

VENERABLE MRS. MARY ELIZABETH GWIN, WIDOW OF CALIFORNIA'S FIRST SENATOR AND ONCE ALL-POWERFUL IN OFFICIAL SOCIETY AT WASHINGTON, PASSES AWAY AT HER HOME IN SAN FRANCISCO



FROM PHOTO TAKEN IN '51.

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1850. USES HER INFLUENCE TO HAVE CALIFORNIA ADMITTED INTO THE UNION.

1867. RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA...

Painless End of Life Both Long and Eventful.

MRS. MARY E. GWIN, widow of the late United States Senator William M. Gwin, died yesterday morning at 11 o'clock at her home, corner of Sacramento and Hyde streets. She had been ill for eight months past of the ailments attendant upon extreme old age, though she was most remarkably free from organic troubles. Her death was expected almost daily during the last month, and only her exceptional vitality enabled her to withstand the ravages of illness so long.

Early yesterday morning it became evident that the aged lady, who was once among the most famous leaders of society at the national capital and whose wish was a power to sway the affairs of state, had but a few hours more at most to survive. Her son and daughters were summoned to her bedside, and at 11 o'clock she breathed her last, so calmly and peacefully that those who stood over her scarcely knew when the spirit winged its flight.

Mrs. Gwin had reached the advanced age of 86 years and 22 days. Until eight months ago she enjoyed excellent health and retained the vigor of mind to which, as well as to her beauty and charm of manner, was due her influence over public men of the days preceding the Civil War, and even during her prolonged illness her mind remained bright and her interest in her household affairs active.

For many years the widow of California's first United States Senator has lived in comparative retirement and seclusion in San Francisco, and her own generation having almost entirely passed away few knew in detail the story of the eventful life of the charming and venerable old lady nor recalled that her influence had once been strong in national politics, a President being proud to respect her wishes and grant her requests even in important matters of national policy. San Franciscans came to think of her mainly as a charming old lady with great culture and dignity and quietly bearing, and her triumphs of ante-bellum days and her adventures during war times were seldom recalled except among intimate friends of the family.

The news of her death will be received with sorrow by thousands of people who knew and admired and loved Mrs. Gwin. Among the old guard of public men there are some still surviving who knew her in the halcyon days of her power, and a few women still survive who were her associates in the social life at Washington, and these white-haired men and women of a bygone day will learn with keen sorrow of her death.

The funeral services will be held tomorrow at 2 p. m. from her late residence, 2490 Sacramento street, at the corner of Hyde. The Rev. R. C. Foute, rector of Grace Episcopal Church, will officiate.

Years of Retirement Follow Early Triumphs.

The interment will be in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

William M. Gwin Jr., formerly United States Shipping Commissioner at this port and a former State Senator, is a son of the deceased. Two daughters survive her, Mrs. E. J. Coleman and Miss Carrie Gwin. All three were at the bedside of their mother when the end came.

EVENTFUL LIFE AND INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC MEN

Mrs. Gwin a Favorite in Washington Society, With President James Buchanan Among Her Admirers.

Mrs. Gwin was Mary Elizabeth Hampton Bell, daughter of William and Susan Bell. She was born in Russellville, Logan County, Kentucky, June 24, 1816, and was married to William G. Logan of Glasgow, Ky., September 17, 1830. Her father kept the tavern at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, and was famous throughout the State. It is Kentucky tradition that his daughter, Mary Elizabeth Hampton Bell, was celebrated for personal beauty and graces of character. It is not surprising, therefore, that William G. Logan, a well-known surveyor of Glasgow, fell in love with the attractive young lady. Youthful marriages were then applauded in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee; hence it was not uncommon for a girl to become a bride at 15. Surveyor Logan's sweetheart was only two months past it when the wedding took place. The young couple went West and South to grow up with the country. They settled in Texas, where Logan surveyed immense tracts of land and became the owner of a lordly number of acres. Among their many friends in the Lone Star Territory General Sam Houston was one of the most devoted. If Mrs. Logan had been his own daughter he could not have been more devoted.

