



CHARLES MASON, CHIEF JUSTICE OF IOWA (TERRITORY AND STATE), 1838-47.  
This portrait with the facsimile of Judge Mason's oath of office were published  
in Vol. 11, 3d series of THE ANNALS. They are reprinted here as  
illustrations to Mr. Yewell's article, by request of  
the friends of Judge Mason.

## REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES MASON.

BY GEORGE H. YEWELL, N. A.

### PART II.

During the four years that passed between the last letter and the following, my home, with the exception of a short visit to the United States in the winter of 1871-2, had been in Italy. The summer and autumn months had been passed, part of the time in Perugia and part in Venice, in the making of studies in color of architectural interiors, and sketches of the picturesque material abounding everywhere in that magical country, to be made into pictures in my Roman studio during the remaining portions of the year. I had looked forward to a day when I might have the pleasure of welcoming Judge Mason and his family to Rome, knowing well with what interest he would view its surrounding landscape and the ruins of its mighty temples and palaces.

In the last sentence of the following letter there is an indication of a possible passing away of the "gloomy apprehensions" regarding the future of his country. A faint gleam of hope seems to have arisen in his mind that the future might have better things in store than had been discerned through his fears.

BURLINGTON, Nov. 26, '72.

*My Dear Sir:* I have allowed your esteemed favor of April 14th to remain long unanswered; at first because I was under a mistaken impression that I had replied to it, and afterwards when satisfied that this was an error, and I commenced a letter to you some weeks ago, I was prevented from completing it by having mislaid your address. Dr. Ransom told me he thought he could furnish it to me, and finally yesterday he did so.

We are all at home and very well. We remained in Burlington through the summer except that I had to make two journeys east and shall probably have to make a third one in a very few weeks. We found our house so airy and comfortable that we did not feel disposed to leave it to go pleasure-seeking elsewhere. We all have a desire to travel—though my wife's

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NOTE.—Through inadvertence the name of Stephen Whicher was given in the first article as one of the commissioners to revise and codify the laws of Iowa. It should have been Stephen Hempstead, of Dubuque County.

ambition in that respect is very limited. But the inconveniences and obstacles to be overcome in leaving our house have thus far proved insurmountable. I do not know that I shall ever attempt to cross the ocean but hope at least to cross the continent at no distant day, which will be a much less arduous undertaking. In fact, if it was more difficult of accomplishment than it is, I should perhaps be more likely to attempt it, for those undertakings which require comparatively little effort are often longer postponed than those which call forth more planning and greater energy.

I suppose you are back again in Rome for the winter. I should like for one season to breathe the same balmy air as that inhaled by the stalwart old republicans and patriots who have long been the theme of my admiration. Our winters are too severe, but then they are our own. A few days ago our thermometer indicated three degrees, and a year previous at about the same date it was three or four degrees below zero. It is now pleasant and mild again, but I rather dread the severe cold that I know is in store for us before many weeks.

I was in Iowa City for a few days in June in attendance upon a convention of the Episcopal Church and passed my time very agreeably. It is becoming a delightful city with many pleasant people, and they seemed very desirous to make our stay agreeable. I met with several of your acquaintances who spoke kindly of you and your good wife. Mrs. Morrison, whom I think you knew, is now on a visit to her friends in Burlington.

Our city is feeling its importance and is beginning to take on airs. We are having a large opera house to be completed in the spring. The walls, are now nearly completed. We expect to enjoy the luxury of water works and horse railways in the streets within a year, and it will I hope at no distant day become somewhat of an attractive place, especially for those who have long regarded it as their home.

The result of our election disappointed me very considerably. At least I had hopes of a very different result six months ago. But as the decisive day drew near I saw the indications of a new defeat so unmistakably that I was gradually prepared for the result which I have some faint hope will not prove as fatal to the cause of true republican liberty as I have anticipated in case a military executive was again placed over us. It seems to me that our civil war is to be followed with the same fruits as those of Rome. When a republican people lay aside the weapons of intellect for those of force, power usurps the realm of reason, and imperialism in some of its forms predominates to the overturning of all the safeguards that serve as barriers against oppression. I look upon the future of the republic with gloomy apprehensions, but still I shall be glad to find myself mistaken.

Truly Yours,

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

CHAS. MASON.

A great and ever-abiding sorrow came into the life of Judge Mason when, as far back as 1853, or it may have been

a little earlier, two young daughters died within a short time of each other, of diphtheria, if I remember rightly. I shall never forget the expression upon his face when he told me of his loss, during a visit to New York shortly afterward. He was a very tender-hearted man, and his affections strong and lasting. The second great sorrow came late in March, 1873, with the death of his wife. When that occurred he seemed almost to have reached the limit of his interest in worldly things. He lived only for his remaining daughter, Mary, whose devotion to him was untiring. In the following July she was married to Captain George C. Remy, now Rear Admiral Remy, of the United States Navy.

GENEVA, Switzerland, September 15th, '73.

*My Dear Sir:* You will probably be surprised to receive a letter from me dated at this place, and to be told that we expect to be in Rome toward the end of next month, when I suppose we may safely visit that city. We left home the 17th of July, landed at Queenstown, passed through Ireland, Scotland and England, crossed over to Belgium, visited Amsterdam and other places in Holland, passed up the Rhine through Cologne, Mayence and Strasburg, and then on by way of Basle to this place. We have just returned from an excursion to Chamouni and the glaciers, coming back by Montigny and around by the lake.

