

ANNALS OF IOWA.

VOL. I. No. 7.

DES MOINES, IOWA, OCTOBER, 1894.

THIRD SERIES.

JAMES W. GRIMES, GOVERNOR AND SENATOR.

BY EX-GOVERNOR CYRUS C. CARPENTER.

A key to the character of James W. Grimes is found in a single paragraph of his Inaugural Address on assuming the duties of Governor in 1854. Commenting on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the designs of the slave power, he says: "It has forced upon the country an issue between free labor, political equality and manhood on the one hand; and on the other slave labor, political degradation and wrong; and it becomes the people of the free states to meet that issue resolutely, calmly, and with a sense of the momentous consequences that will flow from its decision. To every elector, in view of that issue, might appropriately be applied the injunction anciently addressed to the Jewish King: 'Be strong and show thyself a man.'"

His childhood and youth had been spent in a rural home. It was a home in which industry and economy—the twin relics of old New England life—had become a second nature. His sinewy frame had been hardened by contact with the severe climate and penurious soil of his native New Hampshire hills. His alert and vigorous mind had been sharpened by the necessities of a self-reliant ambition. He had graduated in the course of study common to a New England public school; had spent three years as a student at Dartmouth College; when, after a few months' study in the office of a lawyer, he left New Hampshire for the West. Burlington, then a new

town in a Territory from which the Indian title had but recently been extinguished was chosen as his future home. In a letter to his sister he describes the town as follows: "Burlington is on the bank of the Mississippi, and is about as large as Nashua Village. The houses are not as large and splendid, for a good many are built of logs. But there are as many inhabitants taking out the factory-girls there. One street runs exactly up the bank facing the water. There is but one row of buildings on this street, not more than fifty feet from the water. My office is on Second street, right back of Water street and parallel with it. There are three stores on Second street, offices, etc. There are in the town six doctors, five lawyers with myself, sixteen stores, five or six groceries, or, in New England called grog-shops. No minister in town. We had one, but he died a few days ago." Such was the western home in which he began his distinguished career.

One of the ruling characteristics of his mind was the purpose to secure the independence which results from accumulation. He saw that the new country afforded opportunities for investment that would yield fair gains in addition to his earnings by the practice of his profession. He had an intuition for speculation, especially by investment in real estate. So we find that he early became a partner in the ownership of a tract of land near Burlington which he cultivated several years and from the sale of which he realized a comfortable addition to his growing estate.

In a letter written to his sister in these pioneer days, he says: "The hundred dollars I received from you I invested in town property in Bloomington in Muscatine County. I was this very day offered two hundred and fifty dollars for the lot and refused it. I will sell when I can get enough for it, and purchase you a farm. I should have been independently rich if I had had any money when I came to this place. It is now the Seat of Government for the Territory, and property is worth ten times as much as it was when I came." And again he writes to his parents in 1846: "I know not whether I told you about a speculation that I was trying to make while I was

East, in the purchase of lands. I do not like to talk about myself so much, nor to brag, but I know you want to hear all about me, and I will therefore say that I was fortunate in the operation and succeeded beyond my hopes even, in making money by it. Our law business is still good (himself and partner, Henry W. Starr) much the best of any lawyers in the Territory." He uniformly took an active interest in the welfare of the young men; and his advice to them was never to become active in politics until they had secured a competency. Later in life, when he had himself, by taking his own medicine, laid the foundation of a fortune he said to a young student: "Stick to your law until you can make a lawyer of yourself, and get a practice, and save money; then it will do to play with politics. You do not need much money. I commenced with fifty dollars' worth of law-books, and accumulated by degrees, until I had the best library in town. A determined, persistent industry will secure success anywhere, and without it no one can succeed. Learn to read and speak deliberately; you can do neither too slowly." Thus his entire correspondence and many of his public utterances show the bent of his mind in respect to the advantages and independence which come with a good bank account. But while he was fond of gain it never became, to the exclusion of everything else, the ruling passion of his mind, nor did it blunt the impulses of a naturally generous heart.

