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3D SERIES.

AZRO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HILDRETH.

BY GEORGE D. PERKINS.

When I came to Iowa in the latter part of the second month in the year 1860 and engaged with my brother in planting a newspaper at Cedar Falls, in Black Hawk county, Azro Benjamin Franklin Hildreth had been established in like business at Charles City, Floyd county, since the summer of 1856. Floyd county is in the second tier of counties north of Black Hawk, and by that measure in that early day it was deeper in the wilderness. Mr. Hildreth was my senior by exactly twenty-four years, for we were born in the same month and on the same day of the month, which time, rather oddly, was the 29th of February. What attracted my early attention, however, was the fact that Mr. Hildreth was at the head of his class in Cedar valley.

My first meeting with Mr. Hildreth was during the political campaign of 1864. The late Senator Allison was first chosen to the House of Representatives in 1862, and in 1864 he was elected to his second term. Prior to 1862 the State was divided into two congressional districts, as defined in the act of 1847 and the amendatory acts of 1848 and 1857. The census of 1860 gave Iowa a largely increased population, an increase of more than 250 per cent. in ten years. Under the ratio fixed by Congress the State was entitled to six representatives in Congress, and under the act of 1862 districts were made accordingly. The Third District included the counties of Dubuque, Clayton, Allamakee, Winneshiek, Howard, Mitchell, Buchanan, Floyd, Chickasaw, Bremer, Fayette and Delaware. Black Hawk was in the Sixth District, which included Marshall, Story, Boone, and that line of counties to the Missouri River, and all counties west of the Third District and north to the State line. There was no railroad north or west of Cedar Falls. I was invited to join the Allison party for the north-

ern excursion, and it was on that trip that I first saw Mr. Hildreth and his famous printing-office.

Mr. Hildreth was a New Englander of the old school. He was forty years of age when he came to Iowa, and his steady habits he brought with him. He was born in the town of Chelsea, Orange county, Vermont, on the 29th of February, 1816. His father was Daniel Hildreth, a native of Massachusetts. While residing in New Hampshire, Daniel Hildreth married Clarissa Tyler, a native of that State. Another branch of the Tyler family produced John Tyler, who was elected Vice-President of the United States in 1840 on the ticket with William Henry Harrison, and who succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of Harrison in 1841. The Hildreths trace their genealogy back to Richard Heildreich who reached Massachusetts colony in 1640, twenty years after the arrival at Plymouth Rock of the precious cargo of the *Mayflower*. He was so well thought of that he was made the recipient of a grant of 150 acres of colony land.

The blood of the fathers was in the veins of A. B. F. Hildreth. He was the first born of twelve children, equally divided as to sex. He was brought up in the New England way, industrially and religiously. The Hildreths were farmers, and had been time out of mind, and Azro's early years were passed in close intimacy with agricultural pursuits. The name Azro was his mother's choice, and Benjamin Franklin was interjected by his father, out of admiration for the great man of Philadelphia. It was a good deal of a name for a young man to carry, and in course of time he came to be known to the family in general as Frank, though the mother stuck to her first choice.

Mr. Hildreth admitted late in life that his name had to do with the direction of his ambitions. He was perhaps temperamentally exceptional in his family in his love of books. This was so marked that it entered into the plan of his father to assist the young man to a college education, but the plan did not mature. He had the opportunities common to the New England boy of his class, but he improved these opportunities in an uncommon way. At the age of four years he was per-

mitted to enter the district school, and "his young heart leaped for joy." During his school days "it was his constant effort and pride to stand at the head of his class, and in this he was successful beyond the majority of his schoolmates." Aside from the district schools, he attended academies of the neighborhood, and the branches taught in these "institutions of learning" were such as "were deemed most essential in the ordinary transaction of business." Such was his industry and capacity that at the age of sixteen years he was engaged to teach a district school. He was successful in that undertaking, the more to his credit because among his pupils he had "grown up" young men and young women. "The large girls called him their beardless schoolmaster." His reports of that experience indicate that he was conscious of his youth, his weight of 113 pounds, and of what the school might be thinking of his assumption of mastery. This first school over which he presided was at Piermont, N. H. For several years he taught school during the winter and during the summer worked on the farm, an experience common to bright young fellows of his time in the New England States. Among other things he made himself a master of penmanship, and he occupied available time in this relation after he was through with the winter terms. He taught writing school at different times in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. He wasted no time. He not only looked to an honest penny, but he neglected no opportunity to better his education. Before taking up his winter school teaching, he was glad to attend the fall term of a neighboring academy. By hard work and persistence he provided himself with a liberal education.

