

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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Memoir of John B. Gibson, L. L. D.

JOHN BANNISTER GIBSON, L. L. D., Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, was born at Carlisle, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, a district of that Commonwealth fertile in the name of its distinguished sons. His father was Col. George Gibson, a well known officer of our revolutionary war, who having commanded with success a regiment of the Virginia line during the contest with Great Britain, fell with honor at the memorable defeat of St. Clair, by the Indians in 1791. Having received his primary education in his native town, Mr. Gibson entered Dickinson College, then in the zenith of literary fame, and was matriculated with honor in 1800. He was fortunate in having had at this venerable seat of learning, the instructions of the well known Dr. Charles Nesbit, of the Church of Scotland, for whose virtues, the pupil recorded in 1824, his dutiful remembrance by a design, from his own pencil, of a monument to his memory, and in a printed eulogy on his life and character. The domestic relations of Mr. Gibson pointed to the law as his profession, and having passed the usual term in the office of his kinsman, the Hon. Thomas Duncan, at that time the leader of the bar in central Pennsylvania, and afterwards a judge of its highest court—he was admitted to practice in 1803. "The Western Country" was then beginning to attract that notice which has since made one of the most populous regions of Pennsylvania; and like many other young men of the day, Mr. Gibson attempted to push his fortune in the "back woods." He opened his first office at Beaver, upon the river Ohio. After a sojourn there of about two years, he removed to Hagerstown, Maryland, whence he soon returned again to his native town, Carlisle. His advancement here was such as to gratify his friends. He found, in their full course of practice, such men as Duncan and Wats, and when he had proved, as he very shortly did, his ability to cope with them both, he had established a reputation as wide as the Commonwealth.

The political associations of Mr. Gibson had been with the old Democratic party; and the critical condition of its affairs in 1810, calling for the service of its ablest men, he was returned from his native county to two successive State Assemblies in 1810 and 1811, where he supported with vigor and ability the administration of Mr. Madison and Governor Snyder. He was here among the early advocates of that large system of internal improvement which the Legislature of Pennsylvania has since been completing, and by which alone that State can take the name in the Union which her endowments make not more eminent than natural. Returning to his constituents in March, 1812, after two years of public service in critical and trying times, during which he left no proper expectation unanswered the legislative career of the Chief Justice would probably have added to his professional advancement, had he chosen to remain at the bar. He seems, however, to have early entertained the opinion, which he has since expressed, that his qualities fitted him better for the bench; and having a short time before united himself in marriage with Miss Sarah Galbraith, the daughter of a revolutionary officer, then living in retirement upon his farm in Cumberland, he accepted in 1812, the Presidency of the 11th Judicial District, just then created in Northern Pennsylvania. The death of Judge Brackeauridge having made a vacancy in 1816, of a seat in the Supreme Court, Mr. President Gibson was transferred on the 27th June of that year, to the bench upon which he has since continued. As an associate justice, it was the happiness of justice Gibson, through his whole career to have beside him for a presiding officer, the late Chief Justice Tilghman; and the eleven years in which these eminent persons assisted each other in discharge of their high duties, seems to have been not less an unbroken circle of judicial harmony, than it was of cordial personal intercourse.

The death of Chief Justice Tilghman, on the 30th of April, 1827, left without an occupant the seat in which he had presided for more than 20 years with dignity and usefulness; and made it a matter of no small difficulty for the Executive to supply the vacancy with satisfaction to the public expectations. Names eminent in the profession, and in the State, were strongly pressed upon Governor Shultz for this honorable office; and the appointment to it on the 17th of May, 1829, gave conclusive proof of the high confidence entertained by the Chief Magistrate of Pennsylvania, and the old fashioned Democratic party of which he was the representative, in the ability and merits of Mr. Justice Gibson. From the date just

