

## VETERAN OF THE PEN

Colonel A. K. McClure, Who Was a Power in Politics.

### STRONG ALLY OF LINCOLN.

Last Survivor of Circle of Martyred President's Advisers—Raised Seventeen Regiments For Union Army in Civil War—Odd Campaign Experience.

Colonel Alexander Kelly McClure, prothonotary of the supreme and superior courts of Pennsylvania and for many years a prominent figure in politics and journalism, who recently died at his home in Wallingford, Pa., at the age of eighty-one years, was the last survivor of Abraham Lincoln's circle of personal friends and intimate political advisers. Lincoln once remarked of him, "Mr. McClure has more brains than any man I know," and it has long been conceded that excepting only Lincoln himself Colonel McClure was the man most responsible for his election to the presidency in 1860. He was chairman of the state committee of Pennsylvania at the time, and Pennsylvania was the pivotal state. Colonel McClure's able management of the campaign swung it into line and thus assured the success of the ticket.

Colonel McClure was born of Scotch Irish stock, in Sherman's valley, Perry county, Pa., on Jan. 9, 1828. Schooled upon a farm, he was taught to be self-reliant, and after obtaining a meager book education he was apprenticed, at the age of fourteen years, to a tanner. During this apprenticeship, which lasted three years, he made frequent visits to the office of Judge Baker, editor of the Perry Freeman, and upon his advice he studied politics and occasionally wrote articles for publication.

Through Judge Baker he eventually became editor of the Juniata Sentinel, a new Whig organ, much against the wish of his father. With the aid only of an apprentice Mr. McClure, who was then but nineteen years old, got out the paper, and his caustic pen soon won for him a name, making as it did many friends and foes. During his early work upon the Juniata Sentinel he formed a warm friendship with Andrew G. Curtin, afterward the war governor of Pennsylvania, and a dislike for the political methods of Simon Cameron.

Year by year he forged ahead in politics, becoming Burgess of Mifflin and then deputy United States marshal. Then John M. Pomeroy purchased for him a half interest in the Chambersburg Repository. Mr. McClure became its editor and made it one of the best known journals in the state. In 1853 he was the Whig candidate for auditor general, being the youngest man ever nominated for a state office in Pennsylvania, and two years later he was a member of the convention that met at Pittsburgh and organized the Republican party. In the following year he was a delegate to the national convention that nominated Fremont for the presidency.

In 1853 Mr. McClure sold the Repository and quitted journalism for a time. He was soon afterward admitted to the bar, and the following year he was elected to the assembly and afterward to the senate, on the latter occasion succeeding a Democrat who had added 350 Democratic votes to the district by a new apportionment.

In 1860 he was appointed chairman of the Republican state central committee. In that campaign he made for the first time in the state a thorough organization in every county, township and precinct, and in the national convention he carried the state for Lincoln by winning over the delegates who had been instructed for Simon Cameron. At the outbreak of the rebellion Mr. McClure was in the senate, and he was made chairman of the committee on military affairs.

Two years later he was solicited by President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton to make the draft in Pennsylvania, and, with two clerks, he had the state enrolled, credits adjusted, draft made and seventeen regiments in the field in sixty days. To give to him the military authority to make the draft he was commissioned assistant adjutant general of the United States, an office which he resigned as soon as the work was finished.

After the defeat of his party in 1863 Colonel McClure, at the special request of President Lincoln, went to Philadelphia to aid in organizing and perfecting the organization for the presidential election in the following November. The same year Lee's army, in its invasion of Pennsylvania, destroyed all his property, near Chambersburg, valued at \$75,000. To do this it even went out of its way, as if with intent to leave him homeless as a punishment for his ardent support of the Union cause.

He was a delegate to the convention which nominated General Grant in 1868, and after that campaign he settled in Philadelphia for the practice of law. In 1872, with his old friend, Mr. Curtin, he joined the Greeley movement, and ever since then he was more or less independent in politics.

He was re-elected to the senate, and in 1873 he was nominated for mayor of Philadelphia against William S. Stokes and made a vigorous campaign, but he was defeated in this contest and never again appeared as a candidate for office.

