

## GEORGE HENRY WILLIAMS

George Henry Williams was born in a log cabin near New Lebanon, Columbia County, New York, March 26, 1823. Both his father and his mother were of New England stock and the family was of Welsh extraction on the father's side and English on the mother's. Both of his grandfathers served in the Continental Army during the war of the Revolution. He was reared in Onondaga County and received his early education at Pompey Hill Academy, New York, working for his tuition. He studied law with Daniel Gott and in 1844, at the age of twenty-one, was admitted to the bar at Syracuse. Soon afterward he started West to seek his fortunes as a lawyer. At that time there were but a few miles of railroad in the country -- none west of Indiana, -- and no telegraph lines. He proceeded by way of the Erie Canal to Buffalo and the Ohio Canal to Pittsburg and thence down the Ohio River to St. Louis and up the Mississippi to Fort Madison, Iowa. His wealth was the Statutes of New York, a few law books and some bank notes of New York State banks.

The inexperienced youth fell among thieves. As he was counting his bank notes in Pittsburg preparatory to exchanging them for western notes they were snatched from him and pursuit of the robber was fruitless. Judge Williams always instanced this as proof of the danger of state banks currency. He frankly stated the case to the captain of the boat by which he hoped to reach St. Louis and offered to work his way, and those of us who have known Judge Williams, can readily understand that the captains of this boat and the one which gave him passage to Fort Madison needed no credentials as to his honesty other than his own face.

At Fort Madison he was also obliged to offer his face as currency. He introduced himself to Daniel F. Miller, the lawyer of the place, who went his security for board and lodging at Mrs. Knapp's boardinghouse. But chance -- which has so much to do with the lives of all of us -- promptly threw a case in his way, the conclusion of which was a partnership with his adversary and guarantor, Daniel F. Miller, and the opportunity being once given to him, his abilities and industry made him master of his fate.

In 1847, on the admission of Iowa as a state, he was elected a district judge. In this same year he first met Abraham Lincoln; both were delegates to an internal improvement congress at Chicago. Lincoln, it will be remembered, was an advocate for state-owned railroads, through Illinois. The friendship which began at this date between these two great men, continued in perfect harmony until the assassination of Lincoln. Judge Williams was selected as one of the escorts of honor and one of the pall bearers of the Great American. It seems fitting that a sympathy should exist between these two men. Each was the child of poverty, born in a log cabin, each rose by his own exertions to national fame. Each had the rugged strength and height of a giant. Each was fond of rural athletics, such as racing, wrestling, throwing the weight; and each was himself famous as a wrestler. Judge Williams never lost his love for outdoor sports and was a devotee of base ball and football and an interested spectator at the boxing and wrestling bouts. Only a few years

before his death, he stated with much pride that he was the local champion wrestler at his home in New York State, and had never been thrown in a wrestling bout. Each was a man of the people and sympathetic with the plain masses, and each from the very first championed Freedom and Union in the great struggle which was even then clouding the horizon.

It was at this time (1847) that Judge Williams met and became quite intimate with Stephen A. Douglas, and he never hesitated to pay tribute to the winning personality and great masterfulness of the little giant.

As an anti-slavery Democrat Judge Williams canvassed the State of Iowa for Franklin Pierce and was elected one of the presidential electors on the Democratic ticket. Shortly after the inauguration of Pierce (March 1853), at the suggestion of Senator Douglas, he, at thirty years of age, was appointed Chief Justice of Oregon Territory. This appointment was without his knowledge and contrary to his wish. In 1850, he had married, at Keokuk, Iowa. Miss Kate Van Antwerp, and finding his salary as district judge in Iowa (\$1,000 a year) too small to meet the expenses of married life, he sent in his resignation, with the intention of resuming his practice of law. The Whig lawyers joined with the Democrats in begging him to remain on the bench and promising that he should have no opposition. It was Mrs. Williams who decided their fortunes. Oregon was then the unknown land of the West -- an Eldorado, and the young wife was romantic and desired to visit the far unknown country as a novel experience, and so when he told her of the appointment and that it should be whichever she wished, she decided for the excitement of a voyage to Oregon, both of them fully intending to return to Iowa as soon as his term in Oregon expired. They proceeded by the Mississippi to New Orleans; thence by steamer to the Isthmus; crossed the Isthmus by rail, coach and muleback, and from the Isthmus took steamer to San Francisco, and thence to Portland by the steamer Columbia, arriving in June 1853. They were met the next morning by Colonel John McCracken, who from that day to this has been faithful to Judge Williams' fortunes, and who was one of his pallbearers. The young couple made their home in Salem and on the expiration of his term President Buchanan appointed Judge Williams to succeed himself; but he had left his prospects in Iowa with some reluctance, and now made up his mind that there was also a future for Oregon. He had become attached to the people and the climate and determined to enter the practice of law at Portland. Accordingly he resigned, and in 1858, opened an office in Portland in a small frame building on the river bank between Washington and Alder streets. These were stirring times in Oregon. The admission of the Territory into the Union as a State was a vital issue and necessarily this involved whether it should come in as a free or as a slave state. Judge Williams, like Lincoln, was naturally a politician in the higher sense, and we know that one of the desires which induced him to leave the bench was not only that he might add to his income by the practice of the law, but that he might enter the active arena of politics. His ambition was to be United States

