

## CHAPTER IV.

### WORKS HIS PASSAGE TO CALIFORNIA.

1858.

AGE, 19.

**A**ND now the boy having left home to face the world and seek his fortune in the new country, it may be instructive to get some more definite knowledge of his character. A key to it, or at any rate to his own estimate at that time of it, exists in a phrenological sketch that he wrote of himself while still in Philadelphia. It is in his clear hand-writing and covers two half-sheets of blue, unruled, legal-cap paper, on the back of one of which are the words, "Phrenological examination of head by self." The examination is as follows:

"Circumference [of head],  $21\frac{5}{8}$ ; ear to ear,  $12\frac{1}{2}$ .

1. Amativeness ..... Large.
2. Philoprogenitiveness ..... Moderate.
3. Adhesiveness ..... Large.
4. Inhabitativeness ..... Large.
5. Concentrativeness ..... Small.
6. Combativeness ..... Large.
7. Destructiveness ..... Large.
8. Alimentiveness ..... Full.
9. Acquisitiveness ..... Small.
10. Secretiveness ..... Large.
11. Caution ..... Large.
12. Approbativeness .....
13. Self-esteem ..... Large.

14. Firmness .....	Large.
15. Conscientiousness .....	Large.
16. Hope .....	Large.
17. Marvellousness .....	
18. Veneration .....	
19. Benevolence .....	
20. Constructiveness .....	
21. Ideality .....	
22. Imitation .....	
23. Mirthfulness .....	Small.
24. Individuality .....	Large.
25. Form .....	
26. Size .....	Large.
27. Weight .....	
28. Colour .....	
29. Order .....	
30. Calculation .....	Small.
31. Locality .....	Large.
32. Eventuality .....	Full.
33. Time .....	Large.
34. Tune .....	
35. Language .....	Moderate.
36. Causality .....	Large.
37. Comparison .....	Large.

"An ardent, devoted, fervent and constant lover; will defend the object of his love with boldness, protect his or her rights with spirit. Will feel much stronger attachment than he will express.

"Is not very fond of children. May love them as friends, rather than as children.

"Is strong in his attachments; readily takes the part of friends, resents and retaliates their injuries; yet may occasionally fall out with them.

"Chooses as his friends the talented, intellectual and literary, and avoids the ignorant.

"Is extremely fond of travelling. Has an insatiable desire to roam about and see the world and afterwards to settle down.

"Is patriotic and ready to sacrifice all in defence of his country.

"May get angry quickly, but, unless the injury is deep or intended, cannot retain his anger.

"Will be more likely to make a general than a critical scholar. May have bold and original ideas upon a variety of subjects, yet will not without effort or excitement have a train of connected thoughts upon any.

"Is qualified to meet difficulties, overcome obstacles, endure hardships, contend for privileges, maintain opinions, resent insults and defend his rights to the last; generally takes sides on every contested question; naturally hasty in temper.

"Desires money more as a means than as an end, more for its uses than to lay up; and pays too little attention to small sums.

"Generally keeps his thoughts, feelings, plans, etc., to himself. Will effect his purposes indirectly and without detection. May sometimes communicate his feelings to his nearest friends, yet will seldom do this, and will exercise more attachment than he expresses. May restrain for a long time the anger which is burning in his bosom; yet when he does give vent to it, it will blaze forth in good earnest. Is slow in commencing, yet when once interested in any project pushes it with great spirit. May be timid and fearful until his courage is once excited, but will then be bold and fearless. In cases of danger, will be perfectly self-possessed; and yet will have fore-thought enough to do just what the occasion demands. Cannot soon be worked up to the sticking point; but is determined, if not desperate, when once kindled.

"Is inclined to enter largely into business and to push his projects with so much energy and zeal as to appear rash and nearly destitute of caution; yet will come out about right in the end and will seldom fail entirely in his projects, though he may be obliged to retrace his steps."

