

The mere possession of a Stieff piano puts the seal of supreme approval on the musical taste of its owner. It may cost a little more, but the recollection of quality remains long after price is forgotten.

PLAIN PIANO TALK

The New England Conservatory of Music has bought about one hundred and fifty Stieff pianos. The last order for fifty was placed this fall. Twenty-five have been delivered and twenty-five to be delivered this month.

TO BE CONTINUED

PIANO GOODNESS

The following is a part of a series of articles that will not only prove interesting to those contemplating the purchase of a piano, but to those who have bought, and readers in general.

After all is said, the piano itself must prove by use its worth and standing as a work of art.

The Stieff piano of to-day resembles very little the model of years ago. Yet from that day to this each model embodied every improvement made from year to year; therefore, it was always one of the best pianos of its time. To-day the STIEFF piano is excelled by none, equaled by few, and in its beautiful singing tone is embodied a character of its own, a character with so strong an individuality it seems almost human under the hands of a master.

A poor piano is always unsatisfactory. Lewis Plaidy, one of the greatest teachers of his time, always advised his pupils to buy the best piano. If their means be limited, economize in other ways and buy a piano of a known reputation and one whose name is its guarantee.

It is so easy to be imposed upon in the purchase of a piano, more so, perhaps, than in any other article you buy. The mere fact that pianos look alike, cheap ones often being more attractive in appearance than the higher grades, makes the purchase more confusing, especially to the majority of buyers, who do not know the difference in pianos, nor realize how much depends on the name of the maker.

The name of CHAS. M. STIEFF on a piano manufactured by Chas. M. Stieff guarantees the highest standard of excellence. Our business was established sixty-five years ago, when manufacturers vied with each other to produce the best. Our firm's greatest ambition is to produce a piano that cannot be excelled.

"Continued next week."

Christmas Orders for Stieff Pianos Should be Placed at Once. Don't Delay. Order To-Day

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C. H. WILMOTH, MANAGER.

Manufacturer of the Artistic Stieff, Shaw and Stieff Self-Player Piano

THE MAXTON CONVENTION

Red Buck Tells of His Experience in a Republican District Meeting in 1896.

I have been asked to tell, or retell, the story of the famous Maxton convention referred to in The Observer several days ago.

In 1896 the Populists, managed by Senator Marion Butler, and the Republicans by Senator Jeter C. Pritchard, were standing together in North Carolina for mutual benefit. The Democrats were down and out. Ex-Judge Daniel L. Russell, of Wilmington, and Hon. Oliver H. Dockery, of Mangum, both of the sixth congressional district, were the candidates for the Republican nomination for Governor, which, at that time, meant an election. Charlotte, Union, Anson, Richmond, Robeson, New Hanover and other counties were in the Shoestring district. The Republicans were very busy. That being before the negro was disfranchised, the Republican party in this immediate section of the State was largely composed of Afro-Americans. A county convention was held here in the city hall, and it was as black as Africa. Of course there was a sprinkling of white men in it, but nine out of ten of the delegates were colored. The Dockeryites and the Russellites came close to blows here. There were rumors of wars, but no blood was shed. Every county in the district had had a similar convention, and named delegates to the Maxton meeting.

The all-absorbing question was: "Are you for Dockery or Russell?" Mr. Dockery was known as the "Great Warhorse of the Pee Dee," and Mr. Russell as "The Mighty Dan of New Hanover."

The Maxton convention promised a live newspaper story or two. Unless the hand writing on the wall had been misread there was blood on the moon. Some sort of a fight seemed certain if the delegates of the shoestring district ever got together.

THE NICKNAME OF RED BUCK.

It was at Maxton, as a common reporter, that I got my nickname, Red Buck, now a not de plume. When the fight became warm I bolted without waiting ceremonies.

We, the Mecklenburg delegates to the district convention and L. The Observer's reliance for the story of the day, left Charlotte on the early train, a bright morning, and journeyed eastward. At Monroe the Union delegation got aboard, and at Wadesboro the Anson, and at Rockingham and Laurinburg, the Richmond. The train was literally filled with negroes. I had a tall time with that crowd until we got to Rockingham, where Claude Dockery, whom I met at Chapel Hill several years prior to that, joined the party and introduced me to the most interesting character in the Dockery contingent. I refer to Rich Lilly, a tall wiry limber negro, with a juicy mouth and a nappy, dusty-looking head. Rich was going to do what he could toward the nomination of his old friend, Col. Oliver Dockery. Somewhere between Rockingham and Maxton Rich and myself were thrown together, when no one else was near.

Rich beckoned to me and dodged behind a freight car and, in order to see what he wanted, I followed.

"Boss, is you gwine to Maxton?" asked Rich, holding his right hand under his coat tail as if to draw his gun.

"Yes, sir. That is where I am bound for."

