

burdening his aching heart, and relaxing by degrees into a playfulness that was charming from its very awkwardness. He would bring little picture books for the children, pat them on their heads, and praise them. They were always glad to see him, and would nestle round him lovingly. We all loved him, and felt glad in the thought that he left our little circle lighter at heart. He lived alone. Once, when I playfully spoke to him of matrimony, he smiled quietly, and said: "No, no; my books and my poor school children are enough for me."

He died suddenly and alone. He had been out one windy night visiting the poor, came home sick, and before morning was in that world of spirits which was so real to his faith, and for which he longed. He left his little fortune of a few thousand dollars to the poor of his native village of Posen, in Poland. And thus passed from California life Dr. Julius Eckman, the Rabbi.

## AH LEE.

HE was the sunniest of Mongolians. The Chinaman, under favorable conditions, is not without a sly sense of humor of his peculiar sort; but to American eyes there is nothing very pleasant in his angular and smileless features. The manner of his contact with many Californians is not calculated to evoke mirthfulness. The brickbat may be a good political argument in the hands of a hoodlum, but it does not make its target playful. To the Chinaman in America the situation is new and grave, and he looks sober and holds his peace. Even the funny-looking, be-cued little Chinese children wear a look of solemn inquisitiveness, as they toddle along the streets of San Francisco by the side of their queer-looking mothers. In his own land, overpopulated and misgoverned, the Chinaman has a hard fight for existence. In these United States his advent is regarded somewhat in the same spirit as that of the seventeen-year locusts or the cotton worm. The history of a people may be read in their physiognomy. The monotony of Chinese life during these thousands of years is reflected in the dull, monotonous faces of Chinamen.

Ah Lee was an exception. His skin was almost fair, his features almost Caucasian in their regularity; his dark eye lighted up with a peculiar brightness, and there was a remarkable buoyancy and glow about him every way. He was about twenty years old. How long he had been in Cali-

fornia I know not. When he came into my office to see me the first time, he rushed forward and impulsively grasped my hand, saying: "My name Ah Lee—you Doctor Plitzjellie?"

That was the way my name sounded as he spoke it. I was glad to see him, and told him so.

"You makee Christian newspaper? You talkee Jesus? Mr. Taylor tellee me. Me Christian—me love Jesus."

Yes, Ah Lee was a Christian; there could be no doubt about that. I have seen many happy converts, but none happier than he. He was not merely happy; he was ecstatic.

The story of the mighty change was a simple one, but thrilling. Near Vacaville, the former seat of the Pacific Methodist College, in Solano County, lived the Rev. Iry Taylor, a member of the Pacific Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Mr. Taylor was a praying man, and he had a praying wife. Ah Lee was employed as a domestic in the family. His curiosity was first excited in regard to family prayers. He wanted to know what it all meant. The Taylors explained. The old, old story took hold of Ah Lee. He was put to thinking and then to praying. The idea of the forgiveness of sins filled him with wonder and longing. He hung with breathless interest upon the word of the Lord, opening to him a world of new thought. The tide of feeling bore him on, and at the foot of the cross he found what he sought.

Ah Lee was converted—converted as Paul, as Augustine, as Wesley, were converted. He was born into a new life that was as real to him as his consciousness was real. This psychological change will be understood by some of my readers; others may regard it as they do any other inexpli-

cable phenomenon in that mysterious inner world of the human soul, in which are lived the real lives of us all. In Ah Lee's heathen soul was wrought the gracious wonder that makes joy among the angels of God.

The young Chinese disciple, it is to be feared, got little sympathy outside the Taylor household and a few others. The right-hand of Christian fellowship was withheld by many, or extended in a cold, half-reluctant way. But it mattered not to Ah Lee; he had his own heaven. Coldness was wasted on him. The light within him brightened everything without.

