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GEORGE W. JULIAN: SOME IMPRESSIONS.

BY HIS DAUGHTER, MRS. GRACE JULIAN CLARKE.

"The dear and good paternal image."
—DANTE.

OF my father's political career I could have no knowledge at first hand, because it was mainly finished before I was old enough to remember. I knew him only as an old man and a semi-invalid; but these two facts, coupled with the sudden death of my mother in 1884, brought me into very close and intimate relations with him. And it is my conviction that his public services, valuable and disinterested as they were, were yet not so remarkable as was the man himself, which prompts me to give to his friends this little sketch of my father as he appeared to me, supplemented by a few facts gathered from him and from others.

Life was truly a boon to him, increasing in value with the years. It was, moreover, a momentous reality, an experience not to be idly or carelessly passed through, but a privilege into which should be crowded as much of useful achievement as possible. It was not mere existence that he loved. Activity was his delight, and he fretted under enforced idleness. He dreaded unspeakably the loss of his faculties, and during the last few years the words of John Quincy Adams about his "shaking hand, darkening eye and drowsy brain" seemed to possess new meaning for him. Ever on the alert for signs of failing mental power, he was a severe task-master to himself, for he believed that he could at least hinder the ravages of time by keeping his mind employed. It is probable that the final catastrophe was precipitated by the continuous strain, during excessively warm weather, occasioned in the preparation of a book review for *The Dial*. This meant double work for the brain grown sluggish with age and supported by an increasingly feeble body.

Although stinted in sleep for more than thirty years, and

bowed down by growing infirmities, my father manifested a certain pugnacity in facing distressing conditions that not only made them bearable, but lent a sort of color to life. It was not a part of his philosophy to ignore evil and unfortunate circumstances, as it has become fashionable nowadays to do, but rather to face them in all their might and ugliness, and then set to work to overcome them. Among the lines that he repeated oftenest were these from Browning's *Easter Day:*

> "And so I live, you see,
> Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
> Prefer, still striving to effect
> My warfare; happy that I can
> Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
> Not left in God's contempt apart,
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,"

When attacked by the *grippe*, which occurred quite regularly during the last few years, he would keep his room at first with rather a bad grace, for he loved to be down among his books, where he could see people; but presently, having become adjusted to the situation, he would set himself to pointing out its pleasant features—the east and south windows, the open fire, the pictures on the walls,—pictures of the capitol and of the Thirty-first Congress, of Horace Greeley, Thaddeus Stevens and others. Sunshine was a perpetual delight to him, and the fleeting glory of the dawn was worth a great effort to behold. Once, when he was recovering from pneumonia, I was shocked and a bit provoked, on going into his room very early in the morning, to find him standing at the window gazing out, although it was quite cold and he was not dressed; but he won forgiveness by hurrying back to bed, saying gaily: "I *had* to get up to see 'jocund day standing tiptoe upon the misty mountain tops'!" The branches of the maples as they swayed to and fro outside his window spoke a language very sweet and quieting, and the birds were a constant source of pleasure to him. The sight of a storm seemed to fascinate him, and he would go from one room to another to get new views of it, his face wearing a look of mingled awe and delight. The twilight hour was a precious time; he liked then to have a loved one beside him, by the fire in winter and under the trees in summer, and to sit in

silent meditation, or repeating poetry, or talking of the day's doings and the morrow's plans. Always a great walker, he rather prided himself on his three miles a day at eighty, and his figure was a familiar one in all parts of the village. But although "the old perfections of the earth" appealed to him more and more with the passing years, they never took the place of human society. "What should we do without people?" he murmured, gazing out at neighbors passing by, on the day before he laid him down for the last time. Unfailing courage, and ever-fresh enjoyment of nature and of the varying phases of human experience, were among his most pronounced characteristics.

Children came very close to him, and he had the art of entertaining them without apparent effort. He had a fund of bear stories, and there was a favorite tale about Captain Scott and the Coons. General Putnam and the Wolf was another thrilling recital. In relating these there was more or less dramatic accessory, and when the gun went off, "she-bang!" was always the climax.

Whatever my father did he put his whole heart into. He worked impetuously and indefatigably, and he played as he worked. In his youth he had enjoyed the game of Town Ball, and his special delight always as a recreation from intellectual labor was to toss a rubber ball against the house, keeping it on the bound sometimes ten or fifteen hundred times. The games of Base, and Hide and Seek, and Blind Man's Buff were also favorites; but it was largely his own enthusiasm and the abandon with which he entered into them that made them fascinating. This it was that made his society so engaging,– the enthusiasm he felt for people and things, coupled with an air of wisdom, as of one having a horizon much wider than the average, every-day horizon.

