

# Grand Old Women of the World Briefly Sketched



MRS. JEFFERSON DAVIS.



MARY A. LIVERMORE.



MADAM JANAUSCHEK.



BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

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**T**HE world hears much of its "Grand Old Men," and, comparatively speaking, but little of its "Grand Old Women." It is given small chance to forget that nearly a hundred men, far advanced in years, are still active in politics and statecraft, in commerce and finance, in art, science and letters. It does not often stop to realize that a goodly number of the so-called weaker sex are laboring with their brothers for its betterment. The death of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, taking away one of the most notable of these women, calls attention to those that are left. When they are counted and their deeds recalled, it makes a tale worth telling.

Trained according to the lights of the earlier years of the last century these "Grand Old Women" are not employed in the pursuits of business, but they figure in the politics of the time, influentially though indirectly. They are playing a large part in philanthropy, and certain of them stand forward prominently in art and literature.

The oldest of this little company is Angela Georgiana, First Baroness Burdett-Coutts. In another year she will be 90, and perhaps she is the only woman of prominence living today who, as she sat in Westminster Abbey and saw the crown placed on the head of Edward VII, could remember the coronation of the king's mother.

The baroness, raised to the peerage in 1871, was honored by Queen Victoria not because of the unusual part which she played as a partner of the great banking house of Coutts & Co., but because of her position as a pioneer of practical imperialism. It was she who endowed the bishoprics of Adelaide, Australia, at Cape Town and in the far west of British Columbia. She has given to the poor more money than any other woman in the world. At one time she sent \$1,250,000 to the destitute poor of Ireland. Every Christmas 300,000 people are fed at her expense. It is estimated that her annual gifts to various charities amount to not less than \$2,000,000. Her home at West Hill, London, has become the Mecca for all the charitable workers in the United Kingdom, and it is seldom that one leaves her doors without having received substantial assistance from

the genial old lady whose interest in the world's affairs is still keen.

Susan B. Anthony, who was born in Massachusetts in 1820, has stood forward prominently in the woman's suffrage movement, having experienced in her own case the commercial inequality between the sexes when, in her earlier years, she was teaching school for \$15 a month, while a man in the other school of the village was receiving \$45. From that day she has been a worker for woman's rights, though her interest in that cause did not prevent her laboring with Phillips and Garrison for nine years against slavery, nor has it weakened in latter times her efforts in the cause of temperance.

The old Bay state claims as daughters two other American women known all over the world for their work in charity. Mary A. Livermore was born in Boston eight or two years ago, ten years before the birth of Clara Barton, who was to work with her in so many of her enterprises.

Mrs. Livermore, beginning life as a school teacher, first became known to the world through her labors with the Sanitary commission in the dark days of the civil war. She identified herself also with the temperance and anti-slavery movements, worked hard to further the cause of women's clubs, is the author of half a dozen volumes, has edited several papers, and has lectured not only in America, but in England and Scotland.

Clara Barton, who also began life as a teacher, is identified as is no other woman in the world with the work of caring for the sick and wounded. In 1865 she was voted \$15,000 by special act of congress for what she did on the battlefields in the south. In 1870, during the conflict between France and Germany, she was present on the fields of battle to alleviate suffering. Her work in Cuba won for her the title of "The Adopted Daughter," from the latest republic to take its seat at the council of nations.

The disasters that have come in years of peace have known her presence also. In 1884, at the time of the great floods of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, Red Cross workers, with their president at their head, distributed supplies throughout the devastated districts. Five years later, when

Johnstown was overwhelmed in a moment, Clara Barton was there. She was confined to her bed at the time of the Galveston flood in 1900, but insisted upon directing as well as she could by telegraph the movements of her assistants.

England's Clara Barton is Florence Nightingale, or Florence Shore, as her name is entered on the baptismal register of the little English church in Florence, Italy, where she was born in 1820 and from which town she took her name. She, too, has been a leader in Red Cross work ever since the foundation of that organization, having learned well her lesson years before when she labored with two or three other English women in the fearfully crowded hospitals of the Crimea. How well they did their work was shown in the official reports that went back to London to tell that the death rate had been cut down from 42.7 to 2 per cent.

In those days no woman in all England was better known or loved than the "Angel of the Crimea." Even today Miss Nightingale, living quietly in a retired house in West London, is far from forgotten, for the \$250,000 voted her by the English government was not expended for her own comfort, but went to the building of St. Thomas' hospital and the Nightingale School for Nurses, two of the best known charities in the English capital.

