

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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**The Old Bell of Independence Or,
Philadelphia in 1776**

Henry C. Watson

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: Henry C. Watson
Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)
ISBN: 978-3-8495-1794-6

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PREFACE.

To awaken in the minds of all Americans that veneration of the patriots and heroes of the War of Independence, and that emulation of their noble example which is so necessary to the maintenance of our liberties, are the objects of this little work. Every day's developments illustrate the importance of these objects. In the enjoyment of the freedom and prosperity of our country, we are apt to underestimate the means by which that enjoyment was secured to us, and to forget the men who worked for that end. A knowledge of the toils and sufferings of the noble-hearted fathers of the Revolution is the best preventative, or curative, for this "falling off." War, clothed as it is, with horrors, is to be condemned, and the spirit which leads to it should be driven from the breasts of men. But generous devotion, strength of resolution, and far-reaching skill, are things to be commended and imitated wherever displayed. In these pages, will be found stories of the chief men of the Revolution, so connected, by the manner in which they are narrated, as to give a general interest to them— "The Old Bell of Independence" being the rallying point of the veteran story-tellers.

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INTRODUCTION.

It was a season of unparalleled enthusiasm and rejoicing, when General Lafayette, the friend and supporter of American Independence, responded to the wishes of the people of the United States, and came to see their prosperity, and to hear their expressions of gratitude. The national heart beat joyfully in anticipation; and one long, loud, and free shout of welcome was heard throughout the land.

Arriving at New York in August, 1824, General Lafayette journeyed through the Eastern States, receiving such tokens of affection as the people had extended to no other man except Washington, and then returned southward. On the 28th of September, he entered Philadelphia, the birth-place of the Declaration of Independence, the greater part of the population coming out to receive and welcome him. A large procession was formed, and thirteen triumphal arches erected in the principal streets through which the procession passed.

After General Lafayette himself, the most remarkable objects in the procession were four large open cars, resembling tents, each containing forty veterans of the struggle for independence. No one could, without emotion, behold these winter-locked patriots, whose eyes, dimmed by age, poured forth tears of joy at their unexpected happiness in once more meeting an old commander, and joining in the expressions of gratitude to him.

After passing through the principal streets, General Lafayette was conducted into the hall of the State-House, where the old Continental Congress had assembled, and where the immortal Declaration of Independence was signed. Here the nation's guest was received formally on behalf of the citizens by the mayor, and then the people were admitted to take him by the hand. At night there was a splen-

did illumination; and crowds of people traversed the streets, singing and celebrating the exploits of the champion of liberty and the friend of America.

On one of the days succeeding Lafayette's grand entry into the city, he received, in the Hall of Independence, the veteran soldiers of the Revolution who had come to the city, and those who were residents. One by one these feeble old men came up and took the General by the hand, and to each he had some reminiscence to recall, or some congratulation to offer. Heroes of Brandy wine, Germantown, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, and other fields, were there; some with scars to show, and all much suffering to relate. The old patriotic fire was kindled in their breasts, and beamed from their furrowed countenances, as memory flew back to the time that proved their truth and love of liberty. One had been under the command of the fiery Wayne, and shared his dangers with a spirit as dauntless; another had served with the cool and skilful Greene, and loved to recall some exploit in which the Quaker general had displayed his genius; another had followed the lead of Lafayette himself, when a mere youth, at Brandywine: everything conspired to render this interview of the General and the veteran soldiers as touching and as interesting as any recorded by history, or invented by fiction.

After the reception of the veterans, one of them proposed to go up into the belfry, and see the old bell which proclaimed liberty "to all the land, and to all the nations thereof." Lafayette and a few others accompanied the proposal by expressing a wish to see that interesting relic. With great difficulty, some of the old men were conducted up to the belfry, and there they beheld the bell still swinging. Lafayette was much gratified at the sight, as it awakened his old enthusiasm to think of the period when John Adams and his bold brother patriots dared to assert the principles of civil liberty, and to proclaim the independence of their country. Old John Harmer, one of the veteran soldiers who had been in Philadelphia when the Declaration was proclaimed, and who again shook hands with his old brothers in arms, gave vent to his thoughts and feelings as he stood looking at the bell.

