

Governor Samuel Merrill

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Samuel Merrill

COL. SAMUEL MERRILL.

GOVERNOR SAMUEL MERRILL.

BY WILLIAM H. FLEMING.

It was a notable immigration that poured into Iowa towards the close of the State's first decade. The depression that followed the exuberant speculative feeling to which the discovery of gold in California gave rise, awakened anew in the east the desire to go west and there seek new homes. The rapid extension of the railway system until it reached the Mississippi river gave increased impetus to the movement. The glowing accounts of the new land sent back by those who came first augmented the fever. They told of the wonderful capacity of the virgin soil of Iowa, of its bountiful yield, of the charming vista its rolling prairies presented in their robe of green and their garments of golden grain. Neither did the narrators fail to extol the healthfulness of the land nor to praise the climate.

Then, as if to make the prospect more inviting, came the Crimean war which, giving to American grain the practical monopoly of the European market outside of Russia, enabled the farmers of Iowa to get enormous prices for their produce, prices which are not likely to be realized again except under similar circumstances. All these things conspired to attract to this State, the first west of the Mississippi which was not suffering from the incubus of slavery, immense numbers of people who were seeking new homes. Then, as seems ever to have been the case, Iowa got the cream of the westward-bound emigration. It was indeed a healthful and bracing addition to the hardy population which had laid so well the foundations of our commonwealth.

As was inevitable, the immigrants of the period mentioned largely made in later years the history of the State, socially, economically, and politically; and among those immigrants were many who became leaders in the land. In addition to many others may be named the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth,

tenth, and eleventh governors of Iowa, three of our United States senators, several of the judges of our highest court, and that great jurist who was for a quarter of a century one of the justices of the supreme court of the United States.

It is of one of the immigrants of that period of intense activity that I am to speak at this time.*

Samuel Merrill was a native of Maine, the son of Abel and Abigail (Hill) Merrill, and the first of the large family to be born in the state of Maine, as distinguished from the district of Maine, state of Massachusetts. He was descended in the seventh generation from Nathaniel Merrill, who came from Salisbury, England, with his brother John, and settled in Newbury, Mass., about the year 1636. Nathaniel's great-grandson, Thomas, the son of John and grandson of Daniel, was born in Salisbury, Mass., December 18, 1708. His son, Samuel, born August 4, 1728, became the father of twelve children. One of these, Abel, was brought by his father to Biddeford, Me., when he was only six months old. Abel was married to Elizabeth Page, was the father of five children, and served in the war of the revolution. His son, Abel, Jr., married Abigail Hill, in Buxton, Maine, June 25, 1809. Of these children, Samuel was the seventh, and the fourth and youngest son; and in the seventh generation from the immigrant Nathaniel. On his mother's side Samuel was descended from Peter Hill, who came from England in the year 1653, and settled at Biddeford, and from whom most of the Hills in America are thought to be descended.

Samuel Merrill was born in the town of Turner, county of Oxford, Maine, August 7, 1822. When he was 16 years old, he removed with his parents to Buxton, in the county of York. Attending and teaching school by turns occupied his time until he reached his majority. Like many another enthusiastic northern boy, he then ventured to go south and follow the profession of teaching. He went as far in that

*This paper was prepared to be read before the Iowa Pioneer Lawmakers' Association, at its biennial meeting held in February, 1900.

direction as Maryland, but not liking things there he returned to the North, without effecting his object.

Young Merrill then settled in his native state, farming for some time. When 25 years old, he went into mercantile business with an older brother, Jeremiah, who is now as he has been for many years, a resident of Des Moines. After several successful years there, he removed to Iowa, where his brother had preceded him, and they opened a branch of the Tamworth house. Here, too, success attended the enterprise of the brothers. A few years later, when the State Bank of Iowa was organized, they were instrumental in establishing one of its branches at McGregor, which is still in existence as a national bank. Of the state bank, Samuel Merrill became the president, as he was subsequently of the national bank.

In 1859 Mr. Merrill was elected a representative in the Eighth General Assembly of the State. Among the members of that legislature, a body exceptionally well supplied with able men, men whose names have become historic, was Nathaniel B. Baker, who had been governor of New Hampshire when Mr. Merrill was a member of the legislature of that state, a position to which the latter had been re-elected the following year.

