

**IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM F. KING.  
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT A MEMORIAL  
MEETING ON MAY 12TH, 1909, IN THE  
ASSEMBLY ROOM OF THE MERCHANTS'  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK; TOGETHER  
WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

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# **VARIOUS**

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Published by  
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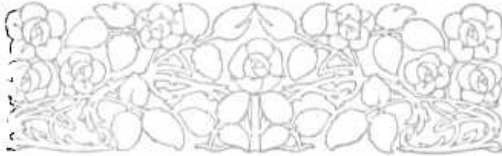
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W. F. King

W. F. King



## Address by Henry R. Towne

President of The Merchants'  
Association of New York



WE are met to do honor to the memory of a man who honored this community, this Association, and himself, by his high sense of civic duty, by his earnest and effective services to the public, and by his devotion to the cause for the promotion of which he and others organized The Merchants' Association, namely, "To Foster the Trade and Welfare of New York."

The visitor to London's Great Cathedral, St. Paul's, is shown in its crypt the simple tomb of its illustrious architect, Sir Christopher Wren, on the wall above which is inscribed the legend "si monumentum requiris, circumspice"—If thou askest for his monument, look about thee. And so of William F. King it may fittingly be said in this place, "If you seek his monument, look about you," for the useful and militant organization in whose home we are met is in



the truest sense a monument to his finest traits and to his best creative powers.

Among the significant signs of the times is the growing recognition of the fact that the moral obligation of the citizen to the state or community in which he dwells, especially if under its aegis he has prospered, does not end with the payment of taxes, but should include personal service or financial aid in support of practical movements for the promotion of the public welfare. In this sense and in this service William F. King was a leader in his time, not only in the affairs of this city, but also of this state and of this nation;—not only in the affairs of business and of commerce, but also in those of philanthropy, of education, of public welfare, and of civic righteousness. He was a man of many sides, of many aptitudes, and of many gifts, but of single purpose in his devotion to duty and his desire to do good in the community in which he lived. A busy and successful merchant, he found time to apply himself to public and civic affairs with a devotion which entitles him to lasting gratitude, and an ability which won lasting victories. This great city in which he spent his life, and of which we are so justly proud, is a greater and a better city because of what he did in it and for it. On us who survive devolves the duty of carrying forward the work which he so well began.

Others will speak of his work in its other phases, but on me, as his successor in the

office he so ably filled, devolves the duty of indicating in some brief measure the character and scope of his work in, and for, the Merchants' Association.

He was its founder and chief organizer, and in 1897 became its first President. In his farewell address when resigning the presidency, in June, 1901, he outlined his views as to its functions as follows:

"My views of the extent to which an Association truly representative of this city's business and property interests might and should influence public affairs were and are far wider than the nominal purpose for which the Merchants' Association was organized. It has served that purpose which relates directly to trade faithfully and well, but it has done very much more than that; and I firmly believe that it has shown the people of this city the usefulness of such a public organ. I have for many years had the earnest conviction that a purely commercial organization, largely directed toward restraining the waste of the people's money and properly shaping public outlays, would greatly benefit the city's commercial and property interests."

During the four years of his administration the Association expended \$266,000 in the conduct of its work, and collected over \$200,000 additional for relief work in Galveston, Jacksonville, Porto Rico, and elsewhere. The greatest achievement in its history

was its long but successful fight against the great Ramapo scheme of plunder, which cost the Association some \$40,000, towards which Mr. King advanced \$22,000 from his personal means (afterwards repaid), and which saved the taxpayers of this city more than One Hundred Million Dollars.

Among the many other activities of the Association under Mr. King's leadership may be mentioned the following, viz:

It secured the equalization of railway passenger rates which terminated the 1897: discrimination against New York which had previously existed, and thereupon organized the semi-annual "Merchants' Reduced Rates Excursions," under which an average of over ten thousand merchants from the West and South have been induced annually to visit this city for the transaction of business with New York merchants.

It supported effectively the movement for currency reform inaugurated by the 1898: Indianapolis Monetary Conference.

It aided in securing the modification of the U. S. War Revenue Act as to the unequal taxation of mercantile corporations.

It aided greatly in securing the appropriation of \$6,000,000 for the improvement of the Harbor of New York by the cutting of the Ambrose Channel, now in use, which is named after its chief advocate, Mr. John W.