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GEORGE TURNER, A CHARACTER FROM PLUTARCH

(Continued from November Issue)

CLAUDIUS O. JOHNSON

The Judge who for nearly fifty years was one of the leading citizens of the State of Washington always looked the part. He was about six feet tall and weighed approximately 175 pounds. His hair was very dark and abundant until late middle age, when it grayed and thinned, but it never entirely disappeared. His brown eyes often carried a merry twinkle when he greeted a friend or engaged in conversation, and when he was aroused to anger they might "look a hole through" the object of his wrath. The nose was fine, straight, and well proportioned. A conventional mustache partially concealed a mouth of moderate proportions. His jaws and chin were not pronounced, but rather gave a fine symmetry to his face and head. His shoulders were square and his carriage erect. He had long, narrow hands and fingers, and feet of the same mold.

Turner was always sartorially correct. What his position and the occasion called for, he wore, and the more formal the occasion the more imposing he looked. The Judge's Prince Albert coat and silk hat were familiar objects in Washington Territory. He continued their use until the Prince Albert became almost a vestment for the ministers of the evangelical Protestant denominations, when he turned to the conventional business suit. In this later period, unresentful of the alertness of ministers in matters sartorial which was now causing them to ease out of elegant Prince Alberts and into the more graceful cutaways, the Judge, for formal occasions, also donned the cutaways.

His even, well-proportioned features, his dark hair and eyes, his slightly swarthy complexion, his erect and dignified carriage, his well-tailored garments of statesmanship presented a handsome picture—a picture tastefully colored and tinted by the grace and ease with which he greeted an acquaintance, bowed to the ladies, or received a caller. In his office or conversing with friends he sat erectly with legs crossed—dignified, quiet, reserved but often smiling. He talked quietly in a smooth, resonant, mellow, pleasing voice.³²

Physically, Turner was almost indolent.³³ It was his habit to ride to his office. To look at a hoe made him tired; the thought of an axe made his back ache. He knew that Lincoln had once split rails, but he knew also that the Springfield lawyer neither chopped wood nor tended a garden after he became established in his profession. The Judge may have smilingly reflected that both he and Lincoln had "enjoyed" enough sport at manual labor when they were boys. If one of his favor-

³² Frank H. Graves, interview.

³³ *Ibid.*

ite modern statesman, William E. Gladstone, wielded the axe at four score, that was his privilege, and it proved only that there was no set formula for physical well-being. On occasion the Judge played a round of golf, but he could not get interested enough in it to get mad at the ball. Living in a day when the great majority of Americans found their physical exercise in the course of their work and before the idea became prevalent that the professional man would just shrivel up and die if he did not bowl, roll, play ping pong, softball, handball, or golf, he pursued the even tenor of his way sleek and unsweated, a horrible example to later generations of what might not happen to a healthy, contented man who shuns the playgrounds, the gymnasium, and the showers. Blissfully ignorant of all the fun he was missing and of the degree to which his indolence should have been impairing his health and shortening his days, at eighty-one he had the physical, mental, and temperamental vigor to present one of his outstanding cases to a federal circuit court of appeals, to defy one of the judges, and to win the case for his clients.

Exercise, no; recreation, yes. He might stroll along the street with a friend; he might walk in the garden with his dog; but he was more likely to take a seat, with the dog beside him, in a chair on the lawn. He loved to relax in conversation with a neighbor or friend. A cottage in the wilds of northern Idaho afforded him a delightful retreat in the summer. Occasionally he hunted or fished, usually in company with men of his own profession. He was in no sense a sportsman, being rather that type of individual who was more likely to embark on such an expedition with some misgivings that his companions might take seriously the announced purpose of their trip. He always found relaxation in playing cards, sometimes in the parlor game of bridge and sometimes in the smoke room game of poker. The latter was his favorite, although it was not a game in which he excelled. As a senator he did not supplement his income with winnings at poker, but he did supplement, rather substantially at times, the salaries of other senators. When in his last illness, he told an old friend of the reduced state of his capital and smilingly added that he could be comfortable enough for several years to come if he had his losses on one of his bad nights at poker.³⁴

