

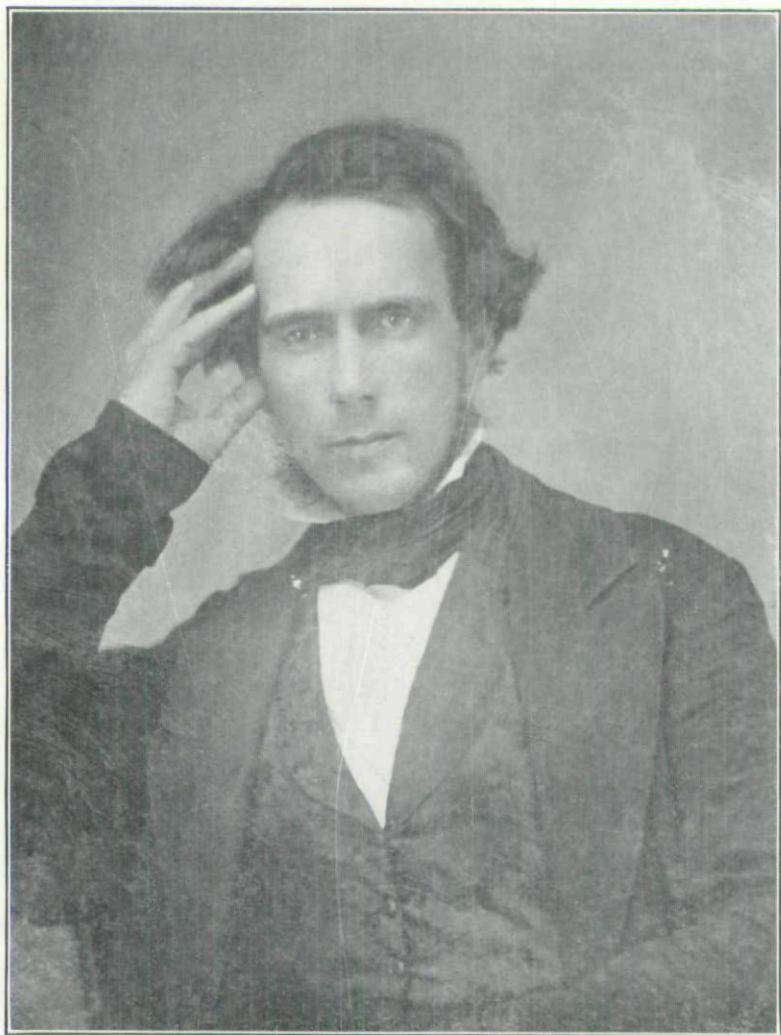
PROMINENT MEN OF EARLY IOWA.

BY EDWARD H. STILES.

GEORGE G. WRIGHT AND JOSEPH C. KNAPP.

I join these men because they were very near to each other and associated as law partners for many years. Judge Wright was one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Iowa during most of the time I was its reporter, and from this and other associations, I came to know him intimately. He died in 1896. For more than half a century his name had been a familiar one and intimately associated with the progress and current history of the State. The mature years of his long and busy life were devoted to its interests with a purpose as steadfast as it was heroic. He was not only one of the most widely-known men of the commonwealth, but one of the most popular. He had been a favorite with the people throughout his entire career. The causes for this general popularity lay in his intrinsic character and make-up. In appearance and bearing, he was very attractive. He walked with a limp, owing to a defective limb, but notwithstanding, his figure was good, his face classical, his countenance always beaming with good will. He loved the pioneers, the old settlers, and they were always at ease with each other.

