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HENRY FARNAM

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- [Henry W. Farnam (1874)]



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*To the Grandchildren of Henry Farnam :*

The sketch of the life of your grandfather which fills the greater part of the present volume is written especially for you. Besides his own children, who need no written record to tell them what he was, none owe him a greater debt of gratitude. Yet already his character must appear to your eyes traditional and remote. The oldest of you was but twelve years of age at the time of his death; the youngest has never seen him. Your knowledge of him must be derived from others. Even his features would be forgotten by the younger of your number, if you were not reminded of them by his portraits.

Thus, while you have the greatest possible interest in knowing all you possibly can learn about one who loved you so tenderly, and who

did so much for you, you are at the same time in the greatest need of such information in a permanent form.

And yet I cannot but feel, that what I most want to tell you is the very thing that I have least succeeded in telling. For I am not content to give you an outline of the public events of your grandfather's life. What I want to make you realize, and what I feel it impossible to do justice to, is the character which lay back of all these activities; the strong moral force, which would always have remained the same, even if your grandfather had been prevented, by some of those accidents to which great commercial enterprises are exposed, from seeing the fruit of his labors.

It is this character which I would have you understand. It is this character which, if you can but make it your own, you will always cherish as your grandfather's most precious legacy.

H. W. F.

*New Haven, July, 1889.*

MEMOIR  
OF  
HENRY FARNAM

BY  
HENRY W. FARNAM





# HENRY FARNAM

## I.

### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE

1803-1825

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**D**URING the last quarter of the last century, probably between 1778 and 1780, a small company of Connecticut farmers left the pleasant valley of the Thames to settle in the wilderness west of the Hudson. At that time even the eastern part of the State of New York was regarded as the Far West. Much of the land was thickly wooded, and those who made their homes there were true pioneers. They had not only to clear the surface which they expected to till; they had to face, if necessary, the attacks of the Indians. It is believed that the emigrants originally intended to settle in Wyoming County, Pennsylvania, though

the execution of any plans was dependent entirely upon circumstances, and they soon found that they were by no means masters of the situation. At one time, probably in Sullivan or Delaware County, they were driven from their homes and obliged to take refuge in a fort. At another time, probably near Neversink, in Sullivan County, they were again brought to a halt by the news that hostile Indians were in their path. In this emergency, as my grandmother used to relate, two of the party volunteered to go on as scouts and verify the report, having first agreed with their comrades that, if they did not return by a certain time, the rest of the company were to assume that they had fallen and retreat. The scouts never came back, and the pioneers were obliged to retrace their steps. One of the two scouts was Joshua, the oldest brother of my grandfather, Jeffrey Amherst Farnam.

His father, Eliab Farnam, had brought with him from Preston, Connecticut, his wife and children and, after a period of involuntary wandering, had settled in Mount Hope, Orange County, where he spent the remainder of his days. He was joined here a few years after his arrival by Benjamin Tracy of Norwich,

with his wife and eight children, and by Abiel Fry, with his family. The three families were connected by marriage. Eliab Farnam's wife, Abigail Kellum, was the sister of Olive Kellum, the wife of Benjamin Tracy, while Abiel Fry's wife was Abigail Tracy, the sister of Benjamin Tracy.

The families united only to be soon separated again. The Frys moved further west to Big Flats, on the border line between Chemung and Steuben Counties, while the Tracys moved to the town of Scipio, in Cayuga County, and bought a farm on Poplar Ridge. This separation in space, however, did not mean a loss of interest in one another or the severing of family ties. The Frys took with them to Big Flats Mercy Tracy, the fourth of Benjamin Tracy's children, and several years later Jeffrey Farnam joined them and spent the years 1792 and 1793 with them, working on the farm in summer and going to school in winter. He and his twin brother, George Whitfield, had been born in 1772 and belonged to a family of fourteen children, of whom eight were older and four younger. There soon grew up an intimacy between Jeffrey and his cousin Mercy, and in 1793 they were married, he being then

twenty-one years of age, and his bride, who had been born in 1775, eighteen. The young couple spent the first two years of their married life in Big Flats, and it was here that their oldest child, Lucinda, was born. In 1795 they moved to the town of Scipio, where the rest of their eleven children were born and brought up, and where, in 1842, Jeffrey Farnam died.

The fragments of a diary, which he kept for many years, enable us to form a picture of the life he led. It was mainly one of hard work on his farm. The changes in the weather, the condition of the crops, the health of his live stock, are the topics most often mentioned. He was a regular attendant at church. The monotony of his life was occasionally varied by a trip to Auburn or some more distant town to sell produce, purchase supplies, or attend court. This homely record of trivial events is occasionally broken by a few lines from a favorite hymn or a memorandum regarding the payment of interest on a loan. There is nothing exciting in the narrative, but the fact that it should have been written at all is interesting and significant.

In 1865 my grandmother removed to Pittsford, near Rochester, where she lived with her

son George Washington until her death in 1873. Even to the end of her life she was noted for her memory, her clearness of mind, her intelligent interest in public events, and her uniform evenness of temper. When over ninety years of age she would often relate events which occurred in her childhood, recalling every detail with marvellous accuracy. She was as vigorous in body as in mind, and, when sitting in a chair, never made use of its back.

It was on the Scipio farm, November 9, 1803, that Henry Farnam, the sixth in a family of eleven children, was born. Like his brothers, he was possessed of considerable physical strength and showed great fondness for music, the singing in the village church being mainly carried on by the various members of the Farnam family. He displayed, however, at an early age a greater appetite for books and a less eager devotion to boyish sports than the other members of the family. The two subjects that most attracted him were poetry and mathematics. His memory, like that of his mother, was singularly retentive. Even in his old age he could repeat many verses which he had committed as a boy, especially extracts from

Cowper and Pope, who (perhaps from the accident that their works were most accessible to him) were his favorite authors. His aptitude for mathematics was such that, even with the little instruction and the few text-books he was able to command, he mastered the elements of trigonometry and surveying before he was sixteen. When President Day's Algebra was first put into his hands, he read it through with the eager interest with which most boys read a novel, so easy did it seem to him in comparison with the books that he had studied before. Yet he was often obliged to pursue these studies in the evening, when, to save the expense of a candle, he worked by the light of the winter's fire.

Farm work was never congenial to him, and while still a boy he was sent to live with Dr. Phineas Hurd, a connection by marriage, with the intention of studying medicine. What he saw of the physician's life did not, however, arouse in him any ambition to pursue that career, and he returned to his father's farm to occupy himself with manual labor, to finish his schooling, and later to teach in the village school himself.

The opportunity for a more profitable use of

his talents soon came, and it is significant that his first professional work was on the earliest of those great highways of commerce between the East and the West to which he was destined in his later life to make such important additions.

The Erie Canal had been begun in 1817, and the chief-engineer of the section west of Rochester was David Thomas, a Quaker, with whom my father had become acquainted through his relative Davis Hurd, and to whom he applied in 1821 for a place in his surveying party. Mr. Thomas was a man of scholarly attainments. He was particularly versed in pomology and horticulture, and his influence and advice were of great assistance to my father, who always entertained a warm affection and respect for both Mr. Thomas and his wife. Long after they were gone, he took pleasure in seeing their strong but kindly faces look down upon him from the walls of his study in New Haven, and I remember with particular pleasure a visit which I once made with him to Mrs. Thomas at Union Springs, on Lake Cayuga. Her kindly interest in all his doings, her quaint humor, her lively sallies, and her keen comments on all subjects, together with a certain

balance of mind and serenity of temper, fully explained my father's regard for this excellent lady.

My father found in Mr. Thomas a good friend, but, when he sought employment in his party, there was no vacancy excepting in the position of camp cook. Mr. Thomas half-jokingly offered him this office, and to his surprise it was at once accepted. My father knew well that he would not have to fill it long. In a short time he became rodman, and in three months assistant engineer.

On the return of winter he came back to teach school at Scipio, and in March, 1822, again took his place in the field. An entry in his father's diary under date of June 11, 1822, says: "Heard from Henry for the first time since he went away; heard that he was sick of a fever at Sandy Creek."

The work was indeed unhealthy, especially when in the fall of the year he was charged with the construction of a canal connecting the Tonawanda and Oak Orchard creeks. This took him through what has since become one of the most fertile spots in the State, but what was then known as "the Tonawanda Swamp," and the exposure to its miasmatic influences



was all but disastrous to his health. When he left the Erie Canal after its completion in the fall of 1824, the malarial poison had so fastened itself upon his system that his family almost despaired of his life.

In order, if possible, to rid himself of this complaint, he decided to try a change of air and go back to the State from which his parents had in their childhood emigrated. He was now twenty-one years of age. Up to that time his services had, of right, belonged to his father, and he had been able to take the position of engineer, only on the condition of employing a substitute on the farm. He was now his own master, and, after another winter of school-teaching, he took advantage of the offer of a position on the Farmington Canal, and moved in the spring of 1825 to Connecticut.

## II.

# THE FARMINGTON CANAL AND THE CANAL RAILROAD

1825-1850

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THE twenty-five years that followed were years of great toil, heavy responsibility, and small reward. They were the long apprenticeship of his life. They were the period in which he laid painfully and slowly the foundations of character and experience upon which his later success was to be built.

The Farmington Canal had been chartered in 1822, but it was not put under construction until 1825, when Davis Hurd was appointed its chief-engineer. It was as his assistant that my father came to New Haven. Upon the retirement of Mr. Hurd in 1827 my father was made chief-engineer, and held this office as long as the canal was in operation. The

Farmington Canal was really only the southern part of a water line which was to extend from Long Island Sound northward into Massachusetts and connect with the Connecticut River. The Farmington Canal Company operated the distance from New Haven to the State line; the Hampshire and Hampden Canal Company operated the rest. The interests of the two companies were thus identified, and their stocks were accordingly united in 1826. The canal was finished as far as Farmington in 1828, and in 1829 there was continuous navigation through the Hampshire and Hampden Canal to Westfield. The line was finally carried to Northampton in 1835.

Unfortunately the company did not prove profitable. In 1836, ten years after the consolidation, it was in such a condition that it was willing to convey all of its rights and franchises to another organization, known as the New Haven and Northampton Canal Company, on the condition that the latter should assume its debts. The original stock was thus a total loss. The new company put over \$120,000 of new capital into the business, but was no more successful than the old ones had been. In 1840 the sum sunk by the three companies was esti-

mated, according to a history of the canal published in 1850, at \$1,377,156.54.<sup>1</sup>

In 1840 a further change was made in the management of the canal through the efforts of Mr. Joseph E. Sheffield, who had now become a large stockholder, and who virtually controlled the property for the next five years. Mr. Sheffield had moved to New Haven from Mobile in 1835, and was already a man of large property and extensive business experience.

The plan for raising money which was now put into operation was one originally proposed by Seth P. Staples. The city of New Haven had, in 1839, voted to loan the canal company \$100,000, secured by mortgage, and had made a beginning in the execution of this vote by issuing, in the spring of that year, \$20,000 worth of bonds. The company now decided to keep the remainder of the \$100,000 for extraordinary emergencies, and to meet its ordinary needs by assessments on the stockholders. In default of payment the stock was to be sold by the company. The city thwarted the execution of this plan in the spring of 1840 by voting not to issue any more of its bonds; but at a subsequent meeting, held in June of the same year, it partly made up for

this by voting to pay \$3,000 a year for the use of the water.

Means were thus provided for supplying the canal with funds, but its balance-sheet still showed losses. It was able to pay its ordinary expenses out of its earnings, but its extraordinary outlays necessitated assessments on the stock. Many of the stockholders were unable or unwilling to pay, and their stock was sold. In this way Mr. Sheffield gradually acquired more of it, and in time became almost the sole owner of the canal. The extraordinary outlays were most frequently caused by freshets, which broke the banks and necessitated expensive repairs. Once, however, in 1844, considerable loss was caused by a drought, which suspended navigation entirely.

Mr. Sheffield found little satisfaction in this kind of business. In 1845 he sold the greater part of his stock, and withdrew from the presidency and directorate of the company.

During all this time my father acted as chief-engineer and superintendent. He was constantly traveling up and down the line of the canal in his buggy, called hither and thither by sudden and unlooked-for emergencies. By night and by day, in rain and in shine, he re-

sponded promptly to whatever demands were made upon him, and at the same time he was often obliged to provide for raising the funds needed to pay operating expenses.

The weight of the responsibility which rested upon him and the anxious care with which he bore it are illustrated by a curious fact. In his later years, long after he had given up active business, if by chance his usually sound and healthy sleep was disturbed by a distressing dream, his imagination almost always reverted to the days of the canal. He would often say, when he awoke in the morning after such a night, "I have been spending the whole night repairing a breach in the old canal."

Great efforts were made to maintain this enterprise. Two of the New Haven banks, the City Bank and the Mechanics' Bank, had received their charters as the price of their support, and the most skillful and careful management had been applied to the work. Its failure seems to have been due to unavoidable natural causes. In the historical sketch of the canal, published under Mr. Sheffield's direction in 1850, two facts are advanced to account for the generally unprofitable character of New England canals. One was that they

could never get any large share of the passenger travel; the other was that, as they never carried on transportation themselves but simply collected tolls, it required a much larger volume of business to pay dividends than would be required by a railroad. Besides these causes, the growing competition of the railroads had, at the end of this period, its part in preventing the canals from sharing in the increasing business of the State.

The problem which confronted the stockholders of the canal in 1845 was, therefore, to make some use of their property which would prevent it from becoming a total loss, since twenty years of experience had demonstrated that a canal would not pay. The first suggestion of a feasible plan for accomplishing this end was made, according to Mr. Sheffield's statement, by my father, who proposed that a railroad should be built along the line of the canal, and the canal itself abandoned. This measure would evidently save the expense of acquiring the right of way and of doing a great deal of the grading and would, at the same time, substitute for the antiquated canal a more efficient means of communication.

Mr. Sheffield brought this idea to public at-

tention by an anonymous communication in one of the New Haven newspapers in the spring of 1845, his intention being to make the road a new route to Hartford by way of Plainville. He was, at the time, actively engaged in organizing the New York and New Haven Railroad, but he was so much impressed with the advantages of this plan for using the canal that he bought back, at an enhanced price, the stock which he had sold in 1845. He again became president of the company, and in February, 1846, the directors voted to adopt the plan. My father continued to act as chief-engineer and superintendent of the company. Work was begun upon the railroad in January, 1847, and pushed rapidly forward under his direction. In January, 1848, the road was opened to Plainville, and in 1850, to Tariffville and Collinsville. Most of the capital for this enterprise was furnished by Mr. Sheffield.