named, the Chief Justice has occupied the seat to which he was then appointed. And, with the exception of having acted as one of the electors of 1828—when his name was put by the democratic party at the head of their State electoral ticket, and he assisted in casting the vote of Pennsylvania in support of General Jackson—his public services have been exclusively confined to the duties of his judicial office. Few men in magistracy, any where, have given more extensive evidence of a life of labor. Independently of constant sittings throughout the Commonwealth on the circuits and at *Nisi Prius*, where some of his ablest opinions have been given without a record, the Pennsylvania reports preserve enduring evidences of his abilities, fidelity and learning. "The Reports of Pennsylvania," said the late Charles Chauncey, "are entitled to the admiration of Lawyers at home and abroad. * * * They contain decisions which have led the way upon some very interesting subjects, and which have been followed both here and in England." How far and how faithfully Chief Justice Gibson has participated in these labors so honorable to his native State, is attested by upwards of six thousand cases in which he has taken part in the final judgment of the court, and more than twelve hundred in which he has himself delivered opinions distinguished for their impartiality, learning, and conclusive force. Without disparagement to any of the distinguished men who, at different times, have sat beside him as associates, all will agree that to him the court has been largely indebted for the praise pronounced upon it by those best qualified to know its character. Mr. Birney, we are sure, did not speak a sentiment of perfect truth, when on an occasion dictated by respect to the tribunal, where for five and twenty years Chief Justice Gibson has presided, he declared, amidst the enthusiastic response of men of every party, that at no time have the judgments of the court been guided by either favor or resentment; and that in learning, integrity, and industry, the judges of the court have never been wanting to themselves, the profession, or the country. "We all agree," said this eminent lawyer, "that the Judges of the Supreme Court have been faithful to the Constitution and the Law; faithful to the State and to the Union; faithful to the People and to the Bar."

In person, the Chief Justice is considerable above the common stature; and has always been distinguished by extraordinary vigor of health and frame. His temper is eminently social; and among all classes of society throughout the State, he is ever greeted as a welcome guest. His hearty health—his fresh and genial tastes, and his devotion to judicial labors, indicate a man on whose vigorous power age has made no mark.

Curran, The Orator.

CURRAN sprang from the people. He was born at Newmarket, an obscure town in the county of Cork, in 1750—being thus four years younger than Grattan. On the father's side, he was descended from one of Cromwell's soldiers. Passing his childhood in the country, he was thrown much among the people. He loved to recall the days when he played marbles in the street of Newmarket, or assumed the part of Punch's man at a country fair. He loved to visit the peasantry in their cabins, and listen to their tales. There he saw the Irish character—his wit, his humor, its sensibility to mirth and tears. There, too, in those rough natures which appear so sullen and savage, when brought face to face with their oppressors, he found the finest and tenderest affections of the human heart. There, too, he found a natural poetry and eloquence. He was a constant attendant at the weddings and wakes of his neighborhood. It was customary at that time to employ hired mourners for the dead, and their wild and solemn lamentations struck his youthful imagination. In after years, he acknowledged that his first ideas of eloquence were derived from listening to the lamentations of mourners at the Irish burials.

When transferred to Trinity College in Dublin, he became distinguished chiefly by his social powers. Full of the exuberant life of youth, overflowing with spirits, and fond of fun and frolic, he was always a welcome companion among the students.

His mother had designed him for the church. When he came out of college, his tastes took another turn. But his mother never got over her disappointment at his not being a preacher. Not even his brilliant reputation at the bar and in Parliament, could satisfy her maternal heart. She lived to see the nation hanging on the lips of this almost inspired orator. Yet even then she would lament over him. "O, Jacky, what a preacher was lost in you."

Her friends reminded her that she had

lived to see her son one of the judges of the land. "Don't speak to me of judges," she would reply, "John was fit for anything; and had he but followed our advice it might hereafter be written upon my tomb that I died the mother of a bishop."

But no one as yet knew that he had extraordinary talent for eloquence. Indeed he did not suspect it himself. In his boyhood he had a confusion in his utterance, from which he was called by his school-fellows "stuttering Jack Curran."

It was not until many years after, while studying law at the Temple, that he found out that he could speak. After his fame was established, a friend dining with him one day, could not repress his admiration of Curran's eloquence, and remarked that it must have been born with him. "Indeed my dear sir," replied Curran, "it was not, it was borne twenty-three years and some months after me." But when he had made the important discovery of this concealed power, he employed every means to render his elocution perfect. He accustomed himself to speak very slowly; correct his precipitate utterance. He practiced before a glass to make his gestures graceful. He spoke aloud the most celebrated orations. One piece he was never weary of repeating, the speech of Anthony over the body of Cæsar. This he recommended to his young friends at the bar as a model of elocution.

And while he thus used art to smooth a channel for his thoughts to flow in, no man's eloquence ever issued more freely and spontaneously from the heart. It was always the heart of the man that spoke. It was because his own emotions were so intense, that he possessed such power over the feelings of the others.