In 1891 a little book was printed in Charles City, dedicated "to the wide-awake, enterprising and go-ahead boys and girls of the American union," the copy for which was provided by Mr. Hildreth and turned over to the late Charles Aldrich, founder of the Historical Department of Iowa, to edit. Mr. Aldrich had suggested to Mr. Hildreth that he ought to write and publish his biography, and it appeared that Mr. Hildreth had the manuscript prepared. Mr. Aldrich consented to act as editor, "although I knew," as he sets forth in the preface,

“that any writing which came from Mr. Hildreth’s pen would require little at the hands of any editor.” In preparing this sketch I shall borrow from this book, and at this point the following is introduced :

When only nine years old, little Azro was placed in a private boarding house in Chelsea village for the purpose of attending the high school there. Among the different branches of study given him was that of English grammar. In a few weeks he had committed to memory and recited to his teacher the entire contents of his grammar book, a text-book prepared by Prof. Rufus Nutting, at that time principal of Randolph, Vt., Academy. The teacher of the high school had not taken much pains to explain the rules laid down in the grammar book. But one day, while visiting home, the mother, who was a good grammarian for those days, gave the lad some lessons in parsing, and showed him the relations which words composing a sentence bore to each other. When required to apply the rules which he had memorized, he at once saw their application, and from that time ever afterwards he was fond of the study and became an excellent grammarian. Usually, with most students, grammar is a dry, dull study, and is generally disliked by new beginners. Not so with Azro. He was delighted whenever the grammar class was called for recitation or for exercise in parsing.

I am prepared to believe this. In my early experience in Cedar Falls the fact was developed that Mr. Hildreth retained his partiality for English grammar. I had printed something indicating a difference of opinion on some matter dealt with by *The Intelligencer*. Mr. Hildreth’s reply was brief, devoted mainly to pointing out an error in grammar. It may be that I wished I had not provoked the reply, but the lesson was of such benefit to me that I doubt whether I have made the same error since.

When Mr. Hildreth was nineteen he had plans to go to Michigan in company with Washington A. Bacon, a farmer’s son of the neighborhood, who had settled in Detroit. Young Hildreth expected to continue his studies in the west and he entered into the arrangement most heartily. He was to meet his friend in Albany, New York, and thither, with much solicitude on the part of his parents, he repaired. The business of young Bacon in the east was to procure a wife; and, for

some strange reason, he did not meet young Hildreth in Albany. The disappointed Azro took a steamboat and landed in New York. He found temporary employment in the publishing house of Thomas George, Jr., at No. 4 Spruce Street. Then he was taken sick. Before his landlady really turned him out under conviction that he had smallpox, it was developed that he had a case of measles. On his recovery he went to Paterson, New Jersey, where he engaged himself to teach a select school. But Mr. George sent for the young man to come back; and when he presented himself again at No. 4 Spruce Street, "the office boy told Mr. Hildreth that he had heard Mr. George say he was determined to have Mr. Hildreth if he could find him, for he knew he was honest." The incident goes to show that office boys were as office boys now, and that the perplexities of men in business then had much in common with the perplexities of men in business at the present time.

But another change was in store for the young man; and let the book explain:

Mr. Hildreth remained in the employment of Mr. George during the season of 1836 and enjoyed his fullest confidence. He was often entrusted with large sums of money, and was frequently sent out to make collections, not only in the city but to the various cities up and down North river, out in New Jersey, Connecticut and Rhode Island. In the fall he was sent to Vermont for the purpose of establishing agencies for the sale of his employer's publications, with the privilege of visiting his home and enjoying a winter vacation, fully expecting to return to New York in the spring. But when spring came there came with it the great financial crash of 1837, and Thomas George, Jr., his employer, went down in the general ruin. All the banks in the United States suspended payment, thousands and thousands of business men failed, and it was said that 40,000 clerks in New York city were thrown out of employment.