His opinions were uttered with a freedom and spontaneity that were refreshing, and yet with a seriousness and tone of authority that were the fruit of deep thinking and long experience. It was Miss Catharine Merrill, for fifty years a teacher of English, who said that he talked in such complete sentences that they had the quality of literature. I believe he never spoke without previous thought.

In all his talk there was a deep religious vein, a spirit of faith

in the Eternal Goodness, that was tonic in effect. In his article entitled "A Search After Truth" he called himself a Theist, and expressed his belief in personal immortality on the strength of the human affections and because he could not think that "the unappeasable hunger of the soul for so priceless a blessing was implanted to be ungratified." He believed in the simple humanity of Jesus and in the renovating and ever-uplifting power of his life and teachings in raising the world to higher and yet higher conditions. The life and sufferings of the Nazarene were habitually in his thoughts, and the story of the crucifixion always brought tears to his eyes. Perhaps the most touching and terrible passage in literature, to him, was the sentence, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This picture of awful agony and utter loneliness was one not to be dwelt on, that yet laid hold of the heart and imagination.

Reverence was a marked characteristic of my father—reverence for God, and Truth, and Duty. He was a good deal of a hero-worshiper, too, and certain names were always spoken with tender regard and a glow of pride. Among these were Plato, Dante, Bruno, Milton, Mazzini. But all his heroes did not belong to the past. He had numerous idols among the men of his own time. Over the mantel in his library hung portraits of William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson, saint, reformer and seer, as he called them. It was not his privilege to have known John Quincy Adams, the latter having died the year before my father entered Congress. But Mr. Adams's character impressed him as few others did, and he was almost as familiar with his career as with the alphabet. Charles Sumner was another statesman of Abdiel-like proportions, whose greatness seemed to tower higher with the receding years.

Deference to old people was a trait always observed in my father,—so I am told by his surviving cousins. The loneliness of the aged, even in the most favored conditions, appealed to him; and the sight of age coupled with want caused him a pang only equaled perhaps by the spectacle of a mind in ruins. To see one whom he had known in the vigor of manhood fallen into a condition of mental decay was not only unspeakably sad, but it seemed to fill him with a sort of awe.

My father was fond of the theater, particularly in middle life, when he went as a relaxation from the work and worry connected with the war period. Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle he went to see annually, if possible, and he liked to repeat Rip's farewell as he departed in the storm, and his beseeching words to his new-made friends in the mountains: "Boys, do not leave me." The elder Sothern as Lord Dundreary pleased him infinitely, and he imitated to perfection the puzzled look of Dundreary when the latter attempted to repeat proverbs. The funny little hop, or skip, that was also characteristic of Sothern in this part, he could rehearse capitally, and did so during the last weeks of his life. The Booths, father and son, and Fanny Kemble, were favorites. Edwin Forrest as King Lear he never missed an opportunity of seeing, and I think he felt real pity for the man or woman who had never heard Forrest's tone when he called on the dead Cordelia to "stay a little." To the end of his life he spoke with enthusiastic delight of Jenny Lind and Christine Nillson. He had not what is called a cultivated ear, his taste being for simple things, especially for the Scotch ballads. His voice was sweet and melodious, and he sang almost every day. Sometimes it was a hymn that he had learned in childhood, but more often it was one of Burns's songs,—the Banks o' Doon, Auld Lang Syne, or Highland Mary; and his voice rang out with peculiar fervor to the thrilling strains of Bannockburn.

In his youth he had committed to memory a great deal of poetry, and this he retained in large measure to the last, while he regularly added to his stock from the good things that appeared from time to time. As he lay awake at night he would repeat page after page of Paradise Lost, and occasionally some fragment that he had learned some fifty or sixty years before would come floating across his memory, called from its hiding place none knew how. Until within the last fifteen years, if asked who was his favorite poet after Shakespeare and Milton, he would probably have said Tennyson; but about 1885 he became interested in the poetry of Robert Browning, from which he derived great pleasure, and he repeated more of Browning, I think, than of Tennyson thereafter. "In Memoriam" remained without a rival in his regard, but there was a certain strength, a tone of courage, about much of Browning's work that touched in him a responsive chord.

