The surgical operations on President Cleveland in 1893 / by William W. Keen.

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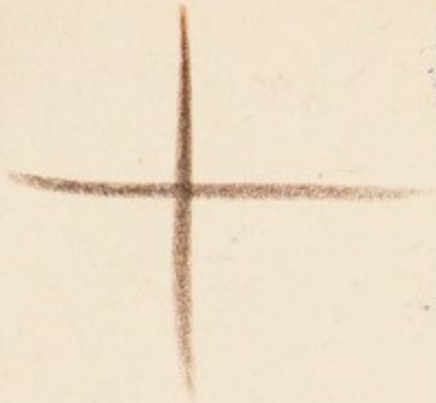
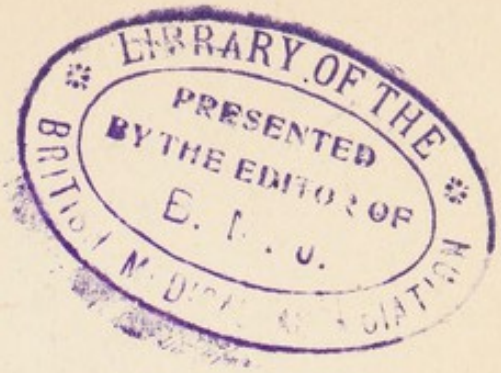
BY

W. W. KEEN, M. D.

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THE SURGICAL OPERATIONS ON PRESIDENT CLEVELAND IN 1893

The Surgical Operations

ON

President Cleveland in 1893

By

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FOREWORD.

It had been Dr. Bryant's intention, as he repeatedly told me, at the proper time to publish a full account of the operations on President Cleveland, but for various reasons he delayed writing it. Unfortunately he died unexpectedly in April, 1914, leaving his task undone. Almost all those who took part are also dead. Commodore Benedict, Dr. Erdmann and myself are now the only ones still living who were on board the Oneida in July, 1893, and Dr. Erdmann and I the only persons who were present at the two operations. Hence I felt it a duty to make the facts matter of public record before all of us had passed away.

Accordingly I wrote to Mrs. Thomas J. Preston, Jr., (formerly Mrs. Grover Cleveland) asking her consent to the publication of

the facts in the case as a contribution to the political, financial and surgical history of our country. After a personal interview she kindly acceded to my suggestion.

For permission to republish the article I have to thank Mr. George H. Lorimer, Editor of the Saturday Evening Post, in which magazine the article appeared on September 22, 1917.

At the beginning of the article I have alluded to "Holland," Mr. E. J. Edwards. In a letter published in the Philadelphia Press of September 26, 1917, he states in detail how he learned the facts. It does not seem to me to be necessary to reproduce his narrative here as it is not pertinent to my story. Those who are curious can consult the original.

I have corrected one or two minor errors in the original paper and with his kind permission have added considerable new matter chiefly from the article by Mr. Robert L. O'Brien.

One satisfaction in publishing this article is that it enables me to vindicate Mr. Edwards' character as a truthful newspaper correspondent. His veracity was violently assailed. "Fakir" and "calamity liar" were among the obnoxious epithets applied to him. After suffering in silence for twenty-four years his vindication is now complete.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS KEEN.

Philadelphia,

November 15th, 1917.

HOLLAND'S DISPATCH

ON AUGUST 29, 1893, the *Philadelphia Press* published a three-column dispatch, or letter, from "Holland"—Mr. E. J. Edwards—its New York correspondent, startling the whole country by giving the first positive intimation of an alleged serious operation upon President Cleveland, performed by Dr. Joseph D. Bryant, of New York, on board Commodore E. C. Benedict's yacht, the Oneida. He gave the names of the medical men present and many details of the operation. This was said to have been done on July first, immediately after Mr. Cleveland had called the special session of Congress for August seventh.

Holland stated that the operation consisted in the removal of some teeth and of considerable bone, as far as the orbital plate of the upper jaw on one side. This dispatch was substantially correct, even in most of the details, as will be seen later.

The news was immediately spread broad-

cast and at once gave rise to a heated controversy. At the time of the publication of the dispatch Mr. Cleveland had been in Washington for the special session of Congress on August seventh, and four days later had gone to Gray Gables, his summer home on Buzzard's Bay, for rest and recuperation, as was publicly alleged. He returned to Washington on August thirtieth. On September fifth he opened the First Pan-American Medical Congress, in Washington, when his voice was "even clearer and more resonant" than on March fourth at his inauguration. Two weeks later he spoke at the Centenary of the Founding of the City of Washington. He met many persons officially and socially. No scar or other evidence of an operation existed, neither eyeball was displaced, his cheek was not fallen in, his voice did not betray him, and his general health was evidently as good as could be expected by one who for four months had endured a horde of pestiferous officeseekers and the terrible anxiety of the existing financial crisis.

Many newspapers denied that any operation had been performed; others said that, at the most, it consisted in the removal of two teeth and possibly a little rough bone. They cited not only the lack of physical evidence already mentioned, but the statements of Doctor Bryant, of Cabinet officers, of the President's private secretary, and a signed statement by Mr. L. Clarke Davis, editor of the *Public Ledger* and a close friend of the President, who wrote that Holland's statement "had a real basis of a toothache." Some papers denounced Holland's letter as "infamous," and claimed that the whole story was a "cancer fake," and "a deliberate falsification."

Doctor Bryant, who was the only spokesman for all the medical men who had participated in the operation, was naturally unwilling to discuss his patient's case for professional reasons, and the weighty additional reason of the serious influence of any full statement he might make upon the tense and disastrous financial crisis. He rightly minimized the operation as far as possible.

