

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF ROBERT MANN

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ROBERT MANN.

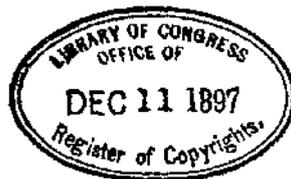
THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT MANN

WITH
REMINISCENCES OF THE MANN FAMILY

IN THE
COUNTIES OF CENTRE, MIFFLIN, AND
CLINTON, PENNSYLVANIA



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BY
ROBERT MANN.

M. v. G. Nov. 24-17.

TO MY CHILDREN.

HAVING been requested to write a genealogy of the Mann family as far back as I knew it, I have drifted into reminiscence and a narrative of my own life, for which I have no better apology to offer than the aptness of an old man to cast his eyes backward and review those scenes of greater activity by which his career has been checkered during the period of a long life.

I disclaim all pretention to methodical arrangement in these recollections, and shall be compensated if the example of my life affords encouragement to any who are content by moderate methods to achieve a moderate success.

ROBERT MANN.

MILL HALL, September 27, 1897.

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MRS. ROBERT MANN
(NÉE MISS CHRISTINA REESMAN).

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT MANN

CHAPTER I.

LIFE IN BELLEFONTE AND BALD EAGLE VALLEY,
CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

YOUR great-grandfather Mann was a blacksmith, your great-grandfather Gillette was a farmer. I am sorry to say that I have not been able to find any illustrious personage, either on the paternal or the maternal side, from whom you can claim descent.

My father, soon after his marriage in 1801, in Montgomery County, New York, started a factory, in which he made scythes and some axes. He failed in this enterprise during the hard times caused by the war of 1812. He never rose to any consequence in business afterwards, but always, until too old, had a shop in which he made hoes, forks, rakes, traps, etc. He was a good workman, and noted for doing well what he did do. I

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claim much advantage in after life from my experience in his shop. My father was a man of tenacious convictions; sometimes erroneous for the want of a greater breadth of intelligence, mainly owing to his very limited education; in politics a Jackson Democrat, in principle an honest man, he heartily despised all forms of dissimulation and untruthfulness; remarkably methodical in his habits and care of his health, he did not know what sickness was until extreme old age.

My brother William, twenty-two years my senior, came to Bellefonte, Centre County, Pennsylvania, about the year 1824. He made the first axes in a blacksmith-shop a short distance below Boiling Springs. Probably one year after, my next oldest brother, Harvey, came to Bellefonte and joined his brother William, renting a shop at Bellefonte owned by John Hall. There was a water-power here, and they put in a trip-hammer and grindstones for the making of axes and tools. The business seems to have prospered, and after, say, four years they built the works at Boiling Springs, having purchased the site from Judge Burnside, located about two miles above Bellefonte. Here they continued in business for several years, and were apparently suc-

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cessful ; but having formed a partnership with a Mr. Smith, a merchant of Bellefonte, who owned the Thomas mill property, they built axe finishing works at the site of the foundry on the mill power, and in the axe business and the mercantile business made a failure, it appearing that Mr. Smith was really insolvent when the partnership was formed. After this, William and Harvey Mann dissolved, Harvey keeping the works at Boiling Springs and assuming the debts, which he finally succeeded in paying, through the patronage of Judge Burnside, his father-in-law. William went away with a few hundred dollars and started a shop at Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, but it seems that this was soon abandoned, and he came to Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, and started a factory in the Kishacoquillas Narrows, four miles from Lewistown, at the site of an old oil-mill. I do not suppose his capital was five hundred dollars, if, indeed, anything. This enterprise grew from its small beginning until it attained its present dimensions. At the time of his death, in 1855, its capacity was about five hundred axes per day. The consumption of axes does not seem to have been half so much at that time as it is at present, so his business then was

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considered quite large. His success was due to his management, to his mechanical skill, and to his integrity as a man.

After my brothers William and Harvey were established in the Hall shop in Bellefonte, my brother Stephen joined them, though not with an interest in the business, and in 1828 my father and mother came with the remaining children,—Willis, thirteen; Maria, eleven; Harris, nine; and Robert, four years of age.

My earliest recollections extend back to the place where I was born, when I played with a boy called Tom, in a neighbor's house; and another reminiscence of that early period of my existence was an adventure with my sister Maria and brother Harris in an old field near our house, when I saw the most beautiful bird's eggs in a hollow stump that ever were revealed to older eyes than mine. The gladness of this discovery was suddenly turned into fright by the flight of a large hawk quite near to us, when between my sister and brother I partly ran and was partly dragged home. My next impression, that time has not obliterated, was made without provocation on my part by the aggressive act of a goat, by which I was prostrated in the town of Williams-

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port when on our way to Pennsylvania. When my brothers occupied the Hall shop, they, particularly my brother William, gave me pennies, which I found to be very useful in exchange for other commodities that I desired. As I grew older my desire for pennies increased, and the inclination of my brothers to give probably decreased. At all events, what had formerly been given me as a gift I gradually acquired the habit of asking for as an accommodation. This continued until "after the works at Boiling Springs were in operation, when I remember having asked my brother Harvey for a fiscal accommodation; he handed me the surprisingly large amount of twenty-five cents, with the remark, spoken in his slow, deliberate way, "Robert, you are getting to be too large a boy to ask for money." That was sufficient; I never begged again.

Perhaps three years after my brother Harvey's marriage, when he lived in the stone house across the dam at Boiling Springs, I remember being there with some other boys from town. The same Aunt Jane that you all knew so well had some lady friends visiting her. I, with the boys, was exploring the premises, and found a small

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watermelon on a vine in the garden, which in an evil hour we took and ate. Not long after, inquiry was made for the missing melon, which my good sister wanted for a treat for her friends. While she did not reproach me for what I had done, there was something in her look and in the act itself that cut me with such deep contrition that it has always been painful to me to recall this act of vandalism.

Your Aunt Jane, then a happy young wife, flowed over with exuberance of spirit and had the goodness of an angel. I was about her much during our stay in Bellefonte, and often myself of by no means decent appearance, but her uniform kindness to me rises up in my memory with grateful recollection, and I feel that this tribute to her worth is justly due from me. The employees of the old Harvey Mann axe factory can attest to the goodness of her heart.

My brother Harvey was a man of good mind and scrupulously honorable in his dealings. As long as he devoted his attention strictly to his axe business he was very successful, though greatly hampered by his poor water-power. He claimed to be the inventor of the process of drawing axe-bits under a trip-hammer, a practice

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that soon became universal. His greatest invention was the overlaid steel which has come to be extensively used, and during his lifetime yielded him a handsome royalty ; but it was at the sacrifice of his reputation as a manufacturer, for his mind was so engrossed by his invention that his axe business suffered, and at the time of his death, in 1870, was on the decline, when it came into the hands of his only surviving son, Harvey, a noble young man, whose sudden death in 1875 by a railroad accident near Steubenville, Ohio, was the last and the hardest of the heart-crushing bereavements his now childless and widowed mother had to endure. It was pitiable to see her hopeless sorrow, yet she endured and survived it. Her nephew, J. Fearon Mann, my brother William's third son, leased her axe factory, her greatest business care, and was otherwise of much comfort and help to her. She built a small church near her house, and lived for many years in her desolated home with ample means, which she used liberally to do good. She died October 7, 1885, and the family of Harvey Mann became extinct.

I might say that my life at Bellefonte, which was up to my tenth year, was, as I now look back

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upon it through the subsequent years of greater responsibility, a bright spot full of enjoyment: swimming, skating, coasting on those steep hills, and, in company with older boys, fishing, hunting squirrels, trapping rabbits, and, not the least interesting, listening to stories such as "Jack the Giant-Killer," as we sometimes sat of a night on the platform of the old pump that stood in the Diamond Square. Your mother would not have permitted one-half that I indulged in, but I never thought I was the worse for it. While my education at Bellefonte was not neglected, and was of important consequence to me, it did not show, considering my age and opportunities, any remarkable progress. It was not until my second term at Milesburg, when I commenced the study of arithmetic, that there was awakened in me a thirst for learning and a fondness for the school-room.

After the collapse of Manns & Smith, my father, who had been unsuccessful in the manufacture of scythe-snaths and patent mill-picks, left Bellefonte very poor, and moved on a small farm one-half mile above Milesburg, leasing in this town a shop for doing his peculiar kinds of work. The summer he devoted principally to the land.

