

OLD MAN LOWRY.

I HAD marked his expressive physiognomy among my hearers in the little church in Sonora for some weeks before he made himself known to me. As I learned afterwards, he was weighing the young preacher in his critical balances. He had a shrewd Scotch face, in which there was a mingling of keenness, benignity, and humor. His age might be sixty, or it might be more. He was an old bachelor, and wide guesses are sometimes made as to the ages of that class of men. They may not live longer than married men, but they do not show the effects of life's wear and tear so early. He came to see us one evening. He fell in love with the mistress of the parsonage, just as he ought to have done, and we were charmed with the quaint old bachelor. There was a piquancy, a sharp flavor, in his talk that was delightful. His aphorisms often crystallized a neglected truth in a form all his own. He was an original character. There was nothing commonplace about him. He had his own way of saying and doing everything.

Society in the mines was limited in that day, and we felt that we had found a real treasure in this old man of unique mold. His visits were refreshing to us, and his plain-spoken criticisms were helpful to me.

He had left the Church because he did not agree with the preachers on some points of Christian ethics, and because they used tobacco. But he was unhappy on the outside; and, finding

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that my views and habits did not happen to cross his peculiar notions, he came back. His religious experience was out of the common order. Bred a Calvinist, of the good old Scotch-Presbyterian type, he had swung away from that faith, and was in danger of rushing into Universalism or infidelity. That once famous and much-read little book, "John Nelson's Journal," fell into his hands, and changed his whole life. It led him to Christ and to the Methodists. He was a true spiritual child of the unflinching Yorkshire stone-cutter. Like him, he despised halfway measures; and like him, he was aggressive in thought and action. What he liked he loved; what he disliked he hated. Calvinism he abhorred, and he let no occasion pass for pouring into it hot shot of his scorn and wrath. One night I preached from the text: "Should it be according to thy mind?"

"The first part of your sermon," he said to me as we passed out of the church, "distressed me greatly. For a full half hour you preached straight-out Calvinism, and I thought you had ruined everything; but you had left a little slip-gap, and crawled out at the last."

His ideal of a minister of the gospel was Dr. Keener, whom he knew at New Orleans before coming to California. He was the first man I ever heard mention Dr. Keener's name for the episcopacy. There was much in common between them. If my eccentric California bachelor friend did not have as strong and cool a head, he had as brave and true a heart as the incisive and chivalrous Louisiana preacher, upon whose head the miter was placed by the suffrage of his brethren at Memphis in 1870. He became very active as a worker in the Church. I made him class leader, and there have been few in that office who

brought to its sacred duties as much spiritual insight, candor, and tenderness. At times his words flashed like diamonds, showing what the Bible can reveal to a solitary thinker who makes it his chief study day and night. When needful, he could apply caustic that burned to the very core of an error of opinion or of practice. He took a class in the Sunday school; and his freshness, acuteness, humor, and deep knowledge of the Scriptures made him far more than an ordinary teacher. A fine pocket Bible was offered as a prize to the scholar who should, in three months, memorize the greatest number of Scripture verses. The wisdom of such a contest is questionable to me now, but it was the fashion then, and I was too young and self-distrustful to set myself against the current in such matters. The contest was an exciting one—two boys, Robert A— and Jonathan R—, and one girl, Annie P—, leading all the school. Jonathan suddenly fell behind, and was soon distanced by his two competitors. Lowry, who was his teacher, asked him what was the reason of his sudden breakdown. The boy blushed, and stammered out: "I didn't want to beat Annie."

Robert won the prize, and the day came for its presentation. The house was full, and everybody was in a pleasant mood. After the prize had been presented in due form and with a little flourish, Lowry arose, and, producing a costly Bible, in a few words telling how magnanimously and gallantly Jonathan had retired from the contest, presented it to the pleased and blushing boy. The boys and girls applauded California fashion, and the old man's face glowed with satisfaction. He had in him curiously mingled the elements of the Puritan and the Cavalier—the uncompromising

persistence of the one, and the chivalrous impulse and open-handedness of the other.