The new road had, of course, to meet the competition of the New Haven and Hartford road, and the rivalry between the capitals of the State led to some trying complications, into the details of which it is needless to enter. Suffice it to say that Mr. Sheffield leased



the Northampton Railroad in 1850 to the New York and New Haven Railroad, on the understanding that he was to extend the line northward to Springfield, if desired. While the bill for securing the necessary charter for the extension was before the Massachusetts legislature, and after the contract had been made for building the road to the State line, the New Haven and Hartford road succeeded in making a contract with the New York road which made all of Mr. Sheffield's work unnecessary and entirely blocked his plans. Disappointed in those whom he had trusted, Mr. Sheffield settled with his contractors, sold his stock in the New York road, resigned from the directorate, and gave up for the time all active interest in railroading in the East. At the same time my father resigned his position in the New Haven and Northampton Company, and both men were now at liberty to turn their attention to a field which offered a better opportunity for the use of their talents.

Though continuously employed by the Northampton Company during a quarter of a century, my father had found time to take an active part in the inauguration of the road to New York. The road from New Haven to

Hartford had been chartered in 1833 and opened to Hartford in 1839, but communication with the metropolis was still kept up by means of steamboats. The first suggestion of a road to New York seems to have been made by Mr. Sheffield, who was a director in the New Haven and Hartford road, and who presented the idea to his fellow-director, Judge Hitchcock. The latter regarded the scheme as visionary but, at Mr. Sheffield's solicitation, obtained in 1844 a charter incorporating, among other men, Mr. Sheffield and Mr. Farnam as a company to build the road. When the books were opened for subscriptions, Mr. Sheffield put down his name for one hundred shares, Judge Hitchcock for ten, and my father for twenty. Beyond this, not a single share was taken; the plan was still regarded by the mass of the people as visionary. After further efforts to get support from capitalists, and after subscribing more himself, Mr. Sheffield went in 1845 to Europe, in order, if possible, to interest foreign capitalists, especially the firm of Baring Bros., in the enterprise, while my father was doing some preliminary engineering work on the line. Mr. Sheffield says in his memoranda :

“In the meantime, my friend Mr. Henry Farnam, with blank deeds (prepared by Judge Hitchcock), with his accustomed zeal and energy, had taken Twining’s Report, and with his own horse and buggy had travelled the whole line and had successfully negotiated for the right of way for about three hundred out of the four hundred and twenty claims between West River at New Haven and the State line ; the others were cases of minors, non-residents, etc. For his own time and services, not even for his own expenses, did Mr. Farnam make any charge whatever.”

Though prevented by his work on the canal from taking any further part in the New York road, my father had the satisfaction of having been one of its original incorporators and of having done much of the work preparatory to its construction.

This period of my father’s life was beset with many discouragements. He had to work hard in the service of a company which was a constant drain upon its owners and the cause of much contention and complaint on the part of New Haven people. He had done this with no material reward beyond a small salary. As Mr. Sheffield says, in speaking of the losses of New Haven people by the canal :

“No man in Connecticut lost as much as Mr. Farnam, for he lost not only all that he had invested in

its stock (which was all he had saved of his hard earnings in former years), but he lost ten or twelve years of the prime of life, when he might elsewhere have received large salaries as engineer.”

These years were hard, and yet they brought some compensating advantages. In the first place, my father won the esteem of all his acquaintances for his skill as an engineer, for his judgment in business, for his honesty and nobility of character, and for his liberality. His standing in the community is seen in the following resolutions, that were passed at a meeting of the stockholders of the New Haven and Northampton Company, upon his retirement in 1850:

“ WHEREAS, Mr. Henry Farnam has been employed for the last twenty-five years in connection with the works of internal improvement in the Farmington Valley, first, for eleven years of this time, in the service of the Farmington Canal Company, and for the remainder as Superintendent and Chief Engineer of the New Haven and Northampton Company, from its organization in 1836; and

WHEREAS, having brought to a termination the public works which have been constructing under his supervision, he now tenders his resignation to this Company:

*Be it resolved*, That for the uniform fidelity with which Mr. Farnam has performed all the duties devolving upon him; for the unimpeachable integrity with which the many thousand dollars, that have passed through his hands, have been expended; for the unshaken confidence with which he carried forward these works under very great difficulties; and for the heavy personal responsibility which he often assumed to maintain the works, when otherwise they would have been sacrificed, this Company entertain the highest consideration, and that the President be directed to express, in writing, to Mr. Farnam our sentiments to this effect, together with our congratulation upon the triumphant success of the enterprise in which he has been so long engaged.

*Resolved*, That the President and Directors of the New York and New Haven Company be requested to furnish Mr. Farnam with a Director's ticket during the continuance of their leases.

*Resolved*, That the President and Directors be authorized and directed to procure some proper testimonial of our sense of the services Mr. Farnam has rendered this Company."

The canal was also the means of bringing him into close personal relations with a number of men upon whose friendship he looked back in later years with unmixed satisfaction, and whose example was undoubtedly of great influence in molding his own character.

Foremost among these was James Hillhouse, whose erect carriage, straight nose, high cheek bones, and swarthy complexion had made him familiarly known as the *Old Sachem*. His portrait hangs fittingly above my father's in Alumni Hall, and it was always a delight to my father, that he should have built the home of his old age upon the street which bears the name of his early friend and benefactor. In the year in which my father came to New Haven, Mr. Hillhouse was the superintendent of the Farmington Canal and one of its directors. It fell to my father's lot, therefore, to make many journeys in his company, while the line was being surveyed and the work pushed forward. This contact in business soon grew into a relation of mutual confidence and friendship. Mr. Hillhouse was at that time in his seventy-first year. He had sat in Congress, he had been four times elected to the Federal Senate, and he had earned a wide reputation as a financier while acting as Commissioner of the Connecticut School Fund. He was, until the day of his death, Treasurer of Yale College. He has left a noble monument of his public spirit and foresight in the inner row of trees upon the Green, and in the avenue called

by his name, which he cut through his farm and planted with elms. He was universally respected and loved for his ability, his integrity, and his public spirit.

Mr. Hillhouse died in 1832. My father enjoyed his acquaintance, therefore, only seven years; but the friendship of this noble man, nearly fifty years his senior, was an inspiration and a help throughout his life.

It was during this period, also, that my father became acquainted with Joseph E. Sheffield, whose name will occur frequently in these pages. Mr. Sheffield was a man cast in a classic mold; a man of impressive appearance, clean-cut, handsome features, vigorous health, and a clear mind. He was a thorough business man, skilled in the details of commercial life, yet large in all his views, and endowed with that rare faculty of being able to grasp any business combination in its remoter bearings. Mr. Sheffield and my father supplemented each other admirably in the work which they subsequently carried out, the former generally attending to all matters of finance, the latter dealing with the practical work in the field. The business relations which had begun on the old canal were des-

tined to grow into a partnership which led to great enterprises and the handling of many millions of dollars. Yet in all these complicated and often trying affairs, no disagreement ever seems to have arisen between the partners, and to their commercial relations were added an intimacy and friendship which nothing ever marred. Even in the retirement of their declining years, this same harmonious co-operation continued; both finally established their homes upon the same street, and both found one of their greatest pleasures in their benefactions to Yale College.

Their relations to one another are well epitomized by Mr. Sheffield in a letter dated July 9, 1855, enclosing a final settlement of the accounts relative to the building of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, in which he says:

“In closing these accounts of millions between us, it must be a pleasing reflection to you, as it is to me, that we have worked together with mutual confidence, faith and zeal, and that we amicably close them with the same kind feeling, high respect, and confidence with which we commenced, some dozen years ago.”

Finally it was during these years that my father laid the foundations of that home in which he found such solace and comfort, and



in which his presence was a constant blessing.

At the time of his marriage, in 1839, he was thirty-six years old. My mother, Ann Sophia Whitman, of Farmington, was thirteen years younger. All of his five children were born in the house on Chapel street into which he moved soon after his marriage, and from which, even in the many changes of residence which he subsequently made, he never parted.

Though he possessed little in the way of accumulated property at the time of his retirement from the Northampton Company, and though he had always been dependent upon a small salary for his support, he was known, even then, as one who gave as liberally to public objects as his means would allow, and whose hand was always open to help the poor.

### III.

## RAILROAD ENTERPRISES IN THE WEST

1850-1863

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THE period that follows was in sharp contrast with that just passed. Twenty-five years had now been devoted to the service of one company. During the next six years my father had charge of the construction of four railroads; he designed and built the first bridge over the Mississippi River; and he became the president of the leading railroad system of the North-west.

Quick to appreciate the importance which railroads were to play in the economic development of the country, he had given proof of his foresight in being one of the incorporators of the New York road, and in suggesting the New Haven and Northampton Railroad as a substi-

tute for the canal. He showed equal prescience in seeing that the great field for building railroads lay in the West, and that those who wished to operate upon a large scale would find there abundant opportunities.

His first visit to the West was made in the fall of 1850, when he went out at the invitation of Mr. William B. Ogden. Mr. Ogden was president of the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, which was then in operation only as far as Elgin, and he hoped to interest my father in his enterprises.

Chicago was at that time a town of less than 30,000 inhabitants, but little larger than New Haven, which had about 22,500. It had been incorporated thirteen years before, when it was a village of 4,000. It was even then an unsubstantial settlement, built on swampy land about the almost stagnant strip of water known as the Chicago River, admirably located for the terminus of steamboat navigation on the lake, but otherwise possessing few attractions.

The only railroad entering Chicago was the fragment of the Galena and Chicago Union, forty-two miles long. Since 1848, the Illinois and Michigan Canal had connected the city with the Illinois River at La Salle, and so put

it into communication with the Mississippi, before there was any railroad connection with the seaboard. Those who visited the city from the East could travel by rail no further than New Buffalo, on Lake Michigan, about forty-eight miles across the lake. The Michigan Southern Railroad had proceeded no further westward than Hillsdale, about one hundred and sixty-seven miles from Chicago.

My father was much impressed with the possibilities of the country that he saw. Before committing himself to any project, however, he made a second visit in the same year, this time in company with Mr. Sheffield, and now pushed as far as Rock Island, on the Mississippi River. Rock Island already boasted of being the terminus of a railroad, the Rock Island and La Salle, which had been chartered in 1847. But the road existed only on paper.

Mr. Sheffield and my father saw at once that it would be hopeless to make much of this road, unless the charter were so amended as to allow it to run through to Chicago, instead of stopping at La Salle and there connecting with the canal; but they at once agreed that, if a favorable amendment to the charter could be obtained, they would contract to build the road.

In looking back over this period, we are apt to think it odd that a railroad was planned from Rock Island to La Salle, before one was constructed from Chicago to La Salle, and that the road from Chicago to Rock Island should have been projected, before there was a single rail connecting Chicago with the East. But the idea seemed then to prevail that, where water communication was possible, railroads were unnecessary; hence the road between La Salle and Rock Island was regarded as a mere extension of the canal, while the road from Chicago to Rock Island was a mere extension of the water communication which Chicago had with the East through the Great Lakes. We find the same anomaly in Connecticut, where the road from New Haven to Hartford was built before the road from New York to New Haven, and where Mr. Sheffield's plan of running a railroad to New York, parallel to the steamboat route of the Sound, was regarded as visionary. As matters finally turned out, Chicago did get her railroad communication with the East, before the rails had connected her with the Mississippi, but this was almost by accident.

The Michigan Southern Railroad had come to a standstill at Hillsdale; its financial con-

dition was very weak, and but four miles of road had been built in 1850. Mr. John B. Jervis, who was then chief-engineer of the road, wrote to my father on the 4th of December, 1850, offering him the position of superintendent of that portion of the road which was already in operation. Both the original letter and my father's reply have been preserved, and they show that this was the beginning of the acquaintance of the two men. My father's answer, which was brief, said that he could not accept the post, but that he would explain his reasons for declining, when he should see Mr. Jervis in New York. The upshot of their conversation, when they met, seems to have been that my father, while declining to superintend the part of the road that was then built, said that he was quite willing to build that portion which was yet unfinished, and furnish the capital for doing it. The proposition was thought to be a daring one, for, on the one hand, there was a considerable jealousy of eastern men in the West, which caused many obstacles to be thrown in their path, and, on the other hand, there was a great distrust of western enterprises among eastern capitalists. Railroads which are now regarded as sound and conservative

investments were then considered wild speculations.

The proposition, however bold, was too good to be rejected. The contract was made with the firm of Sheffield and Farnam, work was begun, and in March, 1852, the first locomotive entered Chicago from the East over the rails of the Michigan Southern road.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly afterward, the Michigan Central Railroad, which had been racing with the Michigan Southern, also entered the city, and under the influence of this stimulus the population increased, the price of real estate rose, and Chicago was in a whirl of excitement. My father used to say that building a railroad into Chicago would be like "tapping lake Erie under a forty foot head," and his prediction was amply verified.

The construction of the Michigan Southern Railroad was but the preface to the main work for which my father went to Chicago. The task that now confronted him was, first to build a road from Chicago to the Mississippi, and then to carry it further, and open the way for the first railroad across the continent.

The firm of Sheffield and Farnam had agreed to build the road from Chicago to Rock Island

and furnish the capital, provided the charter of the Rock Island and La Salle Railroad could be suitably amended. This was not easily accomplished, for the canal interests were strong in the State, and naturally opposed a railroad which would parallel the canal from La Salle to Chicago. It was evident at an early day, that the charter could not be obtained without some compromise. In a letter written January 22, 1851, to the Hon. James Grant, while the bill was still before the legislature, my father says :

“ Be sure to get the charter to make the road on the shortest route from La Salle to Chicago, even if they insist on your paying tolls on freights taken from points along the canal.”

Through the efforts of Judge Grant the charter was finally obtained, though burdened with the payment of tribute to the canal. During the open season, when canal navigation was carried on, the road had to pay tolls on all business taken from or destined to any point on the Illinois and Michigan Canal or twenty miles west of its termination at La Salle. This was subject to certain limitations. The road was to be released, as soon as any other road carried free of tolls, and it was also to be released, when-



ever the interest on the State debt should be provided for. On the other hand, the road was to obtain the right of way through canal lands and State lands, and its taxes were to be deducted from its tolls. The charter once obtained, in the beginning of 1851, the construction of the road was pushed with great energy. The railroad was re-christened as the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad. In April, 1851, John B. Jervis was chosen its president, and William Jervis, its chief-engineer. In August the surveys had been completed; before the end of the month the terms of the contract with Sheffield and Farnam had been agreed upon, and on September 17th they were approved by the Board of Directors. In the beginning of the following spring, April 10, 1852, work was begun; on the 22d of February, 1854, the first train passed over the rails from Chicago to Rock Island, and on the 10th of July the road was formally turned over to the company, some eighteen months before the time specified in the contract.

The terms of the contract are interesting as showing, how much was done by the contractors, and how little, comparatively, by the company. The former agreed to build and equip the entire

line for the gross sum of \$3,987,688. Of this sum \$2,000,000 were to be paid in seven per cent. bonds at par, and \$500,000 in cash at the rate of \$25,000 a month, while the balance of \$1,487,688 was to be paid in certificates of stock at par, bearing ten per cent. interest and convertible into stock on the completion of the road.

