

## THE HONORABLE ALFRED HEBARD.\*

BY REV. DR. WILLIAM SALTER.

Mr. Hebard was born in Windham, Connecticut, May 10, 1811; he graduated at Yale college in 1832; his favorite studies were in civil engineering. After teaching in New Jersey, and in New London, Connecticut, he came to what was Wisconsin Territory in 1837, and opened and thoroughly improved a large farm ten miles west of Burlington, a few miles beyond where Governor Chambers, the second governor of Iowa Territory, afterwards made his home. He has given a vivid description of those primitive days in his article on "The Border War Between Iowa and Missouri" (1840) in the first volume of this series of *THE ANNALS*, p. 651. Governor Lucas had commissioned him to raise a military company for that "war."

Mr. Hebard was present at the treaty with the Sac and Fox Indians, October 11, 1842, in which they ceded to the United States all the lands up to that time in their possession, retaining the occupancy of a portion until May 1, 1843; and of that west of a line running due north and south from the Painted or Red Rocks on the White Breast fork of the Des Moines river three years longer. "The large amount of land thus acquired," in the language of Mr. Hebard, "has developed a food-producing, life-sustaining capacity unsurpassed by any tract of like extent on the face of the earth." At that treaty he served by appointment of Governor Chambers, with Mr. Arthur Bridgman, at that time a merchant of Burlington, afterwards of Keokuk, on a commission to examine the claims of traders against the Indians, and they adjusted claims to the amount of more than a quarter of a million of dollars. His article on that "Treaty and its Negotiations," in the first volume of *THE ANNALS*, p. 397, gives the testi-

\*A fine half-tone portrait of Mr. Hebard appeared in *THE ANNALS* for January, 1895, page 651.

mony of an eye-witness to the scenes of that memorable occasion.

Mr. Hebard was the first city engineer employed in Burlington, and established the grades of the streets leading from the river bank. He constructed the bridges on the road which the United States government opened from Burlington to the "Indian Agency," where the treaty referred to was made.

He was chosen a representative from Des Moines county to the Third, Fourth, and Sixth Legislative Assemblies of Iowa Territory, and to the First General Assembly of the State, and senator from Montgomery, Fremont and Page counties in the Sixteenth and from Montgomery, Adams and Mills counties in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth General Assemblies. In these bodies he gained universal respect and esteem for his personal qualities and for his wisdom and moderation in law-making.

Upon the apportionment of the "Land Grant" to railroads in Iowa (1856), Mr. Hebard made surveys of a route for the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company through the southern counties. In this work he crossed the State four times, running lines and taking levels over trackless prairies, fording streams, exposed to scorching suns or driving storms, and sheltered at night, if at all, under a canvas-covered wagon. Of three surveys made his was adopted, with a few deviations. When the party of surveyors of which he was chief reached the valley of the Nishnabotana, as they camped for the night, Mr. Hebard said: "Here will be a depot." In that expectation, and impressed with the beauty of the region and its promise of agricultural wealth, he with others purchased the land, and the town of Red Oak was surveyed and platted. He subsequently purchased a large farm in the vicinity.

During the war of the Rebellion he was employed in bridge and railroad construction for the government in Missouri and Tennessee, to aid in the movement and support of the Union forces. After the war he made his home at Red

Oak in the enjoyment of the comfort, dignity and honor his industry, enterprise and public spirit had won.

Mr. Hebard was a man of splendid physique, of large frame, symmetrical, and in appearance recalled Charles Sumner to those who knew them both. In moral force his character was equally strong and balanced. The soul of sincerity and honor, he had a fine modesty of nature, was never given to the language of profession or protestation, but of quiet manners and simple speech. High-minded and unassuming he never sought office, but gained the suffrages of his fellow-citizens from their confidence in his superior intelligence and in his uprightness. Out of the humble beginnings in the "Black Hawk Purchase," to which he came before the Territory of Iowa was organized, he lived to see the rise and growth of a commonwealth that is not inferior in the highest qualities to any other State in the Union. It is as he called it, "a grand civil and political development without historic parallel." His "Recollections of Early Territorial Days" in volume II, p. 212, 3d series of THE ANNALS, and his Address before the Pioneer Law-Makers' Association at their Second Reunion, February 17, 1890, are valuable contributions to Iowa history. On the latter occasion he said:

"That a Commonwealth of two millions of people, very generally in an enviable condition of culture and independence, should read their whole history within a period running back little more than a single generation seems akin to the marvellous; yet such is the fact. It is a bare half-century since enterprise first crossed the Father of Waters on our eastern border and commenced her busy work in circumstances as primitive as could be. Camping in groves that fringed the water-courses, our pioneers lived in cabins made of logs, uncleaned of bark, with doors made of split clapboards, and greased paper for windows. Nothing daunted they saw promise ahead; willing hearts and working hands wasted no time. A common interest suggested rules to govern their intercourse, and neighborhood organizations enforced those rules under the name of "Club Law." No reports are on record, but to this day memory endorses the prompt and just decisions of those early times. Kindred circumstances begat kindly social relations, and no new-comer, when ready to raise his rude cabin-home, failed to find strong hands to give him the needful lift. Then followed the simple spread of coffee and good cheer, more enjoyable than any royal banquet or fashionable lunch that modern society contrives. Courage and

persevering industry started the early settlers on a career of success which has had but little interruption from that day to this. We use no high-sounding adjectives, no self-extolling phrases, but take pride in believing that we have attained a condition of material prosperity and intelligent civilization which ranks us high among our elder sister States.