It is a fact that the Judge died in greatly reduced circumstances. Between the years 1890 and 1930 he probably made well over a million dollars from his law practice and two or three mining ventures. Where had it gone? Much of it he lost in speculation. He built a beautiful home at West 525 Seventh Street, Spokane, which was valued at approximately \$100,000. This suggests his general standard of living. Money was something to spend for the pleasure of Mrs. Turner, him-

³⁴ *Ibid.*

self, and his friends. He was often short of it, but as long as he had any, he parted with it freely and ungrudgingly. He would make loans to friends, the amount of the loan often being in more direct proportion to the degree of friendship than to the business acumen or financial responsibility of the borrower. Any down-and-outter with a plausible tale could approach him for a handout with every prospect of success. He was particularly vulnerable to the plaintive appeals of Negroes, the knowledge of which fact was as widely spread among them as the reputation for helpfulness on the part of a member of a dominant race is usually spread among the members of the beneficiary race. Once, as a colored man in a Prince Albert coat, possibly one of the Judge's castoffs, was leaving the office, the Judge told his secretary that the minister had visited him to collect his annual contribution to a colored church. "He has just named a boy after me, his tenth or twelfth," added the benefactor, his face wreathed in a smile.³⁵ Thus Judge Turner earned, spent, lost, and gave away his money, and by all accounts he enjoyed disposing of it in the "You Can't Take It With You" fashion.

A type of generosity which might not be considered highly desirable from the social standpoint is illustrated by his attitude toward certain individuals whose conduct was below ordinary civic standards. One of his employees was guilty of stealing small amounts of money from him. When it came to the attention of the Judge, he did not discharge the man but was content to warn him and blame himself for not having paid him a higher wage. A more interesting case was that of a burglar who confessed several jobs to his priest. Of course, the priest could not grant absolution until the wrong-doer had made restitution. The penitent, however, could not restore a \$500 rug he had taken from the Turner residence. The priest went to the Judge and explained the situation, and the Judge, always impressed with the role of the Catholic Church in preserving law and order and with its practical and organized zeal in serving its communicants, assured the priest that he should be pleased to forget the rug.³⁶

The general body of citizens who met the Judge and Senator on the street or who heard him address a court or a meeting had the impression that he was cool, perhaps haughty, and difficult to approach. His carriage, dignity, and reserve gave that impression. Cool and aloof he was to those who presumed upon an acquaintance or who treated him with less deference than he considered his due; but to those who showed proper respect for his rank and station he invariably displayed his more engaging qualities. An upstart who approached him

³⁵ Miss Florence Coffeen (secretary to Turner for some years), interview, Spokane, December 26, 1940.

³⁶ Judge Geraghty, interview.

in the free and easy manner would be "frozen out," but a Negro, hat in hand, would rejoice in the warmth of his smile.

The Judge was a man of honor in the sense in which that term was understood by the ancient statesman, the medieval grand seigneur and the ante-bellum planter-politician of the South. He was truthful, not because it is a moral wrong to tell a lie, but because gentlemen did not lie. He fought for justice, not because it was the righteous course, but because it was an obligation of men in his station. He refused bribes with indignation, not because it would have been a sin for him to take the money, but because the offer was a gross offense to his honor. He was quick to anger and as unforgiving as an Indian. Yet he could be magnanimous with an enemy who himself was a man of honor, who understood the code of the grand seigneur, but if the offender wore not the sword of honor, if he were simply a kitchen scullion, our grand seigneur could not follow the example of some of his class and ignore the offender, but he must slit his throat. In short, Turner was by nature a cavalier; the Puritan conscience, the Puritan conception of morals and goodness, he despised as the code of a class of men who were less than fit to inherit the earth.

