

# DEATH MASKS—HOW THE FEATURES OF CELEBRITIES ARE RECORDED



Mask of Fighting Bob Evans



Mask of the Late Senator Carter of Montana



Mask of President McKinley



Mask of Clara Barton



Mask of Late Thomas F. Walsh, Mining Millionaire

WASHINGTON, June 16.—(Special Correspondence).—When Clara Barton died the other day, a death mask was made of the face of this most famous of women by the sculptor of the National Museum, U. S. J. Dunbar, who has probably done more of that kind of work than any other man living. Among other masks he has obtained recently were those of "Fighting Bob" Evans, Senator Carter, of Montana, and the multi-millionaire copper king, Thomas J. Walsh, whose daughter married Edward B. McLean, the present owner of the historic Hope diamond.

Custom has decreed that each President shall leave behind him in the White House a painted portrait of himself. It would be at least equally desirable that "life masks," which are made in the same way as death masks, should be preserved of all the Presidents, not only because of their historic value in themselves, but more importantly for the help they would give to sculptors in the production of accurate busts and statues.

The same remark may be said to apply to other distinguished men. So far as death masks are concerned, it is entirely customary nowadays for the surviving relatives of a person who has been eminent in any walk of life to receive applications for permission to make such a reproduction of the features of the defunct—the idea being either that the family may wish to buy it, or that it may be of value for sculptural purposes. It is not unnatural that many people

should refuse; or that, having declined, they should be sorry afterward that they did so. Only a short time ago, when Justice Harlan died, Mr. Dunbar asked the privilege of making a mask of the great jurist. The family was unwilling, however, having heard of a case where injury was done by the process, the skin of the face being badly torn. Of course, anything may be bungled, but there is not the slightest danger of accident of the kind when the work is done by an expert.

President McKinley died Saturday, September 14, 1900. At once on hearing the news, E. L. A. Fauch, a New York sculptor, wired Secretary Cortelyou for permission to make a death mask, and the request being granted, took a train for Buffalo, arriving there at 9 P. M. the same day. He took the mask at the Milburn residence the next morning, at 7 o'clock, 23 hours after life had become extinct. It was delivered to Mr. Cortelyou at the White House on the following Tuesday, and is now preserved in a glass case at the National Museum.

The mask looks wonderfully like the sculptured face of Napoleon, whom the original in life was considered so markedly to resemble. It lies on a cushion of purple velvet—the face being inclined slightly forward, as if the head were resting on a pillow—and wears the peaceful expression and slight suggestion of a smile which are characteristics of the face of the dead.

In regard to this matter, Mr. Dunbar expresses some very interesting ideas.

For one thing, he states that the expression assumed by the face of a dead person is merely the physical result of attitude. If a dead man be left lying on his face, or on his side, for a number of hours—as may easily happen in case of a murder, or even of sudden death in a lonely place—his features will become set in a distorted way, and may even assume a look of horror. Thus one reads occasionally that an individual who has met his fate through violence "still wears a terror-stricken expression"—the implication being that the latter reflects the state of his feelings at the moment of his demise.

The fact is, however, that if the individual thus tragically done to death had promptly been laid flat on his back, his face would have assumed an entirely peaceful expression. The facial muscles, after life has departed, are absolutely inert, and, responding to the influence of gravity, fall into position accordingly. People ordinarily die in bed; the body is placed on its back, and, when the head is placed in this attitude, all the muscles of the face smooth themselves out. Those of the forehead and about the mouth which by their contraction express anxiety or pain are wholly relaxed, giving the look of a "peace that passeth all understanding," so sadly familiar to us all.

The beginning of a smile in a living person is a relaxation of the muscles at the corners of the mouth. Hence it is that the face of a dead person wears usually a slight smile—a smile of a peculiar kind, inscrutable, as if of knowing at last all that has been in life so mysterious and puzzling. But it is an expression happily suggestive of an unutterable calm, devoid of suffering.