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He was a very thorough, if not a profitable agriculturist. Here I had my first experience in garden-weeding, planting and hoeing corn, gathering sugar-water, etc. My recollection is that these occupations were not irksome to me, but I have recollections of more intense enjoyment in the care of a flock of ducks and, in company with another boy of about my age, playing with a miniature boat along the banks of a little run close to our house.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE NEAR UNIONVILLE, CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

AFTER two years, in 1836 my father moved still farther up the Bald Eagle, on a small farm belonging to Judge Burnside, about half a mile west of Unionville. Here I took my first lessons as a practical worker in iron. My brother Harris took the lead and became quite a good workman. I also had my opportunities and was ambitious to learn. I remember one time hearing my father say, as he was sitting on the vice-bench with a neighbor, and I was forging a piece of iron, no doubt being stimulated by the spectators, "There is a boy who will make a workman." This of course, was very gratifying to me, for I had no higher ambition. During the four years that we resided here I worked principally on the farm. My father, though then a man of some sixty years, usually worked with his boys, Harris and me. I do not remember that he ever scolded us, and he was indulgent as far

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as his very limited means would permit. I was allowed plenty of time for hunting small game and fishing, of which I was very fond. My father's favorite books were Scott's "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte," Blair's "Sermon's," and Seneca's "Morals." These books I read with interest, particularly the former. During summer my father, after dinner, usually laid upon his back, always preferring the hard floor, and read until he fell asleep. My fondness for reading was only limited by the very few books I had access to. We had a school-book called "The National Reader," which was read and reread many times over by my brother Harris and me. I have noticed since that the pieces my brother most admired were such as had acquired a wide celebrity in the world, such as extracts from Addison, Gray's "Elegy," and the poetry of Milton, Pope, and Akenside. You will remember the lines on our axe label, "The jay-bird is singing on Michigan's shore," etc., taken from this book.

There was a log church and school-house where the valley road intersected the Pittsburg turnpike, which from that point turns westward and, passing through the narrow vale where we lived, pursues its course to its distant destination

over the Alleghany Mountains. On this road the famous covered wagon of Joseph Morrow, drawn by six horses, made regular trips between Lewistown and Pittsburg, hauling all kinds of commodities wanted along the way. The intersection above named is where the town of Unionville has since been built. Then the site was a thicket of young pines, excepting an open space in the angle formed by the two roads, where stood the church and school-house. Here I attended school in winter three or four months each year. Though not a bright student, I was a persevering one, and, being the furthest advanced of any scholar in school, I was always a favorite with the teacher. This school-house was on the old plan, with the desks next to the wall; but a portion of the time the scholars sat around with their backs to the desks and faced the opposite side where the girls sat, and *vice versa*. Soon after the commencement of my first term at this school I noticed a girl seated on the opposite bench whose appearance was particularly interesting to me. She was dressed in home-made flannel, such as was worn in winter in that neighborhood. I think she was not long in noticing my attention, and must have considered it a compli-

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ment, for there soon grew to be an intelligent understanding between us that we liked each other better than we did anybody else in the school. If this charmer had not come in the morning when I entered the school-room, I was sure to see her through the window as she approached.

We had spelling-schools at night attended by nearly all the young people in the neighborhood. These stimulated our spelling-classes in the day school, and, though I am not a perfect speller, I am conscious that I was greatly benefited by them. We had also a debating society in which I took part; but what I said was written and committed. I never had the ability of extempore speaking any more than I had of fluent talking.

My life during the four years of my residence in this sequestered dale is reproduced in my memory perhaps more vividly than any other period of my existence. Here were my father and mother, my brother Harris, and my sister Maria. Our very pleasant associations were numerous, and seem now more felicitous, perhaps, from the fact that the long lapse of years has obliterated the memory of the less happy feelings to which we are all more or less subjected in daily life.

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We sometimes sat of an evening with the moon and the stars looking down on the graceful flight of the whip-poor-wills as they circled in the air. These birds gathered here in large numbers, and from fence and near-by trees poured forth their loud, reiterated notes, mingling with the sonorous song of the big-eyed owl. The more accomplished songsters of the tribes of small birds were also very numerous, and, "tuning sweet their mellow throats," made their morning orisons in the thicket glade, while the pheasant, with his muffled drum, played from his perch on a log on the hill-side, and the dove and blue-jay, each with his peculiar dialect, made his presence known; the red-headed woodpecker; the yellow flicker; the occasional woodcock; the mudsnipe, that with whirring wing made perpendicular flight to the upper regions of the air; the domestic robin, making lively the butternut-trees that shaded our spring; the meadow-lark, that rose on joyous wing; the gorgeous humming-bird, with rapid flight from flower to flower; the cackling, singing hen, happy in her maternal prospects and proud when nature yielded to her patient nursing the infant brood to receive a mother's watchful care; the lordly cock, victor of the barnyard by

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hard-fought battles, yet gentle and kind, freely distributing the food he could gather to his numerous family,—these from the feathered tribes were contributions for our entertainment in this Elysium below the skies.

The raccoon and the woodchuck were here; the squirrel family with grace and fleetness traversed from limb to limb the forest trees; the nimble rabbit with elastic bound indented his footprints in the early frost and snow; the cunning fox and the antlered deer with his timid spouse sometimes ventured to leave the forest wilds and cross our little valley; in yonder field stood the useful, patient cow with her playful offspring gambolling around her. There was our honest dog True, who came to us a waif, and his affectionate, confiding nature soon made him the family's friend. He seemed to have an intelligent interest in all that belonged to us. He brought the cows home to be milked, and the frolicsome kittens were his playfellows. After he was with us one year there came a covered wagon from the West, and when passing our house the dog at once recognized his old master. Then ensued a scene of frantic gladness. Possibly this sudden meeting with his friends rehabil-

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itated in the simple mind of the dog the memory of his former happy home when a romping pup. Perhaps he was highly happy in his own life and in all his surroundings ; but why conjecture ? True left us for his first love. We had tears to shed, but who could blame him ? His master lost him during his journey to the West, where his family soon tired, and he was now on his return.

Judge Burnside occasionally passed our house, riding on his horse, to attend court in Clearfield, and complimented my father on the greatly improved condition of the place. I once met him as he was ascending the mountain. He asked my name, and when I told him, he said, "I thought you were a little Mann."

The Judge passed on to his arduous duties and perplexing cares, while we in our lowly vale enjoyed comparative peace beneath the storms that circle around the heads of the great.

We were visited here several times by my brother Harvey, his wife, and daughter Rachel, who was called after my mother ; also by my brothers William and Willis.

About one year ago I visited this abode of my boyhood. All the way from Unionville I found occasional houses where before there was but a

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solitary one until ours was reached. On the little farm we had cultivated, and near to the spring we so constantly visited, I found a comfortable house occupied by the most intimate boy friend I had during my residence here. He had lived here for many years and had added many acres to the part of the land he now owned, and which had once been in our possession.

Mr. Sensor and his amiable wife and daughter received me most cordially. It was not the first time I had visited them, and I stopped a day or two enjoying their pleasant hospitality. Mr. Sensor is a farmer in moderate circumstances. He is a veteran of the late war, a stanch Republican, and his sensible observations in regard to public affairs showed him to be remarkably sound on the important question of citizenship.

His youngest daughter, Miss Mamie, had grown to young womanhood on the spot around which some of my dearest recollections clustered, and whether it was the charm of the past rising up in my memory after the lapse of more than half a century now gone by, or the personal attraction of the young lady, or both combined, I felt for her a more than ordinary friendship; and I have learned by acquaintance and correspond-

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ence that she is not only accomplished in the useful duties of a farmer's daughter, but also in the essential qualifications of a lady that make her loving, filial service in the home of her parents shine as jewels in her hair.

When I looked around me on the place where I had lived sixty years ago, and which dwelt in my memory as it really was at that remote period, I confess to a feeling of disappointment, not because the hand of man had done less, but because it had done more. Only the contour of the ground, the spring, and the rivulet that meandered through the fields remained essentially the same. The hills on either side had been in woods down to the border of the little valley, and even the valley itself from a short distance above our house was then a dense forest. Now all was cleared away and cultivated. Even the house we had lived in no longer existed, but had been replaced by another, and only the old long barn remained as a memorial of the past. The outline of the fields had disappeared, and baffled my power of recognizing what had once been our little farm.

