

Code of Honor In the Naval and Military Academies; How Uncle Sam's Cadets Adjust Their Class Troubles

THE recent death of Midshipman James Robinson Branch, Jr., who was one of the principals in a fatal pugilistic duel at the United States Naval Academy, is a sad and sufficient refutation of the assertion that the code is extinct. Driven from north to south, from republic to monarchy, from civil life to army camps, from civilization to semibarbarism, the so-called "code of honor" which made it necessary for the simon pure "gentleman" to wipe out an insult with blood seems to have taken refuge in the Military and Naval Academies of the United States.

It is true that Paris is still the scene of an occasional farcical duel in which no one is injured and mighty satisfaction is obtained, and that the students of German universities still swear themselves in the leather armor that robs their midnight encounters of any danger more thrilling than a scratch of the countenance, but at West Point and at Annapolis, where the ambitious young American is supposed to be in training to become a gentleman and an officer, the relic of barbarism seems to have taken refuge and is nourished tenderly.

According to recent developments, it appears that the cadet of today must be prepared at any moment to refer a formal challenge to ceremonious seconds and, obedient to their opinion as to what honor demands, must face unflinchingly a fellow cadet in the time honored pugilistic battle to a finish. The scratch of a rapier is not deemed sufficient to satisfy the demands of outraged honor. Nothing will wipe out the indignity save a fight to the bitter end, even though that end prove to be very bitter indeed.

"The honor of the corps" comes as



A FISTIC DUEL AT ANNAPOLIS

JAMES ROBINSON BRANCH

easily today to the lips of a cadet as it did to the worthies created by Alexandre Dumas. As late as 1901, the year in which the Booz investigation was held, more than a hundred young men wearing the spruce gray of the Military Academy at West Point stood at "attention" before the board of investigating generals and confessed that

the cadet who offered an insult or told a deliberate lie might expect to be challenged to a fistic duel to the finish. They admitted, furthermore, that no cadet had ever been able to hold out against the moral force of the academy's condemnation of a man who would refuse to send or to receive a challenge when a formal court of honor,

such as now holds high jurisdiction among Uncle Sam's gentlemen pupils, had adjudged that blood alone could wipe out the insult.

This court of honor is another medieval institution which is still in force at the national academies. Before the civil war the southern cadet dominated social matters at the acad-

emies, as he did at Harvard, Yale and Princeton. It was in the south that the dueling code was perfected in its minutest details, and it was introduced into the national academies by the southern cadets. According to the code a challenge did not compel a man to fight. In South Carolina there was a carefully formulated code—known as

the "Smith code"—which settled many quarrels without the principals appearing on the field. It provided for a court of arbitration made up of three prominent gentlemen who decided on the insult and whether or not it necessitated the "calling out" of a man. No one ever thought of disputing the fiat of this court.

This is the court of honor which still obtains at Annapolis and at West Point. There is only one appeal from its verdict and that is to a class meeting, before whose ruling even the officers of the academies are alleged to bow in submission. So lofty are the standards of honor among Uncle Sam's embryo heroes that an upper class man who has been convicted of lying is not permitted to fight, but is ostracized without further opportunity, although a "plebe" or lower class man is allowed to retrieve his damaged reputation by the ordeal of combat. It is a fact well known and acknowledged among United States officers that this medieval code cannot be disregarded by any man, be he professor, officer or cadet, who expects to retain his connection with these government institutions.

More details concerning the working of the code have become public through West Point investigations than from those at Annapolis. The recent lamentable disaster at the naval school is undoubtedly the most powerful argument for the abolishment of the code that has ever been found. The horrified public is still gasping over the knowledge that such a calamity was possible in the light of modern civilization; must not be too hastily concluded, however, that the code of honor known to the national academies will fall into immediate desuetude. The practice is too well grounded for that and too strongly fortified by the tacit approval of the academy authorities and those who have had the opportunity of witnessing its effect upon the cadet body.

