



Your brother,
Sam. Storrs Howe

SAMUEL STORRS HOWE.

BY FREDERICK LLOYD.

[The writer wishes to here acknowledge his obligation and extend his thanks to Mrs. Laura S. Huff, (Mr. Howe's niece,) of Washington, Iowa, for kind assistance rendered him in the preparation of this sketch by supplying the notes relating to Mr. Howe's career before his coming to Iowa, and to his genealogy, all of which, as here recorded, was compiled by her, and much of it is given in her own phraseology.]

The first family of the name of Howe came from England, as we are informed by old manuscripts still in the possession of the Iowa family of this name. John Howe settled in Sudbury, Massachusetts, in 1640, and was the first-made "freeman" to vote. His father, another John Howe, was a direct descendant of the Howe family of Hadinghall, Warwickshire, England. This John Howe was connected with Lord Charles Howe, Earl of Lancaster, in the time of King Charles I.

About thirty years after the formation of the Massachusetts Colony the Howe descendants emigrated to Marlborough and became "selectmen" to keep order in the church. In May, 1656, of thirteen persons signing a petition to the General Court to incorporate the town the second name is that of John Howe. The town was incorporated in 1660 by the records, and the Indian deed to the Howe family for lands bears date June 12, 1684. John Howe died in 1668, leaving a large family in Marlborough, there being twenty-eight voters alone of that name. In 1711 four of the twenty-six garrisons were commanded by Howes. David Howe built in 1776 at Sudbury the "Howe Inn," whose sign was the "Red Horse," immortalized by the poet Longfellow in the "Tales of a Wayside Inn." The coat-of-arms, a copy of which was presented to the

Worcester Society, bore on its scroll the words, "By ye name of Howe." We quote from the verse of Longfellow a description of the landlord and his coat-of-arms.

"But first the landlord will I trace:
 Grave in his aspect and attire;
 A man of ancient pedigree,
 A Justice of the Peace was he,
 Known in all Sudbury as 'The 'Squire.'
 Proud was he of his name and race,
 Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,
 And in the parlor, full in view,
 His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,
 Upon the wall in colors blazed;
 He beareth gules upon his shield,
 A chevron argent in the field,
 With three wolf's heads, and for the crest
 A wyvern part-per-pale addressed
 Upon a helmet barred: below
 The scroll reads, 'By the name of Howe.'
 And over this, no longer bright,
 Though glimmering with a latent light,
 Was hung the sword his grandsire bore
 In the rebellious days of yore,
 Down there at Concord in the fight."

Of such ancestry sprang Samuel Storrs Howe, who was born in Shoreham, Vermont, June 20, 1808. His father was a son of Captain John Howe of the Revolutionary army. His uncle, Abner Howe, died in the same service, and the Worcester Society has erected a monument to his memory. The father of our subject was Job Lane Howe, born in the town of Brookfield, Massachusetts, who married Deborah Barrows, of Mansfield, Connecticut, and removed to Vermont in 1796, when it was quite a wilderness. He bought a farm at Shoreham, about three miles from Lake Champlain, and helped to build roads, leaving fine shade trees, some of which still remain on the "Cream Hill" road. He was an architect, a builder, a wheelright, a millright and a ship-builder, and had a contract to build the first "meeting house." Rev. Daniel O. Morton, whose son, Ex-Vice President Levi P. Morton, was born there, was one of the first pastors of this primi-

tive Congregational Church. Under his preaching our Howe in 1821, when thirteen years old, was one of the many converts. The first American missionaries to foreign lands were sent out from this little inland town. Probably few of the newspaper critics who were wont to fling their poisoned political arrows at the former Vice President of the United States for complicity in the *Shoreham* hotel management at Washington knew the derivation of the name.

