

In Memory of

Hon. Charles E. Dyer, deceased, one time member of the bar of Racine County, then Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, late General Counsel for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, of Milwaukee.

-----0-----

Memorial of the Racine County Bar.

May it please the Court:

One month ago, we of the Racine County bar, uniting with the bar of Milwaukee County, followed to their final resting place, the remains of a former distinguished citizen of Racine and practitioner in this Court, the Hon. Charles E. Dyer, who departed this life November 26, 1905.

That tribute of respect to the deceased we paid with mingled feelings of love and pride upon the one hand, and of profound sorrow upon the other.

Again, to-day, we come together, by mutual consent, to honor his memory, by recording in enduring words our estimate of his life and personal worth.

A native of New York State, Judge Dyer was born at the town of Cicero, in Onondaga County, on October 5, 1834. His father, Edward G. Dyer, was a physician, and his family, on the paternal side, settled originally in Rhode Island, but at some later period the branch from which he sprung was transplanted to Vermont. Dr. Dyer was a man of ability and sturdy independence, and being withal of an adventurous disposition, struck out for the West, emigrating first to the State of Ohio, and soon after pushing on to Wisconsin, where he located in 1839 at what is now the city of Burlington. Thus the son Charles became identified with this County at the early age of five.

His education was such as was the lot of the children of the pioneers of that day and generation, but his whole life was devoted to self-culture in the broadest sense;- he was always a great lover and assiduous student of literature, and so it happened that notwithstanding the limited amount of schooling he enjoyed, by force of his own efforts, assisted by native ability and endowments, he acquired an ease and facility of expression, and such clarity and grace of style as are possessed by but few who have had the advantage of classical training.

At the age of fifteen, young Dyer was apprenticed to the printer's trade (of itself a splendid school as then conducted), and leaving that employment to enter a law office, took up the study of stenography along with his professional studies, and pursued it with such success that his biographer declares he became able to take 175 words a minute. No doubt these two circumstances contributed greatly to the formation of his early habits and mental processes, and so to the foundations of his future success.

Admitted to the bar in Sandusky, Ohio, in 1857, he, like his father, saw the hand of destiny beckoning toward the West, and responding thereto, established himself in Racine in January, 1859. Here he practiced alone until the fall of 1864, when he formed a partnership with Henry T. Fuller, which continued, under the name of Fuller & Dyer, until February, 1875, at which time he was appointed by President Grant United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

He held this position until May, 1888, when he resigned to accept that of counsel for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, remaining identified with that corporation, in the capacity of its chief legal adviser, until his death.

Although a decade has passed since Judge Dyer ceased to reside among us, and three of them since his voice was heard at the bar of this Court,- and though the personnel of the local bar has almost entirely changed since he was chosen for judicial honors, it is nevertheless most fitting and proper that here, in the city that he never ceased to love, and amid the surroundings where were passed the years of his active professional work, where, too, he gained the ripe knowledge and experience that prepared him for the higher sphere of usefulness to which he later attained,- should be presented a suitable memorial of his achievements and character;- fitting also that the same should be spread upon the records of this Court, there to remain, not alone as a tribute of esteem from us who have known him, but also as a stimulus and inspiration to all who like him shall seek an honorable success in the arduous calling of the law.

Gifted by nature with talents of a high order, and adding to these a painstaking industry which knew no bounds, strict honesty, and a zealous regard for the interests of his clients, Judge Dyer entered upon his career as a young practitioner at Racine, well equipped with the elements of success; and he soon acquired a reputation for ability, sound judgment and legal knowledge which drew to him an influential and constantly increasing clientage.

As a lawyer, he was quick and accurate in applying legal principles,- persistent and painstaking in research,- careful, methodical and accurate in his office work,- truthful, candid and upright in all his intercourse and dealings with clients,- a wise and safe counsellor,- and an able, resourceful and successful advocate. From the first he held to high professional ideals and exemplified them in his practice. While not shunning the "shock and stress" of forensic battle, when issues arose which could only thus be determined, he yet esteemed it the high privilege of an

attorney-at-law to counsel his clients in the direction of peace, though at the expense of personal pecuniary profit;- indeed, this, he himself declared to be the "Summum bonum of professional ethics." In brief, it may be truthfully said that he gave to the profession, in marked degree, every quality which inspires public respect and confidence.

It is said that he assumed the office of District Judge, with a modest doubt as to his ability to fill it acceptably, but after thirteen years service, he resigned that office with the universal regret and esteem of the bar, and leaving behind him a most enviable record as a jurist. Many important cases were tried before him, and to the decision of them he brought the same mental characteristics and the same habits of industry and painstaking research, which had won for him success at the bar. He held the scales of justice with a firm and even hand, and no stain or suspicion of corruption ever attached to his name. His integrity, ability and absolute fairness were conceded by all who had business in his court. His reported decisions were distinguished for breadth of learning, forceful and logical statement, and beauty of diction, and gained for him a well deserved name and high rank as a jurist, extending beyond the confines of his own District and State.

As a man of affairs also, he showed marked ability, and during seventeen years service as head of the legal department of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, managed its affairs with a wisdom and efficiency which won the approval of every one concerned.

As a man, he was simple and domestic in his tastes, an exemplary husband and father,- a lover of birds and trees and the things of Nature,- without political ambition, but patriotic always and public spirited,- not one who "wore his heart upon his sleeve," but to his intimates truly the embodiment of a choice spirit, a cherished and loyal friend.

As a living force, he has passed from view, and in retrospect we may truly say; Here hath passed a man of high ideals, broad culture and genuine worth,- a lawyer of rare type and high attainment,- a judge of distinguished ability and unsullied name.

So, holding him justly in the highest esteem while living, we recognize that in his death, not our profession alone, but the friends who loved him, the community in which he had his home, and the State at large, have sustained a great and irreparable loss.

We extend to his bereaved family our deepest sympathy in their affliction, and we recommend that as a farther mark of respect to his memory the several courts here represented, at the close of these exercises, do adjourn for the day, and that this memorial be made a matter of record.

Dated, December 29, 1905.

Charles H. Seef
John D. Simmons
David W. Platt } Committee.

E. R. Burgess.
Secy.

Memorial of the
Pioneer Society
of
the memory of
Charles D. Ripley
deceased

FILED

DEC 29 1905

J. D. McCallister
Clerk Circuit Court