Evidences of his chivalrous qualities are numerous. In 1898 Senator Turner spoke magnanimously of Confederate General James Longstreet, defending him against charges made against his military and political record. Mrs. Longstreet wrote Senator Turner: "The brave men who made the history of the 'sixties have long since buried the bitterness of those sad and heroic days. . . . Your broad Americanism is the golden link between the old and new glory."⁸⁷

At the expiration of his term in the Senate, he received a letter from E. F. Ware, the Commissioner of Pensions (a Republican, of course), expressing his pleasure at having been associated with such a considerate and courteous gentleman and the hope that he would soon return to the Senate, even if it did mean the displacement of a Republican. "I admit," he wrote, "that it is difficult to melt away the votes of 25,000 Republicans, but I saw an 88,000 Republican majority in Kansas dissolve in a few weeks."⁸⁸

The best testimony respecting his finer qualities of heart came from Japan, from Mrs. Betty G. Pierce, the daughter of Judge J. Z. Moore. "I want to thank you," she wrote, "for your noble tribute to my father. It was so eloquent with the insight of a sympathetic nature and the understanding of a great heart that it touched me very deeply. . . . Many times have I heard him express his admiration of your talents and ability, but best of all, I like to recall my father's keen appreciation of your fine character and gentlemanly courtesy to

⁸⁷ Mrs. James Longstreet to Turner, January 22, 1898. W. S. C. Turner papers.

⁸⁸ E. F. Ware to Turner, March 28, 1903. W. S. C. Turner papers.

him when he was in Washington, D. C., near the end of your term in the United States Senate. I think there had been some sort of misunderstanding between you, and that he pocketed any feeling he had cherished and went to you frankly for help and advice upon a matter he held very near his heart at that time. The cordiality with which you met his advances, and the sincerity with which you responded in your efforts in his behalf won his affectionate esteem, as such conduct ever does the impulsive and warmhearted."³⁹

Judge Turner would not disturb these words of Shakespeare:

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade.

He had a not inconsiderable number of friends, old friends, but adoptions came slowly. The greater number of them were of his own profession and shared something of his sectional and social background. They were men with whom he could converse and argue freely on the subject which claimed his chief interest—the law. Among his older friends were Colonel Patrick Henry Winston, at one time attorney general of the state; I. N. Peyton, mine owner; M. M. Cowley, banker; F. P. Hogan and Louis Ziegler, large property owners; Edward Whitson and Frank H. Rudkin, Federal judges; William H. Cowles and N. W. Durham, newspaper publishers; Attorneys James M. Geraghty (later judge in the state supreme court), and Frank T. Post.

His best friend was Frank H. Graves. Their love for each other was like that of David and Jonathan—"wonderful, passing the love of woman."⁴⁰ For nearly fifty years they talked and argued about law, planned their business ventures, and cheered each other on. In 1914, when the Judge announced his candidacy for the Senate, Mr. Graves wrote an appropriate note in appreciation of the act. Turner replied, referring to their friendship and expressing the hope that it might be transferred to the "sweet bye and bye." He added this characteristic comment: "Geraghty (James M.) who has no sentiment, says, 'Tell him to be sure and register.' I don't care a damn whether you register or not, and I assume that, as usual, you will not."⁴¹ Late in life he wrote Graves these lines: "We have been more closely associated than most men in business, and in a great variety of situations calling for the exhibition of fine judgment, high moral courage, and fidelity to the requirements of a great friendship. If you have ever failed in the obligations of that friendship, unless it might be in an occasional row over the bridge table, in which I was more to blame than you, or an

³⁹ Mrs. Betty G. Pierce to Turner, September 23, 1921. W. S. C. Turner papers.

⁴⁰ Kizer, citing 2 *Samuel* 1:26, "Eulogy of Judge Turner."

⁴¹ Turner to Graves, May 22, 1914. Copy in the possession of R. W. Nuzum.

occasional difference in business judgment, I do not now recall it, and I hope you can truthfully say the same of me."⁴²

But the Judge never wore his heart on his sleeve for anyone, not even for his friend of a lifetime, his "Gravey." Mr. Graves testifies with emphasis—and with him it is a mark of the Judge's great mind and character—that he never fully understood the Judge. Among the qualities of Judge Turner which Mr. Graves does claim to understand were his capacity for unselfish, enduring friendship and an equal capacity for unremitting hatred for those who had earned it.

In Judge Turner's generation it was by no means unusual for a man with no more formal education than he had to achieve outstanding success in manufacturing, transportation, or other business; but the Judge won his fame in the learned profession of law and through that profession attained distinction as a statesman. It is a notable tribute to his success at self-education that a number of men, lawyer associates, who knew him fairly well made the mistaken assumption that he had college training. As a matter of fact, in the use of both the written and spoken word he greatly excelled typical college graduates of his own or our generation.