But many papers pointed to the recent denials of the doctors in the case of General Grant, and of other public men, which proved to be inexact. They declared the alleged statement of Colonel Lamont, the Secretary of War, Mr. Cleveland's most intimate friend, who had also been on board the Oneida during the operation, that the President was "a sick man—how sick we cannot tell," was the correct statement of the actual facts.

The Earlier Controversy.

In addition to this controversy in August and September, 1893, there had been an earlier and equally animated newspaper controversy immediately after the first operation on July 1st. The facts as to this controversy are fully stated by Mr. Robert L. O'Brien, now the Editor of the *Boston Herald*, in its issue for September 30, 1917. In 1893 he was the confidential secretary to President Cleveland. I quote certain parts of his statement as it so graphically describes the (happily successful) efforts to conceal the real facts.

"It would be a mistake to suppose that it

was an easy matter to keep this affair from the newspapers of the country, with all the light that beats on the presidential throne. Here is a dispatch which appeared in the columns of the *Boston Herald* on the morning of July 8, 1893, just one week after the president had suddenly left Washington:

"Buzzards Bay, July 7, 1893.—A strong effort is making to establish the fact that President Cleveland is a sick man. Those who are about the President and who are authorized to speak for him, deny that he is afflicted with anything more serious than an attack of rheumatism.

"But, notwithstanding these denials, emphatically made and oft repeated, there is a disposition manifest to treat them with incredulity, and to assume with absolutely no warrant in information or authority, that he must be suffering from some disease more serious in character than the one which was mentioned in the official statement given out by Colonel Lamont yesterday.

"The publication of an alleged United Press

dispatch in the New York papers this morning to the effect that Dr. Bryant, in an interview, had failed to give complete denial to a rumor that the President was suffering from a cancerous growth in the mouth, has given birth to an endless amount of gossip concerning the physical condition of Mr. Cleveland.

"Dr. Bryant said this evening that the story was absolutely false. The President, he said, is suffering from no cancerous or malignant growth. The only trouble he has had with his mouth was caused by an aching tooth which was extracted some time since. The doctor was asked a question as to the time of the extraction of the tooth and the name of the dentist employed, but he declined to dignify the subject by talking more about it. He said it was too trivial to be noticed.

"Col. Lamont sent the following dispatch to Washington tonight:

"Buzzard's Bay, July 7, 1893.

"To Walter Q. Gresham, Secretary of State:

"The President is laid up with rheumatism

in his knee and foot, but will be out in a day or two. No occasion for any uneasiness.

D. S. LAMONT.

"The only caller he has seen was Mr. Joseph Jefferson. The veteran actor was with him a half hour this morning, and when he came away he said he found Mr. Cleveland in first rate condition, except for the rheumatic trouble in his legs. There is no doubt that the President, as well as Secretary Lamont and Dr. Bryant, underestimate the importance which is attached by the country to his illness. The telegrams of inquiry which poured in here this afternoon from the newspapers indicate that the public apprehension has not been allayed by the assurances that have emanated from Col. Lamont.

A HEATED NEWSPAPER SESSION.

"The publication in New York of the terrifying dispatch resulted in a flocking of correspondents to Buzzard's Bay. There had been perhaps six or eight there, two representa-

tives of the leading press associations, and others connected with the more important of the Boston and New York dailies. But the 'malignant growth' report sounded an alarm, and editors all along the line dispatched representatives to Buzzard's Bay. Men from the *Providence Journal,* the *Fall River Herald* and the smaller dailies of New York and Philadelphia descended on Cape Cod that afternoon.

"Attempts to get in touch with Gray Gables brought out the information that Col. Lamont would see all the newspapermen at 7 o'clock that evening, with a full explanation of everything. He asked that nothing should be said until that time. It was in the latter part of the day, too late for the afternoon papers, that the journalists began to arrive, and so they waited with measurable patience. They found headquarters at a hotel near the railroad station at Buzzard's Bay. At the appointed hour they walked in a body across the old railroad bridge, over where the canal now lies, down to Gray Gables, a distance of a mile

and a half. Col. Lamont, the soul of shrewdness, diplomacy and tactfulness, was out in the old barn, perhaps 200 yards nearer the village than the dwelling house itself. I have always supposed that he did this to take no chances of a prying newspaperman's seeing about the Gray Gables mansion anything that might militate against Lamont's explanation of affairs.

"He greeted the men cordially and with apparent frankness. He told them that it was really very foolish to make such a stir over a matter essentially trivial; that while the President had suffered from an attack of rheumatism, to which he was occasionally subjected, the thing that had occasioned his prolonged journey on Mr. Benedict's yacht was only a bad case of dentistry. The President, besides being very busy, never enjoyed having a dentist work over him. In consequence he had allowed his dental work to fall so badly into arrears that he had finally felt compelled to go on the yacht; here he could be cool and com-

fortable and let the dentist make a thorough job of it. This had been done.

"The newspapermen, with the avidity characteristic of their craft, inquired the name of the dentist, the exact nature of the dentistry and other minor details which the reading public is ever eager to know concerning a distinguished patient. These questions did not stump the resourceful Lamont, who dismissed them with the remark that they were too trivial to talk about.

"The newspapermen walked back to the hotel in pretty heated argument. Half of them did not believe what Col. Lamont had told them; the other half did. They early reached an agreement that they should stand together on whatever story they sent out, an arrangement which newspapermen often make. And then they went into conference at the hotel to decide which should be their story. The next day without a dissenting voice the newspapers, including the press associations, gave to the country a reassuring version of the case.