As it is impossible for a man to make himself a boy again, so I found it impossible to rehabilitate these haunts of my childhood; not only the things

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that are inanimate, but the living father and mother, brothers and sister, had all bowed to our common fate and passed from the earth forever.

As I looked on these remains of a departed past, I felt that but a very few years at most remained until the memory of that past would be utterly lost to earth in blank oblivion, but not, I trust, without a happy reunion in a land of imperishable life.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN MIFFLIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

WHEN my brother William started to Mauch Chunk he left a cow with us belonging to his wife. Not long after he had settled in Mifflin County I accompanied my brother Willis to drive this cow to his place. We were then living near Milesburg. When we reached the top of the mountain on the Bellefonte and Lewistown turnpike I was thrilled with wonder at the sight of the beautiful valley that so suddenly opened up to view, stretching away with farms and groves as far almost as the eye could reach.

On the second day we arrived at my brother's and found him living in an old one-story stone house that had once been occupied by the operators of the oil-mill.

The business of what afterwards became the celebrated William Mann Axe Factory was then operated in the forging department by himself with a single assistant.

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Before I returned I visited Lewistown, walking in by myself, and saw there what I had heard so much about,—the canal and canal-boats. My brother Willis stayed with William and learned to make axes. I returned home by stage, which at that time ran through at night to Bellefonte. At a subsequent time, when we were living near Unionville, my brother William visited us and seemed pleased with my progress in learning, and, as there was no school that summer where we lived, he proposed that I should go over to him and attend a school there; so I went, and attended that school for three months. It was taught by a Mr. Gove, an excellent teacher from New England, and, though the time was short, I learned much that was of advantage to me.

While here I took care of my brother's horse, a good one, of which I remember I was very proud as I rode him sometimes to Lewistown on errands.

I ought not to neglect to mention here my brother's wife, who was very kind to me. She was a young woman of handsome appearance and vigorous health, which was brought to task in subsequent years when she boarded the men, as many as twenty at one time. Most of you

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remember her as the good and motherly Aunt Ann.

During a subsequent visit of my brother William, while we were living near Unionville, in 1840, he seemed to be impressed with the importance of Harris and I having a better opening for our future career than that place afforded, and he proposed to build a shop for us at a power about one mile below his place which had formerly been used as a cycle factory, but buildings and all had disappeared; he therefore leased that property, and Harris and I came over and commenced digging for the proposed factory, and continued helping until the shop was finished. It was rigged up with trip-hammer, grindstone, and polishing machinery, all driven by one wheel. During the summer we were working here my sister Maria was teaching school in the old school-house where Unionville was afterwards built. In the winter she came over and kept house for us. There was a very good stone house on the property, and in the spring my father and mother also came, so that we were all together once more. We continued running the factory for about two years, making hoes, forks, rakes, and cleavers; but it was found that this business was not profit-

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able. While it was done very well in my father's small shop, where the excellent quality of his work gave him a local reputation and a better price, it did not prove to pay well on a more extended scale.

After this, Harris went on the road with a two-horse team selling axes, for they were then sold principally in the country by peddling. Harris, I think, tired of this business and eventually went away. I accompanied him as far as Yeagertown. He said he would visit the factories about Philadelphia, and we all expected it would not be long before his return. If I had known that I would never hear from or see him again, it would have filled me with crushing sorrow, for he was nearer to me than any of my brothers; we had grown up together, and my affection for him was very strong.

I continued principal operator at the factory, making shingling hatchets and colliers' shovels. This was between my eighteenth and twentieth years. My father thought this work too hard for me, but I rather enjoyed it, for I had much leisure time, which I devoted principally to reading. There was a circulating library in Lewistown, kept by a Mr. Cogley, of which I made free use.

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We had about five acres of ground with a good garden here, which afforded my father employment in his favorite occupation. Finally, the axe business coming into the city markets greatly increased in demand, and the factory was diverted into the making of axe polls and colliers' shovels. I did the plating of the polls and shovels. The axe business still increasing in demand, my brother William, who had furnished all the capital, now proposed to forge and grind axes here, and for this purpose put up additional grinding works.

I suppose it was an enigma what to do with me, and to ease the matter he proposed to give me a certain portion of the profit on the axes made at the factory where I worked.

About this time I had a severe spell of sickness. After my recovery, not being very stout, I travelled for a year or so on my brother's business. My first trip was to visit a grindstone quarry, north of Binghamton, New York. I started in a sleigh, but the snow failing at Danville, I left my sleigh and went on on horseback. My horse was small and not a good traveller; I stopped over night at a private house of entertainment near Tunkhannock, kept by a sharp

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Yankee, who, seeing me rather disheartened at the slowness of my horse, induced me to trade with him ; as I wanted a horse that could make a good day's journey, he said, he had one that would exactly suit me ; so I traded, and started in the morning in high spirits. I had not gone many miles before I met a man who knew the horse and asked me where I had gotten him. He told me that the man with whom I had traded was a notorious cheat, and that the horse I had was very old. This information caused a complete revulsion in my feelings, and as I journeyed on I discovered that the horse travelled no better than the one I had parted with, which was a young horse, and sound. I put up that night at another house of entertainment kept by a farmer. In the room I entered there were two young ladies, daughters of the farmer ; they were bright and intelligent, and met me so openly and cordially that I at once felt at home, and related to them the circumstances of my unfortunate horse-trade, and for which I had their honest sympathy. In the evening a young man, a medical student, called, whom, in the little conversation I had with him, I discovered to be full of impertinence, born of conceit. He retired to an adjoining room

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where the young ladies were, while I sat with the farmer. I occasionally heard peals of laughter from the adjoining room, and I believed it to be at my expense. In the morning I resumed my journey, heartily despising the medical student.

This day I was overtaken by a hotel-keeper from Towanda; he was riding a young gray horse; he said his horse could easily make sixty miles a day. I traded with him, giving him twenty dollars to boot. This proved to be not a bad one, but the foolishness and impropriety of this horse-trading weighed upon my spirits and made me unhappy during the whole journey; still I saw much that was interesting to me. The town of Binghamton appeared to me to be wonderfully beautiful, and the fact of it being in my native State, of which I had heard my father say so much, added to the fascination.

I went to the quarry and contracted for stone to be sent on a raft down the North Branch to Northumberland, and thence by wagons to Lewis-town. These stones were never shipped.

On my return trip I visited Berks county to see a man whom my brother wanted to get to make axes. I passed through Allentown, Reading, and Harrisburg. I saw for the first time a rail-

road and a train of cars on the Reading; it was a long coal-train, and as it rolled over the country it filled me with astonishment. When I returned home my gloomy anticipations as to the horse-trading were dissipated, as a good judge of horses pronounced the one I brought back worth more than the one I took away, and my brother seemed to be satisfied.

My next trip on the axe business, and also on horseback, was through the towns of Huntingdon, Alexandria, Petersburg, Williamsburg, and Hollidaysburg, on the Juniata, and Johnstown, Ebensburg, Indiana, Blairsville, and Greensburg, to Pittsburg. Riding up to a hotel in the city, I was met by a Mr. Snyder, from Centre County, who was acquainted with our family; he was of much use to me in the strange city. I looked with wondering eyes on the steamboats and shipping in the Ohio River, and on the mills and factories in the smoky town, then of not one-quarter the dimensions it has since attained. There was in store here, in a commission house, several dozen of my father's mill-picks, having lain here unsalable for several years. I succeeded in selling these to a large stone-cutting establishment, in exchange for glass, which I had shipped

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home and readily exchanged for such articles as were needed. Here I met the elder Mr. Lippincott, a genial old man, who was just commencing the manufacture of axes. He was, of course, eager for information, as William and Harvey Mann's axes were the only ones known to the hardware trade in Pittsburg.

I made a second trip to Pittsburg, leaving Lewistown on a packet-boat, crossing the mountains at Hollidaysburg, on the old portage railroad, and resuming the boat on the other side to Pittsburg. These trips, with others that I made to other parts of the State, were at once interesting and instructive to me, and I always considered them an important part of my education, as important, perhaps, to me, considering the sphere I had to move in, as a trip to Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land would be to a young man more favored by fortune than I was.