Perhaps you have not yet heard of the changes which have taken place in our family within the last six months, one of which you doubtless expected. Mrs. Mason died the last of March, and Mollie was married a few days before we left on our journey. She and her husband are with me. It is only on her account that I am in Europe. For myself I would have much preferred remaining at home. But she had been for a long time calculating on this journey on the occasion of her marriage, and when her mother was dead, she determined not to go at all unless I would accompany her, and rather than disappoint her, I concluded to go.

Our journey has been as pleasant as we had any reason to expect. I lost my appetite for two days in crossing the Atlantic, but on the whole we had a very favorable time. Since landing in Ireland it has rained almost every day till we started on our excursion to Chamouni. But it has so happened that the weather has been comparatively pleasant and the rains, if any, very light when we were most needing pleasant weather, with but one or two exceptions.

On our trip to Chamouni the weather was as fine as we could have desired it, and the atmosphere perfectly clear until yesterday, after we had started in the cars for this place.

We shall remain here today and leave tomorrow for other towns and places in Switzerland and Germany, expecting to reach Vienna about the

last of the month or early in October. From thence we shall probably visit the towns in northern Italy, and gradually wend our way towards Rome, which we shall not expect to reach before the 20th of October.

Should you receive this before the end of September, please write me at Vienna, giving information and suggestions as to our best course in reaching Rome. Please direct to me to the care of the Anglo-Austrian Bank, Vienna, where I shall obtain my letters.

My daughter unites with me in love to you all. Her husband sends his regards.

Yours Truly,

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

CHAS. MASON.

The foregoing letter reached me at the picturesque old city of Perugia, where many of our Italian summers were spent. I wrote to Vienna and invited them to visit us at Perugia on their way to Rome, which they did. The re-union was pleasant, and there was much in the beautiful Umbrian mountain country surrounding us, and in the old Etruscan city itself, to interest Judge Mason and draw him out, for a time, from the cloud of sadness that enveloped him. Their stay was short, but we saw more of them later at Rome. Here he found abundant material to occupy his time and attention. Judge Mason had always seemed to me like a noble Roman born into the nineteenth century, and his presence in Rome was as that of one come to see the ruins of the home of his ancestors.

His active mind became at once interested in many things that concerned the welfare or hindered the progress of the growth of the modern city. The condition of the Roman Campagna and its malarious atmosphere at once claimed his attention, and his mind was busily occupied with searching for the underlying causes of its poisonous exhalations and the means to be employed in destroying the fever-breeding miasma that covered, like a funeral pall, a most interesting and beautiful stretch of country.

In my early days in Rome I kept a journal until, like all journal-keeping, it became a burden. I wish now that some record had been made of what happened during the visit there of Judge Mason and the Remeys, as the greater part has faded from my memory. There is one incident, however,

that I shall never forget, in connection with a visit made one afternoon by the Judge, Captain Remey his son-in-law, and myself, to St. Peter's church.

In the many galleries of pictures by celebrated old masters in the cities he had visited, Judge Mason's attention had been directed, in the paintings of religious subjects, to the representations of the face and figure of God the Father. He had criticised unfavorably the general tendency to represent the Almighty as a very old man in the decline of life. In examining the mosaics in St. Peters, he had discovered, away up in the top of the lantern of the great dome, a mosaic representation of the Father, which he was examining intently by means of a large opera glass. As he was obliged to stand immediately under the lantern, it was neck-breaking work. Some minutes later I found him lying at full length upon the marble floor, near the high altar, viewing the mosaic more comfortably. As the church was nearly deserted, it was some little time before one of the guardians saw him, and smilingly tapped him upon the shoulder. The Judge arose and apologized, only then realizing for the first time into what a droll position his pursuit of knowledge under difficulties had led him.

My American friends in Rome were interested in him and did many things to make his visit pleasant, which he remembered afterwards with gratitude. He was an example of a noble type of American republicanism, which was of interest when seen with such different surroundings.

Early in December we bade them farewell with regret. The following extracts from a letter by Mrs. Remey, dated Paris, Dec. 14, 1873, will give some account of their movements up to the time of their sailing for home:

Our first day's ride was delightful; we enjoyed the sandwiches, and found a good hotel in Pisa. The following morning was very crisp, and the ride to the Duomo anything but comfortable. We enjoyed the group of beautiful buildings very much, and especially the echo in the Baptistry. We went on to La Spezia that day, and the next morning started in a carriage for Sestri. The first part of the day was enjoyable, but later we became very much chilled, and by the time we reached Genoa, were thoroughly

tired. I had hoped to travel several days in a carriage over at least a part of the route from Genoa to Nice, but we concluded the season was too far advanced. We found Nice very pleasant and mild; in the afternoon of the day we spent there we went to Monaco, and were interested in the novelty and brilliancy of the surroundings. If one could forget the object for which the display is made it would be a most charming spot. We spent nights at Marseilles and Lyons, but as we arrived at both places after dark, and left before sunrise, there was not much rest. The last day was very wintry; the carriage windows were so covered with ice we could not see through them, and there was every indication of snow. The sun has not shone since we have been here (Paris), and the air is so raw and chilly there is little temptation to go outside the hotel. Even under these circumstances we can realize the superiority of this beautiful city. \* \* \* We think now of applying for passage in the Russia, which sails on the 3d of January. This will give us only two weeks more in Paris, but by an industrious application of time, I think we can get ready. Father is getting anxious to be at home, and if the weather continues as at present, we shall all be willing to start.

PARIS, December 14, '73.

*My Dear Sir:* As Mollie was writing I concluded to give you some of the results of my observations relative to the malaria that afflicts the Campagna as well as the city of Rome, leaving it to her to post you in relation to all matters of news.

