

12/15/1911

PROF. PARKER SINCERELY MOURNED

With sweet music and the loving words of old time friends, the city of Grinnell honored the memory of its "grand old man" Professor Leonard Fletcher Parker, at the funeral services held in the Congregational church on Wednesday afternoon. The church was filled to the doors by the friends from town and college who had assembled. The sessions of the college were suspended and in the business district curtains were lowered as the bell tolled for the funeral and remained so while the service was in progress.

The flags in the city park and on the college campus, the latter being the gift to the college of Professor Parker, were at half mast during the day.

Garden Granger Post, G. A. R., of which Professor Parker had been an honored member, attended in a body. Parker school, named in honor of Professor Parker, was represented by the pupils of the Eighth grade in charge.

LEONARD F. PARKER



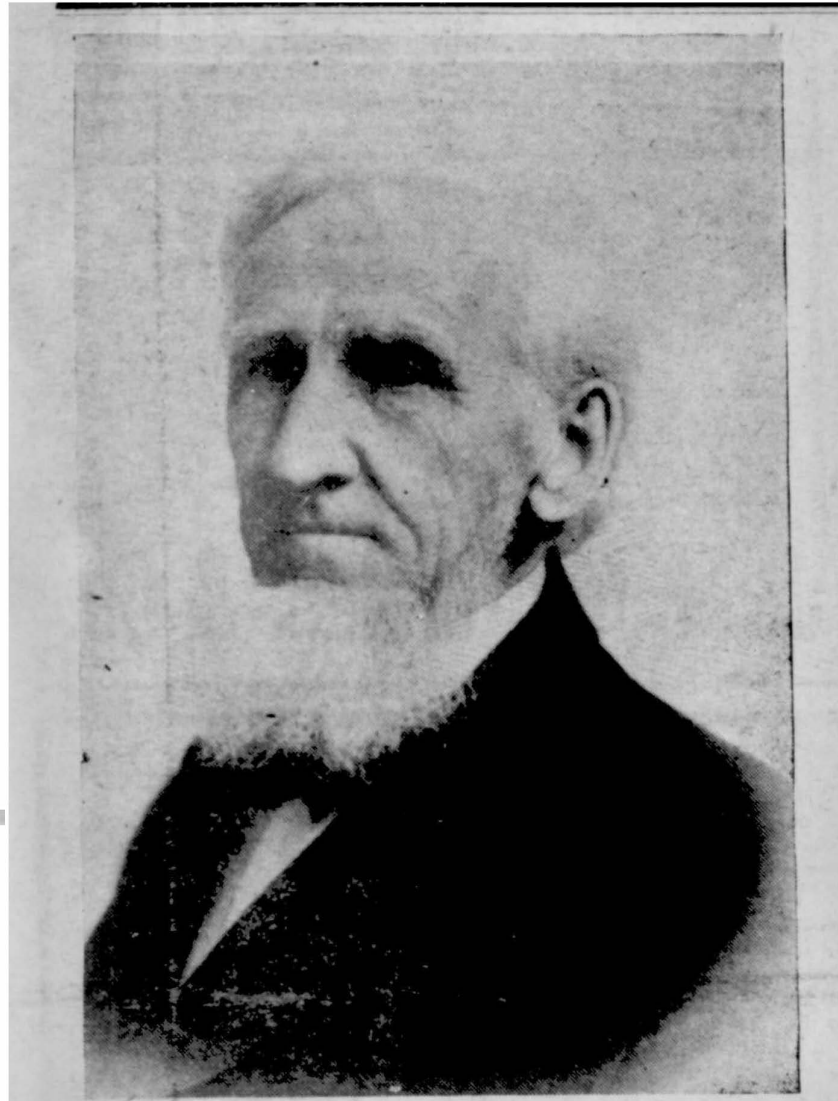
them may be mentioned two beautiful wreaths sent by Professor J. Irving Manatt, of Brown University, one of laurel and one of immortelles. The laurel wreath was placed about the brows of the bust of Professor Parker which was sculptured by William Manatt, the son of Professor Manatt, and given to the college. The bust was brought to the church from the college for the funeral and when it was taken back the laurel wreath remained and will remain about the brows. This was Professor Manatt's wish.

