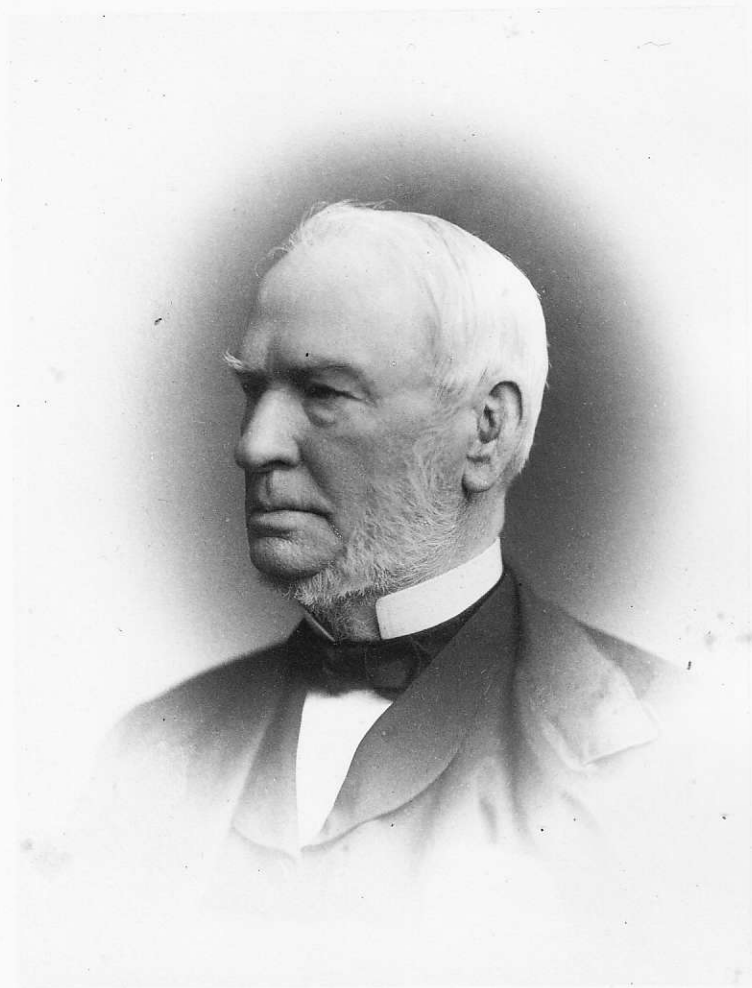


In Memoriam

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JONATHAN THORNE

1801-1884



*Jonathan Thorne*

In Memoriam.

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JONATHAN THORNE,

DIED AT HIS RESIDENCE, 524 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY, TENTH MO. 9TH, 1884.

AGED 83 YRS., 6 MOS., 11 DAYS.

## TESTIMONIALS.

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THE following Testimonials to the integrity and upright character of our father, accompanied by Resolutions of Sympathy tendered by his business associates, and by several corporations with which he was connected, together with Tributes of the Press, have been thus embodied by his children as a legacy which cannot be affected by the mutations of time, and as a memorial to be cherished and revered by his descendants.

HIDE AND LEATHER CLUB, NO. 1 FERRY ST.,  
NEW YORK, OCTOBER 11, 1884.

MR. EDWIN THORNE:

DEAR SIR: With feelings of sincere regard and sympathy in your deep affliction, we carry out the instructions of the meeting of the Hide and Leather Club, and the members of the Trade, held to-day at the rooms of the Club.

We ask you, as the representative of the family, to accept the accompanying resolutions, relative to the death of your venerable and esteemed father; the late Mr. Jonathan Thorne.

Very respectfully yours,

JOHN T. WILLETS,  
*President.*

ERASMUS STERLING,  
*Secretary.*

*Resolved*, That while we can but deplore the event which takes from our midst one so much esteemed and respected as our departed friend and neighbor, Jonathan Thorne, has always been, we at the same time rejoice in the goodness of Divine Providence which spared him to us for so long a period of time, made him so useful to our trade and the community at large, and has taken him at last, full of years and honor, leaving behind him so spotless a character and so unblemished a reputation.

*Resolved*, That we tender to his bereaved family, several of whose members are with us in the trade, our condolence and sympathy in their bereavement.

*Resolved*, That our places of business be closed on Monday morning, 13th inst., to give opportunity for attendance at the funeral services.