There was nothing for the young man to do but to resume work on his father's farm. Soon, however, an opening was presented to him to learn the trade of a printer in the office of William Hewes in Chelsea. When he had completed his engagement with Mr. Hewes, young Hildreth went again to New York, where he found employment on the *American*

Family Magazine, published by J. S. Redfield, at No. 13 Chamber Street. Subsequently he was employed on the *Christian Intelligencer*, the organ of the Dutch Reformed church. The office was in Ann Street, and in the same building Horace Greeley was making a hard struggle with his *New Yorker*. "On one Saturday," Mr. Hildreth remembered, "Mr. Greeley, failing to obtain money enough to pay off his help, sat down and cried over his hard luck."

In 1839, being then twenty-three years of age, Mr. Hildreth determined to go into business for himself. He located in Lowell, Mass., and began the publication of a weekly paper called the *Literary Souvenir*. He added a daily publication called the *Morning News* and a semi-monthly publication called the *Ladies' Literary Repository*. The daily failed for want of sufficient support, and in the winter of 1842 he sold the *Souvenir* and *Repository* to a Methodist clergyman and an abolitionist lecturer, the purchase price being mainly in notes given by these enterprising reformers, and the notes were never paid.

Mr. Hildreth then went to Boston, where he connected himself with the printing house of S. N. Dickinson, on Washington Street; and Mr. Hildreth entertained the opinion that no man in America up to that time had done more than Mr. Dickinson to improve the art of printing.

But in the fall of 1842 Mr. Hildreth was induced to go to Bradford, Vermont, and re-establish himself in the newspaper business. He started the *American Protector*, of Whig politics and an earnest pleader for a high protective tariff, with Henry Clay as the ideal candidate for president. After the defeat of Clay in 1844, the *Protector* gave way to the *Vermont Family Gazette*. He added the *Green Mountain Gem*, and the revenue from the two publications gave him a comfortable support. In 1852, having been ten years in Bradford, Mr. Hildreth sold out to a returned Californian, Ezra Southworth, who paid the purchase price in gold. The establishment was removed to White River Junction, Vermont, and a little later the entire property was consumed by fire.

Mr. Hildreth's last stand in New England was at Holyoke, Massachusetts, to which place he removed in 1853, after settling up his business at Bradford. At Holyoke he established the *Mirror*, which he conducted until the fall of 1855, when he sold to M. C. Pratt. Mr. Hildreth made money in Holyoke, but he was induced to sell "by the more flattering temptations held out to him by parties then interested in opening up a new and magnificent town in the then far west, viz.: Charles City, in Floyd county, Iowa."

When Mr. Hildreth arrived in Charles City, in the spring of 1856, he found himself in a new world. The change exhilarated him. His spirits were buoyant and his hope bright. "Here was opened before him a broad field for enterprise and usefulness." Business was not overdone in his new home. Newcomers were not set upon by angry competitors and treated as interlopers. Men were wanted and welcomed. The situation at this distance, however, was not altogether alluring, as may be gathered from this summary:

In those early days Charles City contained a population of only a few hundred. Not a dozen frame houses were to be seen in the whole town, the others being built of logs and several families were "dwellers in tents." Provisions were very scarce and could only be obtained at high prices. The few settlers who had come into the county during the previous year had raised but a small quantity of farm produce, not nearly enough to supply the rapidly increasing demand of the immigrants who succeeded them. The nearest market was Dubuque, distant 145 miles, and thither teams were dispatched to procure the necessaries of life.

The first white settlement in Floyd county was made by Joseph Kelly, who established his home on the site of a deserted Indian village on the Cedar River, formerly the home of Chief White Cloud and his band of Winnebagoes. In 1853 Mr. Kelly laid out a part of his claim into town lots and named the place St. Charles. This was the Charles City which offered welcome to Mr. Hildreth in 1856, the county seat of Floyd county. In 1858 there was a vote on the question of removing the county seat to the geographical center of the county, and Charles City lost by a vote of 453 to 434; but in subsequent proceedings, in some way known to early

history, actual removal was prevented. Mr. Hildreth from the first found plenty to engage his attention.

