

MEMOIR OF MADISON YOUNG.

BY P. M. CASADY, DES MOINES, IOWA.

MADISON YOUNG, A. M., born in Stewartstown, Cass county, New Hampshire, June 3d, 1813, died at the Cincinnati Hospital, in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, October 21st, 1873. He lived in the rough and mountainous county of his nativity with his parents, working on the farm in summer and attending school in winter, studying whenever he could get an opportunity, until he was about the age of eighteen. Previous to this he had manifested a desire for literary attainments, and possessed as he was of indomitable energy and perseverance, no discouragements, however formidable, were sufficient to deter him from accomplishing his purpose. He attended school at the academy in Lancaster for about two years, afterwards attended the academy at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, for a while, and finally fitted for college at the Kimball Union Academy, Plainfield, N. H. He then went directly to Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., where he graduated in July, 1840.

Hon. I. Fletcher, then a member of congress from New York, under date of November 4th, 1838, in a letter to Young, says: "The industry and perseverance with which you have pursued your studies are truly laudable, and give evidence of future success. You know how to appreciate an education, for you know the cost of it." In another letter, just before he graduated, he says: "Few have had more to contend with than yourself, and few have more gloriously triumphed over obstacles." Soon after his graduation he went south, and engaged in teaching in the state of Georgia. While there he became acquainted with the peculiar institution of slavery. It was here, among people

who owned slaves, that he formed his deep-seated convictions against the institution. These opinions remained with him until the stain was wiped out.

In the year 1842 he returned to the state of New York, and was licensed as an attorney by the supreme court at the May term, 1843. He located at Cato, Cayuga county, and commenced the practice of law. July 16th, 1845, he was examined, and regularly admitted as a solicitor and counsellor in the court of chancery of the state of New York, by Chancellor Walworth.

He remained at Cato amid the duties of his profession for quite a time, and then decided to take the advice of Horace Greeley, and "go west," arriving at the village of Fort Des Moines, December 14th, 1849 — it is said with two or three copies of the New York *Tribune* in his pocket. Being well posted as to the political views of the editor of that paper, and coinciding with him, he attached himself to the whig party, and soon became an active politician, and was selected twice as the candidate of that party for the office of prosecuting attorney, but was defeated. He however served, by appointment, as special prosecutor in the counties of Dallas, Warren, Madison, Jasper, Boone, and Marshall. He was afterwards elected and served as justice of the peace until 1856, at that time quite a lucrative office. He discharged the duties of the office with marked ability and punctuality, attending to every duty pertaining to the office at the proper time and to the entire satisfaction of all those who desired to have an honest and well qualified man to fill the place.

While holding the office of justice of the peace he made some very judicious and profitable investments in real estate, his earnings being saved with great care. After the termination of his office, he continued to look after real estate investments, and having studied the country well he had great faith in the future of the central part of the state, and invested every dollar he could obtain in land, with the fullest confidence that his money would be returned four-fold.

Notwithstanding his seeming desire to accumulate property, he took an active part in public improvements, and especially in the public school, being one of the officers of the school board when the first lot was purchased for a school house site. He was also a liberal subscriber to the funds to aid in erecting the college building now the Des Moines University, and when the subscriptions were all expended, he, with the Rev. Thompson Bird, Dr. Grimmel, and others, became individually liable for a large sum of money, agreeing to pay thirty per cent per annum for the use of it, with which to continue the enterprise. After the flush times of 1855 and 1856 were about past, he purchased ten acres of land just north of the city limits, for the purpose of improving it with fruits of all kinds that would grow with any success in this country. While waiting for the trees and vines to grow he took a trip to Europe, visiting the cities of London and Paris, and attended the university lectures at Heidelberg, Germany; also visited the noted grape-raising places on the river Rhine, with the view of perfecting himself in the knowledge of cultivating the grape and making wine. After having remained nearly two years abroad, he returned to his ten acres of land with renewed energy and vigor, working with his own hands in pruning the trees and vines — and while thus engaged he cooked his own meals, living in a very ordinary shanty on the premises, in the summer time, in the winter living in his grout house, which he built a great many years ago in South Des Moines.*

After he had spent several years of hard and fatiguing work, and not being fully satisfied with his first trip to Europe, and having a desire to become better acquainted with the German and French literature, he concluded to visit that country again. Arriving in Germany a short time before the commencement of the Franco-Prussian war, his