Senator. We find him as a Democrat championing the anti-slavery cause; and as a Free Soil Democrat he was elected a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention and appointed Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. After the adoption of the constitution by the convention he took the stump and by his force of argument and eloquence greatly aided in having the free constitution adopted by the state.

Judge Williams' strong anti-slavery work in Oregon had antagonized the administration in Washington and he was not appointed United States Senator, and at the first election, when he was opposed by James W. Nesmith, he was defeated and Nesmith and E. D. Baker (who fell at Balls Bluff) were chosen. Those were days of acrimonious feeling, and Nesmith was a hard hitter. But it is characteristic of Judge Williams, that he pronounced the most appreciative and touching eulogy above the grave of his relentless antagonist.

He had joined in the call for an amalgamation of anti-slavery-war-Democrats with Republicans, to be called the Union Party, and by this transition he entered the Republican party and in 1864 was elected to the United States Senate, and his ambition was fulfilled. He entered the Senate at the close of the war and commencement of the reconstruction period, a period historically as important as the actual warfare. The Reconstruction Act was his work and the enforcement of it also fell to him as Attorney-General under Grant, to which office he was appointed at the expiration of his senatorial term.

Judge Williams had not only an admiration but an affection for Abraham Lincoln. He has spoken of the tragedy of his face, when oppressed by a Nation's troubles the President listened, in silence and with utter patience, to the fault-finding of his wife as Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln and Judge Williams drove together. He has told how he was awakened from his sleep by the dull roar of the mob in the street and how a man opened his door and shouted, "Judge, the President has been assassinated; Mr. Seward and Mr. Stanton are both killed and God only knows what will become of the Government."

Something of a partisan feeling undoubtedly entered into Judge Williams' reconstruction work in the Senate and in his conduct during the impeachment of President Johnson. He was loyal to the memory of Lincoln, suspicious of his successor, hated slavery and distrusted the South. He has said in recent years that he was now glad the impeachment failed and that the Reconstruction Act had faults in treating the South too much as conquered territory; but, he added, "Those were days of intense bitterness and overwrought feelings amounting to almost hatred, and it was natural that mistakes would be made. For my part," he said, "I am conscious of only the best intention and believe that as a whole what I then did, both as Senator and Attorney-General, was justified and has been justified by the final result."

It is certain that Judge Williams cherished no animosities; was warped by no personal prejudices. In his later life he viewed with judicial calmness the incidents and events in which he had taken a partisan part. That he was a power among the men of the nation is evident from his record. He was the sole author of the Reconstruction Act substantially as it was adopted. When he showed the draft to some of his Senatorial colleagues, they exclaimed with enthusiasm: "Williams, that is the very thing we have been looking for." He drew the Fifteenth Amendment practically as it now stands. He suggested the electoral commission to settle the dispute over the election of President Hayes.

He was a member of the Joint High Commission which met in Washington to determine how the disputes between Great Britain and the United States should be settled, namely: The northern boundary, through Puget Sound, and the claims for the depredations of the Confederate cruiser Alabama.

He was a leader in the Senate during the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. He was chosen by General Grant and his advisers as the one to campaign the South and explain the Reconstruction Act, the policies of the administration and to plead for Southern co-operation.

