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## Reminiscence

George Wilkinson

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## Reminiscence

By GEORGE WILKINSON, C. P. A.

(Now and for many years a leader in accountancy affairs in this country)

WELL do I remember a cold, rainy Sunday evening when I met Mr. Haskins by previous appointment at the old Queen's Hotel in Manchester. It was after eight; the streets were unusually dark, as it was Sunday and the shop lights were out. The rain pelted down on the glass front of the hansom cab as it splashed along Oxford Street and Portland Street on the way to the Queen's Hotel. Mr. Haskins had arrived that afternoon from London, and that Sunday evening, late in September, 1902, was the only time he could give me to talk over my plans for federating the several societies of public accountants organized under state laws.

As the hansom clattered over the wet Belgian blocks of Portland Street, and the rain played a ceaseless tattoo on the canvas-covered cab, I wondered what sort of a reception the Big Fellow would give to the idea. Lybrand and the Pennsylvania Association, Max Teichman and the Maryland fellows, Joe Goodloe and the Ohio bunch, Harvey Chase and the Bostonese, and all the other state society presidents had endorsed the plan of the Illinois Association, but what would the Heap-Big-Chief say to me?

Well I knew that what Charles Waldo Haskins would say would go with the biggest society of them all. It was with some trepidation then that I jogged along to the promised interview. I had only met Mr. Haskins once or twice. I wondered whether he really would remember me.

"Yes, sir, Mr. 'Askins is h'expecting you, sir," said the lift-boy. "Step in, sir, and I'll run you hup."

A hearty welcome, a warm hand-shake, and a cheery coal fire awaited me in the Big Chief's sitting room.

"Boy, take the gentleman's coat and umbrella. Sit down, Wilkinson. Rotten weather. Good of you to come down here tonight. Am tied up with appointments tomorrow. Must get back to London on the night train. You mentioned in your letter that you were over here to attend a Golden Wedding anniversary. How are the old folks?" Thus the Big Chief put an end to formality.

Did he want to read over the tentative draft of the by-laws of the federation? *He did not!* Did he want to know what the other society presidents had said about it? *He did not!*

"Never mind the details, Wilkinson; tell me what you want to do." I told him. It didn't take long to outline to a man whose vision was so clear the plan which the Illinois Association had brought forward to federate in one national body the several societies of public accountants in the United States. The short recital over, the answer came promptly: "Bully scheme, Wilkinson, let's do it. New York will come in." And so it was settled. What had looked so doubtful in the prospect seemed so easy in the fulfilment. The Big Chief's enthusiasm for the plan was one of the happiest memories of my visit to England.

The rain had ceased and the cool washed air, through the open window of the cab, tasted good, as the little brown horse jogged briskly along the well-paved street on the three-mile drive to my parents' home. All doubt about the federation going through was ended.