THE LEATHER MANUFACTURERS' NATIONAL BANK OF  
NEW YORK.

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At a meeting of the Officers and Directors of the Leather Manufacturers' National Bank of New York, held Tuesday, October 14th, 1884, the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted :

After a long, upright and useful life, it has pleased God to take to Himself our esteemed friend and fellow-director,

JONATHAN THORNE.

And, *Whereas*, it seems fitting that, after his faithful service of forty-seven years as Director in this Bank, we should place on record our testimony as to his worth.

He was a man of well-balanced mind, of calm and equable temper, affable, kindly and courteous toward all, modest and retiring in demeanor, wise in counsel, shrewd in his estimates of the character and capabilities of others, and fearless in trusting those on whom he placed reliance. Eminently cautious and conservative in action, yet prompt, bold and enterprising where occasion required, and through all his dealings maintaining and exacting the strictest integrity.

He was helpful toward others, and in his decease we lose an honest, Christian gentleman.

*Resolved*, That we herewith tender to his family our deepest sympathy in their sad bereavement, and in doing so we desire to express our full appreciation of his pure and singularly blameless character.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these minutes be engrossed and forwarded to his family.

D. L. HOLDEN,  
*Cashier.*

## THE NEW YORK MUTUAL GAS LIGHT COMPANY.

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At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the New York Mutual Gas Light Company, held on the 14th day of October, 1884, the following resolutions were adopted :

*Whereas*, We have learned with deep regret of the decease of Mr. Jonathan Thorne, for many years a valued member of this Board, and whose mature experience and judgment we thoroughly appreciated ; therefore,

*Resolved*, That the long and distinguished career of Mr. Thorne as a merchant, and as a citizen highly esteemed, and one whose example for probity and honor was so marked, that the community as well as this company have sustained a loss in his decease.

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be published, and a copy of the same suitably engrossed be sent to his family, to whom we extend this evidence of our sympathy and condolence.

JOHN P. KENNEDY,  
*President.*

W. C. BESSON,  
*Secretary.*



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
CENTRAL TRUST COMPANY OF NEW YORK,  
OCTOBER 21, 1884.

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THE Board of Directors of the Central Trust Company at their first meeting since the death of their late associate, Jonathan Thorne, desire to place on record an expression of their sincere esteem for his character, and their sense of the loss they have sustained in his removal from their number. A Trustee of this Company from its first organization, he was, notwithstanding his advanced age, active in his interest in its affairs, aiding by his regular attendance at the meetings of the Board, and by his counsel and advice in promoting its progress and success. His venerable presence, his genial manners, and the kindliness of his intercourse with the members of the Board will be recalled with peculiar interest and affection by his surviving associates, while they unite in the Tribute of respect to his memory which all who knew him have been prompt to render. His long life, beginning with the present century, was, during his active business career, honorably identified with the growth and prosperity of this city, in whose commercial advance he aided, and among whose merchants he was conspicuous for integrity and ability. The agricultural pursuits and industries, to which he gave a large portion of his maturer years, were on a scale commensurate with the liberality and large capacity which characterized him in every sphere of activity; and in the serene old age which he was permitted to enjoy, he had the respect and reverence which were the fitting crown of a life of spotless integrity and consistent principles.

In token of the high esteem in which his memory is held by his associates of this Board,

*Resolved*, That the foregoing memorial be entered on the minutes, and that a copy thereof be sent to the widow and family of the deceased.

A true copy from the minutes of the Board of Directors of the Central Trust Company of New York, attest.

F. P. OLCOTT,  
*President.*



## THE SIXTH AVENUE RAILROAD COMPANY.

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At a meeting of the Directors of the Sixth Avenue Railroad Company, held at the dépôt on the 6th day of November, 1884, Mr. Demorest presented the following :

*Whereas*, Jonathan Thorne, one of the oldest and most respected members of this Board, died at his residence in the city of New York on the 9th day of October, 1884. And, *whereas*, it is the desire of the members of this Board of Directors to place upon the records of this Company an expression of their regret at the loss of so good a man, citizen, and friend : Therefore,

*Resolved*, That in the death of Jonathan Thorne this Company has lost one of its most valuable members ; a man whose honesty and integrity no one could ever question ; possessed of good judgment and ability, which his business life has shown as one of New York's oldest and most successful merchants ; a man who, in his social and genial nature, endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact.

