

## Pen Portrait of Gov. Adams

Interesting Sketch of Colorado's New Executive—Although a Democrat He Has Always Been Elected by Republican Votes—A Strong and Sterling Character.

REGARD Gov. Adams as one of the most admirable men in public life in Colorado.

Every man will have his own ideal of what is admirable. Ex-Gov. Adams is a representative of my ideal. I hold that man most admirable who has made the most of the talents entrusted to his keeping. In this, I believe, my opinion has a high and ancient sanction.

I do not by any means contend that ex-Gov. Adams is the strongest man in the state, nor the wisest, nor the best. I mean only—well, I mean just what I have said. I admire him because he has had the purpose and the perseverance to make the most of himself and because the product of his efforts is excellent.

He is a good man, a wise man and a strong man, the sort of man that a sensible father might safely point out to an ambitious son as a fair all round example of ambition, sensible manliness for the boy to observe and emulate. That is certainly a most honorable distinction. It is a distinction that but few men, even among those of whose faculties or achievements we might justly speak in the superlative degree, attain to. The character of men, whose talents and force of intellect place them in the highest rank are nearly always so hampered in some respects as to render them dangerous examples. Undiscriminating youth, seeing such men successful, are liable to not conclude that they have succeeded by virtue of their faults. It takes experience to discover that they have really succeeded only in spite of their faults.

Many of the men whose talents and force of character carry them to the heights of financial or political achievement are guilty of the meanest lying, chicanery, knavery and ingratitude, and these visible faults betray the judgment of young and inexperienced men into the mistaken inference that lying, chicanery, knavery and ingratitude have contributed to the success.

No conclusion could be more false and short-sighted, no inference more blindly and unwarrantably drawn. It is all a deceptive seeming—and pitifully disastrous in the short-sighted inference drawn from the damnable delusion, for if any one truth is written more plainly over the whole history of the human race than another it is that no man ever succeeded in life except by virtue alone, and that his faults were but a drag and hindrance to that force of character which impelled him upward.

If the faults were in preponderance they must have impelled such men downward instead of up, by a spiritual force as universal, as resistless and to the reflecting mind as obvious as gravitation.

But short-sightedness will not be cured by argument. Reflection—with whatever light of reason one can—is its only palliation.

There is a wrong, a fatally wrong and infectious impression abroad, debasing public life, and the lesson I would enforce from my own limited observation is that no virtue of itself, neither truth nor the nicest loyalty to honor, ever since the world began, disadvantaged any man in politics—nor was ever, of itself, sought but a most positive help whose influence was limited only by the force of character impelling it. Backed by equal force, truth and honor will win every time unflinchingly against falsehood, chicanery in any community on earth where the trial is made before any considerable number of men.

Though I am sermonizing somewhat, this is no Sunday school flapdoodle, but irrefragable philosophy—or psychology, if you will. It is this and it cannot be by any possibility be otherwise. To doubt it is to disclose an incapacity to understand the restless instincts of human nature—but observe, the "equal force" is a sine qua non.

It is impossible to expect virtue which will not exert itself and keep its eyes open, to win in public life.

Truth and honor will often limp and be timid and bear-eyed and slow, where falsehood and chicanery come into the battle nimble and bold and clear-visaged and swift.

The debasing blunder is to regard such as a necessary condition of truth and honor.

Courage and cleverness and generosity are admirable even in the worst cause—and pity to say, they often figure prominently in the worst. But of themselves they are virtues of character, not vices. There is certainly no need a man should be a liar and a scamp to be courageous and clever and generous.

Even justice itself may be rendered so hateful by the absence of generosity that men will reject it.

But as for the cunning politician in politics that whinnies pleads the right of victory for virtue without any proof of battle, I have no use for it. It is an unwholesome thing and I rejoice to see it crushed every time. Neither have I any profound and abiding respect for honesty without sense that rushes bawling and blundering into the arena ready to club everybody into sudden and undesired reforms.