His natural sympathies were strong. Like every truly great man, he was as simple as a child. He had all those tastes which mark a genuine man. He loved nature. He loved children. He sympathized with the poor. It was perhaps from these popular sympathies that he preferred Rousseau among the French writers, and that his friendship was so strong with Mr. Godwin.

His nature was all sensibility. He was most keenly alive to gay, or mournful scenes. He had a boyish love for fun and frolic. He entered into sports with infinite glee. In these things he remained a child to the end of his days; while in sensibility to tears he had the heart of a woman. Thus, to the last hour of life, he kept his affections fresh and flowing.

He had the delicate organization of genius. His frame vibrated to music like an Eolian harp. He had the most exquisite relish for the beauties of poetry. He was extravagantly fond of works of imagination. He devoured romances. And when in his reading he met with a passage which gratified his taste, he was never weary of repeating it to himself, or reading it to the friends who came to see him.

In conversation, perhaps the most prominent faculty of his mind was fancy—sportive, playful, tender, and pathetic. His conversation was a stream which never ceased to flow. His brilliant imagination, and the warmth with which he entered into everything, gave it a peculiar fascination. Byron said that Curran had spoken more poetry than any man had ever written. In a circle of genial friends, after dinner, his genius was in its first action. His countenance lighted up, and his conversation, beginning to flow, now sparkled, now ran like wine. Flashes of wit played around him. Mirth gleamed from his eyes and shot from his tongue. He had an endless store of anecdotes, to which his extraordinary dramatic talent enabled him to give the happiest effect. He told stories, and hitting off the point of Irish character by the most exquisite mimicry; he "set the table on a roar," following perhaps with some touching tale which instantly brought tears into every eye. "You wept," says Phillips, "and you laughed, and you wondered; and the wonderful creature, who made you do all at will, never let it appear that he was more than your equal, and quite willing, if you chose, to become your auditor."

The wit of Curran was spontaneous. It was the creation of the moment, the electric sparks shot from a mind overcharged with imagery and feeling. In this it differed from the wit of another great Irishman, Sheridan had more of the actor about him. His brilliant sayings were prepared beforehand. He aimed at display in the recitations at Holland House as much as when writing a comedy for Drury Lane.

Perhaps no foreigner, who has visited England, has had a better opportunity of seeing its distinguished men than Madame de Staël. She was constantly surrounded by the most brilliant society of London. Yet even in that blaze of genius, she was most struck, as she often told her friends, with the conversational powers of Curran. This, too, was in 1813 when his health had sunk, and his spirits were so depressed

as to make it an effort to support his part at all in society. From the vivacity of his conversation, one would hardly have suspected the depth and seriousness of his character. In talking with ladies, or with young persons, his mind was remarkable for its constant playfulness. A gleam of sunshine illumined his whole being. Yet those who knew him intimately were aware that he was subject all his life to constitutional melancholy. Like many other men celebrated for their wit, his gaiety alternated with deep depression. The truth was, that he sympathized too intensely with the scenes of real life to be uniformly gay. In his country he saw so much to sadden him, that his feelings took a melancholy tone. The transition was often instantaneous from humor to pathos. His friends, who saw him in his lighter moods, were surprised at the sudden change of his countenance. "In grave conversation, his voice was remarkable for a certain plaintive sincerity of tone"—a sadness which fascinated the listener like mournful music.—*Athenæum*.

One-Eyed Thompson.

The Police Gazette is engaged in publishing sketches of the life of William H. Thompson, better known as "One-Eyed Thompson," who committed suicide a few days ago in a New York prison, an account of which we published in the Chronicle. From the account before us, a portion of which we copy, he must have been a very remarkable man, in many particulars. He was born in New York city of an honorable stock, and was gifted with a genius of more than common stamp, and a disposition that was as bold, as wayward and peculiar as his mind.

When a boy at school he was not remarkable for proficiency, but lagged in attainment far behind boys of much inferior capacity, yet in the school yard and in the street he shot beyond them all, and was the acknowledged leader of every crowd of daring and reckless youngsters. His mind was very acute and vigorous; he was possessed of great courage for acts of desperation and fearful undertaking.—His boyhood promised that which his age developed.

The following exploit is sufficient to make the reader, familiar with Thompson's desperate and peculiar nature, and enables us to understand the exact bearings of his mind.