I have no doubt as to the true cause of this unhealthfulness during the hot season. It does not arise from the dry uplands, but wholly from the marshes which are spread to so great an extent over the river bottoms and the alluvial soil along the Mediterranean. These marshes were frequent and often very extensive. I saw hundreds of acres in a body, which were covered with stagnant water, and numberless patches of smaller dimensions scattered in all directions. These, putrifying in the broiling summer Italian sun, suffice to account for all the sickness which renders the Campagna so nearly useless.

But it is said very truly that in former times the Campagna was healthy and that the effects of malaria were only felt when the country ceased to be cultivated. I reply that when the uplands became neglected the same was true of the bottom lands. They ceased to be drained and were converted into marshy grounds as we see them now. The mischief all comes from that source. There is no more reason why the neglect of the dry uplands should produce disease than that the natural prairies which had lain uncultivated for thousands of years should have been unhealthy. Our own observation proves that our prairies were just as healthy before the plow had disturbed them as they ever have been since. In fact, it is generally supposed that the breaking up of the soil was at first a cause of unhealthfulness, but this at most was only temporary. In like manner the breaking up of large portions of the Campagna might for a year or two cause some sickness to those who were exposed to its effects, but that would be the only evil that need be apprehended.

It is a well settled fact that the malaria that results from stagnant water is often more fatal in its effects to persons inhabiting the higher ground in the neighborhood than to those on a more immediate level. The malaria arises to a certain height which can only be ascertained by observation. If the Campagna is found unhealthy in any particular portion, it shows that the malaria from the marshes rose to that height. Where there is an abundant and well known cause for such an effect, I do not think it philosophical to be casting about for others that are unnecessary and improbable.

The manifest remedy for this evil is a removal of its cause. I do not think it at all necessary that this should all be done at once. There are several months in every year when men can with safety work on any portion of those marshy grounds. If all cannot be reclaimed in one year, let as much be done as practicable. What is thus effected one year may be so protected as to suffer no injury till all is done.

If the low grounds are sufficiently above the Tiber or the sea, nothing but drains will be needed to effect the desired result. But where this is not the case, something farther will be necessary. Dikes should be thrown up along the sea or the rivers with ditches on the inner side and the water from within could be pumped over these dikes, as is done so extensively in Holland where the difficulties are greater and the motive far less than is the case with Italy. The salt lakes thus drained to a great depth in Holland would not have caused pestilence. The great purpose was to obtain land for cultivation. The latter result is but a subordinate inducement in your case. I have no doubt that it would be entirely practicable to drain all the Pontine marshes in this manner, and that the soil thus reclaimed would be vastly more than sufficient to defray all the expenses of the work. There were several places passed by us as we traveled along the coast where a like course might be advantageously pursued, thus not only reclaiming a large amount of most fertile and valuable soil, but also rendering the surrounding country salubrious and vastly more valuable and pleasant.

Such a work must necessarily be done by the public authorities. If the lands thus improved are private property, local taxation would furnish the means of meeting the expenses necessary. Such a course would be permissible even in a popular government, much more under a monarchy. But I will not enlarge on this subject further at present.

I always feel an inclination to give a practical application to any information I acquire, and this prompts me to write as I have now done. It may come in your way to communicate these suggestions to some one who will follow them up to a useful result. At all events I have endeavored to show my good will to a portion of the human family among whom I have spent a few weeks very pleasantly, though I never expect to see them or their country again.

We shall probably take passage home in the Russia, which sails from Liverpool on the 3rd of January. Should this be the case, we shall hope to see our own shores by the middle of that month.

Yours Truly,

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

CHAS. MASON.



The next is a most precious letter, revealing at the close, a part of his inmost soul. In giving his words to the public, especially of Iowa, I feel that I am not overstepping the bounds of a trusted friendship, but revealing a priceless heritage of character, of which every citizen of his beloved state will be glad to become possessed.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7, '74.

*My Dear Sir:* We left Paris on the 26th of December and London on the 1st day of January, Liverpool on the 3rd and reached New York on the evening of the 14th, came to Washington on the 16th and shall probably remain here for several weeks to come. It was the intention of the Captain and Mollie to remain in Washington only a few days, and then to return to Iowa, to remain till the last of March, as his leave of absence expires the first of April. The next day after our arrival here, however, the officer at the head of one of the bureaus in the Navy Department proposed a situation to the Captain which he would be very glad to accept, but in order to do so it would be necessary to enter upon duty by the middle of this month. He had resolved to waive the remainder of his leave of absence rather than fail to secure the situation here, and inasmuch as the journey to Iowa and back would hardly be compensated by the brief period that they would be permitted to remain at home, it was concluded not to go to Iowa at present, but to enter at once upon duty here, which was done accordingly. We are all comfortably situated at a private boarding house where we expect to remain till spring, when Mollie will probably accompany me to Iowa, though that is not settled yet.

In the meantime I am kept busy with various matters, chief among which is my plan for the resumption of specie payments in such a way as to create no disturbance in the relations of money and property, and to secure all the most essential advantages of a convertible currency from the date of the passage of the law on that subject. This seems to be promising too much, but not more than can be accomplished, as I can demonstrate to any man of sense whose mind is not preoccupied with some antagonist's hobby. You expressed a wish to see a pamphlet I had prepared on this subject in 1872. I have sent home for a number of copies I still have there and expect them now daily. I will send you one if they arrive as expected, from which you will see the general plan by which I expect to attain my object. I know I understand this matter better than any man in Congress. It has been a study with me for many years, and I have made many improvements in the manner of elucidating it since the pamphlet was printed.

