

2-22-1910
OBITUARY.

MICHAEL AUSTIN.

Michael Austin was of Irish birth, and emigrated to this country in boyhood, enlisting in the Civil War in the Twenty-first Massachusetts Infantry in 1861. He served thru the war, being engaged in some of the severest battles with the Army of the Potomac. He was taken prisoner at the siege of Petersburg and served five months in Libby and Salisbury prisons. He came west, graduating at Iowa College in 1871, and in the law department of the State University in 1874.

He entered upon the practice of law at Toledo, Iowa, coming to Grinnell in 1880, as attorney for the firm of Craver & Steele, afterward being associated as a partner under the firm name of Craver, Steele & Austin.

As a citizen of Grinnell he was first and foremost in every good thing, and was associated with practically every good cause requiring character or public spirit until the removal in 1890 of the company's plant to Harvey, Ill. Selling his interest in the plant, he became identified with the Plano Mfg. Co. as director and treasurer, and later with other successful manufacturing enterprises.

He has been trustee of Iowa College since 1886, and was recognized as one of the ablest members of that strong body.

The past two years he has been in broken health and has steadily grown weaker until the end came last Saturday morning.

He is survived by his wife, who has a very large circle of Grinnell friends to mourn the loss of one of our foremost men.

The funeral was conducted at the Congregational church this afternoon at 1:30 o'clock in charge of his life-long friend, Prof. L. F. Parker.

The twenty years have passed since Mr. Austin moved from here, the large circle of Grinnell friends has remained constant, and all join in the testimony that a man of highest character, successful experience and warmest human sympathy has been removed from our midst.

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TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 1910.

IN MEMORIAM

MICHAEL AUSTIN

The death of Michael Austin in Chicago Feb. 19 closed a life of twenty years there and in the vicinity although we have loved to claim him as a citizen of Grinnell during the last forty-five of his sixty-five years.

He was born in Ireland into neither wealth nor large opportunity, but rather into the lonely, depressing lot of the penniless orphan. He is believed to be the descendant of a Cromwellian soldier, who settled there. The fairies of hope or promise rarely visit such a child. They came to him for the first time in the home of an orthodox New England deacon in whose nature so many find more of winter than of summer. Deacon Sabin and his family gave a royally human welcome to the rugged lad made stronger and wiser by adversity, and ready to respond to every word or deed of kindness. A daughter in the Sabin family writes Mrs. Austin: "The immediate ancestor of the Austins in Ireland was a clergyman of the Church of England. My father always said that the good blood was very evident in your good husband, for in him were only noble qualities. What a sterling man he has been."

Michael loved America, and when secession was attempted he was ready to risk his life for the Union. He was in the army at sixteen, in a Massachusetts regiment. He was in battle at Newbern, Bull Run 2nd, "on the bridge", and along the mountainside at Antietam, at Fredericksburg, in the

siege of Petersburg, where a rebel fort, with its 300 soldiers, was blown into the air, and "a crater" twenty-five or thirty feet deep was scooped out in the earth. Incompetent officers rushed his regiment into the death trap unsupported. A useless death or surrender awaited every one of them. Our young soldier climbed out of the snare to spend five months in Salisbury and in Libby prison where a tunnel almost to freedom was destroyed by a flood.

The war over, a life-work was sought. The West beckoned. Mr. Blake of Iowa whispered, "The West and Iowa College." Soon a young man of twenty with the bearing of a soldier, the energy of a man, and a manifest purpose prophetic of achievement, addressed the writer in his yard in Grinnell. "I want to enter your college. Can I?" were his words. They dropped like shot. They revealed the man. Evidently he was worth knowing. "Come in. We will talk about it in the house."

I wanted to have my family hear what he had to say and how he said it. His past years and things hoped for were unveiled with frankness. A new friend was on our list.

Six years of college relations followed. He was a diligent student, an athlete before he had thought of Rugby, the boarding club he originated and controlled was a model, and he graduated with the \$1,000 which he brought here.

He taught school and the scholars had no disposition to sleep. They awoke, indeed, to the beauty and the duty of manly purpose and effort. He became a lawyer and was the legal advisor of manufacturing firms in which he was a stockholder and a director. He was an eminently successful business man for which his early years of wrestle had given him preparation.

Through all business life he cherished a patriotic and philanthropic interest that transcended all personal considerations. He did his full share in promoting all public enterprises, in aiding Iowa College of which he was long a trustee, and especially in aiding and stimulating young men to rise to the best in all attainments and achievements. They appreciated all his efforts, created a patriotic organization bearing his name, and are now

actively such a young man before. That man was useful in battle a few weeks later, and through a third of a century longer.

giving nearly expression to sincere gratitude as they long have done.

In his later years he was more active religiously. The church gave public and formal thanks for aid by himself and his wife, and teacher and taught were pre-eminently interested in his bible class of a hundred enrolled members. When disease was slowly and surely conquering the vigorous man he retained his interest in all that was highest, and when near the end, he exclaimed: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings! Beautiful! Beautiful!" These seemed like a voice from the other side of the river. They were his last words. He was walking with Isaiah and the prophets. He then sank into a quiet sleep, in which breathing became gentle and quieter still till it ceased to be.

The funeral exercises in Chicago were conducted by Dr. J. M. Sturtevant, his former pastor in Grinnell.

At the memorial service here Prof. Buck read the scriptures, Prof. Parker spoke of his life in general, President Main spoke of personal relations, and Mr. Austin P. Haines emphasized his faithful interest in young men and his remarkable affection and fidelity as a friend. Mr. Decomb offered a tender prayer. The music by Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Dungan, Miss Stella Battlett and Dr. Pearl Somers was peculiarly sweet and appropriate.

His casket lies in Hazelwood close beside that of his first wife and their little child. The wife who survives will enjoy the living presence of her daughter, Mrs. Florence K. Potter, of Ames, and of her son, Mr. W. B. Kirby of Manitou, Colo., and of a host of friends who can never forget her own or her husband's life of sunshine.