*Resolved*, That the sympathy of the members of this Board is hereby tendered to his family in this hour of their affliction.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of this Company be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the family of our deceased friend.

On motion of Mr. Demorest, seconded by Mr. Gordon W. Burnham, it was

*Resolved*, That the same be placed on the minutes, and a copy engrossed and sent to the family of our deceased friend, which was carried unanimously.

HENRY S. MOORE,  
*Secretary.*

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF  
CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.

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THE Board of Directors, at its meeting of November 6th, 1884, unanimously adopted the following resolution in respect to the memory of the late

JONATHAN THORNE.

*Resolved*, That the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children mourns with unfeigned sorrow the loss of Jonathan Thorne, one of its Vice-Presidents and earliest members. During the ten years of its existence his deep interest in its work has been manifested by liberal contributions, and by his openly avowed personal sympathy with the objects of its care. Having entered into rest at the close of a long and honorable life in this community, it remains only for the Board of Directors of this Society to unite with all who knew him in expressing their personal sorrow at his loss, and to bear their testimony to the excellence of his character as a citizen and philanthropist.

E. FELLOWS JENKINS,  
*Secretary.*

TRIBUTES OF THE PRESS.

[*Shoe and Leather Reporter*, October 16, 1884.]

## MORTUARY.

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JONATHAN THORNE.

THIS eminent merchant and citizen, who died on Friday last, October 9th, at his residence in New York, aged eighty-four years, was for so many years identified with the hide and leather trade of this State, that we feel it a tribute due his memory to recall some of the incidents of that business career, which has resulted so advantageously to his immediate family, and so honorably to the trade.

On coming to this city, in the year 1828, from his father's home in Dutchess County, N. Y., he first became interested in the dry-goods trade.

After a short period, influenced, as we may naturally infer, by his marriage relations with the family of Israel Corse, who had at that early period established a business house in the "Swamp" upon a permanent foundation of credit, he became a partner. The forms and methods then pursued by most of the houses in the trade did not suit the ideas of the new son-in-law, for at that early period the business was "buying and selling," either on commission or "out and out," mostly the latter. This dickering process did not accord with the views of the newly-installed partner, so by slow processes the nature of the business was changed into commission or an out-and-out manufacturing, either on joint or individual account. This was more or less of a struggle on behalf of this house, as, indeed, of many others, during all these earlier years, to adapt themselves to the changes which were inevitably forcing themselves on the leather trade of the city, State, and, in fact, the whole country. There was a line being drawn between the manufacturer and the jobber. This line has now become so thoroughly established that, with rare excep-

tions, no one thinks of connecting these diverse interests in the same house.

When, in the year 1847, the house of Thorne, Watson, Corse & Co. was established, succeeded in 1852 by that of Thorne, Watson & Co., this divorce was complete. There was no more pretence of buying and selling "leather, hides and oil," but it was buying hides and selling leather. It became a purely manufacturing business, and has so continued.

It is not too much to say that this firm was the pioneer in establishing the sole-leather business as separate from all other branches.

In the early history of the trade in New York there was an intimate and close relation between it and that of Philadelphia and Baltimore. The packets that sailed between these ports depended very largely upon carrying oak leather from the two Southern ports to this city. Subsequently, the same trade was transferred in part to Boston and Lynn.

During the continuance of this oak sole-leather trade, the houses of Thomas Everit & Sons, Israel Corse & Son, James & George Brooks and Thomas Brooks were the principal dealers and consignees. While, therefore, Jonathan Thorne was the natural inheritor of the Southern trade, he soon outgrew it and launched out into the hemlock sole-leather trade, as before stated.

Mr. Thorne was fortunate in making his early connections in this new departure. He associated himself with Colonel John Watson, who in connection with Colonel Zadock Pratt had become perfectly familiar with the economies of making hemlock leather, and it was to his practical knowledge and long business experience with the manufacturers of Western and Northern New York that gave the new firm a prestige enjoyed by no other. For about thirty-five years the firm continued with unimportant individual changes, and it was the recognized head of the red sole-leather trade.

The eldest son of Mr. Thorne grew up with this house, and, after making an ample fortune, retired on account of ill-health to the more congenial occupation of stock-raising, which he still pursues in an unprofessional way.