It happened a few years ago that the wife of a retired Admiral in the Navy, residing in Washington, was thrown out of her carriage and killed. Incidentally, her face was much disfigured. Her husband had no portrait of her, and so got Mr. Dunbar to make a cast of her left hand, wearing the wedding ring—this being afterward reproduced in marble.

The making of such casts of dead people's hands, or of hands and arms, is not at all uncommon. One was taken by Mr. Dunbar from the right hand of Chief Justice Waite, of the United States Supreme Court, and another of the hand of Frederick Douglass, the famous negro statesman—who, by the way, was half white. In two instances, also, he has made casts of women's feet, because they were unusually

beautiful, and surviving relatives wished to preserve them.

The sculptor does not use a death mask as a model after which to make a slavish copy for bust or statue. It helps him by measurements, and by preserving such details as wrinkles and the outline of the hair where the latter meets the face. But the main thing gained by it is the reproduction of the bony structure, which does not alter after death, as the muscles.

In some cases a skull is actually modeled from the mask, by measurements of the latter, and upon this the muscles are anatomically laid, in clay, with the help of photographs of the living man, if any are procurable. By such means, with the employment of adequate skill, a counterfeit presentment of remarkable accuracy is obtained—fundamentally mechanical, that is to say, but supplemented in the finishing processes by the artistic talent of the sculptor, for the production of a lifelike expression.

The famous Houdon bust of Washington, by far the most satisfactory existing likeness of that great man, was made from a life mask—which, of course, is much more desirable for the purpose than a death mask. Houdon, a French sculptor of celebrity, was asked by Dr. Franklin to come to this country for the purpose of taking the mask; he did so, and, before his departure, made a mask also of Franklin himself, which is represented today by a bust in the possession of the American Philosophical Society, in Philadelphia. How much more valuable these

are, historically speaking, than any ordinary sculptured likeness is obvious enough, inasmuch as they present to view the very features of the two men, molded direct from the originals.

A life mask is made substantially in the same way as a death mask, the person to be "taken" lying flat on his back while the operation is being performed. But there is this difference, that breathing must be provided for; and the immortal Washington, while the plaster of Paris was waiting to "set" on his face, had to get his supply of air through a small glass tube inserted in one nostril—the tube being provided with a flange to prevent it from falling out.

Sleep has often been called the "sister of death," though not so appropriately as most people imagine. Not only does the face of a sleeper lack the pallor of death, but the facial muscles are alive and do not relax like the inert muscles of the dead. Hence it is that the expression of the face of a sleeper is not in the least like that of the same individual when life has departed.

The process of making a death mask is simple enough. To begin with, the face is covered with vaseline, and a silk thread is laid along from the top of the head to the back for the purpose of being used to describe. Then a thin coat of plaster-of-Paris is applied all over the face with a soft brush, including the ears. It is deemed important to include the ears because they have a great deal to do with expression—much more, indeed, than is commonly supposed.

This first coat of plaster is allowed to "set" partly. It fills all the interstices, preserving the wrinkles and the details. More of the material is not put on at first because its weight would cause the face muscles to sag.

The second coat of plaster is made to cover not only the face, but also the hair, the latter requiring to be reproduced merely in a rough way. Before it "sets," the silk thread is pulled out, so as to divide the plaster mass into two halves, making it easy to remove afterwards.

When hard, it is taken off, and the halves when fastened together form a perfect mold of the face. A cast made from this mold is the death mask. After greasing the inside of the mold with vaseline, the fluid plaster is poured in and made to spread itself over all parts of the inside of the mold. Pieces of burlap saturated with the same fluid are then introduced, and over these more plaster is poured. As soon as the stuff has become hard, the mask is detached from the containing mold, and requires only a little touching up, to remove irregularities, in order to make it a perfect reproduction of the face of the person. It will be understood, of course, that the burlap is to render the mask less fragile.

