



"IT SAID THE ORGANIZATION WAS ENLISTING RECRUITS FROM SOCIETY."

ON THE STEPS OF THE CITY HALL.

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS.

A THIN inch of dusty snow littered the frozen grass-plots surrounding the municipal buildings, and frequent scurries of wind kept swirling it again on to the concrete walks whence it had been swept. The February sun—although it was within an hour of noon—could not break through the ashen clouds that shut out the sky.

It was a depressing day, and yet there was no relaxation of energy in the men who were darting here and there eagerly, each intent on his errand, with eyes fixed on the goal and with lips set in stern determination. As Curtis Van Dyne thrust himself through the throng on the Broadway sidewalk, leaving the frowning Post Office behind him, and passing before the blithe effigy of Nathan Hale, he almost laughed aloud as it suddenly struck him how incongruous it was that a statue of a man who had gladly died for his country should be stuck there between two buildings filled with men who were looking to their country, to the nation or to the city, to provide them with a living. But he was in no mood for laughter, even saturnine; and if anything could have aroused his satire, it would have been not a graven image, but himself.

He was in the habit of having a good opinion of himself, and he clung to his habits, especially to this one. Yet he was then divided between self-pity and self-contempt. For a good reason, so it seemed to him—and he was pleased to be able to think that it was an unselfish reason—he was going to take a step he did not quite approve of. He went over all the terms of the situation again as he turned from Broadway toward the City Hall; and the pressure of circumstances as he saw them brought him again to the same conclusion. Then he resolved not to let himself be worried by his own decision; if it was for the best, then there was no sense in not making the best of it.

So intent was he on his own thought that he did not observe the expectant smile of an older man who was walking across the park in front of the City Hall, and who slackened his gait, supposing that the young lawyer would greet him.

When Van Dyne passed on unseeing, the other man waited for a second and then called, "Curtis!"

The young man had already begun to mount the steps. He turned sharply, as though any conversation would then be unwelcome, but when he saw who had hailed him he smiled cheerfully and held out his hand cordially.

"Why, judge," he began, "I didn't know you were home again! I'm glad you are better. They told me you might have to go away for the rest of the winter."

"That's what they told me, too," answered Judge Jerningham; "and I told them I wouldn't go. I'm paid for doing my work here, and I don't intend to shirk it. I expect to take my seat again next week."

There was a striking contrast between the two men as they stood there on the steps of the City Hall. Judge Jerningham was nearly sixty; he had a stalwart frame, almost to be called stocky; his black hair was grizzled only, and his full beard was only streaked with white. He had large dark eyes deep set under cavernous brows. His clothes fitted him loosely, and although not exactly out of style, they were not to be called modish in either cut or material. Curtis Van Dyne was full thirty years younger; he was fair and slight, and he wore a drooping mustache. He was dressed with obvious care, and his garments suited him. He looked rather like a man of fashion than like a young fellow who had his way to make at the bar.

"By-the-way," said the judge, after a little pause, which gave Van Dyne time to wonder why it was that the elder man had called him—"by-the-way, how is your sister? I saw her in church on Sunday, and she looked a little pale and peaked, I thought."

"Oh, Martha's all right," the young man answered, briskly. "Aunt Mary attends to that."

"Do you know what struck me on Sunday as I looked at Martha?" asked the judge. "It was her likeness to her mother at the same age."

"Yes," Van Dyne replied, "Aunt Mary says Martha's very like mother as a girl."

"And your mother was never very hearty," pursued the judge. "Don't you think it might be well to get the girl out of town for a little while next month? March is very hard on those whose bronchial tubes are weakened."

"I guess Martha can stand another March in New York," the young man responded. "She's all right enough. I don't say it wouldn't be good for her to go South for a few weeks, but— Well, you know I can't telephone for my steam-yacht to be brought round to the foot of Twenty-third Street, and I don't own any stock in Jekyll Island."

The judge made no immediate answer, and again there was an awkward silence.

The younger man broke it. He held out his hand once more. "It's pleasant to see you looking so fit," he said, cordially.

The other took his hand and held it. "Curtis," he began, "it isn't any of my business, I suppose, and yet I don't know. Who is to speak, if I don't?"

