

DRUMMOND'S LIFE FRUITFUL

By PROF. T. F. TOBIN

Thomas Drummond was of English ancestry, born May 9, 1832, in Brooks county, Virginia, now West Virginia. His father, James Drummond, was a Methodist minister, a native of Manchester, England, born May 19, 1804. His mother, Harriet Green, was born in Maryland, Sept. 27, 1805. They were married March 23, 1831. Young Drummond obtained as good an education as his boyhood days afforded, and received a military education at Lexington, Virginia. His early life was passed among the exciting scenes of the south in the years preceding the Civil war. His parents were abolitionists, and he early imbibed the spirit of freedom, and of loyalty to the government. His impetuous nature and outspoken mind upheld the principles of loyalty, which he found openly antagonized on every side. The conditions became intolerable and Tom Drummond, shaking the dust of Virginia from his boots, turned his face to the land of promise and of freedom—the great Northwest.

To the old pioneers of Benton county he will always be known as Tom Drummond. In 1855, at the age of twenty-two, he came to Vinton to carve out a career and fame for himself. His father gave him a good name, an excellent education, and the example of a life of high ideals, but that was all that he could bestow upon him. Here Tom settled and found that nearly all his associates were like himself—young men who had left the old home in the east and came west with exactly the same purpose in mind. He entered into partnership with James Wood in the real estate business, continuing this work for several months, when the appointment of school fund commissioner of Cerro Gordo county was tendered him, which he accepted. The duties of this position he performed with signal ability and honesty, but the aggressive, forceful nature of Drummond demanded a life of greater activity, and two years later on June 13, 1857, he purchased

a half interest in the *Vinton Eagle*, with Mr. Hanford as a partner, and became its editor.

Mr. Drummond was united in marriage to Miss Fannie K. Reppert, of Vinton, Iowa. To them was born a daughter, Catherine, July 19, 1858. Mrs. Drummond died September 20, of that year, at the age of twenty-five. He married for his second wife, Miss Catherine Ann Barnes, also of Vinton, Iowa, October 20, 1859. Two sons from this union survive their parents, F. Warren Drummond, of the St. Louis stock exchange; and Thomas Fletcher Drummond, of the *Kansas City Star*. Mrs. Drummond died at Lincoln, Nebraska, July 22, 1895.

Drummond's intense energy and marked ability were infused into his newspaper enterprise, and it became one of the influential journals in the state. It partook of the nature of the man. Its editorial page was strong and fearless. He was a keen, incisive writer who hesitated not to express his convictions under all circumstances. By means of his writings and speeches Drummond easily became the leader of his party in Benton county, and the convention of October 31, 1857, nominated him for state representative. The campaign was a remarkable one. Drummond entered upon it with the mighty aggressiveness for which he was noted. He was a great writer, but even a greater orator—to use the words of one who knew him intimately: "He was a born orator." Few public speakers had the power of swaying an audience as he had. In the campaign he challenged his opponent to a series of joint debates. This challenge was declined and Drummond took the stump and made what the boys call "a lively campaign."

DOUGLAS AND DRUMMOND OPPONENTS

In this campaign he often crossed swords with Judge Douglas who had been for years the leader of the opposing party. Drummond and Douglas in spite of their political differences admired each other personally. They were antagonists but not enemies. They fought each other with pen and tongue—and fists sometimes, but

when the smoke of battle had cleared away, Douglas and Drummond might have been seen walking down the street arm in arm, and to retire to some quiet corner to hold a love feast between themselves. But the war went on and never ceased until victory perched on Drummond's standard and he was elected to serve the interests of the people in the legislature at Des Moines as representative from Benton county.

