

Thomas

OBITUARY. 1-23-85

Died, at the residence of Mr. A. M. Merrill, Hartington, Neb., Saturday evening, January 10th, 1885, Thos. Merrill, Esq., aged 74 years, 9 months and 26 days.

The venerable Thos. Merrill was born in Tumer, Maine, April 14th, 1810. At the age of 26 years he was united in marriage to Miss Mercy Richardson, and to them were born three children, two sons and one daughter. A. M. and M. S. Merrill and Mrs. Abbie S. Kimball. In the month of April, 1849, Mr. Merrill experienced a change of heart and united with the Baptist church in Tumer, where he still resided. In 1868 he with his family came west, and settled at Castalia, Iowa. Holding the master's cause first in importance, he and his zealous christian wife at once identified themselves with the Baptist church of Castalia, and there during several years contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Some five years ago Mr. Merrill came to Grinnell, and the year following, on the 26th day of Jan., 1883, he was called to mourn the loss of her who had been his faithful, devoted companion for a period of 45 years. This heavy blow was lightened by the affectionate sympathy of loving children, the tender mercies of a heavenly father in whom he had implicit and steadfast faith.

During his residence in Grinnell Mr. Merrill was a consistent, devoted member of the Baptist church and did all in his power to further the cause of Christ, for which he had labored and prayed 36 years.

It was near Thanksgiving last that Mr. Merrill was taken sick while visiting his sons in Hartington, Nebraska. The affliction was sciatic rheumatism and the accompanying pain was very severe. Mr. Merrill had always been a man of remarkable health, and on that account the affliction seemed the more severe. The last week he seemed better but the improvement was only temporary. It was the brightness which precedeth sunset and was soon to be followed by the shades of night, for as the last Sabbath day approached Father Merrill passed hence into the blissful enjoyment of the respite and repose of the Sabbath of eternal rest.

Father Merrill belonged to that class of sturdy pioneers who are rapidly passing away. He came to Iowa when it was comparatively new, and has witnessed the most marvelous development during a period of 20 years in the various fields of human industry, and though withdrawn from the active duties of life of late years, Mr. Merrill watched with deep interest the prosperity of our country and of educational and religious affairs. He was especially concerned about the advancement of the church of which he was a member, and spoke with much feeling in the weekly prayer meetings, expressing his earnest desire that men might repent and turn to God. Father Merrill was a man of steadfast faith, eminent piety, and of that godliness which brings contentment and gain. In the affections of his acquaintances he held so high a place as to win the venerable title, "Father" Merrill, and he will be greatly missed not only by his children and grand-children and his brothers and sisters, but by his neighbors and his church and his pastor. We all drink from the cup of sorrow; but the cup is sweetened by the thought that Father Merrill came to the grave "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season," and was fully ripe for Heaven. And as Paul said of himself, so say we of the deceased: "He fought a good fight, finished his course, he kept the faith."

The deceased leaves two sons, A. M. and M. S. Merrill, of Hartington, Neb., and one daughter, Mrs. Levi Kimball, of this city. Also three brothers and three sisters. Two of the brothers were present at the funeral service, Ex-Governor Merrill and J. H. Merrill, of Des Moines. One of the sons, Mr. M. S. Merrill and wife were also present, having brought the body from Hartington, Nebraska, to Grinnell for interment. Mr. A. M. Merrill and wife, former residents of Grinnell, were detained by sickness in the family.

The funeral service was conducted by Rev. E. English, at the residence of Mr. Levi Kimball.