VARIOUS

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Содержание

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GEORGE DEXTER ROBINSON

BY FRED. W. WEBBER, A.M

[Assistant Editor of the Boston Journal.]

His Excellency George D. Robinson, at present the foremost citizen of Massachusetts, by reason of his incumbency of the highest office in the Commonwealth, is the thirtieth in the line of succession of the men who have held the office of Governor under the Constitution. In character, in ability, in education, and in those things generally which mark the representative citizen of New England, he is a worthy successor of the best men who have been called to the Chief Magistracy. His public career has

been marked by dignity and an untiring fidelity to duty; his life as a private citizen has been such as to win for him the respect and good will of all who know him. He is a man in whom the people who confer honor upon him find themselves also honored. He is a native of the Commonwealth, of whose laws he is the chief administrator, and comes of that sturdy stock which wresting a new country from savagery, fostered with patient industry the germs of civilization it had planted, and aided in developing into a nation the colonies that, throwing off the yoke of foreign tyranny, presented to the world an example of government founded on the equal rights of the governed and existing by and with the consent of the people. His ancestors were probably of that Saxon race which for centuries stood up against the encroachments of Norman kings and nobles, which was led with willingness into the battle, the siege or the crusade that meant the maintenance or advancement of old England's honor, or in the cause of mother Church, and which was possessed of that brave, independent spirit that, when the old home was felt to be too narrow an abode, sought a new-country in which to plant and develop its ideas of what government should be. However this may be it is certain that from the first settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony the family was always represented among the most honorable of its yeomanry, and among its members were pillars of both Church and State. His immediate ancestors, people of the historic town of Lexington, were active citizens in the Revolutionary period, and in the great struggle

members of the family were among those who did brave and effective service in the cause of liberty.

George Dexter Robinson was born in Lexington, February 20, 1834. Born on a farm, his boyhood and youth were spent there, and his naturally strong constitution was improved by the outdoor exercise and labor which are part of the life of the farmer's boy. But the future Governor did not intend to devote himself to farming. With the aim of obtaining a collegiate education he attended the Academy in his native town, and followed his studies there by further preparation at the Hopkins Classical School in Cambridge. Entering Harvard University he was graduated at that institution in 1856, and receiving an appointment as Principal of the High School in Chicopee, Massachusetts, he accepted it, filling the position with success during a period of nine years. He retired from it in 1865. Meanwhile he had devoted much time to legal studies, which he continued more fully during the next few months, and in 1866 he was admitted to the bar in Cambridge. Chicopee, the town wherein his active career in life had begun, he made his permanent home, and with the various interests of that town he identified himself closely and pleasantly, exemplifying in many ways the character of a true townsman, and associating himself with every movement for the good of his fellow citizens. In 1873 he was elected to represent the town the ensuing year in the State Legislature, and as a member of the House he was noted for the promptness and fidelity with which he attended to his legislative duties. Two years later he

was a member of the State Senate, and here, as in the House, he displayed conspicuous ability as a legislator in addition to that fidelity to his responsibilities which had long been characteristic of him in any and all positions. His qualifications for public life received still wider recognition the year he served in the Senate, and he was nominated by the Republicans of the old Eleventh District as Representative in Congress. He was re-elected for two successive terms, and after the re-apportionment was elected from the new Twelfth District in 1882, but before taking his seat was nominated by the Republicans for the office of Governor, to which he was elected. He took his seat, however, in order to assist in the organization of the new Congress, and, after that work was accomplished, resigned to enter upon the duties entrusted to him by the people of the whole Commonwealth. He had sat in the Forty-fifth, Forty-sixth, Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth Congresses. Of his career in Washington it would not be possible to give a better summary than one given by "Webb," the able Washington correspondent of the Boston Journal, which is here given in its entirety:

Mr. Robinson took his seat in the Forty-fifth Congress, which met in extra session, in October, 1877. He was prompt in his seat on the first day of the first session. Regularity in attendance, and constant attention to public business, have been characteristics of Mr. Robinson's Congressional career. He is in his seat when the gavel falls in the morning; he never leaves it until the House adjourns at night. He does not spend his time in importuning

the departments for clerkships, but he welcomes the civil service law. He does not take the public time, which belongs to his constituents, for his private practice in the United States Supreme Court. He is in the truest sense a representative of the people. He is quick in discovering, and vigorous in denouncing an abuse. He as quickly comprehends and as earnestly advocates a just cause. He is a safe guardian of the people's money and has never cast his vote for an extravagant expenditure; but he does not oppose an appropriation to gain a reputation for economy, or aspire to secure the title of "watch dog of the Treasury," by resorting to the arts of a demagogue.

When he entered Congress, he went there with the sincerity of a student, determined to master the intricate, peculiar machinery of Congressional legislation. He has become an authority in parliamentary law, and is one of the ablest presiding officers in Congress.

