

# BOMBARDMENT OF WEST POINT

BY EDWARD B. CLARK

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**W**ASHINGTON.—At both army and navy headquarters in Washington the belief is that hazing is a thing of the past, both at the military and naval academies, despite a recent outbreak at West Point. Perhaps the officers are right, perhaps they are wrong, time and the human nature, or the devil, if you will, that is in boys may some day get working again and show itself in an outbreak of the old hazing custom.

Some time ago there was a hazing case at Annapolis and many cadets were implicated. They were all placed in arrest and the number of the arrested ones was so great that officials thought that a record had been broken, but such was not the case.

The officers had forgotten, if they ever knew it, that once upon a time the entire corps of cadets at the United States Military academy was placed in arrest and that it was necessary to break all army rules by drawing on the ranks of the culprits to secure men for guard duty, a duty ordinarily considered too honorable to be discharged properly by any man or body of men against whom charges of serious misconduct had been laid.

There was a riot at the United States Military academy at midnight, December 31, 1879. The authorities not only called the proceedings a riot, but they said that it was rebellious in its nature, and as the result of it Gen. John M. Schofield, superintendent of the academy, placed the 300 cadets under arrest.

The riotous demonstration at the academy on that night broke all academy precedents. It was planned by a dozen daredevil cadets of the first class who were to graduate the following June and who wished to mark in a manner unprecedented the ushering in of their graduating year.

About 20 cadets by a continued course of good conduct had succeeded in securing leave for two days at Christmas. When they returned from their short furlough they brought with them in valise and in trunk every variety of fireworks known to the ingenuity of the manufacturer—Roman candles, skyrocket, cannon crackers and other noise and fire making articles. They were carefully hidden away in the mattresses of the cadets all over the barracks. For nearly a week the boys slept on veritable mines of powder.

It was curious that the authorities at the academy did not note and inquire into the fact that at least 30 cadets "cut" supper every night for a week prior to New Year's eve. It is dark at supper time in late December, and under cover of the darkness the cadets detailed for the purpose made trips to the barracks scores of round shot, pounds in weight, which had been made years before for use in the old muzzle-loading field and siege guns. The round shot were hidden in the "cock loft" of the barracks.

The cadets who had acted as caisson corporals at light artillery drill had managed to abstract, unseen of the authorities, some 20 or 40 canvas bags of powder. These were stowed away in the chimneys which opened into the unused fireplaces in the cadets' quarters.

