

John Albert COCKERILL (1845 - 1896)

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John Albert Cockerill was perhaps the most brilliant of the descendants of Jeremiah Fenton. He was the only one to win not only national, but world-wide fame. His father told Hon. L. J. Fenton that his son John was a "real Fenton." The writer regrets his total lack of personal acquaintance with his history.

JOHN A. COCKERILL, also known as Joseph Daniel Albert Cockerill. was born December 4, 1845, at Locust Grove, Ohio, and died April 10, 1896, at Cairo, Egypt. His grandfather, Daniel Cockerill, was a lieutenant of artillery in the War of 1812, and was engaged at Crancy Island. His brother, Armstcad Thompson Mason Cockerill, was First Lieutenant, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Colonel of the 24th O. V. I. His uncle, Daniel T. Cockerill, was Captain of Battalion F, First Ohio Light Artillery, and was promoted to Captain of Battalion D, March 16, 1864. He was mustered out March 16, 1864. His father, Joseph Randolph Cockerill, was Colonel, 70th O. V. I., October 2, 1861, and resigned April 23, 1864. He was breveted Brigadier General for gallantry on the field.

John received such education as the common schools afforded, but his tastes ran to geography and history. He enlisted in the 24th O. V. I. as a member of the band at the age of sixteen, on July 18, 1861, and was mustered out September 10, 1862, by order of the War Department, for discharge of Regimental Bands. He fought in the battle of Shiloh with a musket. He was Colonel on the Staff of Governor William Allen in 1872. He learned to set type in the office of the Scion, at West Union. He was Journal Clerk in the Legislature from 1868 to 1871, and after that was an editor in Dayton and Hamilton. He accepted a reportorial position under J. B. McCullough on the Cincinnati Enquirer, and later became its managing editor. He was special correspondent from the scenes of the Russo-Turkish War in 1877.

He was editor of the Washington Post, Baltimore Gazette, and St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Then he assumed the place of managing editor of the New York World and built that paper up. He next became editor of the New York Morning Advertiser and the Commercial Advertiser, and afterwards accepted the position of special war correspondent for the New York Herald to report the Chinese-Japanese War in 1895, and was engaged in the service of the Herald at the time of his death. He was stricken with apoplexy April 10, 1896, at Sheperd's Hotel in Cairo, Egypt, and died in two hours, without regaining consciousness. His body was brought home and buried in St. Louis, Missouri. He was a man of unusually kind disposition. No appeal by a friend was ever made to him in vain. His goodness of heart and generosity of nature are attested by innumerable acts of kindness, which keep him in loving remembrance by all who knew him in friendly intimacy. His sterling qualities as a man, as an editor, and as a friend secured his election as President of the New York Press Club four times successively. He was a writer of great force and vigor, keen, witty, and an adept in the use of argument or satire. No opening in the mail of an adversary escaped the polished shaft of his wit. His keen perception of character in others was so accurate that he was always sustained by an editorial staff of unusual ability. His letters from Japan are among the finest examples of English composition. The character of the people, their civilization, the genius of their

institutions and government, are so accurately set forth as to be almost a revelation to the people of the western world. While there he undertook a hazardous mission to Korea, on behalf of the Japanese government. On his return from which, in recognition of that service, and of the high esteem he had gained among that people, as a faithful historian and journalist, the Emperor conferred on him "The Order of the Sacred Treasure." Only two other men, other than Japanese noblemen, had ever received this mark of distinction. The name of the first one is unknown to the writer. Sir Edwin Arnold was second, and John A. Cockerill the third.

He had been a Democrat until the administration of President Harrison, when he became a Republican and continued devoted to that party during his life.