

CHARACTERISTICS OF RICHARD MOTT.

THE last time the author of this sketch saw Richard Mott was at a wedding reception, on an evening in the holidays of 1887. The July previous he had passed his eighty-third birthday, yet was his eye undimmed and his alert mentality unabated. As usual, on such occasions, he was the centre of an admiring throng; his tall, stately figure towering above any but the tallest in stature. His benignant face, with its clear, boyish coloring, rimmed with a silken silver of hair and beard, suggested the aspect of hopeful youth, rather than that of the seamed octogenarian, who had wrestled with the practical problems of an eventful life. His hand was warm, his manner gracious, his sympathies palpable. Childhood's trustful charm, manhood's masterful grasp, humanity's engirdling breadth; all combined to invest him with the vigor of perpetual youth. An atmosphere exhaled from him, whose radiance was reflected in the kindling thought and kindlier feeling of all who came into his presence.

The question of Bacon's authorship of the Shakespearian dramas and sonnets was the theme of conversation. Mr. Mott, reasoning from cause to effect, was earnest in his opinion that it was Francis Bacon, scholar, philosopher and wit, masquerading behind a strolling player. To him there was no royal

road to learning; no Aladdin's Lamp to lead the way to success. The man who labors is the man who achieves; literary production has its season to sow as well as to reap. Invention, discovery, inspiration, are but manifestations of law applied to human endeavor. The genius, the poet, the philosopher, the statesman, are the exponents of law. The keys of the kingdom are in the hands of the obedient.

Such was Richard Mott at eighty-three, a man whose whole life was a commitment of his ways to law—the higher law. This to him, meant temperance, thrift, frugality, industry, community of interest; patience, perseverance, contemplation, deliberation, reciprocity.

The charm of a little child is its unconscious recognition of the universality of life. The Man of Galilee had this in mind when He held up the truthful babe as a type of immortality. It was this quality in Richard Mott which gave him his peculiar drawing power. A beast, a shrub, a creeping thing, awoke in him a tender interest. "Father never put a stick of wood in the fire," said his daughter, "but he gave it a little tap, fearing he might destroy some harmless insect." It pained him to see a thoughtless youth switch the bushes with his cane as he passed along.

It was this quality which enlarged



Engr. by D. W. Hesselwhite

Richard Mott
1854 - 80 years old

his sympathies, kept him in pace with the ameliorating forces of the age, and enabled him to penetrate the future with seerlike vision and anticipate the processes of evolution in human affairs. This spiritual nature was pervaded by the divine essence.

The child who sat on his knee; the young man who sought his counsel; the explorer into the mysteries of things seen and unseen; the poet, the scientist, the political economist, the man of affairs, each was drawn to him by the inevitable law of like seeking like. The weak found in him a protector and the strong a mentor. An unpopular reform was essentially his own. As one who shared in his advice expresses it, "In him the slave, the woman, the dumb beast found an advocate and friend."

A Quaker by birth and practice, Richard Mott's creed was summed up in the Golden Rule. His gauge of conduct was his oft repeated question, "Is it just?" The rule of action required of himself he exacted of his associates, of the state and nation. He believed in individual responsibility and the right of the humblest. His theory of government was that the full exercise of every factor makes the sum total of human good. The rich and the poor; the educated and ignorant; capital and labor; brain and brawn; male and female; science and superstition; each found in him a fearless champion or a patient guide. To ignore a class, or hamper the individual was to disarrange the machinery of government. He was a democrat of democrats, and his

theory of the distribution of power he summed up in the aphorism, "The ballot for everyone who can read it. Viva voce voting for those who cannot." "Do not prefix 'Hon.' to my name," he wrote to a friend, "it seems so much like a farce."

In business Richard Mott was thrifty and prosperous. Though through sweeping reverses, at the age of fifty, he gave up his entire property to his creditors, he speedily rallied and died possessed of a handsome competence. For twenty years ending with his death he was the president of the Toledo Savings Bank, which he organized May 1868, and devoted eight hours a day, gratuitously, to its service. Yet with all this he found ample time for books, his reading covering every domain of history, biography, poetry, philosophy, travel and belles lettres. Seated in a large rocking-chair, in a cosy study, which he called his "Snuggery," he spent long, restful hours in the society of his silent friends. Among the privileged guests who were sure of a welcome there, were the children whose merriest clatter seemed but a rippling accompaniment set to the music of his thoughts. In the winter he rose with the sun, and when the days were short, while it was yet night. Often of a winter morning his daughter found him reading under the gaslight though the sun had begun to stream in at the window. He was the best exemplar of his favorite adage, "Work as if to live forever; live as if to die to-morrow."