He delighted in the narration of early events; his memory was extraordinary and he was able to recognize and never failed to greet any man with whom he had had the least acquaintance. This faculty greatly facilitated the renewal and continuance of his early acquaintances. He frequently delivered addresses to and about men of the early period, and especially those related to Van Buren county. As instances, he delivered one before the Library Association of Keosauqua in 1856, and another before the Pioneer Law Makers' Asso-



GEORGE G. WRIGHT, AT 31 YEARS OF AGE

From a daguerreotype in Edgar R. Harlan's collection of Van Buren County
Group of Famous Men.

ciation of Van Buren county in 1872, in the course of which he went into the minutest details respecting the early settlements and settlers in that county, giving the names of the different pioneers, the dates of their coming, just where they settled, their course of life, and in many cases the names and dates of the birth of their children. These narrations, like all his others along that line, were interspersed with incidents and anecdotes which were interesting to know.

He had reflected deeply and comprehensively on the affairs of the world and was an excellent judge of human nature. He was so full of pleasantry and good nature that I do not believe anyone ever engaged in a conversation of any length with him without being told some apropos anecdote or incident that would provoke a smile and give a pleasant impression.

It will be readily appreciated that these combined qualities made him greatly beloved by the people and they were always ready to rally to his support. There was no office within their gift that he could not have obtained for the asking. Indeed, he did receive at their hands the highest honors of the State. For fifteen years he was a judge, and a portion of the time Chief Justice of its Supreme Court; then its United States Senator. In respect to the latter position, he had a most formidable rival in the person of William B. Allison, who for so many years subsequently represented Iowa in the United States Senate with a distinction which rivaled that of any of his compeers in that body. The only objection I had to Judge Wright was the character of his handwriting, which was the most difficult chirography that I have ever beheld. In digesting his opinions, while preparing my head notes, I had often great difficulty in ascertaining what he had written. These opinions too were written in his best and most legible style and were not quite so bad as some of his more hastily prepared productions. He sent me many years ago for my use in this work, quite a lot of hastily written memoranda, which after repeated efforts to decipher, I gave up as impossible.

As a summary of his personal traits: In public affairs he was extremely cautious; he was not a bold and aggressive leader of men; his popularity was wholly due to other sources; his good humor and cheerfulness were perennial; his attractive person, his still more attractive, finely lineated face, carried a ray of sunshine that enlivened all surroundings.

His manner was urbane and graceful, and "on his unembarrassed forehead, nature had written 'Gentleman'." He was in short one of the most lovable of men; he drew everybody to him. As for myself, my affectionate veneration was such that I dedicated to him my "Digest of Supreme Court Decisions," published in the early seventies, and on the occasion of his death made a plea for a statue to his memory in a communication addressed to and published in the *Iowa State Register* of January 22, 1896.

As a judge he has had few equals and no superiors in the history of the Supreme Court of the State. His numerous decisions constitute one of the principal bases of its jurisprudence and will serve to perpetuate his judicial fame throughout all its future period. When I became reporter, his associates on the bench were John F. Dillon, Ralph P. Lowe, and Chester C. Cole, and it was this rare judicial array that principally contributed in giving to the Supreme Court of Iowa the distinction throughout the entire country of being one of the very strongest in the land, and it goes without saying, no member was more conspicuous than Judge Wright. He possessed those four qualities which Socrates declares to be the requisites of a judge: To hear courteously; to answer wisely; to consider soberly, and to decide impartially. His published opinions are models of unaffected wisdom and force. With no attempt at learned display, they grasp with all the force of reason the naked points of controversy and trenchantly carry them to lucid conclusions.

Nothing that I can say of him as a judge would furnish as reliable an estimate as that contained in the following letter of that great lawyer and judge, John F. Dillon, to the Pioneer Law Makers' Association, read at its reunion of 1898:

I esteem it one of the felicities of my professional career that I was associated for six years with Judge Wright on the Supreme Court bench of the State of Iowa. It is scarcely necessary for me to express my opinion of his learning as a lawyer, and his merits as a judge. No difference of opinion on this subject, so far as I know, ever existed among the bar and the people of Iowa. The verdict of the bar on this subject is that, take him all in all, he had no equal among the State's chief justices or judges in her judicial history. Some of them may have had, in special and exceptional lines, superior gifts, or superior learning, but as I have just said, take him all in all, he easily stands conspicuous and foremost. To those who served on the bench with him, and to the bar who practiced during the period of his long connection with the Court, the reasons for this are not difficult to find. I may refer to some of them briefly and without elaboration.