A graduate of the Naval Academy who has been in private life for many years relates two instances of this forcible adjustment of class difficulties which may be taken as a fair sample of conditions as they exist today. The first occurred while the academy was located temporarily at Newport, R. I., during the civil war. One of the senior class men, a powerfully built chap older than most of his mates, an arrogant and intractable fellow, was on very bad terms with the "lower class" men. One day he was especially offensive to a plucky little fellow of the junior class, and he was invited to settle the matter by a resort to the code. He refused indignantly and threatened to maintain the presumptuous class man's flag in command of one of his American fleets, laid the matter before the academy, and it was decided that a man who was more nearly a match for the aggressive senior should be chosen to maintain the juniors' honor. The lot fell to the youngster who is now Rear Admiral Lamberton. Although Lamberton was whipped, he made a gallant stand and the class honor was maintained.

The other battle was fought at Annapolis in 1886 between a cadet officer and a first class man who was the strongest man of the academy. It was the result of a feud of long standing, the circumstances being similar to those which led up to the recent fatal encounter.

The code of honor as it exists in both national academies must be regarded as being entirely distinct from hazing. In 1901 Congress prohibited hazing at West Point by making it punishable with instant expulsion. Two years ago it was provided that naval cadets should be punished with unconditional expulsion for any attempt at hazing. JAMES L. TREVATHAN.

Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Franklin; The Most Eminent Bostonian Known to History

MANY cities in the United States are now engaged in making preparations for the celebration, on Jan. 6, 1906, of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of an American who figured more prominently in the building of the republic than any other man save Washington—Dr. Benjamin Franklin, born in Boston, Jan. 6, 1706. The briefest and most brilliant biography ever written of him contained only five Latin words—"Eripuit coelo fulmen, sepiusque tyrannus." "He matched the lightning from the skies and the scepter from tyrants" is about the best that can be done for it in English. No loftier or more comprehensive tribute has been accorded any man and no one has ever risen to controvert its truthfulness.

Mankind has every reason to be grateful to Dr. Franklin and to hold his name in perpetual veneration. He enlarged the scope of human knowledge by revealing mysteries of nature never before understood and by applying the results to the service of man. That alone would entitle him to eternal fame. But that was only one manifestation of this many-sided genius. Besides all this and infinitely more than this, he stands second only to Washington in that heroic list of those who stood for those fundamental principles of liberty which culminated in the foundation of the American republic.

Franklin was born a British subject in the year made famous by the winning of the battle of Marston by the Duke of Marlborough, a time when every New Englander was proud of being ruled by Queen Anne. Even at that tender and irresponsible age he must have excited the admiration of those who, like President Roosevelt, were not converts to the Malthusian theory—he was the fifteenth child, two more

following him. The father of these seventeen young colonists was a native of Northamptonshire who had come to the new world with the expectation of working at his trade of dyer, but there was no opportunity in Boston, then a village of 12,000 inhabitants, and he adopted the business of tallow chandler and soap boiler.

Franklin could not remember when he had learned to read, but he never forgot that he had attended the Boston Grammar school two years and that he had never gone to school elsewhere. So appreciative was he of those brief two years of school life that he willed the sum of \$500 to provide silver medals for distribution to deserving pupils of the Boston public schools. Those Franklin medals are still a feature of the Boston free schools, and it is regarded as a special stroke of good fortune to be given one.

How did this lad without a moment of tuition after he was ten years of age come to be the most famous American of his day? It was by the most marvelous combination of force, intellect, character, self discipline, industry and mother wit ever assembled in a single individual. His endowment of common sense amounted to positive genius. He had a sound mind in a sound body, and he was apparently tireless. All this must have been the lad's equipment when, at the age of ten, his father bade him put aside his books and see what he could do at mending the soap kettle and cutting candle wicks.