Richard Mott was a strong connect-

ing link between the post-Revolutionary days that began the century and the post-Rebellion days in which he passed away. His vigorous memory was rich in a fund of incidents and anecdotes of the Revolution, as related to him in his boyhood by those who were actors in the stirring scenes enacted along the shores of Long Island Sound, his paternal home. Some of these, heightened by the gentle humor, which lent a charm to all his speech, he has left in manuscript form, entitled "Second-Hand Reminiscences." Of the war of 1812 and the British blockade of Long Island he was rich in personal memories and was an eye-witness of the unsuccessful attack of the American fleet, from Sand's Point, on the British blockading ship "Atlantic."

The Mott family is of French origin, and early adherents of the Society of Friends. Like many well-to-do Colonial families they held slaves, but these were emancipated by the Quaker act of 1770. Among the slaves belonging to Richard's grandfather were "Billy Banjo" and his wife, "Aunt Ginny," who lived with the family until their death at an advanced age. From their pitiful accounts of their capture in Africa and transportation to New York on a slave ship, as well as the sufferings of his grandfather from the "Cow-Boys" and the "Hessians" of the Revolution, Richard learnt his earliest practical lessons in abolition and patriotism.

In his boyhood slaves were held in all the states except Vermont, most num-

erous in New York and New Jersey. "Our home," he writes in his reminiscences, "had always been one of the stations where the hunted fugitives from slavery found temporary shelter and a speedy expediting on the way to safety. Sympathy could not be held from the frightened faces peering out from the various hiding places, sometimes under the garret rafters, sometimes from behind the potato bin, or from under the hay, in cow-shed or stable."

When a lad of sixteen, disguised in his father's clothes, according to the Quaker fashion of the day—broad-brimmed hat, topped boots, knee breeches, an improvised wig, made by untwisting a few strands of Manilla rope, to look like his father's white hair—Richard conducted a fugitive woman, dressed in his mother's drab cloak and black scoop-shovel bonnet, safely to a departing boat, thus outwitting the spies set over his father's suspected house. His teacher, to whom he related the circumstance, laid down the axiom, which his pupil ever after followed: "The breaking of man's law, in aiding the poor woman's escape was but obeying another law above all statutes—the higher law of the Almighty." This was thirty years before Seward's Higher Law speech in the United States Senate quickened the ferment that rose to civil war.

At Mamaroneck, N. Y., the paternal home of the Mott family, July, 1804, Richard, son of Adam and Anne Mott, was born. He was reared on the farm, but being fond of the water he

became an expert as a swimmer and in the management of a boat. The latest summers of his life he spent among the scenes of his boyhood, enjoying the handling of the sails and giving his young companions object lessons in somersaults in the water and other feats of bathing. When nineteen years old he found an East Indian ship lying at Hell Gate without a pilot, and conducted her safely past the rocks and rapids until she found clear sailing to New York. The monotony of his boyhood evenings was varied by an occasional visit with "Uncle Banjo" to a country dance, where he looked on while the old centennarian furnished the music on a gourd banjo of his own make.

His father, who was a miller, suffering financial stress from the embargo policy of 1807-13, Richard was taken from the Quaker boarding school where he had been placed and put to work on the farm: but he embraced every opportunity for study, and at sixteen began school teaching to put himself through college. He failed in this, but the studious habits then acquired led to widest self-culture, not only in English but in French and Spanish, in which he became proficient, some of his translations being very felicitous.

In 1824 he removed with his father to New York City, receiving a clerkship in the Bank of New York, which he held for twelve years. At twenty-four he married Elizabeth M. Smith, daughter of Capt. Elihu Smith, of New Bedford, Mass., also of the Society of

Friends. She was a woman of great personal beauty and lovely character, and, until her death in 1855, their union was in all respects ideal. Two daughters were given them, Mary, who grew to beautiful womanhood but died in 1860 and was laid beside her mother at Rochester, N. Y., and Caroline, the presiding genius of her father's hospitable home, an officer of the Protestant Orphans' Home and member of numerous philanthropic and reformatory societies.

Richard Mott left New York and became a resident of the pioneer town of Toledo, Ohio, in the winter of 1836, arriving in a stage, *via* Columbus, over the frozen Black Swamp. He represented the large land interests of Gov. Washington Hunt and the Hicks family, and brought four thousand dollars of his own savings for investment. He entered at once into the business and social life of the primitive community; was a patron of the first debating society and of the first schools and was for years first-lieutenant in the volunteer Fire Company.

