

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LATE GILMAN FOLSOM.

A RECENT number of the Dubuque *Telegraph* contained the following in relation to a parliamentary passage at arms in the House of Representatives of the Iowa Legislature, between the late Hon. Gilman Folsom, of Iowa City, and Hon. James Grant, of Davenport:—

“Gilman Folsom, whose death occurred recently at Iowa City, was, in his day, one of the leading politicians and lawyers of this state. He was gifted with a natural eloquence, which was cultivated by education, and which rendered him a formidable antagonist in the forum, on the stump, and in the halls of legislation. But, withal, this gifted man had such indiscretions of judgment as to more than off-set his other gifts of intellect. He was querulous with his friends, and passionate toward his adversaries, sparing neither in his fits of elocutionary frenzy. A remarkable instance of his peculiar nature was exhibited in the winter of 1854—we think it was—during the session of the legislature. Judge Grant was speaker of the house; and between him and Mr. Folsom there was an estrangement, which affected the latter very sensitively, and carried him into intolerable excesses in his intercourse with the speaker. In the formation of committees of the house, Mr. Folsom expected, from his position in the ruling party, and at the bar, that he would be placed on the judiciary committee as chairman, and so, indeed, did his friends, for there was no other in the house who appeared to be better qualified for, or better entitled to, the position. But the feeling between the speaker and Mr. Folsom affected the former as well as the latter. Judge Grant had the weakness to ignore his adversary, and, worse still, to, as Folsom regarded it, insult him, by placing at the head of the judiciary committee a young man just admitted to the bar, with Folsom down lower on the list of names. The first one who saw the list was the writer of this, and casting his eye over it he noticed at once what had been done, and took in at a thought what would be the

probable consequences, knowing the nature of the two men who would be thrown into conflict with each other, by what one of them would regard as an affront. The writer privately remonstrated with the speaker, but it was of no use. Judge Grant was not the man to change what he had deliberately done. The writer left the hall of the house with the list of the committees in his hand. Folsom noticed what had taken place between the writer and the speaker, and suspected somehow that it concerned him, so he followed the writer out of the hall of the house, and asked to be allowed to see the list of the committees. The writer parleyed with him for a while, hoping that something might occur to change the mind of the speaker, but Mr. Folsom was importunate, so the list was shown him. He became at once another being. In an instant he had made up his mind to give the speaker neither peace nor rest during the session, and he commenced at once to put his feelings into execution. Sitting in front of the speaker, he watched every opportunity to annoy and worry and torment Judge Grant, till at last, the latter, yielding to *his* nature, came down on the floor to meet his tormentor on an arena where he could give way to his feelings. This was just what Folsom desired. It was the opportunity he longed for. It was no longer the speaker he had to encounter, but what he called his adversary, Jim^V Grant. Those who were in the house of representatives on that day will never forget the scene which was there enacted. Judge Grant, on leaving the chair, had the good sense to put Mr.^V Grimes, afterwards governor and senator, in his place. It was well that some one who knew the duties and proprieties of the position, was in the chair, for otherwise the result of that famous passage at words between those two Iowans might have been different. We cannot describe it; nothing short of hearing the words and seeing the combatants as they appeared on the scene, could describe what took place.

“It is no disparagement of the survivor in that famous set-to, to say that his now dead adversary was awarded the

victory. Indeed, it is a question whether it would be complimentary to Judge Grant to say of him that he could worst Gil Folsom in a personal controversy. How these memories of old times come upon us, when we hear of the death of one of our old colleague associates and friends. Peace to thy perturbed spirit, thou eccentric orator, thou intuitive lawyer, thou inveterate enemy, thou steadfast friend ! ”

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JONATHAN EMERSON FLETCHER.

GEN. JONATHAN E. FLETCHER, an old settler of Muscatine, died at his residence, near that city, April 6, 1872, at the age of 66 years. The Old Settlers Association of Muscatine attended his funeral in a body, and passed the usual resolutions of respect and regret. We find in the *Muscatine Journal* a tribute to his memory and an account of the more prominent events of his life, which we copy, from the pen of a favorite contributor to the ANNALS—Suel Foster, Esq.—who knew the deceased long and intimately:

“Gen. J. E. Fletcher was a native of Thetford, Vermont. He was an early settler of this city (Muscatine), coming here in the summer of 1838, when Iowa was made a separate territory. He attended the first land sale in the territory, in November, 1838, at which he bought lands six miles west of the city, upon which he located in the fall of 1839, and went to farming, having previously returned to Vermont and married his surviving wife. He had resided a few years in Ohio before he came to Iowa.

“Gen. Fletcher has held many responsible offices in this territory and state. He was a member of the convention which framed the old state constitution, taking an active and important part in the formation of our fundamental law.

“In 1846 he was appointed by President Polk an Indian agent, for the Winnebagoes, and served in that capacity eleven years, having removed the location of the agency

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