

Speaker Henderson's Chiefest Hobby

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Setting aside questions of public policy, there is no subject upon which David Brenner Henderson has more pronounced views than upon the importance to young men of thorough training in the art of disputation. This is quite natural in a man whose exceptional abilities as a public speaker and a debater have been such powerful aids to advancement as they have in Colonel Henderson's case. It is true that as speaker of the house of representatives, one of the most difficult bodies in the world to control, he will need to bring comparatively untried faculties into play, but beyond a doubt his speeches and debates on the floor of the house, in conventions and on the platform have been a special training which will be of immense advantage to him in his new place. His predecessor, Thomas Brackett Reed, was all the stronger as presiding officer because of his skill in debate.

"There was no progressive American neighborhood without its debating society when I was young," said Colonel Henderson the other day. "Some communities boasted of two or more and the young man who took no interest in their meetings was decidedly at a disadvantage in more ways than one among his associates. Every sort of topic was discussed by the youthful debaters and with quite as much earnestness as if the decision of the judges at the close of each dispute were binding upon the whole world. At first blush you may not perceive how general and thorough is the training received, how wide the range of information acquired by the young man who throws himself heart and soul into general debating, but a little reflection will convince you that the ability to express his views is only one of the advantages he derives.

"One of the most desirable things about regular debating is that the speakers are forced to read extensively and study deeply. In no other way can they hope to stand a chance of making a good showing. Such reading and study is far more beneficial than ordinary preparation for class room work. In the one case he must take the initiative, must bring out every possible point in favor of his contention in order to sustain his side of the dispute. Besides, he must understand all the points likely to be advanced on the other side that he may the more readily answer them. In the other case he has only to acquaint himself sufficiently with the subject to make a fairly satisfactory recitation possible. It is not expected that he will take the initiative at all; the instructor does that.

"The higher institutions of learning in this country could do the young men of America no greater service than to make a specialty of instruction in disputation and public speaking. It would increase the hold of the students vastly upon the things they know and so would be of great advantage even to those who do not enter public life; to those who do it would be simply invaluable. The simple power of thinking on his feet is something which many a man has had to learn long after his school days have passed, but it is something that must of necessity be acquired by every youngster who attends a debating school of the sort that was common in Iowa in the '50's. Nowadays few such organizations are to be found anywhere, I am afraid."

Speaking on Both Sides.

When Colonel Henderson was a boy, living at home with his father's family on "Henderson's Prairie," the debating school was his greatest passion, and undoubtedly he owes much to the experience he acquired then. There was a debating society in the home neighborhood which held its meetings in the "Henderson school house;" there was another in the neighborhood to the west, and yet another to the south. As the school house in which the societies in the adjoining neighborhoods met were within easy riding distance he joined all three and gave up three nights each week to disputation. Naturally, he had to devote virtually all his spare time to preparing himself for the debates. This gave him little opportunity for the ordinary amusements of youngsters of his own age, for often the questions at issue before the three debating societies were of the most diverse nature and it was his practice always to inform himself as thoroughly on the opposite side as on his own.

On one occasion the question to be debated was very intricate, and, moreover, one regarding which a good deal could be said on both sides. Young Henderson noticed this in his reading, and soon after he arrived at the school house was nightly glad he had. It was customary to have three speakers or more on each side, the question generally being worded so that one side took the affirmative and the other the negative. Henderson's reputation had come to be such that he was generally chosen, as on this occasion, to open the debate in support of the affirmative. Naturally, the next best debater in the society was invariably selected to lead for the negative. Henderson had already enjoyed some close disputes with the young man who was to oppose him that night, and was wondering how he could best him, for the negative side was at least as strong as the affirmative. But when the meeting was called to order it was announced that the leader of the negative was not present and would not be there. In the regular course of events the duty of answering Henderson on behalf of the negative contention would have devolved upon the

second speaker on that side, but that individual declined to accept the responsibility and so did the next speaker. In the circumstances it was at first proposed to give up the debate. Before deciding upon that course, however, the presiding officer suggested that perhaps Henderson would consent to lead both sides.