As Mr. Thorne had other sons to whom he wished to impart a business life, he formed the firm of Thorne, McFarlane & Co., and at least two of his sons thus continued a business which had become a second nature to the father.

During the past forty years Mr. Thorne has, at various times, assisted

several young houses by the contribution of special capital. It is understood that he has exercised so much good judgment in the selection of his agents that he has added materially to his own fortune, besides the satisfaction of rendering important service to the young and deserving men of our trade.

It would be a great injustice to the memory of Mr. Thorne to close this without alluding to his services and sacrifices for the trade in defending their interests in the celebrated "Tan Burning Suit." The details of this long-continued suit, and the principles involved, are familiar to most of our readers, but the trials and disappointments from adverse decisions and protracted delays through more than fourteen years of struggle and anxiety, to say nothing of the large amount of money he expended in behalf of the tanners, are not as fully known and appreciated by the trade as they deserve. Within a few months of his death the final decision of the United States Supreme Court was given in his favor, and he had the gratification of knowing that his arduous efforts were rewarded with success, and the position taken by him at the outset fully vindicated.

Outside and quite independent of his services in the leather trade, Mr. Thorne has filled most important and responsible positions in many of our railroads, banks, insurance and trust companies. He was for many years an influential governor of the New York Hospital and the other institutions under its management. Indeed, it would be difficult to find any important eleemosynary institution in our city or State to which he was not at some time a contributor.

Among the first, if not the very first, American that interested himself in the improvement of domestic animals, Mr. Thorne brought to this country from England the most approved breeds of cattle and sheep, which he placed on his Thorndale farm. This enterprise was subsequently transferred to his second son, Samuel, who became noted for his valuable herd both in England and America, while his son, Edwin, before mentioned, has devoted himself to the improvement of horses.

After a long and well-spent life of more than fourscore years, this man lays down the responsibilities he has borne so long, leaving to his sons, the trade and the world an example of honest fidelity worthy of imitation.

The following was issued by the Hide and Leather Club :

NO. 1 FERRY STREET, }  
NEW YORK, October 10, 1884. }

DEAR SIR: You are requested to meet with the members of the Hide and Leather Club, at their rooms, on Saturday morning, 11th inst., at 11 o'clock, to take notice of the death of Jonathan Thorne, who, for many years, was an honored merchant in our trade.

JOHN T. WILLETS, *President.*

ERASMUS STERLING, *Secretary.*

At the meeting the following gentlemen were present:

John Andresen,	J. R. E. Moore,
Richard Anders,	William K. Major,
Theodore M. Barnes,	Richard P. Merritt,
Edward H. K. Belcher,	Frederick Pickard,
E. H. Conklin,	George Palen,
James B. Dewson,	William Palen,
Ambrose K. Ely,	George T. Patterson, Jr.,
Henry Emerson,	Jackson S. Schultz,
William A. Fraser,	Norman I. Rees,
Henry I. Hull,	D. T. Stevens,
Charles Hauselt,	William Sherwood,
Mark Hoyt,	Erasmus Sterling,
H. B. Kirk,	J. W. Stout,
Redmond Keresey,	E. Southwick,
Milo Kistler,	Abe Stein,
H. G. Lapham,	John T. Willets,
W. Creighton Lee,	Colonel John Watson.

Ambrose K. Ely made the following remarks:

"We have been frequently called together, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the leather trade, on occasions similar to this, to pay our tribute of respect to the memory of business friends and neighbors who have been removed from our midst, but perhaps none of us present have ever before been permitted to speak of one who has been for so long a period of time an active member of our trade, had such large interests involved, and occupied so prominent a position in it.



"For about half a century Mr. Thorne was senior partner of one of our leading houses, which, through the successive changes of title of Jonathan Thorne & Co., Lapham, Corse & Co., Thorne, Watson, Corse & Co., and Thorne, Watson & Co., always sustained the highest commercial credit, and ever occupied a conspicuous position in the Swamp, passing through the panics of 1837 and 1857 without default.

"But not only by his large interest in this house, of which he was an active member, but also by the contribution of capital, as special partner, he has on several occasions assisted in the formation of a number of other tanning houses, some of them prominent ones, still existing, so that for many years he was much more largely interested in the hemlock sole-leather business of our country than any other one individual in it.