* The Grout House was erected at the time the Rev. Dr. Peet, Henry Scribner, Young and others, were experimenting, trying to find building materials cheaper than brick or wood.

plans for sight-seeing and study were to some extent interfered with by the war. He, to get away from the clash of arms and the noise and bustle in preparing for the same, passed the most of his time in Switzerland. Before starting for home he took a trip to southern France, and while there was arrested as a German spy. He made a speech to the authorities, explaining the rights of American citizens, as he supposed, in the French language, but the fact was that, under the exciting situation, some of the words were English, some German, and very few French. However, after hearing this speech and inspecting his passport, the authorities became satisfied that he was all right, and as there were no grounds for his arrest he was permitted to go hence without delay. The difficulty in traveling from place to place, and being shut out from Paris, and unable to travel with any satisfaction in Germany, determined him to return home.

Immediately upon his arrival he commenced further improvements on his now beautiful ten acres of land by erecting a very imposing and substantial brick residence. During the fall of 1872 he made several barrels of wine and stored them away in his cellar. He lived by himself in his new residence through the winter of 1872-3, taking care of the house and looking after the wine and fruits stored therein. His exertions the previous summer in taking care of his premises, and the care and anxiety about the erection of the house, seemed to have had a serious effect on his system, so much so that he became quite discouraged. In order to make a change, and also to get away, he took to boarding in the city. In April of the following spring he sold his place to Conrad Youngerman, the enterprising builder, who now occupies the same as a homestead.

Young, having spent so many years in improving his property, regretted to part with it, but his failing health admonished him that he could not superintend it any longer unless he regained his health, and for the purpose of making an effort to do so he started to Colorado. He spent

some six weeks in the mountains and valleys of that territory, but returned not improved by the trip.

Prior to leaving for Colorado he executed his will, bequeathing his property — estimated at from \$30,000 to \$35,000 — to his brothers and sisters, and children of deceased brothers and sisters, except the sum of \$1,000 left to his *Alma Mater*, Union College, New York, and a lot in South Des Moines to a colored man by the name of Murry — Young being a bachelor, not having wife or children. His health not improving, by the advice of his physicians he went to the Cincinnati Hospital, accompanied by his friend, Taylor Pierce, in the latter part of September, where he remained until his death. Before his death he requested that his remains be sent to Des Moines for interment, desiring to be buried by those who had known him for nearly a quarter of a century. The funeral services were held at the Episcopal Church, Rev. P. P. Ingalls, of the Methodist Church, officiating (the rector being absent), attended by the early settlers, the masonic lodges, the members of the church, the Turners' association, and citizens. The Masons having charge of the funeral, their beautiful and impressive services were had at the grave. The attendance of these societies and of so many citizens was evidence of the high regard and esteem they had for the deceased brother and citizen.

Madison Young was somewhat eccentric and singular, but honest and upright in all his dealings with his fellow-man. The situation of his business affairs fully confirms the statement of his uprightness and honesty. He was a man of good heart, hating double-dealing and demagoguism, although persons not fully acquainted with him would not understand his motives.

He became a member of the republican party at its inception, and remained with it until 1872, when he joined the liberal party, voting that year for his old friend, the late Horace Greeley. He was the first person initiated by Pioneer Lodge, No. 22, of Masons, organized in 1850; was

one of the first vestrymen of St. Paul's parish, and died in full communion with the^v Episcopal Church.

By his own exertions, unaided by any one, he acquired his education, and by his industry and frugality he obtained his property. Jonathan Pearson, treasurer of Union College, writes under date of November 7th, 1873, as follows: "Mr. Young entered the Freshman class of this institution September 7th, 1836, and graduated with his class, numbering one hundred and five, July 22d, 1840. Few young men labored under greater disadvantage for obtaining an education than he. From the day he entered until he left he supported himself by the labor of his hands and the sweat of his brow. At odd hours, and during summer vacation, he worked in the college garden, under the supervision of one of the professors, and by these and other labors eked out his support until the full four years course was finished. Though not a brilliant scholar, he made fair progress in his studies, and won the respect of his professors by his indomitable perseverance under difficulties which would have discouraged ordinary minds. When he entered college he was twenty-three, the oldest man of his class, and was looked upon by the younger boys as the father of the class. For many years we have only seen him at long intervals, when he came east, at which times he always renewed his acquaintance with the professors of his *Alma Mater*. I am pleased to learn that he has left so substantial a memento of his esteem for our institution."

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