This matter was a chief reason for my coming home earlier than I should otherwise have done. I do not know that any ground has been lost by my absence. Plans for resumption are as plenty as blackberries, but they generally suit only their respective projectors. I have, I think, suc-

ceeded in placing mine in a condition in which it will be considered and I hope fairly weighed. If I shall succeed in successfully solving the most important problem of the day, I shall be tolerably well satisfied with myself. And if I can follow this up by other measures equally important which I have long had in view, and which will flow naturally from this, I shall feel that I have made a reasonably good use of the talent that was committed to me by the Great Father, and shall be willing, as far as this matter is concerned, to render my final account. I have long been conscious of possessing powers that have never been exercised, and I feared opportunity for such exercise would ultimately fail me; but if I can secure to my country the objects I have in view I shall envy no man the laurels gathered by the bloody hand of war.

We had a somewhat boisterous passage home, but not more so than was to have been expected at that season of the year. A gale was just dying away as we sailed, leaving the ocean writhing and tossing like a thing of life. Before this uneasiness was at an end another gale sprung up which continued till we were half way across. Mollie and I were so sick that though our state rooms were not forty feet apart we did not see each other for nearly three days at one time. Oh, the horror of those long, dismal nights! The lights were extinguished at midnight. Having to keep my berth most of the time, I slept much by daylight and therefore was always wakeful at night, especially during the latter portion of it. And then to be hour after hour wishing for the time to arrive when the blessed light of day should again make its appearance, and often fancying I saw indications of its approach, but only to be disappointed—was perfectly dreadful. What would induce me ever again to cross the Atlantic—especially in the winter? I do not regret having gone to Europe, but am very glad the journey is finished and that I am safely again on shore in my own country.

When the spring opens I shall return home, but how long I shall remain there is uncertain. Our street railway is in operation one mile, and another mile, extending some 850 feet along the east line of our farm is to be finished by the first of June. I shall remain till that time, probably. I believe that I once told you that I was having our family burial vault improved and completed. It stands some three hundred yards from our country home, on the opposite side of a valley through which flows a stream of water, and on a declivity which looks directly over the grounds where we were all once so happy that, whenever I think of Heaven as a material habitation, I connect it with a vision of that home, with my children all around me. I am having that vault finished in such a way that I hope it will not be looked upon as a gloomy habitation. My own place is there prepared by the side of my wife, in the middle, with one of our blessed children on the left of her mother and the other upon my right. And I think with equanimity upon the time when we shall all be sleeping together there. And when, at no very distant day, you shall learn that the dreaded passage which interposes between you and the unseen world has been accomplished by me, let no dismal thoughts take possession of your

mind, but waft me your kind congratulations that apprehension and agony have been exchanged for that rest and happiness which faith teaches us have been prepared for us on the shores of a happy hereafter. My thoughts are often with my wife and children. I wonder how they communicate with each other without the use of the material organs of speech and hearing. Perhaps they have to go through an infancy and learn a new mode of exchanging ideas; and who can tell but that those little children who were taught the language of this world by their mother, have since been repaying their obligations, in this respect, by giving her the benefit of their education during the more than twenty years that they preceded her in the other.

Did you ever see the pretty lines of Mrs. Barbauld, which are often present to my mind?

"Life! we've been long together,  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;  
Then steal away, give little warning:  
Choose thine own time.  
Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime  
Bid me Good-morning."

But I shall make you sad with my reflections, and will draw to a close. We are all in very good health and spirits. If it were not for our new house in Burlington, we should all remain here for some years to come. As it is, the future in this respect is somewhat uncertain.

All join in sending love to you all. Remember us to the friends with whom we became acquainted in Rome. Yours Truly,

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

CHAS. MASON.

There is less of sadness in the next letter. A new interest in life had been awakened by the birth of a grandchild, and the weight of loneliness was being, in a measure, lifted from his heart.

I had shown a former letter, in which he gave his opinion concerning the cause and the removal of the malarious condition in the Campagna of Rome, to some Roman friends interested in the same subject, and had subsequently written to him regarding criticisms made by them, backed up by certain facts which seemed to work against his theories.

WASHINGTON, June 2, 1874.

*My Dear Friend:* Your very welcome letter of March 20 was duly received, and all the kind feelings and sympathies therein expressed were fully appreciated. I now sit down to give you some leaves of our own history since my last letter.

And first let me tell you that we have a fine healthy boy baby at our house in Iowa. It was born May 15th, weighed at first but six pounds but is as lively as a cricket, and makes the house ring occasionally with its voice. How pleasant seems the sound of a child's voice in our house, if it is a crying one. It has long been unheard there, and is something for which my heart has been pining.

We remained in Washington till the 15th of April, when I started for Iowa with Mollie, and reached home on the 17th, at about the same hour that we had left Burlington on the 17th of July on our way to Europe. I remained at home till Monday, the 25th, when I thought it necessary to come back to complete some unfinished business here. I shall probably not remain more than about a week longer when I shall again start for home by way of New York, stopping for a week at my old home, which I have not seen since July, 1872, but which I generally visit every year. I hope to reach home about the 20th instant.

The Captain is quite well, and is looking anxiously forward to an expected leave of absence for a month or more, when he will visit us in Iowa, which will probably be in July next.

Thus we see that in the shifting scenes in the panorama of life, our successors are entering at the one side, while we are advancing in midway, or going out at the other. How brief seems the space that separates the two extremes! But I somewhat doubt whether that space would not appear equally brief were it really ten times as great. The proportion would only be increased, but the general effect about the same.