"Speak about what?" asked Van Dyne as the judge released his hand.

The elder man did not answer this question. Apparently he found it difficult to say what he wished.

"I happened to see a paragraph in the political gossip in the *Dial* this morning," he began again; "I don't often read that sort of stuff, but your name caught my eye. It said that the Organization was enlisting recruits from Society as an answer to the slanderous attacks that had been made on it, and that people could see how much there was in these malignant assaults when they found the better element eager to be enrolled. And then it gave half a dozen names of men who had just joined, including yours and Jimmy Suydam's. I suppose there is no truth in it?"

"It's about as near to the truth as a newspaper ever gets, I fancy," Van Dyne answered. His color had risen a little and his speech had become a little more precise. "I haven't joined yet, but I'm going to join this week. Pat McCann is to take us in hand, Jimmy and me; he's our district leader."

"Pat McCann!" and the judge spoke the name with horrified contempt.

"Yes," responded the young man. "Pat McCann has taken quite a shine to

Jimmy and me. He gives us the glad hand and never the marble heart."

"It's no matter about Suydam," said the judge, with an impatient gesture; "he's a foolish young fellow, and he doesn't know any better. I suppose he expects to be a colonel on the staff of the first Governor they elect. But you—"

It was with a hint of bravado that Van Dyne returned: "I don't see that I'm any better than Jimmy. He hasn't committed any crime that I know of—except the deadly sin of inheriting a fortune. And as far as that goes, I wish old man Suydam had adopted me and divided his money between us. Then I could have that steam-yacht and take Martha down to Jekyll Island next month."

The judge hesitated again, and then he said: "Curtis, I suppose you think I have no right to speak to you about this, and perhaps I haven't. But I have known you since you were born, and I went to school with your father. We were classmates in college, and I was his best man when he married your mother. You know his record in the war, and you are proud of it, of course. He left you—you will excuse my putting it plainly?—he left you an honorable name."

"And that was about all he did leave me!" the young man returned. "I want to leave my children something more."

"If you join the organization, if you are a hail-fellow-well-met with all the Pat McCanns of the city," retorted the judge, sternly—"if you sink to that level, you would certainly leave your children something very different from what your father left you. If you do, I doubt whether the organization will go out of its way to offer inducements to your son. It will expect to get him cheap."

The young lawyer flushed again, and then he laughed uneasily.

"You are hard on me, judge," he said at last.

"I want you to be hard on yourself now," the older man returned. "I know you, Curtis; I know the stock you come of, and I am sure you will be hard enough on yourself—when it is too late."

"I'm not going to rob a bank, am I?" urged the younger man.

"You are going to rob yourself," was the swift answer. "You are going to rob your children, if you ever have any,

of what your father left you—the price-less heritage of an honored name.”

“Come, now, judge,” said Van Dyne, “is that quite fair? You speak as if I were going to enroll in the Forty Thieves.”

“If I thought you capable of doing that I should not be speaking to you at all,” was the reply.

“Pat McCann isn’t a bad fellow really,” the young man declared. “He means well enough. And the rest of them are not rascals, either; they are not the crew of pirates the papers call them. They are giving the city as good a government now as our mixed population will stand. They have their ambition to do right; and I sincerely believe that they mean to do the best they know how.”

“That’s it precisely,” the judge asserted. “They mean to do the best they know how. But how much do they know?”

“Well, they are not exactly fools, are they?” was the evasive answer.

“Don’t misunderstand me,” the elder man continued. “I am perfectly aware that the organization is not so black as it is painted. The men at the head of it are not a crew of pirates, as you say—of course not; if they were they would have been made to walk the plank long ago. Probably they mean well, as you say again. I should be sorry to believe that they do not.”

“Well, then—” returned Van Dyne.