The legislature in which Representative Merrill sat met, it will be remembered, a second time, called together by Governor Kirkwood to devise measures to assist the general government in the war that had been begun by the slaveholding interest. The measures deemed necessary had throughout the hearty support of Mr. Merrill, who was always a working member. But it was in another direction that his services at this time were of most value. The first regiments raised in Iowa had to be clothed. The federal government could not then supply them; and, while the State undertook to furnish what was needed, it was without money or credit. Then it was that the subject of this sketch, with others, came forward with patriotic ardor, and

advanced the money with which the clothing for the regiments that first went into the service from Iowa was obtained.

The following year, 1862, Governor Kirkwood tendered Mr. Merrill the colonelcy of the Twenty-first regiment of Iowa Volunteer infantry, just then being recruited. The appointment was accepted. The regiment went into Missouri and spent the fall and winter there. In January, Gen. Fitz Henry Warren, under whose command the regiment was, hearing that Springfield was threatened, sent a detachment composed of parts of several regiments, but mostly of the Twenty-first, to its relief, under command of Colonel Merrill. They had not got far when they were met by Marmaduke, who had been beaten off at Springfield. A lively fight ensued at Hartville, the seat of Wright county, lasting all day and into the night. Marmaduke, in his report, tells how he had beaten 1,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, under General Merrill, and driven them towards Lebanon. He did not tell all. While part of the union forces did retreat towards Lebanon, having exhausted their ammunition, the southern general himself retreated in the opposite direction at about the same time; and he soon got his command across the state line. Colonel Merrill's force numbered in all 850 men. Marmaduke estimated the strength of his command, when he began his march on Springfield, at 3,370 men: He doubtless had more than half that number when he met Colonel Merrill and was compelled to return to Arkansas.

The next year the Twenty-first regiment was in the brigade which was in the advance at Port Gibson, and was the regiment that first drew the enemy's fire at that place. Again, at Black River Bridge, the same brigade attacked and captured a position which the southern commander, Pemberton, said he had thought practically impregnable. Here Colonel Merrill was severely, and it was thought mortally, wounded. So serious was the injury that the war

department, deeming it impossible for him to return to the service, granted him an honorable discharge for disability four months after he was wounded. But there was a general demand from the regiment that he should be reinstated, which was done in December. He then returned to the command, but he found himself too much weakened by the wound and his long subsequent illness, so that he left the service finally in May, 1864.

In 1867, as the second term of Governor Stone drew to a close, Colonel Merrill's friends determined to urge him for the succession. The suggestion grew rapidly in favor, and especially in northeastern Iowa, the foremost seat at the time of Republican preponderance. When the convention met it was not difficult to see that Colonel Merrill led. The balloting demonstrated this, he having a plurality on each ballot and being nominated on the fourth. His colleague on the ticket as candidate for lieutenant-governor was Col. John Scott, who happily survives. They were triumphantly elected. Always a foe of slavery, and reared in commonwealths where the accident of color or race never prevented any man from voting, the governor was in entire sympathy with the movement then before the people of Iowa—to establish universal manhood suffrage. The war for the union only intensified his feelings in this respect. In his inaugural address he said:

The consciousness that the southern states were a part of our own territory, and their inhabitants a part of our own people, whose well-being must contribute to the future glory of our country, has been the light in which the work of reconstruction has thus far progressed. At the same time, we have felt bound to insist that those states should concede whatever guarantees are essential to the future safety of the Union. We cannot permit the truths established by the war to relapse into a state of doubt, nor the fruits of victory to be swallowed up in a magnanimity which neglects its own salvation. We can afford to be generous, but we must not be unjust.

In restoring the southern people to rights within the Union let no discrimination be made against the black man. Fidelity to the government should be a passport to the high privilege of suffrage. The public welfare must not be imperiled by intrusting its control to hands of doubt-

ful loyalty, much less to hands whose open hostility has only been avoided by their weakness. If any voice came from the tomb of the past six years, it proclaims: Beware of placing doubtful guardians over the palladium of your liberties. Secure the safety of the government beyond a doubt. Let all loyal men share in the heritage which has been purchased with loyal blood. . . .

To refuse to stay up the hands of the union men of the South who resisted secession in its inception and maintained their opposition to it, through all the trying extremities of war, by making the alliance of the black man available, would be as ungrateful to them as perilous to ourselves.

