

PROMINENT MEN OF THE PACIFIC COAST.

The death of the United States minister to Japan removes another prominent figure from Pacific coast political life. John F. Swift was born in Missouri in 1829. While he was a mere lad his parents removed to Illinois, where the family resided for eight years. When eighteen years of age young Swift went to St. Louis and learned the trade of tinsmith. At twenty-two (in 1850) he crossed the plains to San Francisco, where he engaged in the produce business. He was prudent, energetic and ambitious, and prospered. From early youth he was a reader and student. When he had accumulated

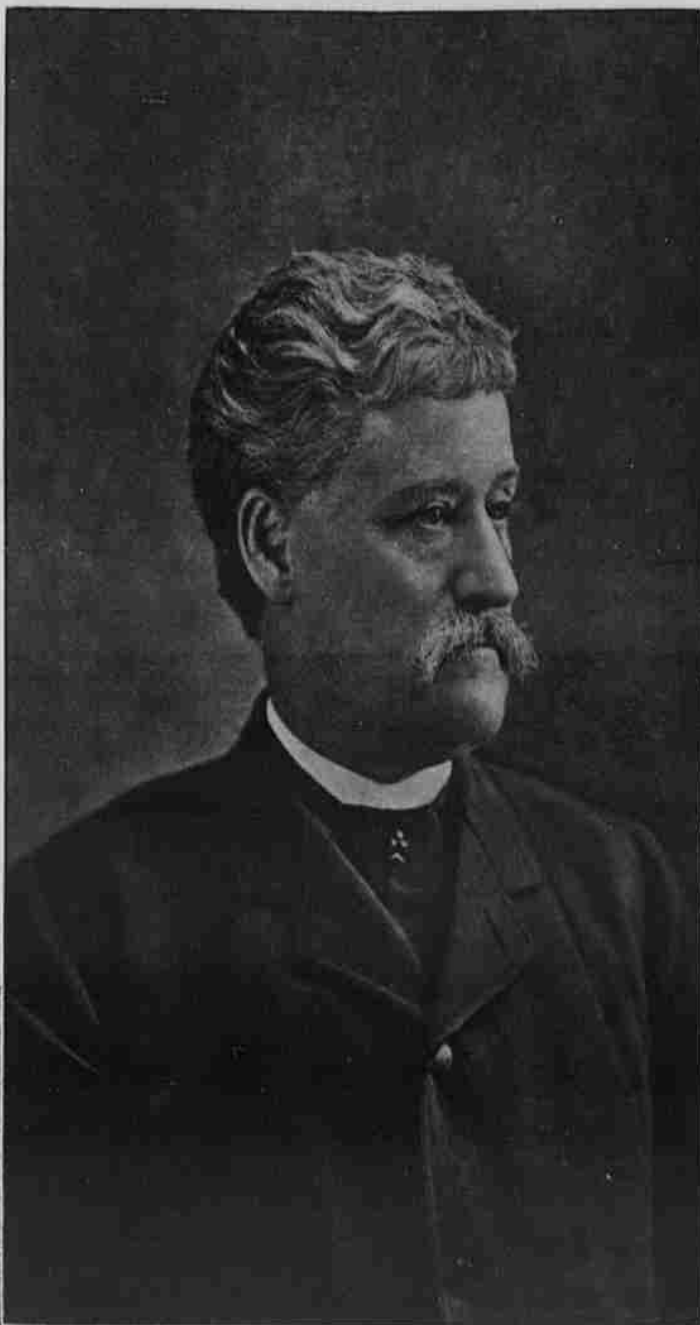
some means through his business, he wisely invested it and turned his attention to the study of the law, being admitted to the bar in 1857. He soon built up a good practice, was successful as an advocate, and accumulated a large amount of money which he used liberally to gratify his literary tastes. He married a daughter of Col. W. G. Wood, who was for many years clerk of the supreme court of California. His writings, his vigorous expression, his bold position on public issues, drew attention to him and led to his election to the state legislature during the twentieth and twenty-second sessions. He was defeated for congress in 1875 by Piper, the democratic candidate in the First California district. Shortly before Lincoln's death he appointed Mr. Swift register of the San Francisco land office, which position he held two years. In 1866 he visited Europe and the holy land, and his published letters while abroad attracted widespread attention. In 1877 he was elected to the assembly from San Francisco, and in 1879 was a prominent candidate for the nomination for governor of California, but the prize was secured by George C. Perkins. In 1880 he was appointed by the president as one of the commissioners from the United States to frame a treaty with China, with a view to checking the influx of Chinese into this country. He then made another trip around the world, enlarging his store of information. In the famous anti-Chinese convention he wrote

the memorial to congress, which was adopted without dissent, and was received in the United States senate with marks of high consideration. It was the chief attainment of that convention, and about all that saved it from complete failure. In 1886 Mr. Swift was nominated for governor by the republican convention, but was defeated by Washington Bartlett, the democratic nominee. In the summer of 1890 he was appointed by President Harrison as minister to Japan, and was discharging his duty as such at the time of his death. Mr. Swift was a man of great force of character, vigor of thought, aggressive, and with profound convictions of the right. As an author he attained an enviable reputation, many of his works being regarded as standard examples

of literary excellence. His views were broad and statesmanlike, and his grasp of public questions was that of a man of courage, depth of thought, broad intelligence and deep convictions.

California has a bribery scandal that completely eclipses that little affair at Olympia. It has been known for a long time that coin was plentiful in Sacramento when a United States senator was to be elected, but hitherto no direct evidence of bribery has been unearthed. Those patriots who biennially went to the state capital to serve the dear people, and incidentally to do what

else profitable their hands found to do, were always astute enough never to put themselves in a compromising position. In Nevada so much circumspection was unnecessary. The senatorship was hung up like a prize, and the man who rolled in the biggest barrel took it; but in California such open methods of auctioneering could not be pursued. Nevertheless, that "fine work" was being done upon such occasions by gentlemen handling money provided by others, was always believed. Not until now, however, was any definite proof of this discovered; but the little memorandum of names and prices found in the library waste basket supplies the evidence. What will the California legislature do? There is a precedent in the action of the lawmakers of Washington. They should immediately appoint a committee of investigation, whitewash the bribe giver and then promptly expel from their midst the man who found the paper and was so "inconsiderate" as to make it known and thus betray his fellow members. Why, if this thing of informing upon bribers is permitted to go on, it will not be long before there will be nothing in senatorial elections at all.



THE LATE JOHN F. SWIFT.

Some English papers, in making comments on recent events, have asserted that the Americans are brutal. This criticism comes with bad grace from a country where wife beating is countenanced by law, and applied to a country where chivalrous protection of women and the

is incorporated everywhere in the laws. Contrast the conduct of American soldiers during the civil war with that of combatants of other nations in civil strife, and the superior humanity and honor of the American shine out with effulgence. Murder, rapine, robbery and plundering of the dead have been inseparably associated with civil war everywhere except in America, where we demonstrated that even in the heat of fraternal strife the inborn instincts of humanity and nobleness of character could not be subdued by passion. Whatever there may be in the American character different from that of other nations, it certainly is not brutality.