In all the years of his laborious and active career he preserved his love for domestic life, and the quiet of his home. In a letter to his wife, written from Washington, he says: "I cannot endure the practice of turning night into day. Eating dinner from four to six o'clock in the afternoon and going to bed at three or four in the morning; yet I am compelled to fall in, in some degree, with this method of living: As I have strolled about the city, you cannot imagine how often I have thanked God that I was not cursed with a fashionable wife." And again he writes Mrs. Grimes from Burlington during her absence in the East: "Tell E—— that I have the best crop of onions on her garden-plot that I ever raised, and beets ditto.

Tell her also that we have a genuine mocking bird in the garden, the noisiest fellow I ever listened to. He is quite tame, and sits on the ground and on the grape stakes to sing, as well as on the trees. I have a nest of turtle doves in the fir tree, with two young doves in it, besides any number of thrushes and robins." At another time he writes: "I wish I were at home with you, wandering about the garden, as I should be at this hour."

It need hardly be said that a character in which the domestic impulse so predominated, and the love of nature in its simplest form was so thoroughly developed, would possess many of the higher moral and spiritual attributes. Thus in numerous letters to his wife, when absent from home, he writes respecting the sermons he has heard; sometimes even giving a synopsis of the discourse. On one occasion he writes her of a sermon by Dr. Hosmer, going into details as to the subject treated. During his Senatorial career Dr. Channing occupied the Unitarian pulpit at Washington several months. It was during the war. He must have been a constant attendant at this church. On one occasion he writes Mrs. Grimes that he had attended Channing's church that day (Sunday) and had intended going again in the evening, but was detained by company. He always speaks with enthusiastic admiration of Dr. Channing, and in one letter says: "He preached the best sermon this evening I ever heard." The ardent patriotism of Dr. Channing led him frequently to preach upon the inspiring themes which were uppermost in the public mind when armies were being marshaled and battles fought unparalleled in history. Of all these patriotic discourses he gave her the outlines with expressions of the highest admiration and the most genuine appreciation of the ability and character of Dr. Channing.

A busy, ambitious and studious man with a taste for the religious philosophy of Channing could not fail to possess many of the characteristics of the philanthropist, and to a large extent be governed by moral purposes in his political convictions and public activities. The early years of his life were

devoted to the business of his profession, and to the investment and management of his earnings. During these years he gave but little time to politics; and not until he felt himself secure in his fortune, did he permit himself to be drawn aside from the purposes to which he had devoted his youthful vigor. Prior to his election as Governor, notwithstanding he was a Whig in politics and Des Moines county was almost uniformly Democratic, he had been elected to the first Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa, which convened at Burlington November 12, 1838; to the sixth, which convened at Iowa City, December 4, 1843; and to the fourth General Assembly of the State which convened at Iowa City December 6, 1852. Although he was in the minority politically, he was active and influential in each of these Assemblies, and by his industry and ability gave direction to legislative action upon many of the questions to which attention was given during this formative period in the Territory and in the State. At this early day in his political life he began to exhibit those traits of character which distinguished him as a frank, bold, intrepid and independent thinker and actor throughout his later career. He was a Whig, but never so much of a partisan as to follow the lead of his party friends in anything that did not command the approval of his judgment. He was an advocate of temperance legislation far in advance of the sentiment of his party or the country, at this time. He was an Anti-Slavery Whig, and opposed with speech and vote every attempt to stultify the public conscience of the North, or tarnish the good name of Iowa, with anything akin to the black-laws which constituted a hideous chapter in the history, and a dark page in the statute books of several Northern States. He opposed any attempt to limit the right to testify in courts of justice to white citizens. He was far in advance of the public sentiment of the period in relation to the rights and privileges of Women. The following is from a letter to his wife in 1855: "As one of the signs of advancement, a lady has just become associated with her brother in the editorial management of a newspaper in Cedar county. I have, of course, become a subscriber." He was a

radical in relation to all the moral issues of the day, but a conservative upon all the financial and economic issues of the times. As illustrating his loyalty to his convictions and his consistency of purpose, another extract from a letter to Mrs. Grimes must here be inserted: "You ask why I did not attend the supper at Burlington, and speak as desired. (Celebrating the completion of a railroad). In the first place I did not think it became me, occupying the position I do, as a temperance man, and a Governor who recommended and approved a prohibitory liquor law, to attend a supper where it was known that champagne was to be drunk, and where I had reason to believe from past observation that some of the guests and hosts would be drunk."

