

WE MOURN.

Our City Loves a Loved and Ven-
erable Citizen.

Judge Sidney Breese---The
Nestor of the Illinois
Judiciary--is
No More.

Illinois Pays Homage to the Memory of Her
Illustrious Citizen, Jurist and
Statesman.

The Largest Gathering and the
Most Imposing and Impressive
Funeral Obsequies ever
Witnessed in South-
ern Illinois.

Brief Biographical Sketch of the Patriot,
Statesman and Jurist--The Father
of the Illinois Central Railroad.

*"When my last resting place shall
be marked by the cold marble which grati-
tude or affection may erect, I desire for it
no other inscription than this, that he who
sleeps beneath it projected the Illinois Cen-
tral Railroad."*—SIDNEY BREESE, 1850.

Our community mourns the loss of a great and good man. Judge SIDNEY BREESE, the eminent jurist and statesman, whose name is familiar to almost every person in Illinois, has been laid low by the icy hand of death. The sad intelligence of his sudden demise reached here last Friday morning by telegraph from Pinckneyville, this State, whither he had gone for the double purpose of making a visit among friends and relatives and to attend to some business. To say that this community, which had been his home for more than forty years, was shocked and grieved at the announcement, but feebly expresses the great sorrow felt. Though far advanced in years, his robust frame and cheerful spirits justified the belief and hope that he might remain with us for some years yet, and, indeed, when he left here about the first of June to attend the session of the Supreme Court at Mt. Vernon, which convened there on the first Tuesday in the month, he seemed to be in unusually good health and spirits. He was lively and cheerful, and neither his relatives nor friends here felt any uneasiness about his health, and little did they dream that when they bade him good-bye it was the last time they would ever see him alive. During his stay in Mt. Vernon he wrote home frequently, but in none of his letters did he make complaints of ill-health. The dispatch announcing his death was the first information received, and the shock it occasioned can only be imagined.

He breathed his last at the Sullivan House in Pinckneyville, at 11:30 P. M., Thursday, June 27th. He had gone to that place after the close of the recent session of the Supreme Court, as has been his wont for some years, to look after his landed interests in that vicinity, and to sojourn a few days with friends and relatives. On Wednesday and Thursday he seemed quite buoyant and cheerful, freely chatting with friends, and taking exercise morning and evening. Thursday was an excessively hot day, and that morning he walked to the property lately purchased by him in the western suburbs of the town, and which he was having neatly repaired, as a gift to his son and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. M. Breese, who reside in Pinckneyville. He dined with them, and walked back to the Sullivan House through the hot sun in the afternoon. Upon his arrival there he complained of a severe pain in his breast, but intending to start that afternoon at 5 o'clock for home, he went about attending to some business. While at the bank of Murphy, Wall & Co., the pain in his breast increased so that he lay down on the sofa in the bank office. His condition not improving any a physician was summoned, and he was removed in a conveyance to the Sullivan House, where the utmost attention was shown him. Dr. McCandless, Wm. M. Breese and his wife, the Misses Sullivan and others attended him, and did all in their power to make him comfortable. Shortly after 11 o'clock he awoke and said to his son, who was watching at his bedside, "I've been asleep," and, in answer to an inquiry as to how he felt, said he believed he was better. But in a moment he again fell asleep, and his deep, heavy breathing caused those present to feel great alarm about his condition, and his son started at once to summon the doctor. When he returned with the doctor all was over; the sleep he had fallen into was the sleep of death; the spirit of that great and good man had left its tenement of clay and flown to the Great Beyond. His last moments were as calm and peaceful as the sleep of a child. In the language of the immortal poet, whose death preceded his but a few days, the pure and noble jurist and statesman

Approached his grave

Like one that draws the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

His sudden death in their midst was a terrible shock to the people of Pinckneyville. They loved him, and they showed the great esteem which they felt in many ways. Almost the entire population followed the remains to the depot when taken to the train to be conveyed to this place, and a delegation accompanied the corpse to East St. Louis, prominent among whom were Judge George W. Wall, Hon. W. K. Murphy and Hon. John Boyd. There they were met by a delegation from this place, but there being no connection on the O. & M. road, the funeral cortege was compelled to remain over night at the Relay Depot, during which time City Marshal Walsh, with ten deputies, and the members of the East St. Louis bar acted as a guard of honor over the remains of the illustrious dead. The cortege arrived at this place Saturday morning at 9:20 o'clock, and was met at the depot by many of our citizens, who marched in procession behind the hearse to the residence on West Franklin street.

