

[Barstow, Caleb]

## CALEB BARSTOW

Mr. Caleb Barstow, who, in his time, occupied a position in the mercantile world similar to that now held by Mr. William E. Dodge or Mr. A. A. Low, died at 2 o'clock yesterday morning at his home in Brooklyn, aged 85 years. He was born in Mattapoisett, Mass., March 8, 1795, and came to this City in 1810. Two years later he entered the shipping house of Howland & Grinnell as a junior clerk. Soon afterward the firm was dissolved, Mr. Grinnell retiring, and Mr. Howland carried on the business in his own name until 1818, when he admitted Mr. Barstow into partnership under the style of J. H. Howland & Co. In 1828 Mr. Barstow and his cousin John founded the new firm of C. & J. Barstow, carrying on the same general business. They were part owners and agents of the first regular line of packets between this port and New-Orleans. Afterward, Mr. Joshua L. Pope was admitted to the firm, which continued until 1849, when Mr. Caleb Barstow retired with a large fortune. The habits of 40 years, however, did not permit him to remain long idle, and in 1860 he accepted the Presidency of the Arctic Fire Insurance Company, serving in that capacity three years. On May 1, 1856, he was chosen President of the St. Nicholas Bank, a position which he continued to hold until 1874. He was a man of over-accommodating disposition, and this was taken advantage of by false friends in his old days, with the result of rendering him penniless. In person he was considerably below the medium height, and was slight of figure. Throughout his life his habits were of the most abstemious kind, and to this may be ascribed that fact that he never knew a day's sickness until the last. His death was the result of pure physical decay. He was a fervent Universalist, and in the days of his prominence was the principal figure in that denomination in Brooklyn. The Church of the Redeemer<sup>1</sup> of which he was for many years the Treasurer, owed its establishment and prosperity mainly to the funds supplied from his private purse. His charity and generosity were unbounded, and his public spirit of the most self-sacrificing character. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce for 55 years, having been elected on Sept. 6, 1825. Of all the gentlemen who joined that body between its organization in 1817 and 1833, but two now survive—William F. Carey and Charles H. Russell...Mr. Barstow served as Vice-President of the Chamber from 1852 to 1855, and then modestly refused an invitation to accept the Presidency...He was the most prominent champion of the effort to repeal the Usury laws. On this subject he wrote so much that it came to be regarded as a mania with him. Although an entirely self-educated man, some of his arguments were publicly pronounced in the British House of Parliament the best ever promulgated in favor of free trade in money. He lived to see, as the fruit of his labors, the repeal or modification of the obnoxious laws in 10 States of the Union. He was Chairman of a committee appointed by the Chamber to frustrate the designs of a Ring of real estate speculators who had plotted to secure the removal of the Post Office up town to a plot of ground of which they had secured the refusal. After four years of labor, the committee succeeded. He leaves a widow unprovided for. The couple were childless. His funeral will take place from the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Joshua L. Pope, No. 519 Henry-street, Brooklyn, at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

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<sup>1</sup> should be Church of Our Father. Interestingly, he was involved in a lawsuit with this congregation and his obituary in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on 21 May 1880 makes no reference at all to his Universalist affiliation.