In all the troublous times following the Civil War, the responsibility of enforcing law and order by civil remedies was upon him as Attorney-General. He had to meet the lawlessness of the Klu Klux Klan; he had to decide between two governments in Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas, conflicts which he resolved in favor of the Republicans in Louisiana, the Democrats in Arkansas and by a compromise in Alabama. It was therefore only surprising to those in his own state, for a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own people, when on the death of Chief Justice Chase, and after the declination by Roscoe Conkling, and the rejection of Caleb Cushing by the Senate, that General Grant sent the name of his Attorney-General to the Senate to be Chief Justice of the United States.

Judge Williams eventually insisted on his name being withdrawn and the causes have been variously stated as political animosity in the East, due to his Republican partisanship and activity in the reconstruction work; social antagonism to his second wife, then ambitious to be a leader in Washington society; and opposition to him in Oregon because in the course of his active Senatorial career and while holding the office of Attorney-General he had necessarily failed to please everybody. Probably all these hostilities contributed to a result disgraceful only to those who produced it. His own statement was that General Grant called a special meeting of the Cabinet, omitting purposely to have him present, and there suggested the nomination, which met with unanimous approval, and his name was sent in without his knowledge, but that some member of the Cabinet had congratulated Mrs. Williams and she prematurely showed an exultant and perhaps haughty spirit, so that the official ladies of Washington were especially aroused to defeat her. The bitter assaults

on him in the Eastern press were bad enough, witness that cheap calumny of "Landaulet" Williams, but when the social storm, with all its undercurrent of political intrigue, gathered force against his wife, and last and worst of all he found he was being opposed from his own State, he went to General Grant and insisted upon his name being withdrawn. It has been said that he did this upon a hint that by so doing he would relieve General Grant from an embarrassing situation. Judge Williams said that General Grant begged him even then to reconsider the matter and suffer his name to remain, saying that he was sick and tired of these political intrigues in and out of the Senate; that he could and would force the nomination through, as nothing really could be urged against him, but Judge Williams replied that no office on earth would induce him to remain longer in this public pillory. He went down to Long Branch to see General Grant as to the nomination of a Chief Justice and they drove out behind his favorite pair of trotters and the President became so absorbed in the discussion that he overdrove the horses and one of them died. The President asked Judge Williams whom he would suggest and he suggested Justice Miller, then on the Supreme bench and whom he had known in Iowa, but General Grant was decided in his opposition to this, saying that it had grown to be an unwritten law that no associate justice should ever be promoted to the Chief Justiceship, and that this was a wise rule because it prevented intrigue on the bench; and, said he, "Every refusal to break the rule strengthens it and shows to the associate justices that they need not engage in any political combinations with the hope of succeeding to the Chief Justiceship." Grant asked him to give him a thoroughly good man who would do credit to the office, but sufficiently obscure that the gang of schemers in the Senate could find nothing to hurl at him. Judge Williams on his return to Washington spoke of this to Columbus Delano, then Secretary of the Interior, who suggested Morrison R. Waite, of Ohio, saying: "You ought to know him; he served with distinction on the Alabama Claims Commission." Judge Williams replied, "He is the very man." When his name was suggested to the President he said, "Wire him in your own name and ask him if he will take the office of Chief Justice of the United States." The result is a matter of history.

As a former Senator of unblemished record, Judge Williams by courtesy of the Senate, was entitled to immediate confirmation when nominated; also when promptly reported back favorably by the committee as was the case. But this required a motion to this effect and for unanimous consent. Judge James K. Kelly was one of the Oregon Senators and John H. Mitchell the other. Judge Kelly said that as he was of the Democratic party and as Senator Mitchell was present on both occasions he felt it was none of his affair and for some reason Senator Mitchell on both occasions failed to make the motion. It seems, therefore, that Judge Williams narrowly missed being Chief Justice of the United States, but he used to sum up the whole matter by saying: "I believe I have lived longer and happier than if I had been raised to that exalted office."

In 1861 Judge Williams returned to Portland, Oregon, and resumed

the practice of the law as the head of the firm of Williams, Hill, Durham & Thompson, and in 1887 he dissolved partnership with that firm and became the head of the firm of Williams, Ach & Wood, which on the retirement of Mr. Ach became Williams & Wood, and later Williams, Wood & Linthicum, with which firm he continued until the day of his death, though during his two terms as Mayor of the City of Portland (1902-1905) he practically retired from the firm because he thought the provisions of the Charter of the City of Portland required him to do so. He died at his home in Portland April 4, 1910. It may be said that he slept not to wake again. He married Miss Kate Van Antwerp at Keokuk in 1850, and Mrs. Kate George at Portland in 1867. He left one descendant, Ellen, a daughter of his first wife, and Mrs. Carl Harbaugh and Theodore Williams, both adopted children.