Virtue without any backbone and virtue with nothing but backbone, are two extremes from which the Lord deliver us.

Any sort of government is some sort of compromise and patience and toleration are virtues as essential to public liberty as courage is.

I shall not be guilty of the absurdity of presenting Gov. Adams as a perfect man or a perfect politician. I present his character to the young men of the state—the youth just coming into manhood and the serious political duties of democratic citizenship—only as an admirable example of a high average of ambition, of capacity, of dutifulness, of industry and perseverance, of courage, of self denial, honorableness, discretion, good judgment, taste and refinement of general excellence, in a state where there is no paucity of admirable manhood and high political sense.

I could, of course, mention men of Colorado more devoted to goodness; plenty of men far wiser in special lines of thought; plenty of men just as dutiful toward the public and many men of (or only perhaps of) greater political sagacity. But I think none of us one I could mention—or certainly not more than one—who presents quite so admirable an average of dutifulness and cleverness and sound political sense.

It would be a wrong to a just public estimate of excellent citizenship to place any man in the state before ex-Governor Grant, who with the cares of the largest private business in the state of Colorado on his head, offered himself last year as district school director. That is a supreme example of dutiful democratic citizenship not frequently matched in American history—not nearly so frequently, I am sorry to confess, as in recent English history.

Nothing is more necessary to public liberty than the fairest and freest right

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to criticize the public acts of public men, but there is an injury to public sentiment—recognition is "wiped" when we judge a public man, as too often we of the press do judge and speak, by his faults alone. The best of us—the best man that ever lived—would cut a shabby figure judged solely by his faults. It is safest to assume toward any servant, public or private, that he has about the average of good motive, and that man or woman is a very poor servant indeed, public or private, who is spoiled by a generous recognition of their merits.

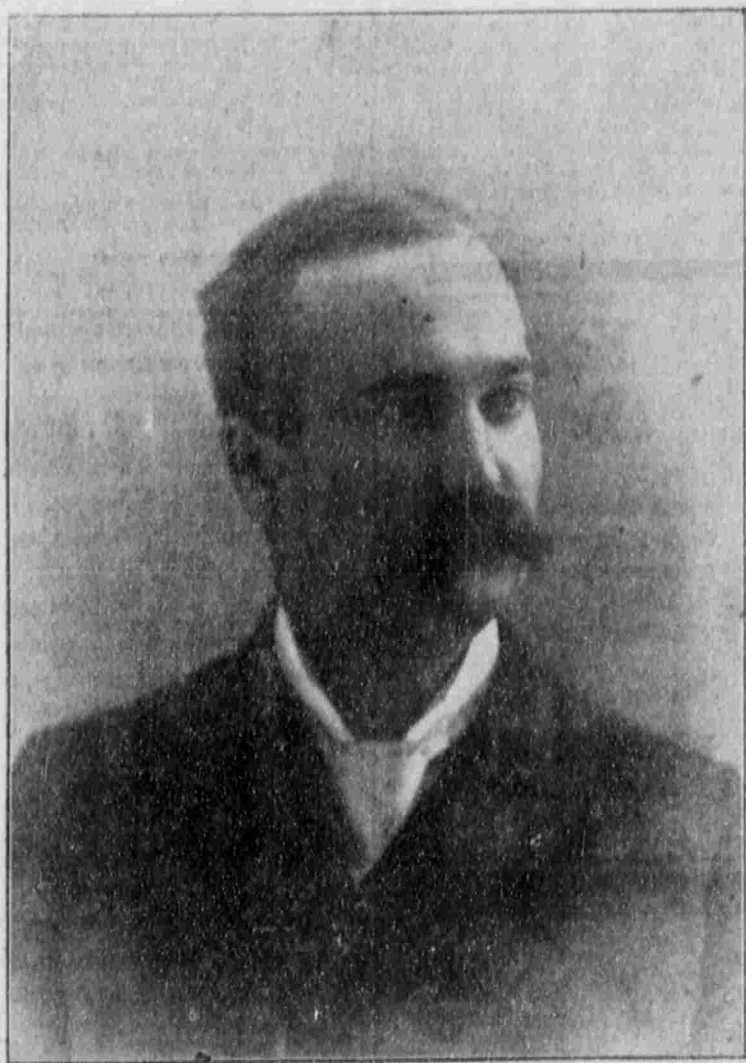
The reflection that fills me with admiration for Senator Patterson and ex-Governor Adams more than any other consideration is that both began the life of manhood here in Colorado about as poor as young men can well be who have only an opulence of courage and ambition for their capital, and that both, by means equally open to any