He was a pioneer railroader, and was one of the builders and operators of the Erie & Kalamazoo railroad, running from Toledo to Adrian; serving as president from March 15, 1838, to April 30, 1839. "How this road got into operation and kept up without money or credit," says Mr. Mott, in his reminiscences, "can never be fully explained, and perhaps not entirely understood, except by the parties whose energy and pluck—with possibly some little assur-

ance—carried it along through years of difficulty and embarrassment.” Mr. Mott, who was a clever draughtsman, has left illustrations of the first train, with its rude locomotive, run over the road; bringing wheat from Michigan and returning bread-stuffs from Toledo, at the rate of ten miles an hour.

He was the pioneer in grain hauling, and built the first warehouse, with a horse-power elevator, in 1838; burned in 1839 and rebuilt in 1840, with the horse tramping under the peak of the roof.

Richard Mott had been a Democrat, like his father, and was first to last an out and out free trader. But the party lash had no terror for him, and in 1838 his strong anti-slavery convictions led him into the Whig convention, at Columbus, for choosing delegates to the Presidential convention, Daniel Webster being his first choice, and Henry Clay the second. November 30, 1841, following the death of Harrison, and Tyler’s abasement before the slave powers, we find him acting as a delegate in the Democratic state convention.

In 1844 he made the canvass for State Senator on the Independent ticket, and the same year he was elected Mayor of Toledo, and re-elected in 1846. From 1848 to 1852 he resided at Buffalo; supported Martin Van Buren, the Free Soil candidate, for President, against Lewis Cass, the nominee of the Democratic party, and was instrumental in getting up the Buffalo convention of 1848.

At Defiance, September 16, 1854,

during the excitement attending the attempt of the slave power to repeal the Missouri Compromise, prohibiting slavery in the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, he was nominated for Congress on the Anti-Nebraska ticket, and elected by nearly three-fourths of the entire vote cast. He actively assisted in the formation of the Republican party in Ohio, and in electing Salmon P. Chase to the Governor’s chair. The first meeting for organization was held in his parlors, and the platform penned by him.

In 1856 he was elected to Congress on the Republican ticket, against Hon. A. P. Edgerton, late of the United States Civil Service Commission, an early friend and associate. Illustrative of his frank, honest methods, the story is told, that meeting Mr. Edgerton, he asked if he was going to run against him; the answer being in the affirmative, he replied: “Then I myself will see that thee is defeated.” And he did, making his canvass often on foot, and, although no orator, winning the support of his hearers by his earnest appeals to their sense of justice and reciprocal rights. The canvass on both sides was so conducted that the life-long friendship was never impaired.

In those stormy times in Congress, the quiet self-control of the Quaker radical was potent for peace. Once his tall form intervened to prevent the rising blows of the wrathful champions of North and South. As a political organizer, and a factor in the evolution

of the Republican party, Richard Mott may be justly ranked with Giddings, Wade, Sumner, Wilson, Lovejoy, Julian, and other intellectual giants of the most important period of our legislative history. A disinclination for public life led to his retirement after his second term in Congress, but his interest never waned, and he expressed his latest party preferences by enrolling his name in the Silver Grays, a Republican club of the Presidential campaign of 1884.

In the Congressional campaign of 1862, when the Toledo District had two candidates in the field, James M. Ashley, radical, for re-election, and Morrison R. Waite, afterwards Chief Justice, conservative,—the issue being immediate and unconditional emancipation,—Mr. Mott supported Mr. Waite, his deliberative judgment according with the more cautious policy of Abraham Lincoln. But he at all times favored a vigorous war policy; was a member of the first district military committee to promote recruiting; and through all the exciting years of 1861 to 1865 was foremost in every public demonstration to support and strengthen the army at the front.

A practical philanthropist, Mr. Mott did not believe in encouraging the idle and vicious by prodigal almsgiving and blind benefactions, but he lent substantial aid in establishing and maintaining the Protestant Orphans' Home, Home for Friendless Women, Industrial School, Humane Society, Protestant Hospital and Temperance Association. He was an earn-

est advocate of manual training in our public schools; and his name was coupled with every enterprise for the common weal. "Oh, yes, the world is getting better," was his frequent remark in reviewing the ameliorating influences of advancing civilization.

In 1869 he assisted Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the formation of the Toledo Woman Suffrage Association, and during the life of Lucretia Mott, wife of his elder brother, James, he lent her ready counsel and advice. In 1876 he assisted in the formation of the New Century Club, devoted to a discussion of literary and timely topics; was made a life honorary member, and served as president for the year 1885.