In the Congress which he first entered the Democrats were in power in the House. "They had come back," as one of their Southern leaders (Ben Hill) said, "to their father's house, and come to stay." Mr. Randall was elected Speaker. He put Mr. Robinson on one of the minor standing committees—that of Expenditures in the Department of Justice—and subsequently placed him near the foot of the list on the Special Committee on the Mississippi Levees. Before the latter committee had made much progress with its business, it was discovered that where "McGregor sits is the head of the table." Mr. Robinson, at the

extra session of the Forty-fifth Congress, took little active part in the public proceedings. He was a student of Congressional rules and practice.

At the second session of the Forty-fifth Congress he began to actively participate in the debates, and from the outset endeavored to secure a much needed reform in Congressional proceedings. He always insisted that, in the discussion of important questions, order should be maintained. He followed every important bill in detail, and the questions which he directed to those who had these bills in charge showed that he had made himself a master of the subject. He took occasion to revise upon the floor many of the calculations of the Appropriations Committee, and to urge the necessity of the most rigid economy consistent with proper administration.

It was at the third session of the Forty-fifth Congress, January 16, 1879, that Mr. Robinson made his first considerable speech. It was upon the bill relative to the improvement of the Mississippi River. He was very deeply impressed with the magnitude of the problems presented by that great river, and, while he was willing that the public money should be wisely expended for the improvement of the 'Father of Waters,' he did not wish that Congress should be committed to any special plan which might prove to be part of a great job, until an official investigation could be had. The interest with which this first speech was listened to, and the endless questions with which the Southern men who favored absolutely the levee system plied him, showed

that they understood that great weight would be given to Mr. Robinson's opinion, and that they did not wish him to declare, unconditionally, against their cause. The speech was a broad and liberal one, but extremely just. It had been intimated in the course of the debate that Eastern members, who did not favor the improvement of the river, refused to do so on account of a narrow provincialism. Mr. Robinson showed them that New England is both just and generous, and that the country is so united that a substantial benefit to any portion of it cannot be an injury to another. He made some keen thrusts at the Southern State rights advocates, who were so eager for the old flag and an appropriation, and he reminded them that whatever might be thought of the dogma of State sovereignty, "the great old river is regardless of State lines, of the existence of Louisiana, and, whenever there is a defective levee in Arkansas, over it goes into Louisiana, spreading devastation in its course." Mr. Robinson insisted that "Congress has no right to spend $4,000,000 out of the public treasury immediately without investigating a theory and a plan which proposes to render such an expenditure wholly unnecessary," and he maintained that the greatest possible safeguards should be provided against any extravagant expenditure on the part of the Government. The relations of New England to such an undertaking he thus broadly stated:

"I am not deterred by any considerations that when the great river is open to commerce to an enlarged extent more freight will go down its bosom and be diverted perhaps from the great

cities on the Atlantic shore. I am willing that the whole country shall be improved and opened for its best and most profitable occupation. This territory, whose interests are affected by this, is greater than the whole of New England. I am not afraid that whatever improvements may be made there New England will be left out in the cold. Whatever conduces to the prosperity of the West or South will benefit the East and North. We are parts of one great whole, and, if it is necessary under a proper policy to spend some money from the Treasury of the United States to meet the wants of those States lying along the Mississippi River, I hope it will not be begrudged to them, but it should not be done, and the Government should not be committed, until the plans, have received a careful consideration and the indorsement of the proper officers."

At the third session of the Forty-fifth Congress, Mr. Robinson, from his minor place on the Committee on Expenditures in the Department of Justice, introduced a bill relative to the mileage of United States Marshals, which proposed an important reform.

In the Forty-sixth Congress, at the first session, Mr. Robinson, on account of the marked abilities which he had shown as a lawyer and a debater, was appointed a member of the Judiciary Committee, a position which he held through the Forty-sixth Congress with honor to his district and his State. From the outset of the Forty-sixth Congress Mr. Robinson, to the great surprise of many older members, who were not able to fathom the mystery

of the rules, took front rank as a debater on points of order, and showed that his months of silent observation and of earnest study had brought their fruit. His discussion of points of order and of the rules was always characterized by good sense. He did not seek to befog a question by an extensive quotation of authorities. He endeavored to strip the rules of their technicalities and to apply to them the principle of common sense. Sometimes, however, he was almost in despair, and once in the course of an intricate discussion he exclaimed (March 28, 1879): "If there is a standing and clear rule that guides the Chair, I have not yet found it."

At the second session of the Forty-sixth Congress, Western and Southern Democrats united their forces in support of an amendment to the "Culbertson Court bill," which was designed to limit the jurisdiction of the United States courts. Some of the strongest advocates of this amendment were men who, although living in Northern States, were unfriendly to the Union, and who, since the war, have been continuously aggressive in their efforts to place limitations upon national power. Mr. Robinson was a member of the Judiciary Committee and spoke upon the bill. His speech upon this measure attracted more attention than any speech he had delivered before that time. It commanded the undivided attention of the House, which was so interested in it that, although the debate was running in the valuable time of the morning hour, Mr. Robinson, on motion of a Democrat, Mr. Randolph Tucker, after the expiration of his time, was requested to continue. The speech was a powerful, logical, patriotic defence

of the federal courts. A few extracts from the general parts of this speech furnish an excellent illustration of the abilities of Mr. Robinson as a debater and orator, as well as of his strong convictions. He spoke as the son of a Jackson Democrat would be likely to speak. He vigorously opposed the increase in the limit from $500 to $2,000 as proposed by the Southern and Western Democrats.

