

Le Grand Byington

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was highly creditable, that of converting its fruits and opportunities into resources and investment outgrew all others and long before his career had closed had over-shadowed all the rest. The firm of Polk & Hubbell was a great, perhaps the leading, factor in Des Moines financial life as early as 1880. It operated chiefly in the fields of real estate and transportation properties. At the dissolution of the firm Mr. Polk acquired the principal part of the firm's transportation properties. Of these that of the Des Moines City Railway Company became the most significant. This he developed from several horse car lines under different managements and of indifferent effectiveness, into a single electrical urban system with universal transfer service, thorough management and popular convenience. To this he designed to attach an interurban system and before he died had carried his plans well toward establishment. He was the first to successfully experiment in collecting mails on street cars. He has been imitated in many American cities. Anywhere in the city any car stops on signal to allow a letter to be placed in the box to be removed in a few minutes at the postoffice. Mr. Polk acquired immense wealth. He expired with a system provided for its administration. In the enterprises he created several hundred men may remain employed at remunerative wages, under just conditions. It is as if he had endowed the firesides of as many families, conditioned solely upon their industry, integrity and sobriety. Attending his funeral, as a guard of honor, were a hundred street car employes in uniform

E. R. H.

LE GRAND BYINGTON was born in New Haven county, Conn., March 24, 1816; he died at Iowa City Nov. 23, 1907. It is stated that he was orphaned of his father when a mere infant and buffeted about in various families during his youth, and almost excluded from the meager educational advantages of that time. He entered a printing-office in 1831, at the age of fifteen years, for the purpose of learning the trade. We find him publishing a newspaper in 1834, during the year he was eighteen years of age, but it is stated that the publication was not profitable and was abandoned at the end of the first year. In 1836 he settled in Elyria, Ohio, where he edited *The Republican*, a democratic paper. At the time he was thus engaged in newspaper work he was also studying law. He removed to Ravenna, Ohio, in 1838, where he edited and published *The Buckeye Democrat* at a stated salary. Owing to a quarrel between the proprietors of the office, the paper was suspended and Mr. Byington lost his salary up to that time, and closed his journalistic work. In 1839 he started for the west, intending to settle in St. Louis, but he met U. S. Senator William Allen—"Bill" Allen; of Ohio—at Chillicothe, where he was induced to stop off and take temporary charge of a newspaper with the beginning of his law practice. His first case was a homicide in which Judge Allen G. Thurman and Thomas Ewing defended the alleged criminal. It is stated that Mr. Byington secured a conviction. During the fall of 1841, he was elected to the 40th General Assembly of Ohio, in which he became prominent as chairman of the judiciary committee and of the committee on incorporations. It is supposed that he was the last survivor of that legislature, one of the influential members of which was Robert G. Schenck, whom Grant appointed Minister to England. Byington was re-elected to the next legislature of Ohio and also became a candidate for Congress. In 1849 he settled in Iowa City, where he resided until his death. At the commencement he was engaged in a very heavy land business which

promised to make him wealthy, but upon the outbreak of the civil war, he opposed the policy of the Government in putting down the rebellion. So bitter was he in his opposition that he refused to pay any taxes that went to the support of the war, thereby losing his immense property, which promised such abundant returns. He was a life long abstainer from all intoxicating drinks and denounced the saloon on all occasions as a curse to humanity a breeder of crime, as a corrupter of morals and unworthy to be tolerated by a Christian community, always advocating its utter extinction. *The Iowa City Daily Press* of Nov. 27th, has a lengthy and highly appreciative article on Mr. Byington, which deserves permanent preservation among the historical memoranda of the State. This sketch concludes as follows: "In brief resume it may be said that Le Grand Byington was a man of brilliant and original mind, of inflexible will and of tireless energy. His sincere but erroneous convictions concerning a great crisis in public affairs turned into the channels of disaster and defeat a career of remarkable promise. A radical of radicals, a hater of shams, of irreproachable private life, of kindly heart through all his bitter experiences, one cannot refrain from the thought: What might have been his career had Fate mingled with his radicalism a moderate measure of conservatism?"

EPHRAIM ADAMS was born at New Ipswich, N. H., in 1818; he died at Waterloo, Iowa, Nov. 30, 1907. Dr. Adams was the last survivor, with the exception of the Rev. Dr. William Salter, of Burlington, of the famous "Iowa Band" of Congregational missionaries who came to Iowa in 1843. These young clergymen first stopped at Denmark, Lee county, until they were called to different congregations throughout the State. Dr. Adams preached at Mt. Pleasant one year, and then definitely settled in Davenport, where he remained twelve years, at the end of which time he had a call from Decorah, where he labored fifteen years. He concluded his services with six years at Eldora. Upon retiring from that pastorate he settled in Waterloo, where he resided up to the time of his death. Dr. Adams was one of the founders of Iowa College, which was first started at Davenport, and subsequently removed to Grinnell, where it has since been permanently established. He was one of the chief laborers in the founding of this institution and continued on the Board of Trustees throughout his life. He has thus been prominently connected with church and educational affairs ever since he came to the State in 1843. His death was the result of old age rather than of disease. His funeral was one of the largest ever attended in the city of Waterloo. There were representatives from many of the Congregational churches throughout the State the most notable man in attendance being the Rev. Dr. Salter, the last survivor of the "Iowa Band." He made a brief and most eloquent and characteristic address upon the life and labors of his deceased classmate. Dr. Salter quoted from the first volume of this periodical (*Annals of Iowa*, 1st ser. I:212) the following tribute to Dr. Adams, which was, of course, published long ago: "In toil and self-denial he labored on amid many discouragements. His uniform kindness to all and persuasive manner as a minister, his daily walk among his fellow men, and his untarnished Christian character, justly entitled him to, as he had, the love and respect of all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance."

DAVID SECOR was born in Putnam county, N. Y., Jan. 6, 1836; he died in Winnebago, Minn., Sept. 14, 1907. In 1859 he came to Iowa, working at the trade of a mason, studying and teaching for a time in

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