

GLORIA DEI (OLD SWEDES') CHURCH
Swanson Street, near Front, Philadelphia, built in 1700.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH the two young pioneers in the Wanamaker business it was heavy plowing early and late for a long time. Good health and pluck, patience and unconquerableness that come to the country-born formed the larger part of the business capital in those early days.

The little store's family consisted of the two partners, two cutters, who also served as salesmen, and one errand boy.

When the business was only three months old came the battle of Bull Run,—July 21, 1861.

Already the "boy-clothiers" were helping equip soldiers going to the front. Already the long thread of PUBLIC SERVICE was started around the spool of years.

When the epoch-making combat between the Monitor and the Merrimac revolutionized naval warfare, an economic revolution was started in Oak Hall.

This was a move for shorter hours for workpeople, and its fruits are now part of the law of the land.

Shorter hours did not apply, however, to members of the firm. They seldom do. Some say this is one of the conditions which makes members of firms and heads of houses! Be that as it may, the two workers were often at the store all night, for the patronage was growing.

Innovations were multiplying.

Winter months after the first of the year had always been dull times in clothing stores. Clerks sat around the stoves and swapped stories or slept.

As Irving Bacheller quotes the dean of the cross-roads grocery crowd down in Maine, sometimes they would "set and think" and then again they would "jest set."

Using special sales as an attraction, "Oak Hall" soon knocked the dulness out of January, February and March. Many merchants, foolishly venerating the customs of their ancestors and apparently unaware that the world was going forward, muttered at this.

Being forced to try the plan, for self-preservation, they found it less unpleasant than they had thought. We like what succeeds.

Already the Wanamaker system, though in its infancy, was a vitalizing influence. Scoffers began to use the soft pedal and doubters disclaimed their doleful predictions, as they have a way of doing when proven wrong.

Hard work wedded to ideals was raising a fine family. It always does.

"Forward March" again came the order, and from

shorter hours in 1862 it was only a few steps to the great innovation of 1865—ONE PRICE *and* GOODS RETURNABLE.

Here was the discovery of a basic economic principle; but being a part of Wanamaker economics, it is treated of fully in another part of this Golden Book.

Rapidly the business forged ahead. The new ideas were active quickeners of trade.

With increasing custom came need for more room. The venture that "just couldn't help being a failure," because it had chosen such an unpropitious birth-time, had actually outgrown its cradle!

At first the overflow was taken care of in a second-story room in the building adjoining in Sixth street. A little later the whole building was occupied.

Within less than a decade of the opening, the Market street front had widened to 67 feet and the Sixth street side extended to Minor street, a distance of 180 feet. Six floors of this size gave a total area of nearly two acres, and an editor from Columbia, Pennsylvania, who came to Philadelphia to buy a suit of clothes, went home and wrote about "Oak Hall" as the most wonderful of the sights he saw in the big city.

This was in the early '70's. The Wanamaker business had already become the largest of its kind in the entire country.

Ten years of strict adherence to the course mapped out in the beginning had given it foremost place in the retail clothing trade in the United States.

It was no longer merely a Philadelphia store. Customers from every State made purchases while visiting Philadelphia or dealt with satisfaction and security by

mail, thus nationalizing the business and pointing the way to its present international scope.

With the successful operation of the Atlantic cable in 1866 and the driving of the last spike in the Pacific Railway three years later opportunities for long-range service were multiplied.

Many times have these two vitals of commerce—the covered wire under the ocean and the shining steel rails on top of the land—been called the Wanamaker Stores' extra right and left hands.

Perhaps no other business institution has made such large use of each of these annihilators of time and distance—certainly no other in the retail field.

The year 1873 was a panic year, marked by the most disastrous business upheaval of peaceful times.

Like dead leaves before the wind, houses that had withstood war, pestilence and change went down to failure. Money seemed to vanish suddenly, like the fairy food-folk in Maeterlinck's wonderful play, "The Bluebird."

Prior to the crash—it was really a succession of crashes—Mr. Wanamaker had sought to enlarge "Oak Hall," but owners of adjoining property would not sell. Still the business cried out for more room.

Reliable goods, sold under the New System and advertised more generously than had ever before been the custom,—such was the foundation upon which new needs rested.

And while friendly souls were saying how fortunate it was that John Wanamaker had not been able to enlarge his store—they were thinking of the hard times!—the object of their kind thoughts was dickering with the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad to buy its old

freight depot, then on the outskirts of the city, at Thirteenth and Market street.

When this was newsed about, men looked at each other sadly and said with sighs, "It's too bad! And just as he is reaping success! Too bad!"

Those who believed the report took it that way. Many persons laughed it off as idle talk. In the first place, why should he want so much ground for just one store? Then, who would be so foolish as to leave the business center of the city for a location so far out?

The very idea!

In 1874 the deal was settled and announced.

