

## GEORGE HENDERSON KELLY

1854-1929

Founder of Arizona Historical Review

passes

Effie R. Keen

Major George H. Kelly, dean of Arizona newspapermen and state historian, died in Phoenix on November 10, 1929. He had been a resident of this state for more than forty years, having arrived in Tucson on the day after Thanksgiving, 1887, where he entered the service of the ARIZONA DAILY STAR, published by Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Hughes, as a printer, at the weekly wage of \$21. His family came in 1888, and at about that time he was taken out of the STAR'S mechanical department and given a job which included reporting, soliciting and collecting, and he and Mr. and Mrs. Hughes did practically all the front office work. Kelly remained with the STAR until October 1, 1888, when he was engaged by the late John T. Fitzgerald to go to Clifton and assist in the publication of the CLIFTON CLARION during the campaign of that year. The election, which was held in November, resulted in routing a democratic power which had been in complete control of Graham County since its organization in 1881, featured by Geo. H. Stevens (Little Steve), Dan Ming, J. T. Fitzgerald, Gilbert Webb and others.

On January 1, 1889, Kelly returned to Tucson to become assistant editor and local reporter of the TUCSON CITIZEN, then under the ownership and management of Herbert Brown and H. B. Tenney. He remained with the CITIZEN until he purchased the VALLEY BULLETIN, which had succeeded the CLIFTON CLARION when that paper was sold by Fitzgerald to some prominent republicans of Graham County, who moved the paper from Clifton to Solomonville, changing its name. The money required for the initial payment for a controlling number of shares in the BULLETIN PUBLISHING COMPANY was loaned by Mrs. Kelly to Geo. H. Kelly and A. D. Webb, who had been in charge of the BULLETIN as publisher. At that time Graham County was indebted to the BULLETIN, something like \$1,800 on a contract. Mrs. Kelly was teacher in the Tucson Public Schools for two years, and the sum she loaned on the BULLETIN stock was \$600, half the purchase price.

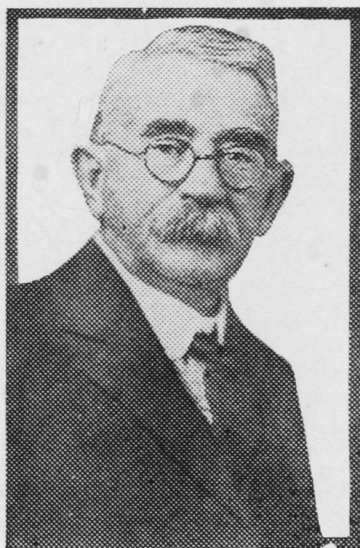
On receiving the majority of the stock in the company, Kelly and Webb elected themselves and Mrs. Kelly as officers and directors. In less than sixty days the money due from the county was collected, besides other substantial amounts due on accounts. On May 1, 1890, a dividend of fifty per cent was regularly declared and paid. This enabled Kelly and Webb to repay Mrs. Kelly her loan and the balance due on their stock. Both Kelly and Webb were practical printers, and with the aid of an office "devil" were able to produce the BULLETIN weekly without additional help.

For thirteen years the BULLETIN PUBLISHING COMPANY proved to be profitable. Mr. Webb sold his stock in 1891. It was the only paper in Graham County for five years after Kelly got possession, and public printing with job printing, secured in Clifton, Morenci, Willcox, Globe and other towns kept everyone busy.

In 1903 Kelly sold the BULLETIN to J. F. Cleveland, and became interested with his son, W. B. Kelly, in the ownership of the CONSOLIDATED PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, owner of the BISBEE DAILY REVIEW. He then went to Douglas and started an afternoon paper, the DAILY INTERNATIONAL, with C. E. Bull, who had established the AMERICAN, a weekly, there. Afterwards, with his son, Kelly organized the STATE CONSOLIDATED PUBLISHING COMPANY, this company in 1907 purchasing the ARIZONA DAILY STAR and afterwards the PHOENIX DEMOCRAT. The DEMOCRAT was sold by the company in 1909, and in the latter part of 1910 the stock of this company was sold to the Phelps Dodge Company, that company assuming the STAR at Tucson and the REVIEW at Bisbee. Kelly then became the owner of two-thirds of the DAILY INTERNATIONAL at Douglas, and continued the publication of this paper until April, 1925, when the plant was sold to the DISPATCH PUBLISHING COMPANY.