The old man had too many crotchets and too much combativeness to be popular. He spared no opinion or habit he did not like. He struck every angle within reach of him. In the state of society then existing in the mines there were many things to vex his soul and keep him on the war-path. The miners looked upon him as a brave, good man, just a little daft. He worked a mining claim on Wood's Creek, north of town, and lived alone in a tiny cabin on the hill above. That was the smallest of cabins, looking like a mere box from the trail which wound through the flat below. Two little scrub oaks stood near it, under which he sat and read his Bible in leisure moments. There, above the world, he could commune with his own heart and with God undisturbed, and look down upon a race he half pitied and half despised. From the spot the eye took in a vast sweep of hill and dale: Bald Mountain, the most striking object in the near background, and beyond its dark, rugged mass the snowy summits of the Sierras, rising one above another, like gigantic stairsteps, leading up to the throne of the Eternal. This lonely height suited Lowry's strangely compounded nature. As a cynic, he looked down with contempt upon the petty life that seethed and frothed in the camps below; as a saint, he looked forth upon the wonders of God's handiwork around and above him. There was an intensity in all that he did. Passing his mining claim on horseback one day, I paused to look at him in his work. Clad in a blue flannel mining suit, he was digging as for life. The embankment of red dirt and gravel melted away rapidly before his vigorous strokes, and he seemed to feel a sort of fierce de-

light in his work. Pausing a moment, he looked up and saw me.

"You dig as if you were in a hurry," I said.

"Yes, I have been digging here three years. I have a notion that I have just so much of the earth to turn over before I am turned under," he replied with a sort of grim humor.

He was still there when we visited Sonora in 1857. He invited us out to dinner, and we went. By skillful circling around the hill, we reached the little cabin on the summit with horse and buggy. The old man had made preparations for his expected guests. The floor of the cabin had been swept, and its scanty store of furniture put to rights, and a dinner was cooking in and on the little stove. His lady guest insisted on helping in the preparation of the dinner, but was allowed to do nothing further than to arrange the dishes on the primitive table, which was set out under one of the little oaks in the yard. It was a miner's feast: can-fruits, can-vegetables, can-oysters, can-pickles, can-everything nearly, with tea distilled from the Asiatic leaf by a recipe of his own. It was a hot day, and from the cloudless heavens the sun flooded the earth with his glory, and the shimmer of the sunshine was in the still air. We tried to be cheerful, but there was a pathos about the affair that touched us. He felt it too. More than once there was a tear in his eye. At parting, he kissed little Paul, and gave us his hand in silence. As we drove down the hill, he stood gazing after us with a look fixed and sad. The picture is still before me—the lonely old man standing sad and silent, the little cabin, the rude dinner service under the oak, and the overarching sky. That was our last meeting; the next will be on the other side.

THE CALIFORNIA POLITICIAN.

THE California politician of the early days was plucky. He had to be so, for faint heart won no votes in those rough times. One of the Marshalls (Tom or Ned, I forget which), at the beginning of a stump speech one night in the mines, was interrupted by a storm of hisses and execrations from a turbulent crowd of fellows, many of whom were full of whisky. He paused a moment, drew himself up to his full height, coolly took a pistol from his pocket, laid it on the stand before him, and said: "I have seen bigger crowds than this many a time. I want it to be fully understood that I came here to make a speech to-night, and I am going to do it, or else there will be a funeral or two."

That touch took with that crowd. The one thing they all believed in was courage. Marshall made one of his grandest speeches, and at the close the delighted miners bore him in triumph from the rostrum.

That was a curious exordium of "Uncle Peter Mehan," when he made his first stump speech at Sonora: "Fellow-citizens, *I was born an orphan at a very early period of my life.*" He was a candidate for supervisor, and the good-natured miners elected him triumphantly. He made a good supervisor, which is another proof that book learning and elegant rhetoric are not essential where there are integrity and native good sense. Uncle Peter never stole anything, and he was usually on the right side of all questions that

claimed the attention of county fathers of Tuolumne.

