

ing our sentiment in regard to his character and his life. When called upon by the committee to attend this meeting and take part in it, my first idea was to decline, considering the fact that I had prepared a memorial of William Beckett at the request of the Bar Association in which I expressed myself as to his character and life. On second thought I said to the committee, "Yes, I will attend. It is the last opportunity I will have to say a good word for my kinsman and my friend, who loved me and whom I loved."

I have known William Beckett as far back as I have known anyone. I remember him as a boy. We were boys together. I remember him as a young man. We were young men together. I remember him as a student at Miami University. I remember him as a young lawyer just admitted to the bar and I have known him in middle life, and I have known him in old age, and I am very glad to repeat that we were fast and loving friends always. There was a singular characteristic about William Beckett that I have hardly ever seen exhibited anywhere else. In the court house he was timid to a fault. He was timid before the jury, and before the court, yet this timid man was not afraid to walk before the highest men of the Nation and look them in the face and give them his judgment about matters of national import-

ance. We never had a man, I apprehend, in Butler county, who had a more unselfish influence with the "powers that be," with the governors, the president, and men occupying the highest positions in the land, than William Beckett. And yet this man with this characteristic was timid in the court house.

I have been told, in fact, he has told me himself that he was a great admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte — a man you would say at once as different from William Beckett as any man could possibly be and yet, when we look at some of the characteristics of Napoleon Bonaparte we can understand very readily why William Beckett admired his character. Napoleon Bonaparte was a far-seeing man, so was William Beckett. Napoleon Bonaparte made his plans upon a broad scale, and executed them with a force that was unequalled. I am not very well versed in his history but I believe that it is an historic fact that he never fought a battle on the defensive, but always on the aggressive. William Beckett had these qualifications in a very large degree. He was always aggressive. He made his plans carefully and he executed them with all the force that his powerful nature would bring to bear upon them, and he was almost always successful.

William Beckett's greatest characteristic was

as a private citizen. He never sought, except on one occasion, office. He never held any public place, but he was a powerful private citizen. When the civil war broke out there was no man in all this community who exerted so great a personal influence in bringing about the union of the patriots and encouraging them to put down the rebellion and stand together as one man in defense of the country. His influence over men was simply wonderful.

I remember on one occasion a distinguished citizen of this county was very anxious to go south of the Mason and Dixon line. His sentiments were not regarded as patriotic. He applied to several influential men at Washington, to get a pass to go south, but when they applied to Edward M. Stanton, then secretary of war, with that abruptness which was his characteristic, he positively refused to listen to any man upon that subject. Mr. Beckett happened in Washington about that time and he immediately said "I will go and get the pass to go south," and he went to the rough secretary who attempted to shut him off as he had done the others upon a similar occasion, but Beckett said, "Hold on, while we are at home, laboring through the day to have the people stand together to put down this rebellion, this man is working at night creating secession feeling

and undoing what we have done. Now I want you to give him the pass." The stern secretary saw the new light in which the case was put, he yielded to Mr. Beckett's logic, granted the pass, not as a favor but as a patriotic duty, and the man went south and that was the last we heard of him in Butler county. That shows the kind of man he was. He had an influence over men that was simply wonderful.

As a business man you all know without my telling you just what kind of a man he was. He was the foremost man in every public movement that was brought for the purpose of building up our city. In building up all these manufacturing establishments in our midst, all the railroads, every enterprise, no matter what it was, William Beckett was the foremost man in this community in giving help, and in giving encouragement to the enterprise, whatever it was, so that it was right. A great characteristic of this man was his love for his fellow-men. He loved everybody. And he had an almost over-weening anxiety that everybody should love him. I know that when he had offended anyone, he was punished himself by the reflection that he had thus offended him, and he had no peace until he had gone and made it all right, shaken hands and agreed to let the past be forgotten.

It is right, my fellow citizens, when a great man and a good man and a useful man who has spent his life in building up the city, dies—a man who spent his life in doing good for others, great and good in helping the poor and in helping public interests, — that his memory should be cherished. Where a man like that has passed away there is no grander sight than to see the people come together and recognize the fact. He will be remembered by everybody. He will be remembered by every one who has the interest of his native city at heart. He will be remembered by the poor, for no man in Hamilton ever exhibited a stronger and greater disposition to help those in distress than he did. He will be remembered by the old, he will be remembered by the middle aged, and he will be remembered by the little children whom he always noticed and loved.

REMARKS OF JOHN M. LONG.

Ladies and Gentlemen:— All of the speakers that have preceded me have told you just what I was going to tell you about my friend William Beckett. I am not as old as many of them. I can only go back about forty years. When I came to Hamilton to follow my vocation, I had arranged to stay here in the manufacturing business a year, and then I wanted to retire and

go back to Cincinnati, where I came from. In conversation with my friend Beckett, he said—"No, you can't go back; if you wish to go into business and do anything to advance your skill, do it right here in Hamilton and I will help you," and from that moment on we gradually got to be friends in almost every undertaking.