As I had a good deal of leisure at this time at home, I turned my attention to literature. I wrote an article on education for the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, a popular paper at that time. It was published with a flattering notice by the editor. Thus stimulated, I sent another article, entitled "The Stars," and received this acknowledgment

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in return: "The article by R. M. has merit, but it is too abstruse for the general reader."

I next turned my attention to tale-writing, and had several published in the Lewistown *Gazette*.

I think this diversion of my talents had a dampening effect on my brother's hopes of making me a successful business man, and, as he had several sons growing up, he concluded to sidetrack me as to the future profits of his business, for which I never blamed him. He had achieved his present position through hard knocks continued for many years, and I had no right to expect him to divide the profits with me. So when he proposed that I should get a shop built at Reedsville and he would give me his axe-polls to make, and I could continue the making of shovels and other articles, as I had really no money, and my interest in the axe business was very small, I accepted the proposition, and got Joseph Reed, who owned the site, to put up the factory at a moderate rent. When it was ready for operation we moved into a small house on the border of the woods above the factory. My father, comparing small things with great, called this retreat St. Helena, after the island where the great Napoleon was the prisoner of nations.

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It did, indeed, seem as if our fortunes were getting lower, although we never had much of anything to lose; but, notwithstanding my poverty, I always scrupulously avoided making debts beyond my ability to pay.

I did not work much myself in this factory, but had two men employed to do the work there, while I was employed for my brother inspecting axes, with some care of his books. After about two years there came a great flood that nearly destroyed my factory. This involved a summer's work in repairs and much expense. When I got again in operation, and had run, say, one year longer, I was seized with a very dangerous sickness, from which I did not recover for several months. This resulted in the termination of my career in Mifflin County. It must be confessed that it was not a very flattering one; still, I had gone through an experience that was of great use to me in after-life.

CHAPTER IV.

MY LIFE AT MACKEYVILLE, CLINTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, WITH REMINISCENCES.

MY brother Willis Mann having purchased in Philadelphia stock for a new store which he proposed opening in Mackeyville, he offered me the position of clerk, which I concluded to accept after having consulted my brother William, who agreed to take my factory off my hands. I had not been long in my new position in the store at Mackeyville before I discovered that my brother's affairs were in bad shape, that he had gone mainly in debt for the goods; being pushed for funds he had to sell his axes very low in the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore, and in winter had to haul them to Harrisburg. I saw that ultimate failure was inevitable, and it made me feel very unhappy.

My brother Willis Mann came to Clinton County about the year 1840 and rented the old Hays shop near Mackeyville, where he started the axe business, as all the Manns did, on

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a very small scale. He did very well for a few years, got married, and finally moved his axe factory onto two water-powers belonging to his father-in-law, Mr. James Porter. This appears to have been a period of too great expansion for his means. He had great activity and worked almost day and night, but his energies ran into too many ventures outside of his axe business, which he unfortunately neglected by suffering the quality to run down. The bringing up of the store only added to his difficulties and made his failure certain.

I was treated very kindly here by my brother's wife and her father's family. She was a woman of excellent qualities and deserving of better fortune. No one of my brothers' wives or my own had so hard an experience as she had, and none with so sad a result as terminated their career at Mackeyville. After this, Willis Mann settled with his brother William and became superintendent of the manufacture in his axe works. Finally he moved to Yeagertown and had a store there for some years, with fair success. He was succeeded by his son Edward, who also was successful and sold out quite recently.

Willis Mann died while travelling, quite sud-

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denly at Du Bois, Pennsylvania, February 18, 1879. I remained in Mackeyville two years, during which time I taught school four months in the winter of 1848-49. During this time I had occasion to go to Mill Hall to see Dr. King; he was not at home, and I went to the store of Saul McCormick to await his return. Mr. McCormick suggested to me that he thought it would be a good thing for my brother Willis to move his axe works to his water-power at the old forge, which he had recently improved by building a new dam. I did not need the pleading eyes of Priscilla to John Alden, but at once spoke up for myself, saying that I had an offer to go into business with my brother at Lewistown, but that I thought a business I could control myself would suit me better. The idea seemed to please him, and we talked over the details and fixed a day to draw up the article of agreement, when I went down, and the firm of Robert Mann & Co. was born into the world.

This article was written by me, and I do not remember that Mr. McCormick altered it in any particular. A clause at the end of it was of the greatest importance to me when his death occurred. This secured to the survivor, in case of

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the death of one of the partners, the control and continuation of the business in his own right until the end of the lease. The important clauses of the agreement were its duration for five years, that we were to be equal partners, each putting in two hundred and fifty dollars. S. McCormick was to put up the buildings at an annual rent of one hundred and fifty dollars, fully equipped with machinery for making axes. He was to furnish goods for the supply of the employees at ten per cent. discount. Mr. McCormick was to have the sale of the axes and the management of the finances, and to receive twenty-five dollars per year and expenses for his services. I was to have the entire management of the manufacture, and was allowed three hundred dollars a year for my services. If I remember rightly, with the advantage of some extra work, my living expenses did not exceed my salary for the first five years. The cash capital I actually put in did not exceed sixty dollars, the amount I received for school-teaching; the balance I put in in stock after Willis Mann's failure, as he owed me for a consignment of goods I sent him from Mifflin County, and I got this out of the wreck of his fortunes.

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In January, 1849, the contract for the new factory at Mill Hall was made, and very soon after, I was married to Miss Christina Reesman, so that the business and matrimonial enterprises started out on the venture of life almost simultaneously.

The wedding was conducted very quietly, and was a surprise to the neighborhood. As I did not want to move to Mill Hall until August, when I expected the factory would be ready to start, I rented a kitchen and one room up-stairs back of a log house, the same that is now used for a railroad station at Mackeyville. Here we commenced house-keeping. I mention this to show the very small beginning from which we started, and I will say, in candor, that I have not been happier in any quarters I have since occupied. We were visited here by my brother William, my sister Maria, and Harvey Mann's daughter Rachel, who, I know, were surprised at the situation, but I am not conscious of having been the least ashamed; perhaps my wife had so much influence over me that I saw nothing but her at that time.

Here I will venture to say that there has not been a couple in the county of Clinton who have contributed so much to the industry of the common people so continuously, and for so long

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a period of time, as the obscure pair who commenced their wedded life so lowly in a kitchen in Mackeyville.

If I were to claim all the merit for my success in my struggle from poverty to competence at Mill Hall, I would be at once egotistical and unjust. To the heroic help of my faithful wife I must accord full share of merit; her thorough house-keeping, minute in every detail, her economy, self-denial, and persevering industry saved me from sinking, when a woman of different character would surely have brought disaster on the infant business struggling in the first stages of its life.

Her parents lived just across the creek at Mackeyville, and were in possession of one of the most valuable properties in the valley. Her father, John Reesman, left his home in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, when quite young and struck out for himself; he learned the milling business and followed it with persevering industry for many years. Finally he bought the land east of Mackeyville, and made money enough to improve it and build the mill. He was a man of incorruptible integrity, a constant worker, and most vigilant and orderly in the care of his possessions.

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Christina, his first wife, and mother of all his children, was a fitting partner for such a man ; she was universally liked in the neighborhood for her sympathy and help to the sick and poor ; she died in the forty-eighth year of her age, when my wife was fifteen years old. The family were of German descent, very plain and frugal in their wants and habits. Their house was often a house of prayer for the Evangelical Society, which they liberally patronized and also attended their camp-meeting.

The church on the hill at Mackeyville was built as a memorial church to the memory of your grandmother Reesman.

MY MOTHER.

One of the most amiable and inoffensive of women, she might be said to have been buried in her home, with very little talk that was not suggested by the duties of the hour. I know she loved her children, but she did not manifest that worrying anxiety about them that has always given your mother so much trouble. Her people were Presbyterians, and her Bible was almost the only book she read. She was small of stature and of weakly constitution ; in her last sickness it

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was necessary to take her to Philadelphia for treatment. I visited her there during the time I was living in Mackeyville, and she died while I was present with her.

She was buried in a beautiful graveyard in Philadelphia, surrounded on all sides by the tide of human life surging in busy streets. There were present, the sole mourners at her burial, my sister Maria, myself, and James H. Mann, then a boy. After a year or so we tried to find her grave, for the purpose of putting up stones, but from some error in the record kept at the cemetery we could not find it.

With the lives of her immediate descendants, now all gone but myself, and my own departure, as I have formerly expected, now overdue, the memory of this meek and devoted wife and mother will have passed into oblivion, but surely there will not be many who will rise from this burying ground in whiter robes than hers when the trumpet of the archangel shall awake the long-forgotten dead.