After quoting the opinions of Chief Justices Story and Marshall to show that the right of Congress to establish federal courts could not be denied without defeating the Constitution itself, Mr. Robinson continued: "I say, then, that those constitutional provisions give to the citizens of the different States their rights in the federal courts. I say again, it is not within the constitutional power of Congress to make discriminations as to citizens in this matter. It has been taken as settled that the corporations of the States for purposes of jurisdiction are citizens of the States in which they are created. Can you discriminate? Why, in the famous Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court did discriminate, and said that a negro was not a citizen within the meaning of the Constitution, nor entitled to sue in the Circuit Court of the United States. The nation paused and held its breath, and never recovered itself until after the bloody strife of the war, when was put into the Constitution that guaranty that no such doctrine should ever be repeated in this country. If Congress can exclude the citizens of a locality, or the citizens of one color, or the citizens of one occupation, or the citizens of certain classes

of wealth or industry, surely it can exclude any other citizens. If you can, in this bill and under our Constitution, declare that the citizens, or any portion of them, in this country, because they act in their corporate capacity, shall lose their rights in the federal courts, it is but the next step to legislate that the man who is engaged in rolling iron, or in the manufacture of cotton, or of woolen goods, or is banker, or 'bloated bond-holder,' shall not have any rights in the federal courts. There is no step between them. There may be a discrimination as to subject-matter, but not as to citizens. The distinction is very broad, and in recognition of it my argument is made." In the discussion of the apportionment at the Forty-sixth Congress, third session, Mr. Robinson eloquently defended the honor of Massachusetts against the aspersions which had been cast upon the Commonwealth by General Butler in his brief as attorney in the Boynton-Loring contest. In the course of the debate Mr. Cox called attention to this brief and suggested that if it were true the representation of Massachusetts should be curtailed. Mr. Robinson entered into an explanation of the reading and writing qualification for suffrage in Massachusetts. As General Butler was the assailant in this case, Mr. Robinson said:

"I propose to show this matter was understood before 1874. Turn to the debates in the Congressional Globe, volume 75, and in 1869 in this House, and within these walls. General Benjamin F. Butler made this speech in reply to an inquiry made by the gentleman from New York, the Chairman of this Census

Committee. He says:

"Everybody in Massachusetts can vote irrespective of color who can read and write. The qualification is equal in its justice, and an ignorant white man cannot vote there and a learned negro be excluded; but in the Georgia Legislature there was a white man who could hardly read and write, if at all, voted in because he was white, while a negro who spoke and read two languages was voted out, solely because he was black. It is well that Massachusetts requires her citizens should read and write before being permitted to vote. Almost everybody votes there under that rule, certainly every native-born person of proper age and sex votes there, and there are hundreds and thousands in this country who would thank God continually on their bended knees if it could be provided that voters in the city of New York should be required to read and write. They would then believe Republican government in form and fact far more safe than now."

After exposing the assertions of General Butler, Mr. Robinson concluded as follows:

"For twenty-three years it has been written before the people of that State that to entitle them to vote and hold office they shall first learn to read and write. Near to every man's dwelling stands a public free school. Education is brought to the door of every man. These school-houses are supported with almost unbounded munificence. Children have been born in that time and have attended school at the public expense, and the general education of the people has been advanced.

* * * I will not take any time in talking about the policy of the law. There are some and many people in the State who do not think it wise to require the prepayment of a poll tax. People differ about that. Some time or other that may be changed; but for sixty years it has been the law, and it so remains. Looking into the Constitution and the laws of the sister States of Virginia and Georgia and Delaware and Pennsylvania we find similar provisions of the same antiquity justified by the communities that have adopted such legislation. And we say to all the States we leave to you those questions of policy, and we commend them to your judgment and careful consideration. Does any one claim that representation should be reduced because of insanity or idiocy, or because of convicts? Does any one claim that all laws requiring residence and registration should be done away? And yet they are on the same line, on the same principle. There is not one of these prerequsites, on which I have commented, that it is not in the power of the person who desires to get suffrage to overcome and control and conquer so that he may become a voter. But if he be a black man he cannot put off his color. He cannot, if he were born a member of a particular race, strip himself of that quality; nor can he, if he has been in servitude; nor can he, if he has been in rebellion, take out that taint; nor can he, if he has been convicted of other crimes, remove his record of criminality. These are an inherent, inseparable, indissoluble part of that man. But his education, his registration, his residence, his payment of a portion of the burdens of the State, and the other

matters, are in his power and his control. I find it to be in accord with the wisdom of the people of the country that it is the true policy to let the States govern those matters for themselves. The Constitution of the United States touches those things that are out of the man's control."

