

G-H 1896

8-4 FRANCIS THACKERAY. '96

Francis Thackeray was born in Gorton, Yorkshire, England, December 1st, 1821. He moved to Canada in 1847, and from Canada he came to Grinnell, Iowa, in 1869. He was converted in his native country, England, Jan. 12, 1842, and joined the Primitive Methodist church. He belonged to the same church in Canada. On coming to the United States and locating at Grinnell he cast his lot with the M. E. church, and has been a faithful, devoted and exemplary member of the same these years, and a better one would be hard to find anywhere. He was a leader in more senses than one and a profitable member of the Official Board. He was always looking after the flock and held precious the interests of the church. He was always loyal to his pastor. The pastor could always depend upon him for true counsel and help. He was especially helpful to the young people of the church and was an Epworth Leaguer worthy the name. Tho old in years, compared with others he was young in his enthusiasm for the Master. He was much loved by the young people and they were always in his thought and regard.

His was a life devoted to the Master and His cause. He often referred to the time of his conversion and called the spot precious, the glory of the Lord shone in his soul, and it was a Bethel—"God blessed me there." He had not been in these years disobedient to the heavenly vision, but had grown as the vision of Christ was impressed upon his soul.

In his church duties he was as regular as a clock; in his devotion to Christ he was ever asking "Lord what wilt thou have me to do." When stricken with disease it was hard to not be present at the church and give testimony to the goodness of the Lord, yet in all the long months of his sickness, terribly tortured by pain at times, he was patient and praiseful to his Master. He wanted to leave this earthly tabernacle of clay, and looked for the house in the heavens. He was calm and joyful in spirit, giving honor to the Lord. He was much interested in the new church enterprise and rejoiced when it was dedicated. He took a good cry in the old church at the last service held there, and hoped to be at the first service in the new church, but, alas, he never saw the new building in its completion, and was not privileged a service. His is the first funeral in the new church.

Father Thackeray had been married three times. His first wife, married in England, died there twelve months after marriage, leaving one child for his counsel and care. In Canada he married and there were five children born to them, four now living in Grinnell. His second wife died some years ago, and he married again, and she who has been at his side these late years survives him. She has been patient, tender and loving and was the fit companion in these last years in all his work and life.

The children, wife and all have been devotion itself, in their care for him their precious one who was called to pass through a severe sickness.

He died at his late residence, Friday evening, July 31, 1896, at 20 minutes past ten, surrounded by his wife and loving children. He gave testimony to the power of Christ to help, and said "in a short time I will be with Jesus in glory." He was anxious to go to the brighter and better world in which there is no suffering, no death.

His death was that of a revered and sainted father in Israel, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" yes thrice blessed are they whose upright, noble life shall live in the lives of others, having influenced them for good, because of an example of true, modest worth and Christian purity.

His life might be compared to a beautiful song, or a long happy day, with a beautiful sunset, or to an aged life unfolding like the flower, or to a shock of corn fully ripe, or a stream winding clear and pushing out into the deeper current of the larger ocean of old age.

Like Enoch of old he "is not," for God has taken him, but he leaves this testimony "that he pleased God."

"Servant of God, well done;
Thy glorious warfare's past;
The battle's fought, the race is won
And thou art crowned at last."

The funeral services were held at the Methodist church Sabbath afternoon, Aug. 2, 1896, conducted by his pastor, Rev. J. W. Hackley, and all that was left of good, honest, loving, noble, upright, conscientious, Christ-like Francis Thackeray was laid in Hazelwood cemetery.

Like as a child the writer knowing him could but love him. Farewell! but after a little, some sweet day, it will be, "All hail Master and God." Good morning will be said never to say good night or good bye.

J. W. H.

The funeral was one of the largest in Grinnell. The pall-bearers were Messrs. C. S. Stickle, T. R. Cesena, R. G. Coutts, J. E. Neeley, Wm. Rortell, George Milligan.

—Mr. C. W. Darrow