MY SISTER MARIA

lived mostly at home with her parents until her mother's death. She had a more genial, social

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temperament than her two younger brothers. She and her brother Harvey, with whom she made her home after her mother's death, were most like their father. She became an active member of the Baptist Church. She had many friends, and had it not been for the pinch of poverty that always accompanied the career of my father, her fortunes might have been quite different. She was with us a few weeks when we moved to Mill Hall, and my wife long remembered the interest she took in fixing us up in the old house that was to be our future home. A few months after she left us she went to Lewistown to visit my brother William's family, where she died suddenly of dysentery, in the thirty-second year of her age.

STEPHEN GILLETTE MANN,

in my father's estimation, excelled all his brothers in nobility of nature. Without disputing the correctness of this judgment, I have noticed that parents most deeply sympathize with the forlorn and unfortunate of their children. Stephen worked faithfully for his brothers William and Harvey Mann up to the time of the Manns & Smith failure, and for Harvey Mann many years

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after. There was talk of his marrying Mary, the second daughter of Judge Burnside, but this was before the failure, which probably spoiled the alliance, if there was ever anything in it. He finally left, broken in health, and went to East Tennessee, where he started a small axe factory in company with a Mr. Howe, whose sister he married. He visited us once afterwards. His disease, which was a slow consumption, had now weakened him so much that he was not able to do hard work. He stayed several months, and his brother William gave him employment over-seeing two men he was teaching to make axes. When he returned to Tennessee I accompanied him to Lewistown and saw him start on the packet-boat, and as he moved off I felt very sorry, for I never expected to see him again. Before starting he advised me never to leave my brother William. However well meant, this did not prove to be good advice.

My brother Stephen lived but a short time after he returned to Tennessee. He had a daughter, who got married and moved to Texas. In former years she frequently wrote to us. She had a yearning desire to see her father's friends, but has never had that privilege.

MY FATHER.

After my mother's death my father made his home partly with William and partly with Harvey Mann. He visited me twice after my establishment at Mill Hall, and I had frequent and long letters from him. He had now become very old, and for his last year or two he made his home with his son Harvey, whose noble wife cared for his every want, and in his last sickness, which was not for many weeks, she soothed and nursed him until nature collapsed gently into the embrace of death, and his uneventful life ended in length of days that are allotted to but few men. His faithful daughter Jane, true to her instincts, had her husband buried next to his father, and she herself on the other side of her husband, in the Bellefonte Cemetery, where they all now repose under beautiful monuments.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN MILL HALL FROM THE STARTING OF THE
FACTORY UNTIL THE SALE OF THE SAME TO MY
SONS.

THE new factory was ready for operation in August, 1849; and now came the crucial test of my future business success. I was twenty-five years of age, and while I had a good deal of experience in the axe business with my brother William, it was only in subordinate positions, in which there was no chance of development beyond a very limited experience. Now I had an opportunity of growing; true, that growth was as from the mustard seed, very small and enfeebled by want of capital, want of experienced workmen, and want of reputation in the market. These difficulties necessarily caused the growth to be very slow, but it was very satisfactory that year by year there was a growth. And without the exercise of any extraordinary ability on my part, my unintermitting attention to the details of the business was having its effect on the pro-

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duction, and on the hold the goods were winning in the market.

Of the four men who were with me when the factory started, only one remained after the first year, and he for his remarkable qualities deserves special mention.

John Myers had some experience with Willis Mann before I started, but he grew up in the business with me, until he finally mastered every part of it. His willingness to work was only equalled by his power of endurance, which was something marvellous. He was properly an emergency man : while he generally had his regular work, he was always ready and willing to turn in and help where help was needed. His ambition and our wants involved him in much more work than he ought to have done, and while he was well paid, sometimes as high as five dollars per day, it seemed impossible for him to accumulate. He was generous to a fault, with his latch-string always out, noble hearted, faithful, honest. John Myers died a poor man, May 28, 1779.

At the end of five years it was found that the capacity of the works was too small, and my partner and I made a new lease for eight years, and greatly enlarged the works. It was fair to

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infer that our business had now gained a position of respectability; that it had emerged from its obscure and precarious origin and promised to be a permanent institution.

Mr. McCormick, who was a merchant, at first attended to the introduction of our axes in the cities, but this duty was finally relinquished to me.

In 1857, Mr. McCormick died. His estate proved insolvent, and the accumulated fund of the company was in his hands, as there had been no distribution of profits, and he was treasurer and financial manager. He had placed a mortgage on the axe factory property, and it was sold by the sheriff. I bought it at the sheriff's sale for six thousand dollars. In order to raise the money to pay off the mortgage of three thousand dollars I had to sell one hundred acres of the axe factory tract, by arrangement made previous to the sale, for twelve hundred dollars; the balance of the three thousand dollars I raised from other sources. I was now possessor of the axe factory and about fifty acres of farm land, but I ultimately lost by the McCormick estate about twenty-four hundred dollars; this I considered well repaid by the price at which I had obtained the property. During these changes there was no

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interruption of the business ; it went steadily on, as it had done from the start. The business continued to prosper, and I bought a small store, which proved a success, and was mainly supported by the patronage of the employees of the factory. In 1860 I associated with me my brother-in-law, Joseph Reesman, with a one-third interest. My reason for doing this was a growing apprehension that sickness might disqualify me from attending to my business, and as I had a young family to support I wanted to see the business maintained for their benefit until my oldest son should be of age, and the agreement with Mr. Reesman was made accordingly. I had perfect confidence in his integrity, and had no reason to change my views as long as he stayed with me. He was quite useful in many respects, but he left the management entirely in my hands.

In 1861 the Civil War broke out, and the impending ruin that seemed to hang over the land caused us with many others throughout the country to suspend operations. This was the first serious stop since the factory started, and was an unfortunate one, for the price of axes, with all other goods, rapidly advanced, and in a

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few months we were cleaned out of all our old stock at good prices.

We now planned to put in new grinding works, by which we were enabled to considerably increase our production. We had plenty to do and at good prices during the war, and even after the close of the war our business continued good.

About this time my nephew, James H. Mann, having sold out to his brother William his interest in the firm of William Mann, Jr., & Co., came to Mill Hall and proposed to buy me out, and this makes an epoch in the history of my enterprise at Mill Hall. I had now been here seventeen years, and I ought to have been satisfied with the result, and would have been, no doubt, if my constitutional apprehension of failing health and the belief that my lease of life was drawing surely to an early close had not impressed me with the importance of securing what I had in something more substantial than a business that depended so entirely on my personal management.

A melancholy event had occurred at the latter end of the war which still further strengthened my inclination to dispose of my property, now

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that I had, perhaps, the only opportunity that would ever be offered.

In September, 1864, three of my children died suddenly of diphtheria,—Harris, eleven; John, nine; and Carrie, two years old. This event, which plunged my wife in overwhelming grief and despair, was also deplorable to me on account of natural affection and from the fact that it removed still further the hope of having a son to take my place in the management of my business; so I consulted my wife and had her consent to sell. I had brought her from her home in Nittany Valley, surrounded by beautiful farm land, into the gloom of the forge narrows. The remains of the old forge had been torn away when the axe factory was built; the houses that had formerly been occupied by the forge employees were dilapidated and tottering to decay; one of the best of these we occupied for five years, and it was no wonder that in close proximity to high and gloomy mountains, and thickets of young pines growing almost to the house, my wife felt the depressing gloom of her surroundings, and not until her children died did she feel that she could stay here from choice. However, she deferred to my expressed belief that now was the time to make a

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safe investment by which the family would be provided for independently of the risks and perplexities of business and the uncertainty of life. The sale to James H. Mann was therefore made.