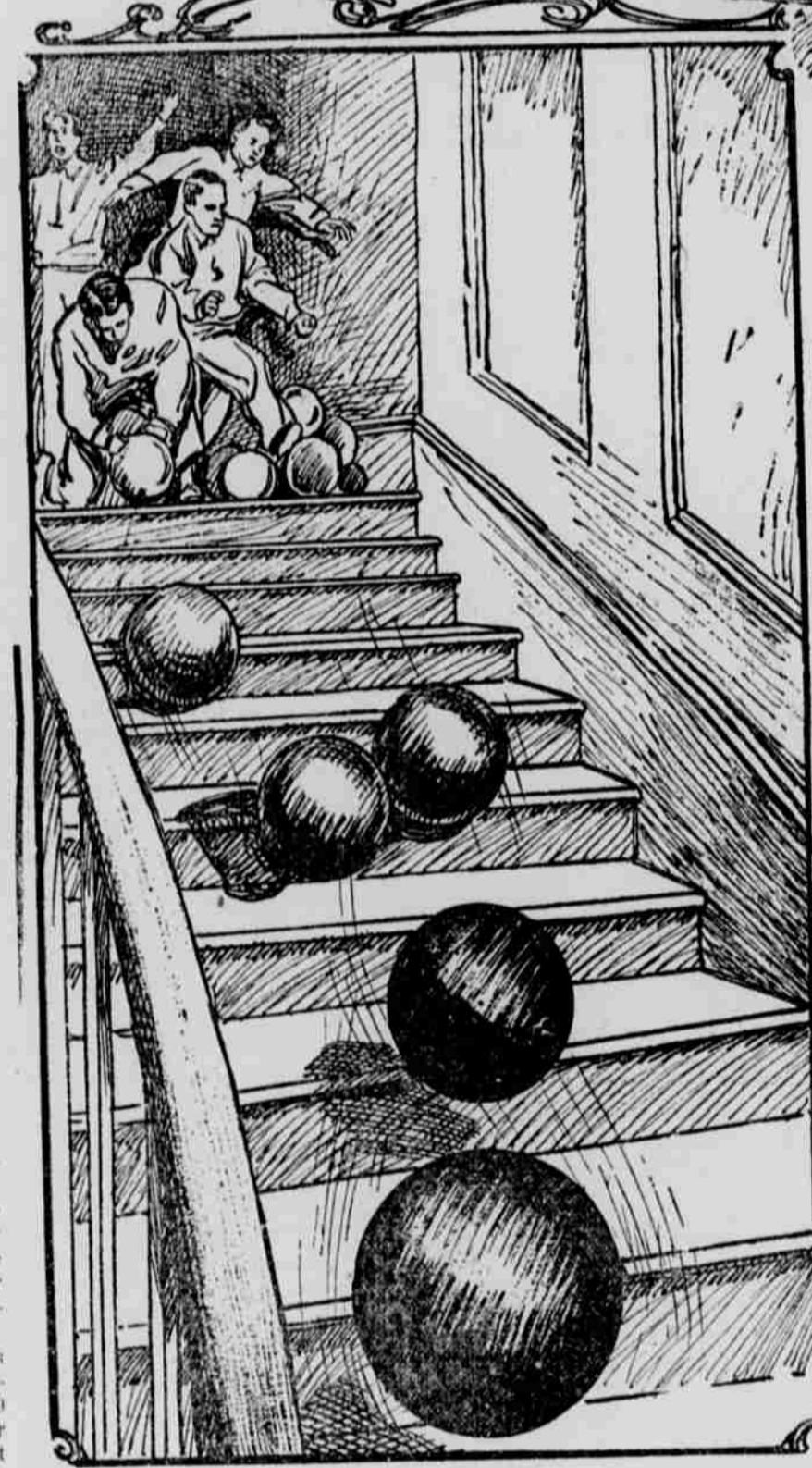
Ten first classmen "fell out" from supper on New Year's eve. They stole under cover of darkness down to Battery Knox and there they loaded the old smooth-bore cannon which had been fringing harmlessly over the Hudson for a quarter of a century. From Battery Knox the cadets went by way of Filtration walk to the seacoast battery, and there they loaded the 20-ton smooth-bore, the biggest gun at that time in the service. The smaller pieces of the seacoast batteries also were loaded—doubly loaded were a better way to put it—and then the six 30-pound Parrotts of the siege battery were fed with powder. Into the vent of every piece of the three batteries friction primers were inserted and lanyards were attached ready for the pulling. Then the cadets went back to barracks.

The bell in the tower of the old academic building tolled the first stroke of midnight. Before the second stroke came there was a roar from the river front, followed by another roar, another and yet another. Then there came a shock that shook the plateau and sent the echoes rolling from Cro' Nest to Fort Putnam and far away to the hill of Mad Anthony Wayne. The old 20-ton smooth-bore, doubly, if not trebly, charged, had spoken. Then came the sharp reports of the Parrotts and then the snappy bark of the field pieces.

Simultaneously with the roars from the river batteries there came the hissing and screaming of rockets, etc., fired from every

barracks window. The balls from Roman candles broke through the branches of the trees edging the parade ground and dropped their sparks over the roadway. Cannon crackers fell and exploded at the feet of the passing enlisted men sentinels, and the din of the night was increased by the crashing of round shot as cadets rolled them down the iron-bound stairs from cockpit to the basement through the echo-breeding halls of barracks.

The cadets who had fired the great guns of the batteries made better than "double time" back to barracks



and entered by the one door which had been left unbarred. The cadets in barracks had fastened every other door and every window on the ground floor, effectually barring the officers from entering. Within three minutes of the first crash from Battery Knox officers began to swarm out of their quarters to head for the area of barracks, where they found the officer of the day dodging the fiery balls of a score of Roman candles.

Gen. Schofield, roused from his slumbers, hastily dressed and trotted across the parade ground in the wake of his juniors. The general howled an order at the officer in charge: "Sound the long roll."