He did not have a broad mind, the Jeffersonian type of mind which reached out into practically every field. There is no evidence that he found any enjoyment in approaching a new problem unless that problem was related to his duties as a lawyer, judge, or statesman. His capacity for observation might be described as decidedly limited; or at least the objects of his interest were limited.⁴³ Nor would one characterize him as resourceful beyond a very definite capacity to interpret and apply the principles of the common law to new conditions and situations.

In what then did his mental power lie? This is the answer: In his singleness of purpose plus his photographic memory. He was probably told or learned very early in life that to be a lawyer one must know the law and be able to speak and write correct, clear, and convincing English. To the acquisition of these essentials he addressed himself to the exclusion of practically everything else. This was the secret of his education. It was his secret in dealing with his cases as lawyer and judge, in informing himself on the issues for debate before the Senate. And he put first things first, seldom, if ever, making the mistake of speaking first and getting information later.

When in the process of informing himself on any point or subject, he sought information and "leads" far and wide. He looked for them in books, he conferred with his associates, he sounded out his opponents. He was open to suggestion and advice. Once he had made up

⁴² Turner to Graves, January 21, 1929. Copy in the possession of Mr. Nuzum.

⁴³ Frank H. Graves, interview.

his mind, however, he was inflexible. Suggestions offered for the purpose of changing his views he had either thought of before and discarded or he now rejected as immaterial or irrelevant. Convinced of the correctness of his position, he would not change it.

The Judge had a well-rounded law library which, combined with those of his law partners, was not only adequate for all practical purposes, but also supplied the source from which deep legal learning was drawn. His home library was not large—consisting of some eight hundred volumes of history, biography, classical and modern literature, and general reference works—but reflected “in its comprehensiveness the great mind which guided its selection.”⁴⁴ Judge Turner read widely in the law and on the legal phases of government. General literature, both poetry and prose, held his interest, but he was not an omnivorous reader. He did not read and read and read. His method was to read and ponder and think, a method which precludes the reading of several books a week. All of his friends marveled at his prodigious memory. He remembered everything he read, they say. This retentive capacity is apparent to anyone who gives attention to his qualities of mind. A fine sentence, a happy phrase, he could almost invariably recall. And he had the wit to vary them, to rephrase them, to reshape them to convey his own ideas, a fact which goes a long way to explain the secret of his literary style, and, for that matter, the style of nearly everyone else who is one notch below genius.

Judge Turner wrote exceptionally well. He was almost never guilty of a grammatical sin and errors in diction were equally scarce. He sometimes delighted in the long sentences common to literary men and orators of his day and to lawyers and bill drafters of both his time and ours. Yet his sentences were always clear, usually well balanced, and often eloquent.

An argument for the court, a speech in the Senate, a letter to the public, he always prepared with the greatest care, writing it with his own hand. In 1925 Mr. Frederick S. Wood was collecting reminiscences of Theodore Roosevelt which he published two years later under the title *Roosevelt As We Knew Him*. Senator Turner was one of some two hundred who were asked to contribute a reminiscence. He complied, submitted the story of his association with Roosevelt in the Alaska Boundary Dispute. Upon receipt of Turner's contribution, Mr. Wood wrote him as follows: “It is without a doubt, to my mind, the most valuable of almost 150 contributions that I have received to date. May I not comment also on the editorial and mechanical perfection of your article. It is altogether a novel experience to receive an article prepared with such scrupulous exactness, and such meticulous

⁴⁴ Statement of Principal Henry M. Hart, Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane, at the time the Turner library was given to the school (1932).

care . . ."⁴⁵ This expression of appreciation takes on added significance when it is noted that Turner's effort was a companion of those of such giants as Elihou Root, Charles E. Hughes, Charles W. Eliot, Brander Matthews, David Starr Jordan, and Nicholas Murray Butler.