I was to receive twenty-four thousand dollars for all my real estate that had not cost me more than ten thousand dollars. This looked, on the face of it, like a very profitable sale, and particularly so to me in view of the fact that I was always disposed to look on the gloomy side of the future, and was never sanguine in my expectations. This sale left me a net estate of about thirty-seven thousand dollars. That was estimated in the neighborhood to be a handsome fortune, but as land had reached a high value just after the war, the amount of my capital did not seem to be so very immense invested in real estate, and the result of a trip which I made in company with Mr. John S. Furst and my daughter Frances through the valleys as far as Lewistown gradually weakened my enthusiasm in regard to investing in farm land, and as that enthusiasm abated, an appreciation of my old business perceptibly grew upon me. When I came home my brother Harvey Mann was there on a visit with a protest on the impropriety of the sale. My wife,

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too, had had time for reflection, and, as her repugnance to the place was obliterated after the death of our children, she discovered that her feelings were growing more and more averse to leaving the old home. As good luck had it, my nephew was growing quite as sick as we were of the bargain. He had really withdrawn from the firm of William Mann, Jr., & Co. on account of trouble in the families, but not between the brothers. The act was a great self-sacrifice on his part, unwisely made, and it took only a little time and reflection for the brothers to see the impropriety of it, and to come to terms of reconciliation. We were soon visited by my nephew, and it took but a few minutes to utterly obliterate a sale that might have been attended with consequences quite beyond our ability to estimate, but doubtless it would have been unfortunate for us both.

Before making the sale to my nephew I had arranged with my partner, Joseph Reesman, to withdraw, he accepting six thousand five hundred dollars for his four years' services. During his stay with me his only child, a daughter, had married Dr. Treat, from Sharon, Wisconsin, and had gone with him to make her future home where he resided. This fact naturally made her father

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and mother discontented, and Mr. Reesman finally proposed to me to leave on the same terms we had previously agreed upon. I was now alone in the business, and for two or three years had cares and responsibilities that engaged me to the full limit of my strength and capacity, and ultimately brought on a very serious sickness. Up to this time, and from the close of the war, our business had been remarkably prosperous. During my sickness my nephew, Robert Mann Jr., was given the management; he was a bright young man and had had some experience, but a great disaster was brought on the business while under his management by a mistake in tempering, by which a large quantity of soft axes were sent out to our best customers. Baltimore had always been our best market; we had held our customers there for years, and latterly their trade had largely increased, but this fatal mistake was irreparable. No effort on our part could restore confidence, and in short we lost the trade.

My health was now sufficiently restored to look somewhat after the business, which I did with the help of my oldest son, Thomas, then about eighteen years old. We had partially recovered our trade by seeking new markets,

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when our factory was entirely destroyed by fire in the fall of 1877. Fortunately we had about ten thousand dollars insurance, and, though the season was unfavorable, we had a new factory built and equipped by May 1 of the following year. It was of larger capacity and in all respects better than the old one. The new brick building which I had erected after the war, and which was used for a store-room of general merchandise at one end, and for packing and storing axes at the other end, was spared by the fire, and as our capacity was now increased in the new factory, we needed all this building for painting, packing, and storing finished axes. I therefore built a new storehouse for merchandise on the mill and woollen factory property at Mill Hall, which I had recently purchased for ten thousand dollars.

After a period of some two years after the fire, my third living son, Joseph, took charge of the store and mill at Mill Hall, while I, with the assistance of Thomas and Alfred, had charge of the axe factory.

As my sons were rapidly growing up, the demand for more room to give them employment was felt by me, and having an opportunity to

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purchase the water-power next below the mill property at Mill Hall, on which was erected cement works, now idle, I bought that property and converted the works into a factory for making double-bit axes. The business, therefore, of making the double-bit axes was transferred to this factory, and my son Joseph was given the oversight of the work there, in connection with the store. This arrangement continued for, I think, about two years, when it occurred to me that it would be better if I would practically retire from business, and let the entire responsibility be thrown upon my three sons, Thomas, Alfred, and Joseph. So the arrangement was affected by my sons agreeing to pay me twenty-five cents per dozen on single-bit axes, and fifty cents per dozen on double-bit axes made in the factories, and to pay me interest on the capital I furnished them. I agreed to keep the factories in ordinary repair, to pay taxes, insurance, etc. Thomas chose to operate at the double-bit factory, and Alfred and Joseph at the single-bit factory, although in reality it was all one firm, under the name of Robert Mann & Sons.

About this time I gave to my daughter, Mrs.

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Abbott B. Garth, the store in Mill Hall, her husband taking charge of it; so that my children all had positions except two younger sons, not yet grown up.

I have given to my children at various times, the sum of thirty-five thousand dollars in the aggregate, on which no interest was to be charged, and each of them had three years schooling away from home, and could have had more if they had so desired.

My son Thomas had married about one year before the burning of the factory, and during the subsequent four years my sons Alfred and Joseph also married and built comfortable houses for themselves, near the upper factory.

All seemed to be well during this period, and some money was made by my sons after paying me and living in a pretty liberal style themselves, notwithstanding an expensive strike which occurred during this period, in the year 1882. Our men had held frequent secret meetings, under the leadership of the Knights of Labor, in Mill Hall, and so complete was their organization that when the strike was declared on not more than two or three of our men presented themselves for work. The order had been successful at the

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Hubbard factory in Beaver Falls, and also in the factory of William Mann, Jr., & Co., at Lewistown. Our men had been to a great extent isolated from the employees of those other factories, and my sons were determined that they would not yield to the demands of the men, as it practically meant a surrender of their right of running their own business. Some concession was made as to price of labor, but a bitter and determined fight was waged against the organization that the men had entered into. The upper factory was started with many new and green men. They played havoc with stock, and many axes were made that had to be sold as seconds; but after two months it was clear that the new men, with the help of a few experienced ones, were gaining ground, and the strikers saw and felt it. Many families were coming to want, supplies ceased to come from other places, and many of the women upbraided their husbands for not going to work. Finally, after about three months, the strike collapsed, and the order has never held a meeting since in Mill Hall.

My son Joseph, becoming discontented after four years under this arrangement, proposed to sell out to me. I considered that it was making a

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place for another son who was younger and more poorly equipped to strike out for himself than Joseph was. I therefore concluded to accept his proposition, although I regretted his desire to leave, and his mother was almost inconsolable, as his intention was to go to the far West.

I gave Joseph a farm of four hundred acres of excellent land adjoining the city of Atlantic, Iowa; the balance due on the price of the farm after deducting the amount for his interests at Mill Hall he was to pay at his convenience.

This purchase of Joseph's interest was made with the understanding that my son William H. Mann was to take his place, which he did by agreeing to pay me interest on the amount which I paid for Joseph's share. As he had recently got married, he moved into Joseph's house.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN MILL HALL (CONTINUED.)

WHILE the change was being made consequent upon Joseph Mann's withdrawing from the firm of Robert Mann & Sons, it occurred to me that it would be well to throw the entire care of the axe factory properties upon my sons who operated them, as I expected they would come into the ownership of them some time.

But in the proposed sale of the factories to my sons it was evident to me, and also to them, that Thomas and Alfred could not work pleasantly or satisfactorily together. It had been Thomas's misfortune from eighteen to twenty-two years of age to prefer pleasure to business, and this worked to the advantage of his younger brother, who gradually got the control in the management and held it with an iron grip. This did not necessarily imply that his ability was superior to his brother's, but that he had a tenacity of purpose that was unyielding.

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I therefore, with the approval of all parties interested, sold to my sons Alfred C. Mann and William H. Mann the upper axe factory, including the water-power and meadow at the head of the dam, and I gave them enough capital to run it. I also at the same time sold to my son Thomas R. Mann the lower axe factory, at which the double-bit axes were made, and gave him capital enough to run it.

The above amounts for real estate and capital were in both articles to bear interest at six per cent. per annum, but the principal was not to be paid unless at the option of my sons during my lifetime.

These articles bound the upper factory to make only single-bit axes, and the lower factory to make only double-bit axes for a period of four years. Axes made both at the upper and at the lower factory were to bear the brand of Robert Mann, Mill Hall.

The two firms went on with energy and success, the upper firm under the name of Robert Mann & Sons, and the lower firm under the name of Thomas R. Mann & Co.

The lower factory was completely remodelled during the first and second years by the addition

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of machinery and buildings so as to increase its capacity from one hundred and twenty to four hundred axes per day. In order to finish this increased production of axes my son Thomas made an agreement with me by which I sold him the mill property, reserving the store lot. The woollen factory had previously been destroyed by fire.

The conditions of the sale were that he was to pay interest on the money, the same as on the other sales, and he was to take in as partner my youngest son, Robert Mann, Jr., with a one-third interest. He accordingly had this power improved by cleaning out head- and tail-races, and putting grinding, polishing, and finishing works in the old mill and store-room. At the upper factory a wareroom for packing and storing axes was built, also an engine erected in a new building. Both firms were doing a prosperous business, paying my interest, supporting their families, and leaving a surplus, not counting, of course, the substantial improvements made by them.

