

Necrological

Death, the reaper, has been busy in our community this week and two of our old and respected citizens have paid the debt of nature. Stephen Hill died at the residence of his son, George about one o'clock on the morning of January 17th, and we herewith give a short sketch of his life:

Stephen Clever Hill was born in Bourbon County, Kentucky, April 3, 1813. Mr. Hill was converted in boyhood and joined the Methodist church, of which he remained a faithful member until the day of his death. In 1838 he migrated to Monroe county, Missouri, where he resided for 19 years. During his stay in Missouri he married Miss Martha Ann Hill, who preceded him, a score of years, to the world beyond. Eight children were born to this union, four of whom are dead and four – H. A., F. S., G. W. and J. H. Hill – survive him. In 1852 he came to California, settling first near Coloma, El Dorado County, where he resided until January 1858, when he settled on the ranch now owned by his son J. H. Hill, near Winters. Here he has since resided with the exception of five years in Ventura. Since he return from Ventura, in 1890, he has made his home with his son George. His funeral took place from the Methodist church on Thursday afternoon, the 18th inst., and was attended by a large number of sympathizing friends. The services were conducted by Rev. D. Bauer, pastor of the Methodist church, assisted by Revs. Culton and Waddell. The pall-bearers, old friends of the departed, were L. Moody, J. H. Harlan, R. Morrison, W. H. Robinson, William Baker and J. Jeans. The body was encased in a metallic casket covered with black cloth and richly mounted. The services at the church were simple but impressive, and Mr. Bauer's discourse was so appropriate that we give it entire.

A warm, faithful friend to his church as transferred his membership to that of the church triumphant. He is no longer responsible to our Roll Call. He has accomplished his earthly pilgrimage, and answered at the bar of God. We are not supposed to bring to mind or dwell upon his faults, for none are perfect, but throw over them the silent mantle of charity, and dwell upon his virtue, which we will cherish in our memories, and practice in our lives.

In the 10th verse of the 90th psalm we read "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength, they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The life of our brother was a remarkable illustration of this Scripture. His years a little more than spanned the four score. During his three score and ten, he did not always sail o'er placid water. He had the ups and downs and trials, incident to a busy frontier life; but he labors and sorrows: of his last decade, would have well nigh swamped the stanch life-boat of a strong man, of middle age. Let us review a few of his sorrow that we may see what the frail old man had to battle with. In addition to dimming vision, faltering steps, pains and aches, incident to approaching old age; our brother was often called to sorrowful mourning for departed loved ones during his ten years of borrowed life. Two daughters, dear to the paternal heart, happily married, and in the early years of hopeful womanhood, fell victims to the angel of death. One brother and one sister also paid the last debt of mortals, during that

period. Two sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law and also a grandson, eight in all have in the past ten years, passed over the river, each death helping to swell the billows of sorrow, that have rolled over his soul, and pierced his frail body, with the pangs of bereavement.

Is it any wonder, that his life was soon cut off, and his soul flew away under such mighty trials of the living he has been called to endure? Many a man of middle age would have broken down under the load, but he leaned upon the strong arm of the Almighty. He put his trust in Him, and bowed submissively to the rod of chastisement. It was my privilege to visit him often during the past year of his life, and I always found him ready to praise the Lord for His goodness, and relying upon His mercy. In that room of suffering I learned more of a father's yearning love for his children than I have ever known before. How he desired to bind them together by the strong band of love, that they might always dwell together in peace and harmony. Heaven seemed to bow and stoop low, in time of prayer, such was his fervent faith and trust. His boys, their wives and his grand children, were the burden of his prayer, but he never forgot to pray for his church and his pastor. Such was the life, as I saw it, that has passed away. He will be greatly missed, by none so much as that faithful son and daughter-in-law, upon whom the great burden of care and waiting has fallen. No more will you hear the inarticulate, faltering voice calling you for assistance. The many, many weary steps you have had to take in all these months will not have to be repeated, but you will be rewarded in heaven by Him who has said, "Honor thy father." These others who have been often and occasionally there will miss him. Father's room will be vacant. I, too, will miss him. It was a benediction to me to visit that room. But why should we mourn? He was old and full of days, and has gone to his rest.

It can be truly said of him "though by reason of strength his days were four score years," yet his strength brought labor and sorrow; and as we look upon that pale, wan face for the last time, we can say with sorrow yet with relief "Farewell brother," "Farewell father" – "Thou are gone to the grave but we will not deplore thee." Rest in Jesus; sell forever with Him, and the loved ones gone before. We too, will join you soon.

Dear friends and neighbors, "Our days are passing swiftly by." Will our span measure fourscore years? or shall we fall short of that goal? It matters not, so that we can meet our God in peace, realizing that we have been yoke-fellows with Him in trying to redeem and build up humanity, loving our Maker with all our heart and doing unto others as we would have them to do unto us. Life is worth gaining. The grave is not the end, or the best and highest longings of the human breast, and all the wisdom of the ages shall come to naught. I exhort you in presence of the dread angel of death Live for God and humanity, even to the sacrificing of every selfish pride.

[Source: Napa Daily Journal, The Express, Winters, CA, January 20, 1894]

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County Treasurer Geo. F. Gardner received a telegram from Winters Wednesday morning announcing the death of his wife's uncle, Stephen A. Hill. Deceased was a native of Missouri, aged 75 years. Mr. and Mrs. Gardner will go to Winters to-day to attend the funeral.