Mr. Hildreth had purchased his newspaper outfit in New York, and he had also bought in that market a chest of carpenter's tools. During his first months in Charles City he was carpenter and builder, and he was boss mechanic on the job of putting up the "Intelligencer Building." Much of the material he delivered on his own back from the Kelly saw-mill. The building was made two stories, the first story for mercantile purposes and the second story for his printing-office. On the 31st of July, 1856, he issued the first number of the *Republican-Intelligencer*. It is presumed that he took the name from the *Christian Intelligencer* upon which he had been employed in New York. Bishop Berkeley's line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," was made the motto of the *Republican-Intelligencer*. The first impression of the paper was sold at auction and brought \$20. Such was the demand for the paper that three editions were printed of 1,000 each. In 1857 the paper was enlarged, though prematurely, as the hard times of that and the following year brought proof, but Mr. Hildreth permitted no backward step. In 1862 the name of the paper was changed to *Hildreth's Charles City Intelligencer*. Business conditions in the Cedar valley were improved by the Civil War, and general prosperity attended all of Mr. Hildreth's business affairs.

Mr. Hildreth made the *Intelligencer* first-class. He put into it the best of his life. He made it representative of his high moral standards, and he made it in a large sense independent in politics. The paper was always Republican, but it did not favor men calling themselves Republicans apart from the principles he held to as his guide. Necessarily he met with opposition, but he had the courage to meet it, and talk of killing the paper did not alarm him. He neither fell under the influence of designing men, nor did he at any time lower the standard of his paper. He kept his paper clean. He extended his strict rules to advertising matter, and advertising he thought objectionable he excluded, though the money temptation at times was severe.

On the 1st of October, 1870, after a little more than fourteen years of hard work with the *Intelligencer*, Mr. Hildreth sold the paper to Dyke and Rowell, and permanently retired from the business. He was then in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

The book giving Mr. Hildreth's memoirs says:

Among Mr. Hildreth's contemporaries, during nearly fifteen years of editorial life in Iowa, may be mentioned your humble editor, Charles Aldrich, then of the *Hamilton County* [Webster City] *Freeman*; Frank W. Palmer and J. M. Dixon, of the *Des Moines Register*; Clark Dunham, of the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*; L. D. Ingersoll, of the *Knoxville Journal*; John Mahin, of the *Muscatine Journal*; J. B. Howell, of the *Keokuk Gate City*; Charles Beardsley and Lieut.-Gov. Needham, of the *Oskaloosa Herald*; Perkins brothers, of the *Cedar Falls Gazette*; N. H. Brainerd, of the *Iowa City Republican*; Lieut.-Gov. Gue, of the *Fort Dodge North-West*; Ed Russell, of the *Davenport Gazette*; Tom Drummond, of the *Vinton Eagle*; Willis Drummond, of the *McGregor News*; J. L. McCreery and Jesse Clement, of the *Dubuque Times*; Frank M. Mills, of the *Des Moines School Journal*; and many others who might be named—all of whom left their impress upon the institutions and habits and character of the people of Iowa.

Of this list the writer of this sketch knows of but one who is still in active newspaper work, and with few exceptions all others mentioned have departed from this world.

Enough has been said to suggest that Mr. Hildreth brought his religion with him from New England. He was one of the incorporators of the First Congregational Society in Charles City, and was for several years chairman of its board of trustees. The church was organized in 1858, and five women and three men at that time constituted the entire membership. Mr. Hildreth himself was inclined toward the Unitarian wing of the New England Congregationalists, but in his new home he was free to enter into the church relation indicated as the next best thing.