In the midst of these encouraging circumstances came the great flood of June, 1889. The first flood was from a tributary of Fishing

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Creek, that drained the east end of Nittany Valley, passing through Salona before joining the main creek. This stream, usually insignificant, was swollen far beyond all precedent. Several barns and houses were carried down and several lives were lost. Pouring into the main creek, already greatly swollen, it made such a flood in the axe factory narrows as never was known there before. This occurred from four to five o'clock A.M., and might have been endured without very great damage, but to add to the consternation, the water drainage from Sugar Valley arrived in the main stream of Fishing Creek from seven to eight o'clock A.M., and swelled the united streams so enormously that the floating débris on the axe factory dam was a dark mass, through which the water could not be seen. The damage to the upper factory was very serious. The dam and forebays were destroyed, the new engine was badly wrecked, and the new brick building containing the engine was totally swept away. Other buildings were damaged and a head shop bodily carried off. The water rose in the store-room five feet, and wet two thousand dozen axes, so that they had to be polished over at a cost of two thousand dollars.

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In the properties below, now owned by Thomas R. Mann & Co., the damage was equally great. The mill and store-room, where the new machinery had been recently put in, were both badly wrecked, and in a falling condition when the water abated. So also at the lower factory three thousand dollars' worth of coal was washed away or made almost useless by mud and water. The new building for forging axes was seriously undermined and the embankments of the water-power were greatly damaged.

This disaster occurred in the worst season of the year, when the goods were being prepared to fill fall orders. My sons, Thomas at the lower factory, and Alfred and William at the upper, so far from being paralyzed by the great and sudden calamity which they were so poorly able to stand, went immediately to work on the repairs, and manifested a zeal and energy that was highly creditable to their business qualifications. In less than three months both factories were running.

The business of the two firms went on steadily till February 1, 1890, when it was ascertained that the firm of Robert Mann & Sons had made a moderate profit above interest on investment and

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running expenses, but the firm of Thomas R. Mann & Co. had achieved a degree of prosperity that was something marvellous, considering that most of the axe factories in the country were making no money, and some were losing or compelled to shut down. This success was due to the fact that they made only double-bit axes, and the bulk of them of very light weight. The cost of making double-bit axes was proportionally less than the cost of making single bits, and the profit was proportionally greater, but the great hold that Thomas got on the market was caused by his persevering efforts to please the trade. The style and finish of his axes was a radical departure from that of other makers, and the great bulk of the Pacific coast trade was captured by him at prices better than others could obtain. These results caused great dissatisfaction on the part of the firm of Robert Mann & Sons, and as the time of the limitation when their manufacture should be confined only to single bits would soon expire, they determined to manufacture double bits as well.

It was at this critical period, when the change of making both kinds of axes at both factories was agitated, and my sons were yet smarting

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from the severe loss they had sustained by the recent flood, with the possibility of its recurrence in the future, that the project was proposed of forming all the axe factories into a combination, by means of which it was claimed that all would make more money, with less annoyance from business rivals and ruinous competition. In the formation of this combination there was an element in it peculiarly captivating. The properties were to be taken into the trust with all assets at a very liberal valuation, for which the owners were to receive stock of the corporation.

This was a tempting opportunity for my sons, for it was claimed at the time that the stock of the company would rise one hundred per cent. above par within one year.

I myself was the only party who really had no inducement to sanction this unfortunate agreement, for all I was to receive was stock for the capital I had loaned to my sons and the value of the real estate which I had sold to them at a much lower price than I would have sold to any other parties, for all of which I had heretofore received interest promptly paid. I was now asked to take stock for all this. My four sons, representing the two factories, earnestly urged me to do it, but

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I decided that I would not agree to the arrangement unless the new company would secure my interest by guarantees, which they positively declined to do. My sons in the two firms were all anxious, and Alfred most urgently, that I should allow my claim to go in as stock, and so it was finally agreed by my sons guaranteeing my stock to pay me six per cent. interest, and I agreeing to allow them the dividends on the stock, each one guaranteeing a specified amount. It is proper to state that my wife most bitterly protested against this sale of our property and business. As long as my sons had the properties it was all right with her, but the idea of selling out to a company over which we could have no control, and then only receiving its stock in payment, distressed her exceedingly, and if her sensible advice had been taken it would no doubt have been better for us all.

My son Joseph, who was then in the West, also protested earnestly against my going into this company, and in order in some degree to reconcile my wife, I advised the company that if they could give Joseph a good position it would make me more inclined to go into the agreement. He was accordingly appointed superintendent of all

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the factories at a salary of three thousand dollars per year.

It is unnecessary for me to rehearse in detail the career of the American Axe and Tool Company, which has now been in existence for over six years, but I shall content myself in these memoirs to note the effect which it has had upon my own interest and that of my sons. In my own case I have received for the eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars which I put into the company interest equivalent to about four per cent. per annum, declared in dividends at irregular times. If I were now obliged to sell my stock for cash, I could not realize more than sixty per cent., notwithstanding that the company is perfectly good for its obligations.

Its weak point has been in its attempt to suppress competition, which was carried to an extravagant excess at the very outset of its career. When the company decided that there should be an advance at once of about thirty-three per cent. on the price of axes, this made it necessary to purchase or control all the factories that could be in any way run in opposition to the company, and the consequence was that a great deal of its stock was expended in buying up fac-

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tories that were idle or struggling with a precarious existence, and that could have been entirely suppressed without any cost to the company if its policy at first had been a very moderate profit.

While the company has made money enough to have paid dividends that would have been satisfactory to its stockholders, the large amount of stock invested in idle or unprofitable plants has weighed upon it like an incubus, and must always do so, although it is not impossible that the American Axe and Tool Company may yet have a future of satisfactory success. Its good factories are thoroughly equipped with the best and most economical methods of manufacture. The standard of its goods is high, and, having run successfully through the recent hard times, there is evidence of strength and stability that promises well for the company in the good times that are coming if it is wise enough not to throw away all its profits in a vain attempt to suppress competition.

As for the fortunes of my sons, they have been affected far more seriously than mine have by surrendering their business to a company in which only half of them could be at best but employees.

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Thomas and Alfred were given positions as superintendents at the upper and lower factories, where they really were the managers when they ran their own business. Thomas soon tired of his position, and went into a new bank in Lockhaven as cashier and treasurer, and has built it up with remarkable success, but he has recently taken a position as secretary and treasurer of a new railroad now building in Colorado, and also as manager of large smelting works in Boulder, Colorado, all controlled by a company of capitalists said to be of ample means. These enterprises are new, but promise a great success. My son Robert, as the partner of Thomas in the old business, succeeded him as superintendent, but voluntarily retired from the position in less than one year and was succeeded by William, who was formerly Alfred's partner in the upper factory.

After a period of some two years it was determined by the company to make all the double-bit axes at Mill Hall, which had formerly been made at all the factories. For this purpose extensive improvements were made and a larger number of men employed. Alfred C. Mann was put at the head of this management,

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with W. H. Mann as assistant and my son-in-law, Abbott B. Garth, as shipper and paymaster. The salaries for the services rendered are fair and satisfactory, and there has been no friction in the management at the works. Neither have the employees any reason to complain that they are not as largely employed and as well paid as they were under the old firms. But notwithstanding all this, when we take a retrospective view of the firms of Robert Mann & Son and Thomas R. Mann & Co. for the four or eight years preceding their absorption by the American Axe and Tool Company, and consider the progress made during those periods, the conclusion is irresistible that under the independent management of the old companies the axe business at Mill Hall would be larger than it is now, and that it would continue to grow; but the past is past, probably never to return, and it is well for Mill Hall that the American Axe and Tool Company concluded to make their double-bit axes here.