In the early days the Virginians, New Yorkers, and Tennesseans led in politics. Trained to the stump at home, the Virginians and Tennesseans were ready on all occasions to run a primary meeting, a convention, or a canvass. There was scarcely a mining camp in the State in which there was not a leading local politician from one or both of these States. The New Yorker understood all the inside management of party organization, and was up to all the smart tactics developed in the lively struggles of parties in the times when Whiggery and Democracy fiercely fought for rule in the Empire State. Broderick was a New Yorker, trained by Tammany in its palmy days. He was a chief, who rose from the ranks, and ruled by force of will. Thick-set, strong-limbed, full-chested, with immense driving power in his back-head, he was an athlete whose stalwart *physique* was of more value to him than the gift of eloquence, or even the power of money. The sharpest lawyers and the richest money kings alike went down before this uncultured and moneyless man, who dominated the clans of San Francisco simply by right of his manhood. He was not without a sort of eloquence of his own. He spoke right to the point, and his words fell like the thud of a shillalah or rang like the clash of steel. He dealt with the rough elements of politics in an exciting and turbulent period of California politics, and was more of a border chief than an Ivanhoe in his modes of warfare. He reached the United States Senate, and in his first speech in that august body he honored his manhood by an allusion to his father, a stone mason, whose hands, said Broderick, had helped to erect the very walls

of the chamber in which he spoke. When a man gets as high as the United States Senate, there is less tax upon his magnanimity in acknowledging his humble origin than while he is lower down the ladder. You seldom hear a man boast how low he began until he is far up toward the summit of his ambition. Ninety-nine out of every hundred self-made men are at first more or less sensitive concerning their low birth; the hundredth man who is not is a man indeed.

Broderick's great rival was Gwin. The men were antipodes in everything except that they belonged to the same party. Gwin still lives, the most colossal figure in the history of California. He looks the man he is. Of immense frame, ruddy complexion, deep-blue eyes that almost blaze when he is excited, rugged yet expressive features, a massive head crowned with a heavy suit of silver-white hair, he is marked by nature for leadership. Common men seem dwarfed in his presence. After he had dropped out of California politics for awhile, a Sacramento hotel keeper expressed what many felt during a legislative session: "I find myself looking around for Gwin. I miss the chief."

My first acquaintance with Dr. Gwin began with an incident that illustrates the man and the times. It was in 1856. The Legislature was in session at Sacramento, and a United States Senator was to be elected. I was making a tentative movement toward starting a Southern Methodist newspaper, and visited Sacramento on that business. My friend Maj. P. L. Solomon was there, and took a friendly interest in my enterprise. He proposed to introduce me to the leading men of both parties, and I thankfully availed myself of his courtesy. Among the first to whom he pre-

sented me was a noted politician who, both before and since, has enjoyed a national notoriety, and who still lives, and is as ready as ever to talk or fight. His name I need not give. I presented to him my mission, and he seemed embarrassed.

"I am with you, of course. My mother was a Methodist, and all my sympathies are with the Methodist Church. I am a Southern man in all my convictions and impulses, and I am a Southern Methodist in principle. But you see, sir, I am a candidate for United States Senator, and sectional feeling is likely to enter into the contest, and if it were known that my name was on your list of subscribers it might endanger my election."

He squeezed my arm, told me he loved me and my Church, said he would be happy to see me often, and so forth—but he did not give me his name. I left him, saying in my heart: "Here is a politician."

Going on together, in the corridor we met Gwin. Solomon introduced me, and told him my business.

"I am glad to know that you are going to start a Southern Methodist newspaper. No Church can do without its organ. Put me down on your list, and come with me, and I will make all these fellows subscribe. There is not much religion among them, I fear, but we will make them take the paper."

This was said in a hearty and pleasant way, and he took me from man to man, until I had gotten more than a dozen names, among them two or three of his most active political opponents.

This incident exhibits the two types of the politician, and the two classes of men to be found in all communities—the one all blarney and self-

ishness, the other with real manhood redeeming poor human nature, and saving it from utter contempt. The senatorial prize eluded the grasp of both aspirants, but the reader will not be at a loss to guess whose side I was on. Dr. Gwin made a friend that day, and never lost him. It was this sort of fidelity to friends that, when fortune frowned on the grand old Senator after the collapse at Appomattox, rallied thousands of true hearts to his side, among whom were those who had fought him in many a fierce political battle. Broderick and Gwin were both, by a curious turn of political fortune, elected by the same Legislature to the United States Senate. Broderick sleeps in Lone Mountain, and Gwin still treads the stage of his former glory, a living monument of the days when California politics was half romance and half tragedy.* The friend and *protégé* of Gen. Andrew Jackson, a member of the first Constitutional Convention of California, twice United States Senator, a prominent figure in the Civil War, the father of the great Pacific Railway, he is the front figure on the canvas of California history.