Another of the world's grand old women living in retirement in London is Marie Eugenie, Countess de Montijo and ex-empress of the French. The love of Louis Napoleon for the beautiful daughter of a Spanish grandee, abetted by the astuteness of the girl's mother, as well as by her own wit and discretion, lifted her to a throne that had been intended for a daughter of royalty.

During the winter she passes much of her time near Nice, from where she may cruise at will in the Mediterranean in her yacht. Then she goes to Paris, the scene of her greatest triumphs and saddest humiliations, to consult her physician before returning to England.

At present she is said to be at work upon her memoirs, which are not to be published until after her death and which are to present not a mere collection of idle gossip and personal anecdotes, but a seri-

ous history of the third Napoleon's reign, written by the only person who could write such a book from intimate knowledge.

In America are living three "grand old women" who may look back upon days of brilliancy and power from retirement almost complete.

Mrs. "Bettie" Dandridge, the niece of Zachary Taylor, who in 1849, the mere girl of 24 years, was mistress of the White House, is living in Winchester, Va. It is given to few women to be married at 19 and within eighteen months to be both widow and orphan. It is given to yet fewer to retain when the 87th birthday is so near such splendid health as is that of the mistress of this center of old-time southern hospitality.

Mrs. Jefferson Davis does not enjoy this blessing of continued health. She has never quite recovered from her serious illness of last summer, nor has she ever been her old self since the death of her daughter, Varina, "the daughter of the confederacy" some years ago. She passes her time at the cottage of her friend, Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, at Bar Harbor or at one of the quiet New York hotels.

On the western edge of the continent at Los Angeles there is living a gracious, charming old woman of 78, Mrs. John C. Fremont. She, too, is an invalid, with a mind undimmed by the passing of the years and an unflinching devotion of her famous husband. When Jessie Benton, the daughter of the great senator of Missouri, ran away from Washington to marry the young lieutenant who was to write his name in history as "the pathfinder" she was known to all the country for her brilliancy and beauty. For years after her popularity was phenomenal. Daughters and dolls and dogs without number were named after her, yet today the white-haired, pale-faced old woman living alone with so brave a spirit in her rose-covered little house is practically forgotten by the nation which received from her husband the gift of a state. For herself she does not seem to care, but she is keenly jealous of the fame of her husband. "Pathfinders die, but the paths remain open," she says.

It is only a short step from those who have actually ruled on the world's stage to those who rule on the mimic stage be-

yond the footlights. In their ranks stand three women famous both for their consummate skill in their art and for the long years through which they have served it. Madame Francesca Janauschek at 72, and Adelaide Ristori at 82 are no longer on the stage, though Mrs. Gilbert, born in 1821 in Lancashire, England, still charms her audiences and wins their love.

The last years of Janauschek and Ristori have been strangely different. The one has lived through all her triumphs to know what it is to be forgotten and in want; the other, celebrating her 80th birthday in the greatest theater in Rome, found herself surrounded by court officials and the famous men and women of all Europe. Both have played Judith, Lady Macbeth, Phedra and Deborah; both have given long lives to the profession which they have graced, yet Janauschek is neglected and Ristori is courted.

Mrs. Gilbert made her first appearance on the stage when a girl of 23 as a dancer in one of the smaller theaters in rural England. The same year she married another dancer, whose name she had made famous, and three years later they came to America. Almost from the first she was given the leading "old woman" characters, and almost from the first her place in the hearts of those who saw her was secure. To many there is no pleasanter sight on the American stage than the quick turns of the head, the bright eyes, flushed cheeks and merry little laugh of this lovable old lady. When, a few weeks ago she entered the stage on her eighty-first birthday, the ovation she received showed the esteem in which she is held.

In the realms of literature are two names to be mentioned—Amelia E. Barr and Julia Ward Howe. The last named is distinctly the "Grand Old Woman of American Letters." For so many years she has been closely identified with the literary life of Boston that few know that she is a New Yorker born (1819). Before she was 12 years old she had begun her writing. She published essays at 17, but creditable as all her work has been, her fame rests upon her "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written in 1861, under the inspiration of the swinging refrain of "John Brown's Body," and the sight of a review of troops in Washington.

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