

ANNALS OF IOWA.

VOL. I, No. 2.

DES MOINES, IOWA, JULY, 1893.

3D SERIES.

GENERAL NATHANIEL B. BAKER.

BY B. F. GUE.

During the War of the Rebellion, two Iowa men who remained in the State, each in a sphere to which he had been called, achieved national reputation for patriotic services of the highest character. I refer to Samuel J. Kirkwood, who was one of the foremost of the "War Governors" of the loyal States, ranking easily as the peer of Morton of Indiana, Andrew of Massachusetts, and Curtin of Pennsylvania, and to Nathaniel B. Baker, whom he selected in that stupendous emergency for the arduous duties of Adjutant General of Iowa. Each was the natural adjunct or complement of the other. Kirkwood, though he did not see a day in school after he was fourteen years of age, had become a profound lawyer, possessing wide knowledge of men and affairs, although he had spent many of his mature years in rural life. In "the summers of long ago" he was a barefoot boy on a Maryland farm. He therefore understood as one "to the manner born" the works and ways, the inner life, the instinctive patriotism of the masses of his countrymen. He went about his work coolly and steadily, making few mistakes, always meeting emergencies, and never failing to gain and retain the confidence of the people.

Baker, on the other hand, was a man of action, whose impulses were as prompt and instant as they were patriotic. Whatever the exigency, or however suddenly it arose, he saw at once, as by intuition, the course to be pursued. To a nature at once kindly and generous, for he was a born philanthropist, a lover of his race, he united the highest type of the executive officer. His equal in the management of the largest.

affairs, or the smallest details, has never appeared in our State, and but seldom in the nation. On one occasion the writer saw him hurriedly paying out coin, early in the war, when hard money was still plenty, to a dozen different men, apparently without memoranda. He had such ways of transacting business, with little of red tape, and yet he never made mistakes, or failed to account for the last cent. His accounts remain models of system and accuracy. It is of the career of this large-brained, large-hearted, patriotic man that I shall speak in the following pages, and only incidentally of the illustrious War Governor who had the sagacity to select Baker for the great work of that eventful time.

General Baker was born at Hillsborough, Merrimack county, in the "Old Granite State," September 29, 1818. He received a liberal education, his preparatory at the Phillips Exeter Academy, afterward taking a full course and graduating at Harvard, the college which has been the *Alma Mater* of a long and brilliant array of America's most eminent statesmen, jurists, authors, scientists and clergymen.

He was but twenty-one years of age when he finished his college course, and entered the law office of Franklin Pierce. He was admitted to the bar in 1842 and entered upon the practice of his profession. He was always a clear, forcible and able writer, and for three years was one of the editors of *The New Hampshire Patriot*. In 1845 he was appointed Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, and in 1846 Clerk of the Supreme Court. In 1851 he was elected to the Legislature from Concord. He was chosen Speaker of the House, and served with distinction for two terms. He was at this time one of the most popular men in his native State, and in 1852 when the Democrats were disposed to take their Presidential candidate from New Hampshire, N. B. Baker was one of the men frequently spoken of for the place, while Franklin Pierce, his warm friend, had also a host of supporters for the position. When Baker learned that his former instructor was a candidate, in the generosity of his abiding friendship, he stood aside and used his influence to help bestow the great honor upon

Pierce, who received the nomination, and as all know, was elected by an overwhelming majority. Baker was chosen one of the Presidential Electors, and had the satisfaction of helping to give the vote of his State to his old friend for President. Although a young man at this time, not thirty-five years of age, N. B. Baker had become one of the most influential leaders of the Democratic party; he was especially popular with the young men of his State and in 1854 was nominated for Governor. The great conflict which was now going on over the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the persistent efforts to force slavery into Kansas, had resulted in a wide-spreading Free Soil movement in the Northern States, and the organization of a new political party. This party drew its strength from the Anti-Slavery element of both the old parties, and before the next Presidential election, united in a strong organization known as the Republican party. In New Hampshire, the Free Soil party, led by John P. Hale, put a candidate in the field for Governor; the Whigs nominated a strong man also, and the contest in this hitherto staunch Democratic State became warm, with the result in doubt. Baker entered into the campaign with great spirit, and his personal popularity enabled him to secure a majority over both of his competitors, but he was the last Democratic Governor of New Hampshire, as the growing anti-slavery sentiment of the people left his party in a minority in that State permanently. But Governor Baker made an able and popular executive, adding to his already well established reputation.