"But not only in the leather business was Mr. Thorne prominent. Inheriting from his father, some forty years since, the fine large farm in Dutchess County on which he was reared, he began to make large improvements on it for his family occupancy as a summer residence, and proceeded to stock it with the choicest cattle of the kind which the world could furnish. Whatever he did, he always desired should be well done, and whatever he possessed he wished to be of the best.

"Sending an agent to England, commissioned to purchase the finest cattle which money could procure there, he succeeded in obtaining a number of animals from the celebrated Bates herd of short-horned Durhams, famous throughout the United Kingdom, paying, if I remember correctly, for the bull 'Grand Duke' the sum of £1000 sterling, and for 'Duchess' cows £600 each—prices at that time unprecedented, but more than quadrupled since by public sales in this country of the descendants of these very animals. This herd made 'Thorndale Farm' a noted place for many years to the stock-raisers here, and its celebrity has been added to in later years by the production of the celebrated stallion 'Thorndale,' the winner of many prizes, and bred by Mr. Thorne's oldest son, Edwin, the present proprietor of the property. The introduction of this herd of cattle has been of incalculable service to the stock interests of the United States.

"Mr. Thorne was rather retiring in disposition, but always the perfect gentleman in his intercourse with all around him. It was my privilege to be closely associated with him for fourteen years—from 1843 to 1857—at first as his clerk and afterward as a junior partner in the house. During all those years no harsh or angry word (so far as my memory serves me)

was ever uttered by him to me. He was always courteous, not only to his associate partners, but to all clerks, porters and draymen in his employ.

"Almost uniformly successful in his business operations and investments, eminently happy in all his domestic relations, blessed in his declining years with unusual good health until within the past few weeks, he has gone, leaving not only a very large estate, but that also which is better, 'a good name, rather to be chosen than great riches.' I beg leave to present for consideration the following resolutions :

"*Resolved*, That while we can but deplore the event which takes from our midst one so much esteemed and respected as our departed friend and neighbor, Jonathan Thorne, has always been, we at the same time rejoice in the goodness of Divine Providence, which spared him to us for so long a period of time, made him so useful to our trade and the community at large, and has taken him at last, full of years and honor, leaving behind him so spotless a character and so unblemished a reputation.

"*Resolved*, That we tender to his bereaved family, several of whose members are still with us in the trade, our condolence and sympathy in their bereavement.

"*Resolved*, That our places of business be closed on Monday morning, 13th inst., to give opportunity for attendance at the funeral services, and that a copy of these resolutions be engrossed and forwarded to the family of the deceased."

Jackson S. Schultz seconded the resolutions, and also made a few appropriate remarks in reference to the event. William Sherwood, and old member of the trade, made some eulogistic remarks.

The stores in the Swamp were closed during the funeral, 13 inst., and many merchants attended the services.

[*The Mail and Express*, October 13, 1884.]

## AN EXAMPLE FOR YOUNG MEN.

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THE CAREER OF JONATHAN THORNE, ONE OF NEW YORK'S TYPICAL MERCHANTS.

JONATHAN THORNE, who died on Thursday evening at his residence, No. 524 Fifth Avenue, at the advanced age of eighty-four years, was one of the typical merchants of New York. He was born in Dutchess County, in April, 1801. From 1820 to 1823 he was engaged in the dry-goods business, in the city of New York. He then, at his father's request, returned to Dutchess County and took charge of the large farm which has ever since remained in the family, and has become so noted for successful stock-raising, inaugurated by Mr. Thorne, and afterward continued by his sons, Samuel and Edwin. Almost the first short-horn cattle brought to this country were imported by him. In 1823 Mr. Thorne married the daughter of Mr. Israel Corse, who was then a prominent leather merchant in this city. Upon Mr. Corse's retirement from business in 1830, Mr. Thorne again came to the city and succeeded him in the leather business, carrying it on in his own name and building up probably the largest and most successful business that has ever been carried on in the "Swamp." For those early days he was considered a very bold operator. He paid the closest attention to every detail of his large business, going to his store in Jacob and Ferry streets early in the morning, long before breakfast, and even returning there after dinner almost every night. He was not only a very large buyer and seller of leather in the market, but carried on immense tanneries in New York and Pennsylvania. Later he became the head of the firm of Thorne, Watson & Co., which for many years continued the largest and most successful leather firm of this country. It is difficult now to realize the influence of a man who was foremost among the merchant princes of his generation, more than twenty years ago. He has left a large fortune, the result of his commercial ability and foresight. He was