Joseph's management as general superintendent resulted in disaster on account of antagonism between him and the president of the company. He was summarily discharged after about

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two years' service. Some of the best men in the company thought this proceeding unjust and unwise, and Thomas R. Mann instantly resigned as director. When Joseph took the office of general superintendent he was living in Larned, Kansas, where all his investments were swept away by the disastrous blight of hot winds that came upon that section of country for successive years, so that he was without means when thrown out of office. He, however, found friends who had confidence in his ability and honor, and who extended him credit to enable him to form a company in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, for the manufacture of axes. The result is that after four years operation there,—during which time his factory was destroyed once by fire,—he has now a large and complete factory, and expects to make this year at least twenty-five thousand dozen axes, which, unfortunately for the American Axe and Tool Company, will be largely purchased by its customers. Robert Mann, Jr., went to Lewistown after resigning his position at Mill Hall, and is at present vice-president and sales agent for the Mann Edge Tool Company, of which Joseph R. Mann is president. His success as a salesman has been

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great, and it is probable that he will remain in this position.

For many years my wife and I were left alone, although several of our children lived quite near to us, our daughter and her husband in an adjoining yard. My wife had been ailing for several months, but no alarming symptoms of her approaching end developed until a few days before her death. On the night of January 29, 1897, I kissed her and retired with no thought that this was the last moment she would ever be able to recognize me. About ten o'clock she had a weak spell, and was lifted off her bed on to a chair by my son-in-law and the women attending. She soon said, "Where are the children? Where is pa?" In a few moments my daughter and I came to her, but, alas! it was too late. We saw her last fleeting breath, and then all was still. My daughter said, "Don't break down, pa; we will come and live with you;" and so it has occurred.

My wife was taken to the room whence she was to leave her earthly home forever. As she lay there, freed from all sickness and suffering, she looked very sweet in the midst of the beautiful flowers that she had always loved so well, and surrounded by her family, who had

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always been the ever-flowing fountain of her joys and sorrows.

A stricken husband, one weeping daughter with her husband, five sorrowing sons with their wives followed the coffin to the last resting-place of mother, dear mother.

Here ends my private narrative, which I have written mostly for the perusal of my children and their descendants, if it shall be deemed worthy of preservation.

Having now passed my seventy-third year, naturally it will not be long until I shall have passed into that "country from whose bourn no traveller returns," and I hope I shall do so with reliant trust in the mercy of God and of his son Jesus Christ.

REMINISCENCES

OF

MY NEPHEWS, JAMES H. AND WILLIAM MANN, OF
MIFFLIN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

WHEN we resided near Unionville my brother William's eldest son, James Hutchison Mann, a boy of five or six years old was with us a few months attending a school taught, I think, by my sister Maria. On his road to school there was a terror in the way which he has never forgotten, being frequently obliged to climb the fence by the belligerent attitude of a ram near a neighbor's house, which, discovering that my young nephew was an easy conquest, seemed to watch for him, and with head poised for assault pursued him to his only safe retreat on the fence.

I remember one other occasion on which the future head of the splendid business of William Mann, Jr., & Co. came near losing his life. We had a spring in a field near our house which

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was dug out to a depth of three or four feet and walled up. The boy stooped down to drink, and, losing his hold, plunged in head first. I think it was my father who was fortunately near and saved his life.

It was my nephew James's fortune to be away at school the greater part of his life until grown up,—when quite young with his relatives in Nittany and Pennsville; afterwards for several years at a private school for boys at Litiz, Pennsylvania; and then at various seminaries. I think he was not quite twenty-one years of age when his father died and the responsibility of his father's business devolved on him and his next younger brother, William. Their father, in failing health, was much distressed when he saw that it had become necessary to relinquish the responsibilities of his business into hands so young and, as he supposed, so incompetent to successfully conduct it. If he could have seen the future, no doubt his life would have been prolonged, but it was not given him to know how ably and successfully the business that fell into those young hands (so well established) was augmented and improved by them. After many years of a very successful career the relations

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of the brothers were rudely severed by the sad and untimely death of William Mann by a steam-boat explosion on the Ohio River, and I know his surviving partner and brother will not think it an over-estimate when I say that his unfortunate brother was not excelled in qualities of head and heart by any relative bearing the name of Mann.

GENEALOGY
OF THE
DESCENDANTS OF WILLIAM MANN, SR., TO THE
SECOND GENERATION.

THOMAS MANN, your great-grandfather, was born in County Derry, Ireland; died in Wales, Erie County, New York, in 1820.

William Mann, Sr., your grandfather, was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, August 18, 1779; died at Boiling Springs, Centre County, Pennsylvania, February 19, 1860.

Robert Mann, your father, was born near Watertown, Jefferson County, New York, June 13, 1824.

Stephen Gillette, your great-grandfather, was born near Hartford, Connecticut, in 1753.

Ruth Case, wife of Stephen Gillette, was born near Hartford, Connecticut, in 1753.

Rachel Gillette, wife of William Mann, Sr., and your grandmother, was born near Hartford, Connecticut, May 30, 1782; died in Philadelphia in 1847.

John Reesman, your grandfather, was born in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1788; died in Millheim, Pennsylvania, in 1872.

Christina Helpman, wife of John Reesman, was born in 1796; died at Mackeyville, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, in 1844.

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Christina Reesman, your mother, was born near Millheim, Centre County, Pennsylvania, January 1, 1829; died at Mill Hall, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, January 29, 1897.

Frances Jane Mann, your sister, was born at Mill Hall, October 19, 1849.

Harris Irving Mann, your brother, was born at Mill Hall, March 8, 1851; died at Mill Hall, September 15, 1862.

John William Mann, your brother, was born February 22, 1853; died at Mill Hall, September 2, 1862.

Thomas Reesman Mann, your brother, was born at Mill Hall, February 19, 1855.

Alfred Campbell Mann, your brother, was born at Mill Hall, March 7, 1857.

Joseph R. Mann, your brother, was born at Mill Hall, February 16, 1859.

William Harris Mann, your brother, was born at Mill Hall, August 2, 1863.

Mary Maud Mann, your sister, was born at Mill Hall, May 20, 1865; died December 28, 1865.

Robert Mann, Jr., your brother, was born at Mill Hall, October 16, 1866.

William Mann, Jr., your uncle, was born at Johnstown, New York, October 18, 1802; died in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, June 11, 1855.

Ann Hutchison, wife of William Mann, Jr., was born in Walker Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania, June 10, 1813; died near Reedsville, Pennsylvania, June 17, 1879.

James Hutchison Mann, your cousin, was born at Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, October 28, 1834.

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William Mann, son of William Mann, Jr., was born in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, January 7, 1837; died on the Ohio River, May 17, 1876.

Ann Maria Mann, daughter of William Mann, Jr., was born in Brown Township, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, July 20, 1839.

Joseph Fearon Mann, son of William Mann, Jr., was born in Brown Township, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, November 29, 1841.

Harvey Mann, Sr., your uncle, was born in Johnstown, New York, July 2, 1804; died at Boiling Springs, Centre County, Pennsylvania, June 4, 1870.

Jane F. Burnside, wife of Harvey Mann, Sr., was born February 28, 1811; died at Boiling Springs, Centre County, Pennsylvania, 1885.

Rachel Mann, daughter of Harvey Mann, Sr., was born near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, December 13, 1832; died near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1853.

James Burnside Mann, son of Harvey Mann, Sr., was born near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, August 23, 1840; died near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, May 19, 1860.

Harvey Mann, Jr., son of Harvey Mann, Sr., was born near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, August 18, 1837; died at Steubenville, Ohio, February 27, 1875.

Stephen Gillette Mann, your uncle, was born in Johnstown, New York, in 1806; died in Tennessee, 1842.

Willis Mann, your uncle, was born in Montgomery County, New York, February 9, 1815; died at Du Bois, Pennsylvania, February 18, 1879.

Harriet Ann Porter, wife of Willis Mann, was born in

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Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, March 6, 1813; died at Yeagertown, Pennsylvania, June 2, 1879.

Margaret Williamson Mann, daughter of Willis Mann, was born in Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, December 16, 1842; married to I. Woods Sterrett, February 28, 1861.

Edward Porter Mann, son of Willis Mann, was born in Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, March 11, 1844.

Rachel Gillette Mann, daughter of Willis Mann, was born in Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, February 18, 1847.

Robert Clarence Mann, son of Willis Mann, was born in Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, April 14, 1849; died in Toledo, Ohio, March 7, 1892.

Nancy Jane Mann, daughter of Willis Mann, was born in Lamar Township, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, August 11, 1851.

Maria Mann, your aunt, was born in the State of New York, September 19, 1817; died near Lewistown, Pennsylvania, October, 1850.

Harris Mann, your uncle, was born in Jefferson County, New York, in 1819; left home in 1840, and was never heard of.

THE END.



