

Sam M. Clark

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for United States senator. He was defeated by the late Senator Wilson. In 1886 he was elected to the Fiftieth Congress, and was re-elected in 1888. He was defeated in 1890, but reelected in 1892, serving in the interim as assistant secretary of the treasury, by appointment of President Harrison. In January, 1894, Mr. Gear was elected to the United States Senate. His term of office would have expired in 1901. In the winter of 1900, after one of the most spirited contests on record, in which a number of prominent Iowa men were candidates for the office, Senator Gear was elected to succeed himself. Though advanced in years and physically far from robust, it was hoped he might be spared to complete the term of service to which he had been elected, and the news of his death, after an illness of but a few hours, carried with it sincerest sorrow and regret. For nearly forty years Senator Gear was actively interested in the politics of his State and Nation. He was loyal to his friends and faithful to his trusts—his attention to details in his business career characterizing his management of the affairs of his constituents. He was not an orator, strictly speaking, but was a good and effective campaigner. In committee he was eminently successful, rarely failing to secure the passage of any measure he championed. He was noted for his remembrance of faces, and was seldom at a loss to recall a name, though the list of his acquaintances was probably the largest of any man in the State. It is safe to assume that the experiences of his own youth made him especially interested in the young men with whom he came in contact, for certain it is that such a bond of sympathy as existed between them is rarely witnessed, and they were ever his steadfast and valiant supporters. In Congress he distinguished himself, as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, by his connection with the "McKinley Bill," some of the most important schedules of which owe their authorship to him. He was chairman of the Senate Committee on Pacific Railways during the last Congress, and through his efforts the government was enriched by many millions of dollars. Senator Gear was married in 1852 to Miss Harriett S. Foote, who survives him, and who has been to him champion and helpmeet in his public career as well as in home and social life. Of the four children born to them, the two now living are Margaret, wife of James W. Blythe, and Ruth, Mrs. Horace S. Rand. The home was one of generous hospitality. Senator Gear was most affable, and was approached with perfect freedom by those in the humblest walks of life, and was never too much occupied to give willing ear to matters of personal, as well as public, interest; while his generous spirit and kindness of heart have endeared him to the people as could no honors of State or Nation. His life-long friend, the Rev. Dr. William Salter, of Burlington, Iowa, spoke of him in a letter to a friend as "a unique and charming character."

SAM M. CLARK was born in Van Buren county, Iowa, October 4, 1842; he died at Keokuk, August 11, 1900. He was the son of the Rev. Samuel Clark, the most distinguished Methodist Episcopal clergyman of South-eastern Iowa during our pioneer days. The father resided upon a farm a few miles from Keosauqua, where the subject of this notice spent his early years. In 1894 there appeared in the pages of THE ANNALS (Vol. 1, 3d series, pp. 454-466) an appreciative sketch of the life of the Rev. Samuel Clark, from the pen of his gifted son who has now followed him to the grave. Young Clark was educated in the public schools near his home and in the old Des Moines Valley College at West Point, Lee county. He was an all around product of this State. It is recorded that he sought to enlist in the Union Army during the Civil War, but was rejected owing to his lack of health and strength. At the age of eighteen he entered the office of George G. Wright, who then resided at Keosauqua, and began the study of the law. He completed his law studies in the office of Rankin &

McCrary, of Keokuk, and was admitted to the bar in 1864. Immediately afterwards he was invited by J. B. Howell, who had published a paper several years earlier at Keosauqua, to join the staff of *The Gate City*, as associate editor. This invitation was accepted. Journalism and not the law was his proper field of effort, and it was not long until he had won an enviable reputation throughout the State. He was a keen-eyed observer, an omnivorous reader and a clear-headed, philosophic thinker. He became one of the ablest and most versatile editorial writers in Iowa. His early life on the farm, his habits of close observation, his appreciation and love of nature, and his wide acquaintance with the pioneers of our State, had given him a fund of out of the way knowledge possessed by no other Iowa journalist. And above and beyond all this, he was a man of the purest morals and the kindest heart. There are hundreds of men throughout the State who will say today: "The kindest words ever written about me were from the pen of Sam Clark." We once heard him reproached by a great Iowa jurist for so constantly "saying and doing things for other men and seldom anything for Sam Clark!" But he enjoyed the opportunities which fell in his way to act generously toward friends—and who was not his friend? If a friend called upon him at a busy moment in Washington, while he was serving in Congress, he was certain to be invited to a longer visit before he left the city. Nothing so pleased him as a long evening's visit with a valued friend. In 1894 he was elected to a seat in the national House of Representatives and re-elected two years later. He was always an important factor in his party's State conventions and councils, and very frequently the author of its platform of principles. When fit names were mentioned for governor or U. S. senator his would come first or close to the head of the list. He was a delegate in the Republican National conventions of 1872, '76 and '80. The president appointed him commissioner of education to the Paris Exposition of 1889, which gave him a long-coveted opportunity of travel in Europe. He was four years postmaster of the city of Keokuk. That he served twenty-one years as a member of the public school board of Keokuk, fourteen of which he was its president, shows the high confidence of those who knew him best and his own absorbing interest in the cause of education. It also shows that he shrank from no public duty, however laborious and unremunerative. In all the characteristics of a grand manhood he was admirably equipped. For fully thirty years he was recognized as one of the foremost Iowa editors, in many respects without an equal. He was possessed of that sublime patience which always enabled him to bide his time—and the fruition of his hopes doubtless came to him as far as was possible to one who was racked with acute pain during most of the years of his manhood. He was one who could "suffer and be strong."

WALTER C. WILLSON was born at Arkwright, Chautauqua county, New York, December 28, 1824; he died at Webster City, Iowa, August 16, 1900. Mr. Willson came west some time in the early fifties with his brother, the late Sumler Willson, and remained for a while in Wisconsin. But in 1854 they removed to Iowa, with some money, but with a much larger capital in the way of perseverance, energy and enthusiastic ambition to achieve business success. They had started with the intention of pushing on still farther west or northwest, but upon reaching the beautiful plain upon which Webster City afterward arose, they determined to stop and build a town. A small tract of land had been laid out in town lots and called Newcastle. They acquired a controlling interest in this new town and changed the name to Webster City. At that time the present county of Hamilton was a part of Webster county, as the reader may see by reference to the old maps. The Willsons rapidly made many improvements in their little town—erecting houses, keeping a hotel, building a mill, bridging the river,

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