We come now to recall the passages in his life which have made him one of the historic figures of the age in which he lived. The country was upon the threshold of the great events preceding the Rebellion. These events aroused the lion in his nature. Although during his eighteen years' residence in Iowa, he had not been indifferent to public affairs, still up to the issue made by slavery with modern civilization, he had been more of a business man than politician. His New England forethought and thrift had induced him to devote his earlier years to business and accumulation; but a great crisis had now arrived which led him to enlist all his energies of body, mind and heart in the public service.

In February, 1854, he was nominated by a convention of the Whig party for Governor of the State. In the following March his nomination was endorsed by a convention of Free-Soilers. He accepted these nominations. The public mind was thoroughly aroused in view of the determination of the Democratic party in Congress to repeal the Missouri Compromise and open the Territory of Kansas, which had been dedicated to freedom by that Compromise, to the blight of human slavery. He issued an address to the "People of Iowa," in which he discussed the issues before the country with great ability and candor. He entered upon the campaign with determined vigor; driving with his own conveyance from

county to county, and speaking at all the principal towns of the state. He rallied to his support the great majority of the Whigs—all, in fact, who were not absolutely pro-slavery in sentiment—all the original Free-Soilers, and a contingent of the so-called Democracy who were in revolt against the Pro-Slavery tendencies of their party. He swept over the State like a flame of fire. The writer—who, as a young man, had just come to the State—remembers well attending his meeting in Des Moines. The Des Moines river was greatly swollen by recent rains, and he remembers the aptness with which he used it to illustrate one of his points. He was commenting upon the declaration of Douglas that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or voted down in the Territories, and said: "I do care. The American people care. Mr. Douglas might as well attempt to dam the Des Moines river with prairie hay as to try to eradicate the aspirations for universal freedom from the soul of every American who appreciates his own liberty."

He was elected. With characteristic force and purpose he prepared for the ceremony of inauguration, and the assumption of the duties of the office. Never was the will of an intelligent and patriotic people more thoroughly incarnated in a representative head than was the awakened conscience of the people of Iowa, in their newly elected Governor. There was no half-heartedness in his Anti-Slavery convictions. On the 24th of June, 1855, he relates in a letter to his wife, then absent from Burlington, the story of the first, and probably the only arrest made under the Fugitive-Slave-Law in Iowa. A Dr. James was arrested near Burlington with a negro in his carriage. Bowie knives and revolvers were drawn on him by the pursuers and he and the negro were forced into town. He says there was great excitement in town, and several personal collisions grew out of it. He declares his purpose to afford no aid to the man-stealers. You can plainly read between the lines that he was determined the fugitive should never be dragged back to slavery; as he quietly says that it was proposed that all legal means for release should be tried before

any other was resorted to. He then moralizes as to whether, being Governor, he should act as he would as a private individual. On the 27th he writes: "The negro is free, and is on his way to Canada. A great crowd yesterday in town. I sent on Monday to Davids, via Yellow Springs and Huron, and told my friends and the friends of the slave to be present at the trial. They were there *en masse*; Marion Hall was filled. * * * * Rorer and Crocker appeared for the Negro. When the decision was made, such a shout went up as was never heard in that hall before. Judge Lowe, was brought from Keokuk, Monday, in the night, and a writ of *habeas corpus* was ready to be served if the decision had been adverse to us. Writs were sued out against the Negro-Stealers for kidnapping, assault, etc; but unfortunately they escaped before service could be made upon them. I am satisfied that the Negro would never have been taken into slavery from Burlington. Our friends, Colonel Warren and Rev. W. F. Cowles, showed that there was some marrow in their spinal columns. * * * * * The State, the town and the people, thank God, are saved from disgrace. How opinions change! Four years ago, Mr. Salter and myself, and not to exceed three others in town, were the only men who dared to express an opinion in opposition to the Fugitive-Slave Law; and because we did express such opinions, we were denounced like pick-pockets. Now three-fourths of the reading and reflecting people agree with me in my statements on the law. It is a blessed thing that there is no ebb to the principles and progress of freedom; it is always a flood-tide."

