

GONE TO MEET THEIR MAKER.

Two Valued Pioneer Citizens Cross the Dark River.

JOHN BLAIR WHIDDEN.

With double force comes to us this week the admonition that the unerring archer, commissioned with the work of death, is liable to hurl his ruthless shaft into our midst without warning, striking down the loved ones of our homes, and that no age and no condition are exempt—no, not for a single hour—from the liabilities of death. The demise of J. B. Whidden, whose spirit passed to that other bourne with the sinking sun Monday evening, leaves a lamented gap in a bright young family and saddens the hearts of a multitude of friends. One week ago he felt slightly indisposed, but entertained no alarm. Saturday morning he was in a high malarial fever, and to his attending physician the end was apparent for he perceived that disease was rapidly approaching the citadel of life—the brain. Three days of terrible suffering followed, and he passed away as softly as the leaves on an autumn eve drop to the earth beneath the gentle sighs of a western wind; and he died with a christian's faith and a christian's hopes.

He was born at Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Sept. 4, 1853, being 30 years old at his death. For eight years past he had lived in San Francisco, where he met, wooed, won and wed Miss May Lever, who, with her bright little fifteen-month's old boy, are called upon to mourn the loss of a husband and father whose sterling worth can never be calculated. Mrs. Whidden's heart bleeds not alone in this, her severe hour of trial, for none knew the departed one but to respect and love him. The strongest of sympathy from many souls goes out for the living wife whose idol, whose very life is thus torn asunder, for those friends know how she, though brave woman she be, must suffer, and how the world must seem bleak, bare, desolate and dreary. The light of her life; the husband of her affection, whose strong, noble character knew no sacrifice that would be too great in his family's behalf, is at peace forever. Never more can he reach out those strong arms to that prattling babe he loved so well; never again can he return caress for caress to a loving wife, for all is over. In the agony of woe that comes to the wife there are many who deeply share the bitter pangs of compassionate grief.

Just six months ago the departed man came to Cooperstown and engaged as junior partner with his brother, W. R. Whidden, in a general mercantile business, and prospects never bore for him a ruddier hue than when he was taken ill. A prosperous trade and a nice little home nearly ready to move into was all that he could desire aside from the possession of his family. During that six months he has endeared himself to all who came in contact with him. Never ready to indorse a harsh opinion of another; always unselfish; possessed of the most scrupulous integrity and honesty; never impatient; ever genial; extremely assiduous; very generous, warm-hearted and public-spirited, he was a friend and citizen to be prized. His loss to our community is a sad blow, equalled only by that which his brother, his wife, little son and mother are forced to sustain.

The funeral obsequies were conducted by Mr. Rockwell at 4:30 o'clock, Wednesday afternoon, at the Palace Hotel parlors, and were attended very largely. The services opened by the singing of that soul stirring hymn, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," followed by prayer and the appropriate hymn, "Gathering Homeward from Every Shore, One by One." Mr. Rockwell chose no text, but from a scriptural standpoint answered the questions always propounded to our minds upon the death of a dear one, namely: "Where has he gone?" "How did he go?" "Shall we see and recognize him again?" The services closed with the hymn, "We shall sleep, but not forever," after which the friends were permitted to take a last look at John Whidden. He was buried in a metallic coffin, so as to permit the removal of his remains at some future day.