But the judge went on, regardless of what the young lawyer was going to say:

“They may mean well, but what of it if the result is what we see? The fact is that the men at the head of the organization are of an arrested type of civilization. They are two or three hundred years behind the age. They have retained the methods—perhaps not of Claude Duval, as their enemies allege, but of Sir Robert Walpole, as their friends could not deny. Here in America to-day they are anachronisms. They stand athwart our advance. I have no wish to call them names or to think them worse than they are; but I know that association with them is not good for you or for me. It is our duty—your duty and mine, and the duty of all who have a little enlightenment—to arouse the public against these survivals of a lower stage, and to fight them incessantly, and now and then to beat them, so that they may be made to respect our views. You say they are giv-

ing the city as good a government as our mixed population will stand. Well, that may be true; I don’t think it is quite true; but even if it is, what of it? Are we to be satisfied with that? The best way to educate our mixed population to stand a better government is to fight these fellows steadily. Nothing educates more than an election, followed by an object-lesson.”

“That’s all very well,” responded Van Dyne, when the judge had made an end of his long speech. “But I don’t believe the organization leaders are really so far behind other people, or so much worse. They’re not hypocrites, that’s all. They know what they want, and they take it the easiest way they can.”

“If that is the best defence you can make for them, they are worse than I thought,” retorted the judge. “Sometimes the easiest way to take what you want is to steal it.”

“I don’t claim that they are perfect, all of them,” the younger man declared. “I suppose they are all sorts, good, bad, and indifferent. But we are all miserable sinners, you know—at least, we say so every Sunday. And I have known bad men in the church.”

“Come, come, Curtis,” the judge replied, “that’s unworthy of you, isn’t it? You would not be apologizing to me here for joining the church, would you?”

Van Dyne was about to answer hastily, but he checked the words on his lips. He looked away and across the frozen park to the pushing crowd on Broadway; but he did not really see the huge wagons rumbling in and out of Mail Street, nor did he hear the insistent clang of the cable-car.

His tone was deprecatory when he spoke at last.

“I suppose you are right,” he began, “and I don’t quite see myself in that company. I’ll be frank, judge, for you are an old friend, and I know you wish me well, and I’d be glad to stand well in your eyes. I don’t really want to join the organization; I don’t like the men in it any more than you do; and I don’t know that I approve of their ways much more than you do. But I’ve got to do it.”

“Got to?” echoed the judge in surprise. “Why have you got to? They can’t force you to join if you don’t wish it.”

“I’ve got to do it because I’ve got to have money,” was the young man’s explanation.

"Do you mean that you are to be paid for associating with these people?" the judge asked.

"That's about it," was the answer. "I wouldn't do it if I wasn't going to make something out of it, would I? Not that there is any bargain, of course; but Pat McCann has dropped hints, and I know how easy it will be for them to throw things my way."

"I didn't know you needed money so badly," said the judge. "I thought you were doing well at the bar."

"I'm doing well enough, I suppose," Van Dyne explained; "but I could do better. In fact, I must do better. I must have money. There's—well, there's Martha. She came out last fall, and I gave her a coming-out tea, of course. Well, I want her to have a good time. Mother had a good time when she was a girl, and why shouldn't Martha? She won't be nineteen again."

"Yes," said the judge, "your mother had a good time when she was a girl. Your father and I saw to that."

"Martha's just got her first invitation to the Assembly," Van Dyne went on. "You should have seen how delighted she was, too; it did me good to see it. Mrs. Jimmy Suydam sent it to her. But all that will cost money; of course she's got to have a new gown and gloves and flowers and a carriage and so on. I don't begrudge it to her. I'm only too glad to give it to her. But I'm in debt now for that coming-out tea and for other things. I ran behind last year, and this year I shall spend more. That's why I've got to join the organization and pick up a reference now and then, and maybe a receivership by-and-by; and perhaps they'll elect me to an office, sooner or later. I know I'm too young yet, but I'd like to be a judge too."

"So it is for your sister you are selling yourself, is it?" asked the elder man. "Do you think she would be willing if she knew?"

"I'm not selling myself!" declared the young man, laughing a little nervously. "I haven't signed any compact with my own blood amid a blaze of red fire."

"Do you think your sister would approve if she knew?" persisted the judge.

"Oh, but she won't know!" was the answer. "I'll admit she wouldn't like it over-much. She takes after father, and she has very strict ideas. You ought to

hear her talk about the corruption of our politics!"

"Curtis," said the judge, earnestly, "if you take after your father, you ought to be able to look things in the face. That's what I want you to do now. Have you any right to sacrifice yourself for your sister's sake in a way she would not like?"