When President Taft was tendered a luncheon in Spokane in September, 1909, Judge Turner was designated to introduce him. Experienced as he was, he did not trust himself to find when the occasion arrived "a few appropriate words." He knew that a number of men thought they could make a proper introduction on the spur of the moment, but he associated himself with a very large body of American people who wished that introductions might be better and with a very select group of introducers who prepared for the office. He wrote out his introduction with his own hand, and when the time came to use it he spoke, without reference to notes, his genuinely pleasing words of simple grace and dignity. He was not reminded of any story; he did not detail the President's career; he did not intimate that he might do something for Spokane; and he did not anticipate the President's address. He used words of restrained praise, delightful, satisfying words as necessary for the enjoyment of post-luncheon speeches as color and garnishes are for the enjoyment of food. "The man whose great qualities of mind and of heart" had "caused him to be chosen as the leader of this nation" was immensely pleased.⁴⁶ Thirty years later the Judge's old associates still remembered the effectiveness of his well-chosen words.

Judge Turner's care in writing may explain, in part, his limitations as a speaker. When he spoke on matters in which he was interested—on the law in relations to a client's case, on a question of governmental policy in the Senate—he was a most pleasing and convincing speaker, although on occasion somewhat prolix. Such speeches lent themselves to his style of preparation, his style of language, and, except where denunciation and exhortation were called for, he delivered them in a winsome, conversational tone. He was effective also in a political convention or at a citizens' gathering in advocating a specific issue or in denouncing a particular piece of injustice.

As a speaker at commencement exercises, chamber of commerce banquets, and at lodge conventions, he was almost a bore. His language was good, but he was neither inspiring nor entertaining. Often one could look in vain for any clear plan of organization, any ringing message which he was seeking to drive home. Or, if one should find a message, it might be unsuited to the occasion. For example, in 1894,

⁴⁵ F. S. Wood to Turner, September 5, 1925. In the possession of Mr. Nuzum.

⁴⁶ Introduction as written by Turner in longhand is among the W. S. C. Turner papers. *Spokesman-Review* account of it in issue of September 29, 1909.

he selected "Government Ownership of Railroads" as the subject of his Fourth of July oration at Colfax, Washington. Joe Smith (now of Seattle), seated at the press table, noted that the Judge's "speech was a scholarly production but his delivery was very poor . . . Many people left the arbor while the speaker was still talking."⁴⁷ Judge Turner's difficulties in addressing a jury and in reaching the voters from the stump—his inability to speak convincingly the language of the common man—have already been mentioned. He was not lacking in a certain ironical humor, but it is probable that it often passed over the heads of his audience. In any case, it is less effective on the hustings than the "haw, haw, haw, that's a good one" variety.

Lacking the dramatic touch except when faced with a situation which naturally placed him in a dramatic role, as did the debate on the silver question in the Republican state convention in 1894, he could not use the press as many public men used it. To be sure, his course was often news in the days when he held public office, but he was news because of the significance of his utterance and the importance of the subject, not because he had maneuvered himself into the news. He stood well with newspaper men, but he was not a man upon whom they could rely when news was scarce for a blast to stir up an issue or controversy. So undramatic was he that he was more likely to write the press a letter than to call in the reporters. No doubt he knew that an interview might make the front page and that a letter was certain to be buried in the center of the paper. Since he wrote good letters which clearly set forth his position, he was probably fearful that the interview as reported would not adequately and clearly express his views. Understanding all of this fully, most politicians would prefer the interview.

Certain other qualities which are commonly associated with politicians were lacking in Judge Turner. He was perhaps too sensitive to criticism. He could take criticism from his friends if it was administered cautiously, but his reactions to general criticism were likely to arouse his combative instincts too violently. Cooperation was not his long suit. He had the desire to work with others, and he succeeded in some measure for varying periods of time, but he was instinctively and by profession an individualist. His easily offended honor and his directness often won out over his tact. Sometimes he lacked patience, and he had entirely too much temper. Some understood his temper and put up with it; others sulked or withdrew their support. Reconciliation and forgiveness came hard with him, if at all. One of his best friends says that his memory of a wrong was as long as his memory for a point of law.⁴⁸ The same friend testifies to another weakness—his inability to judge men. A few fairly poor specimens of men were his

⁴⁷ Joe Smith to the writer, July 3, 1941.

⁴⁸ Frank H. Graves, interview.

friends, political friends at least, and he stood by them through thick and thin. His unyielding loyalty to certain unworthy friends was sometimes a political handicap, but less so than his relentless hatred of his foes.⁴⁹ These non-political traits were not decisive, for the Judge offset them with others of positive worth.