In the filibustering contest over the rules in the Forty-seventh Congress, first session, Mr. Robinson made a very earnest speech, which commended itself to all except the extreme filibusters. Stripping the contest of its technical parliamentary points, Mr. Robinson said: "Our rules are for orderly procedure, not for disorderly obstruction; not for resistance." Continuing he said that no tyranny is one-half as odious as that which comes from the minority. "Our fathers," he said, "put our Government upon the right of the majority to rule." To the charge of one of the minority that the purpose of the majority to proceed to the consideration of the election cases was tyranny, Mr. Robinson said:

"Tyranny! Because the majority of this House proposes to go forward to action in a way that, upon their oaths, they declare to be right and proper, and in their judgment is to be vindicated, you say that is tyranny! But it is not tyranny for you in a minority forsooth to say, unless it goes just the way we want it, it shall not go at all. That is to say, in the language that you have thrown out here and have fulminated in the caucus, you will sit here till the expiration of this Congress rather than you shall not have your way. I commend to my friend some other dictionary in which he

will find a proper definition of the word tyranny."

To show to what logical result the theory of the right of the minority to prevent legislation or the consideration of public business would lead, the following illustration was used: "But this very day suppose by some great calamity the chair of the Speaker was left vacant and we were confronted with the necessity of electing a Speaker. Elect him under the rules, you say. Yes, but under the Constitution, greater than the rule. But, say one-fifth of this House, you shall not proceed to elect a Speaker unless you will take a man from our number; and we will move to adjourn, to adjourn over, and to take a recess. You shall never organize this House so long as we can call the yeas and nays. Do you believe that we are in that pitiable plight?"

On the subject of civil service Mr. Robinson improved one minute to express his views in this manner:

"I am heartily in favor of this bill. It is in the right direction. We have read enough in the platforms of both political parties; here is a chance to do something.

"In some of the States of this country have just been inaugurated officers of the Democratic party; and I have noticed they have made haste, no matter what their declarations have been in recent platforms, to turn out well tried public servants and put in some of their own retainers and supporters. I want this Congress here and now to express itself in this bill, so that it may be in accord with the sentiment of this country.

"I hear some gentlemen say, 'Oh, yes, we are for reform, but

this does not reform enough,' I am somewhat alarmed when I find a man who says he wants to reform but cannot begin at all unless he can reform all over in one minute. If there is not enough in this bill, still let us take it gladly, give it a cordial welcome and support, and we will pass some other bill some day which will go as far as our most progressive friends want."

The position of Mr. Robinson on the tariff and River and Harbor bills needs no explanation to Massachusetts readers. He opposed the River and Harbor bill and voted to sustain the President's veto.

The political campaign of 1883, which resulted in Mr. Robinson's election as Governor, was an interesting and somewhat exciting one. His Democratic competitor for the office was General Benjamin F. Butler, who was then Governor, and who took the stump in his peculiarly aggressive way, arraigning bitterly the Republican administrations which had preceded his own and appealing to his own record in the office as an argument for his re-election. His elevation to the Governorship the year before had been the result of some demoralization in the Republican party, and was the possible cause of more, unless a candidate could be found able to harmonize and draw together again the inharmonious elements. That Mr. Robinson was such a man was indicated very clearly in the fact that the nomination sought him, in reality against his wish, and was accepted in a spirit of duty. Accepting the leadership of his party in the State Mr. Robinson at once applied himself to the

further duty of making his candidacy a successful one, and to that end placed himself in the view of the people all over the Commonwealth in a series of addresses that were probably never surpassed for excellence in any previous political campaign. He is an interesting and impressive speaker, an honest man in the handling of facts, logical in his arguments, choice in his language, which is rich in Anglo-Saxon phrases, and with the admirable tone of his utterances combines a clear and ready wit that, never obtruding itself, is never missing when the place for it exists. He made himself thoroughly acquainted with questions at issue, and with questions in general connected with the interests of the Commonwealth. His addresses commanded attention and commended themselves to the common sense of the people, and the result was inevitable. He entered upon the administration of affairs with his customary vigor, and during his first year in office won the respect of men of all shades of political opinion by the ability and impartiality with which his duties were performed. While neglecting none of the details of official business Governor Robinson found time to attend to those social requirements that have long been imposed upon the Chief Magistrate, dignifying by his presence and enlivening by his timely remarks all kinds of gatherings, the aim of which has been to broaden social relations, or to advance the welfare of the community in any way. In the election of November, 1884, he was again the Republican candidate for Governor, and was re-elected. In his personal appearance Governor Robinson

is what might be termed a clean-cut man. He is of good stature, compactly built, with a well-shaped head and a face in which are seen both intelligence and determination. His temperament is very even, and though he does not appear to be a man who could be easily excited, he is one who can be very earnest. His manners are pleasant, and in meeting him a stranger would be apt from the first to accord him, on the strength of what he appears to be, full respect and confidence.