Mr. Logan died in 1835 or 1836. In 1837 Mrs. Logan, a widow scarcely out of her "teens," married Dr. William M. Gwin,

Son and Daughters at Their Mother's Bedside.

who subsequently became United States Senator from California and one of the prominent figures in national history. The marriage took place at Vicksburg, Miss., but Mr. and Mrs. Gwin elected to reside in New Orleans. They were living in the Crescent City when the news came of the gold discovery in California. Mrs. Gwin must have possessed ambition as well as comeliness and energy, because she encouraged her husband to try his fortune in California, saying "Doctor, go to California and become United States Senator." Dr. Gwin arrived in San Francisco on June 4, 1849. Thereafter Mrs. Gwin celebrated June 4 as her birthday, but as a matter of fact June 25 was the true anniversary. She preferred, however, to celebrate as the day of her birth the day which opened to Dr. Gwin his eventful career in the nation's history.

Husband Elected Senator.

Her husband was elected to the United States Senate in 1849, but the State was not admitted to the Union until September 9, 1850. The Senator-elect and his remarkably gifted wife used their influence to obtain Congressional support of the measure to admit California. The hospitality bestowed by Senator Gwin and his family is often recalled by Californians who visited Washington in the "fifties." It made no difference to Senator Gwin if the visiting constituent from California belonged to the Broderick or any other faction. Californians of all shades of political opinion were cordially greeted and hospitably entertained.

The distinguished Senator's wife was 34 years of age when she realized the dream of her ambition. Among her devoted admirers in Washington was James Buchanan, President of the United States. At once the Gwins became prominent figures in Washington society, and she took a prominent part in the social functions of the Capital City.

Senator Gwin served California in the

Last Sad Rites Will Be Held at House To-Morrow.

United States Senate for two terms, during which twelve years he canvassed the State regularly, maintaining unquestioned party leadership. In his journeys to and from Washington he crossed the Isthmus of Panama twenty-four times, generally accompanied by Mrs. Gwin.

The leaders of both North and South gave Senator Gwin their confidence. This was due as much to Mrs. Gwin's tact and charming personality as to her husband's character and ability. At the hospitable table of the Gwins and in their drawing-room might be seen Butler of South Carolina, Mason and Hunter of Virginia, Atchison of Missouri and Davis of Mississippi, brought into social contact there with Seward, Fish, Hale and other great leaders of the North.

Spurs Husband's Ambition.

Mrs. Gwin's influence on her husband's career in the Senate was marked and had much to do with its brilliancy, even as his original ambition to secure the Senatorship was stimulated by her. Senator Gwin secured the establishment of the branch mint in San Francisco. While

Spurred Ambitions of Able and Popular Husband.

chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs he reported the bill for the establishment of a navy-yard and depot in the bay of San Francisco, under which Mare Island was subsequently chosen for the site. He advocated the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and favored Government aid to a trans-Pacific line of steamers. He offered a bill, in 1852, for the construction of a Pacific railroad, but it was defeated. He secured, however, appropriations for the survey of routes for a transcontinental railroad. Again and again he urged the importance of a Pacific railroad as a peace agency. It was due to his efforts that the "pony express" across the continent was established.

In 1857 Adelina Patti, who has since achieved fame as the world's greatest singer, went to Washington. The project of giving a concert to introduce the young singer to Washington society was submitted to Mrs. Gwin. Patti was then in her "teens," but Mrs. Gwin knew of the marvelous sweetness and range of the singer's voice, and resolved that the concert should be an event of the season in Washington. She decided that the President, Cabinet officers and prominent Senators should attend the function, and sure enough President Buchanan, who was quite a stickler for form, acceded to Mrs. Gwin's request and attended the concert to acclaim the genius of Patti. Never did Patti forget the kindness. Years later Mrs. Gwin was a "Confederate" in Paris and Patti was in the zenith of her glory. The two ladies then saw much of each other, and the famous singer always recalled with expressions of gratitude the concert in Washington and the start which Mrs. Gwin gave her.