He had a peculiar regard for books. They almost seemed to possess sentient life, and he could not endure to see them tumbled about carelessly. In the primitive society of his young days books were very rare and precious, and he never ceased to regard them in that light. He cared greatly for philosophy, history, biography, and sermons of men like Martineau and Channing. Novels he knew little about, and he used to say that his early education along this line had been neglected; but I fancy he did not realize how vast and important was the field from which he was thus excluded. He had, of course, read certain classics, such as Tristram Shandy, Don Quixote, Les Miserables, Consuelo, and a number of George Eliot's, and he did not forget them, as habitual fiction readers do.

With his tall figure, which attracted attention wherever he went, there was a remarkable dignity of mein, and also a frankness of manner that, as was said of Uncle Toby, "let you at once into his soul." Like Uncle Toby, too, there was something about him, at least in later life, that seemed to make a special appeal to the unfortunate and unhappy. I often regretted this, because it added to the burdens on his heart. People used to come to him for counsel and advice on all sorts of topics, even those who did not know him well, feeling instinctively his friendly spirit. Perhaps one reason for this was his manifest sincerity and earnestness. He had no patience with vain, silly people, and when they endeavored to talk with him, it was apt to be a very one-sided affair, for his part of the conversation consisted largely of monosyllables and grunts. But he always sought to introduce higher and worthier themes than the ordinary chit-chat. He often read to a caller an extract from a book he was perusing, or something timely from a magazine or newspaper. He never made people feel small; he was too kindly and gracious for that. There was, however, a reserve about him that made him appear austere and unbending to those who did not really know him. This was chiefly due to a native shyness that he never outgrew,—a timidity against which he always struggled, but which was, in fact, one of his most winning qualities.

In his prime his hair and beard were black, but they began to whiten rather early. His eyes were hazel, remarkably clear, and they retained their *young* look to the very last. His smile

was the most unclouded I have ever seen, beginning with the eyes, and then all at once suffusing the whole face with sunshine.

A more agreeable household companion than my father it is impossible for me to imagine. There was a bird in his bosom whose song could not be quenched. Pain and sorrow did sometimes silence it, but not for long. He had that attribute commonly possessed by the young, the ability to lose himself in a ray of fancy at any moment. He took great delight in words, and the dictionary was consulted many times every day, up to the last three or four days of his life. He had a fashion of applying a great variety of proper names to me, and when I entered his room each morning I was playfully addressed by a different appellation,—almost any name, from "Pio Nono" down to that of the Washington printer who used to print his speeches and whose un-euphonious patronymn was "Pokenhorn." The numerous little attentions which his weakness rendered necessary were always kept from being irksome by the relation of an amusing anecdote or reminiscence. Sometimes he would imitate the tone and manner of Henry Clay as he addressed the Senate, or of an old Virginia planter whom he had once known; again, he would be Hamlet, or Lear, or one of Milton's devils. It was something different each time, so that there was the temptation frequently to prolong the task for the sake of the entertainment.

His sense of humor was of the keenest, and his laugh was hearty and contagious. As he grew older, people became more and more attentive to him, and he was sometimes much entertained by the superlative exertions of street-car conductors and other kind persons who evidently thought him even more frail than he really was. The old gentleman up at Catawba Island who carefully lifted his foot for him when he was about to step aboard the boat was never forgotten, and the laugh occasioned by that performance betokened no lack of gratitude for the intended service.

He was everywhere a favorite with servants, because he endeavored to make as little trouble as possible and never omitted a "Thank you" or a word of appreciation where it was due. The maid who waited upon him at breakfast was as sure of a cheery "Good-morning" as was the guest who sat at table. His tastes in the matter of food were simple in the extreme, bread and

milk forming the basis of each meal. He never used tobacco, and while not pledged to total abstinence as to spirituous liquors, his use of them was almost wholly medicinal. Coming of a Quaker ancestry, all display of whatever sort was distasteful to him, and to be in debt was a condition he could not endure. I think he was peculiarly free from little eccentricities, such as characterize many old people, a sound common-sense being one of his chief endowments.

Laundresses were the objects of his particular consideration and pity, and although very fastidious about his wearing apparel, I believe he never threw aside a garment without a sigh at thought of the work he was making necessary. He liked to listen to the sound as the clothes were rubbed up and down in the tub; it carried him back to the days when his mother did the washing for her little family.