"Well, say, boss, here's das' a little uv Dockery's best, won't you have or drink?"

"No, thank you, I don't drink," said I.

"Looker here, boss, you mus' not be no delegate?"

"No, I am not."

"Well, is yer gwine to de convention?"

"Yes."

The train started and we got aboard. Rich could not understand. My attitude toward his elixer of life astonished him.

CONVENTION MEETS AT HIGH NOON.

About 12 o'clock the convention met in a large hall, provided with a rostrum, over a store on Main street. The hall, having been used for a buggy warehouse, had a tramway that led from the sidewalk to the floor. Up this broad and slanting way the delegates and spectators traveled. I was one among the first to arrive, with a chair that I borrowed from a hotel, a small lapboard, and a tablet and took my seat on the rostrum, in the north corner, against the rear wall, near a window that looked out on a back lot, believing that I had selected the best place in the house for a reporter.

By the appointed hour the hall was well-filled with people, principally negroes. Seeing Mr. Claude Dockery talking and laughing with me, Rich Lilly became curious again, and when no one was about, he came up, looked me in the eye and asked: "Boss, for Gawd's sake, what is you gwine to do of you ain't no delegate?"

"I am going to sit here and watch you Republicans, take notes and write you up in the paper if you don't behave yourselves," was my reply.

"O, you's er writer fur de paper?"

"Yes."

"I do not recall any but the more violent incidents of the convention. As I sat there and watched the various delegations, take their seats a looker-on in Yanna pointed out some of the celebrities.

"That man with the long beard and the long fig-stemmed pipe, is Dr. Norment, of Lumberton," said my coach. "The man with the cripple hand is Col. B. Bill Terry. The long-armed man with abbreviated trousers and coat sleeves, is Speaking Henry Covington." Many others were named, but I have forgotten most of them. Later Big Bill Sutton, of Bladen, came in. He did not belong to the convention, but it was understood that he was there to lead the Russell forces in a rough house affair if his services were needed.

No one would have imagined that the quiet, lifeless body of men of the first half hour of the convention would become the mob that it did before the day was over.

TROUBLE BEGINS SUDDENLY.

The trouble began when the convention voted on a permanent chairman, each side claiming the majority when the balloting was over. The god of peace had quit the meeting and the devil taken possession. Mr. A. M. Long, of Rockingham, a handsome man, with a good face, was put up by the Dockeryites, and a Wilmington negro by the Russellites. Both Mr. Long and the ducky tried to take the seat, each mounting the rostrum and faking a chair.

"This was the signal for a general fight, which began on the stage. Knowing the power of Speaking Henry's lungs the Dockery delegates began to yell 'Covington,' 'Covington,' but in the meantime the Wilmington negro, the Russell chair, had been deprived of his seat by force. Mr. Long held his with a brace of Colts.

I want the reader to understand that the fight then in progress was none of my affair. To all the whole truth I did look on with considerable satisfaction until I saw two or three men produce pistols; from that time on I had one eye on the convention and the other busy looking for a way to escape, but attack to my corner. Every fighting man was coming to the rostrum, throwing nervous delegates out of the way as he advanced.

RICH LILLY TO THE BAIT.

Rich Lilly brought first blood. The call for Henry Covington, the supple man with the oily tongue, were heeded by that gentleman, who was just as fearless as he was wordy, and while others glared and swore at each other he was making the welkin ring with Dockery thunder. No man ever made more gestures and took longer strides than did Speaking Henry that afternoon. With a quart of mean liquor in his tummy and a cigarette in his mouth, Rich Lilly, the warmest Dockeryite of them all, braced behind Mr. Covington, following him with his hands and feet as far as he could without bursting an entrail. Seeing this double barreled performance I lost sight of the free-for-all fight on the opposite side of the stage. It wasn't what Mr. Covington said but the way he said it that attracted the crowd, and me. Except for the difference in color one would have taken Speaking Henry and Rich Lilly for the Gold Dust twins.

"Tell it to 'em!" shouted Rich, every time he hit the floor.

"Yes, Lawd, let 'em have it. Dere ain't no candi-date but Col. Duckery!"

Tiring of this, a Russell man in the back section of the hall roared out: "Five dollars for the man who will pull that long-legged devil down from there!"

No sooner had the offer been made than did a short, stocky, big-headed negro, with a Van Dyke beard, start from the fifth row of seats toward the stand to catch Covington by the leg. I mounted my chair to see. Having the advantage of the pedestal I could take in everything. Speaking Henry had charged and jumped and spat and bounced until his trousers, all too short, had climbed nearly to his knees and his heavy homo-

knit socks had fallen over his shoe tops. He was about ready to fly when the desisting negro reached out for his thin bare shank.

NEGRO DELEGATE KNOCKED DOWN.