Ah Lee became a frequent visitor to our cottage on the hill. He always came and went rejoicing. The Gospel of John was his daily study and delight. To his ardent and receptive nature it was a diamond mine. Two things he wanted to do: he had a strong desire to translate his favorite Gospel into Chinese, and to lead his parents to Christ. When he spoke of his father and mother his voice would soften, his eyes moisten with tenderness. "I go back to China and tellee my fader and mudder allee good news," he said, with beaming face.

This peculiar development of filial reverence and affection among the Chinese is a hopeful feature of their national life. It furnishes a solid basis for a strong Christian nation. The weakening of this sentiment weakens religious susceptibility; its destruction is spiritual death. The worship of ancestors is idolatry, but it is that form of it nearest akin to the worship of the Heavenly Father. The honoring of the father and mother on earth is the commandment with promise, and it is the promise of this life and of life everlasting. There is an interblending of human and divine

loves; earth and heaven are unitary in companionship and destiny. The golden ladder rests on the earth and reaches up into the heavens.

About twice a week Ah Lee came to see us at North Beach. These visits subjected our courtesy and tact to a severe test. He loved little children, and at each visit he would bring with him a gayly painted box filled with Chinese sweetmeats. Such sweetmeats! They were too strong for the palates of even young Californians. What cannot be relished and digested by a healthy California boy must be formidable indeed. Those sweetmeats were—but I give it up—they were indescribable! The boxes were pretty, and, after being emptied of their contents, they were kept.

Ah Lee's joy in his new experience did not abate. Under the touch of the Holy Spirit, his spiritual nature had suddenly blossomed into tropical luxuriance. To look at him made me think of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. If I had had any lingering doubts of the transforming power of the gospel upon all human hearts, this conversion of Ah Lee would have settled the question forever. The bitter feeling against the Chinese that just then found expression in California, through so many channels, did not seem to affect him in the least. He had his Christianity warm from the heart of the Son of God, and no caricature of its features nor perversion of its spirit could bewilder him for a moment. He knew whom he had believed. None of these things moved him. O blessed mystery of God's mercy, that turns the night of heathen darkness into day, and makes the desert soul bloom with the flowers of paradise! O cross of the Crucified! Lifted up, it shall draw all men to their Saviour! And O blind and slow of heart to be-

lieve! why could we not discern that this young Chinaman's conversion was our Lord's gracious challenge to our faith, and the pledge of success to the Church that will go into all the world with the news of salvation?

Ah Lee has vanished from my observation, but I have a persuasion that is like a burning prophecy, that he will be heard from again. To me he types the blessedness of old China newborn in the life of the Lord, and in his luminous face I read the prophecy of the redemption of the millions who have so long bowed before the great red dragon, but who now wait for the coming of the Deliverer.

### CIELA VISTA.\*

CIELA VISTA! Ciela Vista!  
On Christmas morn,  
At early dawn,  
Listen! Leeward,  
To the seaward,  
Earth's great ocean,  
In rhythmic motion,  
Its song doth sing  
To Christ the King.

Ciela Vista! Ciela Vista!  
The valleys green,  
And groves between,  
With changing tints,  
And sunny glints,  
And clouds aglow,  
And earth below,  
Tell, glory bright,  
Of Christ the Light.

Ciela Vista! Ciela Vista!  
Yon hills eternal,  
Of might supernal,  
With crests snow-crowned,  
Feet flower-bound—  
Their peaks prolong  
The Christmas song,  
And Jesus praise,  
Ancient of Days.

Ciela Vista! Ciela Vista!  
Sky of sapphire,  
Bending nigher,  
Cocumungo,†  
Let thy song go  
Skyward soaring,  
Where, Him adoring,  
Souls, saved by grace,  
See face to face.

\*Ciela Vista ("Sky View"), a spot of exquisite beauty on the southern slope of the Cahuenga Mountains, near Los Angeles, Cal., as seen by the writer on Christmas morning, December 25, 1894.

†Cocumungo, the highest peak of the range, snow-capped.