The theory of our government awards to the individual the largest measure of political trust consistent with the public safety. It declares that "governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Consistency, therefore, requires that emancipation should be followed by the right of suffrage, for equality is a cardinal principle of the American constitution.

In the same address the governor gave expression to his broad democracy, thus:

Let it be our boast and pride that we fear nothing so much as ignorance and artificial distinctions between man and man. Let us establish our power firmly upon the foundations of intelligence and liberal ideas, making manhood our only title of nobility, and believing in nothing so hopefully as an educated public opinion.

His devotion to the cause of national honesty and good faith illumines the same address. After denouncing everything that looked towards repudiation of the national debt, he went on to speak of the resumption of specie payment. He said:

Disclaiming to represent the opinions of others, I would urge the authoritative announcement of some definite time when such resumption shall take place. Let the time be fixed, with the idea that the earliest possible moment will best secure a healthful condition of our finances. I am forced to the conclusion that such a policy would tend to realize in our circulation the perfect currency, in which notes could be exchanged for coin and would command equal respect in the markets.

Meanwhile the public service should be distinguished for the most rigid economy. The increase of money has deluded us with the creation of apparent wealth, and in the train of this delusion have followed extravagance and lavish expenditure. Let us then refrain from every outlay which actual wealth alone could justify. Economy will promote the public credit better than the ripest theory. Retrenchment is the evidence of an honest purpose to meet our obligations. Faith in the intention of the government to preserve both the form and the spirit of its contracts in-

violate is the only foundation for our financial prosperity. Beware of the earliest steps tending to weaken or impair it.

This is good reading now.

Shortly after entering upon the duties of his office the governor addressed a special message to the general assembly, in which he recommended the resumption of two of the land-grants and the transfer of the same to companies that would build the roads for the construction of which the grants were made. In this communication appears the first recommendation by an executive of Iowa in respect to rates of fare and freight on railroads. He said:

Whatever may be the authority of the State over railroad corporations already formed and grants already ceded, it is plain that in the disposition of those which may hereafter revert to the State regulations may be imposed for the protection of the interests of the people against the impositions of monopoly. Fully conscious of the danger of establishing any restrictions tending to discourage these valuable enterprises, I am nevertheless persuaded to recommend the insertion of a clause in every future grant prohibiting discrimination in the arrangement of freight tariffs and fares in this state. While the people demand railroads they also demand just and equitable rates of transportation. Reason would seem to indicate that the expense of transportation should be *pro rata*. With some modifications of this rule in the case of short transfers, it would work no injustice, for it would simply subject railway companies to the same law of compensation which prevails in all other avenues of labor.

It is difficult to find a fairer statement of what our laws should aim at in respect of this important matter.

In the same message a revision of the insurance laws of the State was urged, as was also legislative action regarding reform schools and the erection of a new state house. All of these suggestions were favorably considered by the general assembly. That regarding railroad regulation appears in all the land-grant acts of the session. In the senate it was known as the Doud amendment, in the house as the Wilson amendment. The Wilson who offered the amendment is our present secretary of agriculture. This provision, it would seem, gave the maximum rate law, passed some years later, a better standing in the courts than it would have had without such safeguard. It reserved to the general assembly

the right to regulate rates on the roads of the companies to which grants were made. The excellent insurance law we have also dates from that session. Then, too, the reform school was established, at first temporarily in the county of Henry, while the hospital for the insane at Independence was authorized. The system of circuit courts was inaugurated along with the short-lived general term court; the county court was abolished; and provision made for the county judge to give place to the county auditor. Then was also enacted the first statute authorizing cities, towns, and townships to tax themselves in aid of the construction of railroads. This bill, however, the governor did not sign; neither did he veto it. He let it become law without action on his part. The session was perhaps the most prolific in enduring legislation of all in the State's history, except those in which our various codes were enacted.

In the autumn of 1868 the governor received a letter from the Citizens' Association of New York, Peter Cooper, president, which gave the former an opportunity to make a showing of the resources, the capabilities, and the productions of our State, which he did in a comprehensive letter that attracted widespread attention. Great numbers of it were printed and circulated in the eastern states. It was, moreover, translated into many languages, and widely distributed throughout Europe. It is perhaps not extravagant to say that much of the large immigration, which for a few years about that time crowded into Iowa from other parts of our own country as well as from foreign lands, was due, directly or indirectly, to this letter.

