

OF LUTHER LAFLIN MILLS.

SKETCH OF ONE OF CHICAGO'S BRIGHTEST LEGAL LIGHTS.

Rare as is the Genius of Public Speech, John McGovern Says It Is in the Possession of Mills, and Cites the Reasons for That Conviction.

[Special Correspondence.] CHICAGO, Sept. 5.—When Luther Laflin Mills goes to a rural court house to defend or prosecute an accused person, there ascends a loud chorus of adoration.

I asked John Ritchie, the great shorthand reporter, if Luther Laflin Mills were a great orator, like the reputo of Patrick Henry, Burke, Webster, and so on. John Ritchie said Luther Laflin Mills was just that kind of speaker. To all before this Chicago man when he might be prepared for a big speech was, in John Ritchie's opinion, a privilege not to be waived. I have consulted many persons less critical; I have read the press of Chicago for thirteen years; I have visited the advocate and measured minds with him; I have felt the intimation that he was a distinguished man—a genuinely great man, not the glass of any fashion, but the mold of an enduring form.



LUTHER LAFLIN MILLS.

In 1873 I sat in a pew of the First Congregational church at Chicago and saw a family file into the stall ahead of mine. Father, mother and children took their places with that air of familiarity which comes to the regular attendant, striking the young stranger with force. At the aisle end of the pew was a youth who at once challenged my interest. At 23 I remember I talked much of "affinities." Here was my affinity. I liked him. He was bored. I was sorry for him. But he was the picture of good nature. The solemnest organ hater and psalm singer of them all would not have lost tolerance for the puzzling look that once settled on the boy. There was a clever expression in the faces of his sisters. It said in effect that the brother was now to have a bad quarter of an hour, and the brother's look responded with the thought that he would it were only a quarter. Yet with the preparation for the ordeal he fell asleep. The forelock tumbled on his face, there was a sisterly rumpus and the chastened sinner arose to sing.

Through the sermon my hero fingered upon the verge of dreamland. Already enlisted in his service, I could have pushed him well over the happy border. Evidently liking him as well, the sisters were busy with the salvation of his good name in the rich flock. I left the church, believing that habit had made the Sabbath's experience pleasant to all parties. The youth was not annoyed. The sisters were jealous that he should keep all the properties. I inquired about him in the congregation. Oh, yes. That was Luther Laflin Mills—already with the long name, you see—the brightest member of the Society of the Golden Fleece, an association of the young church people, which disbanded when some deacon declared it to be a matrimonial agency. Would that all wickedness might perish with a resistance so feeble!

Only four years later my young man was elected state's attorney for Cook county. That is, it fell to a lad to prosecute all the criminals of this region, to move against all the enemies of the people, to address courts and confront the devil in all the aspects which my lord the devil puts on at Chicago. Of the same age myself, I remember I was glad it was not I who was to be tried. The eight following years were remarkable for the oratory that decorated the prosecution of justice in Chicago. Talk goes for everything in court. The state had the orator. Young or old, celebrated or merely ambitious, none of the Chicago lawyers, save Emory Storrs alone, had a golden tongue to match the voice of the state which spoke in the mouth of Luther Laflin Mills. Every cause in court was a great event. The trial of the county commissioners (a periodical thing in Chicago), the trial of straw baliers, the trial of Alvina McKee, the trial and death of Sherry and Connolly—these matters sufficed to set the town talking of our orator.

It remained for Judge McAllister, in granting a new trial for one Burns, to out-Herod all the panegyrists. "This prisoner," said the most eminent of our jurists (dead now), "was undoubtedly convicted by means of that peculiar indefinable power which the state's attorney possesses over jurics. . . . This influence, which not one out of many hundreds of our bar possessors, is a fact not to be ignored on motions for new trials; for I have been taught by experience and observation that with a lawyer of only ordinary ability opposed, the state's attorney, in nine cases out of ten, will secure a verdict of guilty, not only when there is a want of evidence to support it, but a clear preponderance against him."

It is needless to say that all subsequent jurics were refreshed by citations of Judge McAllister, as a proof that the thief in hand ought to go free. The murder of Officer Race; the trial of Lamb and Friedberg; the trial of Angell, Peter Stevens and his murdered child wife, as the city editors loved to head the

case; Dr. Earli; the trial of the gamblers; the trial and hanging of Tracy; the trial of Theresa Sturlata and her imprisonment—these outlines recall a long march of excitement—a puffing and sincere praising of the young state's attorney such as has no parallel in western experience. Envy, malice, temptation arose on every hand. The man who once carried 12,000 extra votes to his ticket at last lost many to his rival Grinnell; one great prosecutor gave way to another, and eloquence grew still in our court rooms.