But there came a turn: Rich Lilly, who had heard the offer and seen the negro start and wend his way to the stage, was guarding the speaker. No one knew what was going to happen until it came. Just as the Wilmington delegate made a pass at the Dockery speaker Rich bowed his head like a Thomas cat, ducked, shot forward and gave him a blow between the eyes and flowed him. Speaking Henry never let up. In fact, he never knew what had happened until the convention was over. Rich resumed his antics until he recalled the fact that I was taking notes and then he rushed back to where I had dropped into my seat, put his hands on my knees, looked me in the face and asked, seriously: "Say, boss, did I act lak er delegate?"

"Yes, indeed, do it again."

To my certain knowledge Rich hammered five other delegates after that and came to see if I approved of the manner in which he did it.

But I was forced to forget Speaking Henry and Rich Lilly. Other incidents more exciting and more strenuous were in progress. Big Bill Sutton had come upon the rostrum and was throwing delegates east and west. Having the advantage of a tremendous frame and a notorious reputation as a scrapper he walked rough shod over less fortunate ones. But there was one man, with a keen eye, an iron face and frosted hair, that was not afraid to face him, and that was a good fellow, who was a Republican leader at that time. As Bill Sutton's collar and tie from his neck and his son, Dave, screamed back at Henry Covington from the hall. I saw the quiet man climb on the rostrum, and knew that he was mad. He and Big Bill glowered at each other for an instant at twenty paces. Two seconds later they were rushing at each other, like vicious dogs. They did not have a head-on collision, but side-swiped. The newcomer got the best of the first round; he tore Sutton's collar and tie from his neck and held it between the thumb and fore finger, so that all might see. Friends interfered and prevented an ugly affair.

THE FIGHT GREW WORSE.

"Clear the rostrum!" shouted some one from the hall.

"That is what the chairman and their friends had been trying to do for some minutes. But the delegates crowded around the edge until they were fifteen or twenty deep and the rostrum was alive with opposing factions. After the Morrison-Sutton mix-up the fighting became general. Some fellow in the house knocked Dr. Norment over a seat, jamming his pipe stem halfway down his throat. Times were beginning to look equally for me, and I had no way out. To my left was a window but if I went out that I meant a fall of 30 feet to the ground. To my right, an ante room, with a small thin wall going out, down the steps from the rostrum, the way I came in, seemed at that time an impossibility. While considering the advisability of going into the ante room and closing the door I saw a human uphaval coming from me and before I could catch my

breath an old darky sailed into the room and slammed the door and I was cut off there. All the while the mob on the rostrum became blacker and more like the fall end of a negro festival. The old corn field negroes were just beginning to get the spirit of the meeting. As the colored delegates increased white ones blinked away, imagining that something would be doing soon. Seeing the change in color and temperament of the stage crowd I began to have serious concern about my own welfare. Had the fight been among my own people I might have taken a hand but to sit idly by and be punctured with a pistol or a knife was not to my liking. I was slow in making up my mind. But there came a time when I had to act before thinking it over. As I sat there and wondered what injuries I would receive if I jumped out the window a big negro, I think he must have been one of Mr. Gib Patterson's canal hands, clad in overalls and wearing a cap on his head and high top boots on his feet, broke through the mob in the hall, jumped up on the stand immediately in front of me, and began to finger in his boot and swear. I heard him mumble to himself: "I'll be d-d if I don't clear dis hall when I get ole Sal-lie."

THE NEGRO MEANT BUSINESS.

I had an idea that "Ole Sal-lie" was a weapon of some sort, and I was right, for a half a second later the big nigger rose to his full height, threw open a razor, turned around three times (coming close to me as he wheeled) and yelled, "Git off 'uv dis stage, don't let 'em cut yo' d-d throats—every one uv you!"

I was the first to leave, going over the heads of the mob that had collected about the edge of the stage. My note book went to the right and my lapboard to the left, while I continued my flight straight ahead down the tramway. As I struck the street old man B. B. Terry, whom I knew very well, stood behind the wall of the brick building and peeped up the exit and said: "I gud, that's no place for a well man, much less a cripple." I did not argue the point.

I was followed by many hundreds. In fact, the entire Russell delegation bolted, some going through the windows and others down the tramway.

The Dockery men remained and passed a few resolutions, but there was no more fighting. Late that afternoon when the westbound delegates were waiting at the station to take the train, some one discovered that Big Bill Sutton was missing. A colored delegate from Monroe, was missing; I heard the talking and inquired as to his appearance.

"Why," said I to myself, "that is the old fellow that went in the ante room when the fight began." I knocked on the locked door, but did not get any response. Finally we broke in and there sat old man Hampton, juked down in the corner, afraid to move.