He demurred for a moment, but on second thought concluded to accept the proposition, and then ensued a debate the like of which had never before been heard in the little school house. For the affirmative side Henderson made so many strong points that a decision in its favor appeared to be a foregone conclusion, and when he had finished the speakers who were to support him in opposition to himself felt that he had hardly treated them fairly. After a brief interval for rest he arose again and proceeded to answer his own arguments. He seemed fairly to outdo himself, and when he sat down the second time not one person in the room could decide which side had fared best at his hands. The feeling of uncertainty was not dispelled by the subsequent speakers on either side, and the result, in fact, was a draw, the judges being entirely unable to decide as to the weight of evidence adduced.

A Paternal Admonition.

A few hours after his enlistment in 1861 David B. Henderson went home to talk the situation over with the family. The possibility that some member thereof might go to the front had often been discussed with bated breath, though, as in so many other instances, it had seemed exceedingly remote hitherto. But David had transformed possibility into certainty and his announcement was like a bombshell in the household.

Besides him there were five Henderson sons—James, Thomas, George, William and Alexander. As soon as David had explained the situation a family council was called. Every one understood that David's step was irrevocable and therefore no one sought to discuss its wisdom. Apparently none of the sons doubted it; at all events every one of them was eager to follow David's example. But this wouldn't do, of course. The father had passed the age limit and therefore he must stay at home, but it would be impossible for him to carry on the necessary farming operations alone and some of the sons must remain. It was David himself who pointed this out. Not all could fight, he said; the industries of the country must go on despite the war and the duty of the loyal stay-at-home was as noble as that of the soldier. This was clear enough and the night was given over to a heated discussion as to who should not enlist. It was finally agreed that three should stay and three should go, the selection of soldiers and stay-at-homes to be based upon considerations of sound sense. Alexander, next older than David (who was the youngest), had always been closest to him, and Alexander declared with flashing eyes that no matter who else remained at home he should go if David did. But the final decision was that James and George, who were married men, should stay at home. Thomas and William should follow David's example and enlist, while Alexander should remain with his parents to help work the old farm. He finally yielded, though protesting bitterly.

It was 6 in the morning when the family council was ready to disperse. Mother Henderson had sat weeping all night because David, "her baby," was going to the front, and she remained weeping while Father Henderson knelt and prayed aloud at the end of the deliberations. No member of the Henderson family ever forgot that prayer. Father Henderson habitually spoke with a broad Scottish burr, but in prayer or exhortation he generally dropped it for "pulpit English," clear and forcible in construction. In the gray dawn of that fall morning his diction was clearer and stronger than usual, and at the conclusion of his prayer when all arose from their knees the mental atmosphere was calm and clarified.

Then, taking David by the arm, Father Henderson led him from the house and out behind the barn. There the two had a long talk, at the close of which the elder of the two men said solemnly:

"Now, David, I am sure you don't yet appreciate what you have done; you don't realize what you have to face. But you are doing what is right and I have only to say this: Don't falter. I don't want to see your face again unless you can come home with honor."