"Ah! that's the trumpet that told the Britishers a tale of vengeance! My memory's not so bad but I can recollect the day that old bell was rung for independence! This city presented a very different appearance in those days. It was a small town. Every body was expectin' that the king's troops would be comin' here soon, and would sack and burn the place: but the largest number of us were patriots, and knew the king was a tyrant; and so we didn't care much whether they came or not. How the people did crowd around this State-House on the day the Declaration was proclaimed! Bells were ringing all over town, and guns were fired; but above 'em all could be heard the heavy, deep sound of this old bell, that rang as if it meant something! Ah! them was great times."

As old Harmar concluded these remarks, the old men standing near the bell nodded approvingly, and some echoed, "Them *was* great times!" in a tone which indicated that memory was endeavoring to conjure back the time of which they spoke. They then slowly turned to descend. Lafayette had preceded them with his few friends. "Stop!" said old Harmar; "Wilson, Morton, Smith, and you, Higgins, my son wants you to come home with me, and take dinner at his house. Come; I want to have some chat with you over old doings. I may never see you again after you leave Philadelphia."

The invitation, cordially given, was cordially accepted, and the party of old friends descended the stairs, and, arriving at the door, were assisted by the cheering crowd to get into their carriage, which then drove towards the residence of old Harmar's son. At that place we shall consider them as having arrived, and, after much welcoming, introducing, and other preparatory ceremonies, as seated at a long, well-supplied table, set in a large and pleasant dining-hall. Young Harmar, his wife, and the four children, were also accommodated at the same table, and a scene of conviviality and pleasure was presented such as is not often witnessed. The old men were very communicative and good-humored; and young Harmar and his family were free of questions concerning the great scenes through which they had passed. But we will let the company speak for themselves.

STORY OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"GRANDFATHER," said Thomas Jefferson Harmar, "won't you tell us something about General Washington?"

"I could tell you many a thing about that man, my child," replied old Harmar, "but I suppose people know everything concerning him by this time. You see, these history writers go about hunting up every incident relating to the war, now, and after a while they'll know more about it—or say they do—than the men who were actors in it."

"That's not improbable," said young Harmar. "These historians may not know as much of the real spirit of the people at that period, but that they should be better acquainted with the mass of facts relating to battles and to political affairs is perfectly natural." The old man demurred, however, and mumbled over, that nobody could know the real state of things who was not living among them at the time.

"But the little boy wants to hear a story about Washington," said Wilson. "Can't you tell him something about *the* man? I think I could. Any one who wants to appreciate the character of Washington, and the extent of his services during the Revolution, should know the history of the campaign of 1776, when every body was desponding, and thinking of giving up the good cause. I tell you, if Washington had not been superior to all other men, that cause must have sunk into darkness."

"You say well," said Smith. "We, who were at Valley Forge, know something of his character."

"I remember an incident," said Wilson, "that will give you some idea, Mrs. Harmar, of the heart George Washington had in his bosom. I suppose Mr. Harmar has told you something of the sufferings of our men during the winter we lay at Valley Forge. It was a terrible season. It's hard to give a faint idea of it in words; but you may imagine a party of men, with ragged clothes and no shoes, huddled around a fire in a log hut—the snow about two feet deep on the

ground, and the wind driving fierce and bitter through the chinks of the rude hovel. Many of the men had their feet frost-bitten, and there were no remedies to be had, like there is now-a-days. The sentinels suffered terribly, and looked more like ghosts than men, as they paced up and down before the lines of huts."

"I wonder the men didn't all desert," remarked Mrs. Harmar. "They must have been uncommon men."