The effect of the opening of traffic was what might have been expected from the results seen in the case of the Michigan Southern Railroad. The rush of travel was so great that, even before the completion of the road, it was necessary to increase the equipment. In this way the final expense was brought to about \$4,500,000.

The report of the directors for 1853, made before the road was completed, says :

“ It was originally supposed that one daily through train, with one additional train, between Chicago and Peru, would accommodate the passenger business, and that the same number of freight trains would do all the freight business for the first year after the road was completed, but there are two daily passenger trains running between Chicago and Peru, and one to the end of the track, one daily freight train to the end of the track, and an extra train as often as the machinery can be spared to run it, besides the regular construction trains.”

The original contract had provided for eighteen locomotives of from sixteen to eighteen tons each, twelve passenger cars, one hundred and fifty covered freight cars, one hundred platform cars, etc. But the rush of business was so great that this allowance had to be constantly exceeded, as the work progressed, and on the 10th of July the road had twenty-eight locomotives, twenty-four first-class passenger cars, four second-class passenger cars, one hundred and seventy covered freight cars, one hundred and seventy platform cars, and other things in proportion. In addition to this, the president and executive committee had already contracted for ten additional locomotives, while at the time of making the report, it was proposed to buy eight more. The report well says :

“ When it is recollected that three years ago, when the road was located, a large portion of the line traversed was then open prairie, and that even now only a small part of the country along the line of the road is under cultivation, and seeing the business already developed, it is almost impossible for any one who has any regard for his judgment, to make an estimate sufficiently large to meet the increase of business.”

During the first half year from July 10, 1854, to January 10, 1855, the earnings exceeded the running expenses by \$270,894, or nearly nine per cent. on the capital stock. During the five months ending December, the road carried 168,825 passengers and 49,735.82 tons of freight.

While the main line of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was being constructed, my father was engaged in pushing a branch southwards to Peoria. This branch was organized as a separate corporation, the Peoria and Bureau Valley Railroad, and joined the Rock Island road at Bureau Junction. It ran through a large portion of the fertile valley of the Illinois River, and thus became a valuable feeder to the Rock Island road, to which it was leased in 1854. It was the intention from the beginning to put the two roads under the same management, and it was merely as a matter of convenience that a separate company was organized. This branch was pushed through with the same rapidity that was shown in the construction of the main line. The contract was signed July 4, 1853, and in less than a year the road was completed and turned over to the lessor company. The firm which undertook this contract included, besides Mr. Sheffield,

Mr. Farnam, Mr. William Walcott, and Mr. T. C. Durant. Thus before the first six months of 1854 had passed, a road had been constructed from Chicago to the Mississippi, and a branch had been run as far as Peoria in the central part of the State.

The completion of this undertaking was justly regarded as of the first importance to the development, both of the State of Illinois, and of the whole country, and was commemorated by two celebrations. The first, which was a local affair, was conducted by the people of Rock Island and took the form of an excursion over the main line of the road on February 22, 1854. The guests, on arriving at Rock Island, were received by the city council and entertained at a banquet. A number of prominent men, my father among the number, made speeches on this occasion, and in the evening there were fire-works and an illumination. The following day the guests returned to Chicago.

The other celebration, which took place in June, was a national affair, and was managed by the firm of Sheffield and Farnam on a scale proportional to the magnitude of their achievement. The participants, to the number of

about one thousand, came from all parts of the country and were carried by the contractors over the railroad from Chicago to Rock Island and thence by steamboat up the Mississippi to Fort Snelling and back. Six large steamers were barely equal to the accommodation of the party, and six days were spent on the excursion.

The details of both of these celebrations, particularly of the second, which is still remembered with pleasure by many of those who had the good fortune to take part in it, are interesting, but to give them here would fill a space out of all proportion to their importance in my father's career. A more circumstantial account of them will be found in an appendix.

In those days my father had little time for festivities of any kind. His vacations were few, and there was so much work to be done that every moment seemed precious. Before the Rock Island Railroad had been completed, he and his associates had already made their plans, first for a bridge across the Mississippi River, and then for a railroad to run through the State of Iowa to the Missouri. The bridge was built by an independent company, of which

my father was president. He also designed the bridge, and superintended its construction. It was finished in April, 1855. The original bridge, which was of wood and ran across the middle of the island, has since been replaced by an iron structure, which crosses its lower point.

The execution of these projects was beset with many difficulties, with more, in fact, than had been met with in the construction of the Rock Island Railroad. For the bridge, which was the first to cross the Mississippi, at once provoked that conflict of interests which has been going on ever since. It also necessitated the solution of some very important legal problems. A glance at a map of the United States shows that most of the large waterways run from North to South. Most of the trunk railroads, however, follow the direction of the migration of population along the parallels of latitude, and run from East to West. The construction of a bridge across the Mississippi River brought these two lines of travel into open conflict, a conflict which was aggravated by the fact that they were respectively championed by the two foremost cities of the West, whose commercial rivalry has not yet

ceased. The people of St. Louis were largely interested in steamboat navigation, and at once complained that the bridge was a great hindrance to this traffic. The Chicago people, on the other hand, felt that the growth of their city depended upon their being the gate through which all intercourse between the western prairies and the East must be conducted.

There soon began a series of persistent attacks upon the bridge, made by those who were interested in steamboat navigation. Steamers would collide with the bridge and then claim damages from the company. In May, 1856, a boat ran into the bridge and set fire to it, burning away a considerable portion of the trestle work, and it was strongly suspected at the time that the boat, which had already been disabled by a collision with a ferry-boat, had been run into the bridge intentionally in order to injure it.

An article published in the *Chicago Times* of May 22, 1859, thus describes the spirit of the St. Louis people :

“ Her common council has made large appropriations, her board of trade have added to these, and her citizens have contributed time and money without



stint to maintain the most vexatious suits in every court jurisdiction against one of these railroad companies ; she has kept in constant employment a corps of engineers to survey and examine the Mississippi at every point at which bridges have been proposed, and she has paid out liberal fees to the most conspicuous engineers of the country for opinions adverse to these bridges in their plans, location, and supposed effect upon the commerce of the river. Her steamboat owners and pilots have been ready on every occasion to furnish testimony against these bridges. The Rock Island Bridge Company has been left to fight the battle single-handed—to fight the battle against the capital, intellect, and party feeling of her citizens, which have been concentrated upon this single object.”

To these vexatious and annoying difficulties, caused by the action of the St. Louis people and the river pilots, was added a legal complication of no small magnitude, for, while the bridge was still under construction, the United States government sued for an injunction against it. The case was argued in the first instance by the attorney - general of the United States and Mr. Hoyne, district attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, for the complainants, and by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, Mr. Sergeant, and Mr. N. B. Judd for the defendants. There were two points made by

the United States in its complaint. One was that the bridge traversed land reserved by the government for military purposes, and that the State of Illinois, therefore, had no right to allow it to be condemned by a private corporation. The other was that the construction of the bridge over the west channel of the river would materially obstruct steamboat navigation. The first complaint, therefore, was based upon the rights of the United States as a proprietor, and the second, upon the power of Congress to regulate inter-state commerce. The case was ably argued on both sides, and ended in 1855 in a verdict in favor of the Bridge Company. Thus the legal rights of the Bridge Company were maintained, but it required constant vigilance for many years to protect it against the attacks of its enemies.

The railroad through Iowa was also built under great difficulties. It was first chartered in February, 1853, as the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad. It was from the outset a part of the Rock Island system, and contracts existed between it and the Bridge Company, as well as between the Bridge Company and the Rock Island Railroad, which made all three corporations but links in one chain. The rail-

road was, however, a separate corporation, and had as such to manage its own affairs. My father was the leading spirit of this enterprise, but unfortunately he could no longer command the services of Mr. Sheffield, who felt that he had arrived at a period of life at which he was justified in retiring from active business, though he continued to aid the enterprise liberally by subscribing to its funds. Mr. Sheffield had been an invaluable partner. His high sense of honor, sound judgment, and financial skill, gave my father perfect confidence that the purely financial part of their enterprises would be well managed, and enabled him to devote his undivided attention to the practical work of construction. His partner in this new undertaking was Mr. Thomas C. Durant, a man with whom he had already been associated in the construction of the Peoria and Bureau Valley Railroad, but whose virtues were not those for which Mr. Sheffield was conspicuous. Other difficulties, which no foresight could have avoided, showed themselves at an early day. It was expected, that the counties through which the new road passed would aid it by issuing their bonds and subscribing to its stock. Two obstacles, however, presented themselves

to this mode of raising funds. In the first place, there were rival companies, which were seeking to gain the support of the people of Iowa, and in the second place, the people themselves could not command much capital. The correspondence of Mr. Hiram Price, who was sent through the State in 1853 as general agent of the railroad for the purpose of procuring the right of way, obtaining subscriptions, and doing any other business that might be necessary in locating and establishing the line of the road, gives us a graphic picture of the difficulties of the task.

In his letter of September 3d, he says :

“ At Kaneshville, found the people wild for a railroad, but partially committed in favor of the Air Line. I send you the resolutions. I spent two days among them ; conversed fully with all their prominent men ; held a public meeting which was well attended. . . . They insist, and I suggest to you the propriety of a survey at once. The Air Line has made a survey, and promised them to commence work this fall. I am satisfied, that this is all for effect, but you have no idea of the state of feeling through this country. The other companies promise them everything. . . . It will be remembered, that every county between Iowa City and Fort Desmoines had pledged their support to the Lyons, before I started from Davenport.”

On the 20th of August he had reached Fort Desmoines, from which he writes :

“ I have called public meetings in different places, and succeeded in passing resolutions leaving a county subscription to be applied to either road, as they may deem best. This is all I could possibly accomplish, and considering the rabid feeling that exists along the line for the Lyons road and against ours, I think this is much. . . . But to-night I am, as you see, at Fort Desmoines, and a more crazy and unreasonable people I have never seen than a majority of them are. A few are with us, but the current sets strongly, often irresistibly, the other way. . . . The counties between this and Iowa City are not able to take one-third of the stock. The whole taxable property of Iowa, Powashiek, and Jasper Counties is only \$80,000 ; the distance by a straight line through these counties is seventy-eight miles.”

In a letter of September 20th, from Desmoines, he writes :

“ The Polk County election is over and decided, so far as that vote can decide, in favor of the Lyons road. At your distance, you no doubt think it very strange that men professing common sense should act so, but you talk to them, and you will receive for an answer, ‘ I signed the petition ; I said I would vote for it, before I heard of the Davenport road ; I believe the Lyons road,’ and a score of other just such answers, some of which display not much sense, and some of them not much honesty.”

These difficulties were gradually overcome, and in May, 1855, the firm of Farnam and Durant took the contract for building the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad from Davenport to Iowa City, a distance of fifty-five miles, together with a branch to Muscatine, all to be finished and equipped by July 1, 1856. But the troubles of the company were not yet ended. There was a great stringency in the money market, and, as Mr. Sheffield wrote in January, 1856, it was hard to get money, even in New York, on better terms than fifteen per cent. per annum. Mr. Durant, writing February 28, 1856, says :

“ We are paying one per cent. per month and a commission for money. I am paying the same rather than sell stock.”

Difficulty was also experienced in finding a market for the securities of the road. A letter of December 8, 1855, from Mr. Durant, states that he had offered Ward and Co., brokers of New York, a contract by which, if they disposed of \$250,000 worth of Mississippi and Missouri bonds, in addition to those taken by Mr. Sheffield and others, at \$75, they would realize a commission of \$5,000 and a bonus of

\$25,000 in the stock of the company. Yet they were not willing to accept the offer, and December 23, 1855, he writes that, though Ward and Co. had been offered a commission of two per cent., instead of one per cent. as at first, they still hesitated. "It is impossible to inspire people with confidence," he writes January 12, 1856, "in the enterprise."

The condition of the bank money of the country was also a serious obstacle. The banks had issued such a large number of notes that it was often difficult to secure currency for them. In some cases the banks complained, that the bank-notes which they had loaned had come back to them in the original packages, and refused to issue any more.

But a still graver danger presented itself. My father's partner had unfortunately yielded to the general spirit of speculation which had taken possession of so many of the railroad men of that time. The result was that, when the commercial crisis of 1857 came, it brought the firm of Farnam and Durant to the very brink of ruin. So near did the catastrophe seem that my father actually wrote, in a letter of August 29, 1857:

“I thought a week ago that I was a rich man ; I now find the concern so involved that we cannot possibly go on, and the firm must make an assignment to-night or Monday. The loss of property is nothing, if I was only sure that I had enough for the support of my dear wife and family ; to lose everything now is rather more than I can bear.”

And a letter from Mr. Walcott, dated September 1, 1857, speaks of breaking the news of my father's financial ruin to my mother. Fortunately the necessity for an assignment was overcome by the prompt and vigorous measures taken by my father. He was able to avoid failure, and ultimately to extend the road to Grinnell, 120 miles from Davenport, though it was not carried through to the Missouri, until after he had retired from active business.

While all these cares were weighing upon him, he was acting as president of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, and was also, for a time, president of the Merchant's Loan and Trust Company, a bank of which he was one of the original stockholders.

He was also actively interested in promoting the plan for extending the railroad system across the continent to the Pacific coast. It is interesting to notice that as early as 1856, Mr.



Sheffield, in one of his letters, speaks of the desirability of getting a charter for a railroad from the Mississippi River to San Francisco, so that this was evidently a part of the original plan of the far-sighted men who finished the Michigan Southern road. When the time seemed ripe for putting this plan into execution, my father became one of the incorporators of the Union Pacific Company. But he soon found himself entirely out of sympathy with the methods by which his associates proposed to conduct the enterprise, and ceased to have anything to do with it, after the first work of incorporation had been accomplished.

In addition to this he began to feel that, for personal reasons, it was desirable to throw off, rather than to assume, responsibilities. He was over-worked. He was anxious about the health of his oldest son, whom a severe attack of rheumatism had forced in December, 1861, to take the sea voyage to San Francisco by the way of Cape Horn. He began to feel that what he might add to his means by further years of hard work would be dearly bought at the expense of his health and perhaps of his life. Yet it was very hard to cut so many ties at once. In a letter of April 17, 1862, to

his friend Hon. N. B. Judd, who was then United States Minister at Berlin, he writes, after speaking of the plans of the family:

“Mrs. Farnam and myself will keep house in Chicago, and work for the poor wounded and sick soldiers. You ask if I work as hard as ever. I never worked as hard in my life as I have for the last year, and I have of late been thinking how I could get out of it. If I had not everything I am worth tied up in this railroad, I would cut loose at once, and go to Europe, and meet George B. on his way home. But to go away now . . . would be equivalent to throwing away everything. Still it would not be the most surprising thing that ever happened, if I should get mad some day, and jump from the train, even at some risk of injury, and run off to Europe, though I can hardly see my way clear just now.”

