

12-5-1882

OBITUARY-MATT. PHELPS.

On Thursday evening, Nov. 30, 1882, at the residence of his father, L. C. Phelps, Grinnell, Iowa, **MATTHEW PHELPS** died from internal injuries received in a railroad accident in January, 1881. He was aged 39 years.

North of Chicago, near Lake Michigan, thirty-nine years ago, Matt Phelps was born. Twenty-eight years since, with youthful aspiration and plee, wreathing flowers by the way, he accompanied his parents to Iowa, they being of the first of the pioneer families in Grinnell. Here he was a voracious lad in the first organized Sabbath and day school, developing an apt academic scholar, and in 1867 graduating in Iowa College, and later in the Michigan Law School at Ann Arbor, becoming a successful practitioner and an eloquent advocate. Repeatedly elected city recorder, and honored as confidential commercial agent and local attorney of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway, he was embarking on a brilliant career, when, two years ago, in the company's employ, by a railway fatality, was brought to death's door, never recovering from spinal and internal injuries, which ended his life at 9 o'clock P. M. on the 30th of November.

Lameness from childhood and an heir to perpetual suffering, did not repress the inherent dash in his organization, and exuberance of spirit which, combined with a cultivated taste and native nobility, gave prominence in affairs, and made him in the society and lodge room, not less than at the professional bar, attractive to clients by his suavity and zeal; a hail boon companion and a man of mark. How generous! Moved to respond to the tales of suffering, he disregarded himself, forgetting the maimed limb in nights of toil and voluntary expropriation, soliciting material aid in another state for the sufferers by our late devastating cyclone.

In the home and domestic circle there was rare devotion to parents, and by death a bright link in the family chain is sadly sundered, which had lovingly clasped an accomplished wife and mother, whose untimely decease cast a dark shadow in a home where there is a full orphaned daughter of five years. The remaining members of the family are Mrs. H. D. Works, Mr. L. C. Phelps, Jr., a merchant of the city, Mr. L. A. Phelps, the eminent musical professor of Chicago, and Benjamin, of Grinnell, a family in whose circle the speller has for the first time entered, to silence the leader, bereaving the family and an entire community, to love with energy, nobility and generosity.

By his own expressed wish, the deceased was buried with Masonic rites and honors, and the funeral was one of the most imposing and impressive that has ever been known in the State. Special trains from Des Moines, Brooklyn, Ottumwa, Marshalltown and Montezuma, brought members of the fraternity. Mr. Phelps for several years past has been a member of the Oriental Commandery (Newton, Ia.) of Knights Templar, and there were in attendance the Commanderies from Des Moines, Newton, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa and Marshalltown. It is estimated that there were, in all, from 150 to 200 Knights present. In addition to the Knights, the Lodges of Grinnell, Montezuma, Brooklyn, Macon, Newton and Kellogg attended in body, and members from the Colfax and Gilman Lodges were present. In all, there were from 500 to 600 Masons in the funeral procession. They were attended by the 1st Brigade Band of Brooklyn, and the C. R. I. & P. Band of Newton.

The gathering at the Congregational church was perhaps the largest ever assembled there. The five hundred Masons occupied the center seats in the main room, and neighbors and friends filled the side seats and standing room, and three or four hundred occupied the adjoining lecture-room, which was thrown open. Probably thirteen hundred people heard the discourse, and there were large numbers outside the church. Dr. Starlevant, Mr. Grinnell, and Dr. Murphy occupied the platform.