

**A MEMORIAL OF
JOSEPH P.
FAIRBANKS**

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A Memorial of Joseph P. Fairbanks by Samuel H. Taylor

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SAMUEL H. TAYLOR

**A MEMORIAL OF
JOSEPH P.
FAIRBANKS**

TO
THE SURVIVING BROTHER,
THADDEUS FAIRBANKS,
THIS MEMORIAL IS INSCRIBED.



1851

Appy. Yours
J. P. Fairbanks

A

MEMORIAL

OF

JOSEPH P. FAIRBANKS

BY

SAMUEL H. TAYLOR

RIVERSIDE

1865

MEMORIAL.



I.

THE record of a successful and useful life is always instructive. The process and influences by which the character was formed and strengthened, the circumstances which gave it its peculiar type, the efforts put forth for the results reached, the obstacles met and overcome, and the different spheres of influence, are useful lessons for study and imitation. Character presents itself in every variety of form ; it is as varied as the human countenance. The story of one life is never the measure of another. There will be points of agreement, but always points of difference. The great features may be the same, while there will be some diversity to mark the individuality of each. Every circle, be it wider or more limited, has lost some attractive name, some centre of many hopes. Such a name should not be forgotten. The good associated with it, the controlling power of which it is the representative, should be cherished and kept alive. The influence of a good man does not cease when he is laid in the grave ; the great and the good just begin to live when they die. The life that before

was viewed only in its parts, in its particular acts and relations, now that all these are the representatives of a single character, of one honored name, has a deeper and more impressive interest for those who would profit by it.

The object of this Memorial is to present the character of one who aimed to do his duty; who was unwearied in his efforts to find opportunities to benefit individuals and communities; and who made his influence felt upon society in more directions and more effectively than most men in private life. The record of his life is that of a meek and lowly disciple, with little or no incident to give it interest, with no startling results, but in its unobtrusive earnestness and the breadth of its influence full of instruction and incentive.

Joseph Paddock Fairbanks was born in Brimfield, Mass., November 26, 1806, and removed with his parents to St. Johnsbury, Vt., in May, 1815. Though his parents were in humble circumstances, they were eminent for their moral worth, for a consistent and unostentatious piety, and for whatever is of good report. Their family consisted of three sons. Joseph, the youngest, was eleven years the junior of his next older brother, and was not unnaturally a favorite of his parents, for whom he had a remarkable affection and reverence, which never abated even in their extreme old age. His early youth was marked by the same gentleness, simplicity, and guilelessness which

characterized his later life. A companion thus describes his character at this period :

“ Among the boys of his own age, he was always regarded with respect as well as affection. With a spirit as gentle as a woman's, and with a manner quiet and soft, he joined a manliness and decision of character, a moral courage, a resolute determination to pursue the right and shun the wrong, which always challenged the respect and admiration of his associates. He early evinced a love of the true, the pure, and the beautiful. In our boyish pastimes he shrunk from contact with coarser natures, and repelled with indignant loathing the ribald jest, the profane allusion, the licentious innuendo. I never knew him utter an untruth even playfully. His reverential regard for his parents was the subject of comment even among children of his own age.”¹

Another early companion says of him : “ He was of a remarkably amiable disposition, and perfectly gentle in his manners. I do not remember that he ever received any correction at school, as the rest of us did ; and I am quite sure he never deserved any. In our out-of-door sports he participated less freely than some, and was always less boisterous ; and when strifes arose among us, Joseph was the peace-maker, and the protector of the injured.”²

Yet another early associate says : “ I remember

¹ Professor Milo P. Jewett, D. D.

² Professor Edward A. Lawrence, D. D.

distinctly that friend Jos. P., as I always used to call him, was a general favorite with the boys with whom we used to associate. His kind, affectionate, unselfish disposition made him dear to all; and while yet a boy, I think he was just as remarkable for truthfulness and conscientiousness as in maturer years."¹

He early evinced an unusual fondness for reading. He would oftener be found in the chimney-corner with his books than with his companions at their sports. At this period he had access to but few literary works. No treasure, therefore, was ever more highly prized by him than some new volume which he had not before seen; and he manifested great enthusiasm when he first saw in the neighborhood a small case of books, which he looked upon as a large library, and from which he asked the loan of a Shakspeare. But he was greatly disappointed when told that he was too young to read such a work.

His means of early education were quite limited, not extending beyond the narrow range of study pursued in the district school; and the course of instruction here, as he afterwards described it himself, was anything but thorough. He never had the advantages of an Academic or Collegiate education.

In the year 1825, the young men of St. Johnsbury formed a literary Society, called the St. Johnsbury Philadelphian Society. The object was mutual liter-

¹ Dr. Adams Jewett.