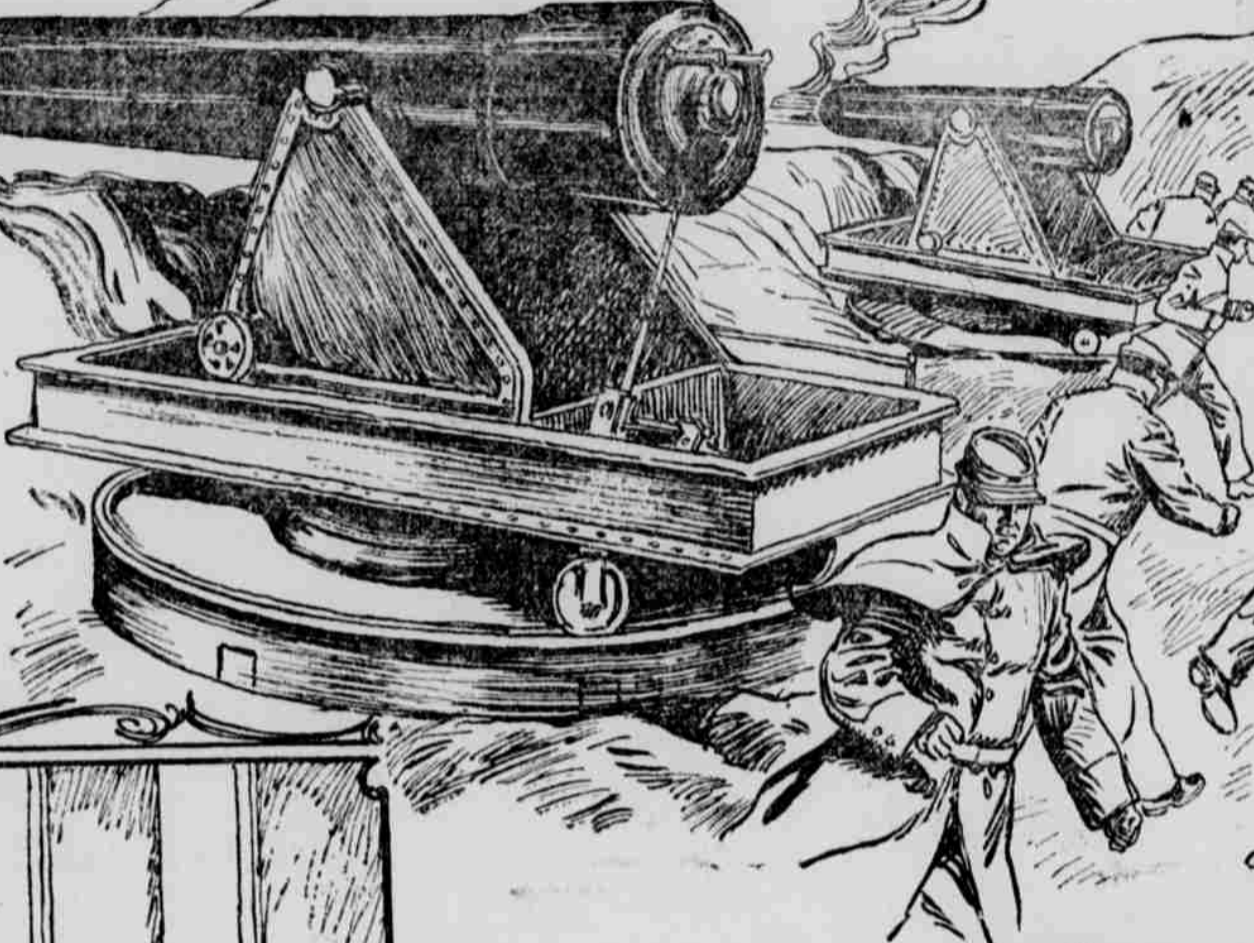
The officer in charge replied: "Can't do it; they've stolen the drums."

All this while the night was full of noise and the air was full of fire. Finally everything burnable was burned up and the cadets had tired of the task of carrying round shot up the stairs only to roll them down again. The enlisted drummer boys found their instruments and it may do no harm at this late day to say that they had known where they were all the time. Long roll was sounded, the barracks doors were thrown open and the cadets fell into line and answered to their names.