In the following year, however, he took the *salto mortale*. He was now in his sixtieth year. He had been at work continuously since the age of sixteen, and felt the need of repose. He was also anxious to see again my oldest brother, who had by this time reached Europe from the East on his journey around the world. He was deeply interested in the war, but he felt that at his age he could do more by his financial support than by any form of personal service, and he could not remain in this country,

without becoming constantly involved in all kinds of labors and responsibilities.

Everything pointed to a trip abroad as the one thing needed. On June 4 he resigned the presidency of the Rock Island Railroad, and on August 5, 1863, he embarked from Boston on the old Cunard steamer *Africa*.

IV.  
RETIREMENT

1863-1883

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OF the remaining twenty years of my father's life, five were spent mainly in travel abroad, and fifteen, in his home in New Haven. He took with him on the *Africa* my mother and his three youngest children. My brother George met us on the dock at Liverpool. Leaving my sister and myself to pursue our studies at Fontainebleau, the rest of the party traveled during the winter of 1863-4 in Egypt and the Holy Land. They ascended the Nile in a dahabeah as far as the second cataract, and returned to Europe by the way of Syria and Constantinople.

In the autumn of 1864 my father came home in order to vote for President Lincoln; but in the summer of 1865 he returned to Europe, and

remained there three years, making Paris his headquarters, but traveling from time to time in various parts of Europe, and visiting Norway, Germany, Spain, Russia, Italy, Switzerland, and the British Isles. My mother was with him during the entire period, my brother George, most of the time until 1867. My sister was at school in Fontainebleau until 1867, when she joined my parents on some of their excursions. In the summer of 1865, my father enjoyed the pleasure of a re-union of all his family at Paris, the first gathering of the kind which had taken place since 1861.

In 1868 he returned to the United States, and decided, largely on the advice of my brother George, to take up his residence again in New Haven, the city in which he had passed so many years of active life, and in which all of his children had been born. Many years before, he had bought a piece of ground on Whitney avenue, to which he had subsequently added a lot on Hillhouse avenue. On the latter site, he built the home of his declining years, which was finished in 1871 and which he occupied at the time of his death. Before the end of the year 1873, four of his children had married, and all of them sooner or later

made New Haven their home. The remainder of his life was spent quietly and peacefully in the management of his property, in acts of public beneficence, and in the enjoyment of his children and grand-children. He made few journeys during this period. In February, 1877, however, he and my mother took his son George to Europe, in order that he might use the waters of Aix-les-Bains, which had greatly benefited him several years before, but which seemed now, unfortunately, to have lost their efficacy. In the autumn of the same year, they accompanied him and his family to Nassau in the Bahama Islands, and spent the winter there with him.

Many quiet pleasures filled up these last years of his life. At short distances from his own home lived all of his children, who made him daily visits, and were in the habit of taking tea in his house every Sunday evening. He enjoyed to the full these family gatherings, and joined with great pleasure in the singing of hymns which usually occupied the early part of the evening. Several of the neighbors, particularly President Porter, Professor Fisher and Professor Silliman, were to be found in his library almost as regularly Sunday evenings

as his own children, and the time passed pleasantly with stories, anecdotes, and the discussion of the events of the day. Not infrequently some of his friends from other cities would visit him, and talk over old times, and thus he maintained an ever fresh interest in the past and in the present, in friends near at hand and in friends far away. He was very fond of driving, and explored the beautiful roads about New Haven in every direction. He generally managed to so arrange his route that, either going or coming, he could pass the house of one of his children, and have a little chat with the grand-children, who were always glad to see his smiling face.

One of the chief pleasures of his life had always been to do good to others. This was so natural and so thoroughly a part of himself that it seems needless, and in truth it would be impossible, to mention in detail his acts of kindness and generosity. What he gave was always given unostentatiously, and without any desire for notoriety. In some cases, however, his name became permanently connected with the gifts. As early as 1863, he gave \$30,000 to Yale College, to be expended in the erection of a new dormitory. At a

later period, he added another \$30,000, and the building which this money made it possible to erect in 1870, and which was the first structure of the new quadrangle, was called by the corporation after his name. He frequently gave smaller sums to the different departments of Yale College, particularly the Art School, the Library, and the Divinity School. His gift of the "Farnam Drive" to East Rock Park connected his name with a feature of the city in which all the people of New Haven take a just pride. The hospital, too, interested him constantly, and in addition to numerous other gifts, he endowed one of its free beds. The representatives of minor charities and public institutions were frequently seen in his house, and seldom went away without some substantial expression of his good-will.

His health was always robust. Even when worn out with overwork, he was not subject to any acute disease, and illness was something of which he had no experience from the time of his recovery from the malarial fever contracted in the Tonawanda Swamp until the last few years of his life. In 1875, however, he found himself failing in strength,



and though the physicians were at first uncertain as to the nature of the ailment, it was finally found to be diabetes. Thanks to his strong constitution, and to the judicious treatment of Dr. William H. Draper, he was able to recover from this disease, and again to enjoy the good health to which he had always been accustomed. The stroke of paralysis which ended his life came without warning on Saturday evening, the 30th of September, 1883, and he died peacefully, and apparently without pain, on the morning of the 4th of October.

This imperfect narrative of what my father did gives us but a dim conception of what he was. His character was marked by a singular consistency. He was always the same. He did not have one standard of conduct for the counting-room and another for the home. He did not stoop to practices in public life which he would have scorned in his relations towards his friends. He was always straightforward, open, true.

His character was, however, a broad one, and contained elements that are not always found in harmonious co-operation. Thus his innate kindness was not inconsistent with great

strength of will. Indulgent as he was towards the faults of others, and much as he shrank from giving pain to any one, he did not allow his feelings to stand in the way of his duty, and when he had made up his mind to say No, was immovable.

A letter, which happens to have been preserved among his papers, is so characteristic of this trait that it deserves to be here reproduced. It is addressed to one of the employés of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad. After stating that the individual addressed had often promised to abstain from intoxicating liquors, but still persisted in drinking, the letter continues :

“ You are aware that I have done all in my power to reform you and make you useful to us and an ornament to your profession, but I am satisfied that your reformation is hopeless. You are therefore notified that your services are no longer wanted.”

Even in this case, however, he did not want to inflict any unnecessary pain, and held back the letter for some time after it was written, because the man to whom it was addressed was sick.

In all respects his nature was singularly well balanced. Thus, while setting up the

highest standard of conduct for himself, he was charitable towards the shortcomings of others, and while generous and open-handed, he was never wasteful or extravagant. Busy as he was during the greater part of his life, he never allowed himself to become a slave to his profession, and always took pleasure in music, art, the drama, and nature.

In society he was full of pleasant talk. His fund of anecdote was large, and his accurate memory, his knowledge of men, his shrewd observation, and his keen but never caustic humor, made his conversation enjoyable.

His manners were marked by a courtesy which knew no distinctions. To his inferiors he was never condescending, to his equals, never obsequious. His bearing was marked by a natural dignity and a genuine self-respect, as far removed from self-assertion, on the one hand, as from an affected modesty, on the other. Accustomed to treat others with consideration, he never feared that he himself would be treated otherwise.

Of an even, well-controlled temper, he was neither soured by failure nor puffed up by success. He preserved throughout his life an almost child-like simplicity of thought and

sentiment, and the manner of his death seemed in perfect harmony with a character which, through the trials and temptations of the world, kept the heart pure and the mind serene, and the memory of which is cherished by all who knew him as at once an inspiration and a benediction.

## APPENDIX.

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE FESTIVITIES BY WHICH THE  
COMPLETION OF THE CHICAGO AND ROCK  
ISLAND RAILROAD WAS CELEBRATED.

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The completion of the first railroad to the Mississippi in 1854 was commemorated by two celebrations. The first was held in Rock Island immediately after the opening of the road; the second was held four months later, and took the form of a great excursion from Chicago to St. Paul.

An outline of the former is contained in the following handbill, printed at the time :

### ORDER OF THE DAY.

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RAILROAD FESTIVAL,

*February 22, 1854.*

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THE FIRST TRAIN OF CARS FROM CHICAGO will arrive at Rock Island at 5 o'clock p. m., which event will be heralded by the roar of artillery, the

sounds of joyful music, and the acclamations of the people.

At half-past four p. m., the President of the Day, with the Committee of Reception, will be at the depot, to welcome the guests whom the city authorities have invited to the celebration.

At a quarter before five, the guests from the State of Iowa are requested to assemble at the Rock Island House, and march to the depot, conducted by Messrs. William Bell and E. C. Cropper.

On the arrival of the cars, the guests will be received into the depot by Messrs. M. B. Osborn and A. K. Philleo.

Seats at the table will be indicated to each one of the guests by Messrs. Bailey, Buttrick, Stoddard, Vansant, and Bolmer.

As soon as the guests from the cars are within the depot, the citizens of Rock Island will be conducted in by Mr. I. Negus and Dr. Brackett, in the following order :

FIRST—THE CITY COUNCIL.

SECOND—THE REVEREND CLERGY.

THIRD—CITIZENS.

When the seats are all occupied, the music, the firing, and the shouting will cease. The President of the Day will call on all to rise, when

J. J. BEARDSLEY, ESQ.,

who has been appointed to that office, will, in behalf of the City of Rock Island, pronounce the

WELCOME.

Seats will then be resumed at the dinner table ; after the enjoyment of which, the

#### REGULAR TOASTS

will be read by the President ; responses to which are expected from the guests.

After the Regular Toasts, Volunteer Toasts, Sentiments, and Speeches will be in order.

At the close of the festivities, the guests will form a procession and march, with music, down Illinois street to the Court House Square to witness the illumination, and return to the Rock Island House.

Before leaving the depot, each guest, by calling at the office at the west end, will be furnished with a ticket for lodgings by Mr. A. K. Philleo.

Coaches will be in readiness to carry the guests to their lodgings, and to the cars on the following morning.

After the President of the Day leaves the depot, Mr. Bailey will preside ; and the depot will be kept open for the citizens as long as any of them may desire.

N. B. BUFORD,

*President of the Day.*

The temporary building in which the guests were entertained at dinner was constructed, it is stated, in less than three days, and was one hundred feet long and twenty feet wide.

The reception speech was made by J. J. Beardsley, of Rock Island. The dinner was

presided over by Colonel Buford, and among the toasts responded to were the following :

“*The 22d of February, 1854, the espousal day of the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean. May no vandal hands ever break the connection.*”

“*The projectors of the C. & R. I. Railroad. Their hearts rejoice in what their eyes behold. What was conceived in weakness is this day brought forth in strength.*”

“*Messrs. Farnam and Sheffield, the builders of the C. & R. I. Railroad. They have demonstrated by their fidelity and enterprise that a corporation may have a soul. In their march to the Pacific, the blessings of cities and States left behind will follow them.*”

“*The President of the Day. The mantle of his ancestors' liberality and regard for the public weal has fallen upon him, and he does honor to its wearing. At the nuptial feast of the proud Mississippi to the giant Atlantic, he sheds additional luster on the occasion in giving away the bride.*”

In response to the toast in honor of Messrs. Sheffield and Farnam, Mr. Farnam spoke somewhat reluctantly as follows :

“ As I have long since given you notice that a speech was not included in my contract, you will not expect at this short notice a speech of any kind from me. I



did not come here to make a speech, but to join in your festivities, and to rejoice with you upon the completion of this work. Let us compare the past with the present. It is less than one-quarter of a century, and within the recollection of the most of you, that the first locomotive made its appearance in the States. Now, more than fourteen thousand miles of iron rails are traversed by the iron horse with almost lightning speed. It is less than two years since the first train of cars entered the State of Illinois from the East, then connecting Lake Erie with Chicago. It is less than one year since the first continuous line of road was completed connecting New York with Chicago. Now, there are two distinct lines the entire distance connecting Chicago and the great prairies of the West with New York and Boston. Two years ago, there was less than one hundred miles of road in operation in the State of Illinois, and most of that was what is called the 'strap rail.' Now, more than twelve hundred miles of road of the most substantial character is in operation, eight hundred of which leads directly to the city of Chicago.

To-day, we witness the nuptials of the Atlantic with the Father of Waters. To-morrow, the people of Rock Island can go to New York the entire distance by railroad, and within the space of forty-two hours.

Gentlemen, I thank you for the compliment contained in the sentiment just offered, and while I am proud of the compliment, I am not so vain or so selfish as to take the credit all to myself, and while I am greatly indebted to the citizens generally of Illinois, I

should do myself great injustice, if I were to omit mentioning the names of those who have more immediately aided me in carrying forward this great work. It does not become me to speak of the officers of the company ; their works are matters of history. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon them for their energy and perseverance in prosecuting this work to completion, but I shall be excused for mentioning the names of those under whose judicious and skillful management the labor has been executed.

Allow me to head the list with your own excellent Governor Matteson ; and then come Gardner and Goss, Crotty, Warner and Sherwin, Clark and Mann, Killedea, Whitman and Boyle, Armour, Groendike, Carmichael, Holmes, and others, whose names I cannot now mention.

The beautiful and substantial bridges over which we have this day passed were built by John Warner and Co. and Stone and Boomer.

I will detain you with details no longer. I again thank you for the kindness shown me on this occasion, and I will ask to propose a sentiment—'*The Citizens of Rock Island*. May they ever cherish the bond which this day binds them to the Atlantic cities.' "

The toasts were thirteen in all, and after the regular exercises were over, those who remained continued the entertainment by offering additional toasts, among which was the following, proposed by E. T. Bridges :

“ *Henry Farnam*, the embodiment of the age. We honor him not less for his indomitable perseverance and untiring energy than for his enlarged liberality and courteous bearing.”

It was remarked that (in the language of one of the reporters) alcohol was not suffered to poison the union that was then effected between the waters of the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan. No substitutes for either were provided except simple tea and coffee, and consequently among the sentiments was one proposed by D. N. Burnham, of Chicago:

“ *The temperance aspect of this elegant festival.* May your worthy example be followed all the country throughout.”

After the dinner, the guests were provided with accommodations by the citizens, and in the evening Rock Island and Davenport were illuminated. The following day, the whole party returned to Chicago, making the trip in seven hours and thirty minutes.

This celebration in Rock Island was informal and mainly confined to the people of the locality. The partners who constructed the road were, however, eastern men, and were fully aware of the general ignorance that prevailed in the East with regard to the West.

They, therefore, conceived the idea of inviting some of their eastern friends to an excursion, and of taking them, not only over the line of the new road, but also up the Mississippi River to St. Paul, in order that they might see with their own eyes the resources of the New West. It was originally not intended to make the excursion a large one, but as soon as the plan became known, requests for invitations poured in in such numbers that, what was expected to be a small party of friends, grew into a throng which crowded six Mississippi steamboats.