First among these reasons may be mentioned his zeal and conscientiousness in the performance of his official duties. As chief justice he was always present; and, having control of the deliberations of the Court, would never consent to adjourn any term until every case which had been argued or submitted was considered. The period of my association with him was when there was no rule requiring the records and arguments to be printed. They were mostly in writing. Judge Wright was a rapid and most excellent reader; and his invariable habit during our consultations, in all cases submitted, was, first to take up the argument of the appellant; read it; next the argument of the appellee; then any reply, referring to the record whenever necessary; then to insist on a full discussion and a vote. I believe I may safely affirm that no case was decided during these six years that I was on the bench without this "formula" having been complied with. No case was assigned, previous to full consideration among the judges, for examination and an opinion by a single judge. I verily believe that the admitted excellence of the judgments of the Supreme Court of Iowa during the period of Judge Wright's incumbency of the office of chief justice, is due to the course of procedure above mentioned.

Another characteristic of Judge Wright was his intimate knowledge and memory of the legislation and course of decisions in the State. He was a living digest of these decisions. He carried in his memory every important case that had ever been decided, and thus kept the lines of judicial decision consistent.

As a presiding officer he was without any equal. He had remarkable executive ability. He presided with dignity; maintained the utmost decorum in his court, and yet no member of the bar, I believe, ever felt that he was exacting, oppressive, or that he in any way encroached upon their legitimate rights and privileges. He had almost

in perfection what I may call the "judicial temperament." He showed absolute impartiality, had great patience of research, and above all, a level-headed judgment, and strong, sure-footed common sense. Combining these merits and qualities with ample learning in his profession, it is no marvel that the bar of Iowa hold him and his memory in such deserved honor.

His miscellaneous reading had not been wide; his acquaintance with English or classic literature slight. None of his compositions are adorned with decorative drapery. I do not think that in any of his writings can be found the employment of Latin or other foreign phrases, save in those terms and expressions which have been preserved in the law; but they are none the less forceful, and often traced in elevated lines.

His notions concerning the judicial office were of the highest order. Perfect independence of the judiciary was his ideal, and when a portion of the press joined in a denunciation of the judges, one of whom was Judge James G. Day, who united in the opinion of the Supreme Court declaring what was known as the prohibition amendment to the Constitution void, it made him indignant, though he was not then on the bench. Stirred with this feeling, he wrote me a letter, which clearly reveals his views in that direction. The letter and my response follow:

Des Moines, May 2, 1883.

Dear Stiles: As you value the independence of the judiciary, the integrity of courts and the good name of the State, I hope you will stand as a wall of fire against this most iniquitous clamor that four judges should be outraged and disgraced because they had the "courage of their convictions." I do not care about the case, nor the decision, nor how it was decided, but I do care, when it is proposed to appeal from the Court to State Conventions and town meetings. I know your views must be in accord with mine on this subject, and I only write that it may be made the more certain that Wapello county be truly represented. I do not propose that Judge Day shall go down before this unjust whirlwind.

Your friend ever,

GEORGE G. WRIGHT.

Ottumwa, May 3, 1883.

Dear Judge: Yours relating to Judge Day is received. I cordially endorse its sentiment. To allow the slaughter of Judge Day for performing a duty in accordance with his conscience as a judge and

which to have shrunk from would have been moral cowardice, will never do. In my judgment the clamor that certain newspapers have made against, and the opprobrium they have sought to throw upon the judiciary of our State, has done more to corrupt the political morals of our people than anything that has occurred in my time. I propose to stand by Judge Day, and I believe that is the general sentiment here.