This "phrenological examination," tested by what others can remember of him at that period and by the traits shown later in life, must be regarded, so far as it goes, as a fairly accurate presentation of the boy's chief charac-

teristics. But this should not be set down to phrenology, for there is nothing to show that he placed particular confidence, or even had more than passing interest, in that teaching.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it to be set down as a lucky kind of guess about himself. It is in truth, more than anything else, the fruit of a habit of introspection which had begun about the time of the return from the first sea voyage and which was afterwards to be shown more and more strongly.

Meanwhile the little *Shubrick* was boldly pushing her way down the coast. This was her first trip in commission, Henry George having seen her building in the Philadelphia Navy Yard that very year. She was named after Rear Admiral William B. Shubrick, of the U. S. Navy, who had been Chairman of the Light-House Board since 1852. She was to become the first vessel on light-house duty on the Pacific coast, to which service she was now proceeding; and the first tender under steam in the light-house department of the United States. She was of 372 tons burden, 140 feet in length, 22 feet in beam and 19 feet in depth of hold; with black hull, red side-wheels, black funnel and two masts, the foremast square rigged. She looked as sharp and trim as a yacht, but, as in addition to her regular duties of supplying light-houses and maintaining the buoyage along the west coast, she was intended to give protection to government property along

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<sup>1</sup> Thirty years later, when his son, Richard, manifested interest in phrenology, Henry George discouraged him, saying that though indirectly or collaterally there probably was truth in it, the subject was one that, in his opinion, Nature did not intend to have man know much about, since the discovery of constitutional characteristics would with most men seem to indicate foreordination, and checking free and independent action, would tend to produce fatalism. Moreover, he said, phrenology was not needed for man's progress, for *that* did not depend upon a knowledge of the relative development of the faculties, but rather upon the *use* of the faculties, whatever they might be.

the sea shore of Oregon and Washington from the depredations of Indian tribes, she was armed with six brass guns and a novel contrivance for squirting scalding water on the redskins when at close quarters.

On Christmas day, while the *Shubrick* was steaming along over a sun-kissed sea some distance off the Hatteras coast, the wind, which had been fair, subsided, and then without warning rose into a white squall, blowing from the north-east. The boat's head was swung around and she was brought to under low-steam. At night the wind blew a hurricane, the sea breaking over her fore and aft with great violence. The after part of the wheelhouse, engineer's storeroom and starboard bulwarks were stove in, and everything movable on deck washed overboard, including port shutters, harness-casks, deck engine, and spare spars and lumber. At ten that night, deeming that she was in danger of foundering, thirty tons of sacked coal and some other things were thrown overboard.<sup>1</sup> Many times during his life Henry George spoke of the terrors of this storm, on one occasion<sup>2</sup> saying:

"A negro deckhand and I worked together throwing over bags of coal to lighten her. The sailing master hung on the bridge shouting to us through the speaking trumpet and barely able to make himself heard, as he told us the work we were doing was for life or death."

This relieved the vessel and at day-light she was enabled to proceed on her course, nine days after leaving

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<sup>1</sup> Notes from record of *Shubrick*, by courtesy of the U. S. Light-House Board at Washington, D. C., and of Captain Geo. W. Coffin, U. S. N., Inspector 12th Light-House District, San Francisco, Cal.

<sup>2</sup> From shorthand notes by Ralph Meeker of a conversation, New York, October, 1897.

Philadelphia putting into St. Thomas, West Indies, to renew her coal supply and make necessary repairs.

To Jo Jeffreys, his young friend in Philadelphia, Henry George sent from St. Thomas a clear account of the passage and of the danger the ship had been in; but to his parents, under same date (January 6, 1858), he wrote in quite different style to save them from anxiety, omitting all mention of danger. The letter to his parents read:

“Here I am this winter’s afternoon (while you are gathering around the parlour stove, perhaps thinking and talking of me) sitting in the open air in my white sleeves almost roasted by the heat. I wish you could view the scene which surrounds me. The noble mountains rising from the water, covered with perpetual vegetation of the tropics and varied in colour by the shadows of the clouds which seem to climb their sides; the little town with its square red-roofed, Dutch houses and white forts, surrounded by the palm and cocoanut trees which line the head of the bay; the ships and steamers which deck the harbour; and the boundless sea stretching away to the edge of the horizon, glittering in the sunlight—form a picture which I know you would enjoy.

