

# THE EUGENE CITY GUARD.

ESTABLISHED FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, AND TO EARN AN HONEST LIVING BY THE SWEAT OF OUR BROW.

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The Most

## Competent Workmen

Are employed, and I will endeavor to give satisfaction to all who may favor me with a call.

A. S. CURRIE.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

The Poet's Curious Career as a Young Man in Oregon.

(S. F. Post.)

The papers have had much to say lately of "Joaquin" Miller and his daughter Maud. Permit me to have my say about "Joaquin." I was running a newspaper in Eugene City, Oregon, in 1862, and in May of that year there came into the office a slender young man, a little above medium height, of fair complexion and genteel appearance, neatly dressed, who was introduced to me as "Hine" Miller. Stukely Ellsworth, the leading lawyer of Lane county, and among the ablest of the bar of Oregon, introduced him. At that time there was a "gold excitement" in the northern part of Idaho Territory, and Florence and the Elk and Pierce diggings were much talked of. Miller had been there—in each district. Many in Eugene City and in Lane county felt an interest in the matter, and some had relations in those diggings. With the common spirit of newspaper men I desired to obtain all the information I could of the gold region. Miller told me he had ridden the weekly express—carrying packages of gold, letters, etc., between Lewiston, at the junction of the Snake and Clearwater rivers, and all these mining camps—and that he knew the country very well. Said I: "Please sit down and draw me a rough sketch of it," and I motioned to him a chair on the other side of the table at which I sat. With a sangfroid that was overpowering he responded, "I will sit here and give it to you." It was to my own chair he directed his index finger—I in authority and he so many years my junior. It was cheek; but also it was genius, and I humored him in his sublime nonchalance and charming impertinence.

SOME STYLE ABOUT HIM.

He wore neat fitting kid gloves, a rarity in interior Oregon at that period even in "our best society." And his, I noticed, were handsome, delicately formed hands; the gloves a thorough fit, Jouvin's best. He took my chair as though it was his, not mine, as I rose to give it to him, reached for a sheet of foolscap upon the table and with pencil, drawn from his own pocket, drafted for me a map of the region, with its streams, trails and details, every camp and all the diggings defined, and then, on my own narrow editorial sheet, added such succinct description of the different ditches and tributaries relating to each as to more than satisfy me. His "bossy" manner amused me, but he more than recompensed me by his information. Years afterward, in traveling over the region he had delineated, I learned the accuracy of his rough sketch and the fidelity of his details.

That afternoon I saw Ellsworth and asked him, "Who and what is the young Miller you brought into my office this morning; he is a sort of genius, isn't he?" Stukely gave an account of him and said: "Why, his father is one of your subscribers, a solid old farmer a few miles from town, and his mother is one of the best old ladies we have in the country. Hine (pronounced like Hiney) is a queer boy, but I guess he is all right. His father, Hulin Miller, is one of our best men; I will make you acquainted with him the next time he comes to town." And he did; also presented me to Mrs. Miller, Joaquin's mother, a lady, by the way, of superior worth and intelligence. Hulin Miller was a careful, thrifty farmer, well-to-do, and respected by all who knew him. Cincinnati Hine Miller, the "Joaquin" of whom the world knows, was a wayward boy of romantic turn and wild, rather than vicious.

HE JOINS THE INDIANS.

One of his mad pranks was his running away from home, where he was loved and petted, and journeyed into Northern California, where he took up with the Indians, the Modocs, I believe. Now, to steal horses is as much an Indian virtue and accomplishment as was that order of theft among the Spartan youths which prompted one of them to suffer the stolen fox concealed beneath his garment to gnaw him to death sooner than to disclose the act which he had committed, for it was not the stealing but the detection which was unpardonable. And, if I do not err, it was in an escapade of this horse fancying order in which Joaquin received the bullet wound in his leg which has caused in him the imitation of the Byronic lump, which sometimes still troubles him, or which he at other times in erratic mood affects. My impression also is that it was the late General David D. Colton, then Deputy Sheriff of Siskiyou county, who gave the fleeing Joaquin the wound, but he didn't catch him, nevertheless. How Joaquin separated from his Indian friends I never learned, never cared to learn. But he was early among the gold-hunters of the Florence boom

period, and from that country returned to Oregon to "settle down." He was bright and ambitious. He studied law with Hon. N. H. Cranor, of Albany, and subsequently succeeded me in the editorship of the newspaper in Eugene City, the name of which he changed to the Review. In the columns of that paper he first began his literary work, a story with some merit, and he chose the non-de-plume of De Weaver. On account of the Southern sympathy the Review manifested in those days, 1862, the government suppressed it from the mails and Joaquin's occupation as editor was gone.