I am afraid you have undertaken too great a task in endeavoring to master the subject of the pamphlet I sent you. It seems like setting myself to study and fully appreciate the merits of one of your own productions. I sent you the pamphlet not intending to impose a task, but that you might obtain a general idea of the views I have entertained on this subject, which at the present time is of transcendent importance to our country. I have the most entire confidence in the correctness of my own conclusions, and all I see and hear on the subject confirms me in my opinions. The world is slow in receiving new ideas. Hume tells us that when Harvey promulgated his theory of the circulation of the blood, there was hardly a physician of forty years of age that ever believed it. There are many converts to my ideas, and I am not without hope of final success in inducing their adoption; but it will hardly be done this session. I do not think, however, that any other plan can be adopted that will prove satisfactory or that will work so successfully as to be continued in operation till we reach the solid ground of specie resumption. One of the members of the cabinet is fully convinced of the correctness of my views on this subject, and proposes that I have a conversation with the President in relation thereto, which I shall probably do before I leave Washington. I have a very carefully prepared article on the subject which I hope to have published in one of the leading reviews, and shall visit New York partly with that intent.

I am not yet convinced of the error of my notions in relation to the

cause of malaria in the Roman Campagna. When I see one sufficient cause for any effect, I do not think it philosophical to seek after those which are extraordinary and unnatural. Were I told of the exact condition of the river bottoms and marshes along the coast, I should have come at once to the conclusion that in such a climate virulent diseases might be expected to prevail, not only in the immediate neighborhood of these breeding places of malaria, but also along the higher grounds in places that could only be fixed by experiment. That the Borghese Villa is more unwholesome than the region around the railroad station of about the same elevation does not prove the incorrectness of my opinions. In Burlington within 500 yards of my house and at substantially the same elevation, malarial diseases are believed to exist which do not visit our immediate neighborhood, but this circumstance never caused me to doubt that the cause of these diseases proceeded from the stagnant water along the river bottoms. A skirt of trees intervening between the source of malaria and any given locality, is believed to intercept that malaria, but on the other hand the overshadowing of grounds or residences renders the places thus overshadowed unhealthy. The Borghese Villa, if I remember rightly, is all surrounded by shade while the vicinity of the railroad station is comparatively free from such shade. May not this account for the difference in healthfulness in the two localities? I will not attempt to account for the unhealthfulness that prevails all the year except a few weeks in the spring. Is there no mistake in this respect? Does malaria manifest its presence there in winter? The causes which produce these effects are often inscrutable. You have seen fogs or smoke assuming the forms of horizontal strata at different elevations. May not malaria assume like positions—sometimes higher, and then again lower, so that at one elevation diseases may manifest themselves while above or below there may be entire healthfulness?

Whether malaria consists of a microscopic fungus which floats in the air or rises from the earth, I know not, but I have a strong belief that whatever the cause of the diseases they produce they spring mostly, if not entirely, from putrefaction and generally from stagnant water. I doubt whether a well drained country is ever unhealthy.

I suppose you will think that I ought to fix myself down in my comfortable home and leave the world to take care of itself, but I cannot endure inaction. An overpowering feeling of loneliness renders it necessary that I should not be idle for an hour. Our street railway is in operation in the direction of our farm and will probably be completed about 40 rods along its east line by the time I return home. When that is done, we shall perhaps attempt the construction of water works in our city. On some accounts I should prefer residing in Washington but Mollie is unwilling to dispose of our home in Burlington. It seems a pity that so much property should remain so nearly useless to us. Many years ago, when Mollie was a little girl, her mother used to tell her that she would not probably live to see her grow up to womanhood and she then enjoined upon her that she must never leave me, which she promised. This promise she is now per-

I, Charles Mason, do solemnly  
swear that I will support the Con-  
stitution of the United States, and well  
and faithfully execute the trust com-  
mitted to me, as Chief Justice of  
the Supreme Court of the Territory  
of Iowa.

Charles Mason

Sworn & Subscribed  
before me this 23<sup>d</sup>  
of July AD 1838,

Wm. Bleonway  
Sec of the Territory  
of Iowa.

forming. She expects to remain in Burlington till fall, and then that I should accompany her back to Washington for the winter. This almost deprives us both of any permanent home, but she has no idea of any different arrangement while her husband is stationed here.

By the special request of the ladies of our parish I delivered a lecture for the benefit of our church, shortly before I left home, on the subject of our European tour. I took my hearers across the ocean and through Ireland. I may be induced to continue my journey at some future time. I kept a pretty full journal and by preparing a course of lectures I shall be reviewing my journey and impressing many of its incidents more lastingly upon my recollection.

Remember me kindly to Oscar and any of our other friends who added so much to the pleasantness of our stay in Europe.

Yours truly,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

At Rome, Judge Mason saw in the studio of the American sculptor, William H. Rinehart, a beautiful group in marble of two sleeping infants, which he greatly admired. It was a subject that would naturally appeal to him, owing to the loss of his two young children. I had written to him of the death of the sculptor, and in a Washington letter of December 23, 1874, he wrote: "I was sorry to hear of the death of poor Rinehart. What has become of his sleeping infants? I should like to own them if I could afford it. About what would they cost delivered in New York? I have no intention of purchasing them unless some enterprises in which I still venture to engage to keep up an interest in the affairs of this world should prove more beneficial than they probably will."

In the same letter Mrs. Remy says of the little boy: "He is a merry little fellow, and is on the best of terms with his grandfather. It would please you to see them together. Father says he has made him feel young." She adds: "We recall our European trip with great pleasure; one of our evening occupations is to listen to extracts from father's journal."