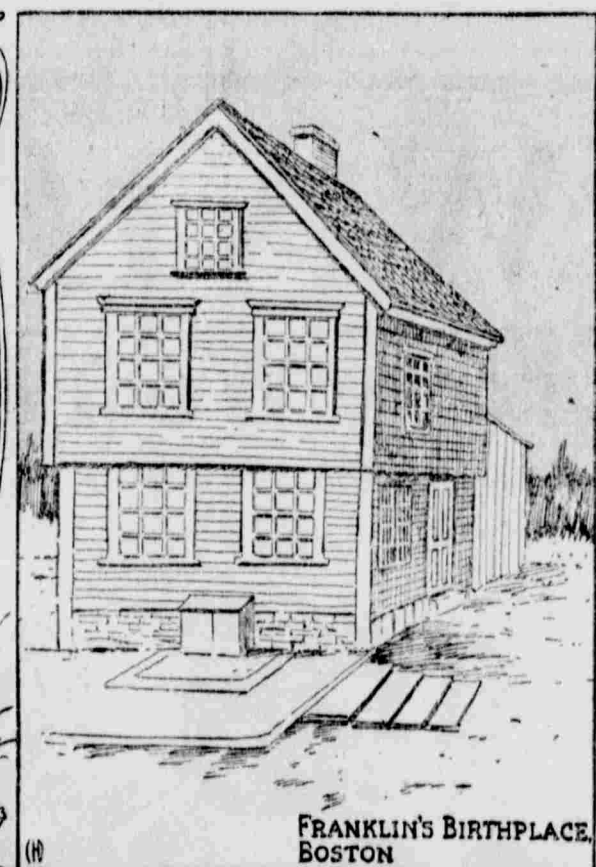
This he did uncomplainingly for three years and then revolted. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to his brother, who was a printer and publisher of the New England Courant, one of the earliest papers on the American continent. It was thus that the printing office became his school and his university. It probably did more for him in those days than Harvard or even Oxford could have done. He had a



GRAVE OF FRANKLIN, PHILADELPHIA



STATUE IN FRONT OF POST OFFICE, PHILADELPHIA



FRANKLIN'S BIRTHPLACE, BOSTON

consuming and insatiable thirst for knowledge which could have been gratified in no other manner than by a study of men as well as books. He read every book that he could obtain and was willing to listen to any one who had any information to impart. He soon learned the art of printing as it was known in those days and began to try his hand at writing. At the age of

sixteen he was furnishing editorials for the Courant, his brother being under an interdiction for criticizing the authorities. His brother was an ungrateful person, for as soon as he was free he banished Benjamin from the editorial sanctum and resumed his own blundering pen.

Young Franklin revolted again. This time he shook the dust of New Eng-

land from his feet and landed in Philadelphia with a dollar in his pocket. He was used to impetuosity and did not worry over it. He soon found good employment and worked diligently until the governor of the province sent him to London on a matter of business which turned out to be an utter failure. Work was easy to obtain in England, and he kept at it eighteen months, then

falling desperately ill. On his recovery he returned to the Quaker City and for twenty years followed the printing business with diligence.

In a few years he became a person of importance not only in Philadelphia, but throughout the thirteen colonies. Two literary ventures in which he had engaged extended his reputation very widely. He purchased the Pennsyl-

vania Gazette when it was on the verge of bankruptcy and under his editorship it became the best paper in America. His Poor Richard's Almanack, which he started when he was twenty-six, and continued to publish until he was past sixty, gave him an international reputation and was the source of great profit. By the time he reached middle life he was the best known and most important man in the colonies.

At this time Franklin was an intensely loyal British subject. He had done excellent service for the home government, and he was well and favorably known in England. In the wars against the French and Indians he had been very active and had been honored with the decorations by both Oxford and Edinburgh. He visited Great Britain and was feted and lionized by everybody of note. He remained abroad several years and had serious thought of spending the remainder of his life in London. His scientific discoveries made him more prominent in European centers than he had ever been in Philadelphia, which had not yet learned how to appreciate him. His fellow citizens were quite ready to admit his business and political sagacity, but they were not so certain of his scientific prestige.