“Now that I have tried to give you a faint idea of the scenery that surrounds me, I shall try and give you an account of our passage.

“We had head winds and a rough sea most of the time; and as the steamer was very slow, the spray which incessantly flew over her made the deck very wet and, consequently, unpleasant. However, we made the run in nine days from the time we left the breakwater and arrived here early on Saturday morning.

“I went ashore last Sunday and attended church, and then together with Jim Stanley (the young fellow who I told you was going out as Engineer’s Store Keeper) climbed the mountain to the ruins of the castle of Blackbeard, a notorious pirate chieftain, who for a

long time made this island his home and stronghold. After coming down, we wandered all over the town and saw all that was to be seen, which I suppose is the same as in the generality of West Indian islands—plenty of darkies—men, women and children—bamboo shanties, soldiers and cocoanut trees. . . .

“I expect our next passage to be much more pleasant than the last, as we shall not be heavily burdened by coal, and important additions have been made in the shape of booby-hatches, etc. . . .

“I know, my dear parents, that you felt deeply the parting with me—far more so than I did. But let the fact that I am satisfied and that my chances are more than fair comfort you. As for me, I, for the first time in my life, left home with scarcely a regret and without a tear. I believed that it was my duty both to myself and to you to go, and this belief assuaged the pain of parting.

“I am now setting out for myself in the world, and though young in years, I have every confidence in my ability to go through whatever may be before me. But of that I shall say nothing. Let the future alone prove.”

In reply to the letter he received from St. Thomas, Jo Jeffreys wrote (February 1):

“While such fools and intolerable dolts as James McMullen<sup>1</sup> live, it is almost impossible to expect your family to be kept ignorant of your great danger. I will elucidate the matter. Some few days since a telegraphic despatch (from Boston, I think) appeared in the ‘Pub-

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<sup>1</sup> “Jim” McMullen, as he was commonly called, was regarded by his boy friends as slow of comprehension. One day wishing to go swimming without McMullen, they tried the expedient of telling him one after another that his head was swollen and that he must be sick. This succeeded so well that the boy went home and to bed in a fever of excitement, and they had great difficulty in convincing him that they had been deluding him. The experience so frightened Henry George that he never again indulged in that kind of a practical joke.

lic Ledger' setting forth that the U. S. S. *Shubrick* had put into St. Thomas in great distress, want of coal, etc., etc. This I presumed somewhat alarmed your mother; but she received your letter about the same time, and you saying nothing of any storm, but merely mentioning rough weather encountered in the Gulf, she thought no more of it. But here McMullen steps in on last Saturday night (he called once before since your departure) and after propounding several knotty interrogatories to your father, very kindly informed your mother that he had seen an extract from a private letter written by one of the *Shubrick's* engineers to a friend in this city in the 'Evening Journal' (or as Collis says, the 'Evening Disturber') the purport of which was that the *Shubrick* had encountered a terrific storm, that they almost went down, etc., etc.

"I happened to call in a few minutes after and was subjected to a series of questions which made me wince. I had received a letter from you? Yes. Well, what did you say? You said you were well and in good spirits. Was that all? Yes, about all. I was sorry to say I had left the letter at the office. (It was in the breast-pocket of my coat.) Did you say anything about a storm? (This question was propounded by your mother, who looked me straight in the eye, while Cad, Janie and Kate followed her example, and your father, who was reclining on the sofa, turned round to hear the answer, which, with this awful battery of unflinching eyes in front, and the consciousness that your father might have some information upon the subject which he designed to level at me in the rear, I was endeavouring to manufacture into as ingenious a shape as possible. They looked at me; I returned the gaze as steadily as an honest fellow who knew he was going to dissimulate for the sake of an absent friend—but an awful bad fellow—could do. At last I broke silence.) *No*. You had said, however, that you had encountered rough weather and had got out of coal. (My hair almost stood on end, and the perspiration rolled in mad torrents down the exterior covering of my seething brain.)



