

lowly, indigent, and unfortunate he is a tender friend. His private life is crowded with deeds of kindness, and a thousand eyes moisten at the mention of his name. At any inconvenience or cost he will serve those to whom he is attached. When he resided in Albany, he has been known to wait hours at night for a delayed train, to meet one who had asked to see him.

AN INCIDENT.

In the days of his great political power he would not always admit distinguished men into his presence, but the lowly could always gain his ear. One day, being greatly pressed with business, he gave orders that no one should be admitted. A senator called. Mr. Weed named the hour that he would see him. The governor called, and a similar appointment was made. A heavy knock brought Mr. Weed to his feet. A colored man, trembling like a pursued fawn, asked to see him. Mr. Weed knew him, had befriended him before, and knew that nothing but stern necessity brought him from home. In his tenderest tones, Mr. Weed bade him come in. He pushed aside his papers, and heard his story, gave him money, and aided him in his flight. He had no time for a senator or a governor, but he had time, counsel, and money for a fugitive negro. And this is but a type of Mr. Weed's private life.

PERSONAL.

Mr. Weed is very fascinating and genial as a companion. As successful orators put themselves in sympathy with their audience, Mr. Weed has the ability of completely captivating those with whom he converses.

There is an air of frank benignity in his manner, a tenderness in his tone, and he seems so sincere in his efforts to please, that one is captivated with his society. He is one of the best talkers in the country. For more than fifty years he has been the intimate companion of our eminent public men. He has a mass of information, anecdote, incident, and story about earlier days, that is interesting and fascinating. It is his purpose to write the history of men and things as he has known them for half a century. His correspondence with public men, at home and abroad, has been immense. His daughter Harriet, since the death of her mother, has been bound up in her father. His wishes, necessities, and comfort have been her constant study. Many years ago, unbeknown to her father, she gathered, assorted, and indexed all his letters and papers, with every sort of memorandum. Since she commenced the work, each day she has carefully gathered every note and letter. Every piece is labelled and numbered, and carefully entered, by index, in a book, so that Mr. Weed can call for any letter, or paper, or memorandum, as far back as the time of Jackson, and have it produced as readily as any bank can present to a customer his account. Such a mass of private history, embracing a period so full of startling events; such political revelations; such letters from politicians and public men, so racy, so sensational and telling, does not exist in this country anywhere outside of the strong box under the key of Miss Harriet Weed. To bring out the treasures of this chest will constitute the closing life-work of Thurlow Weed. While abroad he was received everywhere with honors accorded usually

only to the highest stations. Mr. Weed will occupy room No. 11 at the Astor House while he lives. The friendship between himself and General Stetson, the host of the Astor, has been strong, permanent, and unbroken for thirty years. It is the intention of the host of the Astor, that when Mr. Weed shall be borne to that house appointed for all living, his old quarters at the Astor shall be dismantled, to be occupied by no one after him.

MR. WEBSTER AT THE ASTOR HOUSE.

For many years the Astor House was the New York home of the great statesman. The famed Webster Rooms adjoin those occupied by Mr. Weed, and were numbered twelve and thirteen. A bed-room, a parlor, and dining-room composed the suite. Come when Mr. Webster would, by night or day, these rooms awaited him. All who occupied them in his absence took them on the condition that they must be vacated at a moment's notice. On the death of Mr. Webster, the partitions that divided the apartments were torn down, that they might never be used again by any guests. They now make the private breakfast room on the ladies' side of the house: Mr. Webster and General Stetson were bosom friends, and that friendship was severed only by death. Some of Mr. Webster's happiest hours were passed in his rooms at the Astor. The cheery voice of the liberal host always welcomed him as he crossed the threshold, and was music to his ear. Mr. Webster went from these rooms to Marshfield, where he was to lay himself down, to rise not till the heavens are no more. Worn and weary, Mr. Webster dropped a

word at that last visit which showed that, in his judgment, he was going home to die. He took an affectionate leave of his friend, whom he had known and loved for more than thirty years. He presented him with a complete set of his works, accompanied by a letter written in his best vein, which will be an heirloom in the family. On his death-bed at Marshfield he wrote the last letter that he ever penned, full of love and affection, to his life-long friend, the host of the Astor.

Few persons knew Mr. Webster better. He knew him as he appeared to the public — an orator pouring out the nervous tide of eloquence; an advocate at the bar, carrying court and jury, willing or reluctant, along with him; the farmer at Marshfield, familiar with cattle and crops, dressed in his short jacket, long pants, heavy brogans, and wide-brimmed, bad-looking hat; a boatman and fisherman, hunting his favorite game in Marshfield Bay; as a companion, social, fervent, and warm in friendship; and he knew well how strong was his faith in the God of his fathers.

