnestness and faith accompanied him like a body-guard. They lifted him over obstacles, and spurred him on to fresh exertion after each repulse. As the years went by, his enthusiasm fired others, thus

carrying into new regions American rights and interests, and turning the hearts and minds of men to the great west. Running parallel with the desire for personal benefit in his great enterprises, was a deep-seated loyalty and patriotism toward the young Republic of which he was a part.

Irving writes of Mr. Astor: "He began his career, of course, on the narrowest scale; but he brought to the task a persevering industry, a rigid economy, and strict integrity. To these were added, an inspiring spirit that always looked upward; a genius, bold, fertile and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage, and a singular and never-wavering confidence of signal success."

His friend and intimate companion, Joseph G. Cogswell, gives this brief description of the great financier: "He was a man of fine personal appearance, his features bearing the stamp of intellectual sagacity, and of commanding and pleasing address." He also adds: "John Jacob Astor's liberality was princely."

Still another writer says of the great financier: "He was a shrewd and enterprising man of business, yet large-hearted and public-spirited to a fault."

Others, in speaking of his face, have said it showed, "a spirit of meditation, patient courage, masterful resolve." He concentrated his thought, and all his

resources on the object he wished to attain. He relied upon his own judgment rather than that of others, but not without the fullest information he could gain in regard to any of his operations. He was fond of saying: "An ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory." Ingenuity, and making the most of an unexpected opportunity, often saved the day for him, when a less ingenious man would have failed. Supporting his many valuable mental characteristics, was an iron constitution, whose staying powers were tested over and over again, to the limit of his reserve strength.

Judged by the standards of his own day, John Jacob Astor's public benefactions were generous. It is a question whether he may be considered behind or ahead of our time, in his devotion to his family, even to its furthest outstanding branches. In regard to the Astorian enterprise, Arthur Butler Hulbert says: "The spirit which John Jacob Astor showed has been the making of America. * * * * The first American promoters, while seeking personal benefit, were moved by considerations of loyalty and patriotism equalled by business men in no other country at any time."

One of the strongest enconiums which can be passed upon this noted man, with extraordinary talents, untrained in the schools, but utilized in their virile freshness to the full extent of the gifts, is, that he spent his life

piling up opportunities for those who would follow him. He accomplished great things in his lifetime, and all that his years of incessant and absorbing work left no time for undertaking, be made possible for his descendants. To an unbounded degree, this remarkable man loved his adopted country, his home and his kindred, and John Jacob Astor still lives in the paths he opened for those who came after him.

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