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Major Kelly—as he was known in later years, the title being an honorary one on account of his many years in public life—was appointed to the office of Arizona State Historian by Gov. Geo. W. P. Hunt on January 1, 1923. He served continuously in that office with honor and distinction until his death. In 1926, he published a volume of Arizona history entitled "Legislative History of Arizona—1864-1912." He published the first number of the ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW, a quarter-



MAJOR GEO. H. KELLY

ly magazine, a state publication from the office of the Arizona State Historian, on April 1, 1928. This publication will, with this issue, finish its second successful year. It has met with such hearty support and approval that it will be continued.

### Early Life

Major Kelly early showed the characteristics which made him so valuable a citizen. He was born in Butler County, Missouri, on February 5, 1854, the son of John Garland and Rebecca Cash Kelly. The father died shortly after the Civil War, and young Kelly, with only a common school education, secured his first employment at the age of 13, to help in the support of his mother. This work was in a sawmill, a mile from his home, and consisted in taking slabs from the saw and cutting them in suitable lengths for feeding into the boiler furnace. In July, 1869, his mother secured employment for him as "devil" in the printing office of the BLACK RIVER NEWS, the first newspaper established in Butler County. The printing plant was a crude one which had been bought in Northern Arkansas, where it had been used in publishing a paper prior to the Civil War. It was an old "Cincinnati" press and had been exposed to the weather before it was brought to Missouri. Young Kelly's first job as "devil" was to scour the accumulated rust from the bed of this old hand-press, using a brick for the purpose, much as a carpenter uses a jack-plane. It took him more than a week to clean the press. Then he began "learning the case," and was soon setting type. Shortly afterward his mother secured the contract for bringing the weekly mail to Poplar Bluff from the old military road, ten miles away, over which a daily mail route went from St. Louis to Little Rock, Arkansas. He had a good horse on which he rode with the mail sacks on Saturday mornings, and his return about one o'clock in the afternoons was always eagerly looked forward to by a goodly portion of the town's population, waiting for letters and papers. When this mail service was increased to a daily service, he dropped out and continued as printer on the BLACK RIVER NEWS. The paper had few subscribers, its principal support coming from county and court advertising. When young Kelly had been working on the paper about two years his mother died, and within a short time his sister passed away, and he was left without a home. Dr. Poplin, then sole owner of the BLACK RIVER NEWS, took the boy into his home. About 1873 Dr. Poplin became so involved financially that he lost everything he had, including the BLACK RIVER NEWS. Before the crash, however, he put a bill of sale

to one-half interest in the newspaper on record in favor of young Kelly, "for wages due." A bright young lawyer, named Andrew Gibboney, had arrived in Poplar Bluff about that time to engage in the practice of law, and Kelly went to him and proposed that he, Gibboney, buy the other half interest in the NEWS and edit the paper while Kelly did the mechanical work. Gibboney agreed, and at a public sale he bought the newspaper half interest for \$250. At the succeeding election Gibboney, elected county attorney, made Kelly a present of his half-interest in the newspaper, the name having been changed to the POPLAR BLUFF CITIZEN.

On March 4, 1875, George H. Kelly and Alice Valera Beatty, of Carrollton, Missouri, were married, and to them a son and daughter were born, both of whom survive.

Kelly continued the publication of the POPLAR BLUFF CITIZEN until about 1883, when he sold out and went with his family to Texas, where for several years prior to his coming to Arizona, he published the ROCKDALE MESSENGER, under contract with Enoch Breedin, the owner and a practicing attorney.

#### Death Ends Honorable and Honored Career

In company with his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Rawlins, of Globe, Major Kelly had gone to Douglas and Tombstone on October 23, expecting to attend the big Tombstone Helldorado celebration, of which his grandson, W. H. Kelly, editor of the TOMBSTONE EPITAPH, was a moving spirit. The Major became ill while on this trip, but was able to return to Phoenix where he entered a local hospital for rest and observation. An attack of pneumonia about five years ago left him with an organic heart trouble, and during recent months heart attacks had been occurring with greater frequency, each one leaving him just a bit feebler. Owing to his advanced years, and the severity of these attacks, his condition soon became alarming, and while he rallied several times, there was little hope of his ultimate recovery, and he passed away after a valiant two weeks' fight against the disease from which he had been a sufferer for years. His son and daughter were in constant attendance on their father since he was stricken, and they, with other relatives, were at his bedside when the end came.