In the administration of his duties as Governor he was courageous and self-reliant. The years covering his term of office was the turbulent period portending the civil war. He never cowered in presence of the threats and violence of the times. The Border Ruffianism in Kansas—the invasion of the Territory by armed marauders—the plunder and murder of the Free State citizens—the seizure of the ballot-box and overthrow of free elections—the subserviency of the Pro-Slavery tribunals, called courts, all tended to arouse in the public

mind throughout the North intense feeling and resentment. The Governor not only shared this indignation of his countrymen, but he was not the man to remain a silent spectator of these outrages. He was not a stranger to President Pierce, the subservient tool of the frenzied South. They were from the same State, almost from the same neighborhood; had been students at the same college, but were widely separated in political views and in their judgment of the rights of man. We have no account of any correspondence between them until Grimes the Governor—after various outrages upon former Iowans who had chosen to attempt the establishment of homes in Kansas, and after these were known to have been killed; others driven from the Territory; whilst the roads entering its borders and fords of the rivers had been picketed by armed invaders for the purpose of keeping out free State citizens—wrote the President demanding the protection of former citizens of Iowa in that Territory. It was an able and timely letter. He followed it up by the suggestion of a like letter from Governor Chase in respect to outrages upon former citizens of Ohio; and by the further suggestion of a meeting of the Governors of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Iowa, at Chicago, to consult, and make a joint demand upon the President for the protection of peaceful citizens passing from these States into the Territory of Kansas. Although Democratic newspapers and orators at the time sought to evade the force of this letter by cheap criticism and dull attempts at satire, it proved to be one among the historic incidents of the era, quickening public apprehension and directing public thought to the dangers of the situation in Kansas; and in the end was influential in defeating the purposes of slave propagandists in that territory. His expression of intense feeling and fierce indignation at the crimes of slavery in Kansas were not confined to this letter; every message to the Legislature bristled with denunciations of these outrages upon the ballot-box and these crimes against free Government.

Whilst his soul was on fire with the purpose to do his part as a public officer to right these wrongs in another Territory,

he was not indifferent to the necessities and future welfare of his own State. During his administration the foundation of the Insane Hospital at Mount Pleasant was laid. He took a deep interest in all the details preparatory to locating and building this institution; visited and examined other institutions of a like character in other states, and thoroughly acquainted himself with the various requirements of well-equipped hospitals. In short, he was familiar with all the routine duties and minor details of the office.

At the close of his term, which was shortened by the adoption of the New Constitution for Iowa, his fellow-citizens transferred him to the United States Senate. Since the day he had obtained a foot-hold in public life it had been the opinion of those nearest him, and those most conversant with his character, that he was destined to play a conspicuous part in a broader field than had been afforded him in Iowa.

His early service in the United States Senate shows the peculiar bent of his mind. In a conversation with a friend near the close of his public life, he said to him: "When I entered the Senate I soon determined that I would not try to spread myself over all the business of Congress. I resolved to make myself thoroughly conversant with whatever business might be assigned to me particularly, and only keep informed of the general run of affairs in the Senate so far as to be prepared to vote upon all questions intelligently." Carrying into practice these preconceived purposes, he found himself early in his Congressional service assigned to the Committees on Pensions and Private Land Claims. To the business of these Committees he gave assiduous labor. His qualifications for business, however, were soon acknowledged by his fellow-Senators in his transfer to the Committees on Naval Affairs, and on the District of Columbia. His acquaintance with the business of these two Committees, and especially with every detail of the Naval service, was the marvel of his official career. His knowledge of the vessels and their armament and equipment; of the *personnel* of their officers; of the location and needs of the Navy yards; and the requirements of the Naval Academy,