governor of Colorado ever what he was 10 years ago, when we made him governor the first time—and he was one of the best in our line of governors even then.

He is distinctly a bigger sort of governor this time. He has grown—that is the reason.

Will those unrecognized young men I have mentioned, the young lawyers, doctors, clergymen, journalists and teachers, who are chafing in discontent, with their idle heels on office tables and with unread volumes lying about while they contemptuously reflect how much greater men they would be in the place of Gov. Adams or Mr. Patterson—will they grow at all in the next 10 years? I have my doubts—the unread volumes and their fine contempt of small but steady effort are against their chances. When the dry rot gets hold of one of those fine fellows he is about as good as done for. The first and surest symptoms of the shocking malady is contempt of small effort, the fine determination to do nothing but what is great.

Gov. Adams "struck the state" 37 years ago "without a nickel" in his clothes. He was an unusually handsome, "fresh-complected" lad, quick witted and full of ambition and energy. He might have made some sort of a stagger at doing penwork if he could have got a clerkship which, fortunately



GOVERNOR-ELECT ADAMS OF COLORADO.

poor young man possessed of courage and ambition, have risen to the foremost rank of respect and public influence.

I think Patterson had no more money at the start than Adams, and I know that Adams had not so much as a dollar.

Both are now wealthy men and better to say their wealth is the least part of them. There are many wealthier men in the state who have nothing at all but their wealth—what a pitiful hoard! Wealth is only honorable when it is the fruit of ambition, not of greed—ambition for a wider, fuller life. Greed cramps and shrivels the soul not less, but even more than poverty.

The getting of money has not shriveled the generous ambitions of either of these men. They are neither miser nor spendthrifts. Adams has been a little more indulgent to himself than Patterson. He has traveled a good deal both on this continent and abroad. His nature is softer and his intellect less self-reliant than Patterson's, but I do not think he has been more indulgent and helpful to others. Both are kind and helpful. They can't help everybody; no one can. The world is crowded with dreary incompetents whose careless need arises largely from unrestrained habits of self-indulgence. Both of these admirable men missed the advantages of a good primary education. I do not mean that they missed the common school education, but a college education, which is primary enough God knows for the requirements of life on any plane above the lowest. Both had the intelligence to recognize the disadvantage early, and set diligently about correcting it. Patterson could now, without violence, be called a scholar—he has the habit of systematic and continuous mental application and his learning, if not classical, is varied and sound. With a wider range of mental sympathies—the desire to know something of everything—the mind of Adams has a more superficial, a less possessive grasp. What Adams would naturally desire is culture—that soft something (or a little mind of a pleasurable process of absorption). He has acquired it. He is a man of very nice appreciation of that sort of thing—quite unusually so for a man who has dug up his own fortune.

Patterson, with a mind of a rugged type and a more possessive grasp, would naturally find more to his taste a regular corn-beef diet of substantial and exact learning—something to be "wrestled with" and digested and put away in the bank of the brain subject to slight draft at any emergency.

He also has captured what he began early in life to pursue. Both of them have had a continuous mental growth. Adams is 47 and Patterson is 57 and both are growing still. Both of them have made a very noticeable growth. I first knew them 14 years ago. Both of them will continue to grow mentally for the next 1,000 years, if they live and pursue the same mental regimen.