In 1856 he removed to Iowa and settled at Clinton, a small but ambitious young city, from which point the Cedar Rapids & Missouri River Railroad was then being constructed toward the Missouri River. A grant of public lands had been made by the General Government to aid in the construction of four trunk lines of railroads through Iowa, from east to west. Clinton county was deeply interested in the disposition of lands granted to aid one of these roads, and Gov. Baker was elected one of its representatives, in 1859, in view of the great influ-

ence he would have in the Legislature in securing the resumption of the grant of land made to the Iowa Central Air Line Company, which had failed to comply with the conditions imposed. The citizens of Clinton were working to secure this forfeited land grant for the new company, and they counted largely upon the powerful aid that Gov. Baker could bring to a measure in which their city and county were so deeply interested. They were not disappointed. Under Baker's leadership the land grant was resumed by the Legislature and re-granted to the new company, thus securing the completion of its road through to the Missouri River, and making the eastern outlet for the Union Pacific, through the heart of Iowa, in advance of all competitors. The early opening up of this great through line, traversing the beautiful and fertile prairies of central Iowa, was one of the most important public works ever accomplished in our State. It gave to thousands of travelers their first sight and knowledge of the limitless resources of our magnificent State, and brought into its border thousands of thrifty home-seekers to aid in its development and add to its population and capital. The pioneers whose energy, foresight and influence thus early secured to Iowa what is now the great Northwestern Railway, deserve permanent recognition in Iowa history, and N. B. Baker, John Weare, G. M. Woodbury, W. W. Walker and John I. Blair, are names that should be ever remembered.

One who was officially connected with the General Assembly of 1860 has written as follows of Gov. Baker as a legislator:

While he served but one regular session, that of 1860, in the Iowa House of Representatives, he took a very high position as an able, wide-awake, vigilant and efficient law-maker. He always knew what was going on, what measures were before the body, when they were likely to be reached, and how to secure the most favorable action upon all in which he took an interest. Not only was he an excellent manager, though not strictly speaking, a parliamentarian, but he knew how to appeal to men, how to secure their friendship and support. He used to be spoken of in those old stage-coach days as one of the "wheel-horses" of legislation. The Speaker, Hon. and "Honest" John Edwards, was an excellent presiding officer when everything went well, but when "storms arose" on "the floor," as he called it in his Southern vernacular, he was only too glad to "call the gentleman from

Clinton" to the chair. As soon as Baker took up the gavel order came out of chaos and the business was pushed along rapidly, and as easily as though all the machinery had been freshly oiled. As a presiding officer he had many of the characteristics of James G. Blaine. He was, no doubt, somewhat arbitrary, as every good speaker must be; but he had an instinctive horror at seeing time wasted. He was especially useful as the session wore along toward the close. If he believed that a bill should be passed, he could expedite it on its way to the third reading more rapidly than most speakers would care to do. He never spoke for mere "buncombe," in fact, his remarks were generally very brief, in a sort of conversational way, and almost wholly confined to explanations, or the tersest setting forth of reasons. He was always ready and armed for emergencies—full of resources.

On one occasion the important portion of one of the manuscript journals of the House had been stolen. The fact coming to the knowledge of a few members, there was talk of "investigation," and the affair seemed likely to grow into a scandal. But coming to Governor Baker's knowledge, he counselled those who knew the facts to keep quiet. Meantime, he learned that the Chief Clerk would be able to reproduce the journal almost word for word from his rough notes of the day's proceedings. The next morning, as soon as the journal was read, Governor Baker rose in his place and stated the whole case very quietly, making a motion that the clerk be directed to reproduce that part of the journal which had been abstracted and have it ready for approval the next day. The motion was adopted and the whole affair was thus settled without a ripple of any sort.

At the extra session in May, 1861, he was the leading spirit. As a war Democrat he had the full confidence of his own party, while the Republicans trusted him implicitly. Both House and Senate contained many able men, but there can be no doubt that his master hand shaped the legislation of that most important war session.

Governor Baker was ever the friend of young men and always met them upon equal terms. Even in his latest years, when his hair was becoming white, he appeared naturally to seek the association of young men. When he was chosen to the Legislature in 1860, he was a Democrat. The officers of the House were Republicans, feeling at the start a degree of backwardness in making his acquaintance. He had been Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Hampshire and Governor of that State, and came to Des Moines with almost a national reputation. But he was not long in making the acquaintance and winning the friendship of everybody. He was not burdened with that species of dignity which only makes a man repellent in his manners. The House had elected for Chief Clerk a young man who had never seen a legislative body in session two days in his life, and it may be inferred that he was not over-confident of his power to discharge its complicated and onerous duties. When the session was about four days old, Baker came to the desk, immediately after an adjournment, saying rather sternly: "See here, young man, I've got something to say to you," and the clerk stopped to listen; "I sit right there," pointing to his desk, "where I can see you from head to foot, and I notice when you are reading or calling the roll, that your knees tremble. I want to say to you

that that is all —— nonsense, and I don't want to see any more of it! You needn't stand in awe of anybody in this House! You are going to make a good clerk, and we all like you! Brace right up, my boy, and you are all right." Turning upon his heel he walked rapidly away. It is needless to say that General Baker and the clerk were ever afterward the closest of friends. He had said an encouraging, kindly word, just at the time that it was needed, and in such a way that it was never forgotten.