The body, under honor guard by order of Gov. John C. Phillips, lay in state in the rotunda of the capitol building from 10 to 11 o'clock Tuesday morning, November 12. Flags on state

buildings flew at half-mast until after the funeral which was held in Douglas, the home of the Kellys for many years, on Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Honorary pall-bearers at the services in Phoenix were Gov. John C. Phillips, H. S. Van Gorder, H. R. Tritle, James Bark, George Short, E. A. Tovrea, B. A. Packard, Col. W. C. Breakenridge, J. W. Spear, Scott White, Judge A. G. McAlister, Congressman Lewis W. Douglas, Tom C. Foster and Con P. Cronin. Active pall-bearers were M. C. Hankins, secretary Arizona Highway Commission; E. A. Hughes, chairman State Tax Commission; R. B. Sims, chairman Arizona Industrial Commission, Mike Cassidy, assistant Secretary of State; Loren Vaughn, chairman Corporation Commission, M. J. Hannon, speaker house of representatives. Honorary pall-bearers at the services in Douglas were Dr. F. T. Wright, S. P. Applewhite, J. W. Hunt and former Mayor William Adamson, all of Douglas, and M. J. Cunningham of Bisbee. Active pall-bearers were Judge Albert M. Sames, of the Superior Court; Mayor A. C. Karger, James Logie, of the DOUGLAS DAILY DISPATCH, and personal representative of Governor Phillips at the funeral; Charles A. Stauffer, General Manager of the ARIZONA REPUBLICAN, of Phoenix; Folsom Moore, manager of the BISBEE DAILY REVIEW, and William Hattich, now a resident of Los Angeles, a former newspaper publisher of Tombstone and pioneer friend of Major Kelly. The funeral service was in charge of the officers and members of the Mt. Moriah Lodge of Masons, with whom Major Kelly had been identified over a long period. The services at the chapel of Porter and Ames were brief but impressive. There were two songs, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and "Nearer My God to Thee," by a mixed quartet. At the request of the Masonic lodge, Rev. Herbert E. Hays, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, gave a scripture reading and prayer. The body was laid beside that of his wife, who died in September, 1924.

The surviving relatives are the daughter, Jennie Valine Rawlins (Mrs. Charles L.), of Globe; the son, William Beatty Kelly, owner and publisher of the Kelly chain of newspapers with headquarters in Safford; five grandchildren: George H. Rawlins, associated with his father in the practice of law at Globe; William H. Kelly, Tombstone, editor of the TOMBSTONE EPITAPH; Mrs. Mildred Kelly Stevens, South Gate, California; Lt. Samuel Guernsey Kelly, U. S. N., stationed at San Diego, and Alice Jane Kelly, Phoenix. Five great-grandchildren also survive.

### Tributes From the Press

From all over the state the press and many private citizens paid glowing tribute to Major Kelly.

The *BISBEE DAILY REVIEW* says: "Some years ago Major Kelly retired, marked 'thirty' on his last piece of newspaper copy, closed his desk and quit the newspaper business. For four decades his pen had wielded a mighty influence in the State of Arizona. A pioneer among the pioneers, to him was given vision of the future things in Arizona. Consorting with the greatest builders that the territory has known, he saw the growth of the territory and of the state, long before it became a reality. His faith never faltered; his vision was never blurred. To him Arizona was a commonwealth of unbounded possibilities. And—true pioneer that he was—he put his shoulder solidly to the wheel; he pointed a versatile pen with confidence and truth, and made things happen in Arizona—made dreams come true."

From the *DOUGLAS DAILY DISPATCH*: "The acknowledged dean of newspapermen of Arizona, Major Kelly had been active in helping develop the history of territory and state and through that experience he had built up one of the largest and happiest acquaintances of any man in the state. Both politics and civic affairs engaged his attention and effort, and the only question that Major Kelly asked about any project was to determine that it was clean, meritorious, and that it offered possible benefits for the community. He insisted that those projects to which he gave his support should be clean in their objectives and methods of attaining it. Zealous, he was always modest. Of flexible faith when he was convinced of the worth of a cause, he was untiring to attain his ends.