His father died when he was too young to have really known him, and with his strong affections he lavished a double love upon the parent who was left to bear the burden of life alone. His face glowed with filial pride when he spoke of her struggles and sacrifices, and I am sure that one of the chief pleasures of his life was the satisfaction she took in his success. His first great sorrow was on the occasion of the death of John M. Julian, the gifted brother whose early taking-off cast a shadow that never vanished from my father's path. His own immediate family was four times visited by death, in the loss of his first wife and two children and of my mother. I saw him in one of these bereavements, and the unselfish heroism of his attitude was a lesson for a lifetime. He liked sometimes to talk to a sympathetic listener of the loved ones gone, and so I came to know very well his brother so long lost, and the wife of his youth, as he called her; and it is hard to realize that I never actually saw "Louie," the little son who died when only nine years old, so habitually was he in my father's thoughts and conversation. With his large heart and sensitive nature he felt keenly the sorrows of others, and his words of condolence were always fitting and full of meaning.

It was his custom to take note of anniversaries. The 19th of April, the 17th of June, and such dates were always observed in some way. Anniversaries of events in his own life he would also

call attention to, as, for instance: "My child, sixty years ago to-day my brother John died," and then he would talk of his brother's character, or describe his appearance. Again he would say: "Fifty years ago to-day I was first married," and he would go on and tell about the wedding,—how "Father Hoshour" officiated, how his girl wife looked, in her white frock, and how, of the gay company then assembled, all but two or three had passed to the Great Beyond.

It has been said, and I think truly, that a man's relations to woman, how he regards her and how he acts toward her, are the most significant things about him. My father certainly drew to him good women wherever he went, and his "five hundred lovers" were the subject of inexhaustible raillery on the part of my mother, who thoroughly enjoyed this side of his make-up. It was no show of gallantry on his part that won the favor of the other sex; but there was about him a certain indefinable air of goodness, together with the artlessness of a child, and an ever-ready and boundless sympathy or fellow-feeling, that appealed at once to some men, but more often to the finer intuitions of women. One of these friends writes: "I can never forget the *culture tone* that characterized him as one met him in society and in his home,—the absolute lack of that coarseness that is so much a part of our modern politician. Without knowing his history, I could as easily have said that he was a poet or *litterateur*." His daughter's friends felt for him a genuine affection, and he was seldom too absorbed in any task to stop and chat with them. "He seemed so much more than father," said one of them; "no, not that, but *all* that a father could be—the fullness of fatherhood."

His ideal of womanhood was the highest; yet it was not sentimentally rose-colored. He was fortunate in being all his life associated with high-minded, self-reliant, gentle woman, and it was this association, reinforcing his own best judgment, that early convinced him of the right and duty of woman to share equally with man in the civil and political life of society. He carried on a most interesting correspondence with Lydia Maria Child, chiefly on political topics, during the years from 1862 to 1878. He was a great admirer of Lucretia Mott, seeking her council in early manhood and enjoying her friendship until her

death in 1880. Besides these well-known names, there was a long list of women friends with whom he was on terms of delightful intimacy and comradeship. He liked to make social calls, and this was a practice kept up till the last, especially in his own neighborhood.

A word in regard to the two women most closely associated with my father. He was first married at the age of twenty-eight to Miss Anne E. Finch, who was ten years younger. She is said to have been very beautiful, of the blond type, gay and impulsive in disposition, with a certain shy winsomeness that made for her friends wherever she went. She was thoroughly interested in public affairs, and accompanied him to Washington during his first term in Congress, where she enjoyed meeting and hearing the great men of the day. She died of consumption in 1860. It is interesting to note that the friend to whom my father turned most frequently in his sorrow was Mr. Giddings of Ohio (whose daughter was afterwards to become his wife)—"Father Giddings," as he always called him, between whom and himself there was a strong bond of sympathy dating from their first meeting, at the Buffalo Convention of 1848. Giddings was a believer in spiritualism, and he tried to enlist my father in this, to him, satisfying and comforting faith. He had known and admired Mrs. Julian, and hence he felt a certain near and personal interest in the case. But my father was so constituted that it was impossible for him to accept anything bordering on the mystical and supernatural, his practical mind instinctively turning away from the "twilights of thought" to the clear sunshine of reason, and resting in an abiding trust that steadily grew throughout the years. In regard to the various so-called demonstrations of spiritual mediums, I have heard him quote Emerson's words: "Shun them as you would the secrets of the undertaker and the butcher. * * * The whole world is an omen and a sign. Why look so wistfully in a corner? Man is the image of God. Why run after a ghost or a dream?"