This is the part of Drummond's life that interests us the most, because it is closely identified with the event which calls us together today. Drummond's personality immediately asserted itself in the legislature. His great abilities, sterling integrity, his dauntless courage, and his splendid oratorical powers placed him at once among the leaders of the Iowa house. The records of those days show that scarcely a bill passed the legislature that did not bear the impress of Drummond's tireless labors. Hardly a day passed that he was not on the floor of the house defending some worthy measure or opposing an unwise one. And in all these efforts he was sincere, he was honest, he was unselfish. His great service to the state of Iowa and Benton county, which we are proud to honor today after a lapse of almost half a century, was initiated on February 2, 1858, when he introduced his measure to establish a blind asylum at Vinton. The bill was most strenuously opposed by some who did not favor it on general principles, by others who fought the location of the institution at Vinton. It was a hard fight and called forth all his powers.

It is needless to go into all the details of that struggle. It was the old fight of progress against conservatism, of modern statesmanship against old fogyism, of light against darkness. The bill finally passed and this magnificent institution stands today, an eloquent testimonial to the splendid labors of Thomas Drummond. Whenever there goes out from its halls into activities of life one who has enjoyed its atmosphere of culture, its home-like environments, its excellent educational advantages, there will ascend a silent prayer to the memory of him who made it possible for them to enjoy such advantages.

Drummond's career was fully endorsed by his constituents, and in the fall of 1860 he was elected as state senator. His favorite measure still needed his best efforts. The appropriation was too meagre to place the school upon the basis to which Drummond thought it was entitled. But his indefatigable efforts overcame all opposition and a reluctant legislature finally placed the school upon a sound financial basis.

UNDERSTOOD PORTENT OF EVENTS

Drummond's career as legislator ends here. Events of a national character now dominated his mind. This country was on the verge of a life and death struggle for its existence. The north and south were arraying themselves for a mighty struggle. Drummond knew the people of the south and realized what the mutterings of disloyalty meant. He saw the handwriting on the wall. He had heard the rumble of the distant thunder and realized that the lightning bolt was about to strike. He set his house in order and placed his business affairs in the hands of Judge Douglas, his old but honored opponent. He sold his interest in the *Eagle* and waited for the oncoming of the storm. He said to a friend at that time, "If Lincoln is elected there will be war and I will be the first man in Benton county to enlist."

The crisis came and Sumter fell. That very day Drummond took the stage for Cedar Rapids, proceeded directly to Washington and offered his services to the government. It is not for me to speak of Captain Drummond's military career. Another speaker has that honor. But I wish to say in closing that to few men has it fallen to accomplish as much for his state and country as did Tom Drummond. He was an orator, a statesman, and a soldier. Shakespeare said: "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." The good Drummond did lives after him and will for ages be a benediction and a blessing to his countrymen.

In the sunny southland, in his native Virginia, is a little mound, and within it are the mortal remains of Tom Drummond, but fifty years have not dimmed the memories of those who knew him as an honorable citizen and a valiant soldier. Above that mound is a simple slab of marble, but that little stone is the noblest monument ever erected to man, because it marks the resting place of a Union soldier who fell fighting for the Union cause. We stand today under the lofty dome of another monument which will, for ages to come, commemorate the splendid services which Drummond rendered to mankind—a monument nobler than the grandest mausoleum that ever stood beside the Appian Way, or reared its bulky form along the banks of the Nile.

MEMORIAL TABLET PRESENTED TO STATE

By CATO SELLS

A large number of those participating in this memorial service were personally associated with, or have inherited a veneration for him whom we honor today.

The space of half a century but bridges the time, and transmits the story from parents, who were a part of the primitive conditions of the fifties to the sons and daughters of the new generation now enjoying the civilization for which they labored, and of which they dreamed.

The battle they fought was to overcome the undeveloped wilderness and plant the seed of development for those who were to come after them. The unbroken prairie of the "south slope" and the massive oak along the Cedar, yielded alike to the plow and the axe of those sturdy pioneers. A county government was organized, the county seat was established, and with their coming men of brain, brawn and stalwart manhood, our fathers, contended in business, professional and political life, not alone for material gain, but in shaping the future of a county, that was destined to be an important factor in determining the policies of the state and nation.

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