Mr. Hildreth always took a deep interest in the cause of education. In 1858 he was elected to the State Board of Education, representing a district composed of the counties of Allamakee, Winneshiek, Howard, Mitchell, Floyd, Chickasaw, Fayette, Clayton, Bremer and Butler. The State was divided

into eleven districts, and Mr. Hildreth's was the Tenth. The board held biennial sessions in Des Moines and had control of all the educational interests of the State, aside from such as were represented in private and sectarian institutions. Mr. Hildreth took an important part in the business of the board. He was a strong advocate of co-education, and he was most influential in the work of securing legislation requiring that the State University, located at Iowa City, be opened to young women the same as to young men. His success in this undertaking gave him much satisfaction. A few years later he was privileged to address the students of the University at a chapel meeting, and he confessed that it was one of the proudest moments of his life to appear there in the presence of more than 200 young women students and nearly as many young men students. For many years Mr. Hildreth was a member of the school board of Charles City and much of the time its president. He took an active interest in the free public library of the city, contributed money and books and his valuable counsel. When it passed under the control of the city, he was elected one of the directors and continued in that relation several years. Wherever educational work was to be done Mr. Hildreth was qualified to lead.

In the early part of the Civil War Gov. Kirkwood appointed Mr. Hildreth draft commissioner for Floyd county. He attended faithfully to the duties of the place, disagreeable as they might be. In a letter to his mother, August 24, 1862, he said:

On Friday the mail brought me an appointment from the governor of the state as "commissioner of draft for Floyd county," devolving upon me the duty of appointing an examining surgeon and an enrolling officer, and attending to and managing all the business of drafting soldiers in the several townships in this county for the war. This is a very responsible and at the same time unpleasant duty. The unpleasantness rises from the fact that, while this business is being transacted, nearly every family is in a state of suspense and anxiety lest a husband, a father, a son, a brother, may be drafted; snatched from them, and at once hurried off to the war. Great prudence and discretion are needed in the transaction of this business, and a large amount of writing and correspondence with

the governor and adjutant general has to be done. I shall endeavor to do my duty as faithfully as possible, without favor or partiality. The war feeling all through this country is intense. Ten companies were called for from this congressional district, and we have already raised twenty-five—all done within two weeks! Oh, what a terrible war this is! The world has hardly ever known the like of it. Possibly we shall never be able to subdue the south, but I hope so. We shall be borne down with taxes for many years to come.

Fortunately, no draft was required in Floyd county, nor in Iowa.

In 1863 Mr. Hildreth was elected to the Legislature from the fifty-fourth representative district, and the following January took his seat as a member of the Tenth General Assembly. He was made chairman of the committee on schools and State University, and had membership on the committee on banks and banking and the committee on printing. He was greatly interested in the proposed line of railroad west from McGregor. He secured the adoption of a strong memorial to Congress asking for a grant of land to aid in the construction of the proposed line. Previous efforts to obtain favorable congressional action had failed, and Mr. Hildreth applied himself to the task with his accustomed energy and prudence. He was constant in his correspondence with the Iowa senators and representatives, and the grant was made under act of May 12, 1864. Mr. Allison, under date of May 5, 1864, wrote to Mr. Hildreth as follows:

I have succeeded in getting through the house for you my McGregor land grant bill. It will also pass the senate; probably today. This bill is preferable to Senator Harlan's for the reason that it is of present benefit to the railroad company. Mr. Harlan's bill only allowed the railroad company co-terminous sections of land to road actually built, thus compelling them to build 150 miles or more of road before they could get any lands. Under my bill they draw lands for every ten miles, and must build twenty miles each and every year or forfeit the grant. Mr. Harlan will accept the proposition. Judge Hubbard, from Sioux City, has faithfully stood by me in the matter, although seemingly against his interest. But he believes with me that it is better to give the company immediate aid so as to insure the completion of the road, at least to the Cedar river valley, without delay.

The act of 1864 was amendatory of the general land grant act of 1862. Originally it was supposed the road would connect with the Sioux City and Pacific, but conditions changed the early plans materially. The McGregor road was built as far west as Algona, which was reached in 1870, and there it halted for a number of years; but subsequently it was extended, as a part of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul system, to Chamberlain, S. D., on the Missouri River. This was the first railroad to enter Charles City, and was soon followed by the Cedar Falls and Minnesota, which became a part of the Illinois Central system.

