

Essay

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By Wm. G. Paterson.

Uncle Sam.

Who or what is this "Uncle Sam" we hear so much about? Whence did he come, and what is his character? To answer these questions will be the object of this essay.

We find Uncle Sam represented as a tall, lank man, with a hat on his head, which looks like an inverted Sugarloaf, while his hands ~~seem~~ in vain to fathom the depth of his pockets. In his countenance we can read keen foresight, shrewd business tact, and ^{the} aspect of one who looks after number one. Firmness and decision are seen in the closely-set lips and eagle glance of his eyes; at the same time he is not wanting in generosity and benevolence. So much for his appearance and character, and now we will look into his biography, and the principal events of his life.

In examining some musty documents of a bygone age, I came across the following account of the said gentleman's birth. There was a large Hotel, on the east side of Atlantic St in the City of Cosmos, kept by one, Dame Britannia. In process of time it became so crowded, that a portion of the boarders, headed by Columbia, the daughter of Britannia, removed to the opposite side of the street and started a Branch Establishment under the protection of the Older House. The New House prospered under the genial kindness of Columbia's treatment, and many flocked to rest under the shadow of her roof. This prosperity caused the heart of Britannia to become jealous, and she imposed taxes on the property of Columbia, in order to prevent an influx of strangers. Now Columbia thought she was old enough to manage her own affairs, and could no longer brook the interference of Dame Britannia. She remonstrated with her mother, and the result was an angry scene of altercation on both sides; and some

from words they came to blows. At the first blow struck by Dame Britannia, Uncle Sam sprang, fully equipped, from the brain of Columbia, who nearly fainted with exhaustion from the effects of the blow. But thro' it came her deliverance, for the first use Uncle Sam made of his long legs was to kick Dame Britannia over to her own side of the street, there to ruminate over lost property, wounded dignity, and to mature plans of revenge.

With the assistance of her son, Columbia commenced to organize her household, under different principles of government. Equal rights of men, and a representative system of government formed the basis on which the New House was established. Gathering her children around her of whom there were thirteen, she placed the Rules and Regulations of the Hotel before them with the request to sign their names to them in token of their obedience. All agreed, and placed their names to the document; Columbia and Uncle Sam were joint proprietors of the concern, and each of the children had a suite of apartments to look after. They chose one of their boarders, an excellent, honorable man, named Washington as their chief manager and director for four years and again re-elected him for four more. The Hotel prospered very fast, and there was a continual influx of boarders from the other side of the street; and the messengers of Columbia traversed over every street in the City of Cosmos. This peaceful state of affairs lasted for thirty years, and then came a short season of trouble, the cause of which was as follows.

The jealousy of Dame Britannia being excited by the unparalleled success of the New House, she at once resolved to thwart their operations to some extent. For this purpose she declared that no one had a right to the privilege of walking on Atlantic St, or any other street, except by suffrance from herself; and forthwith she seized on some of Columbia's errand boys and forced them into her service. This was more than either Columbia or Uncle Sam could stand, and in return U. S. seized on any of Britannia's messengers which might come in his way, and he happened to catch the most. Finally they came to a hand and hand struggle, and U. S. compelled Britannia

to acknowledge his rights in all the streets and thoroughfares of the City. Once more Britannia returned sullenly to her own side of the street to attend to some of her nearer neighbors who were threatening her with troubles.

After this, the prosperity of the New House rapidly increased; their business was enlarged, and numbers came thronging to the Hotel, where "Equal Rights" being emblazoned at the portal. From time to time, wings and additions were made to the house, for the accommodation of the new comers, over each of which some one presided, who was at once ~~respected~~^{regarded} as a member of Uncle Sam's family. This house was chiefly noticeable on account of the intelligence of its boarders, whether mechanics, farmers, or manufacturers; and here industry and invention thrived better than anywhere. For nearly thirty more years this uninterrupted peace and prosperity, when one day in the distance Uncle Sam beheld a man crying for help, and running towards him, while a tribe of Indians were in hot pursuit. Rallying a few of his brave boys he rushed forth and rescued the stranger, who at once desired to be taken in as a member of their family. Upon enquiring his name, he said it was Lone Star, that he came from the Gulf, that the Indians had pursued him and he had fled to seek refuge under the protection of Uncle Sam. This Lone Star was a troublesome fellow and ~~and~~ ^{after} cost Uncle Sam more than all the advantages he brought along with him.

