



JUDGE ROBERT SLOAN.

JUDGE ALEXANDER BROWN.

By Judge Robert Sloan.

When I came to Keosauqua on the first day of April, 1860, to study law under Hon. George G. Wright, the resident membership of the bar of Van Buren county consisted of the firms of Wright & Baldwin; Knapp, Caldwell & Wright; Smith & Goodfellow; Webster & Miller, and Ford & Brown.

Hon. Henry Clay Caldwell, who retired some years ago as United States Circuit Judge and Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Judicial District, is the sole survivor of the bar as it then existed. Hon. George G. Wright had declined re-election to the Supreme Court of the State, and had entered the practice on the first day of January, 1860, with Charles Baldwin. Sometime during that summer Judge Stockton died, leaving a vacancy in the Supreme Court, and at the solicitation of Governor Kirkwood, Judge Wright accepted the appointment to fill the vacancy and was duly elected thereto at the October election that year. He never re-entered the practice at Keosauqua, but after serving nearly two years on the Supreme Bench, and a term in the United States Senate, re-entered the practice at Des Moines. George F. Wright removed to Council Bluffs during the year 1868, where he remained in practice the remainder of his life. William Webster removed to Nevada in 1864, where he continued actively in the practice until his death. Rufus L. Miller entered the United States service in the summer of 1861 as battalion adjutant of the Third Iowa Cavalry, but later became adjutant of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, and served until the close of the war. He then entered the practice at Quincy, Ill., where he died while marshal of a Fourth of July procession some years ago. Goodfellow also enlisted in the

Civil War, serving until its close. Later he engaged in the mercantile business as a traveling solicitor of a jewelry house. Henry Ford removed to Magnolia, Iowa. He served one term as district attorney, and three terms as District Judge in the Sioux City District. The last years of his life were spent in Seattle. Hon. Joseph C. Knapp, Hon. Charles Baldwin and Hon. Joseph F. Smith, remained in Van Buren county until their deaths. . .

Early in 1860 the firm of Ford & Brown had determined to remove to Magnolia, in Harrison county, of this State, and engage in the practice. Judge Brown had gone there in March, and Ford followed in the course of a couple of months. They remained until the summer of 1861 when Judge Brown returned to Keosauqua to enlist in Company E, of the Fifteenth Iowa Volunteer Infantry, which was being recruited there. It was during that time that we became acquainted and our friendship began which continued during life. The regiment some time during the summer and fall of that year was quartered at Keokuk, and remained there until just prior to the battle of Shiloh, when it was ordered to report to Gen. Grant. It arrived by steamboat on the morning of the day of that historic battle, and many of the men were for the first time furnished arms. They were ordered into line of battle as early as ten o'clock and were engaged therein during the day, losing very heavily in killed and wounded. The regiment did splendid service in this engagement, and deserves great praise for unflinching courage under an ordeal that might well have dismayed veteran troops.

Judge Brown a short time prior thereto had been made sergeant major of the regiment, and while engaged in the discharge of his duties was severely wounded in the hip. On this account he was invalided, granted leave of absence and came home. He remained until he was sufficiently recovered to return to his regiment, a short time before the battle of Corinth, in which he was wounded in the arm and shoulder on the first day of the battle. This wound was so severe that it resulted in his discharge from the service some time later,

when he went to Burlington as Chief Clerk under Robert B. Rutledge, Provost Marshal of that Congressional District. He continued in this position until the close of the war.

He was variously engaged from that time until January 1, 1868, when he became County Judge, then a court of probate jurisdiction. This jurisdiction was removed by the creation of the Circuit Court, and the County Judge became county auditor, which latter office he held for three consecutive terms. He was not only a popular officer, but unusually efficient, and perfectly fearless in the discharge of the duties of his office. No man ever questioned his integrity. He mastered the duties of his office and performed them skillfully, carefully and accurately. While he was an ardent republican, he was never a partisan in office. Everyone, without regard to political affiliations or social position, power or wealth, who had business with him as an officer, was given prompt and courteous treatment, and furnished with all available information. He was in every respect an ideal officer, and won for himself the friendship, esteem and confidence of the people throughout the county, which he retained while life lasted.

During the years in which he served as a public officer, he became widely acquainted throughout the county, and this, in connection with the high character for integrity and efficiency which he had already attained, rendered him a valuable addition to the bar, when he re-entered the practice as a member of the firm of Work & Brown. This firm at once came to the front at the bar of Van Buren county, and had to be reckoned with at all times in the legal conflicts of that day. The Judge disliked trial work, but his partner was never happier than when the conflict began, except perhaps when the result was satisfactory in every respect.

In the fall of 1881, the firm became Sloan, Work & Brown, and so continued for some years. Sometime in 1883, W. A. Work removed to Ottumwa and engaged for a number of years in the practice under the firm name. For a short time after the retirement of Mr. Work, the firm of Sloan & Brown, and Sloan, Brown & Sloan, were in practice in Keosauqua.