"It seems wonderful how so many people were thrown off the scent, when so many incidents connected with the affair were calculated to arouse suspicion. I have just been through the files of a newspaper of that day, supplied with the dispatches of press associations and special correspondents, and I marvel at the skill with which the secret was kept. Every form of camouflage was employed, even to the painting of Commodore Benedict's yacht, the Oneida, a different color so it would be less readily recognized in its journey through the sound.*

"At 6 o'clock on Friday evening, June 30, the executive mansion issued a call for an extra session of Congress to meet on the 7th of August. The press associations were induced to say that the President had issued it at that hour, and immediately thereafter left for New York. But he had been gone two hours. One Washington correspondent, per-

[*Mr. O'Brien's statement that the yacht was painted green to escape observation is, I think, his only error. Any change in the color of the yacht, of course, would have excited suspicion rather than allayed it.—W. W. K.]

haps as close to the President as any one there, thus wrote of the affair:

"It was not exactly the unexpected which happened this afternoon, but it was certainly with unexpected abruptness that the announcement fell upon the city that the President had called an extra session of Congress for August. Simultaneously with this announcement came the almost equally startling news that the President had started for Buzzard's Bay, slipping out of town on the 4.20 P. M. train on the Pennsylvania railroad. Secretary Lamont accompanied him as far as New York.

"Probably not a dozen persons in the city knew of Mr. Cleveland's departure until long after it was an accomplished fact. * * *

"The President's determination to leave the city was only reached this morning, and his departure so suddenly leaves a number of important appointments agreed upon unsigned, and many senators and congressmen who had recently arrived, in the lurch.

"Many of the conservative newspapers that morning expressed surprise that the Presi-

dent delayed the assembling of Congress so late as August 7th, when the lawmakers could have reached the city much more promptly. But they did not know what he knew.

"What took place on the Oneida from its start up the East River Saturday night, until her arrival at Gray Gables on Wednesday night, has never been told in print until Dr. Keen's recent article appeared.

"But the President of the United States cannot drop out of the public eye without some speculation as to his whereabouts. On the morning of July 4th the newspapers of the country contained dispatches from Buzzard's Bay telling the country that the President had not yet arrived at his summer home. More sensational journals capitalized the mystery of his whereabouts by making it appear that his family was worried at his non-appearance. Mrs. Cleveland, to correct this impression, on the afternoon of the holiday, called some of the correspondents to ask them not to print disquieting stories, since there was no mystery as to the President's whereabouts.

"The President arrived at Gray Gables on the night of July 5th, but so late that none of the correspondents knew of his arrival in time to notify their morning editions. The afternoon papers carried the first suggestion that the President was indisposed, but the official statements made mention only of the rheumatism which he had had before. Here is the story which went out to the newspapers, which is a masterpiece in concealment:

"Buzzard's Bay, July 6, 1893.—President Cleveland arrived here last night after a five days' trip, from New York.

"He is suffering from a severe attack of rheumatism. Concerning his condition, Col. D. S. Lamont, Secretary of War, who accompanied Mr. Cleveland on his trip, said this morning:

" 'The President is confined to his room at Gray Gables with an attack of rheumatism in his foot and knee, a complaint from which he has suffered for many years, and which is, no doubt, exaggerated at this time by the hard

work and continuous strain on his strength which he has undergone since March 4.

"All the newspapers of the country on the same morning carried this significant paragraph:

"New York, July 6, 1893.—A special to the *Times* from Chicago says that Vice-President Stevenson, who has been there for several days, will leave for Buzzard's Bay tonight to consult with the President over questions which may come up during the special session of Congress.

"It was natural that the alarming stories printed in New York, with the simultaneous announcement that the Vice-President was hurrying to Buzzard's Bay, should startle the country. But the success of Col. Lamont's conference in the old barn with the correspondents finds reflection in the reassuring stories which went over the wires from Buzzard's Bay that night.

"And George Babbitt, the famous paragrapher, wrote for the *Herald* of Saturday, July 18th: 'The Buzzards will please keep aloof from Buzzard's Bay.'

"Mr. Stevenson did not get east of New York. It is doubtful if he had ever intended to do so, and, of course, he knew nothing of the nature of the malady.

"Thus the 'cancer fake,' as it came to be known, died away.

"Dr. Keen's narrative supplies all the missing incidents.

"One can but marvel, as I said before, at the completeness with which an event of such magnitude—aside from sporadic leaks which were soon arrested—escaped the scrutiny of the press, and has remained a secret until this late date. And yet no one can hereafter tell the story of the Cleveland administration, one of the most important in our recent history, and omit the triumph of surgery which saved the life of a great President."

The Grave Financial Situation.

To comprehend the grave responsibility resting on Mr. Cleveland's surgeons and the necessity of preserving absolute secrecy as to

any serious operation having been performed upon the President, it is essential to understand the financial panic then in progress. This Burton describes as a crisis "which in its severity has rarely been surpassed"; and Charles Francis Adams, in his autobiography, calls it "the most deep-seated financial storm in the history of the country." It was a crisis that would have been changed into a national disaster had the actual facts become known before Congress assembled on August seventh. As the *Nation* said on August third—long before the operation was known: "A great deal is staked upon the continuance of a single life."

On the same morning on which Holland's letter was published the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle,* in entire ignorance that any operation had been done, said editorially: "Mr. Cleveland is about all that stands between this country and absolute disaster, and his death would be a great calamity."

Had the seriousness of the operation on Mr. Cleveland become known earlier than it did,

and before his evident good health put to rest the fears of the community and emboldened the sound-money men in Congress, the panic would have become a rout. The reason for these strong statements is that Mr. Stevenson, the Vice-President, was a pronounced silver man. If the dangerous nature of the operation had become known, the public would at once have jumped to the conclusion that the President was doomed. Cleveland would at once have become the setting sun, Stevenson the rising sun, and the silver clause of the Sherman Act almost certainly would not have been repealed. What that would have meant to the country can scarcely be imagined.