His sense of fair play was one of his most pronounced qualities and perhaps one of his most valuable political assets. However, his ideas of fair play must be judged by the standards of his own day, standards so low that they placed his sharp bargaining among delegates and legislators near the top of the list of permissible practices. As late as 1912, when the idea of direct primaries and popular control of conventions was generally accepted, he controlled the Democratic state convention for Clark by strategy he had learned under Conkling. Yet, so fair was he in his use of this strategy that the state delegates at the national convention, a number of whom were pledged to Clark against their will, stayed by Clark to the end, several of them declaring openly that they did it only because Turner had been fair with them.

The Judge had a fair capacity for political organization. He did not use the painstaking system of reaching into every precinct; he did not try to control all details of organization throughout the state. His plan was to depend upon loyal political and personal friends, more upon the latter than upon the former. They gathered about him in each of his campaigns, delivering and receiving stout blows, asking no quarter and giving none. They were more effective in the heyday of caucuses and conventions than after the advent of the direct primary and the direct election of United States senators. The Judge himself was more successful in handling conventions and legislative caucuses than in reaching the people generally. In his political methods he belonged essentially to the old school, never feeling entirely at home with the newer instruments of democracy.

Indomitable physical and moral courage marked Turner's career. His first move was to determine his course. Then he was ready to go the limit. He seems to have had little, if any, physical fear. The "border ruffian" of the Civil War period in Missouri and the Ku Klux Klan night riders of Alabama in Reconstruction times had seasoned him against it. Older residents of Spokane tell of his courageous leadership during the depression of the early 'nineties, when it was thought that aggressive labor organizations were about to resort to violence in Spokane. Some say that he was a fool to "stick his neck out," but all admired his courage. Sure that he was right and grossly offended at what he regarded as the high-handed act of a judge, he went to jail in Alabama rather than yield a point that would have damaged the case of his colored client. He displayed a high type of courage when,

⁴⁹ F. T. Post, interview.

as a young judge in Washington Territory, he gave decision after decision against the politically powerful railroads, and when, as a member of the state constitutional convention, he thwarted their plans, even as a seat in the United States Senate was suggested as a suitable reward for a more accommodating spirit. His denunciation of the Republican leadership in the state, in 1894, and his withdrawal from that party two years later may indicate political courage, although it is a fact that he had nothing to gain by remaining in the Republican party. His failure, in 1916, frankly to declare his position on the initiative and the referendum and other instruments of democratic control and his dallying with the prohibition issue may be put down on the debit side of the ledger of courage, although a frank avowal of his position would have meant a more smashing defeat for his senatorial aspirations than he actually received. But in the sort of courage strong men have in mind, the "prevent the injury," "right the wrong" type of courage, there is not the slightest evidence that the Judge was ever deficient.

Brought up by devout parents, members of the Christian Church, he ever had the greatest respect for religion. In later life he deplored the crusading drives certain Protestant churches were making against what he regarded as harmless pleasure, or, at the worst, only petty immoralities. The "liquor and tobacco" Christians, striving mightily to abate the smoke nuisance and to consign demon rum to hell, he regarded as futile pinks of morality who were neglecting the greater moral and spiritual values. He believed sincerely in the church as a force for "law and order," as a stabilizing influence in society. He sometimes remarked that everyone should belong to some church as a part of his civic duty. The Catholic Church he looked upon not only as a great religious force but as an invaluable civic organization. "There is an institution!" he would sometimes say in admiration.⁵⁰

He was not concerned with dogma of any kind. He did not presume to know anything, as he would phrase it, about "the sweet bye and bye." Sometimes he was whimsically skeptical about the "peace beyond the river." Turning to old friends after a minister had preached the funeral of another, he said: "It would take more than the weak generalities of one poor little Methodist preacher to rob death of its terrors, wouldn't it."⁵¹ On his last evening (January 25, 1932) he said to Frank H. Graves, who had come to be with him at the end of the long trail of their friendly years: "I will be waiting on the strand for your boat to come in, if there is any strand or any boat, which I very much doubt."⁵² This was the Judge, speculating upon the unknowable, smiling over his doubts, and having his little jests, even as

⁵⁰ Judge Geraghty, interview.