AN INCIDENT.

At Marshfield Mr. Webster was at one time engaged in conversation with a friend. The clock struck nine. Mr. Webster arose and left the room. He did not return for an hour, and some allusion was made to his absence. Mrs. Webster remarked that her husband had gone to bed; that nine o'clock was his summer hour for retiring while on the farm; his guests and family consulted their own convenience. At three o'clock in the morning the guest heard Mr. Webster calling for

shaving-water. Shortly after he left the house. A plain office, one story high, built of wood and painted white, still stands in the grove of Marshfield, now silent and deserted, and this was the working-room of Mr. Webster during his public life. Entering this office early in the morning, and closing the door, he addressed himself to his business, and finished the labor of the day before breakfast. On arising in the morning, the visitors proposed to make Mr. Webster a morning visit at his office. Mrs. Webster said, "Gentlemen, that office and this hour are sacred to labor. Mr. Webster gives to his guests all the time he can spare from his public duties. I never call upon him in his office hours, and he will not be pleased if you disturb him. When his labor is finished he will appear." The guests had not long to wait. Soon the host appeared. He bade them a hearty good morning, and proceeded to the breakfast table, and from thence to the pleasures of the day. Going to bed at nine o'clock, and rising daily at three, was his home custom. No wonder he could write his brilliant letter on the glory of the morning!

WEBSTER'S BIRTHDAY.

For many years it was a custom to celebrate, by a dinner at the Astor, the birthday of Mr. Webster. This custom was continued for several years after his death. The dinner was attended by the most eminent New England men residing in New York, and the personal friends of Mr. Webster living in the state. At one of these gatherings, at which I was present, personal reminiscences were told of the great statesman. Many incidents of his inside life came out, which have a

permanent value. He made a profession of religion when he was a young man, and his name remains on the records of the Congregational Church at Boscawen, N. H. In the plain wooden church at Marshfield his pew is still shown, where in foul weather as in fair, with the distinguished guests, foreign and native, who were at his house, he sat and worshipped the God of his fathers. He said to Dr. Codman, whose church he attended, "I am no half-a-day hearer, sir." He liked the simple preaching of the gospel, and detested all pomp and pretence in the pulpit. He was accustomed to ask a blessing at his table daily, unless he had political guests, when it was omitted, lest it should be placed to the account of ostentation. One eminent man at the dinner said that he had known Mr. Webster intimately for thirty years, socially and convivially; at his own house, and on political campaigns; had been his guest at the Marshfield farm, and at the capital; during that long time he never heard him utter an improper word, use an oath, or allow one to be used in his presence without a decided but gentlemanly rebuke.

One gentleman related this anecdote: Mr. Webster was a great lover of fine cattle, and was a much better judge of stock than his friends at that time imagined. Mr. Webster was on a visit to this gentleman at his farm in Massachusetts. He had some valuable imported stock, in which he took great pride. He proposed to make Mr. Webster a present of one of his cows. In the exuberance of his generosity, he told Mr. Webster he might have his choice out of his lot. Mr. Webster requested that the cattle be driven into the yard. He walked leisurely down, and leaning his back against

the fence, saying nothing, he surveyed the stock before him. Not a point escaped his eye, not a mark was unnoticed. Having satisfied himself by an outside survey, he turned to his host, and said, "Bring me a pail." Selecting three choice specimens, he formed his decision, and said, "I will take this one." His friend saw with dismay that Mr. Webster, with the eye of a master, had selected the most valuable cow of the lot, and she was soon on her way to Marshfield.

BALTIMORE NOMINATION.

Before General Scott received the nomination of the Whig party for President, Mr. Webster had put himself forward as the champion of the rights of the south, and had gone as far in that direction as the northern heart could allow. He expected a generous vote from the south at the convention, whether it carried his nomination or not. The delegates from Massachusetts were Webster delegates, and gloried in the name of Webster Whigs. Mr. Choate headed the delegation, and made impassioned appeals for the nomination of his friend. From the start the nomination of General Scott was fixed, and the southern members did not care to recognize Mr. Webster's services on their behalf, which had alienated so large a portion of Mr. Webster's northern friends. They refused him the compliment of a full vote on any question, though it would not have jeopardized the nomination of their favorite candidate. Mr. Webster felt this neglect, and took no pains to conceal his mortification. He saw, with chagrin, his meagre vote from first to last, and felt indignant that the southern delegates voted in a body