"To Mr. Cleveland—and we might say to Mr. Cleveland alone—belongs the honor of securing the passage of the Repeal Bill."—(*The Nation,* October 26, 1893.)

The financial crisis was acute, even world-wide. In 1879, after a long interruption, the United States had resumed specie payments. In 1871 Germany had demonetized silver. In 1877 the three Latin nations had done the

same. Switzerland and Greece, and shortly afterward the three Scandinavian nations, followed their example. In 1892 the leading nations of the world were in a wild scramble for gold. Austria-Hungary was seeking one hundred million dollars for a resumption of specie payments, and the Bank of France was adding to its large supply. Russia, on January 31, 1893, had accumulated four hundred and fifty million dollars. The Bank of England, in order not to lose its gold, had kept its discount rate at 3 per cent., though in the general market the rate was only 1 per cent.

In 1890 occurred the collapse of Argentine credit, and the Baring Brothers very nearly became insolvent.

In May, 1893, twelve British Colonial banks suspended. On June 26, 1893—five days before the first Cleveland operation—India, the only large user of silver except the United States, also demonetized silver. No nation wanted to be caught with a large amount of silver on hand when the world once more placed itself firmly on a gold basis.

In the United States the situation was deplorable. From 1879 to 1890 our business had been conducted on a gold basis. But the silver heresy had spread far and wide among our people, and the influence especially of the senators from our northwestern silver-producing States was energetically used.

The Populist convention in 1891 demanded the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the ratio of sixteen to one, and government ownership of railroads, telegraphs and telephones. Its candidate polled over one million votes, carried four Northwestern States, and received twenty-two votes in the Electoral College. The Populists threatened to become a power to be reckoned with. A number of prominent economists and statesmen in Great Britain and the United States also supported bimetallism. "The people" wanted "plenty of money." To many of them free silver "had a most enticing sound, indicative of opulence. They had a vague notion that * * * the free coinage of silver would increase the number of dollars a head

in the United States. * * * When assured that unlimited silver coinage would drive gold out of circulation they replied that silver was good enough for them if they could only get enough of it; * * * that this country was big enough to do anything it pleased without asking for leave or license from the monarchies of Europe."—(*Peck.*)

In 1890 we had, in all, a gold reserve of over one hundred and eighty-five million dollars—eighty-five millions in excess of the hundred millions set aside to guarantee the integrity of over three hundred and forty-six million dollars of "greenbacks." By January 31, 1893, this reserve had fallen to one hundred and eight million dollars. On Mr. Cleveland's accession—March fourth—it had fallen to less than one hundred and one million dollars. The Treasury was kept solvent only by omitting payments into the sinking fund and by not expending appropriations voted by Congress! The Secretary of the Treasury also begged patriotic banks and bankers to let the Government have their gold. But this gold

soon disappeared in redeeming paper money. He also repeatedly sold bonds. Even these bonds, to a degree, defeated their own object; for the purchasers drew some of the gold they paid into the Treasury for the bonds by presenting to the Treasury its own notes, which the secretary was obliged to redeem in gold on penalty of seriously impairing the credit of the United States.

The Sherman Act had been passed in 1890. It was an almost fatal "truce," as Mr. Cleveland called it, between the advocates of free coinage of silver and their opponents. This Act imposed an additional yearly purchase of fifty-four million ounces of silver, against which Treasury notes were issued, all redeemable in gold. From 1789 to 1878—eighty-nine years—we had coined only eight million silver dollars. From 1878 to 1893—only fifteen years — we had coined over four hundred and nineteen millions! In silver bullion, "cart-wheel" dollars—which nobody wanted—and subsidiary coinage we had six hundred and thirty-five million dollars of silver on hand!

Besides this, the influx of gold into the Treasury from customs almost ceased. In December, 1891, and January, 1892, two-thirds of the customs were paid in gold. A year later, in the same months, instead of two-thirds, there were paid in gold only 4 per cent. and 9 per cent. respectively.

The depleted and steadily diminishing gold reserve not only had to meet the mass of obligations just mentioned but had to supply the gold demanded in payment for American securities, which were freely sold by Europeans because of their lack of confidence in our finances. The balance of trade also was against us, and the difference had to be paid in gold. The very simple and obvious way to get the gold was to exchange paper for gold at the Treasury. When so received, the Government did not cancel these notes, but reissued them—only to have the same process repeated in an endless chain!

It seems to us now passing strange that Congress persisted in such self-evident folly, in spite of the public action of Chambers of

Commerce and other similar organizations, of the opinions of financial experts, and of Mr. Cleveland's repeated but vain appeals for relief: but "something had to be done for silver." When an anxious husband was told by the doctor that he was at the end of his resources and that all that could be done for his wife was to "trust in the Lord," "Oh, doctor," was the reply, "it isn't really as bad as that, is it?"

In our similar financial emergency—and most appropriately in Denver, the "silver capital," where six banks failed in two days —the clergymen evidently thought it was "really as bad as that," and urged the President to appoint a day of fasting and prayer.

No wonder that the loss of confidence in the ability of the Government to sustain its credit, and the various sinister influences already described, precipitated a panic!

At his inauguration, on March fourth, Mr. Cleveland declared he would exhaust all his legal powers to prevent any depreciation of the currency. To that end the Secretary of

the Treasury boldly trenched upon the hundred-million-dollar gold-reserve fund, but gave ominous warning that the Treasury would pay gold for Treasury notes only so long as it had gold lawfully available for that purpose. Before the crisis finally ended the hundred million gold reserve had fallen to only forty million dollars.

In February, 1893, the Reading Railroad went into the hands of a receiver. Early in March call money went to 60 per cent., and in July to 73 per cent. In June the banks had to avail themselves of clearing-house certificates, which were in continual use until November first. Early in August the savings banks put in force the thirty days' notice for withdrawal of money.