On a certain night late in the Fall, when the trees were leafless, and when Winter sent its prologue to riot through the streets of New York in a howling, dismal driving storm of wind and rain, a party of five or six persons were gathered together in a store in Pearl street, within three or four doors of Frankfort. As became the disposition of such a night, the conversation felt the mournful impulse of the elements, and shrank from general discussion to the congenial subject of superstitions, strange appearances, weird oracles, ghosts, and walking of the banded dead; till the ashy speculators in these views of horror found themselves pressed close against each other, round the fire. Thompson was one of the circle, but though he could not resist a certain awe which crept over him from the combined influence of the shuddering legends and the shocking night, he was more free from the tyranny of the illusions than any of the party. When things were in this state, some reference was made to the condition of the burying ground of the Brick Church, which still stands at the corner of Beekman street and Park Row, and which was then undergoing some improvement or repairs that exposed the vaults, or one of them, to the incursions of any person who might feel a disposition to invade its mysteries.

"Who dare go there and bring a skull?" said Thompson.

The party shuddered audibly at the audacious thought.

"Well, I dare!" continued Thompson, compressing his lips, after his peculiar fashion, and answering his own question; "I dare, and if any one will bet me five dollars, I will go do it now!"

The money was bet; Thompson pulled down his cap, drew his cloak around him, and followed by two of the party who were deputed to witness his exploit under the shelter of an umbrella, led the way to the cemetery.

The rain came down in torrents, driving this way and that, as if vexed and full of spite that it could not pelt every object that opposed it from its path, and enjoy the night alone. In the midst of this hissing and doleful atmosphere Thompson went on uncovered, and one of the pair who followed, describes the picture of his tall, ungainly figure, swathed tightly by his cloak, which fluttered only at the skirts, as one of the visionary spectres of which they had been talking, flitting thro' the troubled air, and seeking its road back to the quiet tomb from which it had temporarily estrayed. Soon they reached the Brick Church, and bidding them to stand

by under the shelter of a porch, Thompson darted forward in the darkness, as if too eager to accomplish his object to lose a moment's time, and disappeared in the church yard. With but little effort he tore away the temporary door of a vault, and entered its awful walls. He had taken but two steps inside, however, when he was transfixed by the appearance, far in the distance of the charnel house, of a light. The cold sweat started from every pore, and for a moment he felt of the flesh of his face, to know whether he was awake or in a dream. Recovering his courage by the result, and feeling that unconquerable impulse which always tempts a brave mind to advance and test any danger which it does not understand, Thompson summoned up his courage, stepped forward and laid his hand desperately upon the light. It was cold and clammy, and as it crumbled in his fingers he knew it to be phosphorescent wood from one of the coffins which lay decaying on every side. Gaining courage by this destruction of his fears, he ran his arm in the coffin, drew forth the skull, and then ransacked with his fingers among the clattering remains that tumbled from his touch, for a thigh bone. With these trophies he groped his way into the open air, and with them he ascended the expecting party in the store in Pearl street, as he had them down before him on the counter.

Here is the index of an extraordinary spirit, and examining it properly, we can easily account for the disdain in which he always held the rules and notions of the world.

GRATTAN.—Grattan, the first man in the brightest day of the Irish Parliament, was descended of an honorable lineage. His father was a barrister, member of Parliament for Dublin, and also its Recorder. He himself was a graduate of the Irish University, where he was distinguished. Entering the Middle Temple, he was called to the Irish bar in 1772. But his mind was parliamentary; his study in England had been parliament; and his spirit was kindled by the great orators of the time. He who had heard Burke and Chatham, had heard the full power of imaginative oratory—of all oratory the noblest. Grattan had the materials of a great speaker in him by nature—keen sensibility, strong passion, daring sincerity, and an imagination furnished with all the essential knowledge for debate—not overwhelmed by it, but refreshing the original force of his mind, like the eagle's wing refreshed by dipping into the fountain, but dipping only to soar. Yet, though almost rapturously admiring those distinguished men, he was no imitator. He struck out for himself a line between both, and, in some of its happier moments, superior to either; combining the rich exuberance of Burke's imagination with Chatham's condensed dignity of thought. Possessed of an extraordinary power of reasoning, Grattan had the not less extraordinary power of working it into an intensity which made it glow; and some of the most elaborate arguments ever uttered in Parliament have all the brilliancy of eloquence. He continually reasoned, though the most metaphorical of speakers; and this combination of logic and lustre, though so unusual in others, in him was characteristic. He poured out arguments like a shower of arrows, but they were all arrow-tipped with fire. Mr. Phillips's sketch of him brings Grattan before us to the life:—"He was short in stature, and unprepossessing in appearance. His arms were disproportionately long. His walk was a stride. With a person swaying like a pendulum, and an abstracted air, he seemed always in thought, and each thought provoked an attendant gesticulation. Such was the outward and visible form of one whom the passenger would stop to stare at as a droll, and the philosopher to contemplate as a study. How strange it is that a mind so replete with grace and symmetry, and power, and splendour, should have been allotted such a dwelling for its residence! Yet so it was, and so also was it one of his highest attributes, that his genius, by its 'excessive light,' blinded his hearers to his physical imperfections. It was the victory of mind over matter."