Judge Wright was born in Bloomington, Indiana, March 24, 1820, and graduated from the State University in 1839. He studied law with his brother, Joseph A. Wright, who was at one time governor of Indiana, and afterwards United States Minister to Germany. He was admitted to the bar in 1840 and during that year came to and commenced the practice of his profession in Keosauqua. In 1844, he formed a partnership with J. C. Knapp, under the firm name of Wright & Knapp, which continued till his removal to Des Moines in 1865. In 1847, he became prosecuting attorney for Van Buren county; in 1848 he was elected to the State Senate and served in that capacity two terms; in the fall of 1850, he was nominated by the Whigs of that district for Congress, but it had a clear Democratic majority and his opponent, Bernhart Henn, was elected.

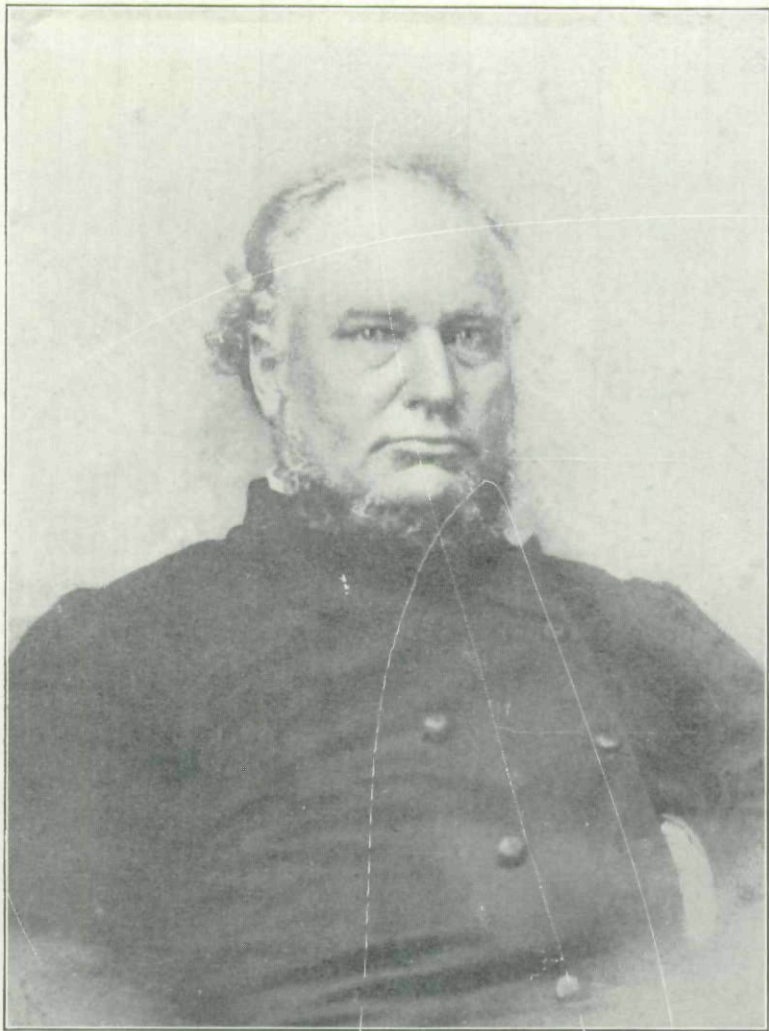
In 1853, when General George W. Jones was re-elected to the United States Senate, Wright was nominated against him by the Whig caucus and received the vote of the Whig members of the General Assembly. He was then but thirty-three years of age. In 1855 he was elected as one of the judges of the Supreme Court of the State and served until 1859, but declined a renomination. In the following summer, 1860, however, he was appointed by Governor Kirkwood to fill the vacancy on that bench, occasioned by the death of Judge Stockton. At the end of that term, he was re-elected for a term of six years from the first of January, 1866. In January, 1870, he was elected to the United States Senate for a full term commencing March 4, 1871, in consequence of which he resigned his place on the bench. In the Senate he served on the important committees of judiciary, finance, claims, the revision of the laws and on civil service and retrenchment. In the per-

formance of these duties, he won a high position in that distinguished body, but at the end of the term, absolutely declined a re-election. Among other duties, he was elected in 1860 president of the State Agricultural Society and served five years in that capacity.