In 1869 Governor Merrill was re-elected by the largest majority any governor of Iowa had yet had. Toward the close of that year, the attention of the governor was called to an advertisement in a paper at Denison announcing an intended sale of school-lands in the county of O'Brien. The facts that this advertisement appeared in a paper published at such a distance from the county in which

the land lay, that the sale was to be in the winter-time, and that the county had less than 100 people according to the State census taken the same year, all excited the governor's suspicions. He accordingly sent Attorney-General O'Connor to look after the matter and prevent the sale if practicable. That officer succeeded not only in his immediate mission, but in putting a stop to similar schemes in other counties to get the school-lands into private hands at an insignificant price. The governor cited this instance in his message to the Thirteenth General Assembly, which convened shortly afterward, and in that paper he recommended that the school-lands be immediately withdrawn from market, and that when again offered for sale the minimum price should be \$6 per acre. Both measures were adopted. The school fund must be fully \$500,000 richer to-day than it would have been but for the action thus taken at Governor Merrill's urgency.

A recommendation in the same message brought upon him much criticism, some of it severe and even worse. Speaking of the Soldiers' Orphans' Homes, of which there were then three, he said:

In the visits I have made to these institutions during my term of office, I have become impressed with the belief that the cottage plan of providing for these children, such as prevails at the Davenport home, is much preferable to what I might call, in contradistinction, the "hotel plan," under which great numbers of the children are congregated together in a single house. This institution, in order to realize the highest conception of its usefulness, should approximate as closely as possible in character to that of the home of a well ordered family. I apprehend the correctness of this position will be admitted by all. In furtherance of this view, I would suggest . . . a discontinuance of the home at Greenwood at an early day, and of that at Cedar Falls before the convening of the next general assembly, and an increase of the number of cottages at Davenport, to provide not only for those coming from the other homes, but also for diminishing the number to be accommodated at each cottage, as at present arranged. This number could, it is thought, be reduced with great advantage to the children, and at little additional expense to the State.

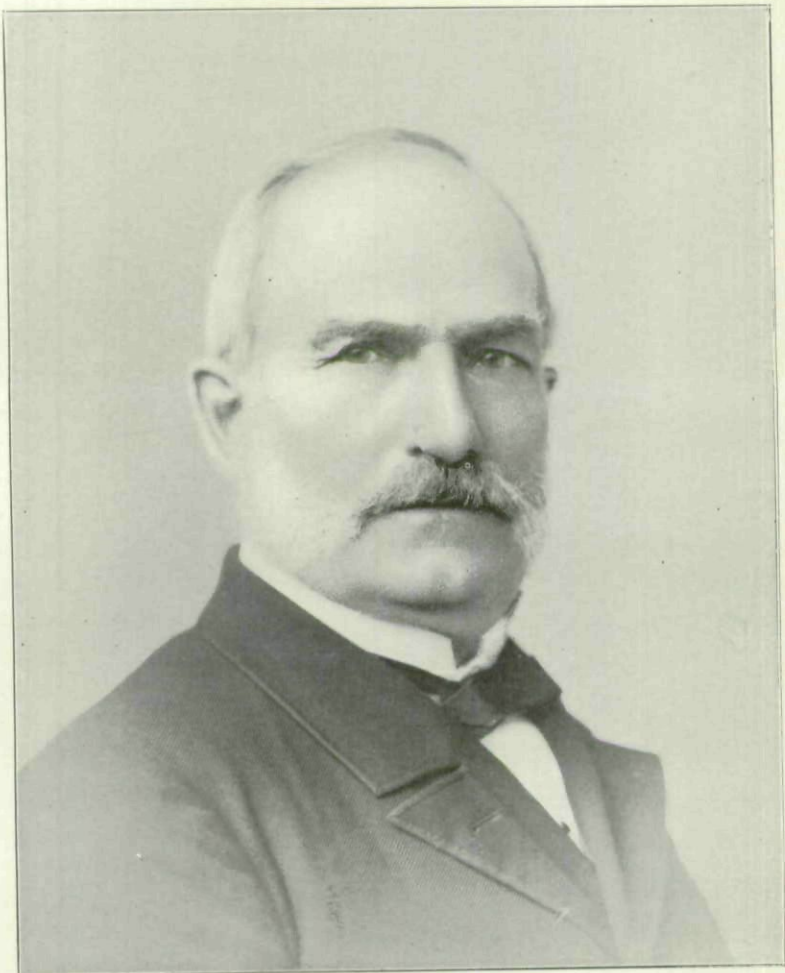
In another part of the same paper the governor sug-

gested that the buildings which would be abandoned if his recommendations were adopted could be fitted up for use as normal schools.