Meetings of the various Societies of this place were held during the day and evening, and arrangements made for funeral obsequies that would be a fitting tribute to the memory of this truly great man. A citizens' meeting was also held at the Court-house, and Committees, composed of both ladies and gentlemen, were appointed, to act in concert with Committees appointed by the Bar Association and the Masons, to which latter Society privilege was given by the family of the deceased to conduct the funeral exercises. The ladies of our little city, assisted by a few gentlemen, performed the work assigned to them, that of preparing the floral offerings and draping the Court-house in mourning, in a manner that was really creditable to their taste and handiwork. The catafalque was erected in the center of the Court-house Hall, and was beautifully and elegantly draped, as were both sides of the hall and the front and rear entrances to the building. On Sunday at 10 o'clock A. M. the remains of the deceased, inclosed in a casket surrounded by ice, were removed by a deputation of citizens from the family residence to the Court-house and deposited in the temporary receptacle that had been prepared for them. Details of Masons stood guard at both entrances during the day and night, and on Sunday the place was visited by almost every man, woman and child in town, and many came in carriages from a distance to get a last look at the well-known features of the dead.

Monday morning dawned cloudy and threatening, still every train that arrived brought delega-

tions of distinguished citizens from all parts of the State, and but for the threatening weather, the intense heat, the uncertainty of making railroad connections, and the contradictory announcements in the daily papers as to the time the funeral would occur, the attendance, though greater than ever before assembled on a like occasion in Southern Illinois, would have been much larger. The early morning train arriving from the east brought representatives from the Masonic Lodges of Salem, Sandoval, Odin and Centralis, with Judge Shaw, of Olney, Judge M. C. Crawford and Judge John Dougherty, of Jonesboro. The trains from the west, the first arriving at 9:20 A. M. and the second at 9:50, contributed largely in augmenting the immense throng already moving about the streets. With the first came Judge G. W. Wall, Judge T. B. Tanner, Hon. R. A. D. Wilbanks, members of the St. Clair County bar, prominent among whom were Hon. John B. Hay, James M. Hay, Col. John Thomas and Hon. Charles Thomas, with creditable delegations of citizens and Masons from Trenton, Lebanon, O'Fallon and other towns. Several of the State officers, among them Gov. S. M. Cullom and Hon. T. B. Needles, and a large number of distinguished citizens, who came by special train from Springfield to St. Louis, arrived by the second train, their coaches being attached to the same at St. Louis. Governor Cullom and other distinguished personages accompanying him were taken to the residence of Hon. W. A. J. Sparks, and the several Judges of the Supreme Court were driven to the home of Hon. G. Van Hoorebeke. At 10:30 o'clock the special train from Chicago, containing some forty or fifty members of the bar of that city, arrived by the way of Odin, their train being provided with sleepers and a dining-car. Soon after the arrival of this train the multitude of people began to assemble in the Court-house Square, where it had been arranged to hold the services. The large space in the square facing the front entrance to the building soon filled with people, and the sidewalk adjacent was crowded. When the casket containing the remains of the deceased had been placed in position on the portico, and everything put in readiness for the officiating minister to begin, there were probably 2,000 people within the sound of his voice. Rev. J. P. T. Ingraham, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, St. Louis, officiated, and the services, conducted according to the rites of his church, were beautiful and impressive. The sermon was listened to with great attention, and was such as not only reflected credit upon the dignified minister who delivered it, but was such as did justice to the virtues of the truly great man over whose inanimate body it was spoken.