While in Keosauqua, Henry C. Caldwell, afterwards the distinguished United States judge, was added to the firm of Knapp & Wright. While in Des Moines at the close of his term in the Senate, Judge Wright became a member of the firm of Wright, Gatch & Wright, composed of himself, Colonel C. H. Gatch, and his son Thomas S. Wright. In 1881, the firm was composed of Judge Wright, his sons Thomas S. and Carroll Wright, and A. B. Cummins, afterward governor and United States senator.

In the fall of 1865, after he had removed to Des Moines, he, with Judge C. C. Cole, established the first law school west of the Mississippi river. After the first year, Prof. W. G. Hammond, afterward Chancellor of the Law Department of the Washington University at St. Louis, accepted a position with them, giving his entire time to the school. In 1868, the law school was removed to Iowa City, and became the Law Department of the State University, Judges Wright and Cole becoming law lecturers of the department. He took great interest in this work. His last lecture before the department was in June, 1896, and in it he referred with pathetic eloquence to his co-workers of the past, who had been his associates in laying the foundations of the State. In 1879, he was elected a director in the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company.

The State is not only indebted to him for wise decisions moulding its jurisprudence, but for introducing into its early laws beneficent measures that have been enduring. He prepared and introduced both the bills which passed into laws, abolishing imprisonment for debt, and the creation of homestead exemption.



JOSEPH C. KNAPP, AT AGE OF FORTY-ONE

From a photograph loaned by Mrs. J. C. Knapp for Edgar R. Harlan's collection
of Van Buren County Group of Famous Men.

Joseph C. Knapp, in appearance, temperament, bearing, disposition—in the *tout ensemble* of his characteristics—was in striking contrast to his long-time partner, Judge Wright. He was a man of moods, sometimes blunt, gruff, apparently unsociable, devoid of popular traits and cared nothing for public opinion. He was really a great man, and had his lot been cast in a large city, rather than a country town, he would have attained a national reputation. He needed the stimulus of great demands and the execution of great purposes. He did not have these, and lapsed into the inertia of his surroundings. He had a great contempt for little things, and I think became discontented with his environment. But it was too late in life to change, and he lingered and died in Keosauqua. He was leonine in appearance and character, but it took something more than the ordinary to arouse him. When once aroused he was a veritable Jupiter Tonans and made everything around him tremble. I heard him when thus waxed, make the closing argument in the slander case of Bizer vs. Warner, tried in our Court at Ottumwa fifty years ago, and it made my youthful blood tingle. He was a pretty regular attendant of our court during the early part of my professional life. He subsequently became the judge of our district court and it was my fortune to try a good many cases before him. At that time he had become somewhat advanced in years, and the lapse of time had considerably toned down his youthful fires. His reputation as a great lawyer overshadowed his reputation as a judge, and was co-extensive with the State.

Anecdotes, when apt, sometimes serve to illustrate a man's traits. I have said that Judge Knapp was occasionally gruff. The following incident related to me by Judge Robert Sloan, who lived in the same town and was for many years a distinguished judge in that district, will illustrate:

Knapp was a member of a committee to examine an applicant for admission to the bar. The other members of the committee asked the young man a number of questions, the answers to which disclosed the fact that his legal attainments were very slim. Finally Judge Knapp thought he would ask

him a practical one and said, "Suppose Cox & Shelley (wholesale merchants at Keokuk) should send you an account for collection. What steps would you take in the matter?" "Well," was the answer, "I would sit down and write the man to come in and pay it, then I'd wait on him three or four days and if he did not come in, I'd put it in the hands of a justice of the peace and in about a week, I'd go around and get the money." "Yes, like h—ll you would," growled Judge Knapp. He had been there himself.