### THE EMPEROR NORTON.

THAT was his title. He wore it with an air that was a strange mixture of the mock-heroic and the pathetic. He was mad on this one point, and strangely shrewd and well informed on almost every other. Arrayed in a faded-blue uniform, with brass buttons and epaulets, wearing a cocked hat with an eagle's feather, and at times with a rusty sword at his side, he was a conspicuous figure in the streets of San Francisco, and a regular *habitué* of all its public places. In person he was stout, full-chested, though slightly stooped, with a large head heavily coated with bushy black hair, an aquiline nose, and dark gray eyes, whose mild expression added to the benignity of his face. On the end of his nose grew a tuft of long hairs, which he seemed to prize as a natural mark of royalty or chieftainship. Indeed, there was a popular legend afloat that he was of true royal blood—a stray Bourbon, or something of the sort. His speech was singularly fluent and elegant. The Emperor was one of the celebrities that no visitor failed to see. It is said that his mind was unhinged by a sudden loss of fortune in the early days, by the treachery of a partner in trade. The sudden blow was deadly, and the quiet, thrifty, affable man of business became a wreck. By nothing is the inmost quality of a man made more manifest than by the manner in which he meets misfortune. One, when the sky darkens, having strong impulse and weak will, rushes into suicide; another, with a large vein of cowardice, seeks to drown the

sense of disaster in strong drink; yet another, tortured in every fiber of a sensitive organization, flees from the scene of his troubles and the faces of those that know him, preferring exile to shame. The truest man, when assailed by sudden calamity, rallies all the reserved forces of a splendid manhood to meet the shock, and, like a good ship, lifting itself from the trough of the swelling sea, mounts the wave and rides on. It was a curious idiosyncrasy that led this man, when fortune and reason were swept away at a stroke, to fall back upon this imaginary imperialism. The nature that could thus, when the real fabric of life was wrecked, construct such another by the exercise of a disordered imagination, must have been originally of a gentle and magnanimous type. The broken fragments of mind, like those of a statue, reveal the quality of the original creation. It may be that he was happier than many who have worn real crowns. Napoleon at Chiselhurst, or his greater uncle at St. Helena, might have been gainer by exchanging lots with this man, who had the inward joy of conscious greatness without its burden and its perils. To all public places he had free access, and no pageant was complete without his presence. From time to time he issued proclamations, signed "Norton I.," which the lively San Francisco dailies were always ready to print conspicuously in their columns. The style of these proclamations was stately, the royal first person plural being used by him with all gravity and dignity. Ever and anon, as his uniform became dilapidated or ragged, a reminder of the condition of the imperial wardrobe would be given in one or more of the newspapers, and then in a few days he would appear in a new suit. He had the *entrée* of all the restaurants, and he lodged—nobody

knew where. It was said that he was cared for by members of the Freemason society, to which he belonged at the time of his fall. I saw him often in my congregation in the Pine Street church, along in 1858, and into the sixties. He was a respectful and attentive listener to preaching. On the occasion of one of his first visits he spoke to me after the service, saying, in a kind and patronizing tone: "I think it my duty to encourage religion and morality by showing myself at church, and to avoid jealousy I attend them all in turn."

He loved children, and would come into the Sunday school, and sit delighted with their singing. When, in distributing the presents on a Christmas tree, a necktie was handed him as the gift of the young ladies, he received it with much satisfaction, making a kingly bow of gracious acknowledgment. Meeting him one day, in the springtime, holding my little girl by the hand, he paused, looked at the child's bright face, and, taking a rosebud from his buttonhole, he presented it to her with a manner so graceful, and a smile so benignant, as to show that under the dingy blue uniform there beat the heart of a gentleman. He kept a keen eye on current events, and sometimes expressed his views with great sagacity. One day he stopped me on the street, saying: "I have just read the report of the political sermon of Dr. — [giving the name of a noted sensational preacher, who was in the habit, at times, of discussing politics from his pulpit]. I disapprove political preaching. What do you think?"

I expressed my cordial concurrence.

"I will put a stop to it. The preachers must stop preaching politics, or they must all come into one State Church. I will at once issue a decree to that effect."

For some unknown reason, that decree never was promulgated.