The unrivaled advocate went to his private office and passed from the visions of terrified knaves to appear as the pillar of their support. I dislike such a transaction, but it has been accompanied by many bright apparitions of noble oratory in defense of the right. It has relieved the scene of many artificial lights. It has left Luther Laflin Mills his natural grandeur. When he speaks, wise men gather, excluding the fools. The tribute from friend and foe, from client and opponent, from debtor and creditor, has always been like the renowned McAllister's. God made Luther Laflin Mills an orator.

Of late years the most notable appearance of Luther Laflin Mills out of Chicago has been at Columbus, O., in the tally sheet cases, where he confronted John McSweeney. Luther Laflin Mills carried with him the aroma of celebrity. His fame sat about him, and when he spoke I swear to the reader that wondrous garment did not fall off. The press reported his speeches. Of McSweeney and Mills the leading editor said: "The former was known before he came here, and the greatness of the latter has been the amazing feature of the trial."

What is oratory? Why has it died when men still love it so dearly? I can only say that I have it from Luther Laflin Mills that there is no elocution. It does not exist. How does he look? Small, growing stout, a wan, spare face, a beautiful eye, a piercing, earnest gaze. All the arts of sudden pleasing are in him at their summit. He is charmed to meet you. He knew your father, or saw your horse, or noticed the sign over your door—doubt not that you are famous with him! If you be a scribe, come into his sanctum and let the knaves wait. Notice the literary bee that buzzes in orators' bonnets. What is the difference that separates the twain arts? Who can tell? I am proud Chicago has a great orator, yet I might wish orators were writers. If I transcribe a speech of Luther Laflin Mills—notice always the long name—I shall make him simply a writer. The dark eye, the menacing finger, the terrifying earnestness—where are they? I see him standing in a cemetery at its dedication.

"The grave yard," says that sweet voice, "is the world's great pulpit. No custom hinders, no prejudice prevents; men, women and children gather around it. Grief sings a song of the heart, memory recites the virtues of the dead to eager ears. Faith preaches the immortal life and all the voices say, 'Amen.' I cease to quote as I think of the decision of Judge McAllister, for what man was ever awayed out of his reason by the handing to him of a written poem? How could I quote the "Marguerite" of Nilsson, the "Prodigal Son" of Dubufe, the opening chords of the overture of "Lurline"? It cannot be done. I can only bear testimony that my great city has an orator whose name will forever embellish our annals. Rare as is the genius of public speech, the genius still remains. As Montaigne in his lovely twenty-seventh chapter tells me that friendship exists and that the ancients looked for it as the Jews for the Messiah, so I look upon this rare man of our valley—an orator appearing among men to excite them with fires that elsewhere must smolder. Sometimes, however, an impatient that oratory should be apprenticed to the trade of law, and earn its bread like a shoemaker.

JOHN MCGOVERN.

New York Firemen's Monument. NEW YORK, Sept. 5.—The statue which the veteran firemen of New York intend to erect soon in Central park represents a figure of a typical fireman in the attitude of listening to the alarm in order to catch the extent of the fire.



THE MONUMENT.

The figure is of bronze, nine feet high, and the base is of granite, twelve feet high. Bronze emblematic inscriptions are also on it, and at each of the four corners there are emblematic lambs. The best sculptors of New York city entered into competition for this work, and the award was made to Henry Baerer.

Simeral (to waiter)—Bring me two eggs, toast and butter, and a cup of tea. Waiter—Yes, sir. How will you have your eggs, sir? Simeral—Fresh.—Epoch.

ODDS AND ENDS.

"I will lose no time in reading your book," said a gentleman to an author.

The extremely fashionable summer young man wears a silver bangle on the left wrist.

The recent floods in Japan are said to have swept away 12,000 houses and drowned 100 persons.

You may set it down as a truth, which admits of few exceptions, that those who ask your opinion really want your praise.—O. W. Holmes.

Diamonds have blazed in English society this season as never before. They have even appeared in profusion in morning entertainments.

Never speak well or ill of yourself, says an eastern proverb. If well, men will not believe you; if ill, they will believe a great deal more than you say.

A New Orleans alderman, in speaking of pauper burial, remarked that greater care must be taken of the "indignant" dead.

An emigration movement has been started among the colored people of North Carolina, and thousands of them will probably leave that state during the next eight months.

The greatest house in London before long will perhaps be Lord Portman's proposed reproduction of Wolsey's famous palace at Hampton Court.

Professor Langley finds that a very faint light may be perceived in about half a second, while an ordinary bright light requires only half that interval; and that the same amount of energy may produce at least 100,000 times the visual effect in one color that it does in another.