"They were uncommon men, or, at least, they suffered in an uncommon cause," replied Wilson. "But about General Washington. He saw how the men were situated, and, I really believe, his heart bled for them. He would write to Congress of the state of affairs, and entreat that body to procure supplies; but, you see, Congress hadn't the power to comply. All it could do was to call on the States, and await the action of their Assemblies."

"Washington's head-quarters was near the camp, and he often came over to see the poor fellows, and to try to soothe and comfort them; and, I tell you, the men loved that man as if he had been their father, and would rather have died with him than have lived in luxury with the red-coat general."

"I recollect a scene I beheld in the next hut to the one in which I messed. An old friend, named Josiah Jones, was dying. He was lying on a scant straw bed, with nothing but rags to cover him. He had been sick for several days, but wouldn't go under the doctor's hands, as he always said it was like going into battle, certain of being killed. One day, when we had no notion of anything of the kind, Josiah called out to us, as we sat talking near his bed, that he was dying, and wanted us to pray for him. We were all anxious to do anything for the man, for we loved him as a brother; but as for praying, we didn't exactly know how to go about it. To get clear of the service, I ran to obtain the poor fellow a drink of water to moisten his parched lips."

"While the rest were standing about, not knowing what to do, some one heard the voice of General Washington in the next hut, where he was comforting some poor wretches who had their feet almost frozen off. Directly, he came to our door, and one of the men went and told him the state of things. Now, you see, a commander-in-chief might have been justified in being angry that the regula-

tions for the sick had been disobeyed, and have turned away; but he was a nobler sort of man than could do that. He entered the hut, and went up to poor Josiah, and asked him how he was. Josiah told him that he felt as if he was dying, and wanted some one to pray for him. Washington saw that a doctor could do the man no good, and he knelt on the ground by him and prayed. We all knelt down too; we couldn't help it. An old comrade was dying, away from his home and friends, and there was our general kneeling by him, with his face turned towards heaven, looking, I thought, like an angel's. Well, he prayed for Heaven to have mercy on the dying man's soul; to pardon his sins; and to take him to Himself: and then he prayed for us all. Before the prayer was concluded, Josiah's spirit had fled, and his body was cold and stiff. Washington felt the brow of the poor fellow, and, seeing that his life was out, gave the men directions how to dispose of the corpse, and then left us to visit the other parts of the camp."

"That was, indeed, noble conduct," said young Harmar. "Did he ever speak to you afterwards about violating the regulations of the army?"

"No," replied Wilson. "He knew that strict discipline could not be, and should not have been maintained in that camp. He was satisfied if we were true to the cause amid all our sufferings."

[Illustration: WASHINGTON'S PRAYER
FOR THE DYING SOLDIER.]

"Praying at the death-bed of a private," mused Smith aloud. "Well, I might have conjectured what he would do in such a case, from what I saw of him. I wonder if history ever spoke of a greater and better man?"

Young Mr. Harmar here felt inclined to launch out into an elaborate panegyric on the character of Washington, but reflected that it might be out of place, and therefore contented himself with remarking, "We shall ne'er look upon his like again."

"He was a dear, good man," remarked Mrs. Harmar.

"Yes," said old Harmar, "General Washington was the main pillar of the Revolution. As a general, he was vigilant and skilful; but if he

had not been anything more, we might have been defeated and crushed by the enemy. He had the love and confidence of the men, on account of his character as a man, and that enabled him to remain firm and full of hope when his countrymen saw nothing but a gloomy prospect."

THE SPY'S FATE

"Now I'll tell you a story that I have just called to mind," said old Harmar. "It's of a very different character, though, from the story of Washington. It's about a spy's fate."

"Where was the scene of it?" inquired Mrs. Harmar.