Richard Mott passed away January 22d, 1888, 7.30 P. M., at his Toledo home, and on the 26th the silent service of the Society of Friends was solemnly observed by a large concourse assembled, broken only by the reading of his favorite hymn, "How Blest the Righteous when he Dies," by Clarence Brown, preceded by a tender eulogy and followed by the singing of Whittier's hymn, "With Silence as their Benediction God's Angels Come."

Before me is a heap of manuscript, productions of his latest years, written in the firm, open hand, characteristic of his epistolary correspondence and business details. They treat of the most potent questions of our time and country: Free Trade, Woman Suffrage, The Higher Law, as applied to society and government. "As a man thinketh

in his heart so is he," and the following extracts will give a better idea than can otherwise be conveyed of his terse idiomatic English and strong sense of equity and moral truth.

MOTT MAXIMS.

The primary law for everyone to achieve business success is to live within his income.

When outgo exceeds income the game is desperate, the fate inevitable. The two per cents crush all in the end.

To render a country thoroughly prosperous requires the industry of all the people.

No person can be idle and unemployed without danger. He will become effeminate in body or mind, frivolous or useless.

Our normal condition is work. It is one of the highest laws of nature that a human being must sustain himself; a nation must sustain itself.

Occupation of both body and mind is indispensable. Better the toil be grave than none. Better be overtasked than undertasked.

The standard of equity is the only one from which to view questions of human duty.

The degradation of any one class practically debases the others.

Political liberty is the right, not only of the entire community, but of every individual composing it.

Universal, untrammelled and equal suffrage and frequent elections afford the best and only lasting security to civil liberty.

There is more danger from the mil-

lionaire than from the impecunious classes; from gigantic, entrenched monopolies than imported ignorance and superstition.

Excessive wealth carries with it excessive poverty, both injurious to private virtue and public good. To diminish these evils is an important but neglected branch of moral legislation.

The strength of government must have its permanent foundation in equity. Absolute justice and perfect equality form the enduring base on which it must rest.

Suffrage in a Republic should be held as a right, not as a privilege. If the latter, it can be taken away by the same power by which it was conferred.

Equality of citizenship, its rights, duties, responsibilities and privileges, should be the first question of the day and should have precedence in all legislative bodies, till all humanity be placed on the same political plane.

The retrogression from democracy through oligarchy to decay can be traced to the influence of the specious sophistry teaching the necessity of placing the governmental management in the hands of the educated and well-to-do classes, who have leisure to think for the masses. We read of distinguished men who had no early advantages, who were early compelled to severe labor. Such men have actually the best advantages; the petted children of effeminacy really less.

Progress is a positive law. Individual education and culture are pursued in promotion of this law. Legislation

contemplates the same beneficent end; but it must be elevated above political squabbles and petty larceny scrambles for office.

It is the observance of vital and pervading truth, instead of local and special phenomena, that distinguishes the Galileos and Franklins among people of science, the Stephensons and Morses among mechanics, and the Jeffersons, the Hamiltons, the Pitts and Cavours among statesmen.

If anyone assume to regard himself while living as independent of his fellows and holds himself aloof from all their trials and exertions, of course, living or dead, the world owes him nothing but reciprocal contempt, and his own doctrine carried to extremes would leave his own carcass unburied when the breath left it.

The many wrongs complained of as being manipulated in primary political meetings could be mainly prevented were two elections to be the rule. The first a preparatory, or nominating, one and the two names receiving the greater

number of votes should be the candidates at the second and deciding election. This would prevent ill-judged caucus management.

Through the co-education of woman she has become the peer of man in intellectual culture, and will at no distant day be found in her proper position as his peer in political rights—a position which is hers inevitably—thereby softening our discussions, and with her clearer intuition becoming a useful co-laborer in our legislation.

Right inspiration is to know little and care less, for all the differences of dogma between church and church, and to look at all people as subjects to join in the enjoyment of that social, broad religion, which matters not what notion of Christianity, consistent with morality, is accepted by it.

He inculcates the higher law of practical religion who teaches his listeners to manifest the genuineness of their love of God by elevating their fellow men.

KATE BROWNLEE SHERWOOD.

A VIEW OF CHICAGO IN 1848.

The *Gem of the Prairie* was one of the early ventures of Chicago, and for some eight years after its founding in 1844 it made weekly visits to a limited circle of readers who hoped—even though they may not have believed—that it would become one of the great literary and educational influences of

the time. But although its distinctive Western name was not long retained, its career was by no means short-lived, as it was gradually merged into the weekly *Tribune*, and as such finds a place in American journalism of to-day.

I have been permitted to make use of a file of that pioneer journal for