

*Resolved,* By the House of Representatives that with deep sorrow we deplore the event that has deprived this General Assembly of a wise counsellor, and a noble, earnest, and talented Representative.

*Resolved,* That we deeply sympathize with the widow and family of our deceased brother, in their great affliction, and hope that their wounded hearts may be soothed by the consolations of Him who "doeth all things well."

*Resolved,* That these resolutions be published in the *Iowa State Register*, the *Des Moines Bulletin*, the *Washington Press*, and the *Washington Gazette*, and that the Secretary of State be instructed to forward a copy thereof to the widow of the deceased.

*Resolved,* That these resolutions be transmitted to the Senate.

*Resolved,* That as a token of respect to the deceased, this House do now adjourn.

Senator Bennett rose and addressed the Senate as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT—A message from the House informs us that one of its members, Hon. Abijah Conner, Representative from the 26th District, is dead. How frequent have been such announcements during the sitting of this General Assembly : they bear with them their own admonition, and no words can add to their chilling appeals. We are stopped in the hot and fevered race or life, to lay to rest by the way some friend or comrade. We drop the tear of love and affection, the kind mother earth closes over all that is mortal, and we turn away, feeling there is another and holier tie that binds to the mysterious hereafter, and as time rolls by we lose gradually our hold on life, and feel our interest deepening in the land beyond the shadows. "The cup of life is sweetest at the brim, but its flavor is impaired as we drink deeper, and the dregs are made bitter, so that we may not struggle when it is taken from our lips." From the convening of the House the name of Conner has been called without an answer, and his seat has stood vacant, awaiting his coming. But he has answered to a higher call. With him "the hills and valleys of time are all passed; the wear and fever, the disappointment and sorrow of life are over, and he has set down in the house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens; in the homestead, over whose roof fall no shadows, or even clouds, and over whose threshold the voice of sorrow is never heard; built upon the eternal hills, and standing with its spires and pinnacles of celestial beauty, among the palm trees of the "city on high."

I believe there is no Senator on this floor, except myself, who had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Conner, and I am conscious that nothing that I may say can give to you any proper conception of his character and mental endowments, his life of hope and patient labor. He died in the forty-first year of his age; twelve years of that time he had devoted to his chosen profession, the ministry; a faithful, earnest worker, not content with

simply standing in the banqueting hall of his Master and announcing that all things were ready—but going out into the streets and lanes of the city, out into the highways and hedges. In religion as in every day life he was a practical man—leaving the past dead to bury its dead, and hastening on to deal with the earnest issues of the living present. Theories that could work out no practical good to mankind he passed by and left for idle dreamers.

Throughout all his labor, he never lost sight of the sublime truth couched in the reason following this sentence: "For I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat, thirsty and ye gave me no drink, naked and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited me not;" and he passed by as spurious all professions of religion that had not so much as a cup of cold water to give in the Master's name, and had eliminated from the Lord's Prayer that searching, limiting clause in the petition for forgiveness—"As I forgive them that trespass against me."

As a pastor, he was warm hearted and affectionate, first at the bedside of the sick, last to leave the house of mourning. He was a living and bright exemplification of the prophet's sublimely uttered thought—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that sayeth unto Zion, thy God reigneth."

About one year ago, his health began failing so rapidly that he was compelled to quit the ministry and seek relief in the pure air and invigorating climate of the Rocky Mountains, from which he thought he derived great benefit; but soon his disease assumed a more serious form, and about the 1st of January he began rapidly to decline, and gradually grew weaker until the evening of March 7th. At about the hour of nine o'clock, he remarked to a friend standing near by, "*I am going to die now, let there be perfect quiet,*" and there, with his house set in order, with those that were loved and dear about him, without a struggle he peacefully breathed his last. The years of my acquaintance with Mr. Connor were few, but as my pastor I knew him intimately. Truth and constancy were prominent characteristics of his nature. As a friend, the same through sunshine and shadow, generous and charitable. He loved a truth better than his own life, and despised cant and sham, whether in religion or politics. With a finely cultivated mind, with energy of intellect and indomitable will, he was no laggard in the world of thought; was a believer in the dignity of labor, whether of the hand or the brain, and had but little faith in that sort of excellence which may be conferred by birth or bought with wealth. He believed with Scotia's bard that

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gold for a' that.  
A King can make a better Knight,  
A Marquis, Duke, and a' that;  
But an honest man's aboon his might,

Guid faith, maunna fa' that,  
 For a' that and a' that.  
 Their dignities and a' that,  
 Their faith o' sense, and pride o' worth,  
 Are higher ranks than a' that."