"When you bought the old freight depot, all Philadelphia wondered what in the world you would do with such a large piece of property so far uptown," wrote the Rev. Dr. James Russell Miller, the eminent pastor and author, on a recent anniversary.

Philadelphia did more than wonder at the purchase. A large slice of its citizenry assumed prophet-roles and freely predicted that the ultimate result of such a move—if it really was his intention to move there!—would be failure.

Let us now review this failure!



OLD BUILDING IN GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA
Still Bearing the Marks of Bullets Fired in the Battle of Germantown,
October 4th, 1777.

CHAPTER IX.

COLONEL THOMAS A. SCOTT was an official of the Pennsylvania Railroad when the Civil War began. He invented the modern method of clearing away train-wrecks by burning smashed cars. The wind carried off the ashes, the junk-man took the twisted iron and delays were reduced from days to hours.

Of course, some lumber was lost, but this was more than made up in the saving of labor, time and traffic, just as the Wanamaker innovation of reducing profits to move goods quickly—clearing the track for new stocks—gives people advantages that compensate the merchant for any money-margin sacrificed.

Lincoln turned to "Tom" Scott when he needed a practical troop-mover. He made him assistant secretary of war, and one day asked him how soon rail communication

could be re-established between Philadelphia and Washington.

"It is already done," answered Scott.

"When may we expect troops?" asked Lincoln.

"The first train-load is already in and others are on the way."

"Thank God, we are all right again," said Lincoln.

So when the Wanamaker System's first train was in and others were on the way it was from "Tom" Scott that



THOMAS A. SCOTT
1824-1887

John Wanamaker in 1874 bought the block of rambling sheds between Market and Kelly, Thirteenth and Juniper streets.

This old spot was both the camping ground of soldiers and a special rendezvous for regiments during the Civil War.

David Edward Cronin, an officer of the New York Black Horse Cavalry, has written a graphic story of the night his command waited transportation southward and slept on the platforms and the Market street pavement until the cars came at 4 A. M. to carry them on.

The old Freight Station was a storage and distribution point for ammunition during the war.

Many of the sons and grandsons of old soldiers are in the Wanamaker ranks of thousands who carry the flag of New Commerce. They are good soldiers, of high principles, and are fighting the battle of good citizenship, as their fathers and grandsires—members of the Grand Army of the Republic—fought for the Union.

For twenty years the sheds on this spot had served the railroad, the freight cars being drawn in and out by strings of nine or ten powerful mules, chained tandem.

Once substantial, the buildings were now dilapidated. From a height of ten feet at the eaves to thirty at the ridge, the pitched roof covered a frontage of 200 feet on Market street, where the wall was simply a succession of



SITE OF THE WANAMAKER STORE, PHILADELPHIA, IN 1875

wide doors. At the Thirteenth street corner was a four-story brick office structure. Three truss-roof additions ran from Thirteenth to Juniper on Kelly street, which was later closed to give the growing store more room.

A less sightly group of buildings could hardly be found.

"That green John Wanamaker is crazy!" In no other way could the public account for his action.

"The consensus of opinion was that the purchase would prove a ruinous one," wrote an old Philadelphia merchant in later years. "The idea seemed chimerical in the extreme,—to start a clothing store so far from the general current of retail traffic and of such dimensions as seemed to be beyond the possibility of success in gathering sufficient business to cover the outlay."



Wanamaker's

Chestnut, Thirteenth,
Market and Juniper Streets.

November 3, 1893.

- 1 City Hall.
- 2 Broad St. Sta. Pa. R. R.
- 3 U. S. Mint.
- 4 Masonic Temple.
- 5 Reading Terminal Sta.

"BUT," he said in the next sentence, "Mr. Wanamaker was to solve the enigma that seemed to be impossible of solution."

In the deserted depot the Franklin Institute had in 1874 cradled the Centennial with its famous Fair, and then came the Moody and Sankey meetings, opening a new epoch in the inspirational life of the city.

"It was in the autumn of 1875 that George H. Stuart, Alexander Whilldin and myself went over to Brooklyn to see Messrs. Moody and Sankey, who were then holding their great meetings there," wrote Joshua L. Baily a few years ago. "We had two or three interviews with the

evangelists, and obtained their consent to come to Philadelphia and hold religious meetings of like character. A preliminary committee had already been formed in Philadelphia consisting of thirteen laymen, of which Mr. Stuart had been chosen chairman, and we proceeded at once to search for a suitable place to hold the meetings.

"After a fruitless search it occurred to Mr. Stuart that the Pennsylvania depot, which had some time before been vacated, might be made to suit the purpose. The president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Mr. Thomas A. Scott, was interviewed on the subject, and told us that arrangements were concluded to sell the prop-

erty to Mr. John Wanamaker, and we could get the use of the building by Mr. Wanamaker's consent. Mr. Stuart at once cabled Mr. Wanamaker (who was then in London),



BETSY ROSS'S UPHOLSTERY SHOP
239 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Where the
First Flag Was Made.

and as nearly as I can remember, the cablegram received in return was that the committee could have the use of the building for three months for a compensation of \$1, or words to that effect.