became proverbial in the Senate. In the Great Rebellion, when the Navy stood only second in importance and in public interest to the Army, his information and his memory in committee room and debate upon the floor of the Senate were never at fault, down to the smallest detail of the service. During his career in the Senate he made very few set speeches; probably not more than three or four. He was, however, a ready and able debater, possessing a fund of information upon every question, on which he took sufficient interest to speak, that always gave him the attention of the Senate. His first speech in the Senate was in reply to Toombs of Georgia, who had arraigned the Free States for passing what were termed Personal Liberty laws. He probably did not occupy the attention of the Senate more than ten minutes in a defense of Iowa, but it gave him standing from that time forward as a bold, ready, and forcible debater. Toombs was no mean antagonist in an encounter of this kind, but he did not attempt to put aside the rejoinder of the new Iowa Senator with a sneer. He also spoke briefly during the first few months of his service upon the Homestead Bill. He was opposed to all extravagance, and in the running debates of the Senate on the appropriation bills frequently attacked what seemed to him to be extravagant expenditures. As indicating how indifferent he was to the purpose of gaining public approbation by securing local advantages for his own state, unless they seemed to him a national benefit, and how thoroughly he depended upon his own character and personal standing as a Senator to retain his hold upon his constituency, the following quotation from one of his speeches is in point: "There are many useless offices in my State which ought to be abolished. We have half-a-dozen—I speak without knowing the exact number—custom-houses in our State, fifteen, sixteen or eighteen hundred miles above tide-water, where we have Surveyors of Ports, to whom the Government is paying annual salaries of six to eight hundred dollars. We have many other offices which are useless. I have been waiting very patiently during the entire session in the hope that some of the gentlemen on the other side, who are so much outraged

at the profligate expenditures of the Republican party, would introduce a bill abolishing these offices. We have in the town in which I have the honor to reside, a Marine Hospital, built at considerable expense to the Government, which never had a patient, and in all probability never will have. It ought to be abolished."

He had given some attention to naval matters prior to his Congressional service. And after he became a Senator and had been appointed on the Naval Committee, especially after the mutterings of civil war began to awaken apprehension in every thinking mind, his interest in the Navy was greatly intensified and became with him almost a passion. As early as March, 1860, he spoke upon a proposition to regulate the pay of the officers of the Navy, moving an amendment looking to the assignment of all officers and men to active duty. In January, 1861, he moved a resolution directing the Secretary of the Navy to furnish estimates of the expense of building a steel or iron-clad gunboat, on which he briefly addressed the Senate; and in the following February he advocated the construction of a screw sloop of war. From this time on he worked and advocated with tongue and pen the enlargement and strengthening of the Navy. He began the agitation and fairly pounded and hounded the Senate upon the question of building iron clads. The Naval Academy, the Navy Yards, the Ericsson Monitor experiment, the flotilla on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, the brilliant achievements of Commodore Foote, its early commandant, the movements on the Atlantic Coast of Commodore DuPont, the victories of the matchless Farragut, the world renowned triumph of the Monitor over the Merrimac, and the laureled name of its Commandant, John L. Worden, the fleets of Commodore Porter and their achievements, were his constant themes of speech and eulogy during the stormy period of the war. He had foreseen more clearly than most of his cotemporaries the coming storm, and had made the knowledge which from natural taste he had acquired of the

Navy available, to promote this most effective arm of the military service.

That he foresaw the gathering storm of the Rebellion is plainly apparent in his correspondence with friends and in his declarations upon the floor of the Senate. He, however, never wavered or weakened in his judgment and action upon the public questions with which he was called to deal. As the winter of 1860 and '61 was laden with one sensation after another, he stood at his post pursuing with unwearied rounds the daily duties of a Senator, and watching from his outlook the march of events which he foresaw must end in civil war. The people throughout the country were intensely anxious, and yet many were hopeful that through some interposition of a Divine inspiration, or by some returning wave of patriotism, war might be averted. He saw that the people at home did not fully comprehend the spirit and purpose of the Southern insurrectionists. Among other propositions which many well meaning persons hoped might solve the problem of peace, were the "Crittenden resolutions;" others hoped a peaceful solution might come from the so-called "Peace Conference." He knew the futility of these experiments, and in a letter to Governor Kirkwood, forewarned the people of Iowa, of the impossibility, of accepting any proposition coming from the South, without an utter sacrifice of manhood, and all the cherished principles of a free and liberty-loving people. The letter was long, most patriotic and convincing. There is space here for a single paragraph which is refreshing to read even to-day: "There are other provisions in the 'Crittenden resolutions' which to my mind are wholly inadmissible; but let them pass. My objection is to any compromise. I will never consent to compromise, or the imposition of terms upon me or the people I represent, under threats of breaking up the Government. I will not give reasons under compulsion. No surer or more effectual way could be devised for converting this into a revolutionary Government than the adoption of a compromise expedient at this time."