French Politics.

LAMARINE AND CAVAIGNAC.—General Cavaignac, a truly great man in France, has quarreled with Thiers and Gen. Changarnier, in opposition to the administration of Louis Napoleon.—Lamarine, who was once called the Washington of France, most unexpectedly came to the aid of the President: Lamarine has yet considerable influence, and Louis Napoleon felt so grateful for that he tendered him any office within his gift; but Lamarine declined, as public gossip says, because he is under bonds to write two more volumes by a certain day, and these required all his time. His "Memoirs" have enabled him to redeem one of his favorite estates from the hands of the mortgaggers, and now is working to redeem more of his patrimonial property.

The remarks of Gen. Cavaignac are a subject of more moment than the rest of the speakers, as he will probably be the prominent Presidential candidate against Louis Napoleon. He blamed severely, in the name of all sincere Republicans, the law of Public Instruction and the Electoral Law of the 31st of May—those great misdeeds of the majority.

Gen. Cavaignac said:—"The Constitution might be revised; but it was not the Constitution which invented the national sovereignty nor could this fundamental principle be destroyed by any party. There could be only two parties, for the Monarch or the Republic. Those who had ill guided the Monarch, had paved the way for the Republic. At present the Republic was ill-guided; and it was to be feared that, if it continued to be so, it would have to make way for a restoration of the Monarchy."

17 The population of Pennsylvania is about 2,325,000.

to order, and that Col. McCahen take the chair. This motion was unanimously agreed to, and the ever ready Colonel took the Speaker's chair.

The member from Centre then rose in his seat, and made an elaborate statement, that the member from Nockamixon, by encouraging a spirit of faction in that usually quiet township had caused great distress there among the women and children, and he was credibly informed that several cases of sickness, mental alienation, and he feared suicide, had occurred in consequence of the active part taken by the member from Bucks on the subject of the division of this township. He therefore moved that the worthy member be subject to the reprimand of the Speaker. This motion was unanimously carried, and Col. McCahen in the chair directed the member to rise. "Nockamixon" was fresh and unused to the scene; and he rose in his seat as directed. And such a reprimand! With all the solemnity of a countenance naturally grave, the *pseudo* Speaker after alluding with tears in his eyes, to the painful duty imposed upon him, recited the enormity of the case, the distress produced in the community, by the conduct of the member; and with extraordinary caution as to his future conduct in respect to the vices and virtues of his position, he pronounced the "member from Bucks," reprimanded.

The gravity of the scene until the roars of laughter at the end, passes all belief; and Mr. Crittenden, the present Attorney General of the United States, at the time was a spectator in the lobby. He has been heard to say that it was the richest farce he had ever seen, and that until the end, and the drop, was himself deceived, and thought it was a regular Legislative session.

Treatment of Scarlet Fever—Important Prescription.

Dr. Lindsly, of Washington, strongly recommends the mode of treatment of scarlet fever, resorted to by Dr. Schneckmann, physician to the King of Hanover. It is as follows, and exceedingly simple—

"From the first day of the illness, and as soon as we are certain of its nature, the patient must be rubbed morning and evening over the whole body with a piece of bacon, in such a manner that, with the exception of the head, a covering of fat is every where applied. In order to make this rubbing in somewhat easier, it is best to take a piece of bacon the size of the hand, choosing a part still armed with the rind, that we may have a firm grasp. On the soft side of this piece slits are to be made, in order to allow the oozing out of the fat. The rubbing must be thoroughly performed, and not too quickly, in order that the skin may be regularly saturated with the fat. The beneficial results of the application are soon obvious; with a rapidity bordering on magic, all even the most painful symptoms of the disease are allayed; quiet sleep, good humor, appetite return, and there remains only the impatience to quit the sick room."