Clyde Dockery, who sat on the roof and saw me make the famous leap, went to Raleigh and told the city editor of The Times-Visitor that Red Buck had bolted the convention." I was the butt of papers and politicians for weeks. The Old Man said in an editorial that "Red Buck" would have to explain why he bolted and he did as best he could. Mr. Caldwell had dubbed me

"Brick Top," "Strawberry Blond" and "Red Buck" and the last name stuck because of the Maxton convention and Claude Dockery's interview.

RED BUCK.

MOST VALUABLE FIDDLESTICK.

An Empress' Treasure Pen—Thimble That Was a Wedding Gift.

The Queen of Siam possesses a thimble which was a wedding gift and is in the shape of a lotus flower. It is valued at \$13,000. Each petal bears the enlaid initials of his Majesty King Chulalongkorn I, and Queen Pongsi, set in rubies and emeralds, while inscribed round the rim is the date of the marriage, the letters and numbering being decorated with diamonds and pearls.

The Empress Eugenie treasures a pen made from the quill of a golden eagle's wing and richly mounted with diamonds and gold, which was used at her request by the fourteen plenipotentiaries who signed the Treaty of Paris in 1856. When the Hon. Mr. Ward, eldest son of Lord Bangor, was married some time ago the register was signed with a quill pen which was used by the high contracting powers in signing the Treaty of Vienna, and which has several times been utilized at weddings in the Ward family.

The most valuable fiddlestick in the world is the one used by Paganini at his farewell recital, afterward possessed by Verdi, the great composer. It was given by Paganini to his favorite pupil, the late Count di Cosselle, and by him bequeathed to Verdi. Many large sums, ranging from \$1,000, have been offered in vain for this unique possession, and its estimated value is at least \$15,000.

Seventeen pounds is a long price to pay for a key, but this sum has been given by a member of the Rothschild family for what may be said to be the most valuable key in the world. It is marked with the arms of the Strozzi family and is believed to be the work of the great Italian artist Benvenuto Cellini, who flourished in the sixteenth century. The key is cherished out of a block of steel, presenting two grotesque female figures and ornamented with various scrolls.

Five hundred and fifty pounds was paid by a nobleman at the beginning of the eighteenth century for a dog collar of gold, a collar of silver, with four small diamonds, costing 200 guineas, was sold to a society lady for her pet pug dog. It is fashionable in France to put gold bracelets studded with jewels on the forelegs of poodles. The plain gold collars with jeweled collars cost no less than \$20, while the jeweled collars run to \$100. The bracelets cost from two pounds to 70 pounds each.

A thermometer can be bought for a shilling, but there is one used at the Johns Hopkins University in the United States, known as Prof. Bowland's thermometer, which is valued at 2,000 pounds. The gradations on the glass are so fine that it is necessary to use a microscope to read them.

Mr. Singer of sewing machine fame paid 12,000 pounds for a pair of opera glasses. The lenses are, of course, the best obtainable, but it was the fact that the "glasses" were of solid gold, surmounted by a lyre encrusted with diamonds and sapphires, which accounted for the "high" price.

Women's hats are both common and

costly as a rule, but a woman in Brunswick, who made no great pretensions to fashion, holds the record for the highest price paid for an article of millinery. She bought a hat with a lacy ticket which the merchant accepted in place of the money. A few weeks later the ticket drew the great prize of 15,000 pounds, and though the woman's husband tried to induce the merchant to share the results he only received 25 pounds. That hat cost 14,975 pounds!

As to "Relaxation."

Dr. Long Mayhew Young, of Chicago, does not agree with us that sleeping on the front is good. But he seems to be in his own mind an expert on relaxation. "In my own opinion," he says, "the want of relaxation is the principal cause of insomnia. To produce relaxation we must first equalize the circulation of the blood. This is very often accomplished by sleeping with the knees up, which throws the blood into the lumbar region. The position is rather tiresome (I should say so!) and on stretching out the legs equalization and therefore relaxation take place. For insomnia supervening upon nervousness I would advise taking some good, long breaths. When due to the want of control of the thinking apparatus eat three or four ginger snaps (10 cents a pound), which will warm up the stomach and transfer the nervous energy to the solar plexus, or stomach brain."

Hot-Air Treatment of Hay Fever.

Swiss Medical Journal.

Dr. Hurlimann, in two serious cases of hay fever which resisted all kinds of treatment, succeeded in causing all the symptoms to disappear by the employment of hot and dry air. He used an apparatus with six electric lamps (red light) arranged in a fitting manner. The patients breathe in the hot air by the nose and expel it by the mouth, from 25 to 30 respirations at each session.

Dr. Hurlimann does not know if the red light acts by reason of its color and hopes that later experiments made by other medical men may elucidate the question.

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS.

Oh, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love thou spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hours now broken;
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends so linked together,
I've seen around me call
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are red,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he deserted
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

—Thomas Moore.