To this succeeded a number of questions that tortured me almost to martyrdom, for, as you know, my very bowels *yearned* to tell the truth. I, however, satisfied your mother that the 'Evening Disturber' had made false representations, and so ends that difficulty.

" . . . You are right, Hen. 'There never was any affectation of sentiment in speech between us when face to face,' and none shall exist now. How do *you* know that we shall never meet again? I should be obliged to you if you would *not* send such letters to me in the middle of business—letters which are calculated to distract my mind and render me as weak as a child. Your ideas absolutely make me gloomy, truth though they be. You know I love you, Hen, as much as *any-one* in this wide world. . . .

"I have commenced to reform, and Bill Jones and myself have for some time been studying geometry together. I spend but little, 37 cents a week on cigars, and loaf only occasionally. I go to the office sometimes in the evening and study law. Bill and I are to take up natural philosophy and grammar in a few days."

The father's letter soon after the departure of the *Shu-brick* shows the man's robust nature.

"My dear boy, we have missed you. I have hardly become reconciled to your absence. It seems that I cannot lock the front door without the thought of your coming in; and when the boys visit us—Jeffreys, Jones and the others—it seems as if it leaves a blank when we find you absent. Don't think I regret the step you have taken. On the contrary, the more I think of it, the more I see the hand of Providence in it. . . .

"Nothing has transpired since you left worthy of note. Things are much as you left them. The times are rather on the mend [industrially]. In political matters things look gloomy. The nigger question, Mor-

monism and General Walker,<sup>1</sup> etc., will, I think, give us trouble; but notwithstanding all this and as much more, the Union is and will be safe as long as there is bunting to make stars and stripes. They may bluster North, East, South and West as much as they please. Our nation is in the hands and under the guidance of a higher Power, who created this republic for a higher and holier destiny, which is not revealed, and will not be until I am long gathered to my fathers."

From St. Thomas to Barbadoes and thence to Pernambuco and Rio Janeiro the little *Shubrick* proceeded, having fair weather and making fair time. A letter written at Monte Video to one of the young friends in Philadelphia (Charley Walton, February 18) gives some characteristic notes:

"We arrived here yesterday morning after a passage of five days from Rio. We lay five days in the latter port and had very fine weather and a pleasant time generally, marred only by one or two little accidents. . . . The first night we stayed there all hands went ashore, wandered over the island, and as a matter of course, got drunk. A couple of the men in trying to come aboard fell over a precipice about forty feet in height. One escaped uninjured, but the other was nearly killed. He is now recovering fast, but it will be some time before his arm, which was broken, will be entirely healed.

"I enjoyed myself very well while we were coaling, wandering along the rocks, catching crabs and toad-

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<sup>1</sup> Probably a reference to William Walker of Tennessee, who led a filibustering expedition into Lower California and was driven out. Then he went to Nicaragua, C. A., assumed the title of President of that State, and re-established chattel slavery, which had been abolished. He was driven from power in May, 1857, but escaped to New Orleans. In 1860 he led a filibustering expedition against Honduras, but within four months was captured and shot at Truxillo.

fish and paddling from one island to another in a canoe, the exact model of the famous one constructed by Crusoe, and like his, made of a single piece.

"I was ashore in Rio but once—on Sunday afternoon—and saw but little of the town, as it was too infernally hot to walk the narrow streets."

The chief incident of the voyage—an event of singular nature—occurred at the port of Monte Video. Two letters containing a brief mention of it have been preserved, but a full and graphic account appeared under the title of "Dust to Dust" in a sketch written by Henry George eight years subsequently and when he was less than twenty-seven, at the request of his friend Edmund Wallazz, for publication in the "Philadelphia Saturday Night,"<sup>1</sup> a prosperous weekly paper, of which Wallazz was then foreman and part owner.

The story in substance is this. An hour after leaving Rio, yellow fever had broken out on the *Shubrick* and several were taken down. All recovered except the Second Assistant Engineer, S. W. Martin, a popular young man on board.

