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A BIOGRAPHY OF THE REV. R. P. FARTHING.

Editor of the Democrat:

I saw in your valuable paper a few weeks ago, that the Rev. R. P. Farthing was dead, and I was pleased with your brief editorial, in which you recounted some of the many virtues which he possessed. Yet I had hoped, that either yourself or some other competent hand, would have at greater length portrayed not only the many virtues that adorned the life of the dead preacher, but that his learning and his intellectual parts would have been more fully elaborated. But nothing further appearing in the public print, so far as I have seen, I have from a sense of duty that I owe to my dead friend, concluded to write my opinion of the worth and merit of brother Farthing.

I knew him when I was a boy, and frequently heard him preach long before I was old enough to fully appreciate the breadth of his intellectual power. There were, however, two men about his age, and by the way of a different faith and order, who often heard him preach and did appreciate his wonderful theological efforts, and I often heard them speak of the masterly manner with which he handled the subject under consideration. I know now, and have long since known, that those men by their education and extensive reading, were fully competent to sit in judgment and pass upon the intellectual efforts of public speakers. Later in life I heard him only occasionally, but enough to know that he was a man of much more than ordinary learning, and the possessor naturally of a strong, incisive and brilliant mind. His early education was defective and only such as the common schools of the country of more than a half a century ago afforded. Yet I have been told that in early life he evinced a strong desire for the acquisition of knowledge, and after his majority he began the study of English grammar, and prosecuted it with such diligence and devotion that when I knew him he was one of the very best grammarians I ever knew. Nor did he neglect the cultivation of many of the other sciences, such as philosophy, astronomy, rhetoric and logic. He could discourse on all these sciences and many others as learnedly as though he had been a college professor all his life, nor yet was his thirst for knowledge satisfied. He turned into his toric field, and acquainted himself with the rise, progress and fall of the mighty empires of both ancient and modern times. I remember to have heard him preaching years ago at the old Cove Creek Baptist Church, and while I have forgotten his text, I remember some of his allusions to Alexander the Great in his Asiatic campaigns in which he recounted one battle after another with the a Rollin and with the fervor and brilliancy of a Phillips. He impressed me on

that occasion as being a man of superior learning and ability. I have said that his early educational advantages were limited, yet by study and close application he acquired the power of clothing his ideas in the most classic language. His pronunciation was accurate; his language chaste, and his grammatical constructions almost faultless. He was sometimes accused of being a little verbose, and perhaps he was, yet no one who knew, ever said that the words selected, though rather high-sounding, were inaccurate, nor that his sentences were wanting in their proper grammatical arrangements. Mr. Farthing was not uniformly a great preacher. Occasionally his sermons were of the highest order, and then again they would fall below mediocrity. This was owing to the fact, that he was averse to the preparation of his sermons. I have no doubt that if he had devoted the necessary time to their preparation, that he would have been a great preacher. He did not however oppose it in others, but he said he could not do it himself. Why he did not, was always a mystery to me, when at the same time I knew he was a close student and on most questions a very deep and accurate thinker. His colloquial powers were most wonderful, and in the social circle he was seen to the greatest advantage. I never knew any man on the forum undertake to measure arms with him. All, as if by mutual and common consent, listened to his wonderful fire-side lectures, and the only thing any one would dare to do, would be to ask a question or suggest a topic, and then away like the Arabian courser he would plunge into the most intricate questions, and with the most consummate skill would discuss them in all their various phases with the logical precision of an Aristotle.

I have said that he was a man of more than ordinary learning, and this may seem strange to many who knew that his early educational advantages were confined to the common schools of the country. Yet I assert, that he was a very scholarly man and was more deeply learned than many who had had the highest collegiate advantages. I read when a boy the life of the nation's great idol, Henry Clay, and soon thereafter, met with my old friend Robert Maxwell, a Scotchman, and by the way, a man of much varied information, and in the course of the conversation which followed I remarked that Henry Clay was not a scholar. "Ah," said he "you are mistaken." No said I, I am not, as his biographer says that his mathematical acquisition only extended as far as practice in the common school arithmetic, and that he had never studied grammar at school at all. He replied with emphasis and in his Celtic dialect, and exclaimed, "Did not Henry Clay know everything?" and

of course I was compelled to admit that he was a man of great wisdom. And he continued, I care not whether a man has had collegiate advantages or not, if he has read and mastered every thing pertaining to the whole range of science." I then denominated him a scholar. I at once saw and recognized the full force of the argument, and have never since thought or suggested that the great Kentuckian was not an educated man. And judging Mr. Farthing's attainments from the same stand point, I again assert, that he was in the true sense an educated man. In further confirmation of what I have said I desire to relate an incident.