"Out here on the Schuylkill's banks, just after the British took possession of this city," replied old Harmar. "There was a man named James Sykes, who had a lime-kiln on the east bank of the river, and was manufacturing lime pretty extensively when the enemy came to this city. While Congress was sitting here, Sykes always professed to be a warm friend to the colonial cause; but there was always something suspicious about his movements, and his friends and neighbours did not put much faith in his professions. He would occasionally be out very late at night, and sometimes be gone from home for a week, and give very vague accounts of the business which had occupied him during his absence. Some of his neighbours suspected that he was acting as one of Sir William Howe's spies, but they could never get any positive proof of their suspicions.

"At length the enemy took possession of this city, and then Sykes began to show that he was not such a very warm friend of the right side. He went to the head-quarters of the British general frequently, and seemed to be on the best terms with the enemy. Well, it happened that one of his old neighbors, named Jones, was the captain of one of the companies of our line; and he, somehow or other, obtained proof that Sykes was acting as a spy for the enemy. He informed General Wayne of the fact, and immediately proposed that he should be allowed to attempt his capture. Wayne consented, and Captain Jones set about preparing for the enterprise. Sykes was

usually out at his lime-kiln, with some of his men, during the morning, and, as the guilty are ever suspicious, he increased the number of his assistants, to ensure himself against attack. Captain Jones took only twenty men from his company, and left our camp just before dark. The business was full of danger. The place where Jones expected to capture the spy was within a mile of a British out-post; and the greatest secrecy and rapidity of movement was necessary to prevent surprise by the enemy's scouting parties.

"About daylight, Jones and his party reached the wood near Sykes' lime-kiln, and halted to reconnoitre. Sykes and four of his men were at work at that early hour. The lime was burning, and some of the men were engaged in loading and unloading two carts which stood near the kiln. Captain Jones' plan was quickly formed. He sent one half his party around to cut off the escape of Sykes towards the city, and when he thought they had reached a favorable position sallied out towards the kiln. When he was about half-way to it, Sykes discovered the party, and, shouting to his men to follow, ran along the bank of the river to escape; but the other party cut off retreat, and Jones coming up rapidly, Sykes and his men were taken. Jones did not intend to detain the workmen any longer than till he got out of the reach of the British, when he would not have cared for their giving the alarm. Sykes seemed to be very anxious to know why he was arrested in that manner; but Jones simply told him he would know when they got him to the American camp; and that, if Sykes had not thought of a reason for his arrest, he would not have attempted to run away. Well, the Americans hurried the prisoners towards the wood, but Jones soon descried a large party of British coming over a neighboring hill, and knew that his chance was a desperate one. Sykes also discovered the party of red-coats, and struggled hard to make his escape from the Americans. Jones wanted to bring him alive to the American camp, or he would have shot him down at once. Suddenly, Sykes broke away from his captors, and ran towards the lime-kiln. Several muskets were discharged, but all missed him. Then one of the privates, named Janvers, a daring fellow, rushed after the prisoner, and caught him just as he reached the kiln. There a fierce struggle ensued; but Sykes was cut in the shoulder, and, in attempting to throw his antagonist into the hot lime and fire, was hurled into it himself. Then Janvers hurried to

the woods after his brave comrades. The British party was near enough to see the struggle at the limekiln, and came on rapidly in pursuit of our men. A few of the red-coats were ordered to examine the lime-kiln, to see if Sykes was alive and concealed; and they found his body burned almost to a crisp."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Mrs. Harmar.

"Well," continued Old Harmar, "there was a long and doubtful race between the two parties; but Jones succeeded in getting within the lines of the Americans without losing a man, and with his four prisoners in safe custody. These fellows were examined, but no evidence of their being spies and confidants of Sykes could be produced, and they were discharged with the promise of a terrible punishment if they were detected tampering with the enemy."

"Captain Jones was a daring fellow to venture so near the British lines, and with such a small party," observed Morton.

"In such an attempt, a small party was preferable. Its success depended upon secrecy and quickness of movements," said Wilson.

"It was a horrible death," remarked young Harmar. "Sykes, however, courted it by treachery to his countrymen."

STORY OF THE SERMON.

"I believe this is the first time I've seen you since the disbanding of the army, Morton," said Wilson. "Time has been rather severe on us both since that time."