OLIVER AMES

By JAMES W. CLARKE, A.M

[Editor of the Boston Traveller]

The descendants of William Ames, the Puritan, who settled in Braintree, are a representative New England family. Their history forms an honorable part of the history of Massachusetts, and fitly illustrates in its outlines the social and material advancement of the people from the poverty and hardships of the early Colonial days to the wealth and culture of the present. In the early days of the Colony they were poor, as were their neighbors of other names, but they honored toil and believed in the dignity of honest labor. Industry was with them coupled with thrift. They recognized their duty to the State and gave it such service as she demanded, whether it were honest judgment in the jury box, the town meeting and the General Court, or bearing arms against the Indian marauder, and the foreign foe. State and Church were virtually one in these primitive times, and such services as were delegated to individuals by church, by school districts, or by the town, were accepted by the members of this family as duties

to be unostentatiously performed, rather than as bringing with their performance either honor or emolument. With their thrift they coupled temperance. They labored subduing the forests, on the clearing and at the forge. Artisans, as well as agriculturists, were needed; and they became skilled artisans. Muskets were as indispensable to these pioneers as hoes or spades; and so they made guns, then farming tools. They made shovels first for their neighbors, then for their township, then for their State and country. As their state advanced they kept pace with it. They found an outlet for the products of their skill at a neighboring seaport, and through this and other outlets secured markets in distant countries. Industries and enterprises which would in time develop other industries and enterprises became the special objects of their encouragement. Where avenues of prosperity and success were lacking, they must be created; and in recognition of this necessity this family took the lead in making the seemingly inaccessible, accessible, and the far, near, by building a railway across the Continent. In this barest and most meagre outline of the history of a single family may be found in miniature an outline of the history of the development of Massachusetts, of New England.

In the early part of the seventeenth century the Ames family became prominently identified with the Puritan movement in England. William Ames, the divine and author, was among those who for conscience's sake forsook his home, finding refuge in Holland. He became known to fame not only as an able writer,

but as Professor in the Franeker University. Richard Ames was a gentleman of Bruton, Somersetshire, England. Neither of these cast in their fortunes with the first Puritan settlers of Massachusetts; but it is doubtful if the sufferings for conscience's sake of those who remained behind were after all less rigorous than were the sufferings of those who, self-exiled, sought homes in New England. The two branches of the family were united by marriage and from them descended the Honorable Oliver Ames, Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Ames family commence their genealogical tree with the first New England ancestor, William Ames, son of Richard Ames of Bruton, Somersetshire, who came to this country in 1635, and settled in Braintree in 1638. A few years later he was joined by his brother, John Ames, who settled in Bridgewater.

John Ames, only son of William Ames, was born in Braintree in 1651; married Sarah Willis, daughter of John Willis; and in 1672 settled in Bridgewater with his uncle, John Ames, who was childless, and whose heir he became in 1697. He had five sons, one of whom was Nathaniel, the grandfather of Fisher Ames. His estate was settled in 1723.

Thomas Ames, fourth, son of John and Sarah (Willis) Ames, was born in Bridgewater in 1682: married in 1706 Mary Hayward, daughter of Joseph Hay ward.

Thomas Ames, eldest son of Thomas and Mary (Hayward) Ames, was born in Bridgewater in 1707; married in 1731 Keziah Howard, daughter of Jonathan Howard; and died in 1774.

Captain John Ames, second son of Thomas and Keziah (Howard) Ames, was born in Bridgewater in 1738: married in 1759 Susannah Howard, daughter of Ephraim Howard. He was a commissioned officer during the war of the Revolution. A blacksmith by trade he also rendered the patriot cause service by the manufacture of guns. His account book, still in existence, also proves that he was engaged in the manufacture of shovels in 1775.

Oliver Ames, third son of Captain John and Susannah (Howard) Ames, was born in West Bridgewater April 11, 1779. For a number of years he was employed at Springfield in the manufacture of guns by his brother, David Ames, who was the first superintendent of the armory, appointed by President Washington; and as early as 1800 was engaged in the manufacture of shovels. In 1803 he married Susannah Angier, a descendant of President Urian Oakes of Harvard College, and the same year he removed to Easton where greater facilities were afforded for carrying on his business. At first his goods found an outlet to markets at Newport, Rhode Island, and at Boston; and a one-horse vehicle was sufficient for the transportation of the raw material to, and the manufactured goods from, his factory. He was a man who combined in himself rare executive ability and mechanical skill, and gradually built up a large and flourishing business. A great impetus was given to manufacturing during the last war with Great Britain, and Mr. Ames availed himself of every opportunity to enlarge his business. The one-horse method

of transportation was soon supplanted by six-horse teams; and when, on his retirement from active business in 1844, the firm of Oliver Ames and Sons was formed, the business had grown to large dimensions.

Honorable Oakes Ames, eldest son of Oliver and Susannah (Angier) Ames, was born in Easton, January 10, 1804; married November 29, 1827, Eveline Orville Gilmore; and entered heartily into the enterprises inaugurated by his father. Under his supervision the manufacture of shovels grew into giant proportions. A railroad, constructed to the very doors of the factories, furnished facilities for transporting to them yearly fifteen hundred tons of iron, two thousand tons of steel and five thousand tons of coal, and for carrying away from them more than one hundred and thirty thousand dozen shovels, in the manufacture of which employment had been given to five hundred workmen. The fame of the goods kept pace with the advance of civilization; and on every frontier, in all quarters of the globe, were found as instruments of progress the Ames shovels.