A certain incident has been stated here tonight, to the effect that he and some one else had fallen out about a transaction. I do not know whether the gentleman alluded to myself and Mr. Beckett or not, but we had just such an experience as that. We fell out in a transaction of business. We were both interested in different businesses and the arrangement we entered into did not work and we conflicted, as suggested. We didn't say anything; we didn't swear, but we thought a great many heavy words. We quite often passed each other without speaking. I felt badly and Mr. Beckett felt badly. I could see it on his countenance that he felt badly. It went on a few days and we met on the street and he reached out his hands and said—"John, let's quit". Said I, "Agreed," and the tears came into the eyes of both of us. From that day on, we never crossed one another's line in any transaction. We worked together, and I found Mr. Beckett to be as true a friend as any one can have.

I remember during the war we got to where more men were required. We thought to supply them out of the veterans that had served their time. When the draught was to come on, Mr. Beckett worked day and night to arrange his business, so that he might speak to, or get some of these men to go back into the army and release other men who had families to attend to, so that that family would have the earnings of his labor. He made an arrangement that a certain amount should be raised, and then we were to see that all the men that worked in the different works here did their part; those that had families were to pay a certain amount and as they, of course, had no money, it was to be paid by the owners of the factories. Mr. Beckett finally succeeded in doing this, and we placed this money and got the men to go back into the army and had them ready for any of those men who were draughted, so as to release them, and keep them at home. Now, Mr. Beckett worked almost day and night. I remember one night when we had to have a meeting promptly, that he came to my house at twelve o'clock to get a meeting and determine what we would do. The draught was ordered and his anxiety for the families of these men that might be draughted was so great, as to keep him awake almost all night.

All such instances as these show what the man was. Mr. Beckett was a *man*, and when you say that, you say all that any one can say. He has gone to his long home, where we all have to go.

ADDRESS OF HON. H. L. MOREY.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: — The invitation to meet with my fellow-citizens of Hamilton to give an expression of our regard and appreciation of the character of our friend, William Beckett, reached me in the midst of pressing duties which have not in any sense been relieved from that hour to this, and I come here to give expression without any special thought or preparation, to the spontaneous and uncontrolled feelings which come from my heart on this occasion.

I have known William Beckett for many years, dating back to the period before the great war, to which reference has been made. I came to his acquaintance through a loved and patriotic brother of his who was my companion and comrade in that great war and who died in the service of his country. I refer to Major D. C. Beckett, whom many of you will remember and who some of my hearers never knew. He was as dear to his brother William, perhaps, as any son

that he has ever had. Major Beckett and I were students together at Miami University and the friendship that I then formed for William Beckett was strengthened and cemented by the incidents of our common army life, in which William Beckett took the deepest interest.

In the later years of his life after I came to make my home in the city of Hamilton, William Beckett was always my warm and cherished friend. For the last eight or ten years of his life we lived close neighbors. He was a frequent visitor at my office and at my residence upon friendly and social calls, and I can truthfully say that up until the close of his life my love for him grew firmer and stronger; he is one of the men for whom I had a feeling of real affection. It is not expected, nor perhaps complimentary that I should indulge in fulsome adulation and praise of the character of our departed friend. Doubtless William Beckett had his foibles and his frailties, but they were neither conspicuous nor were they flagrant. It is a beautiful trait in human character that we cherish only the memory of the virtues of our friends. Their faults are recalled only by an effort. Their virtues come spontaneously in our memory.

It has been well said that William Beckett was a man of most genial character, of social

inclinations; but there was a trait in William Beckett's character which to me was always strikingly prominent; and that was his unwavering and uncompromising fidelity in every relation of life. He was a man whose whole course of life was grounded upon principle, a man of positive convictions in religion, in politics and in business. It may be said that he was a partisan in all things, but in no sense was he an offensive partisan in anything. He was faithful to his church, he was faithful to his political convictions and he was eminently patriotic. His loyalty to his state and his country was unwavering, and his fidelity to the people and the community in which he lived knew no limits.

It was his fortune that his life extended over the period of the grandest achievements not only of his own country but of the world. From his birth until his death; in that period which to my mind is the grandest in the world's history; he was a conspicuous and potent factor in every relation in which he was placed. His impress was felt upon everything that he touched or with which he came in contact. In the great period of the war his influence extended far beyond the bounds of his own state. He was the warm friend and adviser of the governors of at least two states of the union, Ohio and Indiana. He

was the warm, personal friend of President Lincoln, President Hayes and others who occupied the chair of chief executive of our Nation. I think it may be truthfully said that no man ever lived in the city of Hamilton who acquired the influence among public men that was acquired and wielded by William Beckett. Certainly it is true that no man occupying a private station ever held a position of the influence that he exercised in the period of his active life.