steadily against him. Having finished the nomination of General Scott, the southern delegation resolved to take the cars, visit Mr. Webster, and explain to him the reasons which dictated their conduct. They telegraphed to him that they were coming. They reached his rooms about midnight, and found him in bed. He refused to arise, and refused to receive them. Personal friends interceded, and the southern gentlemen entered his parlor to await his coming. He soon made his appearance. He wore his dressing-gown, pants, and slippers. His drawers were untied, and the strings hung loosely about his ankles. He wore neither stock nor collar. He had arisen from his bed at their summons, and it was evident that he had not removed his night-shirt. He gave the delegation a chilling welcome, made his coldest bow, and wore his blackest look. The conference was opened by the chairman, who, in a speech complimentary to Mr. Webster's great abilities, and his signal services to the south, began to apologize for the action of the delegation at Baltimore. Mr. Webster cut the speaker short, by stating that he desired to hear no vindication of their conduct; that what they had done was past recall; if they had done their duty, they had nothing to regret; if not, their consciences must be their accusers. He told them he was mortified and indignant at their persistent refusal to give him the poor compliment of a vote. He reminded them of his labors and sacrifices on their behalf, the letters he had written, and the speeches he had made. He recalled the indignation of his own party, and the loss of long-trying friendships he had suffered from his public course in behalf of the south; he told

them they had been ungrateful, and were unworthy of the sacrifices made for them; that they had sown dragons' teeth, and a harvest of armed men would come up. He reminded the delegation that they had used and deserted every northern man who had stood their friend in dark and perilous days, and that he was the last man they would sacrifice, and the last they would desert. He said to them, "Gentlemen, my public life has ended. I am going to Marshfield to sleep with my fathers. I carry with me a consciousness of duty well done. When perilous times come to you, as come they will, you will mourn, in bitterness of spirit, over your craven conduct and your base ingratitude. I wish you good evening, gentlemen," and the great statesman passed out, leaving the delegation to their own meditations.

MR. WEBSTER AND GENERAL TAYLOR.

On the receipt of the nomination of General Taylor by the Whig party, Mr. Webster made a speech at Marshfield, in which he denounced the nomination as one "not fit to be made." Yet Mr. Webster was the original Taylor man of the country. He saw his merits as a candidate long before the public or politicians recognized him. A stirring article appeared in the National Intelligencer, presenting the claims of General Taylor to the Presidency, vindicating him from charges preferred against him, and denouncing the administration for their treatment of the great soldier in his Mexican campaign. When General Taylor came prominently before the public, and it was doubtful whether the Whigs or the Democrats would

nominate him, Mr. Webster gathered up his writings on General Taylor, with the early article that appeared in the Intelligencer, and sent them, with a letter, to a distinguished senator in the South, who was supposed to be in the confidence of General Taylor, his personal friend and adviser. This original letter I have seen, and a copy of it I possess. In it Mr. Webster urges the nomination of General Taylor, giving reasons therefor; yields whatever claims he might possess in favor of the great soldier; requests his friends to proceed prudently in the matter, making no "sudden pledge or plunge," and asks the senator to make General Taylor acquainted with Mr. Webster's services on his behalf. To this letter no reply was made, neither was there any recognition of Mr. Webster's services on behalf of the general. He had taken early steps to create a public sentiment in his favor. General Taylor was almost unknown to the American people. But none of these eminent services received the least attention or acknowledgment. General Taylor was nominated, elected, and inaugurated. Mr. Webster looked coldly and silently on. About six weeks before General Taylor died the facts in the case came out. Mr. Webster's letter was mislaid. Indeed, it was not opened till after the death of the senator to whom it was addressed. General Taylor was made aware of the fact that Mr. Webster was his early friend and advocate, and had yielded all his personal feelings and aspirations in connection with the Presidency, and had smoothed the path of the successful candidate to the chair of state. On learning these facts, General Taylor took his carriage and drove immediately to the resi-

dence of Mr. Webster, made his acknowledgments, and effected a reconciliation. Had General Taylor lived a month longer, Mr. Webster would have been Secretary of State.

Mr. Webster, at the close of his life, expressed his regret that when he moved from Portsmouth he had not selected New York instead of Boston as his home. His wife, who survived him, lived with her father, before her marriage, in lower New York, which was also for many years Mr. Webster's town residence. The building, scarcely changed, stands near Bowling Green, its entrance guarded by two huge granite lions. It was the centre, at one time, of fashion, and the home of the eminent men of New York.

XXXV.

LEONARD W. JEROME.

DARING speculation and success in bold operations have placed Mr. Jerome among the wealthy citizens of upper New York. He can be seen any pleasant Sunday morning, when the streets are crowded with churchgoers, driving his four-in-hand up Fifth Avenue, bound for the Central Park. His carriage, a huge omnibus, will be filled with gay ladies, in opera costume; two lackeys in livery fill the coupé behind, while the driver, with a cluster of flowers in his button-hole, attracts general attention, as the multitude cry out, "That's Jerome."