These are the milestones in the earthly progress of George H. Williams. Taken by themselves they are without great meaning. Other men have held high office. Other men have lived long lives. Other men have been busy in national social and civic affairs. The question of real interest to us who have survived him, and to those who will come after him, is: What manner of man was he?

In all that he did he was clear sighted with that vision called common sense. He was full of the spirit of justice. As a judge he was calm, impersonal and impartial, sensible, passionless and just. As a lawyer he was forceful, eloquent, sincere, and above all the justice of a case was never obscured from him by technicalities. He was learned in the law, but his ruling trait was plain good sense. The trial of a case was with him an appeal to a higher power, and though he conducted his cause with every right of his side maintained, it was with profound respect for the court and perfect courtesy to opposing counsel. No one who has known him can forget the impressive earnestness with which he addressed a jury. No useless stories or wasted eloquence, but an exhibition of the facts with such earnestness as must carry conviction. He once said: "Everyone tells the jury to lay aside their prejudices and sympathies, but who of us can do this? Jurors are plain men and the man who ignores their prejudices and sympathies will never make a great jury lawyer."

It was delightful to see him, when everyone else had addressed the court, rise and put his finger on the one vital spot and show it clear as day. And yet, on the proper occasion he was an orator with an eloquence thrilling and captivating; his imagery poetically beautiful. Witness his addresses in memory of William Pitt Fessenden, Abraham Lincoln, U. S. Grant. In his own opinion his defense of General Babcock, private secretary to General Grant, accused of complicity with the whiskey ring, was his most masterful defense and most eloquent address to a jury.

Judge Williams was supreme in the rare art of afterdinner speaking and was not only Portland's greatest orator for such occasions, but one of the greatest in the country, and many audiences East and West have listened delighted with his inimitable mingling of wit, humor, poetry and thought.

As a politician he was like Lincoln: shrewd to know the popular feeling and to follow it to the point where it clashed with his settled convictions, but then, instead of surrendering his principles for political advantage, he opposed his principles against the popular outcry and endeavored to instruct the multitude. He disliked dissension or contention either in public or private life. He would yield any personal claim rather than engage in hostilities. He was an amiable man, of a simple, trustful, childlike nature, and if he had a weakness it was that his own innocence led him to trust those who should not be trusted and to yield to those who were in every way his inferiors.

At 87 he was still youthful in mind, belonging to the present, not to the past. Interested in the problems of the day, and as progressive in thought as a man of 25. He exhibited his own childlike simplicity of character in his fondness for children. Two of his children were adopted, but they could not have been more beloved if they had been children of his own blood. Babies, street urchins and all phases of childhood interested him and appealed to him. One of the last pictures his partners have of him was of him gazing gravely at a two-year-old little girl who had toddled into his room from the hallway and stood staring at him. After a moment's mutual viewing each other in silence, not knowing they were observed, the Judge was heard to say solemnly to his small visitor, "Were you looking for a lawyer?" In a few days he was dead, and there passed one of the kindest and most lovable of men.

Like all such natures, Judge Williams was extremely sensitive to criticism, though he would not show it, and the zealots of the pulpit who turned upon him and abused him while he was Mayor, because of his attitude on the liquor question, caused him real suffering.

He has passed to that realm where the shrill discords of man fall not upon his ear, and the shame remains with those who assailed him.

As has been said before (but it cannot be too much emphasized), his was not a nature to cherish hatred. He was never moved by malice. In the course of his long and active life -- a greater part of it in an arena of combat -- he was often attacked (and bitterly attacked), as when he was nominated for the Chief Justiceship, and during his services to the City of Portland as its Mayor, but he forgave those who assailed him; he made allowances for human nature and those who have been most intimate with him can bear testimony that he never spoke bitterly of any one and he easily and quickly forgave his enemies.

His life covers the most active part of the history of this country. When it began there was neither railways nor telegraph lines. Travel was by river, canal and coach. Chicago did not exist. Pittsburg and St. Louis were the Western frontier, and in all that has gone to the making of the country and of the State of Oregon he has had a conspicuous part.



He has gone from us and as we review the record he made and the example he has left, we can say we have lost more than the judge and jurist, more than the politician and the statesman. We have lost a good man.