"Oh, we can't complain," replied Morton. "We can't complain. I never grumble at my age."

"Some men would have considered themselves fortunate to have seen what you have seen," said young Harmar. "I think I could bear your years, to have your experience."

"So do I," added Mrs. Harmar. She always agreed with her husband in whatever he asserted.

"Let me see," said old Harmar; "where did I first meet you, Higgins? Oh! wasn't it just before the battle of Brandywine you joined the

Pennsylvania line?"

"No," answered Smith for Higgins, who, just then, was endeavoring to make up for his want of teeth by the vigorous exertions of his jaws. "He joined at the same time I did, before the battle of Germantown."

"Yes, just before the battle of Germantown," added Higgins. "I was not at Brandywine."

"You wasn't? Then you missed seeing us retreat," said old Harraar. "But we did considerable fightin', howsomever. Mad Anthony was there, and he used to fight, you know—at least the enemy thought so. I shall never forget the night before that battle."

"Why?" asked Higgins. "Was you on the watch?"

"No, not on that account; something very different. There was a sermon preached on the evenin' before that battle, such as can only be heard once."

"A sermon?" enquired Wilson.

"Yes; a sermon preached for our side by the Rev. Joab Prout. I told my son there about it, and he wrote it into a beautiful sketch for one of the papers. He's got a knack of words, and can tell about it much better than I can. Tell them about it, Jackson, just as you wrote it," said old Harmar.

"Certainly," replied young Harmar. "If I can recall it."

"Do," said Mrs. Harmer; and "Oh! do," added the children; and Mr. Jackson Harmar did—as follows:—"All day long, on the tenth of September, 1777, both armies were in the vicinity of each other, and frequent and desperate skirmishes took place between advanced parties, without bringing on a general action. At length, as the day closed, both armies encamped within sight of each other, anxiously awaiting the morrow, to decide the fate of the devoted city.

"The Americans lay behind Chadd's Ford, with the shallow waters of the Brandywine between them and their opponents; the line extending two miles along that stream.

"The sun was just sinking behind the dark hills of the west, gilding the fading heavens with an autumnal brightness, and shedding a lurid glare upon the already drooping and discolored foliage of the surrounding forests. It was an hour of solemn calm. The cool evening breezes stole softly through the air, as if unwilling to disturb the repose of all around. The crystal waters of the creek murmured gently in their narrow bed, and the national standard flapped lazily from the tall flag-staff on its banks.

"In the American camp, interspersed between groups of tents and stacks of arms, might be seen little knots of weary soldiers seated on the ground, resting from the fatigues of the day, and talking in a low but animated tone of the coming contest.

"Suddenly the tattoo sounded,—not loud and shrill, as on ordinary occasions, but in a subdued and cautious manner, as if fearful of being heard by the British, whose white tents might be seen in the distance. Obedient to the signal, the greater part of the soldiers assembled in front of the marquee of the commander, near the centre of the encampment.

"All was hushed in expectation: soon the tall form of Washington, wrapped in his military cloak, and attended by a large body of officers, was seen advancing in their midst. All present respectfully saluted them, to which they bowed courteously, and then took their seats upon camp-stools set for them by a servant. The venerable Joab Prout, chaplain of the Pennsylvania line, then stood upon the stump of a tree, and commanded silence—for it was the hour of prayer.

"Here was a scene of moral grandeur unsurpassed by anything in the annals of war. There, on that still, cool evening, when the sky was darkening into night, were assembled some eight thousand men; very many of whom would never look upon the glorious sunset again. From the humble cottages in the quiet valley of the Connecticut—from the statelier mansions of the sunny South—at the call of liberty, they had rushed to the tented field; and now, on the eve of battle, as brethren in heart and deed, had met together to implore the God of battles to smile upon their noble cause.

"Oh! it was a thrilling and an august sight! The mild and dignified Washington looked around him with proud emotion, and turned