Colonel A. K. McClure has stood on many platforms, has addressed assemblies large and small, political, social and religious. He was noted for his self command under any circumstances, but on one occasion he was distinctly embarrassed and ill at ease. On this occasion Colonel McClure

was the chief speaker at a large assembly, the audience being made up mainly of farmers or other persons who had driven to the place of meeting. In the midst of an eloquent speech it began to rain. One after another of his hearers jumped up and hurried out until the speaker was left with an array of empty benches before him.

Colonel McClure's face flushed crimson. He had said not a word that could give offense, and he naturally failed to understand the sudden leave taking, but his embarrassment was quickly changed to amusement when the chairman arose and said:

"It's all right, colonel; they're only going out to look after the horses. They'll be back pretty soon."

The orator sat down until the farmers returned and then resumed his speech.

In 1876 Colonel McClure, with Frank McLaughlin, founded the Philadelphia Times and remained its editor in chief until 1901, when he withdrew from active journalism and devoted himself to periodical literature. He was the author of many books, perhaps the best known of which are "Lincoln and Men of War Times," "Our Presidents and How We Make Them" and "Recollections of Half a Century."

For years he was the president of the famous Clover club in Philadelphia, and when he retired from journalism the club gave him a great banquet. Covers were laid for more than 300, and the company included some of the foremost men of every profession in the country. Another great banquet was given to Colonel McClure on his eightieth birthday, between 400 and 500 of his friends attending it.

Two years ago Colonel McClure said at a dinner of the Clover club:

"Old age has nothing in it to fear. When death calls to me I shall not be afraid. After dining with Mr. Carnegie once Mr. Carnegie said to me that he would give \$200,000,000 to have a lease on life. Two hundred millions, Alec," he said to me—that's what I'd give for a lease on this life. I'm not hoggish, either. I'd give it for ten years only. I don't think Carnegie is afraid of death, but he clings to life. There is a difference. I said, 'Andy, you would be bunked at that price.'"

In 1904 Colonel McClure was again induced to take office and was named prothonotary of the supreme and superior courts of Pennsylvania.

### NEW CONSULAR SERVICE.

Card System to Advance Interests of American Commerce.

American consuls all over the world are to be supplied with a card index system of catalogues and literature of every manufacturing concern in the United States as a result of an agreement reached the other day between the state department and the department of commerce and labor, says a Washington dispatch. The arrangement is in line with the administration's policy of placing the commerce of the United States in the first rank through a reorganization of the consular service. The service recently was shaken up, and now the administration is preparing to furnish the new men the necessary material with which to produce results.

American consulates receive annually many queries as to manufacturers in various lines. The usual course in such cases is to pass the inquiry on to Washington, which in turn advertises it to the trade and thus gives any manufacturer interested an opportunity to correspond. But this method has been found to involve so much time that the buyer in numerous instances has purchased elsewhere before he gets information about American goods.

William Harper, who evolved this plan, was chief of the bureau of information of the Philadelphia museums for six years following its organization in 1894 and in that capacity visited virtually all of the American consulates in the world in the course of the years 1898-9.

One of the conditions of the service is that it is free to any and all manufacturers in the country. No fee is to be charged for the service in sending out cards to the consulates. All that is required of the manufacturer is that he print his cards in the language of the country to which they are sent and in a prescribed and uniform size for assembling.

### LABOR PARODY ON "AMERICA."

Sung at a Meeting to Discuss Means to Relieve the Unemployed.

A meeting of the unemployed was held the other day under the auspices of the International Brotherhood Welfare association in a hall at 44 Bowery, New York, to discuss methods of providing work for the unemployed. Chairman J. Eads How announced at the beginning of the meeting that the proceedings would be started with a hymn. The "hymn" proved to be a paraphrase of "America," the first verse of which ran:

My country, what of thee?  
What hast thou done for me  
That I may sing?  
In labor's crowded mart,  
Strong hand and willing heart,  
Striving to do my part,  
To thee I sing.

Miss Lily Engleton, an eighteen-year-old anarchist, was one of the speakers. She said:

"The unemployed should be infused with the spirit of the French revolution. They should assert themselves, as the French people did, and make it understood that it is the duty of the government to put the unemployed to work."