"MINNIE MYRTLE."

A favorite and talented contributor to the Review, in verse and prose, was Minnie Myrtle, whose home was in Coos county. Her writings gave evidence of that spirit of romance in which Joaquin himself delighted. A correspondence of familiar, and, finally, of loving order followed. This led to a proposition of marriage and its acceptance. The story goes, although I never put faith in it, that Joaquin rode the hundred and odd miles from Lane county to the home of his betrothed, reached the house at a late hour of the afternoon, was instantly admitted, and there in the room with his lady love found a young man, a rustic of the neighborhood, whom he at once suspected was a sutor for her hand; that he immediately drew a six-shooter and peremptorily bade the young man to "git," which the young man did. But whatever the story, or the truth of it, Joaquin and Minnie Myrtle were duly joined in matrimony, and the strangely wedded pair made their wedding "tour" to Lane county, and at the home of Joaquin's parents the honeymoon was passed. Bouyant and jubilant, with more brains than dollars, the two were alike inspired with the pride of literature and ambitious of name and fame in the realm of letters, of authorship and poetry. There was no field for them in Oregon. They believed there was in San Francisco, and thither departed, alike confident and exultant; they felt that a bright future was before them; it could not be behind them. Bret Harte was then emerging into notice, James H. Bowman, was an acknowledged litterateur and there were other and struggling aspirants to the Mount of Parnassus, to the seat upon Pegasus. It would be an amusing narrative of hopes and fears, of plenty and privation, of confidence and dubiety, of shifts and makeshifts, were the manner of the life of Joaquin and his "Minnie Myrtle" in San Francisco to be given. It was not exactly from palace to hovel; but if it was not in basement, it actually did get to garret, and more than once was their banquet a Duke Humphrey feast. They learned, in severe practice and experience, the vicissitudes of fortune common to "Grub street" writers of the last century, and as the rosate hues were dissipated by the chilling blasts of refusal and neglect, there came upon them the compelling sense of the story of the Prodigal, and with grateful response to the "welcome home" of Joaquin's parents, the two hastened back to Oregon. They had been taught the first sad lesson in the curriculum of literature—how easy it is to write; how hard it is to live by writing only.

MILLER ON THE BENCH.

For two or three years I lost track of Joaquin. In the spring of 1866, on a political canvassing tour in Eastern Oregon, I visited Canyon City, the county seat of Grant county, a mining camp of considerable importance. I was invited to call upon the County Judge, and accompanied my friend to the Judge's chambers. There sat Joaquin Miller—not Joaquin then, but Cincinnati Hine, in strange judicial dignity. It was a warm day. His "chambers" in a small room of a low frame building, a rude pine table, shelves with law books stored, a big fireplace and a carpeted floor. His "honor" was singularly dressed, in a great overcoat of plain fabric, vest unbuttoned, pantaloons frayed at the terminations, and on his feet slippers of thick wool, thick enough for Arctic climate. He was courtly and courteous; it is the nature of the man. He may affect the eccentric, but Joaquin Miller is an inbred gentleman, he inherits it, and the quality belongs to him beyond his queer fancy of some times departing from it. His home was a pattern of his "chambers"—confusion worse confounded.