The year 1860 closed amidst the most intense excitement throughout the country. When it became certain that Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, had been elected President, the Legislature of South Carolina provided for a State Convention to secure the secession of that State from the Union. On the 20th of December an ordinance of secession was adopted by a unanimous vote, and the declaration was made that "the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and the other States is hereby dissolved."

Before the inauguration of the new President, five more of the Southern States had seceded from the Union, seizing forts, arms and other United States property. The gravest apprehensions everywhere prevailed, as a terrible civil war seemed inevitable. The expiring administration of James Buchanan had offered no resistance to the seizure of the forts, arms and other government property by the foes of the Union, and intense anxiety was felt by the new administration and its supporters, to know what the attitude of the Northern Democrats would be in the coming conflict.

When the war began by the attack on Fort Sumter, and the call for 75,000 volunteers was made by President Lincoln, the test of loyalty came. Every citizen must decide whether he would in this hour of supreme danger, stand loyally by his country and its government, or by indifference, or sympathy with its enemies, contribute to its destruction. A united North could speedily crush out the rebellion, while division on party lines might lead to the overthrow of the Government. The fate of the Republic seemed to hang upon the attitude and action of the Democratic party of the North. Some of its great leaders hesitated not a moment. Stephen A. Douglas, John A. Dix, Edwin M. Stanton, Joseph Holt, Benjamin F.

Butler, Daniel S. Dickinson, Lewis Cass and others, promptly arrayed themselves on the side of the Government while many others openly opposed coercion of the seceding States. In Iowa, Gov. Baker, Wm. W. Belknap, Marcellus M. Crocker, J. M. Tuttle, Cyrus Bussey, R. D. Kellogg, and other Democratic leaders, directed the loyal wing of their party into a cordial support of the Government, while a large minority held aloof. The younger generation of to-day can hardly realize how much the restored country owed to the superb loyalty of the "War Democrats" of 1861.

In the meantime a proclamation had been issued by Governor Kirkwood, calling an extra session of the Iowa Legislature, to make provision for raising and equipping the regiments that our State would be called upon to furnish. The Legislature assembled on the 16th of May, and in the House all partisan contests were put aside, by the harmonious election of officers for the session from both political parties.

The first business that came before the House was the following resolution offered by Gov. Baker:

Resolved, That in the opinion of this House there shall be enacted at this session, a law providing for the payment of all volunteers who enter the service of the General Government, or of the State, from the date of their enlistment to the time of their mustering into service, and also providing for their pay from the date of their discharge to the time of their arrival at their respective homes.

By common consent N. B. Baker at once became the leader of the House. Governor Kirkwood had promptly responded to the President's call for volunteers, and without waiting for legislative authority, appropriations of money, or the aid of any efficient military laws, had issued a call for volunteers. The people had nobly responded, and with the aid of such patriotic private citizens as Hiram Price, J. K. Graves, Ezekiel Clark, William T. Smith and others, the means had been furnished to put two regiments in the field, before a special session of the Legislature could be convened.

It devolved upon the Legislature now assembled to enact laws for the organization of the military forces to be called into service, and to provide money to meet the extraordinary

expenses that must be incurred. Iowa was a border State, and must take prompt measures to repel invasions which were threatened from Missouri, where thousands of troops were being mustered into the Confederate service.

Provision must also be made for the support of the families of volunteers who had hurried to the front. Without money in the treasury, or military organization, or experienced officers, it was a herculean task that confronted the General Assembly. But the emergency fortunately developed men who were qualified to meet it. In the House, Baker was placed at the head of the Committee on Military Affairs, and H. C. Caldwell was made Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, and, in co-operation with the strong leaders in the Senate, framed the bills required to put the State on a war footing. Persistent efforts were made by a minority to embarrass and defeat radical war measures, but the loyal majority had little patience with the obstructionists, and in a session of but thirteen days enacted all the legislation needed to enable Iowa to do its full share in furnishing its quota of the grand Union Army, then gathering from all the loyal States.

