

Nebraska City, the home which he selected seven and forty years ago. At all times a prominent and controlling force in that prosperous town, it is almost entirely indebted to him and to his four sons for the great prosperity which it has enjoyed in these later years. Mr. Morton's great memorial in Nebraska City, and that which will be most enduring as an evidence of public spirit and grasp of the needs of future generations, is found in the beautiful park which bears his name, and which he donated to the city many years ago.

Mr. Morton's life in Nebraska has been dominated for nearly half a century by his example as well as by his precepts in the upbuilding of a strong and useful citizenship in our state and section. He has been for all these years essentially a farmer. The practical gospel as to how to raise fine men and women, fine trees, fine apples, fine cattle, fine horses and fine swine, has been preached by him in season and out of season through all of our remarkable growth and advancement. The result and influence upon our people for good cannot be measured in words. Nothing escaped him in giving encouragement to the material development of the state, and agriculture, horticulture and arboriculture have been his constant themes.

As early as the 4th of January, 1872, at a meeting in Lincoln of the State Board of Agriculture, he introduced the following:

"Resolved, That Wednesday, the 10th day of April, 1872, be and the same is hereby especially set apart and consecrated for tree planting in the State of Nebraska, and the State Board of Agriculture hereby name it Arbor Day; and, to urge upon the people of the State the vital importance of tree planting, hereby offer a special premium of \$100 to the agricultural society of that county in Nebraska which shall, upon that day, plant properly the largest number of trees; and a farm library of \$25 worth of books to the person who on that day, shall plant properly the greatest number of trees."

The resolution was passed after some discussion of an amendment introduced by the late Chief Justice Oliver P. Mason, supported by J. H. Masters, which proposed to strike out the word "Arbor" and insert "Sylvan," but Mr. Morton insisted that the word "Sylvan" would apply only to forest trees, while the word "Arbor" would include all trees, hedge and shrubbery. At the close of the debate it was unanimously determined to call the new-born anniversary "Arbor Day."

This was the crowning achievement, as I believe in his own estimation, of Mr. Morton's important and influential life. His name is known in connection with "Arbor Day" the civilized world

over. Arbor Day and Arbor Day festivals are in vogue in most of the states and cities of the union, and countless millions of trees are growing under the influence of his organization of Arbor Day, in our own and other countries, where no trees were ever known to grow before. It has led up to the study of planting trees as a practical economic necessity, and for the higher work of educating the people in the love of the beautiful in nature on a scale, and to an extent, that could never have been achieved without it.

The true trend of Mr. Morton's mind was distinctly altruistic. He had an innate love of the good and the beautiful, and a corresponding contempt for the false and frivolous. Eminently practical and utilitarian in spirit, he blended in happy harmony a cultivated taste with a devotion to the principle of economy and thrift in the homes of the people, in which he found the real sources of their happiness and the true strength of the nation.

#### PERSONAL TRIBUTES.

From J. M. Woolworth, Omaha.

It is an interesting experience to begin one's career along with the planting of a new society on a virgin soil, and, afterwards, in a large measure, to direct its growth and frame and mould its institutions, and, at last, at a ripe age, rejoice in what one has done in the splendid work of building a prosperous and enlightened sovereign state. The retrospect and the fruition must be exhilarating. That experience and happiness fell to the lot of Mr. Morton.

As soon as the treaty had been made with the Indians, extinguishing their title to the territory which was to become Nebraska, he turned his eyes to the new land. He was encouraged by the Honorable Lewis Cass, who had the same experience. A warm friend of Mr. Morton's father, this great statesman was deeply interested in the young man, for whom he hoped that a career would be opened in the new country somewhat like his own. As soon as Congress passed the Act organizing the Territory, Mr. Morton and his young wife set out for the land where their home was to be. She shared his spirit of adventure and entered into the new life with great zest. They went first to Bellevue, and, after a year, removed to Nebraska City. On the borders of the little hamlet, they "claimed" a quarter section of the public domain, built their little house, and, as soon as the United States Land Office was opened, preempted it. In due time, the government patent was issued.

\* \* \* \* \*

These facts are not set out with any view to an account of his life. If that were the purpose, they should be illus-

trated in a narrative of many incidents and reflections. That is a task wisely committed to Dr. Miller. They are stated here, only to show how large a part he took in public affairs, and in what ways he reached the public intelligence and conscience. As we see him addressing his fellow-citizens in political conventions and in popular meetings and from the Editor's Chair, always with peculiar power, we ask what were the convictions which he sought to impress upon the public mind.

He had a definite creed of political doctrine which he strongly conceived, never wavered in expounding, and put forth the utmost of his powers in its advocacy. Underneath all his wit and sarcasm, there was always a serious purpose to teach and impress upon the public what he honestly believed to be the truth.

The fundamental principle of all Mr. Morton's political opinions was the largest possible liberty of the individual citizen, the converse of that doctrine, that the proper functions of government are limited to the maintenance of good order. He believed that a political system constructed on this theory must encourage, stimulate and give scope for the development of the powers, faculties and capacities of the citizen, and morally and mentally, as well as industrially, make him more and more a man. This was his idea of freedom. Anything less than this, he was sure, only tended to impair the vigor, powers and aspirations of the individual.

But this man had another side; and he impressed himself in another very different way upon the public mind. The asperities of political controversies in which he engaged, formed a background to the gentlest qualities. The fact has been mentioned that he preempted a quarter section of public land on which he lived for almost half a century. This rare experience was much to him and he knew its full value. It takes time for the affections to fasten themselves strongly to an inanimate object; associations binding us to them by many experiences of joy and sorrow must be gathered year after year, and be multiplied many times before those objects become dear and tender to us. At last they become alive, taking part in our joys and sorrows, bringing back incidents, experiences, emotions and aspirations of the past as if they were new and fresh. By his ownership of these acres and by years of life upon them and the thousand associations which bound him to them, they became more to Mr. Morton than all the world beside.

\* \* \* \* \*

But he did a great deal more than set before the eyes of his people this example of home and home-making. On all occasions, in speech and conversation and the columns of his papers, he