It is not so much as the successful manufacturer, however, that Oakes Ames will be remembered, as the master mind through whose perseverance and indomitable energy, and in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, was forced to completion the pioneer railway across the Western Continent. He gained a deserved and enduring fame as the builder of the Union Pacific Railroad, and that magnificent work will ever stand as

his proudest monument. During the former part of the war of the Rebellion he rendered important service to the Union cause by his shrewd and sagacious counsels in State affairs, and a little later for ten years represented the Second Massachusetts District in the National House of Representatives. He died May 8, 1873.

Honorable Oliver Ames, second son of Oakes and Eveline O. (Gilmore) Ames, was born in North Easton, February 4, 1831. [See genealogical foot note]. He received his early education in the public schools of his native town and at the North Attleboro, Leicester, and Easton Academies. Having thus laid the foundation of a liberal education, he entered the shovel works of his father, where he served an apprenticeship of five years, thus mastering the business in all the minuteness of its details. At the age of twenty, appreciating the value of a more thorough scholastic training, he took a special course at Brown University, placing himself under the special tutelage of President Francis Wayland. The bent of his mind in this, his early manhood, is perhaps best seen from his favorite branches of study, which were history, geology, and political economy. Having finished his collegiate studies, he returned to North Easton where he soon demonstrated that he was possessed of the same splendid business qualities by which his father and grandfather had fought their way to success. His natural love of mechanical employments, which is a marked family trait, soon displayed itself in several inventions; and his inventive genius, coupled with his perfect knowledge of the business,

has brought about important changes and improvements in the business of the firm. During this time he served honorably in the State militia, rising from the rank of Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel. In 1863 he was admitted a member of the firm of Oliver Ames and Sons, and for several years personally superintended the various departments of the firm's immense establishment at North Easton. At his father's death in 1873 the numerous financial trusts held by the latter devolved on him, and he has been, and is, President, Director, or Trustee of a large number of institutions and corporations, including railroads, national banks, savings banks, and manufacturing corporations. In 1880 Mr. Ames was elected to the State Senate, and was re-elected in 1881. With the exception of having served on the School Committee of Easton this was the first office to which he had been called by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens. He had, however, taken a deep and active interest in political matters, and had rendered efficient political service by his connection with the Republican Town Committee of Easton, as Chairman and Treasurer, since the formation of the Republican party. As a member of the State Senate he was diligent and painstaking in attendance upon his Legislative duties, and was known as one of the working members of the body. He served during each year of his membership on the Committees on Railroads, and Education. In 1882 he received the Republican nomination for Lieutenant-Governor upon the ticket headed by the name of Honorable Robert R. Bishop as the candidate for Governor. In

that tidal-wave year Mr. Bishop was defeated by General Butler, but Mr. Ames was elected by a handsome plurality; and it is not too much to say that by his courteous official demeanor towards his Excellency, Governor Butler, during the somewhat phenomenal political year of 1883, coupled with his firmness and good judgment in opposing the more objectionable schemes of that official, he contributed much to the restoration of the Republican party to power at the ensuing State election. He was re-elected in 1883, and again in 1884, and has now entered upon his third term of service. His political, like his business life, has been characterized by a straightforward honesty of purpose, by the strictest integrity, and by an energetic, able, and faithful performance of trusts accepted. Mr. Ames is the possesor of large wealth, but he has most conclusively proven that such possession is in no sense a bar to a faithful and efficient service of his fellow citizens in positions of trust and honor. His rare executive ability has been of good service to the Commonwealth, in whose affairs he has exercised the same good judgment and marked executive ability, as in his own.

It is, perhaps, as a financier that Oliver Ames has won his widest reputation. Upon the death of his father the management of the vast enterprises which the later had controlled, suddenly devolved upon him. The greatness of the man showed itself in that he found himself equal to the emergency. The Oakes Ames estate was, at the time he took upon his shoulders its settlement, not only one in which immense and diversified

interests were involved, scattered throughout different states of the Union, but it was also burdened with obligations to the extent of eight millions of dollars. The times were most unpropitious, the country being just on the eve of a great financial panic when immense properties were crumbling to pittances. He undertook the Herculean task of rescuing at this time this estate from threatened ruin, and of vindicating the good name of his father from undeserved censure. He had in this gigantic work to meet and thwart the plots of rapacious railroad wreckers, and schemers; but his thorough mental discipline united with his intensely practical business training, and coupled with his native energy, tact, good sense, and fertility of resources, stood him in good stead. He inspired capitalists with confidence, money was forthcoming to further his carefully matured plans, and the ship freighted with the fortunes of his family, was, by his steady hand, piloted securely amidst the shoals and quicksands of disaster, and by rocks strewn with the wrecks of princely fortunes, to a safe anchorage. He rescued the property from peril, met and paid the enormous indebtedness resting upon it, paid a million of dollars or more of legacies, and had still a large surplus to divide among the heirs.