The excursion was carried out in a characteristically liberal spirit, and many professions and many cities were represented in it.

Among the representatives of the press were Thurlow Weed, at that time of the *Albany Journal*; Col. Fuller, of the *Mirror*; Epes Sargent, formerly of the *Boston Transcript*; Samuel Bowles, of the *Springfield Republican*; J. H. Sanford and W. C. Prime, of the *New York Journal of Commerce*; N. W. T. Root, of the *New Haven Register*; Chas. A. Dana, at that time of the *New York Tribune*; James M. Woodward, of the *New Haven Courier*, and James F. Babcock, of the *New Haven Palla-*

*dium*. Among the other guests were President Fillmore, of Buffalo, Governor Baldwin, Professors Fitch and Twining, the Misses Gerry, Professor Benjamin Silliman, Prof. and Mrs. Larned, Judge Boardman, James Brewster, Dr. Leonard Bacon, and Ezra C. Reed, of New Haven, Judge McCurdy and daughter (now Mrs. Prof. Salisbury), of Lyme, and many others, in all about a thousand gentlemen and ladies.

At that time the West was so little known to the East that the newspaper correspondents who attended the excursion found it interesting to their readers to describe all the towns of importance that they went through. Of Cleveland Mr. Babcock says in his letter of June 1st :

“ It has some resemblance to New Haven, and in its general plan is equal to it, or would be, if its public greens approached ours in size and beauty. Its streets are magnificent and well ornamented with trees, and there is much taste displayed here. The stores are very spacious and rather elegant ; but Cleveland needs the completion and perfection in detail, the finishing off and sweeping up of some of the older cities of New England, especially New Haven. These slight imperfections are, however, to be expected in all new towns and cities. The wonder is that there has been

so much time and disposition here for the cultivation of a taste for the beautiful, as evinced by the results seen in all directions. The public edifices and private dwellings of the better sort are generally very creditable to the place, although generally wanting in the admirable proportions and exquisite finish of the architecture of New Haven, which in this respect excels any other place I ever saw, of course excepting select localities in some of the larger Eastern cities. The two New Haven architects would be able to make important improvements in some of the most costly buildings here."

Toledo was described, in a letter of June 3d, as containing a population of about ten thousand, "nearly half of whom have accumulated within two years." But the author continues, "Like all the new and thriving western towns it is unfinished."

Chicago, however, was the city which naturally excited the greatest amount of enthusiasm and comment. Mr. Babcock says, in his letter of June 5th:

"It is wonderful for its capacities and resources, but more wonderful for its rapid growth. Four years ago, it was a mere village, and now it is a city of about seventy thousand inhabitants, and having all the signs of a proportionate increase during the next ten years. . . . The streets are generally planked, and as far as the eye can reach they present a smooth surface,

without a hole or hillock. The walks are about fifteen feet wide and neatly planked. Timber, you know, is here much cheaper than brick, and quite as good for temporary use. . . . The oldest native inhabitant of this place is a young lady twenty-two years of age. She is a daughter of Col. R. J. Hamilton, and was born in Fort Dearborn.

In 1818 there were but two white families here. What a change has been wrought here since that short period !

Among the relics of the past is still preserved, on the government reservation, the old blockhouse used as a fortification against the hostile Indians. It is about twenty feet square, built of hewn logs, with a square doorway about three feet in dimensions. Twelve or fourteen feet from the ground, the logs project over the main building, so that it was almost impossible for an Indian to climb to the roof without the aid of ladders. In the projecting story are small openings for directing the aim of muskets upon the besiegers. This was the first fortification of the kind I had ever seen, and I was, of course, much interested with it. A few rods from it is the old lighthouse, now far inland, for large warehouses are built between it and the lake. The Chicago River, a narrow stream, but deep enough to float the largest steamers, runs close by the lighthouse and through the center of the city. The river is crossed here by a small ferry-boat, worked by hand, or pulled by the aid of a rope fastened to each bank. When vessels pass, this rope is dropped well down into the water. The ferry is free

to all who use it. A few rods above is a swinging bridge, which is thrown open for vessels every few minutes during the day, and long lines of vehicles often stand in the streets on either side of the river, waiting for the use of the bridge. To avoid these annoyances, it is now seriously proposed to tunnel the river's bed."

Those who know the Chicago of to-day will be amused at the comparatively simple appearance of the great metropolis of the West thirty years ago; and yet, even at that time, it was considered to be a marvel, and the features which seem to us to prove its primitiveness are precisely the ones which Mr. Babcock picks out to show its progress.

The guests assembled in Chicago, and started from there on the morning of Monday, June 5th, for Rock Island over the newly-finished Chicago and Rock Island Railroad. There were two trains of nine cars each, filled with people, which moved out of the depot in the presence of a large crowd of spectators.

Rock Island was reached at four o'clock in the afternoon, and the passengers at once embarked on board six steamboats, which had been engaged for the trip. The names of the boats were the *War Eagle*, the *Galena*, the



*Lady Franklin*, the *Sparhawk*, the *Golden Era*, and the *Jenny Lind*. Each boat was provided with a band, and as the little fleet of steamers started up the Mississippi River, the music on their decks was answered by the cheers of the people on shore, and bon-fires and fire-works illuminated their course. Rock Island at that day contained about 4,500 inhabitants, while Davenport contained 7,000. On June 8th the steamboats reached St. Paul, which was then the seat of the territorial government of Minnesota, and contained about 5,000 inhabitants. The city itself was then about six years old.

St. Paul was reached somewhat sooner than the people there had expected, so that their preparations for the reception of the excursionists had not been fully made. Consequently there was some confusion. Mr. Babcock graphically describes the scene on landing:

“All is bustle,” he says, “and confusion on shore, and all sorts of vehicles are coming down the bank. There sit Governor Baldwin and Mrs. B. in high backed chairs in a long lumber wagon, in company with a dozen more on similar seats. There, in just such a wagon, sit Mr. McCurdy and daughter, sur-

rounded by other ladies and gentlemen. There are Judge J. O. Phelps, C. B. Lines, and Mr. Woodward, of the *Journal*, in a very handsome one-horse buggy. They have not waited for the uncertain movements of the committee, but have been to a stable and provided for themselves. There is James Brewster and wife in another similar carriage. There is the Rev. Dr. Bacon, Rev. Mr. Eggleston, Rev. Dr. Fitch, and others, in a lumber wagon. . . . It is now time to enquire, as did Daniel Webster on an important occasion, Where shall I go? . . . A St. Paul man told us to get a seat where we could! . . . Here is room, said Prof. Twining, come up here. We were soon on the vehicle, and took position between Governor Berrie, of Michigan, and Mr. Twining. On the seat below was Mr. Bancroft, the historian, his son, and the driver of the carriage, and back of all was stretched out one of the editors of the *New York Times*."

A slight mishap occurred here to Mr. Bancroft, the historian, which might have proved a serious accident, for he lost his balance on the top of the coach, and fell to the ground, and for a time was in great danger of being run over by the wheels; but he was rescued in time, and remounted without injury.

St. Paul was at that time a city of few attractions in itself, but it boasted of one great sight, the Falls of St. Anthony, nine miles

distant. Accordingly the party were taken there first of all. Having returned to St. Paul, they then continued on the steamers seven miles further to Fort Snelling.

Fort Snelling was at that time a fortification large enough to contain several thousand troops, and stood on a commanding site about three hundred rods from the river. There were seven buildings, connected with walls, and forming an octagon about as large as the lower Green in New Haven. But it was one of the relics of a past period, and had at that time entirely lost its significance as a military post, the Indians having receded from Minnesota, and the country being invaded only by the peaceful immigrants of Germany, Scandinavia, and the East.

On their return from Fort Snelling, the excursionists were entertained at St. Paul by a reception in the great legislative hall.

“The ladies of the party,” says Mr. Babcock, “and the ladies of St. Paul are in full dress, and the scene more resembles one often observed in the saloons of New York than one which could have been anticipated in any place in this new Territory.”

Governor Gorman, the Governor of the Territory, received the guests, addressing Presi-

dent Fillmore in particular, and welcoming the projectors of the Rock Island Railroad, the originators of the excursion, the members of the press, and all present.

President Fillmore replied, and was followed by Mr. Bancroft. The speeches of President Fillmore and Mr. Bancroft are thus reported by Mr. Chas. A. Dana, at that time of the *New York Tribune* :

“ Mr. Fillmore replied at some length. He said he claimed no honor on that occasion. He had come there, expecting to travel altogether as a private person, without being called upon to address his fellow citizens. If any man should be especially honored there, it was Mr. Farnam, who had conducted with such success an entertainment for which history had no parallel, and such as no prince could possibly undertake. The governor had alluded with approval to his conduct in a position it had been his fortune to hold in the Federal Government. He rejoiced at this unexpected approval of the governor, and at that of this vast audience. Next to the approbation of his own conscience, he valued that of his fellow citizens. The act of his administration which had been so kindly singled out (the Compromise of 1850) was a trying one. In performing it, he was aware that he ran counter to the feelings of many whose esteem he could not but desire and value. But he trusted that all would now do him the justice to believe that that act was done honestly

and fearlessly. Mr. Fillmore then went on to speak at length of the important position of St. Paul as a central point on one of the routes leading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and to show how necessary it is to build a railroad across the continent, if we would preserve the States of the Pacific and more Eastern States in one confederacy. His observations on this subject were sound and clearly reasoned, and were listened to with great attention.

Mr. Bancroft next spoke, and in behalf of the railroad directors responded to Governor Gorman's welcome in one of those brilliant and facile improvisations which the public sometimes have the fortune to hear from his lips. He touched upon the kindly relations that must exist between the people of Minnesota and those who had opened to their use this new road on the way to the great marts of our foreign commerce, the unprecedented nature of this excursion in which so large a number of persons were conveyed in so agreeable a way, as the guests of the railroad company, a greater distance than that from New York to Liverpool. I do not attempt to follow Mr. Bancroft through his rapid and salient address, every sentence as clear cut as a finished statue, and delivered with admirable point and distinctness. Every passage was applauded, and when he concluded by bidding Minnesota to be the north star of the Union, shining forever in unquenchable luster, there was a general burst of applause throughout the crowded room."

After the reception was over, the excursionists returned to their boats, and were soon on

their way down the river to Rock Island. This city was reached June 10th, and the party there disbanded, some members returning to the East, others continuing their trip in various directions through the West.

The thing most complained of by the excursionists was the lack of room on the steamboats, which obliged many of the gentlemen to sleep in the saloons and on tables, and which overcrowded the staterooms. This was due to the fact that many people brought more persons with them than their tickets allowed. It was stated that there were several cases in which single tickets were made to serve for entire families and their friends. Otherwise, however, the arrangements seem to have been ample. Mr. Babcock says, in describing the affair :

“ We have had oysters and lobsters daily, though two thousand miles from the sea. These, of course, were brought in sealed cans. Hens, turkeys, and ducks have given their last squeak every morning. Two cows on the lower deck furnish us with fresh milk twice a day. Beets are cooked, and every variety of stuff, and the dessert consists of all kinds of fruits, nuts, cakes, confection ices, and other things too numerous to mention. Such is our daily fare. Then there are meats for supper, with tea and coffee, with

toast, dry and wet, cold bread, warm bread, Indian bread, biscuit, rolls, etc. The captain of our boat, Persie, is a prince of a man, and a particular favorite with all the ladies, as well as gentlemen. He gives up his entire boat, even his office, to the use of the passengers. Our friends on the other steamers boast of being as fortunate, and even insist that theirs is the lucky boat with the best company and the best captain. I, of course, go in for our boat, the Golden Era, "our" captain, and our company; besides we have on board the ex-President of the United States, and Mr. Farnam, the master spirit of the expedition, to whose kind offices we are all indebted more than words can express. He is everywhere present, contributing all his efforts to our instruction, amusement and comfort."

Before the party broke up, Mr. Farnam brought on board Mr. Le Clerc, a half-breed Indian, who was at that time a large owner of real estate in Davenport. Mr. Babcock says of him:

"He was introduced to the passengers, and deports himself like a gentleman, though he appears unable to hold much conversation except in monosyllables. He has a true Indian face, though his body is of enormous size, his weight being two hundred and fifty or three hundred pounds."

Mr. Babcock's letter of June 9th thus describes one of the final scenes of the excursion:

“This business having been disposed of, it was resolved that the ceremony of presenting a golden cup to Mr. Farnam’s well-behaved baby should take place in anticipation of handing over the goblet itself, which was yet to be made. Accordingly the Hon. John A. Rockwell, of Norwich, Conn., was selected to make the address to the infant, and Prof. A. C. Twining, of New Haven, Conn., was chosen to respond in behalf of the child.

Mr. Rockwell discharged the duty assigned him in a very appropriate manner, to the great amusement of the ladies and all present.

Mr. Twining replied, commencing with, ‘I, Henry W. Farnam, being young in years, and wholly unaccustomed to public speaking, feel incompetent to discharge in suitable terms the duty imposed upon me on this interesting occasion. When I came on board this boat, it was farthest from my expectation to make a speech. ‘Man wants but little here below,’ and babies still less. All my wants may be confined within this little cup which you propose to give me. Its contents are a baby’s world—his universe. ‘Heaven and earth and ocean plundered of their sweets’ may be compressed within the golden rim of this little measure. Some babies might cry for joy over my good fortune, but I am as unused to crying as to public speaking. I give you my best smile of thanks for your kindness, while I rely upon my interpreter for a further and more mature expression of the grateful emotions of my joyful little heart.’ I may not have given you a very correct report of this excellent speech



on behalf of the baby ; it should have been heard to be appreciated. It was an off-hand effort, and highly delighted the crowd of listeners.

The baby was taken off and rewarded with kisses for his excellent deportment during the trying occasion of the presentation.”

Before landing in Rock Island the boats were brought together, and a general meeting was held to adopt resolutions expressing the feelings of the party towards the projectors of the excursion. Ex-President Fillmore presided at this meeting, while Dr. Bacon reported the resolutions.

## NOTES

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In the preparation of this sketch I have looked over all of my father's papers that I could get access to. Unfortunately they do not furnish a continuous record of events. Most of them were contained in two large pigeon-holed boxes, which were formerly in the office of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad in Chicago, and were brought to New Haven with other pieces of furniture in 1868. But while certain years were quite well represented, others were missing altogether, and what additional papers might have been found in the office of the company were undoubtedly destroyed in the Chicago fire. I have derived great assistance, however, from several files of letters written by Mr. Sheffield, and from some memoranda which he made for the benefit of posterity, and sent to my father a few years before his death. Both the letters and the memoranda are written in his own even hand, and expressed with characteristic clearness and vigor. The publications that I have made use of include President Porter's sketch of my father printed in *Men of Progress*, Andreas' *History of Chicago*, in three volumes (1884-1886), the files of the New Haven newspapers, railroad reports, and an anonymous account of the Farmington Canal Co., printed in 1850. For this pamphlet, as well as for valuable manuscripts of Mr. Sheffield, I am indebted to his daughter, Mrs. John A. Porter, of this city. I am also indebted for the loan of papers and for other informa-

tion to Mr. John E. Henry, of Davenport, Iowa, to my aunt Mrs. Philo Parks, of Grinnell, Iowa, and to the various members of my immediate family.