Of this branch of the Howe family, which by the records was the sixth generation in America, there were four brothers and one sister, of whom Samuel Storrs was the youngest. He and the oldest brother were thought too delicate for the farm or a trade and were sent to college. The eldest, after his graduation at Middlebury, Vermont, became Principal of Castleton Academy in Vermont, and in 1821-2 Samuel Storrs was fitted for college under this brother's instruction, and entered Middlebury College in 1825. His health was delicate, but he was graduated third in his class August 19, 1829. In 1829-30 he pursued his studies at Andover Theological Seminary, Massachusetts, and taught for a few months in the Castleton Academy. His father had extended his business into Crown Point, and built the Church and some stores there which are still in good condition. So thoroughly was the work done and so durable was the material that it was not necessary to renew the shingles for fifty years. His parents are buried near the church. His brother, Professor Henry Howe, having accepted the position of Principal of the Canandaigua Academy, New York, Samuel Storrs acted as his assistant during the year 1831. It was then and still is one of the leading institutions of the State of New York. The distinguished mathematician Robinson was graduated under their instruction, and the still more famous statesman Stephen A. Douglas was also their pupil. The unfortunate young Philip Spencer, who, as a midshipman of the U.

S. Sloop-of-war "Somers," was sacrificed in the relentless cause of naval discipline and executed by Captain Alexander Slidell Mackenzie for mutiny, was also one of their students.* Indeed, students from all over the Union and even from Mexico, sought their tutorship.

Samuel Storrs, from the end of 1831 to August, 1834, was pursuing his theological studies, first at Andover, and finally at Princeton, latterly under the preceptorship of Professor Robert B. Patten, spending the vacation seasons teaching Greek and Sacred History, and to beginners Hebrew. August, 1834, he was licensed to preach on the recommendation of the Professors of Edgeville Seminary by the Middlesex Union Association, and was graduated September 10th of the same year. In 1835 he was appointed Tutor in Middlebury College, Vermont, but resigned the following year to take charge of the Classical Department of Cambridge Academy, New York, where he remained two years.

* This event produced a great sensation, for Spencer's father, John C. Spencer, was Secretary of War at the time, and the vessel was only a few days' sail from a United States port. The commander's conduct was justified but not approved, and he was never given command of a ship again. Young Spencer was a mere lad, rash and adventurous but not malicious. When told of his fate he said, "This will kill my mother." A village society organized by him now counts many thousand members. Mackenzie was a brother of that Slidell, who with Ex-U. S. Senator Mason, was overhauled at sea by Capt. Wilkes of the U. S. Steamer San Jacinto, and taken prisoner from a British vessel, the Trent, while on their way to Europe in 1861 as envoys from the Confederate States. Mackenzie had taken this name which, as a *sine qua non*, went with a rich Scotch estate. One of his sons, General Ranald Slidell Mackenzie, was a brilliant young Union officer during the war, and when subsequently as Colonel of the fourth U. S. Cavalry he was seemingly on the point of promotion, his mind became deranged and his death soon ensued. It is thus that genius and insanity are so closely allied. The Spencer family is one hardly less brilliant than the Slidells or Mackenzies. They are scattered from one side of the continent to the other and even across the Pacific, and many of them have been distinguished. The third President of our State University was Oliver M. Spencer who afterwards was U. S. Consul at Genoa, Italy, and later U. S. Consul General at Melbourne, Australia, where he died in August, 1895. George E. Spencer, of another family, was Secretary of the Iowa State Senate of 1858; during the war he was Colonel of a loyal Alabama regiment, and after the war was elected U. S. Senator from Alabama.

In 1838 he accepted a call to preach at West Dresden, Yates county, New York, and in 1840 settled at Painted Post, New York. It was soon after this that, contemplating entrance into foreign missionary work he took a short course of practical medical instruction. In the summer of 1842-3 he preached in Ticonderoga,* New York, near Lake George, and from 1843 to 1846 he officiated in Brashear Falls, New York, very acceptably, having been installed Pastor of the Presbyterian Church formed under his ministry, but resigned in 1846 to accept the Secretaryship of the "Western Educational Society" at Auburn, New York.

In June, 1849, he accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, and was installed Pastor by the Presbytery of Des Moines.