"The crisis seemed past, and if his strength would only last until he neared the Cape, all would be well. . . . Only one port remained to be passed before we should hail the rain and fog, and strength-giving winds—Monte Video. But when we entered that great stream, more sea than river, the mighty La Plata, on which the city is situated, young Martin was dying. . . .

"For some time in intervals of consciousness, Martin had been aware of his approaching end, and the only thing that seemed to trouble him was the idea of dying so far from those he loved, and of being buried where

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<sup>1</sup> This sketch on the following month, July 14, 1866, was republished in the San Francisco "Californian," conducted by some printer friends of Henry George.

affection might never mark his resting place. It was his last and earnest request that his grave might be made on shore, where his body could be recognised by his friends, and not committed to the waves; and though it was very doubtful if the privilege could be granted, yet the captain resolved to take the corpse into the harbour, and try to obtain permission to bury it ashore.

"And when night came, sadly we talked in little groups upon the deck, while the sound of hammer and plane from the gangway, told that the 'last house' of one of us was being built. Though no star shed its light, still it was not all blackness. The 'river of silver' beamed with a lustre of its own. Not alone the furrows our prow threw aside, or the broad wake we left behind, but the whole surface of the water glowed with phosphorescent brightness, and we seemed to force our way through a sheet of molten silver.

"All night long we steamed up the river, and when the sun again arose—it showed us the harbour of Monte Video. Out beyond all the other shipping lay a stately frigate, the Stars and Stripes of the great republic streaming from her peak in the morning breeze—the old *St. Lawrence*, flagship of the squadron. . . . We were bringing them news and letters from home, and every port of the great ship thronged with faces eager to see the comer from the land they loved. Running up under her quarter, we were hailed and answered, and after the usual inquiries, our captain mentioned the death of young Martin, and his wish to have him buried on shore; but was told that it was impossible, that we would infringe the quarantine rules by even entering the port with the corpse; and was directed to steam back some miles and commit the body to the waves, before entering the harbour.

"The shrill whistle of the boatswain sounded; a boat dropped from the frigate's davits, reached our side, took letters and papers, and our little steamer turned slowly round to retrace her path. We had felt sad while coming up, but a darker gloom hung over all while going down the river. It seemed so hard that the last and only request of the poor boy could not be complied with.

"But swiftly down the current in the bright, fresh morning dashed our little boat, and when the lofty frigate was hull-down behind us, we turned and stopped for the last sad rites.

"Upon the quarter-deck, in reverential silence, all hands were gathered. The large box-like coffin, in which we had hoped to commit our dead to mother earth, bored full of holes and filled up with heavy materials, was placed by the side, covered with the flag. The beautiful burial service was commenced, its solemn sentences sounding doubly solemn under such mournful circumstances—there was a pause—then came the words, 'We, therefore, commit his body to the deep!' and with a surge the waves closed above the dead.

"Hardly a word was spoken as the wheels again took up their task, and we began to ascend the river, but every eye was fixed on the spot we were leaving, and at the same instant an exclamation sprang from every lip as the coffin was seen to rise! The engine was quickly stopped, a boat lowered, and taking a small anchor and some heavy chain, they tried to secure and sink the box. But it was no easy task in the fresh breeze and short, chopping sea, and the coffin seemed almost instinct with life and striving to elude their efforts. Again and again they were foiled in their attempt to fasten the weights, but were at last successful, and once more the water closed above the corpse.

"After waiting some time, to make sure that it could not float again, we started once more up the river, and this time awe was mingled with our grief. Most men who follow the sea have a touch of superstition. There is something in the vastness with which Nature presents herself upon the great waters which influences in this direction even minds otherwise sceptical. And as we steamed up the river, it was more than hinted among many of us that the strong desire of the dying man had something to do with the difficulty of sinking his body.