Our population in 1893 was about sixty-six millions. During that year six hundred and forty-two banks suspended. Presumably this would be equal approximately to the suspension of one thousand banks in 1917. The most vivid appreciation of the seriousness of the situation can best be had by reading the

"summary of the news" in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger,* or other newspapers, for 1893, or even for the middle six months of that year. Scarcely a day passed without several and sometimes many suspensions. Bank failures occurred, banks and trust companies closed their doors, receiverships and business embarrassments, even of large concerns, appeared in dismal reiteration. At Golden City, Colorado—a singularly inappropriate place—the silver men went so far as to burn Mr. Cleveland in effigy.

Mr. Cleveland, from the very first, had planted his feet firmly on a sound-money basis and stood like a rock in its defense. On February 11, 1891, after the enactment of the Sherman Act of 1890 in the interests of the silver men, and long before even the nomination of a candidate for the presidential election of 1892, the Reform Club of New York held a meeting to protest against free silver. Mr. Cleveland wrote a letter to the club, the closing sentence of which spoke of "the dangerous and reckless experiment of free, unlimited and independent silver coinage."

By his foes this was called "defiant frankness" and "blazing indiscretion." They declared that he was politically dead and buried, and this letter was his epitaph. But the Nation recognized it as a master stroke. It actually made him the inevitable standard bearer of his party against the wishes of its leaders. In the Electoral College he polled 277 votes out of 444. His party, however, weakly catered to the silverites by nominating Stevenson, a silver man, for the Vice-Presidency.

When Congress met in special session, on August seventh, Mr. Cleveland's message urged the absolute repeal of the Sherman Act, without any substitute and without any compromise. On August eleventh Mr. Cleveland returned to Gray Gables. While there he was rejoiced to learn that the House had passed the repeal on August twenty-eighth by 239 to 101 votes—more than two to one. The repeal then went to the Senate.

The day after the vote in the House "Holland's" letter disclosing the first operation was published.

Though there was believed to be a majority of the Senate in favor of repeal, in spite of the fact that seven silver States, with only one-sixtieth of the population, had about one-sixth of the membership of the Senate, the battle raged long and fiercely. "Senatorial courtesy" prevented "cloture," and the weary debate went on and on until the obstruction became a scandal. Jones, of Nevada, covered one hundred closely printed pages of the *Congressional Record* with his speech. Allen, of Nebraska, spoke for fourteen hours. An attempt at a continuous session, to wear out one side or the other, failed after thirty-eight hours. Late in October the Senate did not formally adjourn for fourteen days.

Wild schemes, also, were proposed to alter the proportion of gold and silver from one to sixteen to one to seventeen, eighteen, nineteen; and even twenty to one. The last was actually proposed by Senator Vest, of Missouri. Secretary Carlisle gave it its quietus with a bare bodkin thrust by showing that the

recoinage of our silver would require several years, during which time there would be two sorts of dollars of different values, and would cost one hundred and twelve million dollars!

Finally, on October thirtieth, the repeal passed the Senate by 48 to 37 votes—including five "pairs."

The country was thus saved from the dire disaster that threatened; but the noxious effects of the silver heresy did not pass away until the election of 1896.

This, then, was the threatening situation, which was at its very worst when Doctor Bryant and I operated. The operation itself was as nothing compared with scores that both of us had performed; but on it hung the life not only of a human being and an illustrious ruler but the destiny of a nation. It was by far the most responsible operation in which I ever took part.

The History Preceding the First Operation.

On Sunday, June eighteenth, 1893, Dr. R. M. O'Reilly—later Surgeon-General of the United States Army—the official medical attendant on officers of the Government in Washington, examined a rough place on the roof of Mr. Cleveland's mouth. He found an ulcer as large as a quarter of a dollar, extending from the molar teeth to within one-third of an inch of the middle line and encroaching slightly on the soft palate, and some diseased bone. The pathologist at the Army Medical Museum—who was kept in ignorance, of course, of the name of the patient—after examining the small fragment which Doctor O'Reilly had removed, reported that it was strongly indicative of malignancy.

Doctor O'Reilly, foreseeing the need for an operation, advised Mr. Cleveland to consult Dr. Joseph D. Bryant, long his medical attendant and intimate friend. Doctor Bryant quickly went to Washington and confirmed the diagnosis. The President, after the exam-

ination, with no apparent concern, inquired:

"What do you think it is, doctor?"

To which Doctor Bryant replied:

"Were it in my mouth I would have it removed at once."

This answer settled the matter.

During the discussion as to what arrangements could be made, "the President would not under any circumstances consent * * * to a time and place that would not give the best opportunity of avoiding disclosure, and even a suspicion that anything of significance had happened to him. The strong desire to avoid notoriety * * * was dwarfed by the fear he had of the effect on the public of a knowledge of his affliction, and on the financial questions of the time." He decided that July first was the earliest suitable date. Colonel Lamont, the Secretary of War, and a close personal friend, was then informed of the facts, and it was soon arranged that to secure secrecy the operation should be done on Commodore Benedict's yacht, the Oneida.

The next question was as to how soon after

the operation the President could probably safely return to Washington. August seventh was decided on.

Meantime Doctor Bryant had written me, asking for a consultation "in a very important matter." As I was about to go to New England I suggested that I should go to New York at noon and that we meet at three-fifteen on the deserted deck of the Fall River boat, which did not leave till 6 P. M. There, without any interruption, we laid all necessary plans. The living rooms on the Oneida were prepared and disinfected; an operating table and all the necessary instruments, drugs, dressings, and so on, were sent on board. Arrangements were made with Dr. Ferdinand Hasbrouck, a dentist accustomed to giving nitrous oxid, to assist.