At the conclusion of the services in the Court-house Square the procession formed on Fairfax street, Col. George A. Bacon acting as Grand Marshal. The order was as follows:

The Carlyle Brass Band,
 The Members of the Masonic Lodge in Carlyle,
 with Representatives from many Neigh-
 boring Lodges.
 The Clergy.
 Hearse.
 Pall-Bearers.
 Family and Mourners.
 State Officers and Judges.
 The Carlyle Mannerchor.
 Members of the Bar.
 Odd Fellows.
 Carlyle Fire Company.
 Citizens on Foot.
 Citizens in Carriages.

The procession marched west on Fairfax street to Thirteenth, south on Thirteenth to Franklin, east on Franklin to Fifth, and thence north and east to the Carlyle Cemetery, where the body was interred with Masonic honors, Grand Master Robbins, of Quincy, conducting the ceremonies, and there in the family lot which he selected years ago, and by the side of several children who preceded him to the grave, the mortal remains of SIDNEY BREESE, the patriot, soldier, jurist and statesman, whose name will live in history for all time to come as a great and good man, were laid away to rest forever.

The pall-bearers were the four judges of the Supreme Court present, John M. Scott, of Bloomington; T. L. Dickey, of Chicago; John Scholfield, of Marshall; Benj. R. Sheldon, of Rockford; ex-Supreme Judge C. Beckwith, of Havana; Circuit Judge T. B. Tanner, of Mt. Vernon; Circuit Judges M. C. Crawford and John Dougherty, of Jonesboro.

The inscription on the casket was:

SIDNEY BREESE:
 Born,
 July 15, 1800;
 Died,
 June 27, 1878.

The Supreme Court of the State of Illinois has sustained a great loss in the death of the Hon. SIDNEY BREESE. He has been ailing for some years—being particularly troubled by one of his eyes—but nothing fatal was imminently expected and his sudden death was a painful surprise to the circle of his relatives and intimate friends, as well as to the people of the State, whose legal lore was enriched by his ability, and whose bench was honored by his stainless integrity. Up almost to the last day of his life Judge Breese was engaged in the onerous duties of his position, conscientiously fulfilling all, and preserving amid the winter snows of old age the enthusiastic fire of early youth.

He was born at Whitesborough, Oneida County, New York, on the 15th day of July, 1800, and, therefore, would have been 78 years of age had he lived to see his coming birthday.

His family was of Welsh extraction, and he combined in his nature the electric genius of the Cambrian race, somewhat softened and cooled down by the Saxon blood, which came from his mother's side of the house.

Union College, Schenectady, New York, had the honor of graduating the future gifted jurist in the year 1818. By that time he had acquired a thorough classical education, which was, in those days, considered indispensable to all who were ambitious of following a professional career. During his period of study at Union College, he became intimately acquainted with his fellow-student, Elias Kent Kane, who subsequently became Secretary of State for Illinois. Young Breese, even at that early day, found the Eastern States crowded for his purpose, and he bent his course toward the setting sun, encountering hardships and perils along his lonely road, following canal and forest and river and prairie until he arrived in Illinois about the time she was admitted into the constellation of the Union.

At Kaskaskia, the old Capital of this State, he met his friend and brother student, Elias Kent Kane, and, with him, entered upon the study of the law, at which he worked industriously for the usual term of years. But the bar, at the outset, gave the young New Yorker a rude set-back. He had not yet acquired the solidity which age brings with it, and had no reliance on his powers as an orator. In the fall of 1820 he opened as an advocate in the Court of Jackson County, and, in presenting his case, a comparatively important one, to the jury, made no impression, and an adverse verdict sent the mercury of his self-esteem down to the freezing point. He flung down his law-books, even as Bernardo del Carpio flung the false King, and sat him down for a short period in the dust of despair. But this was not a spirit to be easily broken by failure. He had all the elasticity of his Welsh descent, and, despite natural mortification at his ill-success in the opening of his professional life, kept up a good heart, showed a bold front, made many friends, and so, in 1821, became Postmaster at Kaskaskia, meanwhile prosecuting his study of the law with a tireless persistency that brought forth good fruit in after days. He soon tired of the Postoffice routine, and, in 1822, he sprang into public notice as attorney of the Second Circuit Court, the appointment having been conferred upon him by Governor Bond, who was not long in discovering his rare talents. This position he retained under Governor Coles, and also under Governor Edwards, and never failed to give high satisfaction to all classes of the people.