When, during the French revolution, the human fiend Marat was murdered in his bathtub by Charlotte Corday, the famous Mme. Tussaud, eager to procure so valuable an addition to her collection, went immediately to the house and took a death mask of the victim. This was no very extraordinary performance for her, inasmuch as she had been accustomed day after day to be on hand at the guillotine, and to take masks from the heads of important personages as fast as they dropped into the fatal basket—a task which may be said to have had a certain important usefulness, inasmuch as thereby the physiognomies of many individuals of historic note were preserved.

RENE BACHE.

## THE FIRST SUFFRAGIST HE WAS A PIRATE BOLD, SO INVESTIGATORS FIND



THE original woman suffragist has been found.

Sought for by the London bobby at the behest of the British Parliament, by countless "pressmen" and by thousands of enthusiasts in the cause of "Votes for Women" without avail, it has remained for the suffragists of Boston to discover the primal exponent making for the complete freedom of the sex.

To be accurate, the women of Boston have been able only to establish the identity of this unique individual. To find him would be quite another matter. Members of the British Parliament, who have read thus far with anticipatory emotions of the keenest, may now lay the paper down with the assurance that they will never hear of the original suffragist scurrying out a cell floor in Holloway jail or leading a suffragette army against the House of Commons.

Unfortunately for the cause of women in England, the first suffragist cannot report for duty. If he could, London would probably have to increase her police force or elect a brand-new Parliament, while the undertaker was superintending the "back to the soil" movement being made by the old.

As doubtless the reader has already inferred, the primal protagonist of suffrage was a mere masculine man. Incidentally, he was a pirate.

A bold buccaner, with fierce, bristling whiskers.

The first Duke of Normandy. And his name was Gungu Hrolf. Like most pioneers, Hrolf was more or less of a character. He could not give the women of his time the vote, never having had one himself, but he was the first of his race, according to historical records, to recognize and enforce the rights of women in a community where the rights of the individual man were none too secure. A man of huge stature, indomitable courage and recklessness in battle, he was also a patron of music and the arts.



Gungu Hrolf—The First Suffragist.

Charles, otherwise the Simple, of France.

But all agreed that it was not from the French King's daughter that her illustrious spouse gained his progressive notions. Some sunny-haired daughter of his native Scandinavia must have inculcated the ideas to which he gave expression while conducting the dual affairs of his adopted Normandy. For while the women of France were just as fair and fascinating as they are today, they were equally indifferent to the ballot.

Again it must be remembered that Gungu in his earlier days was a sailor and a pirate, with all that these terms imply. He went and he took, as it were, and it may be that the remorse that this manner of life engendered resulted in his changed opinions in later years. At the same time it should be recalled that in those days piracy was considered quite au fait and was in vogue in many of the best families, so that Gungu Hrolf must not be judged too harshly by his critics.

Gungu was essentially a progressive. He was probably more progressive in many ways than any of the exponents of the most ultra-advanced ideas of the present day. In fact it was largely because of his progressiveness that he became Duke of Normandy and was enabled to express his ideas and ideals in concrete form. As the genial free-booter himself might have said, "It happened this way—"

Having urged his advanced ideas in many parts of the world, in fact wherever the carved prow of his war-galley struck, with varying success for some years, he returned to his own land. There he found a king who was curiously reactionary and opposed to the Hrolfite theories.

On his way to the capital, accompanied by his vikings, Hrolf entered a town which was much like the king in its antagonism to advancement and uplift. Quickly deciding that it was his duty to check this untoward exhibition of revolt against the standard bearers of progress and reform, he proceeded to wipe the town from the map of Scandinavia.

King Becomes Progressive.

When he had completed the job, with the thoroughness for which he was always remarkable, he continued on his way to pay his respects to the king, whom he had not yet learned was a conservative of the most pronounced type. Fortunately, as the reactionaries outnumbered the progressives nearly ten to one, Hrolf discovered his mistake in time, as otherwise this article might never have been written and another martyr to the cause of uplift and humanity's advance might have been made.