President King, of Oberlin, sent a telegram expressive of his grief and Professor Buck was empowered to represent Oberlin at the funeral.

Interment was in Hazelwood.

The end came peacefully to Professor Parker. Though he had been failing for several months, he was only sick for eight days. Much of the time for the last two or three days he lay unconscious and the end was as a falling asleep.

Grinnell Register 14 December 1911
Professor Leonard Fletcher Parker



PROFESSOR LEONARD FLETCHER PARKER

A Sketch of His Life Written by Rev

T. O. Douglass

Leonard Fletcher Parker was born Aug. 3rd, 1825, in China, a little rural community in western New York, noted for its intelligence, morality and religious spirit.

His ancestors were from England and New England, the first of the name arriving in this country as early as 1665, so that he was what Father Turner would call "A Yankee of the Second Edition."

His father died when Leonard was only four years of age so that when a mere lad heavy responsibilities were placed upon him in the home and on the farm.

His early schooling was of the sort furnished in rural communities, but he so improved his opportunities that at the age of sixteen he began teaching school in the winters, the summers being employed in the hard work of the farm.

When he reached his majority, he started for Oberlin, with only \$5.00 in his pocket, and he had reached his bottom dollar before he reached his journey's end.

Prof. Fairchild, later President, opened his door to the young man, and so well did he acquit himself as chore boy and student that soon he was occupying the stool of a tutor, and indeed, one year of the Professor's absence he taught all the Greek and Latin classes of the College. He graduated in 1851 a ripe scholar, out of debt and \$100 to the good at the bank.

It was in the young man's heart and purpose to be a missionary in foreign lands, and was under commission to go to Siam when in 1853 within three months of graduation at the Theological Seminary, he had a serious physical break down, his friends considering him a confirmed consumptive doomed to an early death.

Recuperating rapidly, however, when the pressure of studies was lifted, this same year, 1853, he became superintendent of schools in Brownville, Pa., and Aug. 21st, was married to one of his college classmates Miss Sarah Candace Pearse.

In 1856 the contest between freedom and slavery was raging in Kansas. Mr. Parker thought that he might have a hand in the contest, not as a sharp-shooter, but by establishing a school in the Yankee settlement at Lawrence. But he found the

conflict too fierce and conditions too unsettled to undertake such an enterprise.

So he returned to the East but almost at once returned again to the West, purposing to settle in Des Moines, the new Capital of Iowa. Grinnell, however, lying in his path, attracted his attention. He found here a New England Colony, and projected "University," and he was offered the principalship of the public schools and promised a professorship in the University that was to be. So in 1856 he became a citizen of Grinnell.

Teaching in the school he was on the ground to welcome Iowa College from Davenport in 1859, and for eleven years, as "Head Professor," 1860-1864, and Professor of Latin and Greek 1864-1870, he was not indeed the whole institution, but a very considerable part of it.

He was ordained in 1862, not to be a pastor, for he was wedded to the college work, but because he could preach and because he would, and because it was thought that with a "Reverend" attached to his name he could more fittingly represent the dignity of the college. He found abundant opportunity for the exercise of the ministerial function, supplying churches, speaking at associational gatherings, officiating at funerals and weddings, etc.

Among the students of the College every boy who was old enough to do so went into the Army, at one time, only three lads under age for the service being left behind. Of course, Prof. Parker wanted to go with his boys but the trustees objected and so he stayed by the staff in Grinnell.

In the Spring of 1864 however, when fresh troops were called for, he felt that he must go. He refused the Captaincy of his Company, Co. B 46 Iowa, but went out as first Lieutenant and served until his Company was mustered out in the fall.

For one term, 1868-69, he was in the State Legislature, where he rendered valuable service as chairman of the committee on education.