When the stamp act was first suggested Franklin was sent to England to nip it in the bud. He did everything he could to prevent it, even going before a committee of the house of commons to combat it. This made him bad friends with the king, who manifested his displeasure by professing a sudden unbelief in the philosopher's electric discoveries. This was Franklin's vulnerable point, and it cut him to the quick. Still, he bore it in silence and remained in London as the advocate of the cause of the colonies until the rupture was inevitable. Then he resolved to return to his native countrymen and landed at Philadelphia two weeks after the battle of Lexington.

TRUMAN L. ELTON.

The Isle of Pines, a West Indian No-Man's-Land; The United States Senate Must Find an Owner

THE recent Isle of Pines incident, precipitated by the American interests which have developed on the islet and manifested by a vigorous protest against the ratification by the United States senate of the treaty giving the island to Cuba, has revived the public curiosity concerning this fertile spot. All the trouble seems to have arisen from the various interpretations that have been made of the second article of the treaty between the United States and Spain.

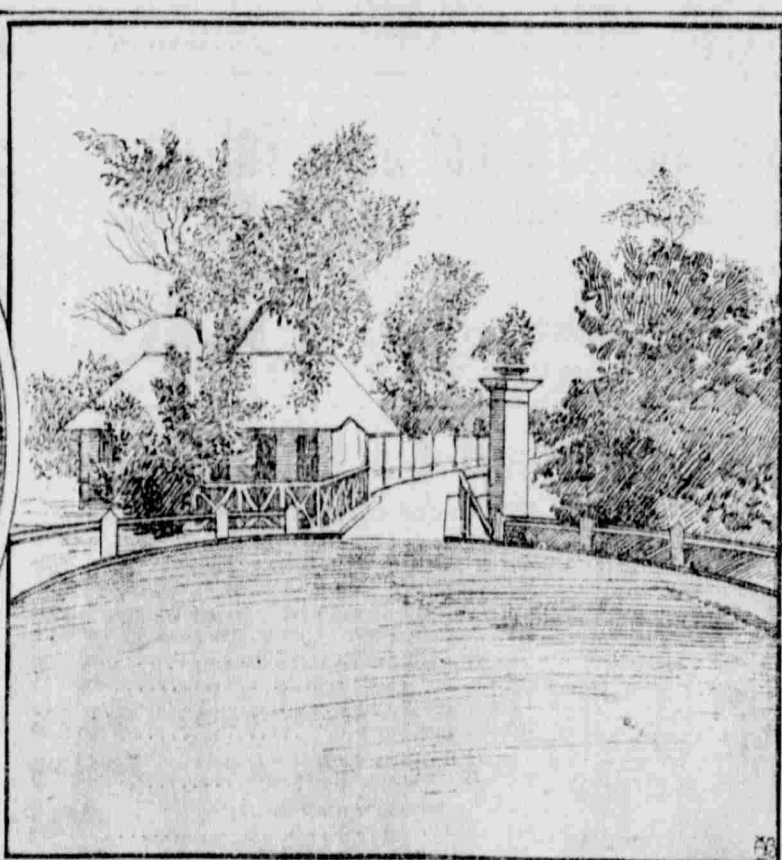
The article over which so much contention has arisen declares that "Spain cedes to the United States the island of Porto Rico and other islands now under Spanish sovereignty in the West Indies." The status of the United States in reference to Cuba was clearly that of trustee. In respect to Porto Rico it was unmistakably that of sovereignty. Thus far it was plain sailing. But how about the phrase "other islands now under Spanish sovereignty in the West Indies?" The ambiguity of this expression has been the cause of great confusion.

American promoters in the Isle of Pines, who very greatly desire its annexation to the United States, did not hesitate to discover a meaning in the words of the article which certainly never entered the minds of the peace commissioners who formulated them. The Isle of Pines had always been regarded as a part of the province of Havana. All the maps of Cuba in which the provinces are distinguished by colors confirm this. The island lies so near the mainland that the channel between might almost be crossed by an adventurous swimmer. To insist upon its separation would be like exempting Long Island from any consideration in which the United States was a party concerned.