In December, 1875, I wrote to Judge Mason a few days after reaching Cairo, in Egypt, whither I had gone to spend the winter in making studies for pictures. His reply from

Washington in the following April reached me in Rome.

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1876.

*My Dear Friend:* Your welcome letter of December 19th was duly received. I certainly was taken by surprise to learn that you were sojourning in the land of the Pharaohs. I very much hope that you may derive all the benefit therefrom that you have desired.

We came to Washington the 20th of last November, and shall probably remain here until near the end of the present month—perhaps longer. We intend then to return home for the summer. We were so comfortable there last year that we make no calculations about going to any cooler place this year. I have for a long time intended to make a journey to California, and may gratify my wish in that respect the present year, but this is still uncertain.

Our little boy is doing nicely. He looks delicate, but is healthy and exceedingly active and mischievous. I indulge him more than I ought, and am trying to correct myself in that respect, but it is so difficult to refuse him any gratification that is not detrimental to his health, and I humor him more than I should.

We have as yet received no intelligence of the arrival of Mrs. Mason's portrait, but I trust no mischief has befallen it. I shall endeavor to institute some inquiries in regard to it when I get home.

You ask about the prospects of resumption. They are very slender. Nothing will probably be done that will be of any avail. A year ago last January a bill was passed, declaring that full resumption should take place January 1, 1879, but without taking the intermediate steps necessary to bring that event about. It has only wrought evil thus far, and will do nothing else hereafter. The premium on gold is to-day higher than when that bill passed. It has been so on the average during all the intermediate time. I tell them I will consent to be burnt at the stake on the first of January, 1879, if by that time resumption can be effected in any way without producing the most dreadful financial troubles. Many of the best minds in Washington believe in my doctrine. The President himself is one of these, and also several members of Congress.

But the great mass of that body is composed of two classes. A vast number of them have hobbies of their own on this subject, and nearly all the remainder feel incapable or unwilling to grapple with a new idea. Their thoughts on the subject run in the old changeless channel. Besides—as is very natural—no one likes to adopt and urge onwards the ideas of another person, and this has, I believe, been the chief cause of the slow progress my ideas have been making.

But I am not discouraged. With the implicit confidence that I have struck upon the true philosophy of this subject I shall not abandon the effort while there is a possibility of success. I believe I am right in my notions and that they would bring about the results sought, with as much confidence as I subscribe to the Copernican doctrine of the universe, or the Newtonian theory of universal gravitation.



You ask if I have published anything further on the subject. I forget whether the pamphlet I sent you was that of 1872 or that of 1874. I think it was the former and will send you a copy of the latter of which quite a number remain on hand. It was an effort to condense into more limited space, but I had to omit many of the details of the predecessor. I have recently written a much more condensed presentation of the subject, with some modifications to meet new objections. Nearly two weeks since, I placed it in the hands of the correspondent of *The New York Tribune*, under a promise that it would soon appear in that journal. It has not yet made its appearance. I will send you a copy of that when it is obtained.

We were much in hopes of seeing you both this coming season and felt a great disappointment in hearing that such would not be the case. We expect to visit the [Centennial] Exposition at some time during the season, and may possibly remain here till the opening, a month hence. Or Mollie may remain while I go home and afterwards return for that purpose. She is, however, so firmly resolved not to be separated from me that it is doubtful whether she will consent to the arrangement.

I wish I could have visited Egypt while I was in the east. It must have been a feast for one of your intellectual tastes and appetites.

You must have been greatly astonished and mortified at the developments that have been taking place here within the past few months. I have long been as fully confident of the existence of such frauds and speculations as I now am, but they seem to present a different appearance when laid open to the light of day. The developments are not ended yet, and no one can yet predict exactly when they will terminate or who will be implicated.

Remember us kindly to our artist friends we met when American friends had such a peculiar value. Tell Mr. and Mrs. Vedder how sincerely I can sympathize with them in their great loss. It is now the twenty-fourth year since our two little girls were snatched from us by the same merciless destroyer, but the anguish of that occasion lives fresh in my memory still, and will do so till I go to join them beyond the dark valley.

I hope the Egyptian climate has restored Mrs. Y. to that health so indispensable to the full enjoyment of life. Give her our warmest regards. Remember us also to our friend Oscar. I hope to hear from you as soon as you find it convenient to write.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq.

P. S. Mollie returns her sincerest thanks for the portrait you have sent. She and her husband unite in warmest regards to you among the others.

A letter from Burlington, February 10, 1877, gave me an account of a very severe and dangerous illness that kept him in bed for twenty-five days and nearly terminated his life.

He never entirely recovered from its effects. In the same letter he writes: "I have another little grandson who will be four months old on the 19th of this month. He is a fine little fellow and is named George for his father. He is much more quiet than his elder brother and will have blue eyes." Of this child he became exceedingly fond, and his early death was another heavy blow that came near severing the few remaining ties that bound him to this life. He further writes of national matters: "You have doubtless watched with some interest the stirring events connected with our presidential election. At one time I felt appalled at the threatening prospect presented. But the danger is now past. Whoever is elected president under the compromise arrangement will be peacefully inaugurated. I have no doubt in the world that Tilden was justly elected, and I still believe he will be our president. But I would much prefer the inauguration of Gov. Hayes, to a disputed succession which might result in violence."

After a residence in Rome of eleven years, I returned, in 1878, and settled permanently in my native land, which had grown dearer to me during the long absence. The next of Judge Mason's letters that I have preserved is a sad but interesting one:

BURLINGTON, December 26, 1880.