Beware of Telephone Cussing. The Omaha city council has passed an ordinance imposing a fine of \$100 for the offense of swearing into a telephone.

## POST NUMBER EIGHT

By BEATRICE TUCKER.

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During the Spanish-American war my regiment of United States Infantry occupied a single position in Cuba for quite awhile. We were not very near an enemy and kept out no vedettes or pickets, the colonel being satisfied with the usual chain of sentinels. There was one sentry beat overlooking a valley from which every man posted at the evening relief disappeared. No cry, no sound of any kind, was heard at post No. 8, but the sentry placed there was not found when the corporal of the guard took a man to relieve him, nor was he ever heard of afterward. Some concluded that an enemy crawled up from below, stabbed him and took his body away. Some concluded that the post was haunted and the sentry was carried away by a ghost.

When the first man disappeared the officer of the guard reported the matter to the colonel, who, thinking that it would be better that the next man to stand post on No. 8 should not know of the occurrence, ordered the officer to keep the matter a secret and if there were inquiries about the missing man among his comrades to give out that he had been ordered away on a special service. So the second man did not know of the mystery of the first, nor the third of the second, nor the fourth of the third. The fourth man was the last to vanish, for after he had gone the regiment was ordered to the front.

I was a member of Company C, and we knew more about the disappearances than the officers thought we did, but we didn't know what had become of the sentries. It was the prevailing opinion that the men were murdered by hostile Spanish citizens, but with what object we were ignorant. After the war closed I came north with the rest of the command, but eight years later went to Cuba on business, and there one day, while passing a sugar plantation, who should I see sitting before a workman's cabin but John Henderson, the last man who had disappeared from sentry post No. 8. At first he pretended not to know me, but I looked him square in the eye and told him he couldn't fool me. Then he owned up and told me the following story:

"When placed on post and left by the retreating relief I stood for awhile uncertain whether to risk death by some unearthly means or by being shot for deserting my beat. I knew that three men had attempted to hold it against natural or supernatural enemies and failed. While I was deliberating I heard a girl's laugh and, looking down, saw a merry face and two black eyes peering up at me. The girl had a basket on her arm full of flowers and began to pelt me with them. I supposed she was simply passing that way and didn't connect her with the ghost who had spirited away the other sentries. I seized one or two of the posies and threw them back at her. She was too pretty to keep at a distance, and I invited her to come up and sit with me on the slope. It wasn't long before I had my arm around her and stole a kiss.

"She spoke some English and, pointing to a house below, told me she was on her way to a dance to take place there. We soon heard the sound of music, and the girl begged me to go down with her, have a dance and get back before the relief came. I was tempted and fell. I went with her, danced several times and was thinking of returning when I was surrounded by the men in the room and made a prisoner.

"They were about to take me out to shoot me when the girl who had arranged for my capture stood in the door and jabbered Spanish at them with constantly growing irritation. I didn't know then what she said, but learned afterward that, having given them three victims, she wished the fourth to be spared. Finally she prevailed, partly by threats to expose them, to our troops above and partly by her influence over them. I was released and, accompanied by the girl, started up to camp. I had plenty of time to get there, but was dallying with her, she showing plainly enough that she had gone daft on me. I tried to tear myself away from her, but couldn't. I knew she had betrayed three other men, but her preference for me caught me, and while I was trying to get away from her I heard the relief visit my post. Then I knew I was too late, for if I went to camp I would be shot for being absent on my post.

"That threw the whole matter into the hands of the girl. It was the same as having sold my soul to the devil. I deserted, and we went away together. She deserted, too, for she never went back home. Her people were Spaniards, and the men who had been bent on shooting me were Spaniards. They lived about there with their families, and had the girl told on them, as she threatened to do, our colonel would have arrested and shot them. They had only consented to let me go on her promise that she would keep me from getting back to the command. Of course, not understanding Spanish, I didn't know this at the time or I should have been forewarned."

Henderson had married the girl and they had several children. In that country women fade early, and upon an introduction I found the wife homely enough to use for a scarecrow. I have remembered the incident since as a warning to all men not to be led away from their duty by a pretty face. Henderson was living in terror, conscious of being a deserter, and all because he had listened to a siren.

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### Money To Pay Warrants

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