

ANNALS OF IOWA.
JANUARY, 1869.

D. FRANKLIN WELLS.

We publish in this number the portrait of the late D. Franklin Wells, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Iowa, at the time of his death; and below the funeral services and sermons which formed a part.

Throughout the State, wherever his name is known, and his influence has been felt, an his services are appreciated,—and there is no place within it where they are not,—it will, we are satisfied, be perused with interest.

The address of Rev. E. K. Young, containing a biographical sketch of the deceased, and delineation of his character, is of peculiar interest as such, and an eloquent tribute of love and honor for his distinguished neighbor and friend. The sermon of Prof. Fellows, a mere brief of which we give, was, as delivered, of more than ordinary power.

IN MEMORIAM.

The funeral of Prof. D. F. Wells occurred on Friday, November 27th, at 1 o'clock P. M. A procession was formed at 12 M., consisting of the State Officers, Trustees, Faculty and Students of the University, the School Board, Teachers and Scholars of the city schools, and citizens of the place. When the procession reached the residence, the column opened and the children passed and looked for the last time upon the cold form. The procession then reformed and followed the hearse to the H. E. Church, which was soon filled to overflowing, hundreds being unable to gain admittance.

The exercises were solemn and impressive. The hymn commencing, "There is an hour of peaceful rest " was sung by the choir. Rev. Dr. Black offered an earnest and very appropriate prayer. A part of the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians was read by Prof. S. N. Fellows. The hymn beginning "Brother, rest from sin and sorrow" was then sung. Rev. E. K. Young, pastor of the church, then delivered the following

MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

It is no unusual circumstance that has convened us to-day. Death is no stranger to us, and the funeral occasion no uncommon event. We know it is appointed unto *all* men once to die. We know that from the universal death-sentence there is no escape, and that all human paths, however diverse, merge at last into the great highway that leads to the tomb. We are not unused to these solemn occasions, nor unfamiliar with the fateful words freighted with so much of bereavement and sorrow. But I feel to-day in common, I think, with you, that more than ordinary interest attaches to this event. I question if the death-summons could have come to one whose loss will be more keenly realized—whose death will send a deeper pang of anguish, a wider sense of bereavement, a more universal feeling of sorrow throughout this entire community. We are not here to wreath his name in eulogy, or cover his grave with flattering panegyric. Standing by the uncovered tomb and in the shadow of the coffin, we deem it more fitting to speak to the living, than of the dead. And surely such a man, with such a life as he had lived—with such a character as he had formed, and such an influence as he had wielded—so pure, so healthful, so widely felt—in the commonwealth—in the social circle—in the church, and in the Sabbath-

school—needs no eulogistic phrases to enhance his fame or enshrine him more sacredly in the hearts of his friends. Such a life is its own best eulogy. We shall speak of his virtues—we shall remind you of those qualities of heart and mind which endeared him so strongly to all, and caused those who knew him best to love him most. But we shall do this in no spirit of adulation, but as the deserved tribute to his memory; just as you bring the floral wreath to his coffin or scatter flowers upon his grave, the loving expression of saddened hearts. We do this to present the living an exemplar worthy of imitation, and to bring before you for your emulation, those graces of life and character which win the love and command the respect of men; and above all, secure the approbation of God.

Prof. D. Franklin Wells was born in Oneida County, N. Y., June 22, 1830. Conceiving his mission to be that of an educator, and resolving to make this his life-work, he entered the State Normal School at Albany, N. Y., from which he was graduated in 1852, and entered at once upon his chosen profession. In 1853, through the agency of Prof. T. S. Parvin, he was induced to come to Iowa, and assumed the principalship of one of the public schools in Muscatine. After organizing and grading the school, he conducted it most successfully until 1856, when he was elected Principal of the Normal Department of the State University, which position, together with that of Prof. of Theory and Practice of Teaching, he held for ten years, and to quote from a biographical sketch in the "Journal of Education," "His success was most remarkable; clearly demonstrating that such a department, wisely conducted, can accomplish the professional training of teachers as well as an independent Normal School."

