



Your friend  
Henry Clay Dean

## HENRY CLAY DEAN,

BY J. R. RIPPEY.

Henry Clay Dean removed to Iowa in the spring of 1850, temporarily locating at Pittsburg on the Des Moines river in Van Buren county, thence to Keosauqua, to Muscatine, to Middleton in Des Moines county, to West Point in Lee county, finally locating at Mount Pleasant, where he resided with his family until 1871.

He was born October 27, 1822, in Fayette county, Pennsylvania. He was a son of Caleb Dean, born December, 1789, in Mifflin county, Pennsylvania. William Dean, the father of Caleb, was born near Philadelphia and married Sarah McDonald, a sister of the McDonald who during the Revolutionary War captured the noted horse "Selim" from the tory. Among the ancestors of Caleb Dean was Henry Dean, Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Henry VIII. of England. Caleb Dean's wife was a descendant of a Maryland family who came to America with Lord Baltimore, and was related to the Rutledges of South Carolina.

Henry Clay Dean on January 19, 1847, married Miss Christiana Margaret Haigler of Randolph county, Virginia, a daughter of Jacob Haigler, a soldier of the war of 1812, and whose father, William Haigler, was a soldier of the Revolutionary War and a member of General Washington's bodyguard, and was of German descent.

In early life, Mr. Dean attended the common schools of his vicinity and finished his education at Madison College in his native state. He worked at the stone-mason's trade, taught school and kept books for Hon. Andrew Stewart, who conducted extensive iron works. While thus engaged every idle moment and long, weary hours far into the night were given to acquiring knowledge and to obtaining such information as would fit him for the highest type of citizenship. He united with the Methodist church, studied theology, was ordained to the ministry and assigned a circuit in the Virginia Conference.

While in Virginia he gained a wide reputation as a pulpit orator and formed an acquaintance with the notable men of the State. Upon one occasion while on an itinerary to the eastern part of Virginia he visited Washington City and asked permission of the minister in charge of the best Methodist church to occupy his pulpit on the following Sabbath. Probably because Mr. Dean was not dressed in the latest ministerial style, the use of the pulpit was declined and an old church house was secured. Mr. Dean's reputation for eloquence had preceded him, and when the hour for services arrived the old, dilapidated building was filled to the extent of its capacity by the largest assemblage of congressmen, senators, heads of departments, and leading citizens that had ever greeted a minister of the gospel in Washington City.

Before leaving Virginia he made a brilliant canvass of the State for the election of Henry A. Wise for governor, and to Mr. Dean's urgent and eloquent appeals to the people Mr. Wise attributed his success. When in 1856 a chaplain of the senate was to be elected, Governor Wise presented the Rev. Henry Clay Dean of Iowa for this high honor and through the influence of Wise, supplemented by a remembrance of the great sermon preached in the old Methodist church, his election was practically unanimous.

Mr. Dean continued in the ministry until the sectional division of the Methodist church. This he declared was the first step toward a dissolution of the Union, would eventually end in Civil War, and as he felt that by affiliating with either faction he would become a party to the crime, he would relieve himself of all responsibility by retiring from the pulpit. While in the ministry he was a great power in the upbuilding of the church. His oratory attracted immense audiences. His eloquent and earnest appeals brought many into the fold of the church. His glowing presentation of the love of Christ and of a religion that would weld humanity in a common brotherhood aroused the church and developed in the membership the best features of the Christian religion.

As a criminal lawyer Mr. Dean was eminently successful and during his practice was connected with many of the most

important and closely contested cases in the Mississippi valley. He was usually engaged by the defense, and his appeals to the court or a jury for leniency in construing the law and the evidence and for mercy in rendering judgment were unanswerable and unusually effective. His arguments were ingenious and his eloquence unapproachable. He reached the hearts of jurors and opened the most tender points for a consideration of his client's case. He would melt the court to tears and win the sympathy of his audience. If fraud or deceit was attempted by his opponent, he exposed its hideousness and aroused his hearers to the most bitter indignation. He was learned in the great principles of law and contented himself by presenting them to the jury, leaving to others the details and technicalities of the case. He had few equals and no superiors before a jury. Probably no attorney in Iowa has saved more men from the penitentiary or from execution, with so great an array of evidence against them, as has Mr. Dean. None has delivered speeches with more force or effect, or left a deeper impression on his hearers.

As a lecturer Mr. Dean was among the ablest and most popular of his day. His lecture on "Mistakes of Ingersoll" evidenced a thorough familiarity with theological subjects, was a sufficient answer to Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses," and a refutation of the brilliant agnostic's assault against the great law-giver of the Israelites. Another lecture which attracted universal attention was devoted to the extension of popular suffrage, advocating the election by the people of all officers, including United States senators. His contention, based on the fundamental principle of this government that all just powers are derived from the people, and that the appointment of officers or their selection otherwise than by popular suffrage is an infringement of the people's rights, has never been satisfactorily answered, but is almost universally approved by public sentiment. Mr. Dean was the author of the *Crimes of the Civil War*, one volume of which was published. But the manuscript for the second volume, together with many other valuable papers and a library of 4,000 volumes, was destroyed by fire in 1876.

