

**DR. M'GUFFEY**

The boys and girls of a quarter of a century ago studied "McGuffey's Readers," and they will be interested in an article written for The Commoner by one of Dr. McGuffey's pupils, John A. McNeel, of Rockbridge, Baths, Va.

Mr. McNeel writes: "Dr. William H. McGuffey long and ably filled the chair of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, at the University of Virginia. I had, for his life and character, profound respect. When the civil war was over I, like many other Virginia boys, was left a cripple. My home, where my people for three generations before me lived and died, was in Pocahontas county, Va., now a part of West Virginia. It was in this county of old Virginia, where General Robert E. Lee assembled that vast army of more than forty full regiments of men in the summer of 1861, to check the march of General McClellan.

"In the month of October, 1866, I first went to the University of Virginia as a student and took with me a letter of introduction to Dr. McGuffey, written by my dear friend and teacher, Rev. James H. Leps, saying many things in my favor, few of which, I am sorry to say, I have been able to live up to. The day after I reached the university I delivered this letter and from the interesting way in which Dr. McGuffey read it, and the kindly way he looked me over, I was sure that Dr. McGuffey would be my friend. Dr. McGuffey was then living at the extreme east end of West Lawn and his office was attached to the dwelling. He would then have passed as an old man, although at that time he possessed perfect mental and physical vigor, he was nearer seventy than sixty years of age. At this first meeting with Dr. McGuffey, young as I was, I was much impressed with the man. With his readers and spelling books, I was quite familiar, as they had been used as text books in all the schools I had attended. I learned afterwards that it always pleased the doctor to find that the university men had been brought up when boys on his school books.

"Dr. McGuffey was rather a small man, being well proportioned, cleanly shaven, very bald, with good side locks, hair that was still very black, piercing blue eyes, and a splendid round forehead and head, set on shoulders that were still very erect; with this description you have as good a pen picture as I can make of Dr. McGuffey. Eight years ago I was a recipient of a handsome photograph of Dr. McGuffey, presented by his daughter, Mrs. Stuart, of Dayton, Ohio. This is the same picture that the University of Ohio, at Miami has of him, so Mrs. Stuart wrote me.

"At our first meeting Dr. McGuffey was plainly but neatly dressed. In this respect he was more particular than any other member of the faculty. His office was the neatest place of the kind I had ever seen, and am sure that since then, I have never seen an office of any professional man quite up to Dr. McGuffey's. I did not take Dr. McGuffey's ticket in 1866-7, but was a member of his Bible class that year, and heard him lecture every Sabbath morning, and nearly always managed to have a few moments pleasant chat with him after the lecture. I took a moral philosophy ticket in 1867-8 and was a member of Dr. McGuffey's Bible class during the three years from 1867 to 1869. In the Bible class lectures, Dr. Guffey did not ask questions, and did not want the students to ask him questions. The fact that he did not catechise in his Bible classes, made him quite popular with the students, and this fact, connected with Dr. McGuffey's known ability as a Bible lecturer, always gave him a good audience.

"When Dr. McGuffey was aroused he was a fierce man and would resent an insult but it was all over in a few minutes. During my last school year, I roomed on West Lawn, not a great distance from Dr. McGuffey's house, and I had a good opportunity to study his character. He was the most thoroughly practical man I ever knew. The sun, moon and stars might change, but Dr. McGuffey never. I never saw a man of such perfect habits, and as a proof I will mention one incident. He had three overcoats of different texture and weight, and by observing these overcoats you could forecast the weather perfectly; the overcoats were far more to be depended upon by the students than the flags now displayed at the weather bureau at Washington are by the general public. In his lecture room, Dr. McGuffey was an absolute sovereign,

and required every student to be a perfect gentleman; he had no patience with anything like rowdiness. His advice to young men was to take truth wherever found and this is what he defined as 'Eclecticism,' the title of his school books. His advice was to think and ask for yourself, imitating no one, but to be as natural in manners as a child; and that the perfectly natural mindedness of children was why the kingdom of heaven was people with little children. It is almost needless for me to say that Dr. McGuffey was free from the use of any stimulant. He was a man of great energy and was a great admirer of great men who had been great workers. He was a great admirer of the life and character of St. Paul. As a consequence his class of 1867-8 of which I was a member, was given Dr. Paley's 'Horae Paulinae' to analyze, and this analysis was made a part of our final examination for that year. In religion he was as staunch a Presbyterian as John Calvin; in politics, a democrat; he was a great believer in the free trade of the world, and taught in political economy that 'every tub should stand on its own bottom.' He taught that the protective tariff was vicious in theory and in practice would produce overproduction and consequently breakdowns in the market. He claimed that the protective tariff was an acknowledgement of weakness on the part of the recipients of that tariff—an acknowledgement of their inability to meet the world in an open market—a thing the American people should be ashamed of. He was a great admirer of the poet Shakespeare, and often referred to him in his lectures. His claim was that Shakespeare knew more about the Bible and more about human nature than any other uninspired man up to his day; that that was why his writings were of such great value. His advice to the student was, first to study the Bible and next Shakespeare; and as I had never read one of Shakespeare's plays up to that time, I believed that my education had been sadly neglected. After leaving the university I procured a copy of the poems and for the next two years spent the greater part of my time, much to the disgust of my father, in the study of Shakespeare.

"I have given you quite a yarn for one of my age, and as a new ground patch of buckwheat is ready to cut tomorrow, and as there is no one to help the boys except the old man, I will have to stop for this time. And God bless every one of you that is trying to uphold truth and righteousness with tongue and pen."

**SPECIAL OFFER**

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**NEW YORK CONTEST**

The New York gubernatorial contest will not be a sham battle. It will be a spirited fight. The personality of both candidates is such as to command the most faithful support on the part of lieutenants who delight to follow men whose love for battle runs in the blood, while in the public record of each candidate there is inspiration for the rank and file bent upon securing the best results in the management of public affairs.

Though much may be said in Mr. Hughes' favor as a lawyer and a citizen, he will, as a candidate for governor, be judged by the purposes of the powerful interests that are even now rushing to his support, and whose representatives display such fine frenzy whenever the candidacy of William R. Hearst is mentioned. The people of New York will learn long before the close of the campaign that this contest is not between Charles E. Hughes and William R. Hearst. The question is shall the affairs of New York's state government be administered for the public benefit or with an habitual disregard for the public interests. Shall insurance combines and other special interests exercise a controlling voice in public affairs, or shall those interests, now preying mercilessly upon the people and practically without hindrance from the authorities, be brought within the leash of the law?

Whatever we may believe of Mr. Hughes' personal disposition and probable action with respect to these great public evils there can be no reasonable doubt of Mr. Hearst. Through the efforts of his great newspapers he has proved his fidelity, and if any proof be lacking we find it in the fact that the representatives of these interests whose purpose it is to defy the law and plunder the people are among his most bitter opponents.

It is somewhat significant that among the first to charge that Mr. Hearst is not a democrat are those who either bolted the democratic ticket or grew cold and distant whenever the party prepared for a serious campaign against monopoly. In 1896 when loyalty to the party was tested, William R. Hearst supported the ticket most heartily, and anyone who now challenges him must have better standing than the man who habitually bolts when the great corporations fail to control.

The democrats of New York who have no ax to grind, and who are interested solely in the public welfare should give their support to the democratic state ticket, headed by William R. Hearst.

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