After the war, he took a deep interest in the reconstruction of the Southern States. I met him one day on Montgomery Street, when he asked me in a tone and with a look of earnest solicitude: "Do you hear any complaint or dissatisfaction concerning me from the South?"

I gravely answered in the negative.

"I was for keeping the country undivided, but I have the kindest feeling for the Southern people, and will see that they are protected in all their rights. Perhaps if I were to go among them in person, it might have a good effect. What do you think?"

I looked at him keenly as I made some suitable reply, but could see nothing in his expression but simple sincerity. He seemed to feel that he was indeed the father of his people. George Washington himself could not have adopted a more paternal tone.

Walking along the street behind the Emperor one day, my curiosity was a little excited by seeing him thrust his hand with sudden energy into the hip pocket of his blue trousers. The hip pocket, by the way, is a modern American stupidity, associated in the popular mind with rowdiness, pistol shooting, and murder. Hip pockets should be abolished wherever there are courts of law and civilized men and women. But what was the Emperor after? Withdrawing his hand just as I overtook him, the mystery was revealed. It grasped a thick Bologna sausage, which he began to eat with unroyal relish. It gave me a shock, but he was not the first royal personage who has exhibited low tastes and carnal hankerings.

He was seldom made sport of or treated rudely.

I saw him on one occasion when a couple of passing hoodlums jeered at him. He turned and gave them a look so full of mingled dignity, pain, and surprise that the low fellows were abashed, and uttering a forced laugh, with averted faces they hurried on. The presence that can bring shame to a San Francisco hoodlum must indeed be kingly, or in some way impressive. In that genus the beastliness and devilishness of American city life reach their lowest denomination. When the brutality of the savage and the lowest forms of civilized vice are combined, human nature touches bottom.

The Emperor never spoke of his early life. The veil of mystery on this point increased the popular curiosity concerning him, and invested him with something of a romantic interest. There was one thing that excited his disgust and indignation. The Bohemians of the San Francisco press got into the practice of attaching his name to their satires and hits at current follies, knowing that the well-known "Norton I." at the end would insure a reading. This abuse of the liberty of the press he denounced with dignified severity, threatening extreme measures unless it were stopped. But nowhere on earth did the press exhibit more audacity, or take a wider range, and it would have required a sterner heart and a stronger hand than that of Norton I. to put a hook into its jaws.

The end of all human grandeur, real or imaginary, comes at last. The Emperor became thinner and more stooped as the years passed. The humor of his hallucination retired more and more into the background, and its pathetic side came out more strongly. His step was slow and feeble, and there was that look in his eyes so often seen

in the old and sometimes in the young, just before the great change comes—a rapt, far-away look, suggesting that the invisible is coming into view, the shadows vanishing and the realities appearing. The familiar face and form were missed on the streets, and it was known that he was dead. He had gone to his lonely lodging, and quietly laid down and died. The newspapers spoke of him with pity and respect, and all San Francisco took time, in the midst of its roar-and-rush fever of perpetual excitement, to give a kind thought to the dead man who had passed over to the life where all delusions are laid aside, where the mystery of life shall be revealed, and where we shall see that through all its tangled web ran the golden thread of mercy. His life was an illusion, and the thousands who sleep with him in Lone Mountain waiting the judgment day were his brothers.

## BUFFALO JONES.

**T**HAT is what the boys called him. His real Christian name was Zachariah. The way he got the name he went by was this: He was a Methodist, and prayed in public. He was excitable, and his lungs were of extraordinary power. When fully aroused, his voice sounded, it was said, like the bellowing of a whole herd of buffaloes. It had peculiar reverberations—rumbling, roaring, shaking the very roof of the sanctuary, or echoing among the hills when let out at its utmost strength at a camp meeting. This is why they called him Buffalo Jones. It was his voice. There never was such another. In Ohio he was a blacksmith and a fighting man. He had whipped every man who would fight him, in a whole tier of counties. He was converted after the old way—that is to say, he was “powerfully” converted. A circuit rider preached the sermon that converted him. His anguish was awful. The midnight hour found him in tears. The Ohio forest resounded with his cries for mercy. When he found peace, it swelled into rapture. He joined the Church militant among the Methodists, and he stuck to them, quarreled with them, and loved them all his life. He had many troubles, and gave much trouble to many people. The old Adam died hard in the fighting blacksmith. His pastor, his family, his friends, his fellow-members in the Church, all got a portion of his wrath in due season, if they swerved a hairbreadth from the straight line of duty as he saw it. I was his pastor, and I never had a truer friend or a severer

