

Francis Marion Drake,

GOVERNOR OF IOWA.

Last week we journeyed to Centerville to pay our last tribute to a departed friend. Eight years before we made a trip to Centerville in honor of the same man. Then it was to celebrate his election as Governor of Iowa. Cannons boomed, bands played, torches blazed and people cheered in honor of the citizen who had been thus distinguished by his fellows.

Last week the crowds were present but tears had taken the place of the cheering, there were flowers in the place of the torches, and the solemn "Dead March" of the band had succeeded the lively stirring airs of the former occasion.

But after all the same thought ran through both observances, both were efforts to fittingly commemorate the great events of a great career, the one to celebrate the civic triumph of fellow citizen, the other to observe with proper pomp and solemnity the glorious close when Death crowns all.

On both occasions there were the large mass of the simply curious, still others whom self interest had brought to the scene, and yet others, the sincere friends, whose hearts rejoiced in the victory of eight years ago and whose grief was genuine as they saw their friend carried to his last rest.

It was our pleasure to know Francis Marion Drake, intimately and well during the two years of his administration and during the six months preceding his election to the Governorship. Although the time was short it served to show us the beauty and the strength, the simplicity and the honesty, the steadfastness and the earnestness of a character that will grow in brightness as the years recede and that will mark General Drake as one of the greatest men Iowa has produced. Long after the memory of more polished men, more astute politicians, more wily statesmen has passed into oblivion, the rugged, simple honesty of Governor Drake will stand out in bright relief.

We shall leave to others the tale of the Governor's public philanthropies, the score of his business successes and his military bravery, but as we have to tell of General Drake as we knew him, as the man of sixty-five, already wearing the silver crown of age, already enjoying the affluence of a successful business career, and plunged for practically the first time into the vortex of politics, the storm center of conflicting elements and factions, and ambitions, and bearing himself through it all as a simple, great hearted, generous-minded man, a steadfast friend, a lenient enemy and possessed of those virtues that make for greatness in every age and clime.

As is the case with most public men, General Drake was assailed with calumny and slander. When such charges were made, he met them boldly and unflinchingly; proved them untrue and passed on, and no man ever saw one trace of malice in his heart toward his traducers, although more than once he had them in his power. It is due to the memory of our friend to say that these charges which saddened the last year of his administration, were wholly untrue and without foundation, and we believe that no one was more intimate, or had better opportunity of knowing the governor's every act at that time, than ourselves.

Governor Drake's administration was comparatively uneventful, but no man can be governor of Iowa without being confronted daily with problems that require honesty, plain dealing, tact and ability. No one has ever been able to point to one discreditable act of the Drake administration; no one has been able to show that during his time in office he ever used his official position to favor any one of the corporate interests in which he was a large holder.

In fact it was his strict adherence to ideals of duty which prompted the malicious charges set on foot by those who found that General Drake was governor in fact as well as in name, and not the pliant tool they had thought him.

The Savior said "In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these, even so have ye done it unto me." If this be a supreme test of christianity, Governor Drake could read his title clear to all the promisee the Good Book makes. No man was more considerate of others, more kindly, more careful not to offend. With him it was ever others first and himself afterward. It was this that made the governor such a lovable character. One might admire others, one might stand in awe of some, but one loved General Drake.

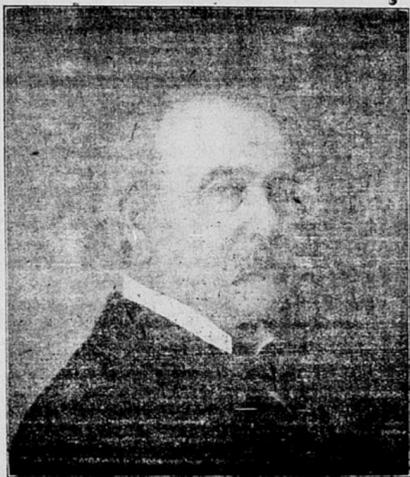
Space does not permit us to tell all the acts of private charity; acts unknown to the world and to the press, done by the governor. His public gifts to Drake University, etc., do not represent one-half of his benevolence. Many an old soldier did the general support; many a poor boy and girl has been helped on the threshold of life. Many the struggling, obscure cause he has befriended.

To us he was almost as a second father; loving, strong, patient and true, and a large portion of our heart's love is

buried in the grave with Governor Drake.