Finally, when the war came as he had foreseen it must come,

he threw himself into the business of the special session of Congress with all the force and fervor of an inspired patriotism. His sleepless ardor and passionate zeal did not flag or grow cold during the four terrible years of the war. As we have seen, the Navy was his special department of the service to which he devoted his ceaseless efforts and his most untiring energies. But he was awake and alert in respect to every measure of the Government and to every policy of the Administration in its dealings with the rebellion. He was a radical. There was no halfway house at which he could halt while armed foes of his country were in the saddle. He was constantly in advance of the President in advocacy of radical measures in respect to slavery. In view of his far-seeing sagacity there is one episode in his senatorial career that must surprise some of his friends. He fiercely criticised the President for his earlier policy in respect to slavery and escaped slaves. But it is plain to the student of history to-day that the great President had but one object in view in dealing with the slavery issue during the earlier months of the war. He knew that radical measures would in all human probability drive the Border States into the Rebellion; and to save these to the Union it was necessary he should be misunderstood and have his motives misconstrued. Senator Grimes was one who thus misconstrued his motives. In writing his wife in regard to the removal of Fremont from the command of the Department of Missouri, he says: "Whatever may have been his acts, or omissions to act, however, there is no question in my mind that the real cause of his removal was the proclamation (freeing slaves of rebels) and which he failed to modify in accordance with the President's wishes. That is the great sin for which he was punished." In line with these opinions, on the 18th of June, 1862 he introduced into the Senate the following resolution: "Resolved (as the opinion of the Senate), That it is the right and duty of the Government to call all loyal persons within the rebellious States to its armed defense against the traitors who are seeking its overthrow." About this time he writes Mrs. Grimes: "You observe that Mr. Welles has issued a circular,

directing 'contrabands,' as he calls them, to be enlisted in the Naval Service. This must be finally followed up by an Army order, sooner or later, and then comes the end of slavery. I regard the employment of colored persons in the Army and Navy as of vastly more importance in putting an end to slavery than all of the confiscation acts that could be devised by the ingenuity of man." Again he writes: "The President has to-day rescinded Hunter's proclamation (annulling slavery in his department). The result will be a general row in the country. All the radical Republicans are indignant but me, and I am not, because I have expected it and was ready for it. They did not anticipate it, though I have told them all along that it was sure to come. But the end must come, protracted by the obstinacy and stupidity of rulers it may be, but come it will nevertheless." Notwithstanding these evidences of his extreme views respecting the policy of dealing with slavery under the war powers of the Government he doubtless in the end must have seen that the President was right and he was wrong. But then radical views at this early stage of the war were natural to a man of his uncompromising convictions and resolute directness. He was terribly in earnest, and from his natural make up there could be no dallying with the circumlocutions of policy. He therefore could not conceive a possibility of ever weakening the cause of the Government by striking the rebellion at every vulnerable point. He made one of his longest speeches, denouncing General Halleck's famous order No. 3 for the return of fugitives to their owners, declaring it not only inhuman but a surrender of the basic principle of military success.

He was a member of the Committee on the District of Columbia and became its Chairman. He became thoroughly interested in its duties and its opportunities for usefulness. Among other things the District Jail was an object of his investigation, in which he found abuses that aroused his intense resentment. His appeals to the President and speeches in the Senate in respect to these abuses, illustrate his interest in the helpless and oppressed. In this loathsome prison pen, which

he visited many times in person, he found a number of soldiers who had either straggled or deserted from their commands. He insisted that they should either be discharged or returned to their regiments to be dealt with under military laws. He also found a large number of negroes, who were imprisoned for various alleged reasons, some of whom had taken advantage of the unsettled conditions of affairs in the country occupied by the Federal armies, to flee from their owners and take refuge in Washington. But followed by the pro-slavery spirit of the city, they had been imprisoned in these dungeons, awaiting the arrival of the reputed owner. In respect to these fugitives, he denounced the whole proceeding—the marshal and his subordinates; and in accordance with his radical views in respect to slavery, he did not cease his efforts until they were set at liberty. This was the golden opportunity of his Senatorial service, in which he was able to reach results in accordance with his opinions upon the slavery question.

Finally, the war closed, and with it terminated all his resentments. When there was nothing left of the Southern Confederacy but its legs and its leaders, he laid off his war paint. It is true he believed in securing the results of the war by constitutional amendments, and a reconstruction policy establishing forever the rights of the Unionists and colored people of the South. Beyond this he had no other feeling than that of good will and generous wishes for the future of the vanquished rebels. From this time forward until the close of his Senatorial services, although in failing health, he performed the routine duties which are ever demanding attention of the Senator, with the same fidelity that characterized all his relations to the public service throughout his official career.