a man methodical in his habits, always punctual in keeping his engagements, and of the strictest integrity. No obligation of his was ever known to go to protest. His business judgment and his opinions on all commercial matters were everywhere respected. At the time of his death he was a director in the Central Trust Company, the Leather Manufacturers' National Bank, the Fifth Avenue Bank, the Mutual Gas Company, the City Fire Insurance Company, and the Sixth Avenue Railroad Company. He was one of the original promoters of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, and continued its leading director until a few years since. Unlike most men of advanced age, he took the liveliest interest in all matters of the present day, even to the last week before his death. He was as well informed in respect to everything of interest to the present generation as persons now in the prime of life; nothing escaped his attention or was devoid of interest to him. Mr. Thorne was eminently a man of his word, and an intense love of justice was the ruling principle of his life. Desiring justice for himself, he unhesitatingly accorded it to all other persons; and no one ever suspected him of a wish to take any unfair advantage or to do the slightest wrong. He was a man of great personal dignity, of commanding presence and of fine proportions. To the very end of his life he stood straight as a dart, continued daily in active exercise, was a rapid and constant walker, and showed all the agility and energy of a young man. In his family relations he was a most affectionate father and the most faithful of husbands. Mr. Thorne's first wife died in 1872, and a few years later he married Mrs. Eliza Fox Merritt, who survives him. There also survive him four sons, Edwin, Samuel, Jonathan, Jr., and William, and one daughter, Phebe Anna Thorne.

[*New York Tribune*, October 14, 1884.]

### FINAL HONORS TO JONATHAN THORNE.

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THE funeral of Jonathan Thorne took place yesterday at his home, No. 524 Fifth Avenue. From an early hour the spacious reception and drawing-rooms were thronged with friends and relatives of Mr. Thorne. The services were in conformity with the customs of the Society of Friends, and consisted simply of addresses and prayers, with intervals of reverential silence, the five preachers being Daniel H. Griffin, of Amawalk, New York; Edith W. Atlee and Samuel J. Levick, of Philadelphia; Samuel B. Haines, and Thomas Foulke, of New York; and Rev. Geo. H. Hare, of Sing Sing, all of whom took part in the eulogy of Mr. Thorne and the accompanying exhortations.

Jonathan Thorne was born in Washington, Dutchess Co., N. Y., in April, 1801, his father being a farmer there. At the age of nineteen he came to New York and engaged in the dry-goods business, returning, however, to Dutchess County three years later, to take charge of the large farm which has remained in the family ever since. Mr. Thorne imported nearly the first short-horn cattle ever brought to this country. His alliance with the Corse family, through his marriage with the daughter of Israel Corse, first brought him in connection with the "Swamp;" for, on the retirement of his father-in-law from business in 1830, Mr. Thorne returned to New York, and succeeded him as a buyer and seller of leather at Jacob and Ferry streets. Not content with this lucrative occupation, he established immense tanneries in New York and Pennsylvania, becoming later the head of the firm of Thorne, Watson & Co. He amassed great wealth by his business ability and foresight, and his opinions and judgment on all commercial matters were everywhere respected. He took the

liveliest interest in all matters of the present day, and he was as well informed in respect to everything concerning the present generation as persons now in the prime of life.

In 1872 his first wife died, and a few years later he married Mrs. Eliza Fox Merritt, a sister of Mrs. Augustus Schell, who survives him. He also leaves four sons—Edwin, Samuel, Jonathan, Jr., and William—and one daughter, Phebe Anna.

At the time of his death Jonathan Thorne was a director in the Central Trust Company, the Leather Manufacturers' National Bank, the Fifth Avenue Bank, the Mutual Gas Company, the City Fire Insurance Company, and the Sixth Avenue Railroad Company. He was one of the original promoters of the Pennsylvania Coal Company, and continued a leading director in it until a few years ago.

Among the well-known business associates and friends of Mr. Thorne at the funeral were William H. Macy, Wilson M. Powel, Charles Haight, Effingham Cock, Robert R. Willets, Austin G. Fox, William H. Carpenter, Robert Schell, William Sherwood, William G. Thomas, David Barker, John B. Isham, Constant Andrews, John Watson, Ex-Mayor Ely, Ambrose K. Ely, Theodore M. Barnes, Henry G. Lapham, Richard Merritt, Josiah T. Tubby, David M. Turnure, John W. Pearce, and Moses Pearce.