I have said that he was leonine when aroused. He was also defiant of the court when he felt outraged. The following incident will illustrate that:

He was defending a man charged with a criminal offense, against whom there was great excitement and prejudice on the part of the public. Knapp conceived that both the judge and the prosecuting attorney actively participated in this feeling and that they manifestly exhibited it throughout the trial. As a consequence, he was inwardly boiling with rage when he came to make his argument, but suppressing his emotions, he commenced in tones low and mild to the jury. He spoke of the unjust prejudice that had been manifested against the defendant and the duty of the court to protect one on trial for his life or liberty by an impartial administration of the law, and a properly conducted trial. He said that a court had been defined to be a temple of justice, where every man's rights were protected by an orderly and impartial trial. Then, no longer able to restrain his feelings and raising his powerful voice to a pitch that made the rafters tremble, looking at the judge, the prosecuting attorney and the assemblage around him, he exclaimed: "But what have we here? What have we here? What have we here?—A judicial mob! A judicial mob!"

I have said that he was without popular traits and cared but little for public opinion. He was boldly independent, had a contempt for pretense and lacked discretion in concealing his views, poor traits for one desiring to court popular favor. When a candidate, the story was circulated that he had in a certain conversation said: "The people are like a

lot of sheep; they will follow the bell-wether wherever he leads."

Beneath all outward appearances, beneath occasional brusque exhibitions of acerbity, he was at heart and in the depth of his great soul a man of profound pathos and tender sympathy. His acerbity was but seeming and then only occasional. In his better moods he was one of the most sociable and agreeable of men; his well-informed and comprehensive mind and his keen discernment made him a most interesting conversationalist. While he occupied the bench, he exhibited no irregularities of temper or conduct, and all of his proceedings were marked with strength and dignity.

The last interview I had with him I shall always remember. He was holding court at Albia and I had gone over there to get an order signed. After the adjournment of court, he invited me to his chambers and we sat and talked during the whole evening. He was then nearing the end of his career. Time had softened his asperities, and as I listened to his kindly conversation and looked into his strong, expressive face, in the lineaments of which God had left the traces of his own mercy, I fully realized the truth of what I have said concerning his pathetic nature.

He was born at Berlin, Vermont, in 1813. He was educated at Montpelier, and in 1833 came westward and located at Racine, Wis., where he studied law with Marshall M. Strong and E. G. Ryan, who was for many years Chief Justice of Wisconsin, and one of the greatest legal minds of the age. After a few years' practice at the bar in Wisconsin, Mr. Knapp still a single young man, following the star of empire, came to Iowa three years before it became a State, and settled in Keosauqua, in 1843, where he continued to reside until his death.

In 1846, he was appointed by Gov. Clark prosecuting attorney of that district, and in 1850, by Gov. Hempstead, district judge of the district, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Cyrus Olney. In 1852, he was nominated as his own successor for district judge, and ran against William H. SeEVERS but was defeated. In 1852, he was appointed by

President Pierce United States District Attorney for Iowa, and reappointed by President Buchanan to the same office, holding it for eight consecutive years. In 1861, he was a candidate for State senator in Van Buren county against A. H. McCrary, the latter being elected. In 1870, he was a candidate for judge of the Supreme Court of Iowa against C. C. Cole, and in 1871 a candidate for governor of Iowa against Cyrus C. Carpenter, his opponents in each case being elected. In 1872, he received the votes of the Democrats in the State Legislature for United States Senator. In 1874, he was again a candidate for judge of this district against Morris J. Williams and was elected. At the expiration of his term of office as district judge he declined a renomination, having received the nomination for State supreme judge by both the Democratic and Greenback parties against James H. Rothrock. In this contest he had strong hopes of success, but was defeated by a small majority. His defeat he always attributed to the action of the Democratic central committee in making a fusion and division of candidates with the Greenback party, after each had made their nominations in regular convention. This he regarded as unwise and unauthorized on the part of the committee, and as the cause of demoralization and dissatisfaction, sufficient to overcome the advantage he had in being the regularly nominated candidate of both parties, and by means of which he had counted on success.