Four years pass. I was publishing a daily newspaper in Portland, Oregon. Joaquin Miller had served his time as County Judge of Grant county, had refused a renomination, which would have been equivalent to a re-election, had left that county, and was bent upon visiting the Eastern States and Europe. He tarried some time in Portland, and was the welcome guest of Colonel W. W. Chapman, a pioneer, whose excellent wife was a relation of Mrs. Miller. His poem, "The Willanette," gave him local fame. It is one of his finest. Children had been born to him. He had been an indul-

gent husband and a kind father, affectionate and mindful; but his was not a happy home. His Minnie Myrtle was neither of his order nor his taste. I do not know whether she is living or dead, (She is dead, and was cared for in her last illness by Mr. Miller.—Ed. Post.) and I write nothing in other spirit than that which would inspire the man or justify the writing. The two ought never to have married. He was the more sinned against than sinning, and this is said without reproach to his wife. No impeachment of her wifely virtue is intended. They were married, not matched or mated. With all his eccentricity of behavior and dress, Miller was a man of taste and gallantry.

He went to Europe. He was a devotee of Byron. He visited Newstead, the home of Byron. He met Swinburne, and the two made fellowship. It was congenial. With his poems and writings since it is not my purpose now to deal. He had his admirers and his detractors, his commentators and his critics. I am not in the list, and I never will be missed, as the "Mikado" puts it.

A VENGEFUL EX-WIFE.

But let me state some things of Joaquin, in respect the stories about him and the treatment of his daughter Maud, now circulated, in which is involved the relations between himself and the Minnie Myrtle of his first love. She had brought and won the suit against him for divorce in Oregon while he was absent in Europe, in 1871. The children remained with her. Remittances regularly came from him for their care, nevertheless, ample for their charge and support. Joaquin returned to Oregon as a visitor, and not with purpose of residence. It was in November, 1872. He came in modest way, seeking no notoriety, although his fame as a poet had been broadly announced. He was invited by the Portland Library Association to deliver an address on the evening preceding Thanksgiving day of that year, and had accepted the invitation. I was at that time publishing the the Daily Bulletin, in Portland. The evening after the announcement of Miller's lecture had been made, Mrs. Miller, accompanied by Mrs. Jane A. Dani-way, a lady who edited the New Northwest, a weekly paper devoted to the woman's rights cause, called in my room to have advertised the lecture of Mrs. Miller, entitled, "Behold the Woman." The lecture was to be given at the Oro Fino Theatre, on Sunday evening, November 26th.

I advised against a Sunday evening lecture, inasmuch as the people of Portland were not in favor of Sunday evening lectures or entertainments, and, furthermore, that as Mr. Miller was announced to give an address before the Library Association on the evening of Monday, the 27th of November, the lecture by his divorced wife might be considered inopportune, if not indelicate. Every suggestion and opposition was overruled, however, and the Sunday night lecture was persisted in, and duly advertised. Mr. Miller came from Salem to Portland on Sunday morning, the 26th. He stopped at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, kept by Zeiber & Holton. Mrs. Miller delivered her lecture "Behold the Woman," at the Oro Fino Theatre that evening. On Monday Mrs. Dani-way told me that from her seat on the stage she watched Mr. Miller in his seat in the parquet, and observed him wince under the scoring which his divorced wife administered in the course of her remarks—her lecture having been intended for that purpose. That evening Mr. Zeiber, of the hotel informed me that Mr. Miller had not attended the lecture, and that he had spent the whole evening with him in the office room of the hotel. He did, however, decline to deliver the promised address before the Portland Library Association the next evening and the reason was his consideration for the woman, no longer his wife, by her own application for divorce, but for whom he had still tender regard, as he had fatherly concern for their children.

I remember little Maud as a child. I knew "Joaquin" in his early manhood. I am pretty well informed as to his "Minnie Myrtle." She married again, in Oregon, and, I think, more in the order of her nature, that is, of compatibility of temperament. But to visit the sins of that unhappy union upon "Joaquin" Miller is altogether unjust, and the honest fact yet remains, that he is better than they describe him. JAMES O'MEARA.

The Pittsburg Tribune says that in that city the use of gas has thrown out but an average of fifteen men in each mill, or six hundred in all. There are now 24,000 men employed in the iron and steel mills of that city. The change to natural gas fuel is felt severely among the coal miners.

The Mormons threaten to move to the Sandwich Islands. If they should do so it might drive the leprosy out of the islands.