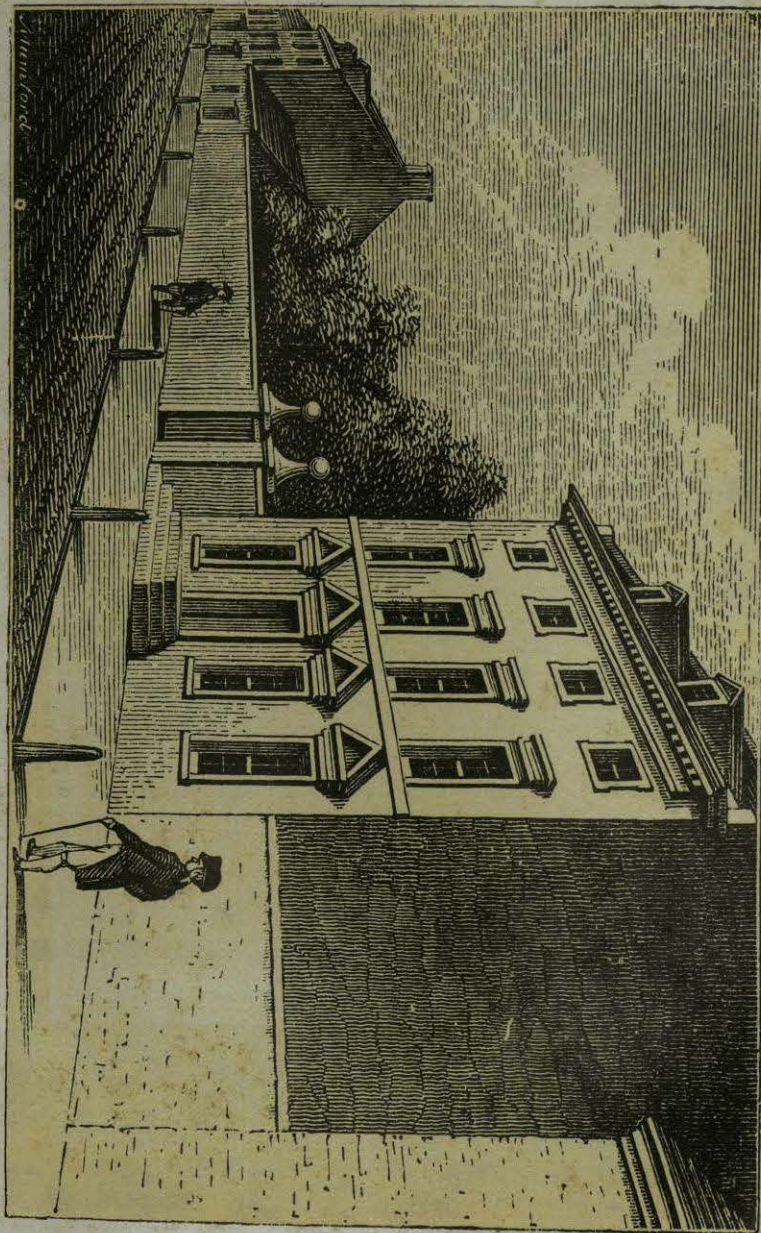
“Mr. Wanamaker returned from Europe after the alterations had been commenced, and most heartily and earnestly gave his support and encouragement throughout.”

Sometimes as many as 13,000 persons crowded the improvised auditorium at a single service. The last strain of the final

hymn still lingered among the rafters when a little army of carpenters and workmen began to make ready for the Wanamaker occupancy.