My own family were kept in entire ignorance of the facts. To explain my absence I simply said that I was called to a distance for an important operation and would probably be absent for some days.

On June thirtieth I reached New York

City in the evening, went to Pier A, and was taken over to the yacht, which was lying at anchor at a considerable distance from the Battery. Dr. E. G. Janeway, of New York; Doctor O'Reilly; Dr. John F. Erdmann, Doctor Bryant's assistant; and Doctor Hasbrouck had also secretly gone to the yacht. The President, Doctor Bryant and Secretary Lamont, at a later hour arrived from Washington, openly drove to Pier A, whence they were taken to the yacht.

At the time when he left Washington, on June thirtieth, Mr. Cleveland issued a call for a special session of Congress on August seventh, with the object of averting the financial danger by the repeal of the silver clause of the Sherman Act.

On arriving on the yacht the President lighted a cigar, and we sat on deck smoking and chatting until near midnight. Once he burst out with "Oh, Doctor Keen, those office-seekers! Those officeseekers! They haunt me even in my dreams!" I had never met him before; but during that hour or more of con-

versation I was deeply impressed by his splendid personality and his lofty patriotism. I do not believe there was a more devoted patriot living.

He passed a good night, sleeping well without any sleeping medicine. Before he dressed, Doctor Janeway made a most careful examination of his chest and found nothing wrong. There was little if any arteriosclerosis. His pulse was ninety. His kidneys were almost entirely normal.

I then examined him myself. He stated that he was sure the rough place was of recent origin; that it was not there on March fourth, when he was inaugurated, but had been first observed about six or eight weeks before July first. There were no perceptibly enlarged glands. I confirmed the facts as to the ulcer and deemed the growth to be unquestionably malignant. During the morning his mouth was repeatedly cleansed and disinfected.

The anesthetic troubled us. Our anxiety related not so much to the operation itself as to the anesthetic and its possible dangers. These

might easily arise in connection with the respiration, the heart, or the function of the kidneys, etc., dangers which are met with not infrequently as a result of administering an anesthetic, especially in a man of Mr. Cleveland's age and physical condition. The patient was 56 years of age, very corpulent, with a short thick neck, just the build and age for a possible apoplexy—an incident which had actually occurred to one of my own patients. He was also worn out mentally and physically by four months of exacting labor and the officeseekers' importunities. Twenty-four years ago we had not the refined methods of diagnosis, nor had we the greatly improved methods of anesthesia which we have to-day. After canvassing the whole matter we decided to perform at least the earlier steps of the operation under nitrous oxid, and the later, if necessary, under ether. Doctor Hasbrouck was of opinion that we could not keep the patient well anesthetized with nitrous oxid long enough to complete the operation satisfactorily.

Doctor Bryant and Secretary Lamont had spent the night at their homes, but returned to the yacht the next morning—July first. The yacht then proceeded up the East River at half speed while the operation was performed.

So careful were we to elude observation that Doctor Bryant and all of us doctors, who might have been recognized by some of the staff of Bellevue Hospital, deserted the deck for the cabin while we were steaming through the East River in sight of the Hospital at Twenty-sixth Street.

The First Operation.

Commodore Benedict and Secretary Lamont remained on deck during the operation, which was performed in the cabin. The steward was the only other person present, to fetch and carry. I have always thought that due credit was not given to him, and to the captain and the crew, for their never betraying what had taken place. It is curious also that the alert and ubiquitous reporters seem

never to have thought of interviewing the captain and crew of the Oneida. The captain and crew knew Mr. Cleveland very well, for he had already traveled over fifty thousand miles on the yacht and his mere presence was no novelty. Any curiosity as to the evidently unusual occurrences was apparently allayed by the statement that the President had to have two very badly ulcerated teeth removed and that fresh, pure air, and disinfected quarters and skilled doctors, all had to be provided, lest blood poisoning should set in—a very serious matter when the patient was the just-inaugurated President of the United States.

Doctor Hasbrouck first extracted the two left upper bicuspid teeth under nitrous oxid. Doctor Bryant then made the necessary incisions in the roof of the mouth, also under nitrous oxid.

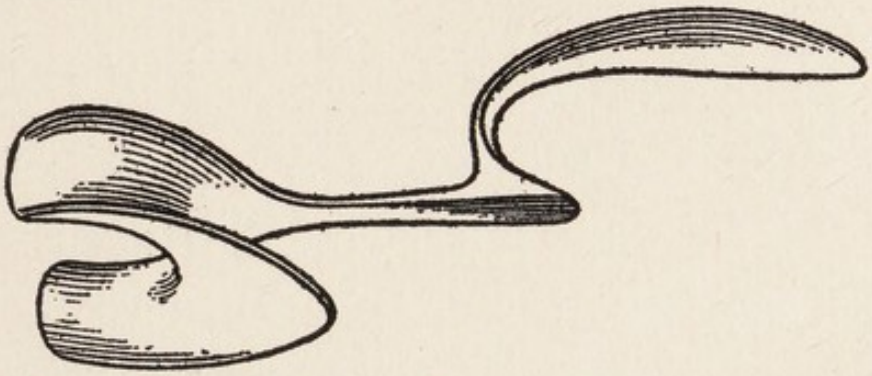
At one-fourteen P. M. ether was given by Doctor O'Reilly. During the entire operation Doctor Janeway kept close watch upon the patient's pulse and general condition. Doctor Bryant performed the operation, assisted by myself and Doctor Erdmann.

The entire left upper jaw was removed from the first bicuspid tooth to just beyond the last molar, and nearly up to the middle line. The floor of the orbit—the cavity in the skull containing the eyeball—was not removed, as it had not yet been attacked. A small portion of the soft palate was removed. This extensive operation was decided upon because we found that the antrum—the large hollow cavity in the upper jaw—was partly filled by a gelatinous mass, evidently a sarcoma. This diagnosis was later confirmed by Dr. William H. Welch, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, who had also examined the former specimens.