N. B. Baker had in this brief session shown such marked executive ability, that he was in July appointed Adjutant General of the State. He entered at once upon the duties of the office, and soon demonstrated his superior qualifications for the great work before him. He proceeded to organize that department upon thorough business principles, to gather as his assistants a most efficient corps of clerks, adopting a plan of records that preserved a concise history of every private and officer who entered an Iowa regiment, or any branch of the service. As the war progressed, increasing in magnitude from year to year, additional duties devolved upon him, as he was also made Inspector General, Quarter Master, Paymaster and Commissary General. The amount of labor and responsibility devolving upon him in these various positions was enormous, and proved a great tax even upon his wonderful powers of endurance. As the years of the long and bloody war rolled on, call after call was made by the President for volunteers to

swell the size, and fill up the depleted ranks of the Union Army. General Baker in Iowa had organized fifty-seven regiments and four batteries, besides sending thousands of recruits to the various regiments, until a vast army of nearly 80,000 men had gone from our State before the war closed. No State in the Union had been more prompt than Iowa in responding to the calls of the President for troops, and no one official in Iowa contributed so largely to make this possible as General N. B. Baker.

The eight large volumes of Adjutant General's Reports, carefully compiled from the records of that office, from the beginning of the war up to 1867, by General Baker, make up a most complete and reliable history of all Iowa soldiers engaged in the war of the Rebellion. It will be the official record and the roll of honor in all the years to come. Every name is there; and every soldier's record is briefly given, just as he made it, in a few lines, pathetic in their brevity.

Here is one copied at random from these volumes: "Ward, Willey, 29 years of age, residence Inland, Cedar county, Iowa, native of Ohio, enlisted as a private August 8, 1862, in Company C, 24th Iowa Volunteers, died May 16, 1863, in hospital at St. Louis, of small pox." Four brief lines make the official record of one of Iowa's 80,000 strong, brave men who, in the morning of life, marched away to Southern battle fields, of whom 12,000 never returned.

This record does not tell of the young wife and two little girls left in the lonely farm home by the banks of Rock Creek, to wait, in dread suspense as the weeks and months go slowly by, for tidings from the husband and father; nor of the despair of the young widow and the fatherless girls when the fatal letter came to them, on that bright spring morning, wrecking all their hopes and forever desolating their home. The war years were filled with such tragedies, all over the land, and these volumes so carefully prepared under General Baker's direction will forever preserve the record of the humblest private as well as the highest officer. It is a cyclopedia of wonderful accuracy and of priceless value; and so long as Iowa has an exist-

ence, it will be consulted by the descendants of soldiers of the Union Army and the students of Iowa history.

Few States have such complete records, and the following correspondence will throw some light upon the obstacles met and overcome by General Baker, in gathering the material embraced in his records.

General Johnson issued at one time—

GENERAL ORDERS NO. 6, }
 HD. QRS. SIXTH DIVISION CAVALRY CORPS, M. D. M. }
 EDGEFIELD, TENN., Dec. 28, 1864.

It has come to the knowledge of the Commanding General, that in the Iowa regiments serving in this division, and perhaps in those from other States, it has been customary under the supposed authority of some regulation or order from Headquarters of the so-called "Army of Iowa," or other authority of like character, to furnish to the Adjutant General of the State of Iowa, and other States, copies of the monthly return, list of casualties, reports of operations, and other reports. Not only military propriety, but the danger of such papers falling into the hands of improper persons, forbids this practice. It is, therefore, ordered that in future no such reports, returns or others of like character, or copies thereof, be furnished to the Adjutant General of the State of Iowa, or any other State, or any person, persons, or authority, except as now required or as may be hereafter required by orders from the War Department, or Department Headquarters.

The time of the officers of this command is too precious to be devoted to the preparation of official documents for the satisfaction or curiosity of civilians at home. This must be left to the newspaper correspondents. Officers will understand that they and their troops are in the service of the United States, and in their military capacity have no relations whatever to the State from which they come, or the Executive thereof.

By command of Brigadier General Johnson.

E. T. WELLS, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

Official copy for the information of the Adjutant General of Iowa.

E. T. WELLS, *Assistant Adjutant General.*

General Baker was justly indignant at this arbitrary and insulting "order," and at once forwarded it to the Secretary of War with the following endorsement:

GENERAL JOHNSON:—

The Adjutant General of the State of Iowa acknowledges the receipt of the extraordinary "General Orders, No. 6." The State officials have asked nothing improper, and the Adjutant General cannot comprehend the motives of Brigadier General Johnson in issuing the "General Orders" of which the within is a copy.

