

## James Davie Butler

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## NOTABLE DEATHS.

JAMES DAVIE BUTLER, born March 15, 1815, in Rutland, Vermont, died November 20, 1905, in Madison, Wisconsin, was an encyclopedic scholar, learned in many ancient and modern languages, and in almost every department of human knowledge, historian, lecturer, litterateur, world-traveler, a most genial companion, his presence and conversation inspiring and giving cheer. A graduate of Middlebury College, 1836, and afterwards tutor there, he had among his pupils Henry W. Starr and John G. Foote, afterwards prominent citizens of Burlington, Iowa, and David S. Sheldon, professor in "Iowa," and the "Griswold" College at Davenport, and one of the founders of the Academy of Science in that city. A graduate of Andover, 1840, and continuing his studies there subsequently for a period, after a year's travel in Europe, he entered the ministry, preached for six months at Burlington, Vt., where John A. Kasson, then a young attorney in that city, was a member of his congregation. He was pastor at Wells River, Vt., Danvers, Mass., and Cincinnati, Ohio, and a professor in Norwich University, Vt., in Wabash College, Ind., and in the Wisconsin State University, at Madison. In the lore of the ancient and modern classics, especially of Homer, Horace, Dante, and Shakespeare, no American scholar surpassed him. His ancestry being that of some of the founders of Boston, Mass., also partly Huguenot, he was an enthusiast in the study of American history. An antiquarian and genealogist, he explored old family and town records, and traced the connection of the present with former times on many anniversary occasions. For fifty years Professor Butler was one of the most active members of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and an indefatigable worker with Lyman C. Draper and its other founders in enriching the library, the museum, and the publications of the Society with its wealth of treasures. He was employed at one time in the land department of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, whose Commissioner, George S. Harris, was his cousin, to furnish public information about the lands given by Congress to that corporation. He made several trips over those lands, observed their latent productiveness, predicted their future value, and wrote many newspaper articles and pamphlets to promote their sale and settlement. He translated some of the pamphlets into foreign languages, and they were scattered broadcast in Europe. A large emigration to Nebraska followed, and the railroad was enriched by several millions of dollars. He was at the same time employed to answer letters of inquiry about the lands from foreign countries, which he did in the language of each country. During this period he spent a year in Burlington. His cousin, Mr. Harris, then resided in the "Fletcher" house (now Mr. Hawkins'), near the bluffs. On one morning-stroll upon the edge of the bluffs, the Professor encountered the famous Swedish singer, Christine Nilsson, whom he had heard the previous evening in Grimes' Hall, and they fell into mutual delight over the charming scenery up and down the Mississippi. He was present at the dedication of the noble obelisk in memory of Sergeant Floyd, at Sioux City, May 30, 1901, and added a unique feature to the ceremonies by exhibiting the original journal which the Sergeant had kept of the Lewis and Clark expedition up to two days before his death. It had been discovered in Kentucky many years ago by Lyman C. Draper, and safely stored away by him in the collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Professor had edited its publi-

cation, and now threw into the occasion the charm of his own historical spirit and vivid imagination as he recalled with tenderness and pathos the scenes of a century ago. On his ninetieth birthday the Senate of Wisconsin, of which body he had often served as chaplain, sent him as many roses as were his years, and adjourned to give him their personal greetings at his home. In a subsequent letter, May 25, 1905, he wrote with his accustomed zest of a new edition of an old book, "An English Traveller, Coryat," a pilgrimage to Venice, published in the Bible year, 1611, the description in which he found so good that he said, "Thus oldest books are once more the youngest." He added, "My health for the oldest man here, moves wonder in every body, and not least in myself. May He in whose hand our breath is, make his word that angels' food which at his earthly table he gave to those who sat with him at meat! I still find a Hebrew text my best lullaby in the night watches." Having rounded out ninety years, seven months and five days his end was peace and he joined the kindred spirit of "the immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence."

W. S.

JOHN LEE BROWN was born in Essex county, New Jersey, October 31, 1838; he died May 24, 1906, in Cedar township, near Chariton, Lucas county, Iowa. In 1848 he, with his father, removed to Brookville, Ind., thence the next year to Greensburg, and again in 1854, to Warren county, Ind. At the age of 17 Mr. Brown came to Iowa, living for three years in the north part of Madison county. The hard times of 1857 so discouraged him that he returned to Marion county, Indiana, where he attended school and also engaged in teaching. On July 21, 1862, he enlisted in Co. A, 17th Indiana Battery, of which Benjamin Harrison, afterwards president of the United States, was colonel. At the battle of Resaca, May 15, 1864, Mr. Brown was wounded so severely that he lost his arm, and was discharged on account of this disability in March, 1865. He was soon elected recorder of deeds in Hendricks county, which office he held for four years. In 1870 he removed to Iowa, settling in Lucas county. He was soon elected constable, and later appointed deputy sheriff, and special collector for the county treasurer. In 1873 he was appointed justice of the peace, and in 1875 was elected county auditor by the republican party, being re-elected three consecutive times. While serving his fourth term he was elected to the position of State auditor in 1882. Mr. Brown's career as Auditor of State will always be one of the noted official careers of this State. In the administration of his office his supervision of insurance companies was so rigorous that it finally resolved into a collision of himself with Governor Buren R. Sherman, which resulted in his forcible expulsion from office by the Governor, and finally his impeachment and trial before the bar of the Senate. The contest between Governor Sherman and Auditor Brown was one of intense bitterness, the merits of which cannot be dealt with here. Upon the inauguration of Governor Wm. Larrabee in 1886, Mr. Brown was reinstated, whereupon ensued the investigation and impeachment of the Senate. The case aroused widespread interest and much legal talent was employed on the part of the prosecution and the defense. Auditor Brown was acquitted and on the advice of the Attorney General, Governor Larrabee reinstated Mr. Brown in the office of Auditor. One of the hardships endured by Mr. Brown was the heavy expense entailed by the trial. Although he was acquitted by the legislature he was not reimbursed for his outlays for attorneys, and the other numerous expenses connected with the trial. For nearly ten years he urged the

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