Many instances in his life would be strikingly historic, if recorded. The nomination of Abraham Lincoln was largely due to his influence; he was Mr. Lincoln's personal friend and accompanied him on his journey to Washington in those dark days of 1861 when assassination and revolution were rife in the land. He was one of his body guard and slept with him in the executive mansion in the first days of his occupancy there, a most distinguished honor to be enjoyed by any private citizen. The first war governor of Ohio was William Dennison, whose adviser he was, and whose confidence he had and kept, because it was well deserved, and never abused. I have heard the anecdote told that when any favor was desired at Columbus or any measure was desired to be brought before the legislature or any object to be obtained in that great war period it

was a common remark to those seeking such an object to say, "Well, go down and see Governor Beckett and get him to go up and tell Bill Dennison what to do." That about illustrates the situation at that time. He was everywhere; now at Columbus, now at Indianapolis, with the great war governor, Oliver P. Morton, directing here, advising there, known of all public men, honored and respected by all.

I remember some instances of his great humor to which reference has been made here tonight. He was a most genial traveling companion. It has been my pleasure in the last few years to travel with him on many occasions both west and east, and his inimitable humor never deserted him upon any occasion. I remember once in the city of Washington, in company with Mr. Beckett and our late fellow-citizen, Mr. John B. Cornell, we had gone out riding in one of those little square-bodied, two-wheeled vehicles called a gurney, and after we had performed our errand were boxed up in it and the doors closed, and driven back to the Ebbit Hotel on one of the prominent streets in the city. The driver turned the horse's head to the street and backed the gurney up to the side walk to unload us. Just at that critical time the belly-band broke, the shafts flew up and the body of the carriage sank back

against the curb, jostling Mr. Cornell, Mr. Beckett and myself all together in our little prison without means of escape. All eyes were turned upon us and even the boys laughed at and gibed us. Among others the little news-boys came up and looked in. Mr. Cornell looked very much chagrined, and I certainly felt so, but Mr. Beckett with his usual jovial smile looked out at the newsboys, and in his rollicking way said, "Little boy, how's your mother?" Mr. Beckett said it in that droll, mock-earnest spirit of his, and the boy taking the question in real earnest replied, "Oh she's well." Mr. Beckett often afterwards referred to this episode and it was ever a source of great amusement to him.

He was a most genial man in his family, a kind and hospitable neighbor; he often came to my house and my affection for him grew as the years passed by. He was kind, intellectual, jovial, and hopeful on all occasions.

I do not think he cherished any ill will toward anybody in the world. If anger was ever aroused in him for cause, if resentment ever moved him it was but transient, and he had the power and inclination to put them away. My friends, it may be truly said that it will be a long time before we shall again see the like of William Beckett. It is no disparagement to the people of

this city to say that he was a man among men, towering above his fellows. His memory shall remain long enshrined in the hearts of his fellow citizens.

[Ex-Governor James E. Campbell had been named as one of the speakers of the evening, but he was unavoidably absent. His address, as was prepared for that occasion, is here given as a part of the proceedings.]

EX-GOVERNOR CAMPBELL'S TRIBUTE.

There can be no citizen of Hamilton who would not feel it a privilege to contribute a few words by way of eulogy upon the memory of William Beckett. No life or services are better known here; no career is more thoroughly interwoven into the history of this city; no man has ever been a more conspicuous "landmark" in this community. Of late years his well-known form has been stooped with growing age and the weariness of life; but, to those of us who are passing the meridian, remembrance of him will always be of one in ruddy prime, smooth of build, hewed on heroic lines, with an intellectual head, a genial expression, eyes prone to twinkle with merriment, and that cast of features which bears the appellation of Napoleonic.

Others have already described, with more or less detail, his dominating and salient traits.

They have told of his patriotism, and of its substantial value to his country in time of war. They have dwelt upon his sturdy partisanship, and of his unfaltering devotion to political associates in whose counsels he held high and deserved eminence. They have spoken with warmth and truth of his life-long efforts in behalf of the material prosperity of this city—of his promotion of the hydraulic, the various railroads, and the manufacturing enterprises in which he was pre-eminently the moving spirit. They have paid just tribute to many of his meritorious qualities of head and heart, including that charitable, sympathetic and forgiving temper which was one of his chief characteristics.

