

Colonel Francis Weller

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We feel that this Holiday Edition of the *REPUBLICAN* would be incomplete were we to omit mention of the late Colonel Francis Weller, one of the brightest lights of Highland county journalism. He first came to Greenfield in 1893, while corresponding for the Republican Campaign Committee and from that time up to the date of his death on April 3, 1901, he had been connected at one time and another with all the Greenfield newspapers.

But little is known of his early life as he was reticent on this matter as he was indeed on all matters relating to his family history. He was born in Ohio in 1850 and when he was eighteen enlisted in the Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry for service on the western frontier. His comrades bear testimony to his valor and efficiency as a soldier though his own innate modesty would never let him speak of his triumphs on the field. John Lafferty who served with him never tires of talking about the daring Colonel Weller displayed in his encounters with bloodthirsty Indians in the good old days when the Blackfoots and the Buffaloes held disputed sway in Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas.

Colonel Weller was not a university man nor yet a college man. His education, like Lincoln's, was received in the school of adversity, at random, and by snatches. Yet he wrote the English language with a limpidity and fluency rarely shown by men who had won diplomas and carried B. A., M. A. and LL. D. certificates. His vocabulary was unusually comprehensive and his adeptness in the use of synonyms had often attracted attention. He was a born newspaper man and had the newspaper man's ability to detect the salient points in a story and present them stripped of all irrelevances and superfluities. His value to Greenfield journalism has been incalculable. He gave to it a dignity and grace which raised it far above the plane on which it formerly rested.

In the early eighties Colonel Weller married a lady living near Wichita, Kansas. The union however proved unhappy and a separation followed in due time.

While in Greenfield he made a host of friends. Ever seeking to make the paths of the less fortunate ones easy he often forgot himself, and when in moments of rest from his labors he thought of the misery submerged tenth his heart went out to them in very pity. He was much interested in sociological questions and naturally he became enthusiastic over

Henry Georges single tax theories, thinking they could solve the problem of the cruel and glaring inequalities existing among men of equal capabilities but of unequal strength in the grasping of opportunities.

He was a most indefatigable worker, conscientious to the point of exaggeration in every thing he did or said. In politics he was neither a Republican or a Democrat but—if we may use the expression in a political sense—he was an eclectic taking from both parties whatever seemed to him conducive to the good of the greatest number, and especially what tended towards the amelioration of the lot of those whom fickle Fortune had not looked on with too kindly eye. He thus builded out of his own idealism a political platform which had very much to commend it to the careful consideration of all thinking people.

Of the manner of his death suffice it to say that it was tragical in its loneliness and its suddenness. There was none but felt sorrow when the news of his unexpected demise on April 3, 1901, was heralded abroad.

One of the most gifted writers in Southern Ohio, one of the staunchest and stoutest friends, one of the bravest and most chivalrous soldiers, one of the deepest and soundest thinkers, one of Nature's most eloquent prose poets was taken from earthly scenes, and battles and triumphs when Colonel Weller died. And despite the sombre surroundings he awaited the final summons



LATE FRANCIS WELLER.