ensor. One Sunday morning he electrified my congregation, at the close of the sermon, by rising in his place and making a personal application of a portion of it to individuals present, and insisting on their immediate expulsion from the Church. He had another side to his character, and at times was as tender as a woman. He acted as class leader. In his melting moods he moved every eye to tears, as he passed round among the brethren and sisters, weeping, exhorting, and rejoicing. At such times, his great voice softened into a pathos that none could resist, and swept the chords of sympathy with resistless power. But when his other mood was upon him, he was fearful. He scourged the unfaithful with a whip of fire. He would quote with a singular fluency and aptness every passage of Scripture that blasted hypocrites, reproved the lukewarm, or threatened damnation to the sinner. At such times his voice sounded like the shout of a warrior in battle, and the timid and wondering hearers looked as if they were in the midst of the thunder and lightning of a tropical storm. I remember the shock he gave a quiet and timid lady whom I had persuaded to remain for the class meeting after service. Fixing his stern and fiery gaze upon her, and knitting his great bushy eyebrows, he thundered the question: "Sister, do you ever pray?"

The startled woman nearly sprang from her seat in a panic as she stammered hurriedly: "Yes, sir; yes, sir." She did not attend his class meeting again.

At a camp meeting he was present, and in one of his bitterest moods. The meeting was not conducted in a way to suit him. He was grim, critical, and contemptuous, making no concealment of his dissatisfaction. The preaching dis-

pleased him particularly. He groaned, frowned, and in other ways showed his feelings. At length he could stand it no longer. A young brother had just closed a sermon of a mild and persuasive kind, and no sooner had he taken his seat than the old man arose. Looking forth upon the vast audience, and then casting a sharp and scornful glance at the preachers in and around "the stand," he said: "You preachers of these days have no gospel in you. You remind me of a man going into his barn yard early in the morning to feed his stock. He has a basket on his arm, and here come the horses nickering, the cows lowing, the calves and sheep bleating, the hogs squealing, the turkeys gobbling, the hens clucking, and the roosters crowing. They all gather round him, expecting to be fed, and lo! his basket is empty. You take texts, and you preach, but you have no gospel. Your baskets are empty."

Here he darted a defiant glance at the astonished preachers, and then, turning to one, he added in a milder and patronizing tone: "You, Brother Sim, do preach a little gospel—in your basket there is *one little nubbin!*"

Down he sat, leaving the brethren to meditate on what he had said. The silence that followed was deep.

At one time his conscience became troubled about the use of tobacco, and he determined to quit. This was the second great struggle of his life. He was running a sawmill in the foothills at the time, and lodged in a little cabin near by. Suddenly deprived of the stimulant to which it had so long been accustomed, his nervous system was wrought up to a pitch of frenzy. He would rush from the cabin, climb along the hillside, run leaping from rock to rock, now and then screaming



like a maniac. Then he would rush back to the cabin, seize a plug of tobacco, smell it, rub it against his lips, and away he would go again. He smelled, but never tasted it again.

"I was resolved to conquer, and by the grace of God I did," he said.

That was a great victory for the fighting blacksmith.

When a melodeon was introduced into the church he was sorely grieved and furiously angry. He argued against it, he expostulated, he protested, he threatened, he stayed away from church. He wrote me a letter, in which he expressed his feelings thus:

SAN JOSE, 1860.

*Dear Brother:* They have got the devil into the church now! Put your foot on its tail, and it squeals.

