

THE FARMER AND MECHANIC.

THE BLIGHTED ROMANCE OF PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN

(Gen. Isaac R. Sherwood, in Washington Post.)

Few of our great statesmen ever linger long in memory after they cross the river to the eternal shore beyond. And this is true of James Buchanan, once President of the United States, and constantly in the limelight for 48 years before the great civil war. His name is never mentioned now by any poet, orator, or prophet. Yet he was from 1814 to 1861 a leader in the councils of his State and nation.

Born poor, the son of an Irish immigrant, reared on a farm at Stony Batter, Pennsylvania, he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania legislature when 22 years old, and was continuously in offices of high trust until over 70 years of age. He was ten years in Congress, was sent on an important and delicate mission to Russia by President Jackson; was elected to United States Senate in 1833; was Secretary of State under President Polk; was Ambassador to Great Britain under President Pierce, and elected President of the United States over Col. John C. Fremont in 1856.

Administration Notable Socially.

He was the first old bachelor elected President, and his administration was the most notable socially since Dolly Madison presided in the White House from 1809 to 1817. Neither the wives of Franklin Pierce, nor Millard Fillmore, nor Gen. Zachary Taylor, nor James K. Polk, the predecessors of James Buchanan, were accomplished society women. Harriet Lane, the niece of James Buchanan, was the mistress of the White House during his administration. She was the most beautiful and accomplished woman who ever presided in that historic mansion; more beautiful and accomplished than Dolly Madison, and not quite so dressy and fussy.

Prince's Tribute to Miss Lane.

The Prince of Wales, afterward King Edward VII, then a young man, visited the United States during Buchanan's administration, and was the guest of the White House. He was given a very elaborate banquet by Harriet Lane. Upon his return to London he was quoted as saying that he had met a more beautiful and accomplished and entertaining lady in Harriet Lane than he had ever met in any European court. And he never forgot Harriet Lane. When he was crowned King of Great Britain, he sent a special invitation to Harriet, then Harriet Lane Johnson, to attend his coronation. And yet, only ten years after James Buchanan's death (in 1868) all his countrymen and the balance of the world had forgotten there was ever such a man once the chief executive of the greatest republic on earth. And it seems of sufficient interest to know why this foremost statesman of ante bellum times never married.

Only a few evening ago, as I stepped into the old Ebbitt House I stubbed my toe against the heels of an old Washingtonian. While I was apologizing and he was begging pardon for standing in the entrance, we mutually recognized each other as acquaintances of the long ago. We had met at Horatio King's levees in the season of 1875. Horatio King was Postmaster General under President Buchanan, and the Washington Literary Society met at his home Saturday evenings. At that time Grace Greenwood, Mary Clemmer Ames, George Alfred Townsend, J. Q. Howard, of Galaxy; Miss Boyle, the poetess and Col. Don Platt were among the usual visitors. So much for the prelude, now for facts and romance.

His Heart Won By Miss Coleman.

My old-time friend took me to his library on Connecticut avenue, and told me this interesting story:

In his youth Mr. Buchanan's heart was won by the charms of beautiful Miss Coleman, who, like himself, resided in Lancaster, Pa. She was a member of the well known and aristocratic Coleman family, whose vast estates and the Cornwall iron works, near Lebanon, rendered them one of the wealthiest in the country. They were soon betrothed and were counted the handsomest couple in all the country round.

Some time after the engagement had been announced Mr. Buchanan was obliged to go out of town on an extended business trip. He returned in a few weeks and casually dropped in to see my aunt, Mrs. William Jenkins, with whose husband, he was on terms of intimate friendship. With her was staying a sister, Miss Gracie Hubley, a daughter of Gen. Hubley, a revolutionary officer, a pretty and charming young lady.

From this innocent came the whole trouble. A gossip young lady told Miss Coleman of this visit and thereby excited her jealousy. She was indignant that Mr. Buchanan should visit any one before coming to see her. On the spur of the moment she penned an angry note and released him from his engagement. This she sent by messenger in hot haste, the note being handed to Buchanan while he was in the court house. Persons who saw him receive it remarked afterward that they noticed him turn pale when he read it. Mr. Buchanan

was a proud man. The large fortune of the lady was to him only another barrier to his trying to persuade her to reconsider her rejection of him.

