

CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER AU.

As a man travels on in the journey of life and passes the prime of manhood his strength and energy are somewhat lessened by age, which is an indication that it is intended that his last years should be at least to some extent a period of rest. Not all who pass the meridian of life are permitted to put aside business cares, for through the lack of business ability or mismanagement they have not acquired capital sufficient to supply their needs in

their declining years. Captain Au, however, is enjoying a well earned rest. Long connected with mercantile interests, his capital management and the careful husbanding of his resources have brought to him a very desirable competence, which now supplies him with all the necessities and many of the luxuries that go to make life worth the living.

On the 12th of December, 1824, in Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, Captain Au was born. His father, Henry Au, was probably a native of Perry county, that state, and was born in 1784, but his last days were spent on his farm four miles west of Mansfield, in Richland county, where he died, in April, 1863. His wife, who bore the maiden name of Barbara Ann Stough, was also born in Cumberland county, where they were married in 1816. Their children were born in the same locality. Four of their family died in early childhood, but they reared five sons and four daughters. Of this number their sons and three of the daughters were married and had children. The five representatives of the family still living are: Henry, who is now in his eighty-fourth year and lives in Springfield township, adjoining the old homestead; Samuel, who, at the age of eighty years, lives in Madison township; Catherine, the wife of Philip Lutz, of Mifflin township; Christopher; and Jane, the widow of William Bloor, of Mansfield. Jacob Au died in November, 1899, when about eighty-one years of age; John died in 1895, in his sixty-ninth year; Mary M. died about 1894, at the age of sixty-five; and Amanda, the wife of Obadiah Munnell, died in 1864, about thirty-three years of age. The mother of these children was called to her final rest in 1870, when she had reached the psalmist's span of three-score years and ten.

The Captain spent the first seventeen years of his life on the old farm homestead and acquired a knowledge of the branches of learning taught in the common schools. He then (1843) removed from Pennsylvania to Mansfield and began working at the carpenter's trade. Our subject worked in southern Ohio among some of his friends and later went to Iowa in the spring of 1846. From there he proceeded southward to Tennessee and Mississippi, spending the winter in those states, and with broken health he returned to Iowa. During his residence in the Hawkeye state he formed the acquaintance of Miss Laura J. Greenfield and won her hand in marriage June 27, 1848. She was born in Locke township, Cayuga county, New York, November 16, 1829, a daughter of Thomas and Mary (Walters) Greenfield. He was formerly a minister of the Freewill Baptist church. Mrs. Au was the youngest of twelve children born to her parents. Her father was twice married and had eighteen children. Her mother, who was born January

20, 1788, died in Livingston county, New York, June 12, 1835, and her remains were there interred. The father died in 1855, at a very advanced age. He was a man of large frame, of strong constitution, vigorous in both mind and body, and he had a high moral character. He served in the war of 1812, and prior to that struggle with England three of his children were born. Mr. and Mrs. Au were married in Fort Madison, Iowa, and for two years thereafter they resided in that city, but in 1850 Captain Au returned to Mansfield with his wife. Theirs has been a very harmonious and happy life, and in 1898 they celebrated their golden wedding, having for fifty years shared with each other their joys and sorrows, their adversity and prosperity.

In the summer of 1862, during the Civil war, our subject organized Company I of the One Hundred and Twentieth Regiment of Ohio Volunteers and as its captain went to the front, remaining in that service until December, 1864, when his regiment was consolidated with the Forty-second Ohio and he was assigned to Company A. The boys of his command, however, were assigned to another company and this occasioned great dissatisfaction to the Captain and his company, who were quick to make known their opposition. The Captain was then mustered out and he returned home. He was afterward tendered a colonelcy in a new organization, but he declined to accept the appointment. With the exception of one month's furlough, which he spent at home, he was never off duty for a single day while with his command.

In his political views the Captain is a staunch Republican and is a valued member of the Grand Army of the Republic. He served as the first commander of the Ontario Post, No. 485. His fellow townsmen, recognizing his ability, have frequently called him to public service. For six years he served as township trustee and for twenty years he has been the postmaster of Ontario. Thirty-one years ago he began merchandising in Ontario and continued in that business until in 1900, when he was succeeded by his son. He is now practically living retired in the home where he took up his abode thirty years ago. He owns twenty-five acres of land on the outskirts of the village and has a cottage at Lakeside, where he and his wife have spent the hot summer months through the past nineteen years. Both are members of the Methodist Episcopal church and he has been one of its most active workers and held all of its official positions at various times.

Unto the Captain and his wife were born the following children: George Washington, born May 31, 1849, and died in infancy; Adessa J., born in 1851 and died at the age of five months; John Henry, born May 2, 1852;

Mary Ella, who was born March 27, 1854, and is the wife of P. M. Ringer, a grocery dealer of Mansfield; Martha Ann, born April 8, 1856, and is the wife of W. H. Roasberry, a practicing physician at Olivesburg; Sherman G., who was born in 1858 and is a grocer of Mansfield; Abraham H., born in 1860 and is engaged in the same line of business in Mansfield; Laura F., born in November, 1862, and became the wife of W. N. Coats, but died in 1892, at the age of thirty, leaving a daughter; and Christopher S. was born in 1866 and killed in a railroad accident at the age of twenty years. Mr. and Mrs. Au have fourteen grandchildren living and have lost three.

It was long before Captain Au applied for a pension, but he is now receiving a small one. The bravery and loyalty which his wife displayed during the Civil war was no less pronounced than that of many a veteran on the field. While her husband was at the front she cared for her family and instilled into their minds the spirit of patriotic devotion to their country. She made for them a flag which was unfurled in their yard. A man of the community threatened to tear it down, but when he found her ready to defend it even with her life he retreated. Surely the heroic citizens were not all at the front in that terrible struggle. In all life's relations Captain Au has followed a course at once honorable and upright and his life demonstrates the worth of integrity and enterprise in the busy affairs of the world. As a citizen his course has ever been commendable. As a public official he has ever been true to the public trust, and as a husband and father he has been loyal and devoted to the best interests of home,