The United States authorities have



THE ONLY CHURCH ON THE ISLAND.



GATEWAY AT SANTA FE.

never seemed disposed to favor the theory advanced by the American interests. Those interests, however, were potent enough to get a hearing in congress, and the Platt amendment, which was afterward adopted as a part of the Cuban constitution, provided that "the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of

Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty."

Situated a little south of the western end of Cuba, and about the size of the state of Rhode Island, the Isle of Pines would prove to be a valuable accession to any nation interested in South American affairs. In the same longitude as Tampa, Fla., and the same

latitude as Yucatan, this bit of land is regarded as a strategic key to the Caribbean sea and the Yucatan channel, which connects this sea with the Gulf of Mexico. The island is about thirty miles in length and forty in width, and at high tide is practically transformed into two land areas, the sea inundating a chain of lagoons across the southern

part of it. The northern part, facing Cuba, is mountainous, with peaks more than 2,000 feet above the sea.

In this northern part are gathered almost all of the 3,000 inhabitants, among them about 400 Americans who have been drawn thither by the wonderful fertility of the soil and the richness of the natural features of the is-

land. Potatoes are raised which bring a higher price in the Havana markets than those from the United States. Tobacco grows even too luxuriantly for quality's sake. Sugar cane is cultivated at a satisfactory profit, and the pineapple, which seems to be native to the soil and once grew in such abundance as to furnish a name to the island, is being produced in quantities for American tables.

The chief industry of the island, however, is citrus fruit culture, and this is almost entirely in the hands of the Americans. More than 150,000 trees have been planted, and they are now beginning to yield abundantly. Cuba has a distinct advantage over the little island in the cultivation of pineapples for the foreign market in the fact that the fruit ripens earlier in the Cuban interior, and the transportation problem is less complicated. More recently the American residents of the Isle of Pines have turned their attention to vegetable growing for the winter market. Tomatoes, eggplants and cucumbers are shipped in immense quantities to the northern markets of America.

The population of the Isle of Pines is distinct from that of Cuba and seems to be a mixture of the native Indian, the invading Spaniard and the negro slave. Among the American portion of the present population there are more persons from Iowa than from any other state. Several colonies of Iowans have located on the island and many others are prepared to go there as soon as the matter of ownership is settled. These Iowa pioneers are from Spencer, Fairfield, Ottumwa and Crescen, and they already number upward of 200. Some time ago there was organized at Fairfield a company to develop a plantation and build a town in the island, and the outcome is the health resort of Almagro Springs, which bids fair to become exceedingly popular as a winter home for northern invalids. Columbia is another American town which has rosy prospects as a health center.

The American residents own in fee simple considerably over half of the island. They have built houses—some of them quite pretentious—set out orchards and prepared the soil for cultivation. A company from New Jersey has expended over \$100,000 on a plantation, and one tract of land recently purchased by an American brought \$80,000. Another company has invested \$175,000 in a hotel and fruit farm. At present fourteen states of the Union are represented in the American colony.

The southern part of the island is of coral formation and, strange as it may appear, is covered by dense forests of such valuable timber as mahogany, ebony, cedar, redwood and many other native hard woods. These rare woods have long been used with the most shameful prodigality by the natives, who did not recognize their value. The Spanish prison in which political offenders were confined in the days when the island was used as a penal colony is finished in mahogany and ebony, over which whitewash has been daubed liberally.

Marble quarries yielding white, green and pink stone of superior quality are now being operated and a company has been organized to exploit the marble. These thermal waters have long been known to the wealthy Cubans, who have for years frequented the island in large numbers in quest of health. The water of the springs is shipped to Havana and sold in the streets and is reported to be a specific for the form of muscular rheumatism which is so prevalent during the rainy season in the larger island.

Nueva Girona has been the seat of the island government, such as it is. Here reside the governor, the municipal judges and several assistants. There is also a barracks in which are quartered about thirty rural guards, who are supposed to patrol the island in the interests of peace.

RAMON SILVA.