Gwin was succeeded by McDougall. What a man was he! His face was as classic as a Greek statue. It spoke the student and the scholar in every line. His hair was snow-white, his eyes bluish-gray, and his form sinewy and elastic. He went from Illinois, with Baker and other men of genius, and soon won a high place at the bar of San Francisco. I heard it said by an eminent jurist that when McDougall had put his whole strength into the examination of a case his side of

*Senator Gwin has been dead many years, but was living when the foregoing Sketch was written. The reader will pardon the anachronism therein.—THE AUTHOR.

it was exhausted. His reading was immense, his learning solid. His election was doubtless a surprise to himself, as well as to the California public. The day before he left for Washington City, I met him in the street, and as we parted I held his hand a moment, and said: "Your friends will watch your career with hope and with fear."

He knew what I meant, and said quickly: "I understand you. You are afraid that I will yield to my weakness for strong drink; but you may be sure that I will play the man, and California shall have no cause to blush on my account."

That was his fatal weakness. No one looking upon his pale, scholarly face, and noting his faultlessly neat apparel, and easy, graceful manners, would have thought of such a thing. Yet he was a—I falter in writing it—a drunkard. At times he drank deeply and madly. When half intoxicated he was almost as brilliant as Hamlet, and as rollicking as Falstaff. It was said that even when fully drunk his splendid intellect never entirely gave way.

"McDougall commands as much attention in the Senate when drunk as any other Senator does when sober," said a Congressman in Washington in 1866. It is said that his great speech on the question of "Confiscation," at the beginning of the war, was delivered when he was in a state of semi-intoxication. Be that as it may, it exhausted the whole question, and settled the policy of the government.

I never saw him again. For the first few months he wrote me often, and then his letters came at longer intervals, and then they ceased. And then the newspapers disclosed the shameful secret—California's brilliant Senator was a drunkard. The temptations of the capital were too

strong for him. He went down into the black waters a complete wreck. He returned to the old home of his boyhood in New Jersey to die. I learned that he was lucid and penitent at the last. They brought his body back to San Francisco to be buried, and when at his funeral the words "I know that my Redeemer liveth," in clear soprano, rang through the vaulted cathedral like a peal of triumph, I indulged the hope that the spirit of my gifted and fated friend had, through the mercy of the Friend of sinners, gone from his boyhood hills up to the hills of God.

The typical California politician was Coffroth. The "boys" fondly called him "Jim" Coffroth. There is no surer sign of popularity than a popular abbreviation of this sort, unless it is a pet nickname. Coffroth was from Pennsylvania, where he had gained an inkling of politics and general literature. He gravitated into California politics by the law of his nature. He was born for this, having what a friend calls the gift of popularity. His presence was magnetic; his laugh was contagious; his enthusiasm was irresistible. No one ever thought of taking offense at Jim Coffroth. He could change his politics with impunity, without losing a friend—he never had a personal enemy—but I believe he only made that experiment once. He went off with the Know-nothings in 1855, and was elected by them to the State Senate, and was called to preside over their State Convention. He hastened back to his old party associates, and at the first convention that met in his county on his return from the Legislature he rose and told them how lonesome he had felt while astray from the old fold, how glad he was to get back, and how humble he felt, concluding by advising all his late supporters to do as he had done by taking "a

straight chute" for the old party. He ended amid a storm of applause, was reinstated at once, and was made President of the next Democratic State Convention. There he was in his glory. His tact and good humor were unbounded, and he held those hundreds of excitable and explosive men in the hollow of his hand. He would dismiss a dangerous motion with a witticism so apt that the mover himself would join in the laugh, and give it up. His broad face in repose was that of a Quaker, at other times that of a Bacchus. There was a religious streak in this jolly partisan, and he published several poems that breathed the sweetest and loftiest religious sentiment. The newspapers were a little disposed to make a joke of these ebullitions of devotional feeling, but they now make the light that casts a gleam of brightness upon the background of his life. I take from an old volume of the *Christian Spectator* one of these poems as a literary curiosity. Every man lives two lives. The rollicking politician, "Jim Coffroth," every Californian knew; the author of these lines was another man of the same name:

AMID THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT.