Once more the City of Cosmos was at peace and Dame Britannia, laying aside all feelings of jealousy, determined to have a grand levee, and invite all her neighbors and friends. It was a sort of a Fair or Exhibition, in which all were to vie with one another in the production of works of the Arts and Sciences, Manufacture, Agriculture, and Mechanism; and prizes were to be awarded to the successful competitors. All came, and every thing passed off as merry as a marriage bell; prizes were distributed, and Uncle Sam bore away the palm for improvements in Agricultural Implements, and Ship-building.

But now we must come down to the present day and notice an awful calamity which befel Uncle Sam and his family, which now numbered thirty-four. A portion of the young folks thought they were abused and unjustly treated, because Uncle Sam would not allow them to take their servants and ~~let~~ occupy some spare rooms which he intended to let to some of his boarders. Also being of an indolent disposition, they cried out against the taxes imposed by him upon articles which they would rather buy than manufacture. They grew more and more noisy till finally when some of their brethren who formed the majority, elected a certain Abe Lincoln as chief manager and director, a man opposed to their views; Miss Caroline South with a toss of disdain, declared that she would set up for herself. She was immediately followed by ten brothers and sisters; viz Caroline North, Virginia, Tennessee, Ala. Bama, Louisa Anna, Lone Star, George, Flora, Ar. Kansas, and Miss Scipio; who formed themselves into a joint stock concern, and chose one named Jeff as their manager and director. Knowing well that when discovered there would be some trouble, they stole from Uncle Sam's larder provisions to last some time, and arms from his War Armory and money from his chest. They did not ~~at~~ anticipate much opposition however, they were going to frighten the other twenty-three loyal sons and daughters and Uncle Sam into compliance with their demands. They locked themselves up within their own rooms and prepared for defense. Uncle Sam when he heard of what they had done would not believe it; but went to the doors of each, and knocked asking to be admitted. Nothing but mocking laughter reached his ears; perplexed and grieved but not out of patience, he says to them: "Come now, dears, be good children, and come out of your rooms and go about your duties, and I shall forgive you." To which they replied that they had chosen their part and wished him to let them alone. He next shewed them that if they did not return to their allegiance, and conform to the Rules of the establishment, he would find means to force them to do so.

At this they jeered at and derided him, telling him to bring the whole brood of chickens, that they would whip them all easily. Finding entreaties and threats alike of no avail, he returned and harangued the rest of his family, who were boiling with indignation and desire to go and punish their dastardly brothers. At his call nearly all came promptly to his assistance, among the first were Empire, Bay, Buckeye, Keystone, and others, while a few who lived near the Rebels part of the house, hesitated, but finally lent their aid. Gathering together they made one impetuous rush on the doors; but alas were beaten back, wounded and bleeding. Again and again they tried it with more or less success, but by and by, they opened some of the doors, and got a foot hold in them. Various events happened, sometimes one side and sometimes the other was successful; each found out that it was to be no easy work, and each learned the courage and strength of its opponent. Just when things were the most unfortunate for Uncle Sam's side, a copperhead snake was seen to wind itself around the neck of Empire and commence to crush out his breath. The serpent appeared to have the head to say more, a body of wood, and a tail which reminded one of the windings of a stream or brook. All expected to see him strangled to death, but with a mighty effort he wrenched the snake from its resting place, and after breaking its back, threw it aside, no more to annoy him. But brighter days soon came and Uncle Sam was victorious. Now he has a foot in every room, and has almost driven the ingrates from some of the rooms. It won't take long to expel them entirely or bring them under, then once more the New House will open, present its attractions and out rival all others in splendor and magnificence.

This is the eighty-eighth year of Uncle Sam's age and he is still hale, hearty, and vigorous, and bids fair to live a thousand years or at least outlive Dame Britannia, who is now dreadful old. Now you have seen his portrait and character and heard the account of his life, do you recognize him? W. J. Peters