

## UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE AT SPRINGDALE, IOWA.

BY PROF. JESSE MACY.

In the autumn of 1866 I entered into a contract with a committee from the Springdale Monthly Meeting of Friends to teach a school during the ensuing winter. The school was to be held in the meeting-house, and I was under the impression that it was to be strictly a Friends' school. When I presented myself, however, to begin my work, I was informed that an arrangement had been made with the sub-director of the school district for the payment of half my salary by the district. I accordingly secured a county certificate and signed a contract with the school officer. The school thus involved the co-operation of district and church.

At this time the Friends throughout the State were establishing private academies under the control of the church, and the discipline of the society placed its members under strong obligations to send their children to the schools so maintained. I had known something of the working of this policy in other parts of the State, and had become convinced that it was a mistaken system, tending to divide the school interests and create competing institutions in neighborhoods scarcely able to support a single good school.

The Friends at Springdale had perfected plans for erecting a building and establishing a church school during the spring and summer of 1867. Almost the only man of influence in the neighborhood who was not connected with the society of Friends was Dr. Gill, who had been elected sub-director of the school district, and I found that he shared my views as to the erroneous policy of undertaking to maintain two schools in the village when one was entirely adequate. At the same time he was quite willing to send his children to a school controlled by the society of Friends. Many of the Friends also regretted the apparent necessity

for assuming the additional burden of an independent church school.

After numerous consultations between the sub-director and the committee of the Friends' Meeting the following plan was agreed upon: First, the village of Springdale and the surrounding country were to be incorporated into an independent school district under the laws of the State. In this way a large taxable area would be secured. Second, Springdale Monthly Meeting was to give to the Independent District a small sum of money for school purposes: Third, in consideration of this sum of money the Independent District was to grant to the Monthly Meeting certain privileges, among which was an equal voice with the district officers in the employment of teachers and the management of the school, together with the right of holding a religious meeting in the school once each week.

The following is the record of the Monthly Meeting in the case:

Articles of agreement made and entered into this 7th day of 3rd month, 1867, by the Independent District of Springdale, situated in the county of Cedar and State of Iowa of the first party, and the Springdale Monthly Meeting of Friends, an incorporated religious society located in the county of Cedar and State of Iowa of the second party. Witnesseth that the two parties, wishing to unite their school interests, hereby enter into the following agreement. The second party agrees to furnish the first party with Three Hundred Dollars or more, by the first day of 6th mo., 1867, to assist in defraying the expenses of building and furnishing a school house, with the understanding and agreement that the Educational Committee composed of three of the second party are to co-operate with the Board of Directors of the first party in selecting teachers and making regulations for the union school contemplated by the two parties, and the second party may have a special religious meeting held in the building, of short duration, each week when the school is in session, for the religious benefit of the students and others who may wish to attend.

The regulations made by the parties shall not be inconsistent with the laws of Iowa.

If the parties cannot agree in selecting teachers or making regulations for the government and management of the school, the disagreement shall in all cases be submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools for his judgment and decision, which shall be final.

Should the Monthly Meeting aforesaid be discontinued according to

the regulations of the Society of Friends of which it constitutes a component part, the monied interest that the second party holds with the first party shall belong wholly to the first party.

If at any time the above agreement shall be found to be illegal, then the sum of money furnished by the second party shall be refunded by the first party, without interest, to the second party. This article and agreement shall at the same time become null and void.

The within article was signed on behalf of the Board this 18th day of 3rd month, 1867.

H. C. GILL,

President of the School District of Springdale.

E. Rood, Sec'y.

The contract was carried out in every essential particular, and this union of church and school district resulted in the founding of the Springdale Seminary, which continues to this day. For several years it remained under the joint management of the school board and the committee of the Monthly Meeting. On Wednesday of each week this semi-public school was for a brief period transformed into a Quaker meeting. Nor did the educational rank of the school suffer in consequence. I know of no other rural district where a public school of so high a grade has been maintained for as long a time.

As the record of the Monthly Meeting clearly indicates, some misgiving was felt as to the legality of the proceedings. The contracting parties evidently contemplated the possibility that a time might come when the compact would be annulled, either because found wanting in legal sanctions or from the failure of one of the parties. As a matter of fact the legality of the arrangement was never tested, and the eminently quiet and law-abiding community was left to manage its own affairs in its own way. The small village was far from railways and lawyers were distant. The promoters of the scheme were aiming at definite, practical results, which were thoroughly approved by all concerned, and they realized no necessity for legal advice. Indeed, they accounted themselves fortunate in being far removed from all members of the legal profession. But after some

years, when the neighborhood had become more complex in respect to church preferences, the religious meeting in the school was omitted and the committee of the Monthly Meeting was discontinued. The Seminary thus became simply a public school; but during all the changes of more than a third of a century the school interests, public and private, have remained united, and the school has continued to be the chief pride of the region. For many years it has been on the list of accredited high schools whose graduates are admitted to Freshman standing in the State University.

In September of 1901 it was my privilege and pleasure to attend a reunion of several hundreds of graduates, former students, teachers and friends of the Seminary, drawn together from various parts of the country to renew old acquaintance and to give expression to sentiments of gratitude for inspiration and help received at the public-private school on the prairie.

IOWA COLLEGE, GRINNELL, IOWA.

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IMMIGRATION.—There has been already considerable immigration to Northwestern Iowa this fall, and the cry is "still they come." Some eight or ten teams passed through our streets today, and this is no more than has occurred on a great many other days within the last three months. Scarcely a day passes without bringing with it more or less of these welcome visitors. Let them come; there is room, and to spare, on our beautiful and fertile prairies.—*Ft. Dodge Republican*, October 28, 1863.

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GEO. H. YEWELL, a young and promising artist of Iowa City, who has resided for several years in Europe, has lately returned to this country. His paintings are spoken of very highly by Willis' Home Journal.—*Daily State Register (Des Moines)*, January 30, 1862.

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