The State wishes to keep up the records of the volunteers sent from this State.

No other General, that this Department is aware of, has heretofore attempted to prevent the completion of said records. These records are absolutely essential for the protection of soldiers and their families here at home.

[Signed]

N. B. BAKER, *Adjutant General of Iowa.*

The War Department promptly revoked the "order" of General Johnson in the following:

SPECIAL ORDERS, NO. 53.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

(Extract)

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 2, 1865.

40. So much of General Orders No. 6, December 28, 1864, from Headquarters 6th Division Cavalry Corps, Military Division of the Mississippi, as forbids the rendition of certain returns and reports called for by the Adjutant General of Iowa, is hereby revoked, it being improper in its tone, and disrespectful to the authorities.

By order of the Secretary of War.

E. D. TOWNSEND.

General Baker was thoroughly informed as to his powers and duties in his official capacity, and would not submit to officious interference from any quarter. His system contemplated the securing of all information relating to Iowa soldiers in the service that might at any time be required to make up the elaborate records of his office, and protect the interests of the State, its soldiers, and their families. No State in the Union was better served in that department. But General Baker's interest in Iowa soldiers did not by any means end with a faithful discharge of his official duties. He was untiring in his efforts to provide for the comfort of soldiers in the camp, field and hospital, and in rendering aid to their families. One of the many instances of his watchfulness over them is related in a case of a railroad accident in Indiana, where many Iowa soldiers were killed and wounded. He issued a public order giving notice to the friends of the victims not to settle with the company, as it was a case of criminal negligence on the part of the officials, and pledging himself to secure ample reparation as far as in his power—and he did it.

When the war closed and the survivors returned to their homes, every soldier found a life-long friend in General Baker. As long as he lived he spoke of them invariably as "my boys." His heart and purse were always open to all Iowa soldiers in trouble or in want.

As the Iowa regiments were disbanded Gen. Baker gathered into the State Arsenal the old battle flags torn by shot and shell, representing nearly every Iowa regiment and most of the great battles of the war. Some of them are stained with the life-blood of those who bore them aloft in the thickest of the fight.

Major R. D. Kellogg was intimately connected with Gen. Baker in the Legislature of 1860-1, and also in his military work as a prominent officer of an Iowa regiment during the war. In an address delivered before the Pioneer Law Makers' Association in 1890 he gives his estimate of Gen. Baker as a legislator, and as an executive officer, as follows:

He was largely instrumental in shaping the legislation of this eventful session. He was a man of powerful frame, a giant mind, an iron will and a voice and manner that commanded attention and respect. He moved and thought and wrote and acted with such force and rapidity that, to those of a different type, his methods savored of recklessness. But his public acts and records are a standing refutation of such a charge and declare him to have possessed a master executive mind. While with my best efforts I should fall short of doing full justice to his great qualities of head and heart, yet I would not canonize him. He was not perfect. He had sufficient faults to assert kinship to humanity, but he was a manly man. He was gifted with a sound judgment and perception of the right thing to be done when matters of the greatest moment waited upon his decision, that seemed like intuition.

In the summer of 1870 Gen. Baker, in conjunction with many officers of the late war, planned a great reunion of Iowa soldiers to be held at the Capital of the State. The proposition met with universal favor and was received with great enthusiasm by the "boys in blue." Gen. Baker at once entered upon the work of making all needful preparations for the transportation, care and comfort of the Grand Army of citizen-soldiers that was sure to gather in from all parts of the State. Through his influence the railroads were persuaded to give free transportation, and Gen. Sherman and Gen. Belknap, Secretary of War, came from Washington to greet the Iowa soldiers.

The date fixed for the reunion was August 31. It continued through two days, and fifty thousand people came together, of whom more than twenty thousand were Iowa soldiers. It had been five years since they were mustered out of the service, and this meeting again and for the last time of thousands

of comrades who had marched, camped and fought together in so many trying campaigns, was an event never to be forgotten. No such reunion had occurred since the grand review at Washington in 1865, at the close of the war.

Most of the distinguished Iowa officers who survived were present, and took part in the services, and again greeted their old companions in arms. It was the proudest day in General Baker's life, as he was continually reminded of the warm affection entertained for him by "his boys." Every soldier wanted to take him by the hand. It was the first and last great reunion of Iowa soldiers, an event ever to be remembered in Iowa history.