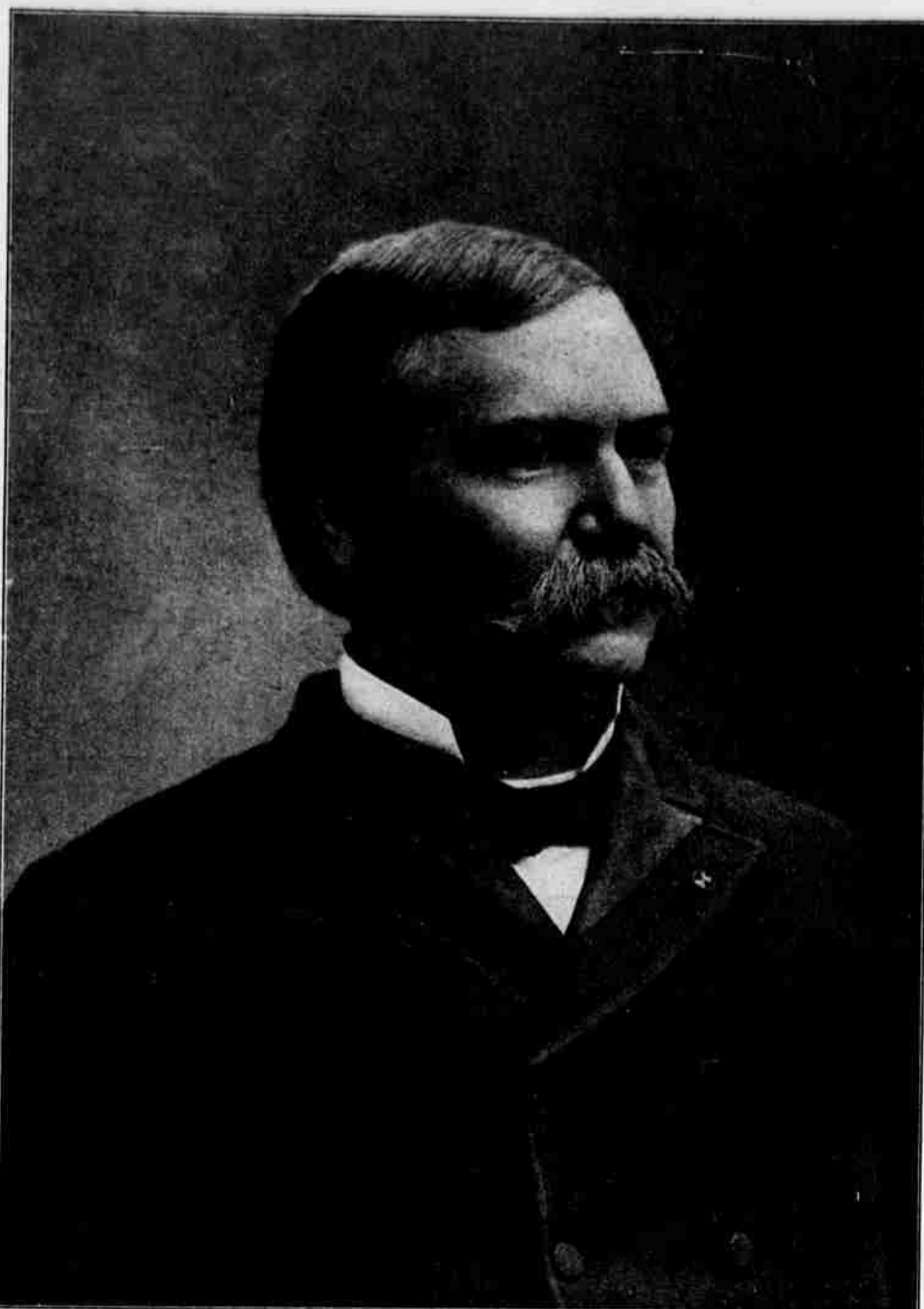
Then the father kissed the son and they shook hands with a grip that was like a clasp of steel.

A Memory in Battle.

The memory of that paternal admonition remained with David B. Henderson all through his soldiering days. It was weeks after his company—in which he ranked as first lieutenant—had gone south before he was under fire, at Fort Donelson. Colonel Henderson had often confessed to his intimates that the crucial test of facing death, of advancing against flying shot and shell and singing bullets gave him a strange, uncertain feeling. But above the roar of the guns, the screaming of the shells and the song of the bullets he seemed to hear the solemn, measured tones of his father:

"Don't falter. I don't want to see your face again unless you can come home to me in honor."

Then there arose from the young lieutenant's heart an inarticulate prayer, while



THE SPEAKER OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH CONGRESS—DAVID B. HENDERSON OF IOWA.

in wordless self-communion he reasoned out the situation something to this effect: "You are in the place you should be in. You are doing your duty. Face it. Don't falter."

Then all fear rolled away, and when he turned to encourage his men, some of whom showed pale faces and quivering, ashen lips, he was cheerful, almost smiling, and it was given to him to shout the order in ringing tones:

"Close up, men! Close up!"

Then, with a dash, they made for the breastworks, here and there a man falling by the side of their young leader till eleven had been stricken. Just at the moment of triumph Henderson felt a stinging pain in the lower part of the face, there was a plentiful gush of blood—he had been shot the first time he was under fire. His jaw was broken and it was thought for a time that he must surely die. However, a furlough spent at Henderson's Prairie, where he had the care of his mother, pure air to breathe and plenty of good country fare brought him round right speedily and he was soon at the front again. In the battle of Shiloh his brother Thomas, the second son of the family, was killed instantly, shot through the heart in the thick of the fight at the locality which has since been termed the "Hornet's Nest."