"Had the Creator given us a choice of all the lands He had made we could not have made a selection preferable to the one Providence has assigned us. Located in that belt of latitude which has nursed and nurtured the energy, the activity, the push and the progress of the world, it has a soil not generally, but universally, of great productive capacity; not a single acre between the great rivers, save the wash of some water-course or some precipitous bluff, but is capable of becoming a garden of profit and pleasure. There is not a mountain, not a hill even, to subtract a single rod from the productive area. Valleys there are, eroded by the action of our streams, and intervening divides that only reach in elevation the common level, thus securing perfect drainage without a foot of waste. No tedious monotony tires the eye of the traveler. A succession of valleys and divides, veined by graceful contours of surface, furnish pictures of beauty at almost every stage. So far as our earthly homes are concerned, we are certainly a favored people compared with any other past or present. Range the earth from pole to pole, go with the sun around its central circle, read history from Eden down, search and examine and then say what the age or where the land in which man ever had heritage like ours."

One of the founders of Red Oak, where was Mr. Hebard's home for the last twenty-eight years, it is the testimony of his townsmen that the character of that flourishing city "for culture, enterprise, philanthropy and righteousness, has been achieved through his influence as largely, perhaps, as through any other single person." He was for many years chairman of the school board and his last public service was an address at a quarter-centennial school celebration.

Through life he maintained the habit of regular attendance upon public worship; at Burlington in the Congregational church of that city; during his residence in St. Louis in Dr. Post's congregation. His pastor at Red Oak, Rev. E. C. Moulton, says:

"His was a truly reverent soul. He was a firm believer in Christianity as he understood it. Although not technically a member of it, this church lay very near his heart. He gave liberally to its support and his counsel was frequently sought and highly prized. During my occupancy of the pulpit he has rarely been absent from either morning or evening service, except when away from the city. His good grey head and reverent and intelligent face were an inspiration to the pastor. The incense of prayer

rising daily from the family altar spread fragrance through his home. Those who knew him would as soon have thought of calling in question sunrise or gravitation as his honesty. He ordered his conduct on lines as accurate as those traced by his unerring compass over the prairies. He was a living commentary on the words, 'The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness.' Courteous in his social relations, considerate of others, kind to those needing kindness, he was a typical American gentleman of the old school, the highest product of American civilization. We temper our sorrow, therefore, that we shall no more behold that crown of glory and that benignant face beneath it, with gratitude for the long and noble and complete life of Alfred Hebard."

His home life was adorned with every domestic virtue and with supreme content. He married Miss Ann M. Huntington, of Campello, North Bridgewater, Massachusetts, April 20, 1841; she was the daughter of Rev. Daniel Huntington and granddaughter of General Jedidiah Huntington, one of Washington's aids in the Revolutionary war. Directly upon their marriage they came to Burlington. In recalling those days Mrs. Hebard says:

"I shall never forget how the city of Burlington looked to me then or how grateful I felt to Dr. Seth S. Ransom for insisting on our removal from its forlorn hotel to his house until my husband could secure a conveyance from the farm to take us home. Stumps were in the streets and everything else looked new and forbidding. Our farm house had not one finished room in it, but it was home, and seemed delightful after the long tedious journey by river and canal. Young people in these days begin married life with luxuries, but they cannot appreciate them as those do who began as we did with only a shelter and gathered their comforts one by one."

In the summer of 1896 Mr. Hebard visited New England as was his wont, and intended returning in season to attend the celebration of the Semi-centennial of the State at Burlington. While at Block Island he was suddenly seized with gangrene in his foot, and after five weeks painful illness died on the 21st of September at the home of his sister in New London, Connecticut, aged 85 years, 4 months, 11 days. On the following Sunday memorial services were held at Red Oak, when tender and beautiful tributes to his life and character were rendered by the Rev. E. C. Moulton, the Hon. N. W. Merritt and Judge H. E. Deemer. This article is indebted for some of its statements to those addresses. In the language of Judge Deemer:

"And now, farewell, thou noble, generous, gentle, kindly man, strange-mixture of Hawkeye and Yankee, of Puritan and Pioneer! Thy life's work is ended; thy summons has come. Simplicity, kindness and the true politeness of a Christian gentleman were in thy keeping. Thy life has been an inspiration and is worthy of emulation. The men of thy generation are nearly all gone, but their influence will abide forever. It may be truthfully said of thee:

'His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, This was a man.'

BURLINGTON, IOWA, March 15, 1897.

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ABOUT all there is left of the old wild life among the Indian tribes now occupying Indian Territory, is the tribal form of government. In other particulars these people conform very well in their ways and customs to the grade of civilization to be seen among the whites of the southwest. The last census of the Territory showed a red population of 50,000 and a white population of 300,000, the latter being the tenants-at-will of the red landlord class that has grown rich from rentals and leaseholds. The five tribes are so thrifty and prosperous that they have been humorously called "tanned Yankees." They have a great many men of wealth who maintain a lobby at Washington to labor against any change in a status that might take their rich lands from them, at an upset price, and open the country to actual and permanent settlement as Oklahoma was opened a few years ago.—*Burlington Post*, January 30, 1897.

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MORGAN L. RENO, formerly Treasurer of State, was killed in one of Sully's late battles with the Indians. He was formerly a partner of J. C. Culbertson in the banking business at Iowa City, and at the time of his death was Commissary of the Sixth Iowa Cavalry.—*Iowa State Register*, Sept. 10, 1864..

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