"I'm not sacrificing myself at all," the young man declared. "I want some of the good things of life for myself. Besides, what do girls know about politics? They are always dreamy and impracticable. If they had their noses down to the grindstone of life for a little while it would sharpen their eyes, and they would see things differently."

"It will be a sad world when women like your sister and your mother see things differently, as you put it," the elder man retorted.

"If I want more money, I don't admit that it is any of Martha's business how I make it," Van Dyne asserted. "I'll let her have the spending of some of it—that will be her duty. I want her to have a summer in Europe too. She knows that mother was abroad a whole year when she was eighteen."

"I know that too," said the judge. "It was in Venice that your father and I first met her; she was feeding the pigeons in front of St. Mark's, and—"

The judge paused a moment, and then he laid his hand on Van Dyne's shoulder.

"Curtis," he continued, "if a thousand dollars now will help you out, or two thousand, or even five, if you need it, I shall be glad to let you have the money."

"Thank you, judge," was the prompt reply. "I can't take your money, because I don't know how or when I could pay you back."

"What matter about that?" returned the other. "I have nobody to leave it to."

"You were my father's friend and my mother's," said Van Dyne. "I would take money from you if I could take it from anybody. But I can't do that. You wouldn't in my place, would you?"

The judge did not answer this directly. "It is not easy to say what we should do if one were to stand in the other's place," he declared. "And if you change your mind, the money is ready for you whenever you want it."

"You are very good to me, judge," said the young man, "and I appreciate your kindness—"

"Then don't say anything more about it," the elder man interrupted. "And you must forgive me for my plain speaking about that other matter."

"About my joining the organization?" said Van Dyne. "Well, I'll think over what you have said. I don't want you to believe that I don't understand the kindness that prompted you to say what you did. I haven't really decided absolutely what I had best do."

"It is a decision you must make for yourself, after all," the judge declared. "I will not urge you further."

He held out his hand once more, and the young man grasped it heartily.

"Perhaps you and Martha and 'Aunt Mary' could come and dine with me some night next week," the judge suggested. "I should like to hear about your sister's first experiences in society."

"Of course we will all come, with pleasure," said Van Dyne.

As the elder man walked away, the younger followed him with his eyes. Then he turned and went up the steps of the City Hall.

Almost at the top of the flight stood two men, who parted company as Van Dyne drew near. One of them waited for him to come up. The other started down, smiling at the young lawyer as they met, and saying: "Good-morning, Mr. Van Dyne. It's rain we're going to have, I'm thinking."

"Good-morning, Mr. O'Donnell," returned Van Dyne, roused from his reverie.

"There's Mr. McCann waiting to have a word with you," cried O'Donnell over his shoulder, as he passed.

The young lawyer looked up and saw the other man at the top of the steps. He wanted time to think over his conversation with Judge Jerningham, and he had no desire for a talk just then with the district leader. Perhaps he unconsciously revealed this feeling in the coolness with which he returned the other's greeting, courteous as he always was, especially toward those whom he did not consider his equals.

"It's glad I am to see you, Mr. Van Dyne," said the politician, patting the young man on the shoulder as they shook hands.

Van Dyne drew back instinctively. Never before had Pat McCann's high hat seemed so very shiny to him, or Pat McCann's fur overcoat so very furry. The big diamond in Pat McCann's shirt front was concealed by the tightly buttoned coat; but Van Dyne knew that it was there all the same, and he detested it more than ever before.

"It's a dark morning it is," said McCann. "Will we take a little drop of something warm?"

"Thank you," returned the young lawyer, somewhat stiffly; "I never drink in the morning."

"No more do I," declared the other; "but it's a chill day this is. Well, and when are you coming round to see the boys? Terry O'Donnell and me, we was just talking about you and Mr. Suydam."

Van Dyne did not see why it should annoy him to know that he had been the subject of conversation between Pat McCann and Terry O'Donnell, but he was instantly aware of the annoyance. If he intended to throw in his lot with these people, he must look forward to many intimacies not quite to his liking.

"Oh, you were talking about me, were you?" he said.