In 1876 he received the distinguished honor as a churchman and jurist, of appointment on the Congregational commission to investigate the charges of unministerial conduct against Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, his associates being Hon. N. P. Chipman, United States district judge of Connecticut; Hon. S. B. Gookin, of Indiana; Jonathan E. Sargent, of New Hampshire, and Hon. A. Finch, of Wisconsin.

In his earlier days, he was conspicuous in Democratic politics, but for the greater part of his life, his party was in a hopeless minority, which accounts for the defeats noted.

He died in 1882 at his residence in Keosauqua. His funeral was largely attended by members of the bar throughout that portion of the State. At the following term of the

district court, memorial services were held, at which addresses were made by a number of prominent lawyers. In order to confirm what I have said and as expressive of my own views regarding Judge Knapp, I give the following brief excerpts from some of those addresses:

Judge Robert Sloan said:

His real fame is as a lawyer. The people of this part of the State recognized him as a great lawyer before any of us come to the bar. When we remember his seeming contempt at times for the ordinary conventional courtesies of life, we wonder at his strength with the people. But when we recall his genius, learning and power at the bar, we are at no loss to account for it. He was trusted by them with a faith that falls to the lot of few men to inspire. When in trouble, clients turned to him, feeling well assured that with him for their advocate they had more than an equal chance for success. There were few great trials in this part of the State that he was not engaged in, up to the time he last went on the bench. Those whom he opposed would have been glad had it been some one else, glad had he been on their side. * * * When aroused in a case calling forth all his energies, he seemed like a lion at bay, determined to conquer by sheer force and yet he pleaded with wonderful gentleness and persuasive power at times. * * * It was not by rhetorical flourishes and beauty of expression that he won to his side his hearers, but by the strength and convincing power of his reasoning. He had a fine command of language and was able to give clear and forcible expression to his thought. * * * In social intercourse, when the mood was upon him, he was indeed a charming companion. Few men could be more intensely interesting or more genial and pleasing. But he had no weather talk for want of something to say.

D. C. Beaman, who was his partner for a time and afterwards became the attorney for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, said:

His name alone was a power in any cause and his best efforts when aroused in a just one were as resistless as a whirlwind. His name appears in the first volume of the *Decisions of the Supreme Court of Iowa*, published in 1846, and continues in every volume down to 1881, embracing sixty-one volumes. There has lived in Iowa no other lawyer whose name is thus inscribed without a break or lapse. * * * It was my good fortune to be associated with him during the latter years of his life. As his years grew upon him, he was bound less and less by the fetters of technicality, and held in

profound contempt all precedents not in harmony with his own enlarged views of equity and right. His ideas of law were drawn from broader fields than ever before, and the iron chains of ancient and common laws were dissolved by the higher elements of social and moral sentiment. His professional ethics were of the highest order. He had his moods like most men, but unlike most men, he had no tact nor desire to dissimulate, and hence when he had no intention to speak, he did not speak, and when he had no desire to form a new acquaintance nor be bored by an old one, he was as impassive and unconcerned as the Sphinx. * * In the forensic arena his powers of pathos and sentiment were equalled and perhaps excelled by those of denunciation and satire, while his humorous comparisons were always of marked originality and inestimable in effect. Contrary to the generally formed opinion of those not intimately acquainted with him, his conversation in every day life was rarely of a solemn or morose character, but a vein of the highest humor continually appeared, pleasant, enlivening subjects were those most frequently chosen by him and his manner as a conversationalist was attractive in a high degree.

In physique, he quite strongly resembled Judge Samuel F. Miller. His features were strong, resolute, but regular rather than angular; his partially bald head strikingly fine, broad and high. His whole bearing carried the idea of strength.

In 1849, he married Miss Sarah A. Benton, whose younger sister afterward became the wife of Henry C. Caldwell, the subsequently distinguished United States district and circuit judge.