"Major Kelly, from his earliest appearance upon the scene in what is now the State of Arizona, turned to active effort in public matters, yet he never sought public office, and the only office he ever held was that of state historian, to which position he was appointed by former Governor G. W. P. Hunt. A democrat, he neither sought nor gave quarter in political contests, yet he gained the reputation of being a fair and honorable combatant. In politics he was 'patient of toil; serene amidst alarms,' and for those reasons held an influential place in the councils of his party.

"Elevated to the post of state historian by a democratic governor, he was rendered singular tribute by Governor John C. Phillips last January when the state administration changed, Governor Phillips retaining him in that post. It was a position

for which his experience as a pioneer had provided a rare background, and it was regarded as fitting by his friends throughout the state that his intimate and accurate knowledge of the history of Arizona should be thus made an asset to the state by his retention in the historian's office.

"In the passing of Major Kelly, one of the delightful personages of the state has gone, yet that he had been granted his full measure of three score and ten years takes something of the sting of sorrow because he had made them fruitful years in helping to build a better and brighter community in which to live."

From the lips of William "Bill" Hattich, pioneer Arizona newspaper man and long-time friend of Major Kelly's, and who came from his home in Los Angeles upon receipt of news of the Major's death, comes this: "The pen that labored so influentially and continuously to the end is no longer guided by the hand of our venerated and beloved pioneer. He spent himself bountifully in loyal and faithful service, but the citizenry of Arizona will ever cherish his memory and work in profound regard and appreciative esteem."

The PRESCOTT COURIER says, in part: "In his long newspaper career, most of which was spent as a publisher, Major Kelly never knowingly allowed a publication under his direction to contain an untrue statement, or to stain the printed page with scandal or sordid truth wherein the pangs of grief for some unfortunate person were carried. At Solomonville, Tucson, Bisbee and Douglas, where he was in the 'newspaper game,' he left no enemies, but was enriched by numerous friendships that never waned."

The TUCSON CITIZEN, upon which Major Kelly worked just forty years ago, has this to say: "In the death of Major Kelly, Arizona loses its most distinguished journalist and publicist. He was essentially a publicist. Although he held, at the time of his death, the office of state historian, the attraction of the office—the only one he ever held—for him was the opportunity it gave him to continue writing, and the theme was one which he loved—Arizona and its people. When he vacated the editorial tripod from which he had reviewed the passing scene and disposed of his newspaper interests, he was offered and accepted the congenial post of historian of the state, where he was able to authoritatively summate the history of his time. Under his editorship, the ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW was established. To him it was an evangel to perpetuate the brave story of the early days and to the task he brought the editorial



skill of a lifetime of work in the profession of writing. The result was that the Historical Review became an archive of winnowed treasure famed beyond the borders of the state, a reliable source to which the story-makers and the saga-singers of the future may confidently turn.

“Newspaper men are the cup-bearers of life, in the service of their fellows, and the sophistication is a bitter brew. They are brought into contact with life’s seamy side, and to them are revealed more than to others its hypocrisies and vanities, its false faces and its masquerades. It is a revelation which is embittering to those who have not derived from experience a sweetening, saving philosophy. That Major Kelly had that invisible armor of faith in human nature and love for his fellow mortals was glowingly evident to all who came into contact with them, for it was reflected in a visage which, whatever the vicissitudes, was ever lighted by that inner illumination which we call faith. He walked among men as a radiant spirit, and his passing leaves an after-glow of cherished memories for his fellows.”

The ARIZONA BLADE-TRIBUNE at Florence, says: “In the death of Major George H. Kelly, veteran newspaperman and state historian, the State of Arizona has lost one of its best and most highly respected citizens. A man of courage to express his convictions on questions of the day, he wielded a powerful influence through his editorial sayings for better in civil and political life.”

The ARIZONA SILVER BELT says that “it was for the qualities of the heart, rather than of the mind, that those who knew Major Kelly best, loved him most. His gentleness, invariable kindness, and unflinching consideration for others, were distinguished characteristics.”

From the PHOENIX GAZETTE: “Journalism in Arizona is better for George H. Kelly’s association with it. His newspapers reflected the character of their editor.

“Major Kelly politically was a democrat and firmly believed in the ethics of that party. But he was too big a man to be unalterably committed to party lines, and it is not recorded that he ever criticized unjustly a member of another political faith.

“Arizona has lost a builder and the newspaper profession has lost an exemplar.”