Mr. Howe, in the course of his work in the ministry was tractable to the advice of his friends. On account of the delicacy of his health he at one time desired to enter the foreign missionary field. It was Rev. Lyman Beecher, father of Henry Ward Beecher, who dissuaded him from this course.

On coming to Iowa City, he found what is now locally known as the "Old Stone Church," in a partially finished state, and set himself about collecting funds for its completion. His name is therefore doubly associated with this "venerable pile, so old it seemed only not to fall," for here the State Historical Society, (of which Samuel Storrs Howe was corresponding Secretary and the first editor of its quarterly publication, *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*.) had its Cabinet and Library from 1868 to 1882. For more than fifty years its grey walls have turned the hurricane and blizzard, its vaulted dome trembled with pulpitish appeals

* Recently workmen while digging near a grave in Ticonderoga found an old decayed box and near by a grave stone roughly inscribed "Ye L' Howe." Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, the famous lecturer, who examined it with others, has expressed his conviction that it was the grave of Lord Howe, who was killed in that locality, although it was supposed he had been buried at Albany. Thus have two collateral descendants of the same ancestry been honorably associated at the same place in their antipodal capacities, one in war and one in peace.

and the resonance of prayer and anthem. But before being deserted by the Historical Society it had become the haunt of mice and rats which have left their impress on many a newspaper file and book-cover.

In 1862 Mr. Howe was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Historical Society. He saw the importance of the Society having a publication of its own as a medium of exchange with other similar societies, and the result was the issue of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, the first number bearing date January, 1863, a quarterly, at first of forty-eight pages, but later enlarged to eighty pages. Its forty-eighth number, dated October, 1874, was the last of this series published. (It may be here stated parenthetically that for the years 1868 and 1869 Dr. Sanford W. Huff, who in 1870 married the niece and protegee of Mr. Howe, Miss Laura S. Nickerson, was the Corresponding Secretary of the Historical Society and the editor of the *ANNALS*.)

It was about this time that Mr. Howe was interested in the collection of Indian relics for the Smithsonian Institution, and it was in this way that the thought which he cherished of preserving the early pioneer and Indian history of Iowa had form and effect, until now it has become a subject sufficiently important in the minds of our people to secure the approval of the Legislature for the establishment of a second organization for its promotion.

His work was rather desultory and perhaps lacking in method, for he was a scholar and student and was unversed in business formulas, and for this reason the good that he effected being scattered over a large field is hard to aggregate and present in its totality. He was still more careless of his own personal interests. With considerable opportunity to acquire wealth he died destitute. No suggestion of misappropriation could ever apply to him. He was a mathematician, a classical scholar, a student whose field of research was not bounded by a curriculum.

He was a bachelor. A cross in love in early life cast a shadow over his path, but it was not one which the sun of Christian hope could not dispel when it shone upon it. The vows he took on entering the ministry were faithfully kept. No scandal ever soiled his gown. He was chaste as one feeding on the vitex berry. Though standing for Presbyterianism he was no bigot. He said the most comforting sacrament he had ever taken was administered by a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church whilst he kneeled between two lady parishoners. Orator, teacher, author, antiquary—"all things by turns," although capable if not eminent in all, he has left little distinctively impressive of his personality except in the memory of his friends.

One of the last roles in which Mr. Howe appeared was as editor of "Howe's Annals," a faint revival of the old periodical, the first number of which appeared in 1883, and was continued at irregular intervals for three years, when failing health compelled its abandonment.

Mr. Howe was a kindly, genial man with his friends, and he had that faculty of adapting himself and his discourse to fit his company which is not given to every one. Like the toad, locked in the rock of ignorant companionship he seemed dull and shriveled, but when liberated into the enlightened sphere of educated society he expanded into the dimensions of a genius.

In the autumn of 1887 Mr. Howe was invited to Castleton, Vermont, as the last living member of the Academy of his class, it being the centennial celebration of the institution, at which he was able to deliver an address.

Mr. Howe's health continued gradually to fail till October 26, 1888, when he died at his home in Iowa City, in his eighty-first year.

IOWA CITY, OCTOBER 10, 1895.

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