The interment took place at Woodlawn.



[*The Boston Herald*, October 14, 1884.]

### A DESERVED SUCCESS.

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MR. JONATHAN THORNE, who died last week in New York City, at the ripe old age of eighty-four, was a business man whose career and whose success deserve to be cited in disproof and correction of the very prevalent notion that in this country wealth and honor are accorded only to those who are willing to disregard the laws of strict mercantile honesty. It has been one of the pre-eminent virtues of the Society of Friends that it has always insisted upon a practical application of the commandment: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," and as a member of that sect, Mr. Thorne, during his long and active business life, was never unmindful of this injunction. An incident which he told of his early experience not only illustrates his adherence to principle, but also the way in which this adherence brought in a decided pecuniary reward. It was, and probably still is, the custom of those engaged in the wholesale hide and leather business to sort out the stock that they bought in the gross, grading it into first, second and third classes and rejections, the latter being the lowest and least valuable on the list. Mr. Thorne, when he entered business on his own account, found that his grader followed the general custom of giving to the firm the benefit of all doubts; that is to say, if some doubt existed as to whether a hide should be thrown into the pile of rejections or should be classed as a third-class article, the grader almost invariably made the latter choice, and so on through the rest of the sorting. Mr. Thorne immediately insisted that this method should be completely reversed. If there was the least doubt the customer, and not he, was to receive the benefit of this doubt. This plan promised to net a loss to the scrupulously conscientious merchant; but in a short time it had the precisely opposite result. Customers soon found that they could afford to pay more for Thorne's rejections than for those of any other



leather house in New York City, while his regular grades always commanded the highest market prices. This is a little incident, but it is characteristic of the methods which Mr. Thorne constantly pursued, methods which, combined with sterling business tactics, soon enabled him to build up the largest trade of his kind in New York, and which gave him, when he retired from active life, a fortune amounting to several millions of dollars. The record left by such a man will go a long way toward offsetting a great deal that is said about the unprincipled character of mercantile transactions in this country.

[*The New York Sun*, October 14, 1884.]

## JONATHAN THORNE'S EXEMPLARY LIFE.

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AN OLD-FASHIONED MERCHANT WHO PROSPERED IN WHATEVER HE UNDERTOOK.

THE funeral of the late Jonathan Thorne, Sr., who died on the 9th inst., was held yesterday morning at the home of the deceased merchant, at 524 Fifth Avenue. The house was filled with friends of the family, many of whom were dressed in the plain garb of the Society of Friends. The services were conducted by members of this Society. Daniel H. Griffin, a minister from Amawalk, New York, opened the services with a short address, in which he said : "There is no better way of solving the problem of life, and no better way of preparing to meet the change which death brings, than in doing each duty faithfully as it is presented. In this manner of life our friend was an example to old and young. He needs no eulogy. His works praise him." Others spoke briefly of the duties of life as practised by the deceased, and of the common hope of heaven. A prayer offered by Samuel J. Levick, of Philadelphia, closed the services. The burial was at Woodlawn. There were no pall-bearers. A list of those who attended the funeral would include about all of the merchants in the Swamp, besides many other prominent business men of the city.

Jonathan Thorne was born in Washington, Dutchess County, on April 20th, 1801. His great-grandfather, Isaac Thorne, was one of the earliest settlers in the county, having moved there from Long Island in 1720. Jonathan's father, Samuel Thorne, was a country merchant in Washington when Jonathan was born, but in 1814 he purchased the farm of four hundred acres, since known as Thorndale, and moved to it for the purpose of educating his boy as a farmer. Six years of farm life gave the boy an ambition to become a merchant, and he was accordingly established as a down-town dry-goods dealer in this city in 1820. While in business here

he became acquainted with the daughter of Mr. Israel Corse, a leather merchant in the Swamp, and married her. After three years in the dry-goods business he was persuaded by his father to sell out and return to the farm, where he remained until 1830. He then returned to the city and succeeded to the leather business of his father-in-law. For just fifty years he followed it with almost unvarying success.