Every privilege was taken away from the cadets for three months, but not one was dismissed, for if the guilty had been punished not a boy would have been left to the service of the corps of cadets.

Maj. Lyman Watson Vere Kennon of the infantry, who is the man who built the Benquet road in the Philippine islands, one of the most remarkable examples of engineering skill and of quick construction performance of recent times.

Col. Kennon (he is a major of regulars, but was a colonel in the volunteer forces) went to the Philippines early in the war game, and he did not leave until he had played his hand for six years, and there are few officers of the United States army who have a like record to their credit. Kennon was an aid on Gen. Crook's staff in all his western campaigns, and



to-day he is a seasoned, experienced soldier, if the country holds one.

Col. Kennon is an example of the class of men who develop gravity and solidity of character after they have expended a fund of mischief and animal spirits greater several times than that which is allotted to the average boy. It is doubtful if one of this staid soldier's subordinates could to-day, by the wildest flight of his imagination, picture to himself his commanding officer holding on like grim death with six other cadets to the edge of a blanket while from its center a "plebe" was soaring skyward. Yet for this offense Kennon was once suspended from the military academy.

Somewhere out in the northwest is Maj. John D. McDonald, whose service has brought him fame and who looks as though he couldn't break a military rule with a sledge hammer. Not long ago Maj. McDonald was serving in the Philippines as a near neighbor to Col. E. J. McClernand, who was military governor of one of the provinces.

Probably McDonald never went across the Philippine fields to call upon McClernand without thinking of the six months' confinement he underwent as a cadet because he had an idea that he could hoodwink the man who rose to the position of an officer presiding over a Filipino province.

With McDonald were several other cadets who thought that they could outdo previous academy deeds of daring. Some of them got caught, and some of them didn't. Among those who were willing to make the attempt were one Hewitt of New York, one John Breckenridge, a junior member of that famous family, one Fairfax Montague, whose name savors of Virginia, and one other cadet, whom modesty requires shall be nameless.

The penalty at West Point for going "off limits" is dismissal, and the same dose is given to the unlucky cadet who is found to be absent from his quarters for more than 20 minutes between taps and reveille. A young woman living in Newburgh, one of West Point's "summer girls," knowing these rules and penalties, jocosely asked several first classmen to be present at a party to be given at her home, 12 miles up the river, on Thanksgiving evening. They resolved to accept. They succeeded in getting hold of some money and in bribing a steam launch captain to agree to take them to Newburgh after taps, when there was an inspection, and to get them back in time for reveille roll call.

Many a cadet from the period of Lee had been to Benny Havens', a mile away from the post, time after time, but such a trip as the one proposed was daring beyond all precedent. The chief danger lay in the possibility of a dark-lantern inspection of quarters while the runaways were absent. There had not been such an inspection for some little time, and this fact made the plotters bold.

McDonald finally evolved a brilliant scheme. It was to get certain other cadets to sleep in the absentees' bunks and to pass for them in the necessarily hurried lantern inspection. This plan would, of course, involve the substitutes being found absent from their own quarters, but it was arranged, through means unnecessary to state, to have them awakened at once in case an inspection took place, and hurried back to their bunks. When a cadet is found absent he is inspected for every 15 minutes until he returns.

Under the arrangement made, of course, the runaways would be supposed to be sound asleep and their substitutes absent, and it was for the latter that the later inspection would be made. It was figured out by the



conspirators that nothing worse could happen to the substitutes than being reported for 15 minutes' absence, which meant nothing more than a few demerit marks.

Silence and sleep reigned through the old stone quarters. Far away up the Hudson sped the steam launch bearing the pleasure-seeking cadets, in whose bunks, with their heads well covered with blankets, lay their self-sacrificing comrades. There was an inspection that night. It was made by three officers—Leverett M. Walker, Benjamin Randolph and E. J. McClernand. Randolph and Walker found two empty bunks and ordered the officer of the day to inspect for the absentees every 15 minutes. He did this duty and found the empty bunks filled. Two of the cadets dancing way up where the Newburgh lights twinkled were safe.

McClernand found in his division of barracks one empty bunk. It was that of Fairfax Montague. McClernand knew a thing or two and was a disciplinarian. After finding Montague absent he turned every cadet over in his bunk threw the light of the lantern full in his face and then looked at the name over the alcove to see if face and name coincided. McDonald and Montague—McDonald on the printed alcove slip and Montague in the bunk—did not agree.