General Baker's love of newspaper work clung to him through life. He was for many years a member of the Iowa Press Association, and at one of its annual meetings delivered the principal address. It was a paper of rare interest to the fraternity, filled with hints of especial value to the younger members. No man in Iowa probably, in his day, sustained such cordial relations with the publishers of the leading papers. Their editorial columns were always open for his contributions, and for years he was in the habit of sending his comments on current topics of the day to a dozen or more State papers, where they were uniformly "appropriated." When he thought of something that in his judgment ought to be said, he wrote it out in the best English and always sent it to the right place. He seemed to have an intuitive knowledge of men that guided him unerringly in making his selection. No one besides these editors, and General Baker, ever knew how many of the best leaders, or paragraphs, in the Iowa papers for the twenty years, from 1856 to 1876, were from the pen of the old editor of *The New Hampshire Patriot*.

In 1872 northwestern Iowa was visited by immense swarms of grasshoppers, which destroyed the crops over a wide area of country. Great destitution prevailed in some fifteen counties where the devastation had been greatest. As winter approached thousands of the new settlers found themselves and families on the verge of starvation. When their situation

became known to the State at large, the generous people in more favored regions were willing to contribute out of their abundance for the relief of their unfortunate fellow citizens. But some one was needed to take charge of the collection, transportation and equitable distribution of the vast amount of supplies freely tendered to the sufferers. General Baker at once stepped forward and volunteered to superintend this great humane work. He procured from the railroad companies greatly reduced rates of transportation, organized an efficient corps of assistants, and entered upon the work with his accustomed promptness and energy. For months he labored unceasingly in collecting, forwarding and distributing provisions and seed-grain to the destitute farmers of the famine-stricken region, until the greatest destitution was relieved, and the settlers enabled to raise a crop. The fact that General Baker was at the head of the relief movement, was a guarantee to both contributors and sufferers that the great work would be performed with the utmost fidelity and efficiency, and the people of all parts of the State contributed generously until the needy were supplied. General Baker, who was first appointed Adjutant General in July, 1861, was successively reappointed by each succeeding Governor for fifteen years. He also held the offices of Inspector, Quartermaster, Paymaster and Commissary General, continuously to the day of his death, performing all official duties with strict fidelity to the close of his life.

Death came to him in the midst of his usefulness, on the morning of September 13, 1876. The following account of the sad event is from *The State Register* of the next morning:

A year ago last winter while in northwestern Iowa looking after the grass-hopper sufferers, he exposed himself in a storm of snow, sleet and rain, being out in it a whole day, which exposure seemed to fasten upon him the fatal results which now have followed. But the lion-like strength of the General bore it without apparent great injury, until last fall, when a cough set in which from the first had in it the sound of death. This quietly and insidiously wrought upon him through the winter months, and when spring had come, the man of such former great strength, was worn to a man of weakness, and glorious Nat Baker, as his friends always called him in their hearts, had little left of him and his pride of strength but his heart, that grew larger to the last, and constantly tenderer.

Through long weeks and months of suffering the man once so strong, so impulsive, always so impatient of restraint, bore with patience, cheerfulness and courage his lot, frequently rising to the point of jovialty, in order to keep up the sinking hearts of those around him. Even pain and torture could not wring complaint from his lips, and although the failing body was on the rack, the intrepid spirit preserved constantly the martiality of its heroism. Those who were about him in these last days saw revealed in all its beauty the gentle inner nature which had always been the soul and the stay of a character that ever had in it an element of the impetuous and the stormy—saw the sun go down from the spanning sky of pride, valor, strength and majesty, to the peace, the twilight and the submission of the expiring day. * * *

At one o'clock Wednesday morning death came on as a sleep. Almost immediately there came into the face that perfect peace which is seen on earth only in the face of the dead, the noble head with its crown of iron-gray hair, the classical face as clearly cut and as nobly featured as any ever on Roman bronze, set about with a beard which age had spun into silver, showed that Nathaniel B. Baker had from nearly sixty years of incessant activity lain down in death, and lain down in peace. Could all who have ever felt the warmth, or shared the bounty, or been kindly held in the shelter and the love of that stilled heart, come to it now and lay their hands upon it with a blessing, the world would know what it little knows now, of the numberless deeds of kindness, succor and help, performed so quietly that only God knew of them to remember them.

When death came to General Baker, Governor Kirkwood, who had fifteen years before first commissioned him Adjutant General, was again in the executive chair. As soon as the sad news reached him he issued the following:

EXECUTIVE ORDER.

STATE OF IOWA, EXECUTIVE OFFICE, September 13, 1876.