Z. JONES.

This was his figurative way of putting it. I was told that he had, on a former occasion, dealt with the question in a more summary way, by taking his ax and splitting a melodeon to pieces.

Neutrality in politics was, of course, impossible to such a man. In the Civil War his heart was with the South. He gave up when Stonewall Jackson was killed.

"It is all over—the praying man is gone," he said, and he sobbed like a child. From that day he had no hope for the Confederacy, though once or twice, when feeling ran high, he expressed a readiness to use carnal weapons in defense of his political principles. For all his opinions on the subject he found support from the Bible, which he read and studied with unwearying diligence. He took its words literally on all occasions, and the Old Testament history had a wonderful charm for him. He would have been ready to hew any modern Agag in pieces before the Lord.

He finally found his way to the Insane Asylum. The reader has already seen how abnormal was his mind, and will not be surprised that his storm-tossed soul lost its rudder at last. But mid all its veerings he never lost sight of the Star that had shed its light upon his checkered path of life. He raved and prayed and wept, by turns. The horrors of mental despair would be followed by gleams of seraphic joy. When one of his stormy moods was upon him, his mighty voice could be heard above all the sounds of that sad and pitiful company of broken and wrecked souls. The old class meeting instinct and habit showed itself in his semilucid intervals. He would go round among the patients questioning them as to their religious feeling and behavior in true class meeting style. Dr. Shurtleff one day overheard a colloquy between him and Dr. Rogers, a freethinker and reformer, whose vagaries had culminated in his shaving close one side of his immense whiskers, leaving the other side in all its flowing amplitude. Poor fellow! Pitiable as was his case, he made a ludicrous figure walking the streets of San Francisco half shaved, and defiant of the wonder and ridicule he excited. The old class leader's voice was earnest and loud, as he said: "Now, Rogers, you must pray. If you will get down at the feet of Jesus, and confess your sins, and ask him to bless you, he will hear you, and give you peace. But if you won't do it," he continued, with growing excitement and kindling anger at the thought, "you are the most infernal rascal that ever lived, and I'll beat you into a jelly!"

The good Doctor had to interfere at this point, for the old man was in the very act of carrying out his threat to punish Rogers bodily, on the bare possibility that he would not pray as he was told

to do. And so that extemporized class meeting came to an abrupt end.

"Pray with me," he said to me the last time I saw him at the asylum. Closing the door of the little private office, we knelt side by side, and the poor old sufferer, bathed in tears, and docile as a little child, prayed to the once suffering, once crucified, but risen and interceding Jesus. When he arose from his knees his eyes were wet, and his face showed that there was a great calm within. We never met again. He went home to die. The storms that had swept his soul subsided, the light of reason was rekindled, and the light of faith burned brightly; and in a few weeks he died in great peace, and another glad voice joined in the anthems of the blood-washed millions in the city of God.

## SUICIDE IN CALIFORNIA.

A HALF protest rises within me as I begin this Sketch. The page almost turns crimson under my gaze, and shadowy forms come forth out of the darkness into which they wildly plunged out of life's misery into death's mystery. Ghostly lips cry out: "Leave us alone! Why call us back to a world where we lost all, and in quitting which we risked all? Disturb us not to gratify the cold curiosity of unfeeling strangers. We have passed on beyond human jurisdiction to the realities we dared to meet. Give us the pity and courtesy of your silence, O living brother, who didst escape the wreck!" The appeal is not without effect, and if I lift the shroud that covers the faces of these dead, self-destroyed, it will be tenderly, pityingly. These simple Sketches of real California life would be imperfect if this characteristic feature were entirely omitted, for California was (and is yet) the land of suicides. In a single year there were one hundred and six in San Francisco alone. The whole number of suicides in the State would, if the horror of each case could be even imperfectly imagined, appall even the driest statistician of crime. The causes for this prevalence of self-destruction are to be sought in the peculiar conditions of the country and the habits of the people. California, with all its beauty, grandeur, and riches, has been to the many who have gone thither a land of great expectations, but small results. This was specially the case in the earlier period of its history, after