Prof. Wells has been closely and intimately identified with the educational interests of the State for twelve years; and it is but simple justice to say that the labors of no other of our educators have been crowned with more marked success, and productive of more lasting benefit to the State. Earnestly devoted to his calling—permitting nothing to swerve him from his early-formed purpose—indefatigable and zealous—possessing in an unusual degree the rare power of inspiring enthusiasm and zeal in others, and thoroughly imbued with progressive ideas, he was not long in making his influence felt, and engrafting his theories upon the educational system of the State. He was active in organizing and conducting Teachers' Institutes, and in lecturing upon educational subjects. He was a member and officer of the first State Teachers' Association, and was elected president of the present Association in 1855, and again in 1859. As a presiding officer he had few superiors. Thoroughly versed in Parliamentary usages—self-possessed and vigilant—prompt and clear in his decisions, with a blending of suavity and firmness in his manners, and an ability to push business with dispatch and thoroughness, he won universal commendation. He was largely influential in establishing the "Voice of Iowa," the first organ of the Association.

A little more than a year ago, the resignation of Professor Faville causing a vacancy in the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Prof. Wells was appointed to the position by the Governor. One year ago the people ratified the appointment by electing him to the office. It was while engaged in the arduous duties of this position, that he contracted the disease which has taken him from us.

He fell at his post, forgetful of self; counting not his life dear unto him—thinking only of duty. To the expostulations of friends who discovered indications of failing health, and fearing that he was overtaxing his strength, sought to dissuade him from his wearying labors, he returned one invariable answer—"It is duty." Just before setting out on the journey which proved to be his last, he said to his companion, in reply to her expressed fears for his health—"When God calls me I want Him to find me at my post doing my duty." And there the death-

message found him, still toiling at his life- work—still laboring to accomplish the mission to which he had consecrated time and talent. Rigid and inflexible devotion to duty characterized him in every department of life. Once convinced that any given course were right, he would pursue it at any cost. The question that determined his action was not "is it politic?" but "is it duty?" He stopped not to enquire who would approve or disapprove,— valuing the answer of a good conscience above the opinion of men. Some of us remember his remarks at our last general class meeting: " Though I may not give in my testimony as often as others, yet I assure you, it is from no lack of interest in the cause, but from a natural diffidence which I find it difficult to overcome. And though I may not be able to express myself with as much fervor as others, yet I have the principles of religion firmly fixed in my heart, and am endeavoring to do my whole duty as a christian, to my family and to the world." Those few simple words present a perfect portrait of his spiritual life. There was little of external emotion—little of outward demonstration in his religious life, but a steady, ever-flowing under-current of piety, growing deeper and broader, and stronger every day. To him religion meant a fearless, consistent, uncompromising devotion to the truth as God gave 'him to see the truth. Those of us who were associated with him in the Sabbath-School, know how faithfully and efficiently he discharged the delicate and difficult duties of Superintendent. Sickness or absence from home were all that ever kept him from his post in the Sunday School. We as much expected to find him there at the moment of commencing, as we expected the Sabbath-School to convene. The punctuality and regularity that he so strenuously exacted from others, he exemplified himself. It is not too much to say that the Sabbath-School connected with this church owes a large measure of its success, its prosperity and the systematic arrangement of its departments, under God, to the genius, the energy, and the faithfulness of Prof. Wells. Few men possess as strongly marked and clearly defined individuality. With whatever he stood connected—with what ever enterprise he identified himself, he infused into it his own spirit, and stamped upon it his own character. What ever he created bore the impress of his genius, and was readily recognized as his handiwork.

I think he was the most courteous gentleman I ever met; ever mindful of the common courtesies and Amenities of life; always regardful of the feelings and convictions of others. During the last stages of his illness, when scarcely able to articulate intelligibly, and speaking with the utmost pain and difficulty, he never permitted the slightest favor or the most trivial act of kindness to pass without a courteous acknowledgment; and when past speech, the wave of the hand or the nod of the head expressed the thanks he had not the voice to utter. He was generous, charitable and forgiving to the last degree. Resentment and revenge found no home in his breast. He could not harbor malice; he never cherished enmity; long-continued ill-will was foreign to his nature. If injured, he forgave; if wronged, he never retaliated, but sought rather to excuse, to palliate and to forget, even reproving his friends when their words of indignation seemed too severe. Amiable, kindly-affectioned, gentle, patient under suffering and wrong, firm in his adherence to and advocacy of the right, affable toward all, thus he lived; and never shone these qualities of heart and mind more conspicuously and brightly than during the last days of his life | and in his dying hours.