As a business man his sagacity seems almost intuitive. As an illustration of this, his work in developing the Central Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad may be instanced, a work which at the same time gave him high rank as a railroad manager. At the time he connected himself with the undertaking, only the

first hundred miles of the road were in running order. He first made a thorough personal investigation of the proposed line, and satisfying himself as to its capabilities for business, he pushed the enterprise through to completion, building two hundred and sixty miles of road, and fully equipping it for operation. His judgment, which at the time was somewhat questioned by other experienced railroad managers and financiers, was fully justified by the result, which was a complete financial success.

One of the most impressive traits in the character of Oliver Ames is his veneration for the memory of his distinguished father. He fully believes that the hastily and unjustly formed verdict of censure pronounced upon Oakes Ames, both by public opinion and by the United States House of Representatives, will ere long be reversed, and that his memory will be honored by the country, as it so justly deserves. Indeed he has already had the gratification of seeing this verdict reversed, so far as public opinion is concerned; and it only remains for Congress to remove its undeserved vote of censure, for Oakes Ames to take his appropriate and honored place in American history. There is little doubt that Mr. Ames will yet see this ambition of his life realized. As to this censure, Massachusetts, where Oakes Ames was best known and appreciated, has spoken through her Legislature by the following resolution, which unanimously passed both House and Senate in the spring of 1883:

> "Resolved, in view of the great services of Oakes Ames, representative from the Massachusetts Second

Congressional District, for ten years ending March 4, 1873, in achieving the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad, the most vital contribution to the integrity and growth of the National Union since the war:

"In view of his unflinching truthfulness and honesty, which refused to suppress, in his own or any other interest, any fact, and so made him the victim of an intense and misdirected public excitement and subjected him to a vote of censure by the Forty-second Congress at the close of its session;

"And in view of the later deliberate public sentiment, which, upon a review of all the facts, holds him in an esteem irreconciliable with his condemnation, and which, throughout the whole country recognizes the value and patriotism of his achievement and his innocence of corrupt motive or conduct;

"Therefore, the Legislature of Massachusetts hereby expresses its gratitude for his work and its faith in his integrity of purpose and character, and asks for like recognition thereof on the part of the National Congress."

The beautiful Oakes Ames Memorial Hall at North Easton, erected by his sons, is an impressive monument of filial devotion and respect. This village of North Easton, the home of Mr. Ames and other members of the Ames family, as well as the seat of the extensive shovel works, deserves more than a passing notice, enriched and beautified as it has been by this family, until it has become one of the most charming of New England villages, and presents a model which deserves to be widely copied. The

old and substantial factories, built of granite, present the neat appearance which characterizes the buildings in some of our oldest navy yards. The employes have many of them grown old in the service of the firm; and well paid, intelligent, and satisfied, are themselves the owners of their attractive cottage homes and take a just pride in the welfare of the community. The concrete walks, macadamized roadways, and well kept yards and lawns evince thrift. The elegant railway station, a gift to the village from one member of the family, is a model of architectural beauty and convenience. The Gothic church and parsonage of the same style of architecture, are befitting adjuncts of the park-like cemetery, where rests the dust of the blacksmith ancestor who bravely struggled amid adverse surroundings to found the fortunes of his family, and build up a business which has extended wherever civilization has made its way. The Memorial hall, before-mentioned, is on a commanding cliff, overlooking the town; close by is the elegant structure known and endowed as the Ames Free Library; and in another direction is the temple, dedicated to the cause of popular education, that emblem of New England's power, the school-house, all monuments of the munificence of the Ames family, and of the deep interest its members take in the welfare of their native town. In the triangle near the centre of the village, formed by the converging of the principal streets, is a declivity, where art has so arranged the rough and irregular forms of New England boulders as to re-produce a unique scene from some Scotch or Swiss village. This

"rockery," as it is called, is clothed in summer with verdure and flowers, and from its summit one finds an extended and charming view of the village, with its cottages, its workshops, and the villas of the proprietors of the latter. These villas, each set in extensive grounds, are models of architectural elegance, and are surrounded by most artistic landscape gardening. Conspicuous among these is the residence of the subject of this sketch, facing, as it does, a spacious well-kept lawn, and overlooking a lake, an exquisite gem in its emerald setting.

The public spirit of the Ames's finds one of its most marked illustrations in this model and typical New England village; and no small share of what has been achieved for it is due to the warm heart and open hand of Oliver Ames. He has ever shown himself an ardent friend of popular education, and justly holds that the New England common school lies at its foundation. For a period of twenty years he found time, amid a multiplicity of weighty business cares, to serve upon the School Committee of his town and to give the benefit of his experience, judgment, and personal supervision to the promotion of the efficiency of this one of the very fundamental of American institutions, the common school. Oakes Ames left a fund of $50,000, the income to be used for the benefit of the school children of North Easton village. Through the wise thoughtfulness of Oliver Ames many of the privileges arising from this fund have been extended to the other sections of the town; and it hardly need be said that the schools of Easton are among the objects of the fondest pride of its citizens.