"This time we passed the frigate, saluting, but not stopping, and entered the port. It was war time; on the Pampas some phase of the interminable quarrels of this Southern federation was being fought out, and the

harbour was crowded with men-of-war. Nearly all the Brazilian navy was there, watching the progress of events; and besides these, and the numerous merchantmen, the ensign of almost every nation was displayed above some armed vessel. By direction of the officer who boarded us, we proceeded past them all, to the farther side of the harbour, where we were ordered to lie in quarantine seven days before being allowed to coal.

"The new scene, the various objects of interest around and the duties of clearing up, conspired to make us forget the events of the morning, but the sun was yet some distance above the western horizon when a startling circumstance occurred to recall them to our minds.

"Nearly all hands were busily engaged below, only two or three loitering around the deck, when the quartermaster, sweeping the harbour with his glass, noticed something floating in, which riveted his attention. Again and again he looked at it; then, with surprise and dismay in his face, called the officer of the deck. The whisper spread through the ship, and in a few minutes all were watching in silence the object that seemed drifting towards us. Onward it came, through all the vessels that lay beyond us—now lost to our view, now coming in sight again—turning and tacking as though piloted by life, and steadily holding its course for our steamer. It passed the last ship, and came straight for us. It came closer, and every doubt was dispelled—it was, indeed, the coffin! A thrill of awe passed through every heart as the fact became assured.

"Right under our bows came the box; it touched our side; halted a moment, as if claiming recognition, and then drifted slowly past us towards the shore.

"There was an excited murmur forward, a whispered consultation in the knot of officers aft; then one advanced—'Man the quarter boat, boys; take pick and spades; tow the coffin ashore, and bury the body!'

"It was the work of a moment—the boat shot like an arrow from our side, the ashen oars bending with the energy of the stroke. Reverently and gently they secured the box, and with slow, solemn strokes, towed it to the foot of the desolate looking hill that skirts the

bay. There, breaking it open, they bore the corpse, covered with the flag, a little distance up the hillside, and making in the twilight a grave among the chaparral, laid it to rest, marking the spot with a rude cross, which, concealed from observation by the bushes, would yet serve as a mark of recognition, and secure the grave, should it be noticed, from the intrusion of vandal hands.

“And so, spite of all, that dying wish was gratified, and the body which the waters refused to receive was laid to rest in its mother earth.”<sup>1</sup>

From Monte Video the *Shubrick* proceeded to the Strait of Magellan, arriving at Cape Virgin on March 6; for instead of taking the long route followed by sailing vessels around Cape Horn, she was to steam by the short route through the strait. The heavy westerly winds and strong currents peculiar to that region made such boisterous weather that progress was greatly retarded and nearly all the coal consumed, so that the crew had to go ashore and cut fire-wood with which to make the next port.<sup>2</sup> To his family Henry George has described the scenery in the western part of the strait as perhaps the most magnificent and impressive he ever beheld.

“The water was clear and green with depth even up to the banks, which in places were sheer walls of rock running up perhaps three thousand feet and mantled at their summits with dazzling snow. In the valleys between these and the mountains beyond were glacial formations, white and green and iridescent; and at the bases where the land flattened out, were heavy growths of evergreens.

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<sup>1</sup> If Mr. George had any superstitious feeling at the time regarding the matter — and there is nothing to indicate that he had — he certainly did not continue to entertain it in after years, but believed the movements of the coffin due to the accidental loosening of weights, peculiarities of currents and other natural causes.

<sup>2</sup> *Shubrick's* log.

“Being short of fuel, we brought the little steamer against a bank, and tying her there, went ashore and cut wood. This consumed a number of days. We ran into a little harbour in the strait and came upon a schooner which belonged to English missionaries with whom we exchanged letters. The missionaries were praying and working with the native Terra del Fuegians. We saw a number of these natives, and they were not at all attractive. I heard afterwards that the Patagonians killed and ate these missionaries.”

On the passage up the Pacific coast the *Shubrick* touched at Valdivia, Valparaiso, Panama, and San Diego, and on the 27th of May, 1858, after a voyage of one hundred and fifty-five days from Philadelphia, arrived at San Francisco.