No two men have ever worked together in closer harmony than Colonel Henderson and Senator Allison. The senator likes to tell how and when he first saw Henderson. It was when the latter took his famous band of student recruits to Dubuque.

"Someone said one morning that a countryman wished to see me," says the senator, who was in charge of the Dubuque recruiting station. "I asked that he be shown in, and a tall, clean-limbed, clear-eyed youngster entered. He had a lot of recruits with him and he said his name was Henderson. I looked at the recruits; they were all right. Henderson had not only brought those boys in on his own responsibility, but he had done it with almost no expense to anyone; his enthusiasm had been so infectious that the farmers had been glad to feed and transport them free."

That was the sort of chap Allison was looking for and the friendship then begun has never been broken. After the war was over it was Allison who advised Henderson in politics and law; it was Allison who suggested to Henderson that he should run for congress and backed him up in the canvass; they have been together in every campaign ever since and could not feel bound together in closer friendship were they born of the same mother.

I. D. M.

Crushed

Detroit Free Press: Spilkins is a college graduate. The other evening he was calling on a young lady and they were talking over the results of the Saturday foot ball games.

"Were you a foot ball player, Mr. Spilkins?" asked the young lady.

"Oh, yes, indeed. I was quite a star in my day."

"Oh, you were. One of those falling stars, I suppose." Spilkins went home early.

Reminiscent of the Late Governor Saunders

The veteran Ottumwa newspaper man, S. B. Evans, has recalled the following interesting story of the late Governor Alvin Saunders, which has found its way into print in the Conservative, from which it is reproduced:

"The recent death of Alvin Saunders, ex-governor of Nebraska, calls to mind a peril which the writer shared with the governor about nineteen years ago in New Mexico. At that time the railway had not reached Santa Fe, but Espanola, a town of inchoate civilization, was the terminus, and from there to Santa Fe, a distance of about thirty miles, the old-fashioned stage made the distance. Governor Saunders and one or two of his friends had been at Santa Fe and were on their way home by the way of Denver, and they were on the stage. The writer's destination was also Espanola, thence he designed going to the Indian village of Santa Clara, where he was to procure a party of Indians and explore the mountains westward.

"The stage, with four horses attached, rolled out of the sleepy old town one summer afternoon in the rainy season, and two hours behind time; the weather when we started was fine; not a cloud in the skies, but before we had reached the San Juan river a violent storm came on, flooding the country with water and made the roads heavy and as muddy as they could be in that land of sand and clay. We did not, therefore, reach the San Juan river until after dark and the "river" that is ordinarily but a dry arroyo with scarce enough water in it to satisfy the thirst of a mule, we found to be a raging torrent, 100 yards in width, its tawny surface agitated, angry and forbidding.

"The driver hesitated and seemed loth to urge his horses into the current; those who knew most about the treacherous stream, its quicksands and the murky waters, were those who seemed most willing to camp on the shore and wait for the waters to subside; we did wait a time and at last the passengers, of whom there were eight or ten, voted to go on and the driver gathered up the reins, cracked his whip and encouraged the leaders of his team to plunge in. The waters were surcharged with mud and sand brought down from the mountains and each one realized that if the stage were overturned there would be narrow chances indeed for anyone to swim out with clothing saturated in such a mixture of mud and water; all depended, therefore, upon crossing the stream without turning over.

"I was sitting on the same seat with Governor Saunders, he on the left and I on the right, or that side which first encountered the current. I deemed that I had a most fortunate position and had made up my mind that in case the stage should turn over I would jump so as to throw myself out of the entanglements and thus escape from being rolled over and over inside that coach

and drowned like a rat in a trap. I was quite confident I could escape according to the plan I had laid, but remember now how sorry I felt for the big governor who would have no chance to jump. The stage rolled, tumbled, groaned and trembled and several times it seemed to be evenly balanced between turning over and holding on; the water leaked in at the bottom and rolled over in a wave over the side of the coach and I presume everybody prayed for deliverance; the driver, however, was a superb fellow; he kept cool, cracked his whip, encouraged his horses and the faithful beasts at last pulled us out of the jaws of death.

