

## ON MONUMENT TO FOUNDER OF G. A. R.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STEPHENSON.

Major, Surgeon, Fourteenth Illinois Infantry Volunteers.

Founder of the Grand Army of the Republic.

First Commander in Chief (Provisional), 1866.

Adjutant General, 1866-1868.

Born October 3, 1823.

Died August 30, 1871.

Dr. F. Stephenson was a son of James Stephenson, of South Carolina, who emigrated to Kentucky, where he met and married Margaret Clinton, of North Carolina. Dr. Stephenson was born in Wayne County, Ill., October 3, 1823.

When twenty-three years of age he read medicine with his elder brother, William, at Mount Pleasant, Iowa, attended medical lectures at Columbus, Ohio, and at Rush Medical College, Chicago, receiving his diploma from the latter institution February 7, 1850. He located at Petersburg, Ill., and built up a large practice.

On March 30, 1855, he was married to Miss Barbara B. Moore, a native of Kentucky, at Springfield, Ill.

He was among the first to offer his services to the Union, enlisting at Jacksonville, Ill. He was elected surgeon of the 14th Illinois Infantry Volunteers, commanded by Col. (afterwards Maj. Gen.) John M. Palmer. For meritorious services in the battle of Shiloh Governor Yates in February, 1862, appointed him brigade surgeon with rank of major. His term of service expired May 25, 1864, when he returned home and was mustered out June 24, 1864.

As citizen, member of a learned profession, and soldier he ranked well; but the service that places his name among the makers of history is the founding of that great order, the Grand Army of the Republic, of which he was the first (the Provisional) Commander in Chief. In January, 1866, he conceived the idea of a national society composed of honorably discharged Union soldiers and sailors, whose motto should be: "Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty." On April 6, 1866, he mustered Post No. 1 of Decatur, Department of Illinois, Grand Army of the Republic.

The following resolution was adopted about him:

"Whereas we, the members of the Grand Army of the Republic, recognize in Maj. B. F. Stephenson, of Springfield, Ill., the head and front of the organization; be it therefore

*Resolved*, That for the energy, loyalty, and perseverance manifested in organizing the Grand Army of the Republic he is entitled to the gratitude of all loyal men, and that we as soldiers tender him our thanks and pledge him our friendship at all times and under all circumstances."

"This memorial is the joint tribute of a grateful nation and his loving comrades, all that are left of an army of nearly three million men (waiting for the world's good night) who are of the men who were."

The monument to Dr. Stephenson in Washington, D. C., is very handsome. The engraving herewith printed represents one of the tablets.

While Dr. Stephenson was an ardent Union man, he never forgot right regard for the people of his ancestral Southland, while his daughter, Miss Mary H. Stephenson, is one of the ablest writers on the American press, and she is ever equally ardent for the best to both sections.