Mr. Dean was a Democrat yet was violently opposed to secession of the State and did not favor coercion as the best means of restoring the Union. He believed that statesmanship and diplomacy could satisfactorily adjust the difference between the two sections, maintain a union of the States, provide for the ultimate extinction of slavery and the perpetuation of one great free government. In secession and coercion he saw his beloved country drenched in blood and confronted by bankruptcy, without assurance of results. He saw the best government conceived by man and established after the most desperate and trying conflict with monarchy and growing out of seed fertilized by the best blood and bleaching bones of his ancestors imperiled and no promise for human liberty, no ray of hope for freedom.

He was strenuous in his opposition to slavery, bitter in his denunciation of oppression in every form and from every source. He personally disliked Jefferson Davis and the leaders of the Confederacy and had no love for Stanton and Seward and their policy of coercion. He conscientiously believed, and had no hesitancy in declaring, that these men favored war, not for the preservation of the Union, but to humiliate the south and her leaders and her institutions.

He had vigorously opposed the efforts of Davis, Breckinridge, and Slidel to extend slavery into the territories in opposition to the will of the people. With Stephen A. Douglas, he espoused the cause of what was then known as "squatter sovereignty." When the split in the Democratic National Convention of 1860 resulted in the nomination of Breckinridge by southern Democrats and Douglas by the northern Democrats, Mr. Dean advocated the cause of Douglas and delivered a series of brilliant speeches in behalf of his candidacy. He believed the election of Douglas would avert war, that it would open the way for a compromise of sectional differences, and to his election he gave his best effort and perhaps made the most eloquent and earnest appeals of his life.

He was actively engaged in every political campaign from the time he was 16 years old until his death.

In 1868 he labored earnestly to prevent the nomination of Salmon P. Chase for the Presidency by the Democratic National Convention, and in the delivering of his speech against Chase ruined a rosewood table upon which he stood. The next day his attention was called to the ruin he had wrought, and he replied that the table was worth less than the Democratic party, which, he believed, he had saved by preventing the nomination of Mr. Chase. He was intensely patriotic. He loved his country and its institutions. He boasted of the liberty it guaranteed to the citizen. He advocated only such measures and such policy as he deemed in harmony with public weal and as would assure the greatest good to the greatest number. He was an unfaltering friend to the people and believed that upon an intelligent and educated citizenship depended the stability of free institutions. In defense of what he deemed right, and in the interest of the great underlying principles of free government he was courageous, eloquent and unanswerable. No political antagonist ever dared to engage him in joint discussion of current political issues. On the rostrum he was the equal of any man in his day. He had complete control of his audience and could convulse it with mirth, melt it to tenderness, or arouse it to the highest indignation. He was a unique character even where originality predominated. He would have been classed as a genius in any age of the world or in any condition of society. He was the peer of statesmen, a friend of the masses, the great commoner of his day.

Dean never forgot a friend and never neglected an opportunity to repay a kindness. He bore no enmity toward man. Even toward those whose acts or politics he assailed with the most violent invective, he at the same time breathed a spirit of kindness. Toward a trusted friend, who was his ideal of a gentleman, his devotion was pathetic and unswerving. To his neighbors and friends he kept open house and his hospitality was unbounded.

He left Mount Pleasant in 1871 and located on an 800-acre farm in Putnam county, Missouri, and named his home

“Rebels Cove.” Here he died February 6, 1887, leaving a devoted family consisting of a wife and seven children.

Henry Clay Dean, eminent divine, statesman, philosopher, and a leader of men, is dead. The highest meed of praise that could be tendered him is that “the world is better from his having lived in it.”

Sedalia, Missouri.

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### JOURNAL OF THE OREGON TRAIL.

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In the spring of 1852 there was organized among the citizens of Cedar township, Van Buren county, Iowa, an emigrant train of about twenty-five wagons. Each wagon was drawn by from three to five yoke of oxen. In the company were, Paul Brattain and family of seven adult persons; William Newman; Lafayette Spencer; Charles Spencer and wife and two children; Henry Newman; George Gimple; Michael Smith and his wife, two sons and a daughter; George Hammonds; Henry Hammonds; Jacob Whetstone and family; George Taylor and family; Robert Carter and family; Adam Barnes and family; Oliver Mitchell and family; John Hilary and family; Napoleon Baker; William Howard and family; Charles Adams and family; Thomas Clark and family; Thomas Whetstone and family; Nicholas Boley and family; John Boley and family; James Watson and family; Hill Watson and family; Iradel Anderson; Mathies Anderson; George, James and William Ebert; Henry and Sloan Keck.

Paul Brattain was best known to the Iowa public of any in this train. He had served in different official capacities, the most important being as Treasurer of the Des Moines River Improvement Board of Public Works.

To assist his brother, William, who expected to follow in 1853, Lafayette Spencer kept a diary of his trip to Oregon, which he transmitted with a letter after the journey ended. This letter and the diary in the quaint diction and orthography of the writer are herewith presented with no more than necessary alterations.

E. R. H.

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