Hrolf decided that if his own country

was so far behind the times that it would not get on the bandwagon of progress he would shake its dust from his feet forever. And the faster he did it the better was his decision, for as he had made certain that the king and a large crowd of his strong-arm vikings were close behind him.

So pushing his stanch galley from the shore Hrolf again set sail, this time for the fair fields of France. King Charles the Simple he found to be patterned in much the same mold as the ruler he had lately spurned forever, and equally averse to all reforms. But he did not have so large or so able a following. His organization was not so effective and Hrolf found him in consequence more amenable to reason.

After several discussions of the progressive ideas formulated by Hrolf, some of which history tells were quite heated, the French king threw up the sponge.

"Take Normandy, Hrolf," he said at last, "and which it you will, but leave me the rest of France."

"And for mercy's sake stop telling folks about your queer notions. They're getting the proletariat so upset that I'm sure they'll be running some apple-woman for my job and then where will our organization be?"

Just what Hrolf's answer was or what it might have been had he not previously cast his eye upon the king's fair daughter, history does not record. But it is known that he agreed to the royal proposition with the proviso that the princess be thrown in for good measure. To this Charles was more than agreeable, for the princess had frequently been something of a trial to him and he was bored to death with the ideas of reform that Hrolf had promulgated. He counted himself delivered from two great troubles, made the compact with a good grace, and Gungu Hrolf became the first Duke of Normandy.

Descendant Is Bandmaster.

It was B. A. Rolfe, the Boston bandmaster, who is himself an ardent suffragist, that first brought the fact that Gungu Hrolf was many centuries the first genuine advocate of the rights of women, to the attention of the Massachusetts Suffrage Association. At once several ladies, among them Miss Mary Schlesinger, president of the organization, became interested, and libraries everywhere were ransacked for information about the long-dead Norse invader of fertile Normandy. Many interesting facts were collected and much data obtained that went far to prove that Gungu Hrolf was many centuries in advance of his time.

Indeed, according to many of those who have investigated the records of his deeds and accomplishments, he might be held to be far more progressive than many men of the present day. He is on record as the first man who really deemed woman other than a mere chattel, whose will was only that of her lord and master—man. In spite of her chivalry, she was considered quite proper by all of Gungu's forbears and contemporaries as well to go and take anything they wanted, provided they could do so without the owner of the article battle-axing them. It seems that very early in life Gungu decided that something was wrong with this system.

Nor was it because some one else had taken Gungu's property away from him that he became of this mind. A giant among giants, he received his surname, Gungu, meaning "Walking," because no horse bred in the land could carry him when fully accoutered for battle, and invariably he had to fight on foot. This was in a land which gave the great Percheron horses to the world.

It was the poverty of the country, owing to its lack of vegetation, which compelled the people of ancient Scandinavia to go forth on piratical expeditions as a means of subsistence, and as their livelihood was gained, not by peaceful toil, but by war and pillage, the boldest and the strongest wielded the preponderance of influence. Thus it was that Hrolf, who was more than seven feet tall and the boldest fighter of the fierce Norse band, became a political power as well as a leader in battles of land and sea.

Imbued with a spirit of chivalry, Hrolf established a code for the warriors. Under it a man was compelled to pay a heavy fine for forcing a station to participate in the great horse fights of the day without the permission of its owner. Also it was decided that it was unmanly, and therefore not permissible, to attack one champion while he was engaged in fighting another.

He ruled that no man over 50 or under 18 years of age should fight in these tournaments to the death. Formerly aged men and boys of 12 years were frequently pitted against warriors in their prime. No man would run from one equally equipped. The circulating of slander was not tolerated. However hopeless a fight might look, none could utter a word of fear, according to the code.

Equality With Man.

But the greatest good worked by the powerful "Walking" Hrolf was the elevation of woman to a social and political equality with man. No woman was to be captured or robbed. A man's life was forfeited if it was proved that he carried a woman aboard a viking ship without her consent.

If a house was fired in vengeance, the women were allowed to leave first. This consideration for woman, once

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