"By this time it was pitch dark and lanterns were brought out; the coach ascended a hill and the assistant driver from the station who had met us at the ford, went ahead with the lantern to explore the way. The driver at last yelled out: "You fellows who want to save your skins and bones pile out of that coach for hell's a poppin' all round here!" We fellows piled out, the big governor at the last and the coach had not gone fifty yards further when it turned over and over and disappeared in the depths of a ravine. We all walked on to the station of San Juan and it was there that I last saw ex-Governor Saunders."

About Noted People

Judge Isaac Story of Somerville, Mass., a relative of the famous commentator of the constitution, is the second oldest judge in his state. The other day he celebrated his eighty-first birthday in vigorous health. He has been on the bench twenty-six years and rarely missed a session of court.

Robert Barr, the novelist, has escaped the early trials through which, according to tradition, most literary men must pass. He says that his first article "was gracefully accepted" by the first magazine to which it was sent, and that unvarying success followed. His only struggles, he adds, were with the English language.

Judge Albert G. Norrell of Utah, formerly of Mississippi, speaking recently in his home state of Congressman-elect Brigham H. Roberts, said: "Roberts is really a man of considerable ability. Physically he is one of the finest-looking men I ever saw, and were it not for his plurality of wives he would be regarded as a good citizen anywhere."

Richard E. Brooks, the sculptor, has completed for the Boston city hall a series of medallion portraits of the living ex-mayors of Boston. They will be hung in the mayor's office and take the place of the portraits hitherto customary. They represent Dr. Samuel Green, General A. P. Martin, Thomas N. Hart, Nathan Matthews, Jr., Edwin U. Curtis and the approaching "ex-mayor," Josiah Quincy.

H. A. London of North Carolina, who was a member of Confederate General Bryan Grimes' staff, reiterates in a recently published letter that General Grimes planned and commanded the last charge at Appomattox, and that General W. R. Cox's North Carolina brigade fired the last volley there. The distinction has been claimed for other southern troops, notably the sharpshooters of General Evans' division, under command of Captain William Kaigler.

Spain is forgetting the disasters of the war in the tragedy of the retirement of the most famous of bullstickers, Guerrita de Cordova, before whose sword over 3,000 victims have fallen. He is still in the prime of life, and his retirement is said to be due to religious conversion. He attended a religious festival and as he gazed at the image of the Virgin he was overcome by a sense of the blood he had spilt and of the injuries he had brought upon his colleagues. So he went home and snipped off the lock of hair that marks the torador.

An incident which is probably unique in Mr. Chamberlain's parliamentary experience occurred during the special session of parliament. At one stage of the colonial secretary's three hours' defense of his policy in the Transvaal he suddenly lost the thread of the argument he was pursuing, looked up at the ceiling with a curious expression, and then exclaimed: "Where was I?" Mr. Balfour, in an undertone, supplied the cue and Mr. Chamberlain, with a jaunty "Oh, yes," immediately recovered himself and resumed at the point where he left off. The incident was so rapid in its action that it doubtless escaped general observation.

One of Mr. Hobart's neighbors tell how the vice president made his first fee as a lawyer. He was employed to write the will of a well known manufacturer of Paterson, who was wealthy. Asked his fee, Mr. Hobart, the legal fledgling, replied: "One hundred dollars." It was from this that he received a significant hint how to succeed as a lawyer. The manufacturer was well pleased with his attorney and turning to his desk drew out a package of bank checks that had come in during the regular course of business. Taking up one for \$800 he indorsed it and handed it to Mr. Hobart. "With this start in life," said the narrator of the story, "Mr. Hobart married the daughter of Socrates Tuttle, who has been his helpmeet through all the years that have followed. Years afterward Mr. Hobart learned that the granddaughter of his first client was about to be married, and that the family had been reduced to financial straits. He sent to her his check for \$150 to assist in purchasing her trousseau and took steps to provide other members of the family with employment."