A few days after the quarrel an opera party to go to Philadelphia was arranged and Miss Coleman was included in the invitation. They went to the city, but when the time for going to the opera arrived, Miss Coleman, on the plea of indisposition, remained at the hotel. A merry evening was spent and the gay party returned to their rooms. One or two of the girls hastened to Miss Coleman's room eager to tell her of the evening's pleasure, and found her cold in death.

His Poem With Her at Death.

That is the true story, said my friend, but the whole has not been told. The sad fate of Miss Coleman broke James Buchanan's heart, and he never married and never loved another woman. I asked him to give me some additional particulars of this somewhat remarkable affair.

He said: "I have a poem written by James Buchanan to Miss Anne C. Coleman just after their estrangement that has never been published. This poem was found on Miss Coleman's person the night of her sudden death in Philadelphia by one of the young ladies of the party."

I asked to be permitted to see this poem. Pulling out a lot of rusty papers from a bureau my friend allowed me to read it.

Biographer Adds Verity.

I dropped into the Congressional Library a day later and asked for George Tickner Curtis' life of James Buchanan, to verify if possible the probable truth of my friend's statements concerning Miss Coleman. I found a detailed account of Buchanan's love affair with Miss Coleman; and under date Lancaster, Pa., December 19, 1919, a letter from James Buchanan to the father of Miss Coleman, in which the following intense language occurs:

"I have lost the only earthly object of my affections, without whom life presents to me a dreary blank. I have now one request to make, and for the love of God and of your dear departed daughter, whom I loved more than any other human being could love, deny me not."

This letter is signed James Buchanan, and is addressed to Robert Coleman. It was written to ask the privilege of gazing upon the form then cold in death of Anne C. Coleman. This privilege the father of Miss Coleman denied to James Buchanan. In fact he never answered his letter.

FIND DISEASE IN MUMMY.

Doctors Trace Evidences of Phthisis and Malaria in Bodies of Ancient Copts.

(From the Journal of the American Medical Association.)

This is an age of specialism. Some doctors limit their practice to babies, some to old persons, some to a single class of disease. Only recently has any doctor attempted to specialize on the diseases of mummies. Dr. Ruffer has in the examination of a large number of recently discovered mummies in Egypt. The conditions of custom and climate which have preserved the mummies of old Egypt make it possible to compare the defects produced by disease with the manifestations of diseases of the present day. Such investigations have already unfolded many facts of interest in respect to the existence of disease in bygone times, and have contributed important facts to the history of medicine.

The perfect preservation of many of the bodies which have become available in Egypt is remarkable. The peculiarities of real mummies are widely known. Coptic mummies which have recently been examined by Ruffer belong to a somewhat different class. They came from Antinoe, in upper Egypt, and dated from the fifth to sixth century. They were, therefore, from about 1,400 to 1,500 years old. They had undergone no artificial process, except that, at one time, they had been covered with salt. The real preservative had been the dry Egyptian sand in which they had originally been buried, inclosed in wooden coffins. Never having been disturbed by the embalmer, the organs were all in position, and the bodies contained no resin, gum, or any materials such as mud, sand, rags, &c., generally used in old Egypt for packing the body after removal of the organs.

In our environment, where special precautions are necessary to preserve the body from decay, it is surprising to hear of microscopic sections from these bodies made 1,500 years after death show the minute structures of the glands in a remarkably fine state of preservation, or to learn that the lobes of the brain and some of the convolutions were recognizable, and that the fibers and valves of the heart could be made out. Ruffer points out the occurrence of tubercular disease of the spine among ancient Copts as one more proof that the disease has existed from the remotest times, and is independent of climate. It has been found in bodies buried close to the Mediterranean shores, in bodies from upper Egypt and Nubia, and even in