There was one act, however, among the crowning duties of his public life which illustrated his real character, and brought upon him the severe criticism of a great many people who had been his personal and political friends. This was his course on the trial of President Johnson. Notwithstanding the harsh judgment of many Republicans, in the excitement

of the hour, there is no doubt a great majority of those who felt that his course was a public grievance have revised their opinions both as to the propriety of his decision and the motives by which he was actuated. It was believed by some that he was influenced by personal regard for Andrew Johnson; by others that he was prejudiced against Senator Wade, who, under the law at that time, would become the acting President; and by others that Senator Fessenden, Chief Justice Chase, and Senator Grimes, who were known to be on very friendly relations with each other, and neither of whom were thought to be in sympathy with the impeachment proceedings, had a mutual purpose to do what they could to defeat conviction without regard to law or evidence. Thus the most unreasonable and improbable rumors were set afloat and were readily believed. The truth was that the public misunderstood his views of the relation which a Senator sustained to the case. There is no doubt that from the beginning he thought that it would be a political blunder. The opinion which he delivered, although almost exclusively devoted to the law and evidence in the case, revealed his judgment of its political impropriety. Still, it was not his belief that his views of the political aspect of the question should influence his decision in the trial. He regarded himself as standing in the relation of juror in a case being tried upon law and evidence. And such being his relation to the case he was not to know or consider anything that might be thought or said of Andrew Johnson outside the Senate chamber, and outside of the evidence introduced by the Committee of the House of Representatives conducting the trial. The writer remembers reading his opinion, and that of Senator Fessenden, who was regarded as having no superior in his power of clear, exact, and forcible statement; still the writer believed at the time, and upon re-reading these opinions in the cooler atmosphere which the lapse of twenty-six years has brought with it, he still thinks the opinion of Grimes is as clear and convincing as that of his great cotemporary. That he was not influenced by his regard for Johnson is shown by an extract from a letter

written to his wife soon after the assassination of President Lincoln; he says: "I am full of forebodings about Johnson. He is loyal enough, but he is a man of low instincts, vindictive, violent, and of bad habits. His course will depend much upon the hands he falls into at the outset. I hope he will be equal to the occasion, and prove a good President. The performance of the fourth of last March was not a very flattering augury of the future." Again he says in his opinion on the impeachment trial: "I have no apology to make for the President's speeches. Grant that they were indiscreet, indecorous, vulgar, shall we not, by his conviction on this article, violate the spirit of the Constitution which guarantees to him the freedom of speech?" But acting in a judicial capacity, uninfluenced by political considerations, he did not believe that the President had been guilty of an impeachable offense, and was not guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors. Upon the announcement of his decision there was a storm of indignation among his former party friends. Various things conspired to intensify and embitter the public judgment. The prejudices of the great war were still at white heat. The foolish speeches of the President were regarded as a public shame. His exercise of the pardoning power raised a question in many minds of his loyalty. And then, too, no doubt, some people were influenced by the selfish hope that in a new deal in the appointments to public offices, they might receive the consideration of the new administration. None of these things, however, moved Senator Grimes. That he was deeply grieved and was intensely sensitive to the criticisms of his party friends and of the public press he did not attempt to conceal. His health had not been strong for some months prior to these proceedings. He was advised by friends not to risk the chances of trying to occupy his seat in the Senate during the impeachment trial. But his feelings were thoroughly enlisted in what he regarded as the crisis of the Republic, and his convictions were so strong as to his duty, that acting upon the principles which had illustrated his life, he scorned the thought of counting consequences personal to himself. Two

days after he had delivered his opinion on the impeachment trial, while in his seat in the Senate, he was stricken with paralysis in the right side. For several weeks he was comparatively helpless, but finally so far recovered as to spend the summer of 1868 in traveling through the eastern states, returning to his Senatorial duties the following winter. In the spring of 1869, with his family, he visited Europe; was in London during the excitement caused by Senator Sumner's speech upon the Alabama Claims; and by a communication to *The London Times*, and an interview with John Bright was influential in correcting a misapprehension respecting American feeling and purposes. In Paris he had a second paralytic attack and soon after resigned his place in the Senate with the purpose of remaining abroad a year, or more, and trying the effect upon his health of new scenes and absolute rest from care and responsibility.