At the close of the sixties the College was pretty well established. Dr. Magoun was president. A second call came from the Iowa University. The work was much easier and the pay much better. With great hesitation, the call was at last accepted, and he went to a seventeen years term of service, 1870-1887, as Professor of Greek for a time, and then of History.

While at Iowa City that dreadful sorrow came to the Parker home, which had known grief before in the loss of two children at Grinnell, the drowning of a son and daughter, in the Iowa River, the father, powerless

to help, seeing them go down to their watery graves.

The doors of Iowa College were left open for the Professor to return.

Calls came to him from Ripon and from Oberlin, but the open door at Grinnell was the most attractive to him. So he came back here to spend ten years more in the College, and thirteen other years as Professor Emeritus; a distinguished citizen of the town; growing old very slowly and very gracefully; busy all the time; writing, preaching, lecturing, visiting the sick; speaking words of sympathy and comfort, of faith and hope to the the living over the caskets of the dead; a friend to everybody and everybody his friend; interested in civic affairs of town, county and nation; his last work, finished only a few weeks ago, a History of Poweshiek County. Not less was he interested in the religious life of the community, the welfare of the denomination to which he belonged and the progress of the Kingdom everywhere.

Two years after his retirement from the college, June 5th, 1900, Mrs. Parker, for nearly fifty years his companion in life, was called to her reward.

Three years later he married Mrs. Nellie Greene Clarke, who was also a graduate of Oberlin, and especially interested in foreign missions.

His home has always been ideal in its simplicity, hospitality, domestic felicity and good cheer. No one was ever more tenderly cared for in his declining days.

The end came without a struggle or a groan or any token of pain at the close of the day, Monday, December 11th, 1911.

PROFESSOR PARKER'S FUNERAL

The body of Grinnell's most honored citizen lay in state at the Congregational church from ten o'clock in the forenoon until the time of the funeral which was set for 2 p. m. The casket, surrounded with flowers, was open so that those who wished could look, for the last time upon the face of a counselor and a friend.

The only service at the house was a prayer offered by Rev. P. F. Marston. The services in the church were attended by the faculty and their families, the veterans of the grand army who sat in a body and hundreds of friends and neighbors.

The services were simple and impressive. The Vesper choir in their vestments, took their places in front of the organ and President Main, Prof. Buck, Prof. Noble, Dr. Marston and W. G. Ray came in and were seated upon the platform.

With Prof. Scheve at the organ, a male quartette sang, "Crossing the Bar," Prof. Buck was the first speaker and told of his long acquaintance with Prof. Parker. He read a telegram from President King, of Oberlin College, where Professor Parker graduated, asking him to act as the representative of that college at his funeral.

Prof. Noble read from the Word of God those passages commencing, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." Then turning over nearer the end of the sacred volume he read that wonderful account of the triumphs of faith.

President Main told of a young man, who, as they were standing on the banks of Lake Lucerne, told him, speaking of Prof. Parker, "He opened up life to me. That was the work of the real teacher, to find the individual in the mass and introduce him to the real life." This was the work in which Prof. Parker so greatly excelled.

Prof. Macy's memorial was what Prof. Parker had been to him as a friend from the time the Professor came to his father's house in the country to try and arrange for him to come to college.

Mrs. Scheve sang, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," from the Messiah.

It was given to W. G. Ray to speak of Prof. Parker as a citizen and to tell of the many civic honors he had received as well as those of the college and the university, and what his life had meant to the city and the state.

The choir sang, "Blessed Are They That Mourn," from Brahms's requiem. Dr. Marston found his greatness not so much in his brilliant intellect as in that he gave his life for others. He said, in the beginning of his last sickness, "I have had a good time. I would like to stay longer but it is all right."

The closing hymn by the whole choir, was "How Firm A Foundation Ye Saints of the Lord." After it was over the congregation waited until the carriages had left for the cemetery. The pall bearers were: J. J. Corrough, Prof. Pierce, Dr. Buck, S. J. Pooley, George Hamlin and Prof. Peck.