"We was that," continued the district leader. "We want you to meet the boys and let them know you, don't you see? We want you to give them the glad hand."

When Van Dyne had used this slang phrase to the judge, it had seemed to him amusing; now it struck him as vulgar.

"We want you to jolly them up a bit," McCann went on. "The boys will be glad to know you better."

"Yes," was the monosyllabic response to this invitation.

The district leader looked at the young lawyer, and his manner changed.

"We'd like to get acquainted with you, Mr. Van Dyne," he said, "if you're going to be one of us."

"If I'm going to be one of you," Van Dyne repeated. "That's just the question. Am I going to be one of you?"

"I thought we had settled all that last week," cried McCann.

"I don't think I told you that I would join you," Van Dyne declared, wondering just how far he had committed himself at that last interview.

"You told me you thought you would," McCann declared.

"Oh, maybe I thought so then," Van Dyne answered.

The district leader was generally wary and tactful. Among people of his own class he was a good judge of men; and he owed his position largely to his persuasive powers. But on this occasion he made a mistake, due perhaps in some measure to his perception of the other's assumption of superiority.

"And now you don't think so?" he retorted, swiftly. "Is that what it is? Well, it's for you to say, not me. I'm not begging any man to come into the organization if they don't want. But I can't

waste my time any more on them that don't want. It's for you to say the word, and it's now or never."

"Since you put it that way, Mr. McCann," said Van Dyne, "it's never."

"Then you don't want to join the organization?" asked the district leader, a little taken aback by the other's sudden change of determination.

"No," Van Dyne replied, "I don't."

And when he was left alone on the top of the City Hall steps, the young lawyer was puzzled to know whether it was Judge Jerningham or Pat McCann that had most influenced his decision.

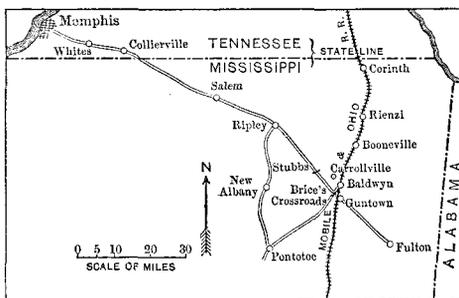
MAJOR-GENERAL FORREST AT BRICE'S CROSS-ROADS.

BY JOHN A. WYETH, M.D.

THE battle at Brice's cross-roads, in Lee County, Mississippi, took place on the 10th of June, 1864. It has passed into history as one of the most signal victories of the civil war, considering the forces engaged. On this field General Forrest displayed not only that bull-dog tenacity of purpose which characterized his aggressive method of warfare, but his remarkable ability as a strategist, and those original methods of fighting which

from Memphis to Ripley, and on in a direction east of south to Fulton in Mississippi, intersects almost at a right angle another important road, leading from Corinth through Rienzi, Booneville, Baldwin, and in a southwesterly direction to Pontotoc.

With the exception of two or three cleared patches of land, not exceeding six acres in extent, immediately around Brice's house, the country, which is only slightly undulating, for a mile in every direction was, at the time of the battle, not only heavily timbered, but there was an undergrowth of black-jack and scrub-oak so dense that in places the troops could with difficulty force their way through; and being then in full leaf, it was possible to approach within a few yards without being seen. About one mile northeast of Brice's the Corinth road, with a worm-fence on either hand for about a quarter of a mile, passed through a field, to the outskirts of which, on all sides, the dense undergrowth extended. This field was enclosed by a heavy rail fence, re-enforced on top with poles and brushwood. About the same distance on the highway leading from Brice's toward Ripley and Memphis the road-bed descended some twenty feet into the Tishomingo Creek bottom, along which stream there was a large corn-field, at that time in cultivation, and here this sluggish stream was spanned by a small wooden bridge.



then won success, and have since attracted the closest attention of students of military science.

The contending forces were—on the Union side, 3200 cavalry and 4500 infantry, with 22 pieces of artillery, commanded by General Samuel D. Sturgis; on the Confederate side, 4713 mounted troops, with 12 pieces of artillery, under General N. B. Forrest.

At Brice's the main highway leading

At the urgent insistence of General