Mr. Hildreth's other important work during his legislative service chiefly related to school matters. He introduced "a bill for an act to provide for the loan of the permanent school fund, and fixing the rate of interest thereon, and limiting the price at which school lands may be sold, and for other purposes." The bill was intended to correct existing abuses. A bill passed the house as a substitute for Mr. Hildreth's bill which simply regulated the rate of interest. In the senate he had three of the most important sections of his bill incorporated, and in this amended form the bill was returned to the house. The following from Mr. Hildreth's record will show the subsequent proceeding:

Being chairman of the standing committee on schools and state university, Mr. H. allowed the matter to lie quietly until near the close of the session, waiting for a favorable opportunity to call it up in the house. Accordingly, one evening, when the members felt humorous and had got parliamentary matters into some confusion, Mr. H. hinted the matter to the speaker, who was favorable to the bill and promised to aid in its passage. In due time the bill was called up, when, without debate, and not many knowing what they were voting on, the bill was passed by sixty-eight yeas to four nays, and thus a stop was put to the waste of the school money.

At the expiration of his term in the Legislature Mr. Hildreth was not disposed to continue the service, and the explanation is given in the following extract from a letter, under date of March 16, 1865, addressed to his mother:

It would indeed afford me pleasure to accept your invitation to call and eat maple sugar with you. I should enjoy it as much as

I did the raspberries with milk which you gathered and gave me the last time that I saw you. But I do not see how I can visit you at present. I have no suitable person to leave my business with. Good journeymen are so scarce and charge so high that I cannot afford to hire suitable hands, and my present printers would ruin everything were I to leave them in charge of my affairs. On this account I must decline going to the legislature again, although I should like to go and the people would like to send me.

No one could attend to the *Intelligencer* just as well as Mr. Hildreth could himself, and absence from home caused him much uneasiness. For something like a kindred reason, Horace Greeley found his service as a member of the house of representatives at Washington irksome, and he cut it short. He fretted constantly over the *Tribune*, and his letters home did not add to the joy of living in the *Tribune* office. Nor was Mr. Hildreth well adapted to personal politics. It is enough to say, by way of explanation, that he believed the office should seek the man.

Probably the bother over suitable help assisted Mr. Hildreth to his conclusion to sell his newspaper business. Possibly he was beginning to think of himself as an old man; at least, as a man entitled to a rest. When he sold in 1870 he was in his 55th year. He had been a hard worker from boyhood; he was in comfortable circumstances, and he desired the liberty which the disposal of his newspaper would provide.

Mr. Hildreth was not much of a traveler. He made a home visit in 1876, but both his parents were dead. His father died in 1858 in his 76th year, and his mother died in 1870, also in her 76th year. When he came west he expected in a few years to return to New England to make his permanent home. He had held out the promise to his mother in 1861 that he would pay her a visit, but he had to withdraw it. In a letter to her, under date of May 28, 1861, he said:

And now I must say that it looks as if I shall not go east this season. I had begun to lay by some money for the journey, when the banks failed (in Illinois and Wisconsin) and their money will not pass anywhere. It will sometime be redeemed at a large discount, but I don't know when. The war is causing very hard times. My business amounts to nothing, and, everything considered,

I fear I shall be disappointed in making my contemplated journey. However, we must submit to all our disappointments and afflictions as well as we can.

Business, however, was better the next year, as the following to his mother, under date of June 19, 1862, goes to show:

I had a very good journey to Milwaukee. I purchased me some clothing and groceries, also various things for Liveria [his wife] such as a beautiful bonnet, mantilla, two dresses, a gold chain for her watch (she has a nice gold watch), and various knickknacks. . . . I am having me a nice buggy made. When in Milwaukee I bought a plated harness. Father Knight [his wife's father] has bought a horse, and we intend to enjoy a ride occasionally, notwithstanding we work so hard. Now, mother, don't think we are extravagant. I should not pay out money to buy these things, but many of my patrons, who have printing and advertising, wish me to take such pay, and would not patronize me unless I would do so. I shall have to go to Milwaukee and Chicago in September, and my going to Vermont at that time will depend upon whether I can be absent from home long enough to go there, in addition to the time I must spend in attending to business in those cities, or not. It looks doubtful now, yet if I can run away a few days when I reach Chicago, you will see me. Do not depend on it, and then you will not be disappointed.