I feel constrained to tell the following anecdote illustrative of Judge Knapp and incidentally of Ben M. Samuels of Dubuque:

It was at the time when Knapp was United States District Attorney. Samuels, who was one of the most eloquent as well as one of the ablest members of the Iowa bar, in defending a criminal in the United States District Court at Dubuque made a pathetic appeal to the jury, in the course of which he described the wife and children who were awaiting with painful anxiety for the verdict which should fill their hearts with joy or with despair; and in the climax of this appeal, he quoted Byron's lines:

“Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog’s honest bark
Bay deep-mouth’d welcome as we draw near home;
Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming and look brighter when we come.”

Knapp in his reply called attention to this appeal of Samuels and said: “Why, gentlemen, there is no evidence in this case that the prisoner has any wife, or any children, or any dog. The chances are that he has neither and that they exist only in the imagination of Mr. Samuels.”

Many stories were told concerning him and Judge Wright and of them I can properly give these, as they throw additional light on some of their characteristics, and because we naturally desire to know particulars about persons who awaken our interest. Judge Knapp was very absent-minded, sometimes so “deep in abstractions sunk,” that he was oblivious of everything about him. In illustration of this, Judge Wright used to relate this incident:

Knapp wanted to saw off a limb of one of his elm trees, and for that purpose, with the aid of a ladder, with saw in hand, ascended the tree and seated himself the wrong way across the limb and commenced sawing it off on the side next to the trunk. The result was that when it parted Knapp and the limb went to the ground together.

To the same point, Judge Henry C. Caldwell, who as a young lawyer entered the firm which then became Knapp, Wright & Caldwell, vouched for this incident:

They had in the office a drawer with two compartments, in one of which was kept the money taken in and belonging to the firm. In the other compartment they had placed some counterfeit bills which had been received in the course of their business. Knapp was going into another county, to be gone several days. To provide himself with funds, and forgetting the distinction between the compartments, he took twenty dollars from the counterfeit bills. When he returned from his trip, Caldwell asked him how he managed his finances. “Oh,” replied Knapp, “I took twenty dollars with me out of the drawer.” “But that was the counterfeit money that fellow gave us,” said Caldwell. “Yes, that is so; I had forgotten

all about it," replied Knapp; "but it didn't make any practical difference, for the money went all right, and I heard no complaint about it."

Knapp used to tell of Wright that when he ran as the Whig candidate for the Territorial Legislature, his opponent was his father-in-law, Judge Thomas Dibble, an old-fashioned and popular Democrat. The district was composed of Davis, Appanoose, and Van Buren counties, and was overwhelmingly Democratic, but it was thought Wright might pull through by reason of his popularity. So Wright went into Appanoose county, to interview the twenty-seven voters there. He was all suavity, talked nicely to the men, was sweet to the women, and dandled and praised their babies at the different cabins. When he returned, he told Knapp that he had the promise of every voter and that he believed he would get every vote in the county; but when the vote was counted, it was found he had received only one out of the twenty-seven, and Dibble the remainder. Wright, he said, wrote to the canvassing board, asking for the name of the man who had voted for him, as he desired to send his wife a new dress; but that he never did send the dress, for the reason that it was claimed by sixteen different men.

The following letter, written by Judge Knapp to D. C. Beaman, his then recent partner who had removed to Ottumwa to become associated with me, affords a glimpse of the quaint and delightful humor of Judge Knapp, when it is known that "my partner, Mr. Jordan Payne," referred to in the letter was an old negro he had engaged to occasionally perform the duties therein specified. This letter Mr. Beaman gave to me when it was received more than thirty years ago, and I have preserved it to the present time. It reads:

January 5, 1882.

Dear Beaman: If you have a key to the office, please bring it down. I want it for my partner, Mr. Jordan Payne, whose professional business is to build a fire and sweep out, and to that end wants a key. I doubt if the business of the office will pay two, but have guaranteed Mr. Payne so much per week any way.

Yours, KNAPP.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.