

## JOHN NEWTON PROCTOR.

JOHN NEWTON PROCTOR was born in the town of Gaines on the 12th of October, 1828, and died in Albion on the 11th of February, 1889. Within this brief period of three score years was comprised the life of one of the best men the county ever honored as a citizen, a man whose memory illuminates the pages of local history and shines with peculiar splendor from amidst his more distinguished contemporaries. His parents were in limited circumstances and his preliminary education was necessarily confined to the district schools of his native town, supplemented, however, by a short attendance at the old Gaines Academy. He passed his boyhood on the farm, acquiring a robust constitution, and overcoming difficulties with characteristic energy. His career, successful and honorable, was purely American. At an early age he became a clerk in the general store of Erastus Woodruff in Gaines village, but about two years later, when less than twenty, he accepted a similar position with William Gere in Albion, where he ever afterward resided. His shrewd business tact soon won his employer's confidence and admiration to such an extent that he was taken into partnership, which continued until Mr. Gere's death. He then formed a partnership with Isaac Gere (son of William), which continued until the latter's death, when the stock was sold to Butcher & House in September, 1866. From then until his decease Mr. Proctor devoted his time to farming and to other business matters in which he was interested.

Mr. Proctor possessed an unusually active nature and a tremendous will power. Full six feet in height and erect in stature, his presence was commanding, courteous, and dignified. He was endowed with great decision of character, and abhorred hypocrisy, dishonesty, and lack of integrity. When he had once formed an opinion, which was always after careful deliberation, he never wavered, but carried it out over all obstacles. Unlike most men he never acted from the vantage-ground of policy, but pursued an independent, fearless course, a course, however, that made him no enemies, but, instead, hosts of friends. Without any special study, but possessing shrewd judgment and sound common sense, he had considerable knowledge of law and was an excellent conveyancer, a business he performed more or less for others for several years. He was a beautiful penman and left many examples of fine chirography.

In politics Mr. Proctor was originally a Whig and afterward a strong Democrat, but never a politician or an office seeker. Nevertheless he was very influential and gave his party his unqualified support. For several years he was trustee and president of Albion village and a member and president of the Board of Education. While serving in the former capacity he was instrumental in permanently suppressing certain forms of vice which had long been flagrant, and during the winter of 1887-8, as a crowning act of his life, he was active in abolishing the corrupt system of dealing with tramps that was practiced by officials whose remuneration was derived from fees. As a financier Mr. Proctor possessed qualities of an unusual order. Shrewd and far-sighted he was generally successful, and by a large coterie of friends and acquaintances was recognized as a safe counselor and adviser. He was frequently consulted in such matters, and was often made the assignee of business concerns, performing his duties to the satisfaction of all interested parties. Many a man owed his start in life to his liberality and valu-