During his sojourn in Europe his correspondence with his near friends, especially with Senator Fessenden and his old Burlington neighbors, is highly characteristic and very interesting. He was greatly pleased with the German people. Their industry, order, neatness, cultivation of the beautiful and æsthetic, their schools and freedom from poverty and misery, their peaceful lives yet military prowess when war was on, were themes upon which he dwelt with special enthusiasm. He bought several hundred German books for the Library at Burlington which he had founded, in order to interest the German people in the Library. In a letter to Senator Fessenden he writes: "There is one thing we lack in America more than any one thing else, to make up an accurate history of our country, and that is memoirs of our public men. I am greatly struck with that fact here (Paris) where they have been so abundant. What kind of a history can any man coming after us make up of the last ten years from the newspapers? None at all. Now you have lived in the most eventful period of our country's history. You have had a leading part in public affairs for twenty-five years; you have a cool head, a retentive memory and a facile pen. I insist that you ought, in justice to the

future; in behalf of your own memory, and for the common good, to spend a few leisure hours every day in preparing your memoirs. You need not necessarily take up subjects *seriatim*; begin with any one of the interesting topics, and after one is completed you will be more in a humor to begin another. If you do not choose to publish them in your own time, leave them to be published in some future time, in vindication of your memory and to promote the cause of truth."

A few months after writing this letter the news reached him that Senator Fessenden had died, September 8, 1869. He says in a letter to a friend, Mr. Lyman Cook, of Burlington: "I have never been afflicted by the death of any one as by the sudden decease of Mr. Fessenden." And he continues at some length, to pay a most feeling and pathetic tribute to his friend.

He was no exception to the rule that men are seldom satisfied with their achievements. Writing to his friend, Cook, he says: "Almost every American newspaper I see brings the news of the death of some old friend and associate; and I cannot help feeling that in the course of Nature my time will soon come, and when I ask myself, 'What have I done to make the world better for having lived in it?' I cannot help pronouncing the judgment that my life has been a failure. I do not mean to say that it has been a failure in what I have done for my State and mankind, in comparison with what has been done by other men, but in comparison with what I might and ought to have done." And again he writes to the same friend: "I have all my life thought of the happy time coming when I should be entirely free from all business, and care, and anxiety, and when nothing and nobody could in any way control or influence my conduct and movements. Well, I have reached that period in my existence, and I do not find what I expected. One cannot sever himself from the world; he cannot be free from care, and he must become perplexed about his own affairs and about the affairs of others. One's thoughts must be occupied, or else the discomfort following from mental laziness will soon kill him."*

He was now contemplating an early departure from Europe-

for his home. He felt that his health was much improved and he was anxious once more to meet his American friends and look upon familiar scenes. He arrived at Burlington Sept 22, 1871. Gratified at his reception, and that most of the friends who had disagreed with his course on the impeachment trial had revised their judgment, he was in good spirits and promising health. He soon found, however, that he was far from well. He spent the winter in comparative quiet with his family, friends and books. Finally, on the 7th of February, 1872, whilst talking with his friend, Cook, in his own house, he was seized with a sudden pain near the heart, and before a physician could be summoned the end had come. He died in the 56th year of his age mourned by the people of Iowa, by the associates with whom he came in contact in public life, by his neighbors and by his family. He had gone, but his example remained. His industry, candor, probity, independence, patriotism and fidelity to duty, will constitute an unfailing heritage for the young men of Iowa so long as history shall be read and its lessons heeded.

THE "IOWA BAND" OF 1843.

BY THE REV. DR. GEO. F. MAGOUN,
Lately President of Iowa College.

As a rule the coming of preachers of Christ into new territories formed out of the fruitful old "Northwest," has been one by one. Some organization for ecclesiastical or "Home Missionary" purposes, being responsible for their very meagre support, as men willing to encounter the inevitable toil and hardship were found, they were sent out—mostly from New England.

But more than once a group or "band" of young found-

* I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to the "Life of Grimes," by Rev. Dr. Salter, from which I have taken extracts from letters for this article.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.