About the spring of 1893, Judge Brown retired from the firm and opened an office of his own, continuing in the practice until his death. During this time he was four years county attorney, discharging the duties of the office very efficiently, and with real regard to the public welfare.

He served in the state Senate during the session of 1881 and '82, securing the passage of the statute that enabled Van Bur-en and other counties to bridge the Des Moines river. He won the confidence and respect of his associates in the Senate, and the legislation secured by him was of great value to the State.

During my association with him in the practice, we became intimate friends. He was in no sense of the word spectacular and never sensational, but when it came to solidity of judgment, firmness of purpose and untiring effort, he had few superiors. He was a wise counselor, not only because of his ability as a jurist—he looked beyond the mere legal propositions involved—saw the difficulties in the way, and the dangers of defeat. He gave advice not merely as a lawyer, but as a friend, and it was rare indeed, that his client engaged in litigation unprepared for the final result, whatever it might be. When consulted in a cause without merit, he readily discovered it, and would quietly yet clearly advise that there was no case. In our long association together, at no time did I ever have the slightest reason to question his integrity. Indeed his character therein was so firmly founded that temptation secured no consideration whatever, and was turned aside as something only to be remembered as putting him upon guard against the person who was guilty of endeavoring to lead him astray.

It was a rare thing for him to discuss religious questions, but when he did he gave rare insight into the faith by which his life was guided, his conduct governed, and on which his character was founded. That he was at all times free from doubt in relation to Christianity is not correct, but those who knew him best will realize how peculiarly appropriate to him are these words of Tennyson:

"Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: Thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light
And dwells not in the light alone."

Nothing can so comfort his good wife, who survives him, as the consciousness that their parting is only for a little while, and that they will surely be reunited in that home where sorrow and death do not enter. We do well to commemorate his life and character, and will do even better to emulate it. It is not necessary for me to speak of his relations to the bar, but I believe I can say without contradiction that he had the friendship and affection of all, and his death is sincerely mourned.

It is doubtful if the Judge was ever free from suffering from the wound which he received at the battle of Corinth, but who among us ever heard him complain? In my judgment this had much to do with his dislike for trial work, which almost always resulted in a severe headache. That he would have become a good trial lawyer, had he remained in the practice from the time he was first admitted to the bar in 1859, I have every reason to believe. He had the qualities of mind that eminently fit men for that work, and he only needed practice and development. He was a fine office lawyer and was exceedingly helpful in the preparation of cases.

He spent practically his entire life in Van Buren county, and was always interested in public enterprises undertaken for its betterment. Words, mere words, will add nothing to the esteem in which he was held by all. The Grand Army of the Republic who laid him to rest with the solemn ceremonies of their order, fully recognize his merit as a soldier, the courage and devotion with which he served his country, and the suffering which it entailed upon him ever after. One by one, those brave men are answering the final roll call. The generations

to come will never realize, and never be able to pay the debt of gratitude which they owe to these defenders of the Union. Their full reward must come from Him who controls the destinies of Nations.

DEATH OF COLONEL REDFIELD.

From the collection of papers of Mr. Joseph M. Griffith, recently presented to the Historical Department by his grandson, Simon Casady, Jr., is the following, copied in the hand writing of Col. Griffith:

Headquarters of the 39th Iowa Infantry,
Rome, Ga., Oct. 10, 1864.

Israel Redfield, Esq.,
Redfield, Iowa.

Dear Sir:—

It is my painful duty to inform you and through you the family of our late Lieut. Col. James Redfield of his death on the field of battle at Alatoona, on the 5th inst. All communication with the North, excepting by telegraph, has been cut off; hence this delay.

Colonel James Redfield left Rome, Ga., on the evening of the 4th inst. in command of his regiment. He was in excellent health and cheerful spirits. The object of the expedition was to guard supplies at Alatoona from the enemy. No one anticipated a battle, but on the evening of the 5th they were attacked by a large force of the enemy and were engaged all day. The 39th was in the front, and under their gallant leader performed deeds of *valor unequalled* in the history of this campaign. The results will show you their determined and desperate fighting. There was in the engagement two hundred and eighty rank and file of our regiment; of these, ten were commissioned officers, five of whom were killed outright, two wounded and captured, and only three left. The total loss to the regiment was 163, nearly two-thirds of the whole. Col. Redfield had orders to hold his position at every hazard, and as it was a very exposed one and was charged by the enemy massed in column, the officers were necessarily exposed to a murderous fire. The Colonel was passing along the lines, cheering and animating the men to fight to the last, when he was hit by a musket ball. It passed through his heart, and he fell *facing the enemy*, without a groan or a struggle. His expression of countenance was natural and as when sleeping.

The fall of their gallant and loved leader only inspired the boys with new deadly determination, and they fought the enemy then in a hand-to-hand encounter. Their bodies lay side by side, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that no *traitor* touched his person after he fell. The railroad was cut by the enemy and the command had to remain for two days. Every exertion was made to bring the remains to this place, but it was found to be necessary to inter them in Coatesville, where they will rest until communication with the North is opened, when the command will have the sad pleasure of forwarding them to such place as the family may direct.

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