

THE CAPITAL

SIR GRIFFITH J. GRIFFITH.

LOS ANGELES is not in any degree noted for its generous and public-spirited citizens. There are amongst us many who will erect large buildings and embark upon great enterprises, but as a general thing they want to see a certain chance for a good return upon the investment. When it comes to donating fountains or contributing towards public library buildings, the Los Angeles citizen is conspicuous by his absence.

This may be accounted for by the fact that nearly all of the old citizens of this place—those who watched it grow from nothing, and who take a pride in the city and love it—are poor in this world's goods. The present Los Angeles is made up of new people, who have come here to amass wealth, and whose hearts are in some Eastern village where they first saw the light of day, and around which their early recollections still cluster. They are not here to give, but to take, and nearly everything, not too large or hot, which crosses their vision, is scooped in and turned to private account.

How refreshing, then, is it to turn to the one man, who, possessed of ample funds, devoted a portion of his possessions to the use of humanity and the glorification of the city he loved. There is no citizen of Los Angeles who does not feel a thrill of pride when he recounts to the Eastern visitor the fact that we have the largest park in the world, and that it is the free-will offering of one of our patriotic citizens.

No matter how highly Griffith J. Griffith is held in the esteem of our people, they can never do him too much honor for his princely gift to the city. It was a domain that passed from his hands to the city when by a stroke of the pen he dedicated Griffith Park to the use of the people. Three thousand acres

of as beautiful and picturesque park land as the sun ever shone upon, was given to the city for a public pleasure ground, and the only reward Mr. Griffith received, or sought, he found in the grateful hearts of the people.

There are generations yet unborn who will bless the donor of this gift. We can look into the future and see in this beautiful valley, and on these stately hills, a city of two millions of people, and in the midst of it the grandest park in all the world. The time will come when speculators would gladly cover

this ground with golden pieces to become possessed of it, and yet all the wealth of the Indies will not suffice to buy it, for it belongs to the people and is forever dedicated to their free and unrestricted use.

When men make such gifts, they subdue every feeling of self, and rise to the plane of greatness.

Griffith J. Griffith is a man of whom any city might be proud. He is energetic and enterprising, and while his fortune is so large as to deprive him of the desire for accumula-

tion, he is yet keenly active to the development of the resources of this country, and does not hesitate to invest his money in enterprises of great moment. He takes much interest in the project of a railroad between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, and when that enterprise is floated he will doubtless be a heavy investor in it.

Mr. Griffith is a man who cannot be swerved from the duty he owes to society, no matter how unpleasant or distasteful he finds the performance of it. This firm trait in his character was exemplified lately in his prosecution of Bird. This man was the book-keeper of Mr. Griffith, and in this capacity forged his employer's name to checks, thus unlawfully coming into possession of sums of money aggregating some \$6,000. Bird was arrested, and there was a combination of lawyers and bankers to clear him. Mr. Griffith was subjected to all the unpleasantness consequent upon a trial of that kind, but he felt that Bird should not be turned loose to again prey upon society, and he persevered until a jury found Bird guilty. The amount involved was nothing to Mr. Griffith, for in the course of a year he gives away many times that sum in unobtrusive charity, but there was a principle at stake and Mr. Griffith did his duty in the premises.

Mr. Griffith, as his name indicates, comes from sturdy Welsh stock, having been born in Wales in the year 1852. He came to this country while very young, and received his education in Pennsylvania. In 1873 he came to California and engaged in mining. He was very successful in that pursuit, and after following it for nine years retired with a competency.

In 1882 Mr. Griffith came to Los Angeles and purchased the magnificent Los Feliz ranch just north of the city. It was a portion of this ranch which was comprised in the recent park gift. During his residence in Los Angeles Mr. Griffith has handled many large propositions and all of them successfully. His management of the Brinswaller tract was matchless.

In addition to his business qualifications Mr. Griffith is one of the pleasantest of men socially. He is a member of the leading clubs of the city, and is popular in all of them. There is many a good deed performed by this gentleman of which the outside world knows little, and as we said before he is a man whom any city might be proud to claim as a citizen.

The editor of this paper has known Mr. Griffith for the past fifteen years, and has ever esteemed him at his true worth. There are many people in this city who are indebted to Mr. Griffith for acts of kindness and charity, but he never lets his left hand know what his right does.

One of the pleasing features of the late Fiesta was the conferring of the order of Knighthood upon Mr. Griffith. He also enjoys the distinction of being the first and only honorary member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Griffith is very popular with all working newspaper men.



Photo. by Steckel.

SIR GRIFFITH JENKINS GRIFFITH.

"I wish to make this gift while I am still in the full vigor of life, that I may enjoy with my neighbors its beauties and pleasures, and that I may bear with me when I cross the clouded river, the pleasing knowledge of the fruition of a wish long dear to me."