-- C. E. S. Wood.

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GEORGE H. WILLIAMS and the "LANDAULET"  
(Oregonian, July 16, 1907)

An honored name in the history of the country is that of George H. Williams. We are going to say a word now, when he may hear it, and not wait till after he is dead, till we say it. We are moved to it by a remark, in an Eastern newspaper, that "Landaulet" Williams still lives. It is the sneer of a petty and paltry soul. Yes; George H. Williams still lives. His life has been that of a great and honest man. His only weakness has been that of too great trust in the honesty and good nature of his fellow man.

His own abilities have always been equal to the requirements of every station in which he has been placed. Men whom he has trusted have abused his confidence. That is all that ever has been said or could be said against him.

That "landaulet" story, of which so much was made, was purely silly. It was started, as a joke, by ex-Senator James W. Nesmith. Then it was carried into a virulent attack, in conditions or circumstances where reply was impossible. Nesmith, formerly senator, had been elected representative in Congress in 1873. Williams had been nominated by President Grant to the office of Chief Justice of the United States. Somebody had said that Williams, then attorney-general, with his wife, was riding about the city of Washington in a Government landaulet. Nesmith remarked that he "remembered the time when Williams had ridden through the muddy roads of Oregon on the hurricane deck of a mule."

(Note: This utterance of Representative Nesmith's appears in the Congressional Record of April 25, 1874, pp. 3375, 3376, 3378. The House was considering, in committee of the whole, a bill for appropriations for the legislative, executive and judicial expenses of the Government. The items for the attorney-general included \$1400 "for care and subsistence of horses," and \$600 for "repairs to carriages and harness." On motion of Mr. Nesmith, these items were stricken out by a vote of 85 to 69. A long debate preceded adoption of the Nesmith motion, in which Mr. Nesmith said: "This constituent of mine (Attorney-General Williams) is the only one who indulges in this gorgeous, oriental splendor of riding in a \$1600 landaulet. Why,



sir, lawyers of my state, of his caliber, ride upon the outside of a fifty-dollar mule, and think they are doing well at that (Congressional Record, p. 3375) \* \* \* Sir, I have seen as good men as he ride upon a mule; and I have so ridden myself \* \* \* upon one of those useful animals, who have no pride of ancestry and no hope of posterity" (ibid. p. 3378). The item was defended chiefly by Representative George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts.)

From this the landaulet story, with all its variations, was propagated. Nesmith and Williams had disagreed in politics, on the policy of President Johnson. Nesmith stuck to Johnson; Williams was a leader among those who opposed secession; both had upheld the war policy for maintenance of the Union. But Nesmith had not been so strongly opposed, as Williams, to the extension of slavery and to the creation of new slave states. The two differed, therefore, as to what ought to be the status of the negro race after the Civil War. This -- after the Civil War -- made them political opponents. And out of this difference came Nesmith's joke about the landaulet.

The joke was made the basis of a virulent attack on Williams at the time when his nomination, for the position of Chief Justice, was before the Senate. It was made to appear that the possession of a landaulet by the Attorney-General -- that is, by the department of justice -- was "A graft," a steal, unprecedented in the annals of the country. Hence, Judge Williams was dubbed "Landaulet" Williams. He was proclaimed a public thief because the department of justice kept a carriage, for the use of its chief, in his necessary movements about the city of Washington. Some who remember the epithet continue to this day to speak of "Landaulet" Williams.

But in fact that "scandal," as it was called, was one of the most disgraceful and contemptible things of which partisan malice in our country has ever been guilty. We pay our public officers salaries on which it is impossible for them to live, and then we undertake to eke the salaries out by an indirect use of the public funds. In the case of Attorney-General Williams, he was furnished with a carriage, precisely as the other heads of the departments were and long had been -- and as they are to this day. To make him the subject of special condemnation, was contemptibly unfair. It is a shame of a democracy that it is mean and niggardly in small matters, and is continually fearful lest a public officer may be decently paid and provided. All the errors of Van Buren's administration were less hurtful to him than was the belief that, under his administration, the White House had been decently furnished. Oregon's secretary of state (H. R. Kincaid) got the same reproach because he had decently, though plainly, furnished the state offices, including the legislative halls, at Salem. Politicians and press disgrace themselves by the earnestness and malignity with which they scrutinize the expenses incurred, by a public officer, for merely decent living and decent quarters in which to transact public business. If there is less of this now than in former times, it is due to the wholesome growth from primitive to more civilized conditions. Even though we

are getting rid of this picayunish and meanly contemptible spirit, it will not hurt us to remember that the spirit once existed.

