General Grant's Home Life.

BY COL. FREDERICK D. GRANT,
(his eldest son),
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The earliest, tho not very distinct, recollection I
have of my father was when he was compelled to leave
his family, in 1852, to go to California. At that time
he was quartermaster of the Fourth Infantry, which
was ordered to the Pacific Coast. During his absence
my mother went to her father's. Shortly before this
my brother Ulysses was born at Bethel, O. The Negroes
on the Dent farm always called him "Buck-
eye," sometimes "Buck," because he was born in the
Buckeye State.

The Fourth Infantry came from different points on
the northern lakes and concentrated at Governor's
Island, New York Bay. Eight companies, under the
command of Lieutenant-Colonel Bonneville, embarked
for California on the steamship "Ohio" on July 5th,
1852.

My first perfect recollection of my father was on his
return from California in the fall of 1854. He came
to our home near St. Louis. The picture that is
framed in my mind is that of a gentleman driving up
to the gateway of the old homestead, "Whitehaven," a
few miles from the city. He was in a buggy, and
the vehicle was drawn by an old white horse. My
nurse was taking charge of me, for I was a small
child, and suddenly she exclaimed: "La me! there's
Mr. Grant."

From that time on I was with my father nearly all
the time until his death, except during the periods
when, as a youth, I was attending school, and the
period during the War when he was absent from home
in active service.

I am asked what kind of a disciplinarian my father
was in his family. His method was quite simple. He
first created in the small child a feeling of absolute
respect for him and belief in him. He ruled by kind-
ness. I can recall but two or three occasions when
he was compelled to be severe in his punishments.
Generally speaking, he simply expressed his disap-
proval of an action, and that disapproval, expressed
as it always was in a kindly way, was the severest pun-
ishment he could inflict upon his children. On the
other hand, his praise for any service we rendered, or
for the performance of any particular duty, was the
best reward we could receive.

A military man is often supposed to be, and some-
times is, a martinet not only in his official but in his
home life. There was nothing of this character
about my father. He ruled by love and gentleness,
and so gained the love of his children that we were
exceedingly careful to avoid doing things that would
meet with his disapproval. His mere expression of
disapproval was a more severe punishment than chas-
tisement.
My father was a very domestic man. He was rarely away from home except on business, and found his pleasure in his household. In my younger days he was a great reader and read much aloud for the benefit of the children. I remember that, in this way, he read to us all of Dickens's works, many of Scott's novels and other standard works of fiction. I recall the evenings when we all sat around in the family circle and enjoyed listening to these stories which pleased my father quite as much as they did the children. This reading always took place in the early part of the evening because we were sent to bed at a reasonable hour. My father would then read works of a more solid character. I remember that he was very fond of the works of Washington Irving, who was then one of the most prominent writers of the day. He read history, biography, travels, essays, etc., until the breaking out of the War, when he did not have time to read much of anything except the daily newspapers.

He was always a great newspaper reader. It was his habit to take several newspapers, to glance over them all, and to read one pretty closely. The paper to which he devoted the most attention varied according to the character of the news he desired to peruse, and the manner in which the report or the special article in which he was interested was presented. During the time he was President, for instance, he paid particular attention to the Washington papers. He had a clerk, also, cut from the leading newspapers of the country the editorials and other articles on leading topics of the day, in this way keeping himself informed as to public sentiment.

Aside from reading books, he was not much given to any special form of amusement. He was fond of playing cards at home with a few friends, and frequently indulged in a game of whist, euchre, Boston; and I have often played cribbage with him. He also played checkers and backgammon.

So far as outdoor amusement is concerned, all his life he was very fond of horses. Riding was his favorite mode of exercise. As a young man he was noted for his horsemanship. At the West Point Military Academy he could ride any horse, could perform more feats in that line than any other member of his class, and was admittedly one of the best riders West Point had ever known. There was a well-known horse in that neighborhood called "York." My father and a classmate, named Couts, were the only cadets who were able to ride the animal. My father was in the habit of jumping "York" over a bar five feet from the ground. The best leap ever made at West Point—certainly up to within a few years ago—is marked there as "Grant's upon York." It was the habit of the horse to approach the bar at a gentle gallop, then, crouching down like a cat, fly gracefully over it. It required a rider of strong nerve who could sit firmly in his seat while this flying steed made his famous leap. A classmate, it is said, one day remarked to my father, after he had successfully gone through the performance: "Sam, that horse will kill you some day." "Well," he replied, "I can die but once."

In the Mexican War he also increased his reputation as a daring horseman. He rode up the side of Chapultepec and then down a flight of steep stone steps to the port. When the colonel in command of the port saw the horse near by he asked my father how he expected to get the animal out. The answer was that he intended to ride him up the steps, and he did. Later on in life, at various times, he had
horses of his own. When he was stationed for a short time at Detroit, his favorite recreation was driving. He purchased for $200 a small jet-black mare, on the previous understanding that she would pace a mile in two, fifty-five, drawing two men in a buggy. The spirited animal finished the mile inside of the prescribed time. This horse, later on, won a race for $1,000, and was afterward sold for $1,400. My father never cared for hunting or shooting and took no interest in horse-racing, tho, at rare intervals he attended a race meeting, not more than three or four times.

One form of amusement of which he was fond was the theater. He always preferred funny plays, Joe Jefferson as Bob Acres in "She Stoops to Conquer," being one of his favorites. He had no special fondness for the theater except as a form of amusement and relaxation from the cares of life. He enjoyed Shakespearean representations when they were well played, and was a great admirer of the elder Booth. The younger Booth came on the stage when my father's time was so occupied that he rarely had an opportunity to attend the theater.

Tho he always enjoyed a cigar he never, until during the War, became an inveterate smoker. It may be said that he had the habit thrust upon him, and that, too, in a rather curious way. At the time of the capture of Fort Donelson he went down to see Admiral Foote, who had been wounded. The Admiral passed him a cigar. He lit it, and they were talking about what the fleet would do when he received a signal to go ashore. A messenger—a staff officer—infomed him about a movement of the enemy which demanded his immediate attention. Mounting his horse he rode rapidly to the front having this cigar in his mouth, issued his orders on the field, and the result was the fall of the fort. Some one, in writing about this battle, said that "General Grant appeared on the field with a cigar in his mouth." The news of the capture of Fort Donelson was received with the greatest enthusiasm in the North, and when people learned from this incident about the cigar, that "Grant was a smoker," admiring friends from all parts of the North sent him boxes of cigars, so that, in ten days, he must have had ten thousand cigars on hand. In this way he began to smoke much oftener than he had ever done before, and he kept up the habit to the close of his life.

New York City.