

A.R.L. and E.B.L. Golden Wedding Dinner Table Talks,

April 27, 1932.

(Those present being in this order:- Alexander R. Lawton, Ella B. Lawton, Spencer Lawton, Elizabeth Beckwith, Florance Minis, Betty Hilton, Sarah Cunningham, Tom Hilton, Virginia Cleveland, Alexander R. Lawton, Jr., Bessie Lawton, Leonard Mackall, Bess Craig, Leopold Alexander, Anne Charlton, Tom Charlton, Mary Minis, Aunt Nora.)

*2 Beckwith*

During the soup course Leonard arose and said something like this:-

"This is not a speech but just an explanation to prevent misunderstanding! The rather attractive person from Florida (Miss Florida) on my left has just asked me what all this celebration or something is about, and some of the others, not from Florida, may not know any more about it than she does! The mystery about it all was necessary to save Aunt Daisy's reputation as a member of the Junior League and the G.F.S., as you will see.

"Last year in New York, when bound for the Grolier Club one night, I suddenly found myself by mistake in a night-club, and I was still more surprised to find there Aunt Daisy at a table with two men, only one of whom was Uncle Alex! I took the liberty of joining them, and we all had a very pleasant evening. The next time that I was in the same place, of course by mistake, the proprietor asked me confidentially who the Lady was. He said that he had never seen her with less than two men; and from the professional way in which she gave everything the once-over, and the way she smoked, he felt sure that she must be running a similar club herself somewhere. Of course I could not deny all this very convincingly, but I added that at least she was justified by the fact that her husband is a notorious bigamist! The proprietor then said

that since she was a business colleague of his, as well as a good customer, or at least encourager of customers, he would particularly like to show his appreciation of her visits by sending her, with his compliments, something which she could not get at home otherwise, provided, for safety's sake, he could send it to my care. He has done so, and we are here now so that we can all enjoy it together. It will now be served at once, in glasses."

As he concluded thus, the glasses, and then the champagne, were brought on as a welcome surprise.

Sarah Cunningham then arose, and read in behalf of Aunt Nora, lines from David Gray's poem, "THE GOLDEN WEDDING", (in Stevenson's "Home Book of Verse", 1837-1888):-

"The sacred myrtle wreathes again  
Thine altar, as of old;  
And what was green with summer then,  
Is mellowed now to gold.  
. . . . .  
Blest was the sun of joy that shone,  
Nor less the blinding shower;  
The bud of fifty years agone  
Is love's perfected flower.  
. . . . .  
So be it still, O Thou who hast  
That younger bridal blest,  
Till the May-morn of love has passed  
To evening's golden west;  
Come to this later Cana, Lord,  
And, at thy touch divine  
The water of that earlier board  
Tonight shall turn to wine."

Shortly afterwards Florance Minis in a few appropriate words, proposed the special health of the Bride and Groom, and it was drunk most enthusiastically.

Later Leonard got up again, and said (more or less):-

"My personal regard for Aunt Daisy and Uncle Alex is even greater than that of the New York night-club proprietor, so I wanted to add something myself on the same occasion, and

accordingly consulted everyone, but in vain. Aunt Daisy and Uncle Alex each wanted just anything that the other wanted, I knew, but did not know what. Miss Bessie suggested my reading something appropriate and short, but could not remember anything suitable from either of her favorite authors whom she had already immortalized, Goethe and Macaulay. But she kindly found a couple of sentences in her third and most favorite writer, Rabelais, but I am afraid to read her quotations out loud, as we have not finished expurgating them yet.

"Beckwith said that he was celebrating the occasion by not talking, and therefore could not talk about it. But I could read in his mind that he thought that at least nothing could be more beautiful than a complete collection of the photographs of all his very best girls. Alexander was unavailable, playing golf. Bessie and Sarah Hodge, whom I met while I was walking out to the Isle of Hope, (she having just had another of her favorite auto accidents) both made the very same suggestion, a subscription for Aunt Daisy to the Tribune; but the Savannah Tribune office informed me that they already sent it to her free, since she supplied them with so much news.

"Sarah Cunningham told me at once that the most wonderful present for anyone would of course be a dog, exactly like her own glorious Weejee. But there is nothing else like him, and anyhow such strange mixtures and percentages are expressly forbidden by the latest Constitutional Amendments, fortunately.

"So finally after all I had to go back to what the New York Night Club proprietor had said, and get three ash trays of special gold, one for Uncle Alex, and one for each of his wives. If, like England, these trays have slipped off the Gold

Standard, at least the Shepheard's Hotel cigarettes which accompany them are useful; and both together will serve to prevent Aunt Daisy from trying to stop smoking. For, if she should try to stop half as hard as she tried to start, and forget to stop trying to start first, the result would be an explosion which would certainly scare Sarah and even Aunt Nora.

"Since I could not possibly read aloud Miss Bessie's Rabelais quotations, and was anxious to spring something original, by someone else, I naturally consulted my old Dictionary of Quotations, 1817, still bearing the autograph signature of "A. Leopold Alexander, Yale College" (Class of 1821), and here at last is the very thing to end, or begin, with:- "In vino veritas. Latin. 'There is truth in wine.' It extracts secrets from the reserved, and puts the habitual liar off his guard."

(A Dictionary of Select and Popular Quotations, which are in Daily Use; taken from the Latin, French, Greek, Spanish and Italian Languages: translated into English, with illustrations, historical and idiomatic, by D. E. MacDonnell, of the Middle Temple. Second American Edition, corrected, with numerous additions. Philadelphia, 1817. The First American Edition was 1810.) Let that be our motto! and don't forget it, when in search of Truth, or thirsty, or both."

Extract from "My Recollections of My Father" -  
Visitors at Langley during my boyhood.

"Among other visitors I recall General A. R. Lawton, of Savannah, who was the last quartermaster general of the Confederate Armies, and who later, under the administration of President Cleveland, served with distinction as United States minister to the Imperial Court of Austria-Hungary. General Lawton was a graduate of West Point, but resigning from the Army soon after his graduation, studied Law and settled in Savannah, where due to his sterling character and substantial legal attainments he rose to the top of his profession. At the marriage of my father and mother, which was consummated on the 7th day of May 1843 at the residence of the latter's father, which is still standing overlooking Madison Square in the loveliest of Southern cities, General Lawton was one of my father's groomsmen, and his wife, then the accomplished Miss Sarah Alexander, was my mother's maid of honor. Later on in life the writer, also, located in Savannah and entered upon the practice of Law; and it is with a grateful memory that he recalls as a briefless young barrister the substantial courtesies and sympathetic encouragement he received from this charming couple of the old school."