The entire operation was done within the mouth, without any external incision, by means of a cheek retractor, the most useful instrument I have ever seen for such an operation. This retractor I had brought back with me from Paris in 1866. The retention of the floor of the orbit prevented any displacement of the eyeball. This normal appearance of the eye, the normal voice, and especially the

absence of any external scar, which was the most important evidence of all, greatly aided in keeping the operation an entire secret.[1]

Only one blood vessel was tied. Pressure, hot water, and at one point the galvanocaut-



The cheek retractor bought in Paris from Luer in 1866 by W. W. Keen. By its means the operation was done wholly within the mouth thus avoiding any external scar.

ery, checked the bleeding. The hemorrhage was not large, probably about six ounces—say a tumblerful—in all. At the close of the operation, at one-fifty-five P. M., the pulse was only eighty. The large cavity was packed with gauze to arrest the subsequent moderate

1. This cheek-retractor I have deposited with the College of Physicians of Philadelphia together with the portion of tissue removed and photograph of the casts of the mouth on which Dr. Gibson molded the artificial jaw which he kindly presented to the College.

oozing of blood. At two-fifty-five P. M. a hypodermic of one-sixth of a grain of morphin was given—the only narcotic administered at any time.

What a sigh of intense relief we surgeons breathed when the patient was once more safe in bed can hardly be imagined!

Mr. Cleveland's temperature after the operation was 100.8 degrees Fahrenheit,, and never thereafter rose above 100 degrees. His pulse was usually ninety or a little over. With the packing in the cavity his speech was labored but intelligible; without the packing it was wholly unintelligible, resembling the worst imaginable case of cleft palate. Had this not been so admirably remedied by Doctor Gibson, secrecy later would have been out of the question.

In turn with the others, I sat by Mr. Cleveland's bedside much of the time that evening and the next day, reading to him at times to help pass the time. Doctor Bryant's and my own full notes say nothing about any stimulant. They would have recorded the stimulant

if any had been administered. My recollection, also, is clear that none was given. Our notes do not record the exact day when Mr. Cleveland was able to get out of bed, but my recollection is that it was late on July second. That he was up and about on July third is certain, for I saw in Commodore Benedict's guest register on the Oneida the signatures of the President, Secretary Lamont and Doctor Bryant on July third, two days after this very serious operation.

Doctor Hasbrouck had been landed at New London on July second. I left the yacht at Sag Harbor early on July fourth and came directly home. On July fifth, in the evening, the yacht reached Gray Gables and "the President walked from the launch to his residence with but little apparent effort."

For the events after July fifth the extracts from Mr. O'Brien's statements (p. 4) give all the needful particulars.

The Second Operation.

During such an operation, especially in operations on bone, with the parts bathed with blood, it is often impossible to judge accurately whether all the diseased tissue has certainly been removed. When, later, he could see clearly the condition of the parts, Doctor Bryant was not quite satisfied with the appearance at one point. At his request, Doctors Janeway, Erdmann and I (and undoubtedly Dr. O'Reilly, though neither Dr. Bryant nor my own notes record his name) again boarded the Oneida. We went by train to Greenwich, Commodore Benedict's home, and there, secure from discovery, went on board. Mr. Cleveland joined us on the yacht at Gray Gables; and on July seventeenth Doctor Bryant, with our assistance, removed all the suspicious tissue and cauterized the entire surface with the galvanocautery. This operation was brief and the President recovered quickly. On July nineteenth, again the second day after the operation, the same three signatures

appear in Commodore Benedict's register. This second operation has never been disclosed before.

On the evening of the eighteenth I was put ashore at Newport just before the Fall River boat was due, on her way to New York. Then an amusing encounter almost betrayed me. My intention was to get a stateroom and seclude myself there at once. At the head of the stairs on my way to the stateroom, whom should I meet but my brother-in-law, Mr. Spencer Borden, of Fall River!

"Hello! What are you doing here?" was his greeting.

I said very nonchalantly that I had had a consultation near by, and had had no time to visit the family in Fall River, as I had reached Newport only a few minutes earlier. Knowing my reticence in such matters and respecting my sense of duty, he did not press the question as to where the consultation had been held, nor who was the patient. When "Holland's" account was published, six weeks later, with swift intuition Mr. Borden ex-

claimed to his family at table that that surely must have been my "consultation" when he met me on the boat!

Mr. Cleveland left Gray Gables for the special session of Congress on August fifth. He returned to Gray Gables for rest and recuperation on August eleventh. Finally he went to Washington for the winter on August thirtieth and reached the White House on September first; on which date Doctor Bryant's notes say: "All healed."

After the first operation, while the President was at Gray Gables, Dr. Kasson C. Gibson, of New York, fitted Mr. Cleveland with an artificial jaw of vulcanized rubber. This supported the cheek in its natural position and prevented it from falling in. When it was in place the President's speech was excellent, even its quality not being altered. On October fourteenth Mr. Cleveland, in a letter to Doctor Gibson, expressed his lively satisfaction after trying a new and even better and more comfortable plate also made by Doctor Gibson.

I went to Washington at intervals several times afterward to examine Mr. Cleveland's mouth and never found anything wrong. These brief visits were always a great pleasure, at the time as well as in retrospect, since I made the more intimate acquaintance of both the President and Mrs. Cleveland and their lovely family.

Now, after the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century, it is even more evident than it was at the time that the instant decision of Mr. Cleveland himself, concurred in by his professional advisers and such friends as Secretary Lamont and Commodore Benedict, to keep the operation a profound secret, was wise, and one may say imperative. What the consequences would have been had it become known at once we can only surmise, and shudder!

