

[Sterling, James]

The late James Sterling

James Sterling is dead: that massive form, so familiar in this community, has passed to its last resting place. That genial spirit and bright intellect have returned to the God that gave them. The monuments of his creation will remain and become a part of the history of our country. Sadly do we deplore the wreck of that creative mind, long before the body was borne to its final home.

James Sterling was no ordinary man, and justly deserves a tribute from an abler pen than the writer's. He was the son of Daniel and Mary Bradford Sterling of Norwich, Connecticut, and was born in that town on the 25th of January, A.D. 1800.

On the paternal side, he was distantly related to the late Hon. Micah Sterling of Watertown, and on the maternal side descended from the Rev. James Fitch of Norwich, who immigrated to this country in the middle of the 16th century. She also descended from Gov. Bradford, who was one of the Puritan Fathers, who landed on Plymouth rock from the May Flower [sic], and whose name she bore until her marriage.

In the summer of 1804, Daniel Sterling with his wife and three sons left the shores of Long Island Sound and wended his way westward, and finally settled on a farm in the town of Antwerp, which he purchased of the late David Parish, and on which one of his sons now resides. Daniel Sterling at different times held the offices of Justice of the peace, Supervisor and County Judge, in the town of his adoption. Before the subject of this notice obtained his majority, he left his paternal home, and commenced for himself to carve out a fortune which the blight of a financial revulsion, in a single year, swept away, and from which he never recovered.

Many a field now waiving [sic] with luxuriant crops, are indebted to the axe of James Sterling for their present harvest. Many of the roads, the turnpikes and bridges of Antwerp and Rossie owe their creation to him, and the large blast furnaces of Sterlingville, Wegatchie, Sterlingbush and Lewisburgh, remain monuments of his indomitable energy, perseverance and capacity. While in the full tide of operation, with nearly all his furnaces in blast, came the great financial revulsion of the country. The foreign product of iron filled the American marts, and it fell to a nominal value, and finally failed to sell at any price. Thus, a large fortune vanished, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," and in its remorseless course carried with it the Iron King of Northern New York.

In the common acceptation of the term, James Sterling was a proud man, not haughty. He was kind and indulgent to his family until the malady which overtook him dethroned his reason. He was generous and noble when his

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means would permit; many public institutions felt the benefit of his munificence, and many a creditor's heart has been made glad by the payment of debts which a bankrupt law had discharged. Some relentless creditor may blame him for failing to do what he could not; but few of this class will ever rank with James Sterling in kindness of heart, in generosity, in benevolence, in charity, in kind hospitality, and many of the qualities which combine to make up a good man.

Soon after the general crash of his fortune, disease seized his susceptible frame, producing a softening of the brain, which no medical skill could avert, and he gradually sank until nature could hold out no longer, and finally died, July 23d, 1863, in the 64th year of his age.—*New York Daily Reformer*.

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