The portrait which is bound with this volume is copied by the photo gravure process of Goupil and Co. from a photograph taken in 1880.

I have, in general, tried to avoid statements which were doubtful, or which needed qualification. The two cases in which it seemed necessary to depart from this rule are dealt with below.

<sup>1</sup> (p. 20.) These figures are given on page 15, but they do not agree with other figures given elsewhere in the pamphlet. They probably should read \$1,327,156.54.

<sup>2</sup> (p. 39.) The History of Chicago, Vol. I, page 259, gives February 20 as the date. The report of the Michigan Southern road of May, 1853, page 6, gives March as the time of its completion to Chicago, and May 22 as that of the opening of the whole road.



MEMORIAL SERMON

BY

REV. NEWMAN SMYTH, D.D.



## A SERMON

PREACHED BY REV. NEWMAN SMYTH, D.D.,

In Center Church, October 14, 1883.

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Acts xx, 35. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

In this sacred place, where human success must own its nothingness before Almighty God, and our human virtue confesses its need of forgiveness from the charity of the Lord, I do not propose to pronounce the eulogy of a man ; but from a life of good will, finished in benevolence and peace, I may properly take upon this Sabbath day a text. There is a handwriting of God for us to read for our profit in the lives of all good men. St. Paul found an epistle of Christ in the characters of his Christian friends in Corinth, not indeed an infallible scripture, for there were many blots upon those first fair pages of the new Christian life in the world ; but, nevertheless, an epistle of Christ which the large-hearted apostle loved to read as he saw it written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh. If the spirit of truth and love still writes fresh scriptures in the lives of good men, let us not dwell with contented criticism upon their human frailties and faults, but sincerely

desire rather to discover the finer writing of the spirit written for our example in the lives of our friends. It is one of the pleasant duties of the pulpit, not only to hold up for admiration lofty Christian ideals of life, but also to keep in honorable remembrance examples of integrity and usefulness in the world. This obligation of commending worthy ambition and honorable success among men becomes more imperative, when we consider how easily in this land unprincipled smartness grasps golden prizes ; how strong is the tendency to engulf naturally noble men in the maelstrom of a hopeless materialism ; and how sometimes even Christian communities may conveniently forget to keep in perpetual contempt the success of wealth or office gained at the price of honor. Should I begin, however, to preach a sermon in eulogy of our friend, Mr. Henry Farnam, or even to give a complete sketch of his long and useful life, those who knew him best in his genial simplicity and modesty might grow conscious of an unpleasant discord between such public speech of him and the unostentatious spirit of his life. What an old English writer said of a completed day of his life might better express all that a man of Mr. Farnam's mold would wish a pastor to say of him, after he should be gone : " My desires I commit to the imitation of the weak ; my actions to the censures of the wise and the holy ; and my faults to the judgment and redress of a merciful God." Not so much of him, therefore, let me speak ; but rather from his life let me draw some lessons which we can hardly learn too much by heart.



I wish among other objects to avail myself of this opportunity to remind you again of our indebtedness to the godly mothers and the stalwart sons of a generation of men who are now almost all gone from us. Trained in his youth by a devout mother, whom he never ceased to revere, Mr. Farnam was one of a class of men who went forth with good consciences and good health, and purpose nerved by good principles, to develop the resources of this country, to clear the way through many difficulties for the flow of our industries, and to lay broad foundations upon which other men should build. I rode last Wednesday swiftly and in comfort up one of our fertile valleys, past pleasant villages and prosperous farms, to the inland town of Northampton. The gentleman who sat with me told me of the young man who years ago had often ridden in his buggy over every foot of that country, careless of food or sleep, sparing not himself in the attempt to keep an open channel of communication through that valley to the sea, and who afterwards with others pushed the railroad through over which, I dare say, the descendants of those earlier farmers may now pass up and down, as we travel unthinking, east and west, taking the railways which antedate our memory for granted as though, with the stone fences and the old roads, they had always been there, the natural adjuncts of the soil. But this country has had makers and builders to whom we owe our ease and opportunity; and another one of these has just gone from among us. Honest work by honest men and the sons of honest men, who went forth and

did with their might whatsoever their hands found to do, has rendered it possible for us, with half their effort or their sacrifice, to make still larger gains in every department of industry, art, or science. It was the same power of honest purpose working for the future, whether in the study of a man like Moses Stuart, as he pushed through an unknown language determined in spite of suspicion and oppositions to bring to his lecture room the spoils of another literature, or out in the world among the indefatigable pioneers of the civilization which now sits rejoicing on the hill-sides, and casting its line far and wide over the prairies which they made habitable. We need not only at times to check our tendency to boastfulness by the memory of our indebtedness to those self-made men whose sagacious enterprise has rendered our recent rapid progress possible ; but we need also, more than this, to re-baptize the speculative spirit of our times in the sober virtue which gave to those men their best strength. I have heard Mr. Farnam relate with the happy unconsciousness of an old man's recollection of a triumph of his earlier life, the surprise of the city of Chicago when the locomotive entered it over his finished road ahead of time, and the East sent its mail for the first time all the way by steam to the upspringing metropolis of the West. I have heard him recount with the freshness of a still present pleasure the story of that large excursion planned by his generosity, when his railroad had reached the banks of the Mississippi, and he wished to give the East a chance to feel the West. This chapter of his life be-

longs to the history of the remarkable development of our railway system, whose end is not yet ; and it was, so far as he acted his part in it, a chapter of honesty. This is the lesson which I would bring from that portion of his life-work—the means which first brought New York and Chicago together were the reward of trusted integrity. Capital first reached Chicago over a through railroad in charge of an honest man. Honesty ran the first through locomotive into Chicago. Sound business integrity, and the confidence of capital in proved integrity, united the Mississippi and the seaboard. Mr. Farnam never wrecked his own railroad, or became receiver of his own trust. There are men who succeed in making themselves rich by leaving all with whom they do business poor. This man helped others while he helped himself. He had sagacity to seize his opportunity ; but his methods of business never descended to small shrewdness. He was trusted by others, and he trusted the men whom he employed ; few men cared to presume upon his confidence, and none more than once. There was an upright and inflexible will behind his kindness. Mr. Farnam's contempt for every kind of jobbery, sharp practice, or meanness, approached the perfect hatred of the Hebrew psalmist.

We have witnessed since his earlier enterprise a stupendous development of our railway system and a corresponding expansion of our industries. Faster methods of financiering, as well as of travel, have come into vogue. The facility with which capital can now be transferred by telegraph to any point of work

where it is needed, is without question a great gain over the undeveloped banking system which made it necessary for Mr. Farnam to carry time and again sums of fifty thousand dollars in a trunk between New York and Chicago. But our greatly increased facilities for large business operations have brought with them also tremendous temptations to jobbery and corruption. Men make haste now to mortgage prospects where our fathers mortgaged work. The speculative method of smart financiering is nowadays to build a house by giving a mortgage on the cellar, and that too before so much as a hole has been dug. The principal thing in much financiering now seems to be to get the money, not to build the house, at least not thoroughly and well. Modern gambling has outgrown the dice of the ancients and even the tables languidly prohibited by law in our cities ; now whole industries, harvests, and railroads are the counters in a game which a few may play with the rights of men, and sometimes legislators seem to be the not uninterested spectators. It would be beyond my province and my understanding to discuss the ominous social and political questions which the growth of monopolies and the relations of gigantic systems of private enterprise, like our railway lines between the oceans, are thrusting upon the attention of the country. I have noticed, however, that those who have studied most deeply, and grasped most comprehensively, any social or political problem, are usually the least forward in pressing for remedies through some new prohibitions of legislation, and are inclined to find in the natural action and reactions of

the forces of society, and in the gradual processes of moral development, their hope for the remedy of evils which at times seem to be stronger than our laws and beyond our power of reform. But whatever legislation may, or may not, be necessary, there is one point of light in these questions and discussions upon which it is the proper province and one of the duties of the pulpit to keep the popular eye fixed ; and that is this : Capital and labor can hold right and prosperous relations only when both are honest ; and the ultimate solution of all social problems is an honest, God-fearing community. Nothing short of that is or can be a stable condition of society. And this ultimate principle of Christian political economy is in point in a discourse from the life of Mr. Farnam. Capital trusted to his hand did no wrong to any man, but achieved good for all classes when it entered on the first locomotive the city of Chicago, and passed on to touch the bank of the Mississippi. Labor had its rights, and was helped to help itself in honest work, when an honest man, who loved his fellow-men, paid its wages. And after all our discussions and projects of reform, shall we not have to come back to the simple truism at the basis of any lasting social and political prosperity, viz., the first necessity of true, honest, and God-fearing men ? There was not only benevolence, but the providence of a far-seeing statesmanship, in the building of school houses and churches along the advancing railroad by a timely aid whose extent probably only the giver ever knew, much of which in the after years he himself had probably forgotten.

For Mr. Farnam, I must say it, had forgotten in his life more acts of benevolence than many richer men than he ever could have remembered. Such civilization, intelligent and Christian, as that which he planted and fostered along his railroad lines, shall yet prove, if we succeed in advancing it, the peaceful solution of those grave problems which are growing with the greatness of the national development whose beginnings Mr. Farnam saw.

I turn now to another phase of Mr. Farnam's life from which as a pastor I may thankfully take a text. The mere quantity of a man's charity does not of itself render liberality a praiseworthy virtue. Christian charity is a quality as well as a quantity. The later Roman paganism knew how under certain circumstances to lavish gifts. The monumental inscriptions of the Romans record the names of men who had erected public baths, given games, and bestowed largesses of corn and wine. But Pagan liberality never learned the real spirit of Christian charity. Large bequests have sometimes in our day been given in anything but the true spirit and under the higher law of Christian charity. Mr. Farnam's benevolence, I can most truthfully say, was not merely a virtue of quantity, but also of quality. Indeed, there were some characteristics in his manner of giving which for our sakes should be commended. One of these happy features of his benevolence was the timeliness of his gifts. He believed in the self-multiplying power of the help given at just the right time. This belief, however, did not render him tardy with his benefac-

tions as one waiting for the last moment with reluctant gift ; but rather it made him watchful for opportunities of good. And when found, as they were wherever he went, he was quick in meeting them. Two instances of many I must give, which show, also, that a man willing and ready to meet the providential opportunities of his life will not confine his liberality to a single worn channel, or to his own church or neighborhood. While traveling abroad, as I happen to have learned, he stopped in Beyrout, and attended upon the Sabbath the exercises of one of those girls' schools which are the adornment of our Christian missions in the East. He saw the possibilities for larger usefulness, and he took the need for granted. Stopping our missionary, Dr. Thompson, at the close of the service, he asked him, although it was Sunday, to help him in a little matter of business. The doctor hesitated somewhat, doubtless fearing that he might be asked to aid in collecting the draft of a stranger. Mr. Farnam quietly handed him his check for the benefit of the school, which, when Dr. Thompson fairly took it in, caused him then and there to fall upon his knees upon the floor and thank God for the help for which with anxious hearts they had been praying, and which proved to be just the help in time of need to save the school. To another instance of the same habit of seeing and acting at once upon the needed opportunity, an instance of generosity nearer home, let me refer.

I should state that the letters to which I now shall allude have been furnished me at my own request by

gentlemen not in any way connected personally with Mr. Farnam, and I assume the responsibility of making this public reference to them. When in 1869 East Divinity hall of the Yale seminary was in process of erection, Mr. Farnam, without a word of solicitation having been addressed to him, sent his check for five thousand dollars to be applied to that department of the college in the new building, or in any way its faculty might deem best. He drew his check, so he wrote, just before leaving for the West, "in case any accident should befall me;" but he left directions not to have it delivered until after the commencement week should be over, as he wished to prevent its getting into the newspapers. "And now," so he concluded the letter accompanying it, "I have only one more request to make, and that is that it be kept out of the newspapers." I trust I do his memory no wrong in breaking after his death this seal of silence which he put upon a good deed done. Again in the year 1881, learning that an effort was to be made to increase the endowment of the theological department of the college, without any direct solicitation he wrote that the friends of that institution could rely upon him for ten thousand dollars for that purpose, an amount which, he said, he would hand them in a few days in cash or its equivalent. What the equivalent in cash for that gift was in Mr. Farnam's estimation, may be judged from the fact that when the few days had elapsed his promise stood redeemed in ten bonds bearing seven per cent. interest and worth at the time in the market fifteen cents above par. I speak of these



instances rather than of some of his well-known and larger gifts to Yale College because they illustrate his habit of looking for the aid at a given time most needing to be rendered, and his promptness in doing what he thought was for him to do. When Mr. Farnam expected to be absent for any length of time from his place in this sanctuary, he would make out beforehand and leave for collection his checks for the several contributions which he knew would be taken in his absence. So the servant ran to meet the Lord's will.