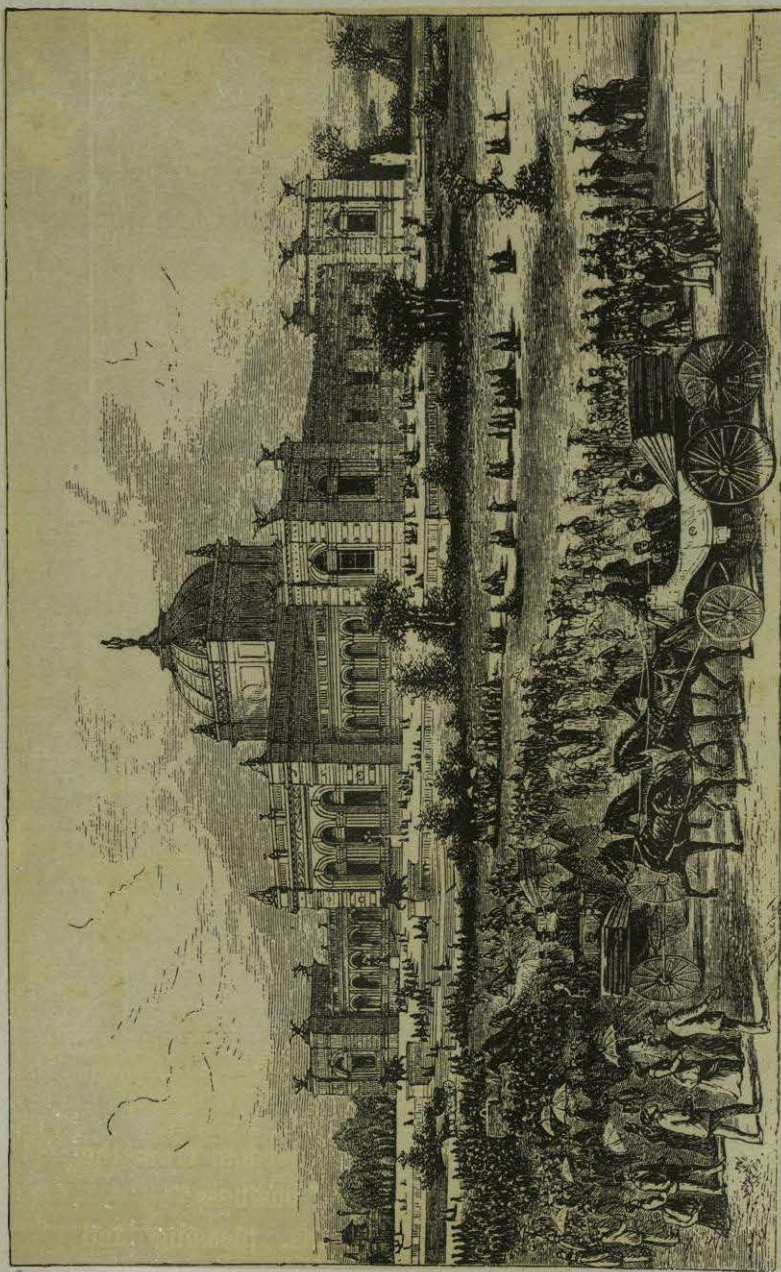
“Then everything was quiet on the outside of the place,” writes the Rev. Dr. Miller, recounting his memories of the Wanamaker move. “The workmen were busy within—making nobody could imagine just what, until one morning the doors were opened and the mystery was solved. What the people saw when they were admitted was the beginning of this New Kind of Store.”

The Philadelphia Home of General Washington, while President of the United States, located on Market Street (then High), near Sixth, where the Wanamaker Business was born.

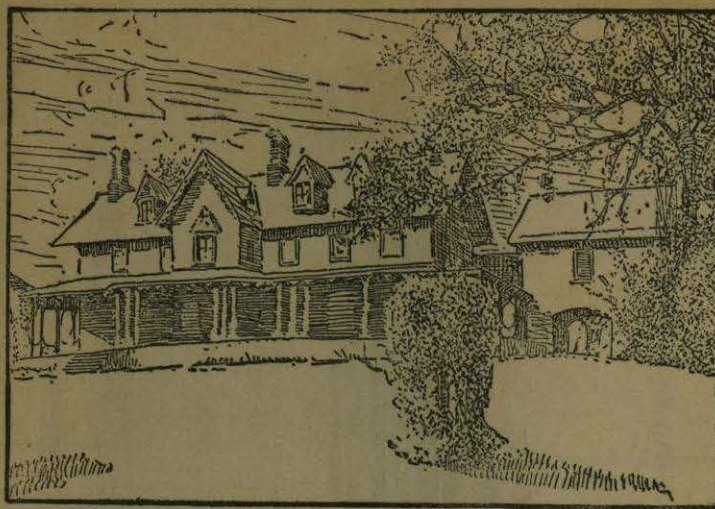




The Grand Depot of John Wanamaker about Centennial Time.



Memorial Hall, Centennial Celebration, Philadelphia, 1876.



CLIFTON HALL

A Country Seat near Overbrook, Philadelphia. Erected about 1682. Visited by Washington, Lafayette and Talleyrand.

CHAPTER X.

THAT morning was May 6, 1876.

The opening of this Grand Depot, as it was called for years, was almost simultaneous with the opening of the great Centennial Exhibition in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.

In point of wonder the new store was second only to that international group of buildings, and during the summer it was a sort of Centennial "annex."

The Centennial celebrated liberty for the American colonies in 1776.

The Wanamaker Store celebrated "freedom from the shackles of old, burdensome customs of business."

The Centennial lasted six months, pleasing and instructing ten million visitors.

Wanamaker's has kept on pleasing, instructing and serving countless millions,—an ever-growing exhibition