The Virginian was ordered back to his quarters in arrest, and McDonald, waiting away all unconscious under the shadow of the flag pole at Washington's headquarters, was inspected for every 15 minutes until he reached his quarters six hours later. He was saved from the extreme penalty for his offense, but he had six months' confinement in barracks in which to think over his part in an escapade that brought about nightly inspection of barracks for years thereafter. Possibly McClernand when in the Philippines and meeting McDonald was glad that for once military discipline miscarried.

**Curfew for Adults.**

As soon as the ordinance is signed by the mayor and the required publication is made, it will be unlawful for any adult to be in the streets of Paragould between the hours of midnight and 4 a. m., punishable with a fine if a good excuse is not given.

A curfew law for children already is in effect, the youngsters scampering home with the ringing of the nine o'clock bell. The law for adults, however, is an innovation.—Paragould correspondence Arkansas Gazette.

## GHOST OF THE POET DANTE

Said to Object to Anyone Using Room in Florence, Italy, Where He Was Born.

Florence, Italy.—Recent occurrences in the house in this town where the poet Dante was born probably will make other people in the more prosaic walks chary of taking up their abode under roofs which have formerly sheltered more celebrated people—or at least will make them very careful what trade they pursue when inhabiting such famous homes. The one trade most to be avoided in such circumstances seems to be that of blacksmith, judging from the uncomfortable—not to say painful, experiences which the smith now living in



House Where Dante Lived.

Dante's house, whose shop once formed the bedroom of the poet, has just had.

Besides most mysterious noises which were heard all over the house, sufficiently disquieting to all good Florentines, and uncanny "carryings-on" by his implements, which acquired the uncomfortable habit of rising from where they had been laid and placing themselves safely out of reach, causing some very explicit remarks by the blacksmith and his attendants, the most alarming manifestation of the presence of a ghostly visitor made itself felt literally the other day. A big hammer started mysteriously from the bench and dealt the blacksmith a heavy blow on the head. History doesn't record his remarks on this occasion, but everybody will sympathize with him, whatever he said.

After a few days of exciting episodes, of which the above are a few examples, the inhabitants of the house thought they had had enough and the two assistants of the blacksmith, who are believed to be powerful mediums and the innocent causes of these phenomena, decided to hold a seance. They therefore summoned two other mediums and sat down to discover the wishes of the spirit, which was evidently as much disturbed as themselves. The spirit obligingly complied with their wishes and on being summoned in the usual way revealed himself as the ghost of the poet Dante and handed over to them a piece of parchment covered with writing.

An examination of this document disclosed the fact that the spirit had distinct objections to any one occupying the room in which he was born; furthermore, he desired that two assistants, who were mediums, should be dismissed. Needless to say, these commands were attended to with alacrity by the good blacksmith, who had no desire to feel his heaviest hammer descending on his head again.

All Florence has been agog over the affair and the blacksmith became the most sought-after man at the tavern where he was wont to take his evening glass. His advice to every one is, first, never to take a house in which any celebrated person has chanced to live, and, secondly, if you must, above all, don't be a blacksmith in it.

### Mrs. Howe's Old Age.

To me has been granted a somewhat unusual experience in life. Ninety full years have been measured off to me, their lessons and opportunities unbridled by wasting disease or gnawing poverty. I have enjoyed general good health, comfortable circumstances, excellent company and the incitements to personal effort which civilized society offers its members. For this life and its gifts, I am, I hope, devoutly thankful. I came into this world a helpless and ignorant bit of humanity. I have found in it many helps towards the attainment of my full human stature, material, mental, moral. In this slow process of attainment, many features have proved transient. Visions have come and gone. Seasons have blossomed and closed, passions have flamed and faded. Something has never left me. My relation to it has suffered many changes, but it still remains, the foundation of my life, light in darkness, consolation in ill-fortune, guide in uncertainty.—Julia Ward Howe, in Harper's Bazar.

### Main Light with Him.

"They are still talkin' about the sun's light dyin' out," some one said to Brother Williams, and his comment was brief and expressive.

"Dat ain't worryin' me at all. De main question with me is—when is my own light gwine out?"—Atlanta Constitution.