It was his habit in the early days of trade to go to his office before breakfast and draw checks for all obligations falling due on that day, and thus open trade. He made it a point to see that the purchaser of his stock was better pleased after the goods were delivered than before. In 1847 the firm of Thorne, Watson, Corse & Co. was established, and the partnership remained unbroken until Mr. Thorne retired in 1880. All of the other members of the firm are now living. The death of Mr. Thorne's father in 1849 left the old homestead in Dutchess County wholly in his hands. He at once began to fit it up for a summer residence. The few months passed there in 1850 served to impress on him strongly the lack of enterprise among his neighbors, and farmers in general. It was a subject on which he had thought much after leaving the farm in 1830. With a view of at once teaching and assisting his neighbors, he determined to begin rearing blooded cattle of the best breeds to be obtained in the world. Early in 1851 Mr. Thorne's son, accompanied by Mr. Francis M. Rotch, a well-known judge of cattle thirty years ago, went to England to buy the nucleus for the new herd. The first purchase made was the bull Grand Duke, for whom one thousand guineas were paid after prolonged negotiations. This was at that time the greatest price ever paid for such an animal, and his subsequent arrival in this country with the three Duchesses, 59, 64, and 68, created a sensation among farmers and stockmen which has probably never since been equalled. Stock in great quantities had been imported before that by speculators, but these four, with half a dozen less famous cows, were the first imported for the purpose of supplying America with the best blooded cattle in the world.

In 1854 the son, Samuel, took the charge of the herd and imported ten more of a like grade, and the next year brought over Second Grand Duke and Neptune. In 1857 the Mount Fordham herd, including the Duchess bull, Duke of Gloster, and the Thorndale herd, became not only the best, but the most valuable, in the world. This was conceded in Great Britain as well as in other countries. For the first time in the history of the coun-

try, stockmen came over to America from Great Britain to get stock to improve their herds. The first sale, that of a bull, Our American Cousin, was made to an Irish gentleman in 1831, and fifteen other sales were made in the year following. The traffic thus started created an interest in fancy stock which drove prices to a fictitious figure. After the Thorndale herd was sold to Mr. J. O. Sheldon, of Geneva, a cow was sold at auction for \$40,600, and quite a number brought more than \$30,000. The bidding was a contest between British and American breeders. Mr. Jonathan Thorne leaves four sons, Edwin, Samuel, Jonathan, and William, and one daughter, Phebe Anna Thorne. His first wife died in 1872, and he subsequently married Mrs. Eliza Fox Merritt, who also survives him.

[*From Friends' Intelligencer, Philadelphia, Eleventh mo., 15th.*]

### JONATHAN THORNE.

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THIS venerable Friend, whose death, at the ripe age of 84 years, was announced in a late number of our paper, will be remembered by many in our religious Society, by whom he was not intimately known, for his liberal hospitality, his genial courtesy, and gentle dignity of bearing.

For many years, ministering and other Friends have been welcomed to his home during the week of the New York Yearly Meeting, and those who have gathered round his fireside or sat at his board will recall with a feeling of pleasure his easy flow of agreeable conversation, the freedom from any undue formalism, and the generous anticipation of any need, or, indeed, any desire on the part of a guest. He was rich in memories of the past, having ever been an intelligent and interested observer of the action of the Society of Friends, even in matters in which he did not see his way into active co-operation. Of persons and events of a generation ago, his recollection was quite vivid, and there was an absence of any feeling of mere partisanship, and an appreciation of nobility of motive, even when he saw it lacking the support of sound good sense and true insight.

As a successful merchant and man of business he was very widely known for his wisdom, his integrity, and his observance of the Golden Rule of the Christian. As a merchant of unquestioned probity, the press in the city, with which his business interests were identified, as well as elsewhere, have been prompt in tributes to his worth, and extracts from some of these we gladly transfer to our own columns. The Boston *Herald* of Tenth month 17th makes most honorable mention of him as one whose career disproves and corrects the prevalent notion that in this country wealth and honor are accorded only to those who are willing to disregard the laws of perfect uprightness in business-life.

Jonathan Thorne's own testimony many years ago is still well remembered by those who loved him, "that no business operation can be ultimately successful in the largest sense, on which the approval of a just God did not rest." \*

\*The above article from the *Friends' Intelligencer* contained extracts from the *N. Y. Mail and Express*, the *Boston Herald* and the *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, which are omitted here, having been printed at length in the foregoing pages.