For these suggestions the governor was rudely assailed; he was said to be hard-hearted, did not sympathize with the children, and even was actuated by unworthy motives—an aspersion then, as now, the frequent argument of those who are themselves unworthy. Nothing came at that time of the recommendation. But six years afterwards Governor Merrill had the satisfaction of seeing his suggestion carried out almost to the letter, the only difference being that the home at Glenwood was devoted to another purpose than that suggested by him. It was furthermore his opinion that the cottage system was a better one for all institutions except perhaps those of a penal character; a view that met with almost ridicule at that time. But it has since been widely adopted. Many of the best alienists have advanced the idea that it is much better even for the care of the insane than the hotel plan; and when the hospital at Clarinda was authorized the general assembly directed that it should be built on the cottage plan.

Governor Merrill exercised the veto power more frequently than has any of his successors; indeed almost as frequently as they all. All of his vetoes—nine in number—were in his second term. Four of them were of bills giving counties credit for funds belonging to the State when the counties had been the victims of safe-robbery. The governor argued that the measures proposed a discrimination against the counties which paid their State taxes. It was a fact, moreover, to which, however, the governor did not allude, that the State moneys thus taken ought, in some of the instances at least, to have been paid into the State treasury before the robbery.

Another veto was where an ingenious attempt was made to evade the constitutional limitation as to the indebtedness which a school-district may incur. The town interested was



Sam Merrill

GOVERNOR SAMUEL MERRILL.

This half-tone was copied from one of the Governor's latest photographs. It represents him very fairly as he appeared in his later years. The steel engraving is a fine likeness of the Governor when he commanded the 21st Iowa Infantry Volunteers.

one which had been farm lands only the year before, and had been assessed as such. Now it had grown to have nearly 1,000 people. The bill provided that when the directors of any district should be satisfied that the value of the property in the district had doubled since the last assessment the board might have an "appraisement" made of such property. When the amount of the appraisement was ascertained the district could borrow up to 5 per cent of that amount. No provision was made for any taxation under the appraisement. It was to be a basis for borrowing only. The taxation for payment of interest and principal would have been on an entirely different basis. The bill was, in the governor's judgment, palpably unconstitutional. It was doubtless well for all parties that the bill failed; had it been approved, the town could have repudiated the bonds; and the attempt to repudiate would have been strong when the pressure of the panic of 1873 was upon the people; and it would not have been necessary for the district as such to stop the payment of the bonds and interest, for any elector could have done it. A bill passed at the same session provided for the establishment of a new county out of the twelve northern townships of the county of Kossuth, to which new county the name of Crocker was given. This bill the governor believed to be unconstitutional, as the proposed county would have a smaller area than 432 square miles, and was disposed to veto it; but the attorney-general inclined to think the bill was not violation of the fundamental law, and the governor reluctantly signed the bill on the last day on which he could act upon it. A few months afterwards, the supreme court held the act void on the very ground of the governor's doubt.

The governor gave close attention to the institutions of the State, repeatedly visiting them and acquainting himself with the manner in which they were conducted. He caused flogging to be abolished at the penitentiary, and got the warden to re-establish a Sunday-school at that prison. Some

abuses in the matter of the disposition of refuse were also corrected. It was because of his intimate knowledge of the workings of the institutions that he was induced to make the recommendations he did in respect of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home. In his first term the legislature took steps towards beginning the construction of the new capitol. In the second session the work was ordered begun. In October, 1870, the governor held the plow (not a new thing to him) as he broke the ground for the edifice. It was about where the west portico is now. On the 23d of November, 1871, Governor Merrill laid the cornerstone of the new building, in the presence of a large crowd of spectators. The day being unusually cold for the time of year, adjournment was had to the old building, where the governor delivered an address, which briefly reviewed the history of the Territory and State, and told of the different capitols they had had. It was a paper of more than ordinary interest and brought to the governor many compliments, because of both its matter and its style.