His consolation had to come through the softening effect of time and by plunging with all his might into the duties of his public position. The war was coming on, and he gave his days and nights to Congressional labors. One thing he never learned,

and that was to work in moderation. It was during these years that he laid the foundation for the sleeplessness and other maladies that pursued him to the end of his days. From scrap-books I find that newspapers began to note his break-down in 1865, and soon afterwards he entered upon those persistent and weary efforts to repair his once hardy and robust constitution

A little more than three years after the death of his first wife he was married to Miss Laura A. Giddings, whom he met for the first time in 1862 in Washington. She was the youngest daughter of his old friend, and was twenty-two years my father's junior. But there did not seem so great a disparity of age, because my mother was very tall and had a marked dignity of bearing. This at once impressed everyone who met her,—a stateliness that was as native to her as the air she breathed, but that seemed somehow to set her apart from all other women. She had dark eyes and hair, her face being one that depended largely for its beauty on the play of expression. She had been educated at Oberlin and Antioch Colleges, and had spent a number of seasons with her father in Washington and Montreal, thus receiving a training in political affairs that was quite unusual at that time among women. On account of her father's ill health she had also learned to look after his physical comfort and to save his strength in all possible ways. This tender care she transferred to her husband, and for twenty years was his constant companion and his trusted advisor on all questions, public and private. She read to him, wrote at his dictation, looked up authorities, and was completely a part of himself. Like my father, she cared greatly for society, and the deafness that came upon her within the last ten years of her life was a severe trial. But her husband's gifts as a reporter went far to atone for what she had thus missed; and his efforts along this line were richly rewarded by her manifest delight in the narrations. She died, as her father had done, of *angina pectoris*, which came without any warning.

As a public speaker, my father had the advantage of a full, rich voice and a remarkable flow of language. He spoke slowly, with little gesture, but always earnestly. He never ranted, his style and manner being those of familiar, friendly conversation. The logical faculty was well developed in him,

and all who have described his speaking bear witness to his mastery of the weapons of irony, sarcasm and invective, as well as a certain sly humor that was quite irresistible. This last is the quality that most impressed me as I listened to him during three presidential campaigns,—humor, and an air as if he were talking with friends at the fireside. In reading his speeches I think one would infer his familiarity with the Bible, Milton and Carlyle, his style somehow suggesting these models.

His last sure grasp of things was on Wednesday, July 5, 1899, when he was about the house as usual, only seeming very tired and lying down a great deal. The next day he did not leave his bed, and on Friday, the 7th, at a few minutes before eleven he breathed his last, his age being eighty-two years, two months and two days. Death came to him not unkindly, but as a friend whom he welcomed. In his rambling talk the day before, his mind had rapidly gone over his whole life,—the early years on his mother's farm, political conditions in the old Burnt District, the war and reconstruction, etc. He frequently spoke of the beautiful day, and asked if I were "a spirit from another world." About noon, as he lay looking at me, I began to repeat a favorite verse from Browning's *Earth's Immortalities:*

"So, the year's done with!
(Love me forever!)
All March begun with,
April's endeavor;
May-wreaths that bound me
June needs must sever!
Now snows fall round me,
Quenching June's fever—
(Love me forever!)"

He gave the alternate lines, joining in faintly with the "forever" at the close. He became quite unconscious towards evening, and remained so till the end, when a look of recognition came into his eyes and he was gone.

At the funeral, three days later, he lay on the library couch, as friends were wont to see him, and there was naught to indicate anything unusual but the flowers that were everywhere, and the stillness. Frederic E. Dewhurst, of Plymouth Church, Indianapolis, spoke briefly and fittingly of his life and character,

and two hymns, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and Chadwick's "Song of the Silent Ones," were rendered. It was regretted that Jenkin Lloyd Jones, of Chicago, who had been invited to assist in the services, was unable to come.

The actual presence of death has an impressiveness all its own. But the hush that fell upon us when we realized that his spirit had departed was sweetened with gratitude, not only for the long and dedicated life, but for the manner of its close. After a full, rich day, the sunset was unclouded. One of the saddest spectacles, my father thought, was that of an aged man whose work was finished, lingering on and longing for release. In 1890 Stephen S. Harding, then eighty-three and blind for years, wrote him a most pathetic letter, which he closed as follows: "When you hear of my demise, which will be before long, strike hands with some old friend and thank God it is all over!" So we were grateful that in his case the summons came in the midst of activity and congenial surroundings, when life, though complete, had not lost its relish. But it is not strange, so tireless and irrepressible was his spirit, that to those who loved him the idea of death is lost sight of in the thought of continuing growth and development. As Emerson said of his brother, "I read now his pages, I remember all his words and motives, without any pang, so healthy and human a life it was."