General Drake was a man of action; a born leader; possessing many of the qualities of generalship. He was not an idealist; his education was gained chiefly on the plains, in the camp and in the affairs of business, but he knew men, and the hearts of men. There was rich, warm, red blood in his veins. He had sympathy and love for all men. He felt no condescension for any man, for he had suffered and toiled in every walk of life. He was no vain, but he wanted to be liked and loved—and in return he had a wealth of affection and steadfastness to bestow. He was stubborn.

We never saw him driven an inch, but he would go to almost any length for a friend. He was the most guileless and truthful of men—except, that no man could deceive him more than once. He was earnest, sincere and honorable. His life was one of action. He was a creator, a doer. He left theories to others; for him were the practical affairs of life, the accomplishments of acts.



FRANCIS MARION DRAKE.

Stevenson said "I know what joy is, for I have done good work." Such joy Governor Drake must have known throughout his long and busy life time.

We cannot lay down the pen without saying one word to the sons and daughters, who were as the apple of his eye. Their names were constantly and lovingly upon his tongue. He was proud of every one of the accomplishments and successes. Never were his dear, kindly eyes so bright as when speaking of them; never did he seem more human and more lovable. Better than the inheritance of wealth he left them, is the heritage of love and honor, and good name.

Personally, no man ever had a better and a kinder friend than we had in Governor Drake. In the two years of intimacy there was never a jar or a misunderstanding, never an unkind word, or ungenerous deed. We can never forget the thoughtful, affectionate letter with which the governor sought to cheer the last days of our father by kindly words about his son. We shall be glad indeed if our words shall in some measure convey the strength of our affection, and shall carry comfort and consolation to those who loved him.

The story of the governor's life we leave to the pen of his life-long friend, Gen. H. H. Wright, of Centerville, as published in the "Iowegian," of that place.

In that great book of Life, where greatness is but a synonym for Love and charity and kindness, and true-heartedness and honesty, the name of Francis Marion Drake will be found, written in letters of gold, by angel fingers traced.

Francis Marion Drake was born in Rushville, county seat of Schuyler county, Illinois, December 30th, A. D. 1830; died at his home in Centerville, Appanoose county, Iowa, November 20th, A. D. 1903, at 10:45 a. m., being the second son of Judge John Adams Drake, by his wife, Harriet Jane O'Neal, natives of North Carolina and both late of Appanoose County, Iowa, deceased.

The family located in Iowa at Fort Madison in the year 1837 and have resided in the state continuously ever since. Judge Drake joined the host of emigrants then pouring into the new state and located in Davis county, at what is now Drakeville, in 1846, where he engaged in mercantile and general trading pursuits, in which employments his young sons were soon installed as active partners carrying on the most extensive trading establishments in this part of the country for many years. The goods for the store were hauled with ox teams from the Mississippi river at Old Alexandria, Keokuk and Fort Madison and the hogs and cattle sold for the markets were driven on foot to the same points on the river, there being no means of transportation except by water and overland by teams. It was in the rugged school of pioneer days, under the

guidance of his noble and christian parents, that the character of the subject of this sketch was formed. The latch string of the Drake home was always out, and never was the weary traveler denied food and rest, or turned away.

WENT TO CALIFORNIA

The gold discoveries in California attracted the restless spirit of this young pioneer and he joined the great throng then crossing the almost trackless plains and the impenetrable mountains of that vast and wild region of country. During the early fifties, when barely of age he made two successful trips to the golden shore of the Pacific Ocean, taking large herds of stock to be disposed of in the mining districts along the Sacramento Valley. Every mile of the route, after leaving the Missouri river, was fraught with danger from herds of wild animals and hostile Indians, requiring great vigilance and daring to escape their cunning and hatred for intruders, who were over-running their hunting grounds, killing and carrying the game out of their usual haunts.

THRILLING EXPERIENCES

It was at the crossing of Shell Creek in Nebraska that he commanded

signed to duty commanding a brigade of troops and the post of Duval's Bluff Arkansas, until the muster out of service in September, 1865.

CAME TO CENTERVILLE

On his return he reentered the mercantile trade at Centerville, where he had removed his family in the fall of 1862, and also engaged in the practice of law in the State and Federal courts, being first associated with Judge James Harris and later with General A. J. Baker, at the Centerville bar. But his crowning success was won as a projector and builder of railroads, having built five railroads in Iowa, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. The apple of his eye was Drake University at the city of Des Moines founded and maintained mostly by his liberal donations and careful personal supervision, during the past twenty years. Another cherished object, recently completed, was the Drake Public Free Library building, erected and presented by him to the association having cost about \$35,000.

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