It is with profound sorrow that the Governor announces the death at one o'clock this morning of Brigadier General Nathaniel Bradley Baker, Adjutant and Inspector General of Iowa since 1861, and acting Quartermaster and Paymaster General, and at one time Governor of his native State, New Hampshire. The Governor anticipates the universal regret this event will awaken, throughout the entire State, and even beyond its borders. To his skill, his indomitable energy and his tireless industry, our State owes not a little of the high reputation her military record has made for her. To the soldiery of Iowa, of whose deeds he was ever proud, and whose history he did so much to preserve, he was especially dear; and so long as that history shall be read, will the memory of Iowa's great Adjutant General be perpetuated. More recently, during seasons of great destitution in the newer parts of our own and adjoining States, the same characteristics that had distinguished his services in the department of arms, were of measureless value in securing relief to the impoverished and starving settlers; and the devoted and self-sacrificing labors of this faithful officer in this work will ever constitute one of the bright pages in the State's annals. The Gov-

error himself, long intimately associated officially with the deceased, feels that the popular estimate of this distinguished man is a just one, and realizes that in his death the State has lost a valuable public officer, the public a servant of spotless integrity, and society a useful member.

It is therefore ordered,

1. That proper military honor be rendered the illustrious dead, by the Third Regiment of the Iowa State Militia.

2. That upon Friday, the 15th inst., the day of the funeral, minute guns be fired from noon until sunset.

3. The detachment of artillery attached to the Olmstead Zouaves will report for duty at such time and place as shall be directed by the commanding officer.

4. Lieutenant-Colonel Townsend, Third Regiment I. S. M., is charged with the execution of these orders.

5. The national flag will be displayed at half-mast from the various public buildings belonging to the State.

SAMUEL J. KIRKWOOD.

The funeral was the most imposing ever known in Iowa. Ex-Governors, veteran army officers and prominent citizens from distant parts of the State, came to pay the last tribute of respect to the honored dead. Among the organizations that formed a vast procession was a detachment of the 2d Iowa bearing the flag they so gallantly upheld at Shiloh. Riddled with shot and shell, the old banner as borne by them was but a remnant of the silken folds that first floated in the breeze on that eventful day. A scant dozen of the gallant men who then held it aloft remained and carried it in honor and sadness to the grave of the noble officer who had been so firmly and constantly their friend.

No man in Iowa knew Gen. Baker better than J. S. Clarkson, at that time editor of *The State Register*. The day after his death he wrote of him as follows:

His work as Adjutant General during the war, his organization of the Iowa troops, his care of Iowa soldiers, his matchless records with which he has handed the achievements of Iowa valor and the names of Iowa heroes over to history, his well earned plaudits from the General Government, the Secretary of War, the General of the Army, as having been the most efficient, accurate and painstaking Adjutant General of all the States, his unfaltering devotion to the soldiery of the Union and his unwearied care for their interests, his proud record of good deeds as a public officer, the unstinted charity of his private hand, his heart of warm sympathy and his hand of quick help to the many thousands stricken by the plague of locusts in Iowa, his constant position at the front in every matter of public charity or private generosity in our State for twenty years, his sacrifice of his own

fortune, his forgetfulness of his own needs in his readiness and anxiety to relieve the distress of others—the unselfishness, the great-heartedness, the ruinous generosity of the man, are known to all, honored by all, while thousands of his acts of kindness and sacrifice stand as good angels around his coffin to-day, not talked of in the speech of man nor recorded on earth.

There was probably never a man in whose heart children lived more supreme than in Gen. Baker's. Many are the children who have been taken barefooted from the paving stones of Des Moines into the stores and clothed and warm shoes put upon them, and Gen. Baker was always the name of the kind man when they could find it out. Older people, mothers in poverty and fathers in difficulty, knew of one door which never closed on them.

We mention these things not to benefit Gen. Baker now nor to serve the purpose of eulogy. Benefit cannot reach him, nor eulogy add to his fame. We write them because as we write of him the countless noble and good things in his record come trooping up to our mind so forcibly that they fairly crowd their way into this article. Nobody will ever tell all of them.

The news of the death of Gen. Baker will go cruelly throughout the whole length and breadth of Iowa. No man in the State had so wide and so universal a personal acquaintance, and no man in the State had so many personal friends. They were in all classes and societies, and the most devoted are found among the unlettered and the plain. All the Union soldiers will feel as though a brother or father had died. They were all his "boys," and for them he would have suffered, gone hungry, starved or even died. At the great Iowa reunion of soldiers, in Des Moines in 1870, neither the General of the Army nor the Secretary of War received the attention that Gen. Baker did. He was the man who was most entirely in their hearts and whom they cheered and lionized most.