One of the most notable events of Governor Merrill's useful administration was the reunion of the soldiers of Iowa, which occurred on the 31st of August and the 1st of September, 1870. This was a pet project of the governor's. In furtherance of it he corresponded with the several railroad companies doing business in the State, and visited their offices in person. Before the Thirteenth General Assembly met, the governor had secured the consent of all the managers to carry to Des Moines the enlisted men of the soldiers of Iowa, resident in the State, without charge. The legislature, at the governor's solicitation, appropriated \$15,000 and the city of Des Moines \$5,000, for the expenses of the reunion. After the Thirteenth General Assembly adjourned, several of the railroad companies tried to recede from their agreement as to transporting the soldiers, but the governor held them to it, although he had to make one or two trips to Chicago to do so, and even some of the companies had to

be persuaded for a third time to make the promise of free transportation. The event eclipsed all expectation. Immense trainloads of men came to Des Moines in passenger coaches and box cars, inside and on top. It was indeed little short of the miraculous that not an accident occurred on the way, coming or going, or at the encampment, to mar the pleasure of the occasion. The arrangements for feeding the assembled thousands were of the most complete character. In this the governor was ably assisted by Dr. Alexander Shaw, who was afterwards in charge of our centennial exhibit and of the Columbian exhibit of Colorado; General Ed Wright, the secretary of state; Major Samuel E. Rankin, then treasurer; Colonel Carpenter, then register of the state land office; and General Baker, the adjutant-general. Governor Merrill had reason to rejoice at the success of the affair. It had been his device alone. Hardly one of the men then prominent in state affairs to whom he spoke gave him any encouragement whatever in the undertaking; but it was not in Governor Merrill to retreat after having made a start.

Governor Merrill put a final stop to the diversion of swamp land funds, of which diversion there was yet more or less when he entered upon the governorship. He was repeatedly urged to waive the strictness of the law in favor of claimants for those funds, but he was immovable and gave all to understand that the funds which came into his hands as indemnity for swamp lands sold must go through the state treasury to the counties interested, so that they could make settlement with the claimants of the funds.

Governor Merrill was firm to follow the path of duty as he saw it. After the adjournment of the legislature of 1868 the parties in charge of the railroad enterprises then projected in the State were disposed to insist that the proviso reserving to the general assembly the right to regulate rates of fare and freight on their lines should be repealed before they would put any money into projects. The desire for

railroad facilities in the yet unsupplied part of the State was so great that a formidable movement was set on foot to induce the governor to call a session of the general assembly for the purpose of having the obnoxious proviso stricken from the statute book. When the clamor got to be pretty loud, the governor announced that he would not in any event call the legislature together unless he was fully assured that a majority of the members would vote for the repeal. He, however, gave no assurances that he would even then. It was subsequently claimed that the majority of pledges had been obtained, and the governor was called upon to convene the general assembly in accordance, it was contended, with his promise. But the governor was now satisfied that there was no emergency to justify the expense of an extra session, and he refused to issue the call. His course was criticised for a time, but it was soon seen that the railroad builders were about as anxious to construct the roads as the people were to have them built. When the legislature next met, there was no step taken to repeal the reservation clause. On the contrary it was put into the act of that legislature amendatory of the act authorizing townships, cities, and towns to tax themselves to aid in the building of railroads.

Another instance of Governor Merrill's manly firmness may be cited: During the campaign of 1869, when he was candidate for re-election, resolutions were passed at one or more meetings held in one of the counties of the State that were especially affected by a decision of the supreme court of the United States to the effect that they must pay certain bonds issued for the purpose of aiding in the building of railroads in such counties. Many of the counties, and some of the cities as well, had, in the flush times of the 50's, issued their obligations for the purpose indicated, in order to hasten the construction of railroads. The supreme court of the State had at first sustained the legality of such issues, on the strength of which decisions the bonds had been market-



THE DES MOINES HOME OF GOVERNOR SAMUEL MERRILL.