It was during this time that he made the science of law a profound study, and, in 1831, the bar was agreeably astonished by the issue of "Breese's Reports" of Supreme Court Decisions," the first book of any kind published within the limits of Illinois. It was a great success, and down to this day is a standard authority.

Judge Breese had within him, however, the dash and bravery of Llewellyn, his countryman, and when the Black Hawk war broke out, in 1833, the learned author once more threw down the volumes of the lawyer and drew sword as Major of a Regiment of volunteers, which went forth to fight in the Black Hawk war. As might be ex-

pected, he did not fail to distinguish himself fighting against the sturdy savages, who, before they were subdued, gave their white conquerors many a bloody lesson in the ruthless forest fray. Major Breese wore the silver leaves of a Lieutenant-Colonel, won by bravery in the field, when he returned and hung his sword above a copy of Blackstone, which lay on the mantel-piece of his apartment. He reposed upon his laurels for a short time, but the public did not lose sight of his ability and his services.

In 1835 he was called to the bench of the Second Circuit Court, and there displayed his characteristic fearlessness and honesty until 1841, when he was chosen to occupy the still higher and more responsible position of Associate Judge on the Supreme Bench of the State.

At this time the people looked around for a man to fill the position of Senator from Illinois in the National Congress. Breese was prevailed upon to lay aside the ermine and enter upon a political career. In the contest for Senatorial honors he was successful, and, in 1842, he was elected to the United States Senate for the full term, dating March 4, 1843, to the same day in 1849.

During his incumbency Senator Breese favored the annexation of Texas, and pressed that policy vigorously on the Government. He was fiercely opposed to conceding the Oregon boundary line to the claim of England, and was a sturdy disciple of the well-remembered principle which in those days used to "fire the American heart."—"54.40 or fight!"

The Senator also, notwithstanding Tom Corwin's astounding speech relative to the "hospitable grave," advised and advocated the victorious march of the American armies on the "Halls of the Montezumas." He believed in humbling Mexican pride at once and forever.

He was also a strong advocate of the selling of the lead mines by the Government to the people and to Companies, on the same principle as the public lands. A bill to this effect was prepared by him and pushed to its passage. Galena and other places felt the benefit of this legislation.

The Senator also originated the popular law which repealed the exemption from taxation of the public lands of the United States for five years after sale, thus rendering said lands taxable, like other property, and adding handsomely to the revenues of the State, which were, at that period, in a condition far from flourishing.

During his term he further served his State by bringing in a report favoring the grant of public lands to the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and indicating the central position of Chicago as the metropolitan market and receiving depot of America. This idea originated with him as early as 1835, but it was in the form of pre-emption. His term in the Senate was not renewed, and so to his successors, Shields and Douglas, was left the legacy of consummating the project. Douglas, especially, received the credit of having won the grant, but impartial history must award to Mr. Breese the honor of having been the first to see, in the then existing condition of affairs, the necessity for the national donation.

His ever active mind was always contemplating some grand plan for the benefit of his country, and he did not fail to advocate, in a powerful report, the building of a line of a railway from the great lakes to the Pacific ocean—a boldness of conception wonderful in times when a wilderness garrisoned by merciless savages extended from the Mississippi frontier to the boundaries of California. It was not, however, as an originator of railroads that the scholar and statesman was to win a pure fame that will send his memory down honored to posterity.