⁵¹ Arnold Graves, interview, Spokane, Washington, December 27, 1939.

⁵² Frank H. Graves to A. W. O'Harra, February 26, 1932.

the old man with the scythe was laying his blade to the golden ripe grain.

Yet he had a basic religious belief. In 1914, in an address at Garfield, Washington, he said: "I hold it impossible for any man of fair intelligence who has reflected on the subject to doubt that there is a God above us who rules the universe, from the spheres circling through space to the meanest insect that crawls on their surface. . . . Faith, hope, charity, love, truth, honesty, fidelity, are as truly the creation of the Almighty, and bear his impress as unmistakably as the mountains that rear their heads to heaven. . . . And if this be true, who can doubt that he intended his sentient creatures to cherish and preserve these virtues, mightier in their force than the shock of worlds, in their conduct toward Him and toward all his creatures? . . . Man must live in accord with his Maker, and can then trust his future to His keeping with the same confidence that a child exhibits when it goes to sleep in its mother's arms."⁵³ Mr. Robert L. Edmiston, a man of strong religious convictions and an active church member, testifies that Judge Turner's "views of God Almighty was broader than the Bible account and comprehended the 'laws of Nature and Nature's God.'"⁵⁴ Mr. John P. Hartman takes a similar view and attributes the remarkably fine character of Judge Turner to his early religious environment and his basic religious faith.⁵⁵

Penned by the Judge's own hand, and pasted in a scrapbook beside an article on Roscoe Conkling, are these lines, lines which pleased the humble spirit of Lincoln, and which must have been spiritual nourishment for the Judge:

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud,
Like a swift fleeting meteor, like a fast flying cloud?

If Judge Turner had a Biblical text for his rule of life, it was probably the one that so many great souls have found sufficient: "What

⁵³ Turner, address to graduating class, Garfield High School, May 22, 1914. W. S. C. Turner papers. Mr. Frank H. Graves interprets Judge Turner's religion in these words: his "religious beliefs were simple and direct. We are all, he said, children of nature. By her processes and as an incident of her purposes we have been brought here without our knowledge or volition. Likewise we will depart this life through her processes and for her purposes. Birth and death are natural and one is no more to be feared than the other. What was for us after death must of necessity be good because we were still children of nature and subject to her processes carried along on the course of her great purposes. He said, however, that so far as by searching we could find out, everything both animate and inanimate was subject to change, and that change was always from the lower to the higher form, alike in the simplest animalcule and in the myriad systems of worlds in boundless space; and he could see no reason why that rule should not continue us in some higher form. In that faith he lived content and died unafraid." *In Memoriam: Judge George Turner*.

⁵⁴ Robert L. Edmiston, Spokane, statement prepared for the writer, April 1, 1940.

⁵⁵ John P. Hartman, interview, Seattle, August, 1940.

doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."⁵⁶

Here ends the story of a man, a self-made man to the degree to which it is possible to make that claim for any man. He was not a great politician; he had too many porcupines in his menagerie of virtues to be well adapted to that art. Frank, forthright, outspoken, "swift to maintain inflexibly the position that he thought right,"⁵⁷ a fighter through his Scotch-Irish ancestors and his Missouri-Alabama environment, he was a citizen any republic in any age would be honored to claim, a statesman of high order, and, above all, a great lawyer. The inner man no one ever understood. When all of the available evidence has been collected, we still cannot understand him. Perhaps we should be greatly disappointed. Who can understand a *man*? One of Judge Turner's friends explains him in terms of his environment and his deep religious nature; then he adds that he strongly resembled an Oriental philosopher, a Chinese mystic.⁵⁸ Noting his unconcern over some of the smaller moralities and his many sturdy virtues, the late Judge James M. Geraghty, paraphrasing a sentence which Robert Ingersoll had used in his eulogy of Conkling, characterized Judge Turner in these words: "He was of the Roman mold—a character from Plutarch."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Micah* 6:8.

⁵⁷ Kizer, "Eulogy of Judge Turner."

⁵⁸ Mr. Hartman, interview.

⁵⁹ Judge Geraghty, interview. Ingersoll's sentence in characterization of Conkling was: "He was of the classic mold—a figure from the antique world."