A few years ago Dr. Anderson, of this place, (and by the way, the Dr. himself is a very scholarly man,) and a friend of his started on a mountain tour, and one day about noon called at a house on the banks of a beautiful river and enquired of a very aged man, who appeared in answer to their call, if they could get feed for their horse, they were answered in the affirmative, and one of the party and a boy went to feed the horse, and the other remained, and he and the old man at one engaged in a conversation, and very soon the traveller was surprised to know that he was in the presence of a man possessing wonderful conversational powers, and withal a man of very superior learning. He met his friend who was returning from the stable, and informed him of his agreeable surprise. They both approached him and as the old man of the mountains led off in his inimitable style they listened, and they wondered and for an hour or more he was the master of assemblies. He began by relating his mental troubles, and done with that, he launched out in to other fields and discussed each topic as it arose with such wonderful skill and accuracy that they were soon impressed with the idea that their host was a man of much more than ordinary learning. On their return, they related to me, in substance, the foregoing incident, and they often on my return from the mountains, ask me if I had seen old uncle Reuben. I presume it is hardly necessary for me to state the the old man referred to was the subject of this sketch. One of these tourists, a year or more ago after having fought life's battles well and successfully, laid aside his armor and preceded this old mountain phenomenon, to the portals of the great beyond, and let us hope that in the far off realms of the good, that they may meet, not on the banks of the beautiful Watauga, but on the verdant banks of that river whose waters issue out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

In this brief memoir I have said but very little touching the great moral worth and high Christian character of our departed brother, nor need I elaborate these at any

great length. My object in writing this sketch is more especially for the purpose of presenting to the public my idea of his learning and the powers of his intellect. Yet, that he was a man of great moral worth and high Christian character as all who knew him could attest. In his long life there never was so far as I know an intimation or suspicion touching his honesty or his moral character. His sincerity and lofty purposes, no one, I presume ever for a moment doubted. He was indeed and in truth a genuine, manly man and we shall perhaps never see his like again. I have written this brief biographical sketch of my dead friend because I thought it not meet that one who had toiled long and arduously up the rugged pathway, trodden by so few of us mortals here below, until he had reached its giddy heights on whose summit is blooming in immortal youth, the unfading amaranth, should die and be forgotten and perish from the memory of men. For years before his death, owing to physical and mental trouble, he had partially retired from the public gaze and most of his contemporaries had preceded him to the spirit land and especially many of those who had known and admired him when he was in the full possession of his physical and mental powers. But he is gone. He bowed his head in death at the great age of about four score years and embarked on that ocean whose waves have never brought back a returning sail.

Strange to say, that this extraordinary man has left behind him no brilliant sermons to be remembered and quoted, no books in which the fruits of his learning and wisdom were gathered and preserved, and they who knew him intimately are passing away and owing to his long retirement before his death, his reputation as a scholar and divine is rapidly becoming traditional. And very glad shall I be if by this slight memorial I may for a single moment arrest the waves of time in their advancing flow over the sands in which are written his name and the names of many others of our best and greatest.

H. Bingham.

Statesville N. C. March 11.
Wants To Take His Place.

There was much talk on the streets yesterday about the old colored man who offered to serve out the term of Chas. E. Cross at the work house. An old family servant of Cross has arrived here and went to see his young master Sunday at the work house. He said that if an arrangement could be made to that effect that he would serve out the seven years sentence in his stead. Of course it is impossible that such an arrangement could be made, as there is no such law in existence in this State.—*News and Observer.*

WASHINGTON LETTER.