But I have not touched upon that which seemed to me to be the best thing in Mr. Farnam's manner of benevolence. I think all of you recognized an appropriateness to him in the words chosen for my text in his memory ;—these words certainly those who knew him well would be willing to leave written as his epitaph until the Lord Christ's judgment day ; “ It is more blessed to give than to receive.” He had learned early in life, and when he had but little to bestow, the happiness of giving. He did not lose that joy as his fortune grew. Riches are poverty, indeed, if when they come the heart's truest instincts and simplest pleasures take wings and fly away. Mr. Farnam was one of those benefactors of their kind who cared little for money as money. He loved all true and happy and friendly uses for his money. His heart went with his gifts. And so his was the happiness of giving. We sometimes say to ourselves how much, if we had the means, we should enjoy giving splendid gifts. Perhaps we might ; and perhaps we dream too much

of finding happiness in the fame of giving ; whether, if we had much, we could know the true happiness of giving, depends upon the degree of pleasure we can take in doing the small duty of ministering, or leaving the little gift which we may bring. Men do not usually in later life enter into the happiness of large liberality if they have not known in their youth something of the joy of their Lord in doing good. But one who can take pleasure in giving, not in the good name of it, not in the honor of it, not wholly either in the consequences of it, but in the act of it, he has learned a rich secret of happiness ; he knows something of a kind of joy which our Lord himself called blessedness. Would that we all knew more of it in little things or large. And if one has not learned it, if any one finds that the act of giving hurts him, and he is a Christian, then by the Master's own example let me urge him to learn that rare secret of happiness at any cost ; perhaps only by some decisive act of benevolence which does cost, can the habit of benevolence which is recognized as a duty be made a pleasure of the soul. I cherish in memory two minor incidents which let me see the heartiness and simple pleasure of Mr. Farnam's kindness, and at the same time his inability to love money for its own name's sake. One, a trifling thing, but characteristic, was the amusement with which he told me how an early acquaintance of his tried to make his will. After slowly dictating to his lawyer a few small bequests, he suddenly stopped short and said no more. At length the lawyer ventured to suggest that he had

not yet disposed of a tenth part of his property in his will ; rising suddenly and pacing angrily the floor, the man exclaimed, "I will keep the rest myself." Some may be living in this folly which they would laugh at when thus spoken. Another illustration of Mr. Farnam's manner of giving, which I must be excused for mentioning here, was the impression which he made upon me one morning when I happened to be with him in his home while he answered one of the many calls upon his benevolence. What I noticed then, what lingers as a pleasant thought in my memory, was the smile which went with his money. He seemed in giving it to be doing a favor to himself. Another memory abides with me, of another man not living now, not known here, of ample wealth, whose natural impulse of kindness had been narrowed and made hard by the false, grasping habit of his life. I remember his look when I asked him to fulfill a promise which in an unguarded moment of generous impulse he had made to me of a small sum to help a poor girl who was making a heroic struggle for herself and others of her life. I remember the word about "some other time ;" I remember how slowly from the unconverted pocket of, I trust, a converted man that single bill came to the light ; I recall the thunder-cloud upon the face as it passed from his hand away forever ; followed, I acknowledge, by a look as of some gleam of long forgotten happiness, when, after the deed was done, the first impulse of generosity came for a moment to his face before he closed against further appeal his gloomy

bank-vault of a heart. Do you wonder that the Lord loveth the cheerful giver? Nor is it well for any of us to put off until another world acquaintance with that happiness of true benevolence which was the perfect joy of the Master on earth, who for our sakes, though he was rich, became poor; and which shall constitute so much of the final blessedness of the city of God that it is difficult to imagine how a man who has not learned the secret of it here can feel at first in any way comfortable in heaven.

As it has not been my purpose in this memorial discourse to sketch the life, or to give an exhaustive analysis of the character of Mr. Farnam; as I have not allowed myself to dwell upon the traits and habits of the man which had endeared him to those who had enjoyed his hospitality and which will form the more intimate and sacred memories of his home; I need not now, on the other hand, seek to bring out the human frailty, or to find the faults in one for whom, as for us all, Christ the righteous died. My purpose has been to preach from the truth of a life a sermon for our use and profit. To all young men, especially to such as have the will for work, I may bring from this man's success a friendly word of encouragement. Grant that he grew up in times peculiarly fitted for the achievement of success; grant that he was fortunate in gaining early the confidence of friends who helped him forward; still his successful life and honored age are proof of the power of certain right principles which, if followed out, under any circumstances, can hardly fail to make in the end for any man friends and happiness. It is

encouraging to reflect that a boy who went in his eighteenth year from the farm with only himself with which to win his way, and who dutifully gave to his father a note for the remainder of his time until he should be twenty-one ; who made up his mind what work he wanted to do, and when he applied for a position upon the corps of engineers on the Erie canal, upon being told that the only position vacant was that of cook, was not ashamed to say at once, "Then I will take that ;" the youth who upon his first small salary helped another young man to gain a start ; and who, as opportunity widened and prosperity advanced, was careless of his own comfort and ease, of where he slept or what he ate, so long as he did the work which he was trusted by others to do ;—he has been fortunate in his life, permitted by a kind providence to live to enjoy with others the fruit of his toil, and to die in peace, surrounded by friends, and with the good-will of a city at his door. His last ride, the afternoon of that day when death stole through the evening shadows to lay its hand upon his lips, and with gentle touch to take him in sleep away, his last look upon this city of our homes was from that drive which bears his name ; and not the cold marble nor the words graven upon stone shall be the monument of his benignant age : rather the happiness of children and youth let loose among those trees ; the pleasure of many who from the turns of that almost Alpine path shall catch views of meadow and stream, and a city of homes among the elms, and of the expanse of water and the sky beyond ; this delight of ours and of our children's children in

the freshness of many springtimes and the colors of many autumns to come, shall be the true memorial of his life ; that path itself reminds us who knew him of the life of him from whom it has its name—a path rising easily from the public highway, nowhere abruptly broken or descending, yet having its obstacles to turn and its difficulties to be surmounted, a narrow way at times shut in on either hand, yet steadily holding its determined course and going higher, with broad, fair prospect at the summit, above the city's stir, and nearer the peace of heaven.

Men and brethren, because this man has gone from us, ours is a greater work to do. His work is done ; ours remains yet a little while. From this pulpit, built upon Puritan principle, let no man living or among the dead be honored above his brethren, or praised after he has gone hence, on account of his birth, or his wealth, or his prosperity. As in the Master's presence, let the childlike spirit here be held greatest of all. And he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. In this spirit may God help us all to use and to enjoy whatever we possess, and to do happily without whatever we have not. May our lives, following the example of the true men and women who are going from us, so far as they have followed Christ, and carrying on to still larger uses whatever of good for their fellow men they have done on earth, abound more and more in every good word and work until the Master comes.

ARTICLES  
FROM  
THE NEW HAVEN NEWSPAPERS  
AND  
RESOLUTIONS





The following account of the funeral services was printed in the  
*Morning News* of October 9, 1883.

Yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock, the funeral services over the remains of the late Henry Farnam were held at his late residence on Hillhouse avenue. The casket in which the remains were inclosed was richly covered with black broadcloth and the silver plate bore the inscription :

Born Nov. 9, 1803.

HENRY FARNAM.

Died Oct. 4, 1883.

Upon the casket were a wreath of ivy and autumn leaves, a sheaf of wheat, and branches of palms. The Center Church choir, consisting of Miss Z. Hazlett, Miss Maggie Roberts, Mr. P. W. Bush, and Mr. G. M. Bush, opened the services by singing the hymn, "Thy Will Be Done," after which the Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth made a short address, as follows :

"The messenger of the Lord has come to this house, and now that God's message has been heard we must say, 'His will be done.' We who are here, many of us who are strangers to one another, know that he was the friend of all of us. A part of Mr. Farnam's life belonged to the public. There are many lessons to be drawn from his life as a citizen, a good citizen, and as a public man, although he held no public station ; and I shall avail myself of the opportunity in my own pulpit to speak of these at another time. To-day we would not in measured words speak the tribute of the man who has passed away ; we mourn now with those who

mourn. Through his honored, useful life, many of you have known him as a neighbor, have felt his genial kindness, and have learned to love him for his kindness and goodness. He was a friend and a father to many. God be praised for this life of his ; God be praised for all he has been in life. He was not a man easily inclined to unveil his inner soul ; he was a man of unobtrusive manners, of devout spirit, interested in all Christian work, in all Christian missions, and with a love of all that is good. As a pastor, in the name of my Master and his, I can repeat : ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.’ ”

“ God knows how hard it is to carry from our homes those whom we love. As his nearest friends return to his home, shall not the spirit of his life be like a kindly, cheerful greeting here ? It is not gold or silver that has made this home, but love. He leaves with us a benediction of good cheer, and hope, and love. We, as we go by this door, remembering him as a friend of the city, may have our own lives inspired by his usefulness. Shall we not find our burdens of care become lightened, as we remember him whom we have known, whom we love, and whom we hope to meet again in the activities of eternal life ? ”

Prayer was offered by President Porter of Yale College. The interment was in the Grove street cemetery. The bearers were President Woolsey, Professor Twining, Dr. Robertson, ex-Governor James E. English, G. W. Curtis, Eli Whitney, Richard S. Fellowes and Professor Silliman.

An article by Professor Fisher, printed in the *Journal and Courier*, October 5, 1883.

An honored citizen, whose physical presence, so gracious in its simple dignity, was itself a benediction—a noble man, whom none who knew could fail to love—has passed away. By a kind providence, his closing days were, for the most part, free from pain. His friends were spared the anguish of seeing him suffer, him whose heart was always tenderly alive with sympathy for others, and quick to devise means for their relief. It was the privilege of the writer of these paragraphs to spend with him a portion of the evening previous to the attack of illness which proved fatal. The same benignity and gentleness, the same unaffected, genial courtesy which always marked his manner, attended him to the end.

Mr. Farnam was a man of strong understanding. His intelligence was quick and penetrating. He seized on the main points of any question that engaged his attention. Not born to affluence, but obliged in early life to earn his own livelihood, he, nevertheless, availed himself to the full of the means of intellectual improvement within his reach. Passages of good authors, like Cowper, whom he had read in his earlier days, he retained in memory. In an important degree he made himself what he was. His prosperity was his own achievement. It was due to his own manly energy, enterprise, perseverance, and uprightness. But he had none of the faults and

foibles that are commonly attributed to self-made men. No one could be more unaffectedly modest. A self-respect, never obtrusively manifested, but serving as an effectual shield against aggression, accompanied that uniform consideration and regard for others which were inbred in his character. He honored learning and institutions of learning. He indulged in reminiscences of his own honorable career without the least appearance of self-flattery, and no farther than was natural to a man who was looking back in a season of repose upon the events of a successful and laborious life. His occupations had brought him into close acquaintance with various individuals of uncommon powers of mind, like James Hillhouse. They had known how to value his worth, and he in turn took pleasure in recalling his intercourse with them. For the public men of a former day, especially for Webster, the men whom he had heard and admired, he had an enthusiastic, yet discriminating admiration.

A large minded man, Mr. Farnam was marked out for large undertakings. A work like that which he accomplished in conjunction with Mr. Sheffield, of connecting Chicago and the interior cities with the Mississippi by a railway, was congenial, not only with the business taste, and capacity, but, also, with the generous patriotic sentiments which distinguished him. It need not be said that in all his enterprises he was governed by an integrity that could never be tempted to inflict a wrong. He instantly turned aside from every scheme, however enticing from a pecuni-

ary point of view, the moment he saw in it the least taint of fraud. To enrich himself at the cost of other men or of his country, would have given him no sensation of pleasure. He might have added vast sums to his worldly store, and, probably, without incurring serious public reproach, had he been less scrupulous in his judgment as to what strict honesty demands of business men.

Mr. Farnam has stood in this community for years as an example of beneficence. It was unostentatious beneficence. It embraced the entire circle of his kinsfolk. But there it did not stop. It extended to public institutions of education and charity, and to families and individuals without number who were in need. His generous gifts flowed out in an almost incessant stream. One of his very last acts was the procuring of drafts to be sent to persons at a distance whom he wished to help. This was on the afternoon just previous to his prostration by illness. But there was no day of his life when death would not have surprised him in the act of doing good to his fellow men. Giving, in the case of Mr. Farnam, fulfilled its idea. It was not from vanity or for applause. It was not even from the pressure of a sense of duty, although conscience was the regulative principle to which he was habitually loyal. Mr. Farnam was not amenable to the censure which a poet (in the "Vision of Sir Launfal") attaches to benevolence springing from the constraint of obligation :

"He gives nothing but worthless gold,  
Who gives from a sense of duty."

He gave out of a heartfelt sympathy. Love was the animating principle. The gift seemed to be suffused with the spirit of benevolence from which it emanated. It was "twice blessed." It made the giver happy not less than the recipient. The service rendered to a community by a man of this stamp is far from being measured by the particular benefits that result from his various benefactions. As an example to others, as a living illustration of Christian goodness, as inspiring men with a higher conception of what human nature is capable of, as diffusing abroad the joy which arises from a common admiration of a noble and generous soul, the life of such a man is of incalculable benefit. In the bestowal of his charities, as in all his conduct, Mr. Farnam discovered the innate refinement of his nature. He kept himself in the background. He shunned all noise and parade. Very much that he did was done silently, and was known only within the limits of his own household—the bereaved household where that "good gray head" will no more be seen.

Mr. Farnam revered God. None who knew him well could fail to discern that religious faith and love were deep and controlling sentiments in his heart. If he said little on these sacred themes, it was because they *were* sacred. They pertained to the profound experiences which it is more hard for some men than for others to expose to the light. In the familiar verses of Leigh Hunt, the angel had not found the name of Abou Ben Adhem on his list of "those who Love the Lord." Then

“Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerly still; and said, ‘I pray thee then  
Write me as one who loves his fellow men.’  
The angel wrote and vanish’d. The next night  
It came again, with a great wakening light,  
And show’d the names whom love of God had bless’d,  
And, lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.”

It has not been the design of the present writer to delineate the character of Mr. Farnam. That is left to other pens and voices. What is here said is but an imperfect expression of the sincere respect and love of one whose privilege it had been for a series of years to enjoy the friendship of one of the noblest of men.

G. P. F.

An article by President Porter, printed in *The Palladium*,  
October 8, 1883.

New Haven buries to-day one of its most conspicuous and honored citizens. It is no exaggeration to say that no man has of late been more generally esteemed and loved than Henry Farnam. The prominent incidents of his life have already been given to the public. It is thought that some notice of his personal character, as it was formed and developed by the circumstances of his life, may not be uninteresting or unprofitable. The writer has had unusual opportunities to know these circumstances and to estimate their influence in forming a character of unusual strength and attractiveness, as well as of distinguished usefulness and individuality. If he shall write with more ardor than may seem to comport with the severity of truth, he begs his critics to remember that he writes from an intimacy of personal knowledge which warrants him in speaking with confidence.

Mr. Farnam's birth and early training were in western New York, before the Erie canal was finished, and almost before it was projected. He knew much of this region when it was an unbroken forest, more of it when its wheat-fields and meadows were filled with stumps and many of its roads were rough and at times impassable, when produce was drawn to Albany, and even to many of the nearest mills and market towns, at an enormous cost, and when manifold inconveniences, as well as hardships, were familiar to the daily life, even of the most prosperous. But he lived in a community of active-minded and strong-hearted



men and women, who recognized duty to God and love to man as controlling springs of action, and who valued education and intelligence as of supreme importance. The variety of the population brought in a certain liberality which was strange to the traditionary New England rigor, and the hope and elasticity peculiar to a new country gave spring and elasticity to the thoughts and feelings, even when they led them astray. His education at home was fortunate. His own mother was as remarkable in her way as was the son in his—simple, self-relying, benevolent, and strong-hearted, till her death in 1873, at the age of nearly ninety-eight. He was a good student and an enthusiastic lover of mathematics, pure and applied. Early in life, it was his good fortune to come under the influence of Mr. David Thomas, the county surveyor. Mr. Thomas was a Quaker and a gentleman of the plain and solid sort, full of love and shrewdness, who taught him mathematics and surveying, and most of all exemplified in his own household the dignity and beauty of a truthful and loving life. Mr. Farnam never wearied in recalling and relating the scenes and conversations which attended his opening youth and early manhood, and it was evident that Mr. Thomas occupied a prominent place in his love and memory. Through influence of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Davis Hurd, he was attached to the corps of engineers who laid out and constructed the western portion of the Erie canal, and found in this employment a congenial field for the activities and tastes which determined the destiny of his life. That he was able and faithful, was

proved by his rapid promotion. That his mind was stimulated by the society and attractions which were incidental to this life, was proved by the astonishing familiarity which he acquired with the history of the political parties and the conspicuous men of New York, in those exciting times of New York politics, all of which he could recite with the utmost accuracy and fullness. Even at that early age, he was no idle spectator in political life, but was an ardent thinker and personal actor in public affairs.