*My Dear Friend:* We are all in the deepest affliction. Our little Georgie died of croup a week ago last evening after an illness of less than three days. Wednesday, the 15th, he was full of life, and health, and joy. Before bed-time he showed symptoms of croup, and the remedies which we always keep on hand were promptly administered. The doctor was called on Thursday but he was not relieved. Saturday morning I telegraphed his father, though we had by no means lost hope. He died a little after 7 p. m. His father started Saturday afternoon, missed the connection at Chicago and did not reach home till Tuesday morning. . . . We are overwhelmed with sorrow. For four years and two months he had been a sunbeam in our household. I can hardly reconcile myself to his loss. On some accounts this is the severest affliction I have ever suffered. To be busy, and to take exercise freely, have always been the remedies to which I have resorted in times of bereavement, and in which I have found relief. The state of my health has been such that I have been in a great degree de-

prived of these remedies. Still, I submit without repining to this terrible chastisement. Mollie has quite as much fortitude as I can pretend to exert.

We concluded to spend the present winter here. My health hardly improves much. I made a short trip to Colorado and New Mexico last October,—encountered a railroad accident which, though it did me no material injury, produced a pretty severe shock and caused me to return home much sooner than I intended. Capt. Remy accompanied me, and we then intended to return with him to spend the winter in Washington, which purpose was afterwards changed. . . . We hope to hear from you soon. Let us know of your intentions and prospects.

Yours very sorrowfully,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq., 51 West 10th St., New York.

WASHINGTON, January 21, 1881.

*My Dear Friend:* You will probably be surprised at reading the date of this letter. As the time approached for Capt. Remy to leave us (his leave of absence expired last Monday) the idea was suggested that we should all accompany him with the intention of remaining here until about the middle of April. The suggestion found a ready response as well on my part as on that of my daughter,—we both believing that a change of scene and of situation would be for our mutual benefit. We therefore started from home last Friday morning and came directly through to this city. It proved to be the coldest morning of the year, the mercury standing at 22° below zero, but we came through very comfortably.

We feel a good deal more reconciled to our dreadful bereavement than we should have done at our lonely home where everything was calculated to remind us at every moment of our irreparable loss. We feel greatly obliged to you for the kindly sympathy expressed in your letter, and hope we may have the privilege to express that obligation to you personally before many months either in Washington or at our home in Burlington.

Yours sincerely,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq., 335 Fourth Ave., New York.

BURLINGTON, November 27, 1881.

*My Dear Friend:* . . . I have another little grandson, born Oct. 23, who will probably be named William B. after his paternal grandfather and his uncle. We are waiting to hear from his father on the subject before fixing upon the name. He does not yet fill the void left by the loss of our dear little Georgie, but will perhaps do so in time. His father sailed for the Mediterranean on the 10th of October, and has not been heard from since. He sailed first to Madeira, and thence to Cadiz in Spain, where he expected to arrive about the 10th of November; so that we are now in daily expectation of a letter from him. He might have remained in Washington another year, and we were in favor of his doing so. In that case we expected to spend the winter with him in Washington.

But Admiral Nicholson tendered him the post of chief of staff on board of his flagship, the Lancaster, and the opportunity was too inviting to be rejected. What he dreaded most was that at the end of another year he might be picked up and sent on a three years' cruise to China or some other out-of-the way and unpleasant station; whereas, he is now to be on the European station, which is the pleasantest of them all, and, what is more, Admiral Nicholson is to be retired April 1, 1883, so that his chief of staff will then return home. This reconciles us to his absence for eighteen months.

My health has not been very satisfactory during the past summer. . . . I went to Minnesota in July but was there taken quite unwell and returned home in fifteen days, much worse than before I went north. I have since spent a month in Chicago in the pursuit of health with little or no benefit. . . . I was seventy-seven years of age on the 24th of last month, and cannot expect to remain much longer with my little grandchildren. But for them I should care very little how soon I was laid by the side of my wife and two children. Still I keep myself busy in reading and writing a good share of my time, and hope to do so to the last. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain.

Yours sincerely,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq., 335 Fourth Ave., New York.

The end was now fast approaching. The next letter was the last I ever received from his hand. In the winter of 1881-82 his health broke down and he took to his bed reluctantly. He died on the morning of February 26, 1882. Following his last letter to me is one from his faithful daughter, dated March 27, giving me the details of his last days and a touching account of the sad days that followed. To him, in an especial manner since her mother's death, she had given intimate companionship and tender watchfulness and sympathy. Death ended all these loving cares, and with her husband far away across the seas, the hours were filled with lonely thoughts.

BURLINGTON, December 9, 1881.

*My Dear Friend:* We were very glad to receive your letter of Dec. 1, and I write this promptly in order to send the draft to pay for the frame for Mrs. Mason's portrait and boxing the same to be sent forward. Please have it sent by express or by a freight line as you may think best.

We are having fine winter weather now, and I am feeling the beneficial effects of it. I am rather inclined to risk staying here through the winter inasmuch as from present appearances we are likely to have a much milder season than usual.

We have had two letters from Capt. Remy since he crossed the Atlan-

tic. The last was written from Gibraltar, and we look for another daily. He expects to spend the winter in the Mediterranean. I wish we could all be there, too. But the way is too long. Even the journey to Florida looks so formidable that I am hardly willing to undertake it. We are very comfortable here, and should we go south it would all be on my account. I think I shall take the chances of remaining where the other members of the family can be made so much more comfortable, and I must keep myself within doors in rough weather.

Capt. Remy's youngest brother, Edward, is now with us, but expects to remain only a few days longer. He is a thorough sailor and feels most at home when at sea. He is only a lieutenant, and, having graduated since the war, while promotion has been slow, he will be fifty years old before he attains the rank of his eldest brother. The captain does not expect to be at home again before the spring of 1883, when he may expect to be many years on shore again. This reconciles us to his absence now.