Mr. Ames, though absorbed in the cares pertaining to the management of gigantic business interests, yet finds time for the appreciative enjoyment of the amenities and refinements of life. He posesses a cultivated appreciation of music, literature and the drama, and his artistic taste is evinced by his valuable and choice collections of paintings and statuary. Architecture has been with him a special study, and his magnificent winter residence, recently completed on Commonwealth Avenue, in our city of Boston, is a monument of his own architectural taste. In Europe this residence would be called a palace, here it is simply the home of a representative American citizen. Peculiarly happy in his domestic relations his home is beautified and ennobled by the virtues of domestic life. A generous hospitality is dispensed within its portals, where on every hand are found the evidences of the cultured refinement of its occupants. A tour of a few months in the Old World not only gave Mr. Ames needed rest and relaxation from business cares, but also furnished him with opportunities for observation which were most judiciously improved. In his religious belief he is a Unitarian, and has for many years been an active member of the Unitarian Society of North Easton.

In his native town he is unusually respected and beloved, and with the working-men in his factories he enjoys an unbounded popularity. This is but natural, since he is himself a skilled artisan, an inventive and ingenious mechanic, familiar through a personal experience with every detail of the work in which they

are engaged. This, coupled with his native kindness of heart, and his unpretentious manners, makes him the model employer.

The custodian of great wealth, he uses it in a spirit of wise benevolence, and his public and private benefactions, while large, are made without ostentation or affectation. Affable, approachable, companionable, devoted and faithful in his personal friendships, it is little wonder that some of them now and then impulsively speak of him as "the best man in the world."

In the full vigor of a robust manhood, Mr. Ames attends to his vast private business affairs, performs faithfully his official and public duties, finds time for his favorite authors, and keeps fully abreast with current thought and the progress of the age. His brow is yet unwrinkled and cares rest lightly upon him. Free from the pride of wealth, temperate, conservative, clear-headed, and distinguished for his strong common sense, his generous, unsuspicious nature, and unswerving fidelity to the interests committed to his trust justly win for him a multitude of friends.

Faithful in his devotion to the principles of the Republican party, and in his services to his native Commonwealth, Massachusetts has reason for a just pride in her Lieutenant Governor. His name may yet stand the Republican party of the State in good stead in a political exigency not unlikely to arise in the near future. Whatever may be said of the causes of the defection from the Republican ranks which took place in the last national campaign, there is no doubt about one of its results,—it

has driven the Republican party to seek a closer alliance with the working-people of the Commonwealth. The Republican bolters were almost exclusively drawn from the aristocratic end of the party. It was Harvard and Beacon Hill that revolted. To make good the loss the Republican leaders had to appeal for support to the same class of voters which gave to Republican principles their first triumphs,—the intelligent mechanics and artisans, the laboring men. However many or few of the deserters of 1884 may re-join the standard now that Mr. Blaine is defeated it is not likely that for many years to come, if ever, the Republican party in Massachusetts will be able, to lean upon the immense majorities of former years, that ran away up to sixty, seventy, and eighty thousand. With a Democratic administration installed at Washington, and the power and prestige which that fact will imply and apply in the local politics of the States,—and in no State more powerfully than in Massachusetts, where the shifting body of Independent voters, so-called, is largely made up of the Hessian element that will incline to whichever side has spoils to bestow,—the Republican party in order to hold Massachusetts will have to cultivate and strengthen the alliance which it formed in the late election with the laboring class of voters. It will have to revert to the sympathetic and liberal policy touching all questions that affect labor, and the welfare of the working people of the State, which marked the earlier years of its power. The Ames family is linked in the popular mind with that policy. And justly so, too! Oakes Ames was a true friend to labor, as well as one

of the most practical; and the fine instinct which guided him in making of North Easton a model industrial community, where the happiest relations of mutual confidence and support have subsisted between employer and employed, he bequeathed to his sons, and to Oliver in an especial and marked degree. It has been said, and there is no element of exaggeration in the statement, that if all our large capitalists and manufacturers could succeed in establishing the same rapport between themselves and their employes which the Ameses have always maintained at North Easton, the vexed problem of capital and labor would be solved; for there would be no more conflict between them. Oliver Ames is held in the same high esteem and almost affectionate regard by the working people of the Old Colony district, where the interests of the Ames Manufacturing Company are centred, in which his honored father was held before him. As the father so the sons! When the time comes, and it is not far off, that the Republican party in Massachusetts shall feel the necessity of getting nearer to her common people, and, in order to retain its supremacy in the State, of offering to their suffrages a man whose whole life has been spent in close and friendly relations with her working-men, it will be strangely blind indeed, to its opportunity, if it shall not turn to the present popular Lieutenant Governor, and present the name of Oliver Ames as one well fitted to lead the revival of Republicanism among the working-classes, and certain, if presented to them, to be endorsed by a splendid majority for the first office in the popular gift.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.