At the very time when this tirade against Judge Williams was in full course, a committee on the contingent expenses of the department of justice, appointed for investigation, reported to the House of Representatives that they had examined all the accounts of the department, including that of the carriage of which so much had been made, and found them all regular and correct. The precedents of more than fifty years had been followed in these expenditures and allowances. Vehicles and horses used by the department -- as by all the other departments -- were the same as formerly. Such use continues to this day, with such additions as are necessary for a larger service. No cabinet officer, nor head of any department, has gone back to the "fifty-dollar mule," which Nesmith truly said he had known Williams to ride in Oregon. There was a lot of chaff about it. Mr. Hoar, then in the House, asked Mr. Nesmith if he wanted the Attorney-General to ride up the avenue on a mule, when he went to the supreme court; to which the Oregon member replied that he had seen that dignitary ride on such an animal in Oregon -- whereat the House laughed, of course.

All this had importance only as it bore on the nomination of Judge Williams for the office of Chief Justice, then pending before the Senate. It was such chaff as this that put off action on the nomination from week to week, till Williams, disgusted, asked the President to withdraw his name. Then, presently, Congress made the usual allowance for carriage and horses for the department of justice, which it continues to this day, but with heavy increase. We suppose the incident would not have prevented the ultimate confirmation of Williams, had he held on. But his patience was exhausted by the persistence and petty malignity of the attack; and, as he had dignity in himself, the consideration, which the office might confer, he did not desire.

This episode, in the life of an eminent citizen of Oregon, is part of the history of Oregon. It is now many years since; and The Oregonian only notices it now because of the persistence of a petty slander. Any cheap rhetorical lie, connected with an eminent personality, outlives all contemporary truth. It was only after the passions of the French Revolution had subsided, that the world learned the true history of Queen Marie Antionette's diamond necklace, and weighed the reports which had done much, at a critical time, to inflame the popular passions. "Attend carefully," wrote a contemporary observer of the Revolution, "to the miserable story of the necklace. I should be nowise surprised it should bring the royal family to ruin."

(Oregonian, April 17, 1910)

An insensate partisan and demagogic spirit struck at Judge Williams. Everything is deemed fair in politics, of course. Representative Joseph G. Wilson, of Oregon, had died before the middle of his term;

and James W. Nesmith, formerly Senator, had been chosen, at a special election, to fill out the unexpired term. Nesmith's hatred of Williams was extreme. It arose from difference of temper and of temperament, intensified by the course of Williams on reconstruction measures, and by rivalries in politics in Oregon. Nesmith was chief among those who talked about the "landaulet" -- and other things. He gave the gossiping correspondents at Washington the choicest of their morsels about the carriage and about the family affairs of the Attorney-General in Oregon. Here was the Attorney-General of the United States, riding about in a carriage, at the expense of the toiling millions of the country; yet the speaker had known the time when this same proud and haughty official had been "floundering through the muddy roads of Oregon on the hurricane deck of a mule -- an animal that, as John Randolph had said, had neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity." It would be unbecoming now to repeat other things then said; but there was a paragraph in the "Anecdotes" about Judge Williams, in The Oregonian of April 5 (next day after his death), which will throw light on the subject -- if any one cares to turn back to it.

(Note: Ex-Senator Nesmith, near the end of his life, asked Judge Williams to visit him. The latter was prompt to respond, and called on Mr. Nesmith. Judge Williams kept the episode secret until Mr. Nesmith's death, and then related it to intimate friends. The meeting, as retold after Judge Williams' death, was as follows: "The man had maligned me. He had tried to ruin my good name, he had vilified my wife and family, but, when he sent for me, I went. I saw him a wreck of a man. As a boy, I once saw two men chained in a hut. They were insane. Then the wreck of what were once human minds impressed itself upon me, and when my one-time enemy in the asylum sent for me, I determined, if there was anything I could do to help his wrecked mind, I would. He told me that what he had said of me had been in the height of political controversy, and had never been meant. He said he could not die happy if I did not forgive him. I told him he had been forgiven years ago. That man was happy, and when he died we were the warmest of friends").