The WINSLOW DAILY MAIL, of which the Giragi Brothers, former owners of the TOMBSTONE EPITAPH, now owned by William H. Kelly, the Major’s grandson, are the pub-

lishers, has this to say: "George Kelly, Arizona's beloved chronicler, both made and recorded the history of this state. He made it, as founder, publisher and editor of some of Arizona's sturdiest newspapers, which have helped shape the political destinies of this new commonwealth. He recorded it as state historian and publisher of the ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW.

"What Arizona newspaperman has not been cheered when old Major Kelly breezed into the office, always with some good story or another for the paper! He was a member of the guild—and he never tried to foist a 'bum story' upon a fellow-craftsman! When he cast his sharp eye over the front page of a sheet, his criticism was in the kindly spirit of Correggio—"I, too, am a painter!" "

The COCONINO SUN says that "in the passing of Major George H. Kelly, state historian, Arizona loses a sturdy old pioneer and a most lovable man. Few men were better informed on the early struggles of Arizona. It was the great aim of his life that the state he loved and the state that loved him should have its history recorded in order that generations to follow might know of the handicaps encountered by the great-hearted, stalwart, early-day men and women.

"The friendships he made grew with each succeeding year and held fast until the end."

The ARIZONA REPUBLICAN says in part: "Though advanced in years, he preserved to the last a youthful spirit. One of his outstanding characteristics, one which especially endeared him to those with whom he was brought into contact, was his unremitting cheerfulness and his heartfelt geniality.

"Though a few years ago he disposed of his newspaper interests and retired from the profession, he was still regarded as a fellow-craftsman. Moreover, he created a journalistic tradition which has extended through two generations of his family.

"Though a retired newspaper man, he died in harness—as state historian, a position for which his training had admirably fitted him and whose duties he discharged with credit to himself and with advantage to the state."

### An Appreciation

In the death of Major George H. Kelly, State Historian, Arizona has lost one of its most valued and best loved citizens.

In many respects Major Kelly typified that Spirit of the West to which Arizona owes so much. Kindly and unassuming, yet courageous and devoted, his life was an example of unselfish effort for public service and the welfare of those about him.

As Dean of Arizona newspapermen, Major Kelly had an influence which was ever exerted for the progress of the State he had helped to make, and for the happiness of its people. As State Historian, he did much to preserve all that was fine in Arizona's colorful past.

The Arizona Press Club takes this means of paying a last tribute to an outstanding leader and beloved comrade whose memory will always be enshrined in the hearts of all who knew him.

JACK LYNCH, President.

E. O. WHITMAN, Secretary.

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Judge Albert M. Sames, of the Cochise County Superior Court, delivered the eulogy, a beautiful and eloquent tribute, at the funeral of his long-time friend. Judge Sames said:

“Wadsworth has said:

‘But when the great and good depart  
what is it more than this—  
That man who is from God sent forth  
Doth yet again to God return?  
Such ebb and flow must ever be  
Then wherefore should we mourn?’

“The sudden passing of a friend and neighbor has summoned us to gather here today to bow to his memory and for a word of parting.

“Perhaps our departed friend was endeared to most, if not all of us because, in the main, his experiences and aims in life were those which most appeal to us and which we are wont to extol.

“It was my good fortune to meet this kindly gentleman nearly thirty years ago. With his friendly commendations I was encouraged to do some work in spare hours on his publication in an adjoining county, at the time. I value the friendship that grew out of and has continued ever since that meeting. I never knew of a malignant or ignoble utterance to fall from his lips or emanate from his facile pen. He struggled upward with high aims and purposes of life and calling and attained the heights.

“George H. Kelly was an exemplary and public-spirited public citizen; he was an ornament to his profession and a valued contributor to the historical records and literature of the

state. He was a patient, affectionate and devoted husband and father; a warm and loyal friend, a man of education and refinement whose word was as good as his bond—one proud and active in the affairs of his city, county and state—one whose kindly personality in all his relationships endeared him to all with whom he came in contact.