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." (Ps. cxxi. 4.)

Amid the silence of the night,
 Amid its lonely hours and dreary,
 When we close the aching sight,
 Musing sadly, lorn and weary,
 Trusting that to-morrow's light
 May reveal a day more cheery;

Amid affliction's darker hour,
 When no hope beguiles our sadness,
 When death's hurtling tempests lower,
 And forever shroud our gladness,
 While grief's unrelenting power
 Goads our stricken hearts to madness;

When from friends beloved we're parted,
 And from scenes our spirits love,
 And are driven, broken-hearted,
 O'er a heartless world to rove;
 When the woes by which we've smarted,
 Vainly seek to melt or move;

When we trust and are deluded,
 When we love and are denied,
 When the schemes o'er which we brooded
 Burst like mist on mountain's side,
 And, from ev'ry hope excluded,
 We in dark despair abide—

Then, and ever, God sustain us,
 He whose eye no slumber knows,
 Who controls each thro' that pains us,
 And in mercy sends our woes,
 And by love severe constrains us
 To avoid eternal throes.

Happy he whose heart obeys him!
 Lost and ruined who disown!
 O if idols e'er displace him,
 Tear them from his chosen throne!
 May our lives and language praise him!
 May our hearts be his alone!

He took defeat with a good nature that robbed it of its sting, and made his political opponents half sorry for having beaten him. He was talked of for Governor at one time, and he gave as a reason why he would like the office that "a great many of his friends were in the State prison, and he wanted to use the pardoning power in their behalf." This was a jest, of course, referring to the fact that as a lawyer much of his practice was in the criminal courts. He was never suspected of treachery or dishonor in public or private life. His very ambition was unselfish: he was always ready to sacrifice himself in a hopeless candidacy if he could thereby help his party or a friend.

His good nature was tested once while presiding over a party convention at Sonora for the nomination of candidates for legislative and county of-

fices. Among the delegates was the eccentric John Vallew, whose mind was a singular compound of shrewdness and flightiness and was stored with the most out-of-the-way scraps of learning, philosophy, and poetry. Some one proposed Vallew's name as a candidate for the Legislature. He rose to his feet with a clouded face, and in an angry voice said: "Mr. President, I am surprised and mortified. I have lived in this county more than seven years, and I have never had any difficulty with my neighbors. I did not know that I had an enemy in the world. What have I done, that it should be proposed to send me to the Legislature? What reason has any one to think I am that sort of a man? To think I should have come to this! To propose to send me to the Legislature, when it is a notorious fact that you have never sent a man thither from this county *who did not come back morally and pecuniarily ruined!*"

The crowd saw the point, and roared with laughter, Coffroth, who had served the previous session, joining heartily in the merriment. Vallew was excused.

Coffroth died suddenly, and his destiny was transferred to another sphere. So there dropped out of California life a partisan without bitterness, a satirist without malice, a wit without a sting, the jolliest, freest, readiest man that ever faced a California audience on the hustings—the typical politician of California.

BISHOP KAVANAUGH IN CALIFORNIA.

HE came first in 1856. The Californians "took to" him at once. It was almost as good as a visit to the old home to see and hear this rosy-faced, benignant, and solid Kentuckian. His power and pathos in the pulpit were equaled by his humor and magnetic charm in the social circle. Many consciences were stirred. All hearts were won by him, and he holds them unto this day. We may hope, too, that many souls were won that will be stars in his crown of rejoicing in the day of Jesus Christ.

At San José, his quality as a preacher was developed by an incident that excited no little popular interest. The (Northern) Methodist Conference was in session at that place, the venerable and saintly Bishop Scott presiding. Bishop Kavanaugh was invited to preach, and it so happened that he was to do so on the night following an appointment for Bishop Scott. The matter was talked of in the town, and not unnaturally a spirit of friendly rivalry was excited with regard to the approaching pulpit performances by the Northern and Southern bishops respectively. One enthusiastic but not pious Kentuckian offered to bet a hundred dollars that Kavanaugh would preach the better sermon. Of course the two venerable men were unconscious of all this, and nothing of the kind was in their hearts. The church was thronged to hear Bishop Scott, and his humility, strong sense, deep earnestness, and holy emotion