From our Regular Correspondent.

For the Democrat:

Vice President Morton's sudden trip to Florida has been fully explained to your correspondent by a prominent republican who is not an admirer of the boodle campaign which Mr. Morton has entered upon to capture the republican nomination in '92. "Morton's object" said this gentleman, "in going to Florida at this time is to hold a private consultation with Senator Quay, who is also down there, and to ascertain whether his support can be purchased. He is prepared to pay a big price, I am afraid he will succeed for Quay has always had a weakness for money, particularly when in large sums, and no man knows the value of money in a political campaign better than he.

There is an old fashioned game called "the devil among the tailors" that reminds one of Frank Hatton and the Civil Service commission. As soon as the testimony in the Congressional investigation which has been anything else but favorable to the present brand of Civil Service reform was all in, Hatton threw another dynamite bomb into reform-sham camp by charging that certain letters written by one W. D. Foulke and printed in the New York Times and the St. Louis Republic which charged Mr. Harrison and his cabinet with having entered into a conspiracy to break down the system of Civil Service Commissioners. The two Commissioners deny the charge. Of course that was to be expected; it was either deny, or hand in their resignations. But Hatton will not let the thing stop here, if he can convince Mr. Harrison of the truthfulness of his charge somebody will hear some thing drop before long.

The democratic members of the House are fretting no little because they lost a seat in the House last week that might just as well have been kept. The trouble, is that certain democratic members of the House refuse to sacrifice either their pleasure or their private business to occupy their seats and attend to the duties that they are elected to perform. There are several of these men who have not voted in the House three times this entire session. In this particular case several republicans, disgusted with the report of the majority of the Election Committee intimated to democrats that while they would not vote against the contestant they would make it a point to absent themselves without pairing when the time came to take the final vote so as to make it certain that the democrats could defeat the contestant. These gentlemen kept their word, and yet the contestant was seated by a beggarly majority of two votes all because the chronic absentees of the democratic side were not on hand to vote.

A minority report was submitted by Mr. Oates who it will be remembered engineered the long dead-lock in the last Congress against the same bill. No dead-lock can prevent it from becoming a law this time.

The House committee on Pensions seems to have gone daft. A majority of that committee has practically agreed to report bills that would, if they became laws, require nearly \$700,000,000 to pay the pensions. These reports are only bunkum, no sane man has any idea that more than one of the bills—the dependant—will be passed, and that is by no means certain, as the rapidly lessening Treasury surplus has already caused the republican leaders to notify the chairman of committees to curtail their appropriations if they expected the bills to get through. The House will probably take up the bills admitting Wyoming and Idaho this week. The democrats will antagonize the bills with an omnibus bill prepared by Mr. Springer providing for the admission of Wyoming, Idaho, New Mexico and Arizona.

It was supposed that in view of the fact and the law, and also of the fact that the votes were not specially needed that the Senate Committee on elections could afford to be fair in making a decision in the Montana Senatorial contest, but by a strict party vote it has decided to report in favor of the republicans. A more outrageous and unfair decision was never made by any committee.

It is impossible to get a republican member of the House Ways and Means committee to say a word if it ever is, nobody seems willing to even guess.

Out of the four contested election cases decided by the House only one democrat has been allowed to retain his seat.

When the Senate Committee that has been struggling so hard to discover how the proceedings of secret sessions leaked out began to examine the Senators the scales fell from its eyes. Now the Committee knows what everybody else has known all the time.

Washington, D. C.

You will have no use for spectacles if you use Dr. J. H. McLean's Strengthening Eye Salve, it removes the film and skum which accumulate on the eye balls, subdues inflammation, cools and soothes the irritated nerves, strengthens weak, and failing strength. 25 cents a box.

Hon. Bob Vance, of N. C. brother of Senator Vance, is here on a visit. 'Colonel Bob' as he is familiarly called, will in all probabilities, be the next Democratic Governor of N. C. Some of his friends, however, want him to make the race for Congress this fall against H. G. Ewart, Republican. Colonel Vance is very popular in that State, and he can certainly reclaim the district now represented by a Republican.—*National Democrat.*