

## MORRIS W. FECHHEIMER.

IN the death of Mr. Fechheimer, Portland has lost one of her most valued citizens, and humanity a friend, yet only the few who knew him intimately can appreciate the loss. A close friendship, beginning while boys together in a store in Sacramento, and continuing uninterruptedly to the moment of his death, enables the publisher of THE WEST SHORE to speak of him with a knowledge of his character few possess.

Mr. Fechheimer was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, September 11, 1844, and died in this city, March 15, 1886, in the prime of life and enjoying the full vigor of his mental faculties. He began commercial life early, in Sacramento, and being ambitious of securing a higher range for his abilities, entered upon the study of law in his hours of leisure. Later, in Canyon City, Oregon, he pursued the same course persistently and industriously until he was admitted to the bar, and abandoned mercantile pursuits to devote himself to his chosen profession. In 1866 he began practice in Portland, and in the twenty years of active service in this city rose to be the acknowledged head of the bar in Oregon. He was a lawyer and not a politician. His energies were devoted to advancement in his profession and to the elevation of the profession itself above the level to which the conduct of so many tends to drag it down. Clean, pure and noble in every instinct, he inspired those of his compeers with whom he came in contact with a higher regard for their calling, and a deep respect for himself as a man and an exponent of that noble profession which has drawn to itself the greatest minds and hearts of the human family for ages. What he sought for he gained, if persistence and ability rendered the gaining of it possible, and what he once acquired his mind grasped and held for all time. There was no leak, no aperture through which hardly-acquired knowledge escaped and was lost. With a memory retentive of every detail, he possessed a logical mind of the highest order and the power of concentrating his faculties upon a problem, so that his judgment was seldom in error. So much had he employed these faculties, his logic seemed almost an instinct, and his mind quickly penetrated the mist of sophistries with which any subject might be obscured, and went direct to its core, seizing upon it and holding it up to the view of those who had been too mystified by false reasoning to see it for themselves. With such abilities, such habits of industry and thought, such persistence in following his chosen path, there was, apparently, no limit to what he might have accomplished had not the Reaper's dread sickle ended his career when it had but fairly begun.

As a man, apart from his profession, he was less known by the community, though here was the greater glory of his life. Although of Jewish parentage, his mind rose above all distinctions of race or creed, and looked upon the human family as one common brotherhood, alike entitled to the enjoyment of the gifts of nature, no matter how unequal mentally and physically

they had been rendered by circumstances affecting them as individuals or races. His religion was that of nature, and he took a broad and philosophic view of life, its duties and possibilities. He was generous by impulse, and his charities, both in person and through his family, were extensive. In this he made no parade, always avoiding publicity, and refraining from mentioning even to his most intimate friends his numerous acts of benevolence. Every organized charity, sectarian and non-sectarian, was in receipt of generous contributions from him, and at his death he made them liberal bequests. In this he has set an example which others of our successful men should follow. He was a liberal friend of education, and an earnest advocate and promoter of industries that would aid the city and furnish work to mechanics and laborers. He held stock in several manufacturing enterprises, as a practical way of assisting labor. He also built the Casino, not as an investment, for he knew it would not be a profitable one, but to furnish the people a place of cheap and harmless amusement. He was originator and President of the Oregon Fire and Marine Insurance Company. He was also the originator of a scheme for supplying the city with water at cheap rates. Though always liberal in the use of his money, without being in any sense profligate, he left an estate valued at over two hundred thousand dollars, acquired honorably and without the exercise of parsimony in any particular. In everything he sought the highest good of humanity, aiming so to live, as he expressed it on his death-bed, that the world would be better for his having lived in it. As a husband and father he was kind and indulgent, a guide for their conduct and a strong rod for his loved ones to lean upon in time of trouble. He did not believe in secret orders and societies, thinking they contained a principle of selfishness not in harmony with his ideas. He belonged to no organizations that were not of a purely benevolent character. He was very fond of pictures, flowers, music and everything that was beautiful in nature and art. He possessed one of the largest and best private libraries in the State, and his law library was large and well selected. His sound common-sense and cultivated mind rendered his judgment of the value of books or works of art almost faultless. No one could converse with him on these subjects without being struck with his knowledge and the refinement of his taste. Like all men of a positive nature he necessarily made enemies, though they were few. Nor was his list of intimate friends large. He never sought popularity nor social distinction, and though always courteous and pleasant, he never made special effort to gain the friendship or good will of any one, his friends being those who, during a course of social or business contact, had won his esteem. The few who became acquainted with him in his inner life were more like brothers than friends, and his conduct toward them always transcended the limits of mere friendship. It is they who feel his loss most keenly, and 'tis one of them who pays this faint tribute to his memory.