That he suffered much, was evident from the nature of the disease; but nothing in his conduct indicated it. From the beginning to the close of his illness, no word of murmuring, or fretfulness, or complaining escaped him. He seemed to us, at every visit we made him, like one perfectly aware of his condition, and calmly, patiently and trustingly awaiting the pleasure of his Heavenly Father. To the question of his companion—" Are the promises of Christ precious, and do you trust in Him 1" he promptly responded in the affirmative. His house was set in order;

his business concerns were all adjusted; his temporal matters were all arranged; and, best of all, the main thing was secure, and he had only to gather up his feet in death. It is pleasant and gratifying to remember that he retained his consciousness and was entirely rational to the very last moment. He understood perfectly all that was transpiring around him; recognized his friends, and answered questions, and gave directions with as much clearness and precision as though in the full vigor of health. The gleam of intelligence never left his eyes until they closed in death. Then he sank gently, and, to all appearances, painlessly away. Without a struggle, as though sinking into quiet slumber, his spirit passed from the cares and conflicts of this world to the changeless glories of the eternal.

Thus he lived; and thus, in the bosom of his family—in the quiet of his own home—ministered to by sympathizing friends, and soothed and comforted by the consolations of religion—God gave His beloved sleep. His life-work was ended; his mission accomplished; the duties God had set before him manfully met; and then the Master said—"It is enough—come up higher;" and now, upon this coffin falls that sweetest of heavenly benedictions—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Even so saith the spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Then followed a brief

SERMON BY REV. FELLOWS, OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY

Text—1st Cor., 15th chapter and 55th verse—O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

It is a terrible thing to die. The cold death sweat, the darkened vision and dying agony—the sundering of human ties, parting of loved ones, the thought of never again beholding their faces or listening to their accents of affection, and that we shall be the lonely tenants of the charnel house, with nothing to break the gloomy solitude, no companions but those that riot upon our bodies—all combine to make death terrible. The scenes of life will move on; childhood will sport above us; friends will meet in social converse, the hum of business be everywhere heard, while we, companionless, will lie in the cold grave.

Death comes unexpectedly. The merchant fills his store and another sells his goods; the farmer sows his grain, and another gathers his harvest; we build houses, and others dwell in them. What sad havoc of all our plans and schemes are caused by death.

To the sinner, death has tenfold greater terrors. Remorse for the past and worse dread of the future, fill his mind with fearful forebodings. Why these terrors? Are they of service to man? Yes; they were ordained by Divine wisdom and goodness. These terrors are the guardians of life and the preservers of society. Without them, suicides would be multiplied, and the authority of law would be weakened if not destroyed.

Can these terrors be overcome? Reason and infidelity reply, "Yes. Death is the law of our being, the condition on which life was received. The pain of dying is short, only apparently hard to die. It is undesirable to live to old age, and suffer the decay of active powers and the loss of friends and social enjoyments. Honor has defied death; shame has sought it; the patriot soldier fears it not; we should submit cheerfully, and meet it with a manly courage."

These are the highest and best sentiments of reason. How cold and cheerless. When the soul is going down into the dark valley, philosophy fails, infidelity is dumb, and the soul cries out for something more.

We ask again, is there no way of overcoming these terrors? Christianity replies, there is."

Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Christ also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him-that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." How is this accomplished ? Answer—By removing the cause, "the sting of death, sin." 'Tis sin that fills the soul with terror at the thought of dying. Jesus Christ takes away sin. "He shall save His people from their sins."

Again: The Christian goes not alone—the Conqueror of death goes with him. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." To the Christian, death is the end of trial and conflict, and the gate to endless joy. 'Tis but as a tunnel through the mountains—a darkness comes over him for a moment, and then light from the other side bursts upon him. The Christian is specially prepared for death. Dying grace is given, faith is quickened, ministering angels hover over the scene, loved ones gone before draw near, heaven is opened to the view, and the soul in triumph passes away.

As we contemplate death, robbed of his terrors—the conqueror of the race conquered by the Captain of our salvation—as we behold him vanquished disarmed, converted into a friend who ushers us into the presence of loved ones, angels and God—may we not, even in this solemn presence, exclaim, " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory' The sting of death is sin, but thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."