"Secret society people help one another wonderfully," said a man as he went by a brick building in process of erection. "See, for instance, how those hod fellows assist the masons."—Chronicle-Telegraph.

A slick confidence man in Arkansas recently made quite a pot of money by selling bulbs which he said would produce rare orchids and other exotics. Enthusiastic ladies paid from seventy-five cents up to five dollars apiece for the magic roots. The bulbs were duly planted, and produced—common turnips! The vender long ago left for parts unknown.

A company of blind English students will soon ride on bicycles from Boulogne to Paris, and then visit the exposition. The bicycle used has from four to eight wheels and can carry eight people.

A statement prepared at the postoffice department shows that the increase in the mileage of railway mail service for the fiscal year 1889 was 6,946 miles. Nebraska furnished the largest increase, 592 miles, followed by Alabama with 473 miles, Kansas with 416 miles, and Kentucky 380 miles.

Another great canal is suggested, one from Lake Erie to Pittsburg. The "Smoky City" is ambitious of being virtually a seaport and of having vessels of from 500 to 1,000 tons come from Lake Erie to the city's wharves. The transportation of Lake Superior iron to Pittsburg would be greatly cheapened by such a canal.

An ingenious contrivance has been invented in England whereby the strings of red and black currants are "raked" by mechanical fingers. The currents are distributed upon a band which is ever passing upwards; the top of this is a revolving brush, which takes the strings from the currents, leaving the currents to roll down to the bottom into a receiver.

Thibet is the only known country on earth not open to missions. It has an area of 750,000 square miles. The greatest length from east to west is 1,500 miles, and the population is estimated at 8,000,000. It is the stronghold of Buddhism. Lhasa, the capital, is the "Rome" of the Buddhists, and the Dalai Lama is the Buddhist pope. He is supreme in both temporal and spiritual things. One monastery has about five thousand Buddhist priests, and there are about six thousand in the country. Thibet is virgin soil for missions. The country is tributary to China.

The legislature of Minnesota has lost patience with "one Willard Glacier," whose distressing attentions to the Father of Waters as sole discoverer of the fountain head are well known. It has passed an act fixing the name of Elk Lake, situated in Beltrami county, and warning all publishers that "no edition of any school geography, published subsequently to Jan. 1, 1890," which gives Glacier's name to that lake, or any name but Elk, shall be used in the schools of this state."

A Lucky Mining Venture.

The Helena assay office takes all gold bullion that comes. It may be no more than a spoonful of dust from the man who is working with a shovel and wheelbarrow and a little sluiceway near the entrance to Yellowstone Park, or it may be the single conglomerate from the Spotted Horse mine, in Ferguson county, which yielded the owners of the mine \$45,908. That was a thirty days' run of the Spotted Horse. Since then that mine has seen several conglomerates which proved to be worth from \$25,000 to \$30,000. Spotted Horse has a short but interesting history. P. W. McAdow was in business at Billings. He crippled himself financially by advancing supplies to the parties who owned the mine. The property was put up at sheriff's sale and McAdow bid it in to save himself. He took out \$30,000 in thirty days, and recently sold to Helena men for \$500,000 cash. Mr. McAdow is a member of the constitutional convention and Mrs. McAdow is the head of the very persistent lobby which has been laboring to get woman suffrage in the Montana constitution. Cashier Dembo said this Spotted Horse bullion is the finest that comes to the assay office. It is nearly as good as gold coin. It goes over \$200 fine.—Helena (M. T.) Letter.

Mr. Turtle Held On.

George Gardner and Ed Bernatche were fishing at the north end of Community lake last Saturday, attending to their eel lines, which had been set the night before. Their luck was poor, line after line being pulled up and found bare of both bait and fish. Approaching the last line they found, on beginning to reel it up, that they had a monster. The line was out for seventy-five feet and it took some time to reel it up. The struggles of the eel were muscularly strong, but they saw at last only a pound wriggler on the line. Drawing the eel nearer to the boat, they nearly fell overboard in their astonishment at seeing on the end of the eel a snapping turtle weighing thirty-two pounds. A pole with a strong iron hook in the end, made for turtle fishing, was thrust under the monster's shell, and he was landed in the boat. He had swallowed about six inches of the eel, and preferred to be captured rather than give up his prey.—Wallingford Cor. New York Sun.

Big Dynamite Guns.

There is a new industry at Trenton, N. J., the making of dynamite guns. Six of these guns are now being constructed by the New Jersey Steel and Iron company. The guns are to be fifty feet long, eleven inches in diameter, and will be made in three sections. They will be constructed of cast steel plates, bolted securely together. The guns are to be completed by Jan. 1 next.—New York Tribune.

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