To every soldier and to every home with a soldier in it, or a soldier's vacant chair, this tidings of death will strike hard and sharp. To such and all who knew him best this article will be none too warm in its tribute and none too cordial in its praise. We ask no apology for it, for we feel that the dead is our dead, too; and feel in the valley of this sorrow that a heart which made this world warmer for us, now is cold; that the strong hand which so often took our own weaker one in its grasp to cheer and strengthen it is never to thrill our blood again; that the familiar form which has so often glided into a seat by our side in dark days, and in darkest days the oftenest, whether to be there just then was popular or unpopular—to say that he was there as a friend—will never come again; all this in the shadow of this hour we feel, and God pity us if in such a time we do not speak the truth of the unselfish, faithful, noble man as we knew it. We write not with sharpened inspection of such dead. We would bury him, faults and all, as tenderly as we would bury a child of our own home and heart.

* * * Wherever sterling patriotism is prized throughout this broad land his name is revered and honored. Brave men died on Southern battlefields blessing the great heart that was so full of tenderness for them. Gentle women and children will mourn him as a friend whose generosity and manliness lived only to do good to those about him. The citizens of Des Moines where he lived so long will ever bear him in kindest memory. A

man without a stain, an official whose every act was born of probity and justice, a friend whose charity of heart impoverished his purse, and a citizen whose public spirit was ever enlisted in good deeds for his fellows, Gen. Baker fills an honored grave. Sunshine and shadow where he lies will rest on a tomb inclosing a heart that beat ever for the good of others. In history he will fill a place accorded to those who worthily, bravely, honestly fill their stations in life and who left behind them records of good.

Soon after his death leading citizens of the State organized the Baker Memorial Association, for the purpose of providing for the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of Gen. Baker. Samuel J. Kirkwood, Iowa's great War Governor, was elected president of the Association, which proceeded at once to organize a plan for raising the funds required. An appeal to the soldiers of the late war was issued, and contributions in small sums were made by thousands of "his boys," who regarded it a privilege thus to testify to the high regard they entertained for one who had ever been their most helpful friend.

A sufficient sum was thus raised to erect a granite column that marks the last resting-place of the honored dead. Hon. George W. McCrary, the distinguished Secretary of War and an Iowa man, secured from Congress an act authorizing him to furnish four brass field-pieces to the Monument Association to be permanently stationed around the lot in Woodland Cemetery where rest the remains of N. B. Baker. But more enduring than granite is the priceless work he did for Iowa soldiers and Iowa history. The superb records he so wisely devised are more enduring monuments than brass or stone and will be sacredly preserved long after the others have crumbled into dust. As the years go by in the onward march of time, generations yet to come will turn to these pages to trace the glorious record of their ancestry, whose deeds will forever illuminate the pages of American history. When "a thousand years" will have rolled away in the life-time of our now young State these records of its early glory will be treasured as among its most valued possessions, and every name thereon inscribed will be embalmed in the memory of the remotest generations. In the old world the youth are proud to trace their ancestry

to dukes and earls. In America the badge of honor will be in the distant future to trace an ancestry back to a member of the Grand Army of the Union.

It is a matter deeply regretted by the friends of General Baker that there is not in existence a good oil portrait of him, painted when he was in his prime, as at the outbreak of the great civil war. The engraving which precedes this article, however, is a fairly good likeness. It was engraved from a somewhat faded photograph which has been preserved by "The Aldrich Collection" in the Historical Department.

THE CHARGE ON BATTERY ROBINET.

BY EX-GOVERNOR CYRUS C. CARPENTER.

The reminiscences of the great Rebellion are becoming more interesting as they recede into history. This fact alone could induce me to repeat the story of one of the events of the war with which I was personally familiar. Time can never efface from the memory of those who saw it, the desperate charge made by the rebels upon Battery Robinet at the battle of Corinth, October 4, 1862. And I sometimes think that the battle of Corinth has not been fully appreciated by the historian; as it was really one of the important events of the war. The little town of Corinth, Mississippi, was neither large nor attractive, but it was one of the strategic points in the territory occupied by the rebel armies. It was at the junction of the Memphis & Charleston, and the Mobile & Ohio Railroads. The one extending east and west from Memphis, Tennessee, through the heart of the rebel territory to Charleston, South Carolina; and the other running north and south from the Ohio river to Mobile and the Gulf of Mexico. To obtain possession of Corinth had cost the bloody battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing) and the subsequent long campaign by regular approaches of the armies of the Tennessee, of the Ohio and of the Mississippi, under General Halleck. Prior to the battle of Corinth, the Union forces in northern Mississippi and west-

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