Judge Breese's claim to the originating of railroad schemes brought on a controversy between him and Senator Douglas, which was highly interesting to a generation passed, or rapidly passing, away. Breese's friends claim that Douglas did not treat him fairly in the matter. He was self-asserting and sarcastic without being convincing. Douglas complained that Breese put him in the position of a man who believed himself the father of a lovely child, which was the offspring of another man—a neighbor in the county of Bond. He did not, he said, in the matter of paternity need any help from his obliging neighbor in Bond county.

In spite of this smartness, Breese appeared to have had about the best of the battle, popular prejudice not being arrayed against him, from the fact that he and Senator Douglas were both extreme Democrats in politics.

In 1849, James Shields, fresh from Mexico, with wounds and laurels, defeated Breese in a contest for a new senatorial term. Then, as now, the wounded soldier appealed to American sympathy and conquered. It used to be said laughingly by the friends of Judge Breese, that the bullet that went through Shields' body at Cerro Gordo, killed the late Chief Justice. This was more figurative than true.

In 1850 he was induced to run for the legislature and was triumphantly returned. He was elected Speaker of the House and held the position with his usual pluck and brightness for several years. He rested a while from his public career, and, in 1855 the people took up their old favorite and made him judge of the Circuit Court.

A vacancy on the Supreme Bench afforded an opportunity for placing Judge Breese for a second time in that honored and honorable position. In the regular course of events, he attained by his wisdom, his learning, his purity, and his unblemished manliness, the position of Chief Justice, which he held for many years.

Judge Breese married in early life, Sept. 4, 1823, Miss Eliza Morrison, daughter of William Morrison, a native of Pennsylvania, who settled in Kaskaskia before Illinois left the territorial nebula and flashed in the stellar sublimity of the Union. Mrs. Breese, some eight years his junior, companion of his bosom for almost fifty-five years, is still living. A number of children—fourteen in all—blessed this union, only six of whom, four sons and two daughters, survive. The eldest, Mrs. E. P. McClurken, for some years a widow, has made her home with her father. His oldest son, Samuel Livingston, is a captain in the U. S. Navy, and but a few weeks ago, after an absence of some three years on duty, he, together with his wife, came to visit their parents, and are still here. It is sad, indeed, that they were not afforded the opportunity of seeing him alive. He was absent on their arrival, and death sealed his lips before the time he had appointed to return. The second son, Sidney S., lives in this place, and the next, William M., resides in Pinckneyville, and was with his father at the time of his death, while the youngest, James Buchanan, is a Lieutenant in the U. S. Marine Corps, and at the present time is in Paris on special duty. The youngest daughter, Alida, the wife of Dr. E. S. Ramsay, whom she married a few years ago, is living in Carlyle. While, occasionally, judicially stern and severe and unsparing, Judge Breese was, socially, one of the most genial of men, at least until his health began to fail a few years ago. He had much of the freshness of youth commingled with the fatherly dignity of age. In his social life he was as pure and noble as in his official career. He was an advanced Christian, liberal in all creeds, and hardly the servitor of any particular denomination.

During his later years much of the vehemence which often led him to crush a lawyer with the weight, not alone of his opinion, but of his in-
vective, departed, and in its stead there remained the dispassionate judgment of as honest a judge as it is possible for human nature to produce. To use the words of Elihu B. Washburne, his political opponent but judicial admirer, "The reports of the Supreme Court attest his profound knowledge of the law, the ripeness of his scholarship, and the peculiar grace of his diction. No judge who ever sat on the bench could touch the very heart and soul of a lawsuit with more unerring certainty, and his opinions will live so long as the jurisprudence of the state shall exist."

No nobler epitaph could be inscribed upon the tomb which shall enshrine the mortal relics of Sidney Breese, who, triumphing over the weight of years, fell a victim to the American scourge, which has numbered among its victims the noblest, the most gifted, and the most beautiful of the land, that many limbed monster—a physiological devil—"heart disease."

Laid in the soil of the splendid state which his genius has helped to ennoble and which his character has illumined with a purer ray than that of Grecian constancy and Roman virtue, all that is mortal of Sidney Breese, may coldly await the return to its temple, renovated and beautified, of the immortal spirit which shall summon that honored dust to the resurrection and the reward.