As an independent thinker, with liberal views, and a mind well stored on all subjects, he would have brought to the discharge of his duties as a legislator, qualities of the highest and most practical order. An earnest and effective speaker, and a clear, logical reasoner, he would have been the peer of all and inferior to none. He would have dared to do what he deemed right regardless of consequences. As a minister of the Gospel of Peace, he magnified his office; as a Christian, he walked worthy of his high vocation; as a citizen, loyal and true; an ardent lover of liberty, and an ever sympathizing friend of the humble and oppressed.

But he has been cut down in the prime and vigor-time of life,

Gone with the wealth of truth that dwelt,  
 Heart kept with holy thoughts and high,  
 Gone like the clouds of evening melt,  
 Beyond a dark and solemn sky.

We mourn his loss, and a wife and four children weep at the new made grave. May He who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," be the widow's God and the friend of the fatherless. Shall we remember that we, too, shall soon lie down together in the dust?

Build thee more stately mainsons, oh, my soul!  
 As the swift seasons roll,  
 Leave thy low vaulted past;  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Lift thee to Heaven with a dome more vast,  
 Till thou at length art free;  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell  
 On life's unresting sea.

I offer the following resolutions, and move their adoption:

WHEREAS, The Hon. Abijah Conner, late a member of the 26th Representative District, has been called from the scene of his earthly labors; therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate,* That we receive the announcement of his death with unfeigned regret, and with becoming reverence bow to the decree which deprives the State of a useful legislator, society of a worthy member, and his family of a kind protector.

2. That we extend to the family of the deceased such consolation as human sympathy can afford, invoking of Him who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" that relief which he alone can give.

3. That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to furnish the widow of the deceased with a copy of these resolutions.

Mr. Fairall spoke as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT—While “man’s inhumanity to man,” has furnished the grandest tragedies in the world’s drama and darkened with “woes unnumbered,” page after page of its annals, it is the crowning glory of the race, that when the silent messenger from the spirit land snaps the silvery strand which binds the mortal to the immortal, the aggressive element of his nature vanishes over the inanimate clay of a departed one, he drops the silent tear; plants a sprig of accacia or otherwise renders tribute to the dead which shows that after all we are of one brotherhood, united by the strongest of ties.

Let us meet where we may, the pageant of death, or, suddenly come upon a scene where the last sad rites are being performed, whether the departed one be a friend or stranger, there is one impulse of our humanity, which impels us irresistably to feel that we, too, have lost a brother. It is this feeling that reached my sympathy this morning as I heard read the resolutions relative to the death of the Honorable Abijah Conner.

When in the walks of private life we are called upon to follow to the portals of the grave the last there is of earth of a neighbor, a loved one, in the solitude of our homes we shed the silent tear, contemplate the evanescence of our pilgrimage here, and realize the necessity of preparation to meet those who have gone before. But when in high places, those who have been chosen by the people to rule in the land fall as the golden grain before the sickle, we fully realize the force of the dread decree that all are mortal, and that neither place nor position, wealth nor power, can avert the shaft of the fell destroyer.

This General Assembly has been forcibly reminded of this sad fact by the loss of the lamented Needham, the gallant Matthies, the noble Clark, and now of the christian Conner. It was not my pleasure to have personally known the deceased, but from those who were more fortunate in this respect I have learned that he was a useful member of society, a good neighbor, a kind father, a true patriot, and a faithful christian : in short, one who will not be wanting when the Master comes to make up his jewels in the crown of his glory. Let us imitate his virtues and prepare to meet him on those shores where the shadows of the Death Angel never come.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted.

At 11 o’clock and 45 minutes, Senator Larrabee moved that as a token of respect to the deceased, the Senate do now adjourn until this afternoon at 2 o’clock.

The motion prevailed and the Senate adjourned.