The statement made by one of his encomiasts, that he was, long after the heyday of his financial career, the loser, as an endorser or guarantor of other men's debts, of a sum that would in itself have been a fortune to him, is not to be passed by lightly. It is the most significant fact in his history—significant, not so much for the loss involved, as for the insight it gives into the web and woof of the man himself. To some persons such a fact may seem but evidence of business methods that were reckless, or improvident; but, to those who probe the hidden springs of the human heart, it is a testimonial of kindness,

generosity and tenderness, which is worth more to the soul, living or dead, than all the miserly hoards on earth. In this day of cold and unfeeling greed, when the worship of Mammon has out-stripped that of all the other gods, it is immeasurable comfort to know that there are yet men, prosperous but unspoiled and unselfish, whose hearts have not grown callous to the sufferings of their poorer and less successful fellows. Had William Beckett turned a deaf ear to the wants and woes of others, he might have left behind him something more in the way of lucre, but he surely would have carried away with him very much less of love, honor and esteem. Who knows but that the world to which he has gone may be so unlike this one that charity will be there a more potent currency than gold?

There was one especial trait of Mr. Beckett which seemed to many of his friends to be of surpassing force and intensity, yet which has not been so fully depicted as it deserves — that trait was his unfaltering fidelity and devotion to every person or thing, connected with his early life. No associates of his youthful days had moved so far away, or so long ago, but Mr. Beckett knew of his whereabouts. He would recount that friend's successes or failures, accompanied by a flood of reminiscences; and, if that same old

citizen came back to revisit the scenes of his youth, the first man to welcome him, and the happiest to entertain him was William Beckett. The home of his birth was never described by him except with enthusiasm and delight. It was a source of perennial joy to recount the incidents of his childhood. His parents, his brothers and sisters, and even his vast retinue of relatives, however distant, were always to him the dearest and best of their kind, and were tenaciously clung to in life, and revered and remembered in death. To hear him dilate upon the early leaders of the Butler county bar, one would imagine that naught but intellectual giants existed in those days; while, for the bar itself, although he had not practiced law for fifty years, yet he retained undiminished affection, and active membership. The university in which he was educated never lost its warm place in his heart, and he was its oldest trustee at the time of his death. Even the food of his early life was ever the sweetest to his taste, and newfangled cookery found in him an implacable foe; while his clothes, unchanged in style by the mutations of time and tailoring, became so distinctive a part of him, that, without his old-fashioned, brass-buttoned, blue "swallow tail," he would scarcely have seemed to be properly dressed.

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Although William Beckett is gone, yet his strong qualities, warm heart, and generous impulses will not be forgotten. This loss is not alone to his family, or his friends, but to the society which can illy spare men of his public spirit and commanding influence.

There is much to be thought of—yet how little to say! It is all summed up in that tender phrase “God’s finger touched him, and he slept.”

The presiding officer then stated that he had a telegram from ex-President Benjamin Harrison, to this effect:—

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., 12-3-95.

R. C. McKinney:—I regret that I cannot show my great regard for Mr. Beckett by attending the Memorial Service. He was a noble man, public spirited, generous and kind.

BENJ. HARRISON.

The presiding officer then read the following letter from Mr. Sam K. Hughes:

LESOURDSVILLE, OHIO, Dec. 3, 1895.

HON. LAZARD KAHN,
HAMILTON, OHIO.

Dear Sir:—I see by last evening’s papers that you are to preside at a meeting of the people of Hamilton Tuesday night, in honor of the late William Beckett.

Allow me to say that I am in hearty accord with this movement, that it is eminently proper and fitting for the people thus to assemble and in a public manner pay tribute

to the name and memory of one who, for more than two generations was a prominent figure in our midst, honored for his great worth as a man, as a citizen, as a patriot, as a father and a true Christian. For the half century past he was counseled in all local enterprises and frequently upon questions of national import, he being a man of clear views, sound judgment and unquestioned integrity.

I need not extend my letter. His fame and good name will go down to future generations of this valley, and his life and his ory has been so closely identified with the growth and development of this section, that they have become an inseparable part of it. He was in all respects a model man, and the impress of his life will never be forgotten by us and we will cherish the fondest recollections of him forever.

SAM K. HUGHES.

FROM GENERAL H. V. BOYNTON.

The following letter to Mr. Beckett was received from General H. V. Boynton two days prior to his death:

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23, 1895.

My Dear Mr. Beckett:—When I came through Cincinnati last week I heard that you were sick. You see, I miss no chance to keep track of my Hamilton friends, and for reasons which you understand, you stand among those at the top of my list.

By this time I trust that you are improving. Doubtless you have heard from some of the 35th men about the dedications and the points which are marked for them on the field. Hamilton, and especially such citizens of Hamilton as yourself, who took so much interest in the organizing of that splendid regiment, may well be proud of their record as now

permanently marked at Chicamauga and Missionary Ridge. I wish you could see the park and the positions of your regiment. I always think of it as in a broad sense yours, or rather one of yours, for I believe you had active part in raising several. This is not written with any expectation that you will either answer it or try to have it answered. It is only a friendly call on one whose early and continuing friendship I very highly prize. With much respect,

Cordially Yours,

H. V. BOYNTON.

Hon. William Beckett, Hamilton, Ohio.