In 1825, at the age of twenty-two, he came to Connecticut as first assistant engineer in the laying out and construction of the Farmington canal. In 1827 he became chief engineer, and from that time forward was intrusted with the chief and almost sole responsibility of constructing and managing and repairing the same until 1846, when the railway took its place. This canal was supported by the co-operation of a few citizens, who gave cordially of their sympathy but sparingly of their subscriptions. Conspicuous among these friends was the Hon. James Hillhouse, who seems from the first to have won his reverence and his love to an extraordinary degree. The ardent and public spirited old man not only believed in the success of the canal, but was ready to give to it all his time and his strength. By day and by night, in storm and in sunshine, during summer's heat and winter's cold, he was with his young engineer in the field, encountering all sorts of inconveniences, equally regardless of them all. It is not surprising that, laden with political honors and not forgetful of his federal

principles, abounding with anecdotes of other men and other times, and overflowing with enthusiasm, he should have gained the confidence of such a young man as was Mr. Farnam, and that Mr. Hillhouse should till the day of his own death have felt toward and talked of him as an adopted son. There were also other good and eminent men whom Mr. Farnam found in Connecticut, whom he learned to respect and honor. Mr. Hillhouse died in 1832, the staunchest and sturdiest supporter of the canal, leaving Mr. Farnam to bear the load of its responsibility for several years. New Haven was a small city of some 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, with a limited back country with by no means the most fertile soil, in imagined, if not real, competition with Hartford, which was surrounded by a rich agricultural region and commanded the rich valley of the Connecticut. What was more annoying, New Haven itself was discouraged and disunited in respect to the canal, the responsibility for which was devolved upon Mr. Farnam. How faithfully and patiently he labored, by day and by night, in sunshine and in storm, his most intimate friends only know. How quick he was to meet any summons of duty at any place, how often he drove in his one-horse wagon from New Haven to Northampton and any place between to meet many a sudden exigency, and how often that exigency involved a loss by flood of thousands of dollars, no one but himself and his family can tell. The end came at last, the poor canal became in small part his property and a source of some income beyond his salary.

These details are recited, because they were to exemplify Mr. Farnam's character. During all this period of struggle he was almost alone in labor, in watchfulness, in self-denial and undaunted courage, with a scanty salary, and no specially flattering prospects for the future. His habits were frugal, and his savings were moderate. He was, however, generous from the first. This fact deserves special attention, for the reason that an impression may have been formed, that the abundant and willing liberality of his later life began with the large increase of his wealth, and that the generous gifts of his life were simply the casual overflow of a superabundant income. This was by no means true. Long before the Canal railroad was ever thought of, while Mr. Farnam was painfully travelling between New Haven and Northampton in his one-horse wagon, he had begun to evince that generous and helpful spirit which was so conspicuous in the years that followed. Not a few of the living and the dead could testify, that at that period by his kindly help and his generous confidence he had aided many to success in the early struggles of their life, and set scores of men on the road to affluence. One of the most loving of his friends, who very recently died, was helped to the beginnings of a considerable fortune by Mr. Farnam's generous assistance, which was disposed of largely in benefactions, stimulated, as he said, by Mr. Farnam's example. "So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

Mr. Farnam's subsequent career in enterprise and acquisition and liberality needs only be referred to.

The change in his circumstances made no change in his character, except as his intellect was stimulated by larger enterprises, his respect for great and good men and his detestation of bad men were deepened, as his acquaintance with both classes was enlarged, his confidence in his own resources was strengthened, and the confidence of the ablest and best men of the country in his integrity and sagacity was more firmly fixed. From the beginning to the end of his career he has been the same self-relying, modest, affectionate, true-hearted, generous man. His career has in many respects been brilliant for its enterprise and its success. Many would say that the circumstances which favored him have been extraordinary, but on a second view of his career, it will be seen that these circumstances have to a large extent been created by his own individual force and goodness. His connection with Mr. Sheffield, it is true, gave him access to the capitalists of the country, but his own skill and integrity first won for him the confidence of Mr. Sheffield, and both together, with the experience of each in the railway which was designed to connect New York with Springfield and Boston, were needed to give effect to Mr. Farnam's forecast of what the railway would do for the Prairie States; to give him courage to finish the first link, which had so long waited to connect New York with Chicago, and which had waited so long for a master to forge it, then to connect Chicago with the Mississippi, next to finish this railway months before the time agreed upon, to the well deserved profit of the contractors, to set off toward the Pacific,

and last to designate him as one of the parties who should be among the foremost in the first charter of the Union Pacific Railway Company. It is worthy of notice, that the reputation for integrity which had contributed so largely to these splendid successes, did not suffer in the bright noon of his splendid prosperity, nor during the later years of a life which continued to be successful to the end. That he should be prosperous was a matter of course with his "troops of friends," to whom he had lent a helping hand, with his knowledge of markets and of men, and the sagacity which comes from "old experience," but his name was never tainted with the suspicion of being a manipulating director, who "slaughtered his own railway in Wall street," or a "receiver," who "wrecked" it for his personal profit. Nothing was more noticeable than the detestation in which he held practices of this sort, and the mixture of simplicity and scorn with which he looked upon manipulations of every kind which deviated from the obvious rules of business sagacity and forecast. Perhaps the most interesting trait of his character was the unconscious combination of the "prophetic strain" which came from his wise experience, and the artless simplicity of the open-hearted childhood, which he never could outgrow.

His public spirit was a passion. Wherever he lived, he became interested at once in the possible improvement of the community, and he made it a matter of personal enthusiasm. When his country was in danger, though eminently a man of peace, he threw himself into the conflict with the fire of excited personal

feeling, and felt, as he often said, that he did not desire to live, if disunion was to triumph.

We have already adverted to his open-handed liberality, as begun in his early life and continued to the end. The habit of helping his fellow men was formed in his early business life, as could be shown by many striking examples, and it was so cherished and matured as finally to become to him one of the chief sources of occupation and enjoyment. His gifts during his residence in Chicago, as his wealth increased, were incessant and various, and took almost every conceivable form of public and private benefactions, and to the end of his life he continued to send westward his liberal responses to the incessant applications which were made to him. To how many churches and colleges and seminaries he sent his benefactions, no one could venture to reckon, nor how quickly he anticipated some of their calls, as in the wise and loving telegraphic dispatch which he sent before the fire in Chicago was extinguished. It would not be easy to count how many subscriptions of \$5,000 he has given to astonished applicants. His large contributions to Yale College have amounted, in one form and another, to between \$70,000 and \$80,000. His gift of the drive in the East Rock Park which is known by his name was thoroughly characteristic, in matter and in manner. He did not care to distinguish himself early by singular or conspicuous generosity to the park, for reasons that were obvious and honorable to himself. He was convinced that nothing but time and trial would justify the purchase of the park and

the expenditure upon it of any considerable sum. But he intimated more than once that some help would sooner or later come, if it was likely to be needed. When the time came, his gift was ready. He had expected that \$5,000 would be all that would be required, but when he found that twice the sum would be necessary, he gave the whole with equal cheerfulness, and the progress toward completion, with its evidence of the pleasure and surprise which the use of the drive furnished so many, was a perpetual delight for months before his death.

To his friends and neighbors he abounded in kindness and sympathy. In their joys and sorrows he was a thoughtful, loving friend. His words and acts were kindness itself. To his own household he was tender-hearted and overflowing with sympathy. Nothing hindered the expression of his feelings to those nearest and more remote, except the sensitive timidity which was characteristic of the man. Even to his own children his love was too sensitive and delicate to bear expression by words. What was true of his feelings towards man was evidently true of his feelings towards God. These feelings were sensitively cherished in his heart, but that they were cherished most sacredly and uprightly there, we have abundant evidence. The language of his heart was "O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord. My goodness extendeth not to Thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent in whom is all my delight." He loved Christian men and Christian teachers, and devout and humble women,



his own mother pre-eminently. He delighted in the services and teachings of the Christian church, in Christian song and prayer. He was steadfastly interested in Christian missions at home and abroad, contributing largely to the support of both. To his own pastor and to the welfare of the Center church he was always most loyal and friendly, and never failed to be present in his place as a devout and attentive worshipper. Many reasons from the history of his early life might be given why he did not become a communicant of the church, but that he not only did justly and loved mercy, but walked humbly with God, those who knew him most intimately believe most firmly.

His last days were days of eminent blessing and peace. The evening of the closing events of his life was singularly happy and complete. From Tuesday till Friday previous, he had been in Farmington, where he passed much of his time for the first fourteen years of his residence in Connecticut, and where he married his wife. On Saturday he traversed the Farnam Drive to its termination, and enjoyed fresh and more than usual gratification at the evidence that it was giving delight to many. On his return he called at the house of his daughter, Mrs. Whitney, to give his blessing to his grandchildren there, then visited his oldest son in his sick chamber, and greeted his children after their recent return from their summer home. After dinner he was solicitous punctually to despatch his accustomed remittances to beloved relatives on their appointed day, and was just prepared to enjoy

his evening's quiet, when he was summoned to the rest which remaineth for the people of God. After a brief paroxysm, he fell into an untroubled sleep, and on Thursday at noon he passed from earth, which is the poorer by the loss of a man whose life was full of blessings and benefits to his kind ; leaving to his family and to his friends his loving benedictions and his blessed memory.

P.

YALE COLLEGE.

An editorial from *The Morning News*, October 5, 1883.

New Haven has suffered within two or three years the loss of several distinguished public benefactors. No greater bereavement remained possible than that which we are called on to announce to-day in the death of Mr. Henry Farnam. The events of his useful career may be read in a formal biographical sketch in another column, but we cannot refrain from here bearing witness to the peculiarly grateful estimation in which he was held by high and low, as New Haven's most honored and representative citizen. Along with his friends and associates, the Trowbridges and Sheffields, he will be remembered to all future time, as one of the men who have made New Haven what it is, the metropolis of literature, science, and art, of this portion of New England. As the writer of the obituary sketch truly remarks, it is not alone by his benefactions to Yale College, to the city charities, and to works of public improvement and adornment, that his memory will long be cherished by hundreds of grateful hearts.

Charity stands at the head of the Christian roll of virtues, yet there have been many great public and private benefactors who have not possessed that *savoir faire* of the refined and polished gentleman whose loss we deplore. The recipient of his bounty was not made to feel himself a dependent, bound to a tribute of recognition, but rather as a co-laborer and partner in the work of advancing the object which had called forth the contribution. "He always seemed," said Professor Fisher many years ago, "as if he was long-

ing to offer you a check for five thousand dollars." This remark aptly illustrated the character of Henry Farnam. To those who accepted the position of trustees of his great public gifts, he felt a positive gratitude, and to them, more than to himself, he ascribed the merit of the foundations which will perpetuate his name.

From another point of view his career was exceedingly interesting and instructive. He was one of the last remaining links connecting us with the heroic age of American enterprise, with the builders of the Erie Canal, the constructors of the first western railways, and the localization of the great western centers of population and traffic. His biography should become popularly known for the instruction and guidance of the younger generation, and his statue should surmount the highest point of that noble park of which he was the chief promoter.

An editorial from *The Palladium*, October 5, 1883.

Nineteen months ago, the people of New Haven were called upon to mourn the loss of an eminent citizen, one to whom his day and generation owed much, and whose name will ever be held in honored remembrance for the good he accomplished. Again the people are called upon to mourn, another eminent citizen is gone, and the name of Farnam is written beside that of Sheffield in the list of the departed. Long associated together in business life, the people will naturally associate them together in death, as the two men in this community who were always first in good works, prominent above others in their public spirit as well as their private benevolence. Elsewhere we give a sketch of the principal events in the life of Mr. Farnam, which imperfectly discloses something of the character of the man. Reared under circumstances far removed from affluence, necessity early compelled him to make the most of the ability God had given him. Mr. Farnam was what is popularly termed a self-made man. That is, it was neither to favor nor to fortune that he owed his success in life. He earned it by his own unaided exertion. Beginning a humble "rodman," eking out his small salary by teaching school in the winter season, he grew to become one of the best known railway engineers of his day, amassing a fortune in the process. But it is not as a great railroad builder, or as a wealthy man merely, that Mr. Farnam will be longest remembered. His public spirit, his private benevolence, and his strict integrity gained for him among his fellow citizens a reputation

which any one might envy. It is as the man who always stood ready to assist any enterprise intended for the public good, whose purse was ever open to the call of charity, whose name was universally recognized as the very best indorsement that any project, public or private, could have, that his loss will be most deeply felt in this community, where the closing years of his life were so quietly spent.

From *The Morning News* of October 10, 1883.

The annual fall parade and drill of the Second Company Governor's Horse Guards was held in this city yesterday. At 10 o'clock the company headed by the National Band, of Wallingford, marched to a lot near Howard avenue grounds and they here spent several hours in drilling. At 2 o'clock they partook of dinner at the Grand Union Hotel. The tables were elaborately spread, and the bill of fare was very extensive, comprising all the delicacies of the season. It was after 4 o'clock when the guards paraded through the principal streets. At the suggestion of Mayor Lewis, the company escorted its invited guests in carriages up Farnam Drive to the summit of East Rock. The novel sight of soldiers on horseback marching up the drive and the music of the band attracted many visitors. When Major Strong, who was in command, had marched his horsemen to the top, and had faced them toward the city, ex-Quartermaster John G. North presented the following resolutions :

*Resolved*, That the late Henry Farnam, by his munificent donation of this beautiful drive to East Rock Park, has endeared himself to all who love New Haven.

*Resolved*, That this company has made this informal visit to dedicate this Drive to one who, though he has gone from us, will be remembered and honored as long as these rocks remain to bear up his handiwork.

Mayor Lewis, Postmaster Sperry, President Porter, of Yale, Major-General William H. Russell, and Major H. H. Strong, responded in words fitting to the occasion.

Resolutions, adopted by the Common Council of the City of  
New Haven, October 8, 1883.

The City of New Haven by its Court of Common Council desires to place upon record its deep sense of the great loss which this community has suffered in the death of Henry Farnam. He has built for himself an enduring monument in his liberal gifts of time and money to East Rock Park. Yet more lasting will be the priceless memory of his incessant flow of generosity to all charitable objects, to the deserving poor, and in every direction where mankind could be made happier or better. A peaceful death, closed a life conspicuously filled with good works. The Mayor is directed to express to Mrs. Farnam, in the name of the city, the sorrow so universally felt.













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