Mr. Cleveland died June 24, 1908, fifteen years after our operations. That he should have survived after the removal of a sarcoma of the jaw without local recurrence for so unusually long a period was a great satisfaction to Doctor Bryant and his colleagues.

Long before his death Mr. Cleveland had "come into his own." He passed away as the "foremost American citizen," respected and honored by all parties and in all ranks of life. To me it is a rare satisfaction to have been associated with him so closely and to have been able to assist my trusted friend Bryant in doing a most important service to our beloved country.

The first time I ever saw Mr. Cleveland was at a reception in Washington, in 1888, when the American Surgical Association held its annual meeting. Mr. Cleveland readily consented to receive the members of the association, at Doctor Bryant's request.

Mrs. Cleveland had still the bloom of a youthful bride, for the marriage of the President and Miss Frances Folsom had been celebrated in the White House in 1886; only two years earlier. I shall never forget the deep impression she then made upon me as we filed past and she shook our hands. Her manner had a delightful friendly charm, which seemed to say to every one of us in turn: "My dear

doctor, I should really like to sit down and have a nice little chat with you; but you see all these gentlemen behind you, to whom I am obliged to say a word or two. I am very sorry; but I must let you go." Nor has that charm been lost with the passing years.

Unfortunately Mr. Cleveland never learned to dictate easily to a stenographer. Practically all his letters, papers and addresses were written by his own hand. In the New York Academy of Medicine there is framed a formal address before the academy, every page of it laboriously hand written. I never received from him a note or a letter that was typewritten.

I never knew any other public man who took the duties of his office more seriously—one might say, so overconscientiously. Every case that reached him from various courts, civil or military, I have been told, had to have all the evidence presented along with the sentence; and many a midnight hour found him still poring over the documents in the case. Such infinite labor has long been a heavy task

for our Presidents. Now it has become a practical impossibility. The President of over one hundred million people should be relieved especially of the huge burden of the appointment of thousands of officeholders in the many departments of the Government. The principal and confidential officers, cabinet ministers, judges, members of important commissions, and so on, should be the only presidential appointees. This would give him time and strength to devote to determining the great questions of policy, which the direction of internal affairs, and still more the intricate and often perplexing foreign relations of a great nation, require. His time and strength should not be frittered away by the importunities of applicants and their personal and congressional advocates.

Once only did I, myself, transgress this rule, and the time and care he gave to this case shamed me. In the autumn of 1893 one of my former medical students wanted to study tropical diseases. As his means were limited he asked me

whether I could obtain for him an appointment as consul at some not too busy place, where there would be leisure for such study. In those days there were no laboratories available for such studies. The work had to be personal and individual.

Moreover, there was absolutely no examination for consulships, and the commercial duties represented by our present useful consular reports were often neglected. Accordingly I wrote to Mr. Cleveland, stating the case. Most men in his position would have thought that making the appointment upon the facts as stated in my letter was fully warranted. Not so Mr. Cleveland! He insisted on knowing all about the applicant in detail; and, instead of directing a clerk to write the reply to me, he wrote it himself. When satisfied with the qualifications of the applicant he made the appointment.

In 1898 Mr. William Potter, former Minister to Italy, and then, as now, the efficient president of the board of Trustees of the Jefferson Medical College, sought to obtain Mr. Cleve-

land as the orator at the commencement of the Jefferson. At his instance I wrote to Mr. Cleveland, urging him to accept. In his courteous reply, declining the invitation, appears an echo of July, 1893:

"I sometimes think I have not, and perhaps never will recover from the mental twist and wrench of my last term in Washington. I suppose I am booked for a speech of a political character, to be made late in April; and while it seemed to me the highest duty dictated the engagement, the anticipation of the ordeal is already such a nightmare that it makes me unhappy."

There again spoke the great citizen. The "highest duty" was ever a call to be obeyed.

The last time I saw Mr. Cleveland was in his Princeton home on December 26, 1905, in consultation with Doctors Bryant, Carnochan, of Princeton, and William C. Lusk, of New York. He was the same dutiful patient as in 1893. For a man of his rugged temperament, self-conscious power, and concentrated will and purpose, he was the most docile and

courageous patient I ever had the pleasure of attending.

Once a decision was reached and announced to him, he observed the prescribed regimen steadfastly and with unquestioning obedience. His equanimity was one of the most noticeable features of his everyday life—at least, as I saw it—but I have a strong suspicion that when, in turn, the lion was roused it were well for his adversary not to cross his path.

My political principles and convictions differed from his own, but I never questioned his sincerity. He had long had my profound respect, for he gained my affection in the very first hour I passed with him on the deck of the Oneida. May this nation ever be blessed with many such noble, fearless citizens!

Author's Note.

Besides my own notes written at the time of the first operation and afterward, I have had the advantage of the original notes by Dr. Joseph D. Bryant, the surgeon in charge of the case; the notes of Dr. Robert M. O'Reilly, United States Army, who gave the

ether; of Dr. Ferdinand Hasbrouck, the dentist; and of recent interviews with Dr. John F. Erdmann, Doctor Bryant's then assistant, now the widely known surgeon in New York City; with Commodore E. C. Benedict, and K. C. Gibson, D.D.S.; and of correspondence with Mr. E. J. Edwards—"Holland"—of the Philadelphia *Press.*

I have also consulted various newspapers of the time, particularly the *Nation,* the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle,* and many clippings from a number of daily newspapers; several Lives of Mr. Cleveland, Mr. Cleveland's "Presidential Problems," and various books dealing with the financial conditions in 1893, especially Peck's *"Twenty Years of the Republic,"* Dewey's *"National Problems,"* and Burton's *"John Sherman."*

My thanks are also due to Mr. James Ford Rhodes for valuable suggestions.