We shall hope to see you in the west next season. I am glad to hear that you are getting quite a number of orders which will give you occupation, and profit also, as we hope. We have heard good accounts of you in this respect through the Brevoorts, and are always glad to learn of your welfare.

Mollie joins in the kindest regards.

Truly your friend,

CHAS. MASON.

GEO. H. YEWELL, Esq., 578 Fifth Avenue, New York.

BURLINGTON, March 27th, 1882.

*My Dear Friend:* Your letter was most gratefully received, and should have been answered sooner, but as you foresaw I have had many demands upon my time. In my loneliness your sympathy is warmly appreciated, for it comes from the heart. I have often wished for your presence to minister to my father's enjoyment, for you are one of the few whose society would have been acceptable to him. Knowing that you were bound elsewhere, it did not occur to me to propose to you to come, but I frequently regretted that it was not possible for you to be with us. After my husband went to sea there seemed to be no one but myself to attend to the numberless little duties required by an invalid. It became fatiguing for him to write or sit long in his arm-chair, consequently much of his business was transacted while lying on the lounge, with me as an amanuensis. I was always at hand to assist, my father steadily refusing the services of a servant. It was only during the last few days of his life that he was willing to avail himself of the help of a professional nurse.

I have marked the failure in my father's strength for many months and felt assured that the end was not distant. Physicians agreed that there was little special disease but a general breaking down and wearing out, which was most discouraging. I knew if he once took to his bed he would never rise from it, and when on the 17th of February he decided that he was more comfortable in bed than elsewhere, I felt that the time was short.

For several weeks he had been harassed with an intensely sore throat, caused by the panting breath. That was the most trying feature of his illness. He had several turns of faintness induced by physical exertion, which I am convinced were caused by spasms of the heart—several times I thought him dying, while I was alone with him. These, however, were not experienced during the last days of his life, as he then was too weak for any effort to move himself. His intellectual faculties remained unimpaired until the last—he spoke but a few minutes before the last change—expressing his satisfaction at having me near him, and passed away as if he were falling asleep. Gov. Gear was with me at the time—and the nurse who has been in our family so much that we regard her as a friend.

My father's mortal remains were laid away in the receptacle he prepared for that purpose several years ago, and by his direction the burial casket was made from the wood of a walnut tree grown from a nut he had planted at the home farm.

Although my father's death was neither sudden nor unexpected, it is none the less a sad loss to me. I miss him as I would a child from the household, and at the same time he has been such a constant and intimate companion that it seems like losing both parents at once. I have mourned over his failing health, and felt how sad it was to witness a mind, active, energetic and interested in intellectual and scientific pursuits, weighed down by the infirmities of the body. I do not doubt the blessedness of the change for him, and I think of him as restored to youth and strength. We have had many interchanges of thought respecting the future life, and his unwavering belief in immortality and the reunion with loved ones is a consoling remembrance to me now.

My last letter from my husband was mailed at Smyrna—he had been to Egypt, but the weather had been too stormy to permit a stop at the Holy Land. I do not know whether the death of my father will hasten his return—otherwise he had not expected to come home until a year from this month. I am trying to take care of the children until he comes, but I sometimes lose courage, for I am alone with them, except the assistance of rather indifferent servants.

I hope to see you whenever you come west, for as long a visit as you can spare the time. I shall remain here for the present—I may spend a part of the summer among my father's relatives in central New York. Had he lived it was so planned, and now my friends are urging me to come with the children. I am so busy during the day that I have little time for reflection, but when the children are asleep, and I sit alone in the library, I realize the dreariness of that favorite spot. I intend to have the portraits of my parents placed there, to cheer the solitude in some measure.

The picture frame came safely, and was in every respect satisfactory except it was a little too broad. That defect was remedied by placing a strip of wood so as to cover the crack. The portrait is greatly improved in effect by the frame, and every one remarks upon the strong resemblance to my mother.

Yours very sincerely,

MARY J. REMEY.

MR. YEWELL.

Judge Mason always impressed me as an eminently just man, fearlessly doing that which his judgment and conscience approved as the right thing, at the same time carefully respecting the rights of others. Judge George G. Wright, of Des Moines, said of him that "he was honest as a man and as a judge; of the cleanest habits; had an utter abhorrence of the dissolute and intemperate, and exercised a most beneficial example on the side of morality."

In conclusion I will partially reproduce some words of mine written about him several years ago.

He was a man over six feet in height, thin and somewhat angular. His movements were energetic, and he carried himself erect, a habit formed during his military education at West Point. His mind was by nature a judicial one. He was an attentive listener; arranged his thoughts carefully before clothing them in words; not much given to talking; rather reticent than otherwise, yet capable of being very interesting when he did talk, and having a quick sense of humor that brought with it a cheery smile and a twinkle of the eye. He was merciful and kind-hearted, and never any but pure words came from his lips. He had no bad or useless habits; used no tobacco or spirits, and, I believe, never drank coffee or tea until he was quite advanced in life. He was careful of money, economical and self-denying, and yet very few people knew of the many young men he befriended and assisted with money. I know of one for whom he did that and more, for to me he stood in the place of a father, giving me not only advice and money, but that which was better and more precious,—affection.

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IN JUNE, 1854, four colored people—long-time residents—were arrested in Galena, Ill., for the purpose of expelling them from the state, under a law then existing. A writ of habeas corpus, however, set them free again, and the movement was denounced even by pro-slavery people in Iowa, and presumably also in Illinois.

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