When Mr. Hildreth was on the state board of education and a member of the Legislature he made his journeys to Des Moines by team, a distance of more than 200 miles.

Mr. Hildreth was four times married. He was at Lowell when he was first married, October 24, 1839. Miss Hannah D. L. Rier, of Newburyport, was the bride. She died of consumption at Newburyport, May 20, 1841. He took his second wife the next year, marrying Miss Olive Freeman Fuller, of Paris, Maine. He was then established in business at Bradford. His wife died January 26, 1844. On the 21st day of the following October he married Miss Liveria Aurette Knight, of Fryeburg, Maine. She was one year his junior and he first knew her as one of his pupils when he taught school, at the age of sixteen, at Piermont, New Hampshire. To this union one child was born, a daughter who was named Mary. The child lived to see the new home in Iowa, but died soon after attaining her sixth year. This was a very heavy blow to both Mr. and Mrs. Hildreth. The mother of the child died in

Charles City, December 8, 1890, in the seventy-fourth year of her age, after a married life of a little more than forty-six years. In 1891 Mr. Hildreth married Mrs. Julia A. Waterhouse, formerly of Boston, but at the time a resident of Charles City. This wife survives Mr. Hildreth, who died November 29, 1909, at the age of ninety-three years and nine months.

In a letter to his mother, dated March 16, 1865, Mr. Hildreth said:

You will see by the *Intelligencer* of this week what we are doing for education in this place. My advice and assistance in all our school matters is constantly sought by our leading men, and it is flattering to thus enjoy the confidence of the community. Nearly all the resolutions and business which was transacted at our school meetings were prepared by me, and the people were rallied by my friends to sustain them, which was done by an overwhelming majority. It is pleasant to live among such whole-souled and enterprising people as we have here. Oh, that I had children to be benefited by these educational labors of mine. Then I should feel that I was receiving some compensation in return. Now, it is all for the public good, and little or none for myself.

But the appreciation he received and the good he did were compensatory in a large sense; and to render himself worthy in this regard he abated nothing of his labor and generous co-operation.

In 1871, the year following his retirement from the *Intelligencer*, Mr. Hildreth took an active part in the organization of the First National Bank, serving as director and for a time as vice-president. In 1873, when the Floyd County Savings Bank was organized, he was chosen its president. He was the prime mover in the work of organizing the Floyd County Agricultural Society, dating back to 1859. From the beginning of his time in Charles City to the end of his active life he was a leader in all the public activities of the community in which he had cast his lot and which he distinguished by his life and works for nearly fifty-four years.

The Hildreth hotel and opera house was the most substantial material contribution of his later years to the business and social needs of Charles City. This property was completed

in 1893. It was there, on Lincoln day, February 12, 1906, at a meeting under the auspices of the Sons of Veterans, that the writer last met Mr. Hildreth, then within a few days of his ninetieth year. He was the guest of honor at the banquet.

Mr. Hildreth was of the type of which the best of pioneers in northern Iowa were made. He had physical and moral health. He was steadfast in adherence to principles, and he took his conscience for his best guide. He had many difficulties and many sore trials to contend with, but he kept his lamp burning, though at times it flickered dimly in "the encircling gloom." He had great will power, yet he was never stranger to tenderness and never superior to the ties of true friendship. He had great love of home; and the love he bore his child, made manifest at the time of separation, was pathetic. He left an impress on Charles City that will not disappear; and the influence of his good life in association with his good works will not be lost as the years come and go, to that portion of the State where he was best known, and to Iowa whose foundations he so well assisted in laying.

The story of every life is interesting, and the study of every good life is inspiring. Trouble and sorrow are common heritage, and victory alone is to them who make contest to the end, guarding well their integrity, bearing well their burdens, and holding fast, doing the work of the day, and keeping faith in a better tomorrow.

City Scrip—We have been favored with a sight at our new City Scrip. It is a handsome engraving, and intrinsically is no doubt better for our local purposes than much of the stuff which has been circulating amongst us. We do not know what arrangements have been made with our bankers; but in the absence of a sounder currency, we recommend the use of the Scrip in ordinary business transactions.—*Tri-Weekly Iowa State Journal* (Des Moines), Jan. 15, 1858.

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