Between sessions of Congress from 1850 until 1860 Senator and Mrs. Gwin came to San Francisco. They lived on Jackson street, near Stockton, in the house subsequently occupied by Dr. Toland. Senator Gwin returned with his family to California after the war. The Gwins then

Ante-Bellum Affairs Swayed by Her Influence.

took the house on Harrison street, Rincon Hill, where Irving M. Scott now dwells. The eldest of Dr. and Mrs. Gwin's children is Lucy, now the wife of Evan J. Coleman. The second daughter, Mary, died at the age of 14. William M. Gwin Jr. was the third. He married the daughter of George Maynard. For several years Mr. Maynard was Auditor of San Francisco. Miss Carrie Gwin is the fourth child. Children were born of Dr. Gwin's first marriage and of Mrs. Gwin's first marriage, but none survive.

In Paris During the War.

When the war came Senator Gwin espoused the Confederate cause. He went South, but did not enter the army. Mrs. Gwin went to Baltimore, where one of her daughters was at school. There were many Confederate sympathizers of both sexes in Baltimore, and the Government at Washington was forced to employ the strictest vigilance to prevent them from communicating with the Confederate generals. In 1864 the Federal authorities suspected that Mrs. Gwin was giving information to the Confederates and sending quinine through the lines. At the suggestion of her friends and perhaps of Dr. Gwin she went to Paris. There she entertained Mason, Silldell and many other distinguished advocates of the Southern cause. In 1864 Dr. Gwin and his daughter Lucy ran the blockade at Wilmington on the steamer R. E. Lee and joined Mrs. Gwin in Paris. Subsequently William M. Gwin, an officer in the Confederate army, joined them, having obtained sick leave. He also ran the blockade.

The Gwin House in Paris was really Confederate headquarters in France. Officers of the Alabama and the commanders of noted blockade runners paid their respects to the eminent Southerners.

Dr. Gwin had an eventful experience at the beginning and just after the close of the war. General Sumner had him placed in Fort Lafayette, New York, in 1861. In 1866, after his return from France, General Sheridan kept him at Fort Jackson, New Orleans, for six months. His release from both prisons was brought about through the influence of George D.

President Buchanan a Warm Friend and Admirer.

Prentice, who kept Kentucky from seceding.

At Fort Jackson, Dr. Gwin received a message stating that he could have his liberty if he would leave the country. The message was brought to him from General Sheridan by Colonel Kip, son of Bishop Kip. When the message was delivered Dr. Gwin looked at the bearer and replied:

"You were appointed to West Point on my recommendation, and you bring me this insulting message. I am ashamed of you."

Dr. Gwin in Prison.

Colonel Kip apologized, with the remark that he was simply obeying the orders of General Sheridan, to whose staff he was attached. Later on George D. Prentice interceded and the doctor got away from Fort Jackson. He rejoined his family in Paris in 1866, but not in time to attend the wedding of his daughter Lucy and Evan J. Coleman. He had advised the family not to postpone the wedding, as his prospects of release were slender.

Dr. Gwin always expressed great fondness for California. When he learned that H. H. Haight, Democrat, had been elected Governor, he said to Mrs. Gwin and the children: "I am going to California to make way for all of us to live there." The doctor came and soon Mrs. Gwin and others of the family, including Mr. Coleman, came.

Mrs. Gwin had a most remarkable career. Doubtless the happiest days of her life were passed in California, with her children at her side and the doctor dwelling upon the memorable events of his active life. She possessed peculiar grace and tact in the art of entertaining. As a manager she was unequalled, being able to accomplish with a limited wealth what others could not achieve with boundless treasure. She was truly a noble and gifted woman, who won the lasting affection and gratitude of her companions.

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE HONORS MRS. S. T. MILLS

Trustees and Faculty Confer Upon Her the Degree of Doctor of Literature.

In appreciation of all she has accomplished in the interest of education, the trustees and faculty of Mount Holyoke College, at the recent commencement, conferred on Mrs. Susan T. Mills, president of Mills College, the honorary degree of doctor of literature. Mrs. Mills graduated from Mount Holyoke College in the class of '46 and has always manifested a deep interest in the welfare of the institution. This act of Mount Holyoke College will be especially gratifying to the great number of graduates who have received their diplomas from the hands of the honored president of Mills College.