That is a point I wish to emphasize in this political sermon for the special benefit of those ambitious young men in every city and little village in the state—young lawyers, young doctors, young clergymen, young journalists and young teachers whose brains are shriveling from dry rot while they are waiting for the recognition which they are so confident they deserve—far more confident (and this means you) than they will be when they deserve it better.

To them I would say that mental growth depends on faithful mental effort and that mind growth is conducive to longevity as well as to force of character and pecuniary profit and political recognition or any manner of distinction.

More ambitious, but "unrecognized" young men die in the United States of the dry rot in a year than are lost to their country and to fame in a century by overwork of the brain.

As soon as the brain stops growing it begins to decay. Patterson is 57, and a big man, yet I expect to see him a good deal bigger, and younger than he is today.

As for Adams, he would make no shabby figure as president of the United States today and I will guarantee that he will be as much better qualified to be president at 57 as he is now to be

ly he couldn't in time to meet the pressing necessities of his case. He had skill, however—having been bred on a Wisconsin farm—with an instrument, more powerful than either the sword or the pen for the elevation of the world, namely the shovel.

He immediately began to elevate the world by the shovel on a railroad grade between Denver and Boulder. In 17 years from that day he threw his first shovel of dirt for the improvement of Colorado he was governor of the state and reckoned to be worth about \$200,000 or better. Since then he has doubled his fortune and continued to improve his mind. Now he is governor again, and he is so cultivated a man, so broad, so prudent, so capable that nobody who knows him and appreciates his capacity for further growth doubts at all that he would make a very respectable figure as president of the nation—not, of course, that we expect to see him president or that he expects it. But the best thing is to be worthy of it. That cannot be an accident, while the getting of it may be.

The interesting and instructive inquiry I would wish to put all the discontented, ambitious young men of the state upon is, what has become of all the other 17 men of that grading gang who were associated with Gov. Adams in the elevation of the world that first day 27 years ago?

Have they had a good time of it since? Have they continued to grow, or are they still at the gravel-pit? They must have been sturdy young fellows then, full of hope and energy, and (perhaps, and perhaps not; it would be interesting to know), of ambition. Their opportunities that day were the same as his. Whatever difference there is now is a difference that had its root in character.

The keynote of Alva Adams' character throughout has been—purpose. He is not a great man, but he is a good man, a clever man, an ambitious and cultivated man. He has made the most of the excellent talents with which nature endowed him and that is why he seems to me the most admirable man in the state. What he is he has made himself, and my heart goes out in unreserved sympathy toward the high and honorable and forcible character he has established. But a problem that haunts my imagination is, what has become of the 17 others. I wish I could write their history in connection with his. It would be a great lesson.—Fitz-Mac, in George's Weekly.

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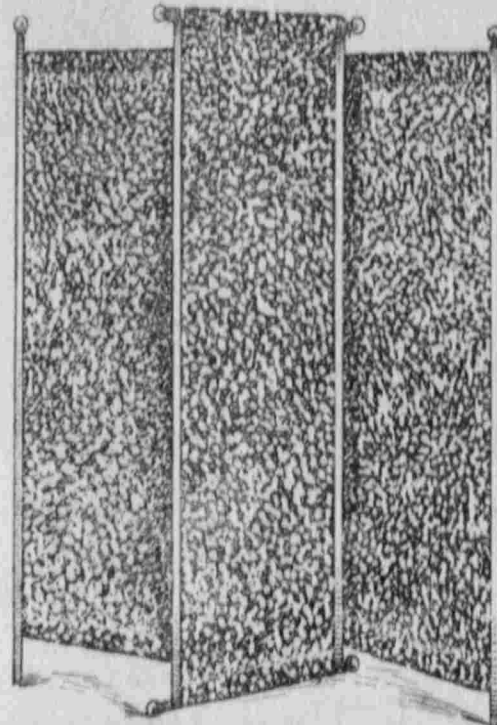
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