“To those who have known him long and well—his unflinching pleasantness of manner and congeniality—his happiness with life and interest in affairs, perhaps his words of parting might not be unlike those of another of gentle like and pleasant philosophies,

‘Life, we’ve been long together  
 Through pleasant and through cloudy weather  
 ’Tis hard to part when friends are dear  
 ’Twill cause a sigh, perhaps a tear  
 Then steal away, give little warning  
 Choose thine own time, say not goodbye  
 But in some brighter clime, bid me good morning.’ ”

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**Tribute From Governor Phillips**

Governor John C. Phillips says: “The passing of Major George H. Kelly leaves not only his friends but the entire state bereft. Others may speak of his ability as a newspaperman and writer, and I know this was great, but I want to speak about the nobility of his soul; the dignity and grace of his character.

“His was a cheerful and lovable nature; his presence was always welcome. His visits to my office were bright spots in the course of the day, and I thoroughly enjoyed his fine sense of humor. He possessed one of God’s greatest gifts—the gift of making friends, which after all means only the power of forgetting self and appreciating whatever is fine and noble in others.

“In the face of infirmities which overtook him of late years, he was courageous and cheerful. I believe he knew that the end was not far off, but he carried on with his usual smile, and his sense of humor never failed him.

“Major Kelly was not a reformer; he accepted men as they were and found the best in them ultimately. I miss him, but I feel that the world is a better place because he sojourned here for a time.”

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Intimate tributes are paid in the many personal letters received in this office. Former Governor Geo. W. P. Hunt,

who is touring the Orient, writes from Honolulu: "I learned with great regret and much sorrow of the death of Major George H. Kelly, who passed away shortly after my departure for the Orient. I have known the Major for many years, and his passing is a distinct loss to our state.

"In late years I had been very closely associated with Major Kelly, and the friendship that existed as a result of my intimate association with him had grown into an affectionate comradeship—for to know him as I knew him was to love, respect and admire him.

"His unselfish devotion to his friends, his state and his profession exemplified that great Christian principle 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' He had charity for all, and harbored ill-will toward none. His friendships were deep-seated and lasting, and he was truly a Christian by precept and example."

Dean Frank C. Lockwood, of the University of Arizona, writes: "I first met Major George H. Kelly in Douglas during the World War, and from that day until the time of his death my admiration and love for him grew. He was a bland, cheerful, kindly and humane man. He was an ornament to his state and a friend to every worthy individual or cause. He was ideally fitted for the position of state historian and through his occupancy of that office he has left his definite impress in the records of the state. The ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW, which he conceived and started, is one of the most important incidents in the literary life of our Commonwealth."

John P. Clum, Indian agent in Arizona during the troublous early days, and now a resident of Los Angeles, writes: "The suggestion that a generous part of the ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW for January, 1930, be devoted to tribute of esteem and respect to the memory of its founder, seems most befitting.

"In the death of Major George H. Kelly, Arizona has lost an outstanding citizen, whose quiet but persistent influence has been a potent factor in the upbuilding of the new state.

"My personal intimate acquaintance with him was all too brief—only about two years—but I am deeply grateful for the memories of that brief friendship. Age and infirmities had already overtaken him, but he met these bravely and smiling—thankful for life and friends and wholesome memories. He took pains to reveal himself to his friends for exactly what he was, and his guileless life kept him friendly with himself. His ster-

ling character combined those noble qualities of justice and gentleness and good-will and self-sacrifice, and his life was replete with deeds that enobled his own soul. That was the secret of his resistless personality; that is why he was so well beloved.

“Life’s evening twilight found him patient, kindly and considerate of others. In those more frequent and serious heart attacks during his last year he surely discerned the beckoning finger of the Grim Reaper, but he remained unperturbed—equally well prepared for life or for death—and he awaited the final summons serene and unafraid.

“We mourn the loss of a worthy, sincere and helpful friend.”

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### Hail! Farewell! Adieu!

#### A Tribute

Why are his friends all silent?  
 Why are their eyelids red?  
 Why are the church bells tolling?  
 And the marching with silent tread?  
 Why are his friends all grieving  
 At the close of his perfect day,  
 When he folded his hands at three score ten  
 And silently passed away?  
 Pioneer of the eighties!  
 Dean of newspapermen!  
 Friend of all the people,  
 Fluent with voice and pen.  
 Honored as state historian,  
 In our capitol his bier,  
 Lying in state 'neath the splendor  
 Of our flag at half-mast here.  
 Blessed are you, his children,  
 For a father so kind and true,  
 And we friends who loving are legion—  
 Wish him Hail! Farewell! Adieu!

—Dan R. Williamson.