

AT REST.

Biographical sketch of Dr. Van Aernam.

Was born in the town of Marcellus, Onondaga Co., N. Y., March 11, 1819. He was the sixth child and fifth son of Jacob B. and Hannah (Wallace) Van Aernam. His paternal ancestors emigrated from Holland to the American colonies, and settled near Albany prior to the Revolution, his grandfather taking active part in the struggle for independence, and his son, Jacob B., imitating the worthy example of his patriotic sire, actively participated in the war of 1812. His maternal ancestors brought with them from amid the Highlands of Scotland that indefeasible inheritance, a love of liberty, stronger than the love of life. Jacob B. Van Aernam, the father of Henry, removed with his family from Marcellus to Little Valley (now Mansfield,) in the spring of 1822, when the subject of this sketch was three years of age. Surrounded by an unbroken wilderness, hampered by poverty and the pressing necessities of a large family of dependent children, the parents of young Henry could furnish but limited facilities for an education; nothing, in fine, save the great volume of nature thrown broad open by the Creator's hand. Thus he struggled on, with "here a line and there a precept," until he was ten years of age, before he ever entered even the most primitive of common schools. But nature had planted within him the germs of more than ordinary intellectual powers, and these would vegetate and grow despite the hindrances of cold neglect, and the multitude of adverse circumstances by which he was surrounded.

In the fall of 1829 and the winter of 1830 he attended a common district school for the first time, and continued to attend during the summer and winter terms until the autumn of 1831. Possessed of more than ordinary powers of analytical reasoning, readily deducing results from legitimate causes, and, withal, possessed of a laudable ambition to excel in intellectual attainments, his progress was rapid and his natural and acquired abilities extraordinary for one of his years and limited opportunities. In the winter of 1834, at the age of sixteen years, we find him at what is now West Salamanca, measuring with dignified strides, the length and breadth of the rough plank floor of a dingy edifice, twirling between his finger and thumb as a token of authority, the ubiquitous ferule, and rejoicing in the distinctive title of the "schoolmaster."

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first in his class, and his determination to overcome the impediments by which he was surrounded challenged the admiration of all.

At the close of his academic studies in 1841, he entered as a medical student the office of Levi Goldsborough, in the village of Waverly, N. Y. One of the prevailing characteristics of young Van Aernam was that of positiveness, never assuming hypothetical or ambiguous conclusions, discarding as dangerous every theory not fully established by a thorough and searching investigation. As a medical student he was diligent, energetic and practical. Select almost to exclusiveness in his associations, with a constitution unimpaired by indulgence, with a mind naturally strong, improved by study and strengthened by application, and with moral principles fortified by an intuitive respect for the laws of God and man, he passed through the slippery paths of youth to dawning manhood without one blot to tarnish his reputation or his name. He attended medical lectures at Geneva College during the session of 1842-43, and soon after entered Willoughby College, Ohio, from which institution he graduated in 1845.

In the summer of 1845 he located at Burton (now Allegany,) and commenced the practice of medicine; and on the 30th day of November, 1845, he married Miss Amy M. Etheridge, a lady in every particular worthy to share the honors and good fortune which have subsequently fallen to their lot. He continued in the practice of his profession at the latter place until March, 1848, when he removed to Franklinville, where he still resides. During a period of nine years, until the autumn of 1857, he devoted his time and talent to the practice of his profession, and by his fidelity and practical skill he secured an extensive patronage and the unbounded confidence and esteem of all who came within the circle of his acquaintance. At the general election in the fall of 1857, he was elected to represent the First Assembly District of Cattaraugus County in the State Legislature, and the fidelity with which he guarded the rights and interests of his constituents has become a matter of history, and needs no repetition in this connection. At the close of the Legislative session in the spring of 1858, he returned to his home and again resumed the practice of his profession, with a growing popularity and a more extended field of usefulness. During his whole professional career, Dr. Van Aernam has never known any distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, but wherever disease and physical suffering found a lodgment he cheerfully adopted that as his field of labor, without one thought of personal consequences to

to test with such giant force the strength of American institutions. Dr. Van Aernam threw the whole energies of his mind and might for the Union intact, popular freedom and popular rights. He labored zealously to encourage enlistments, and contributed liberally to alleviate the necessities of those who had been deprived of their natural supporters by the exigencies of the war. Under the call for troops in the summer of 1862, he was recommended to the Governor as a suitable person for the important position of regimental surgeon, and in August he was ordered to report at Jamestown, where he was examined, approved, commissioned with the rank of major, and assigned to the 154th Regiment of Infantry. On arriving at the front, in the fall, he was soon made surgeon of brigade. In the fall of 1863 he was made medical director of the 2nd division, 11th Army Corps. In March, 1864, by a consolidation of the 11th and 12th Army Corps with a large detachment of Rousseau's Kentucky troops, the 20th Army Corps was formed, and placed under the command of Gen. Hooker; this meant "business," and Van Aernam went with the Army Corps.

He not only followed the fortunes of the army through its various marches and campaigns, but served upon the operating staff during the battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wauhatchie, Chattanooga, Blaggold, Rocky-Faced Ridge, Resaca, Dallas, New Hope Church, Kenesaw Mountain, Peach-Tree Creek, and Atlanta. Here, entirely worn out with fatigue, and unable longer to sustain the constant draught upon his physical constitution he resigned his commission, on surgeon's certificate of disability, after an active service of more than two years, and left Atlanta, Ga., on the last hospital train, Nov. 8, 1864. Late in the fall he reached home, feeble in health, to find himself member-elect to the Thirty-ninth Congress from the Thirty-third District of New York. He was re-elected in 1866, and his official record as the people's representative has already passed into history, and the approbation of an intelligent and appreciative constituency of his Congressional career have been significantly recorded.

Soon after the inauguration of President Grant, in 1869, Dr. Van Aernam was nominated and confirmed as Commissioner of Pensions. At the election in the fall of 1878, he was again elected to the office of representative in our National Congress. The dazzling glow of most men is enhanced by the altitude they attain, through official station, above the plane of ordinary life.

In 1880 he was stricken with paralysis and for the past five years has been confined to his house, and invalid



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In 1880 he was stricken with paralysis and for the past five years has been confined to his house, and invalid chair; until quite recently his mind has been as active as ever and he has taken great interest in passing events. After all these weary years of pain and sorrow the end came on the first day of spring, and the spirit that had so long been a controlling influence in this part of the state passed quietly away.

The grandest tribute that we can pay to the memory of the man is to say that no man has ever held as large a place in the hearts of the people of Cattaraugus County as that held by Henry Van Aernam.

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