This beautiful residence, which passed into other hands years ago, fronts south on Pleasant street, a few doors west of the home of the late Judge George G. Wright. Ex-Lieut. Gov. B. F. Gue lived in the next house west.

ed, and the holders got the proceeds. In some instances, that was all that was done in the business. The operators got what they were after, and did not go on with their enterprises. In respect of those projects which were in the hands of men who intended to push them, the financial panic of 1857 prevented their getting the money with which to go ahead. But the interest on the county and city bonds came due and had to be met, as the principal would in due time. The communities that had thus loaned their credit were indignant that they should be called to pay out money and have no return for the outlay. Accordingly, proceedings were instituted in the courts to enjoin the paying of the bonds, with the result to obtain from our supreme court another decision overruling the former one, and declaring the bonds void. On appeal, the supreme court of the United States reversed this decision as to bonds issued while the first decision of our court was held to be the correct rule, the higher court holding that the buyers of the obligations were justified in accepting that first decision as the law, and in investing their money in the securities to which that ruling gave currency. At the meetings referred to resolutions were passed denouncing this decision, and demanding that the State authorities take steps to resist any attempt to enforce the order of the court. Candidates for the governorship and other offices were called upon to pledge themselves to such resistance.

Governor Merrill's opponent made such pledge, of which the governor was duly advised. But his answer to the demand was decisive to the effect that the power of the State should not be used, with his consent, for any such purpose, and that those who supported him for re-election must do so with that understanding.

When Samuel Merrill became governor he was satisfied that the time had come when the governor of Iowa must give practically his entire time to the duties of the office. He accordingly made the seat of government his residence,

turning over the management of his extensive interests to others, and entered upon the discharge of his duties with determination to make that his business while he held the governorship. It thus happened that he was the first executive of the State to make the capital his home during his term of office. Just before the convening of the Thirteenth General Assembly, Governor and Mrs. Merrill gave a public reception, the first gubernatorial reception, it is believed, in the history of the State.

Upon retiring from office Governor Merrill embarked in the banking business and became president of the newly organized Citizens National bank at Des Moines, which position he held for many years. He gave much of his attention to matters of general financial concern. At a meeting of bankers of the country held at Chicago he advanced the idea that the amount received by the government from taxes on deposits should be held as a general fund to secure depositors in those banks. This idea has been revived of late years and found many advocates, especially during the period of depression in the last decade.

About a dozen years ago he removed to California, making his home at Los Angeles, where he passed away on the 31st of August, 1899. His remains were brought to Des Moines, where they lay in state at the capitol, thence they were conveyed to Plymouth church where the funeral services were held, and thence to Woodland.

No more faithful or conscientious governor has the State known. He aimed in all things to do his duty as he saw it. His aim in public position may be expressed in his own words used at the close of his address at the laying of the corner-stone of the capitol:

Let us see to it that to the extent of our power we securely fashion the fabric of the commonwealth, that freedom and equality, justice, intelligence, and public virtue shall ever be its characteristics; that ours shall not be a

Land to hastening ills a prey
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

but one whose material triumphs, while enriching the whole, shall yet not impoverish any; and that the laws to be promulgated from the edifice soon to crown this fair height, while looking to the suppression of crime, the removal of poverty, and the dissipation of their causes, shall ever tend to the true object of righteous legislation—the greatest good of all the people.

Well will it be for the commonwealth if she shall always have in her first executive office a man as conscientious in the performance of duty, and as zealous for the honor of Iowa, as her seventh governor.

Governor Merrill was married three times. His first wife, to whom he was united in 1847, died fourteen months after marriage. He was married in 1851 to Miss Elizabeth D. Hill, who was the mother of his children, and the Mrs. Merrill whom the people of Iowa knew and loved. She passed away several years ago. The governor's last wife was a resident of California, which is yet her home. Two children survive their parents—Harriet (Mrs. John Craig), and Jeremiah H., both of whom are living in Rialto, California. Mr. Jeremiah Merrill, an older brother, still lives at Des Moines. A yet older sister, Mrs. Mary P. Files, survives at Gorham, Maine.

OF THE PEOPLE of the country I ought to carry away a most favorable impression, if such an impression could be produced by unwearied endeavors, with apparently no motive but simple benevolence to make our stay agreeable. The American minister, Gen. A. C. Dodge [of Iowa], is very attentive to the convenience of his countrymen, and a great favorite with such of them as come to Madrid. He is on excellent terms also with the people of the country, and has done what I think few of his predecessors have taken the trouble to do—acquired their language.—*W. C. Bryant's Letters from Spain, 1858.*

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