

The **P**ALIMPSEST

JANUARY 1932

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

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Superintendent

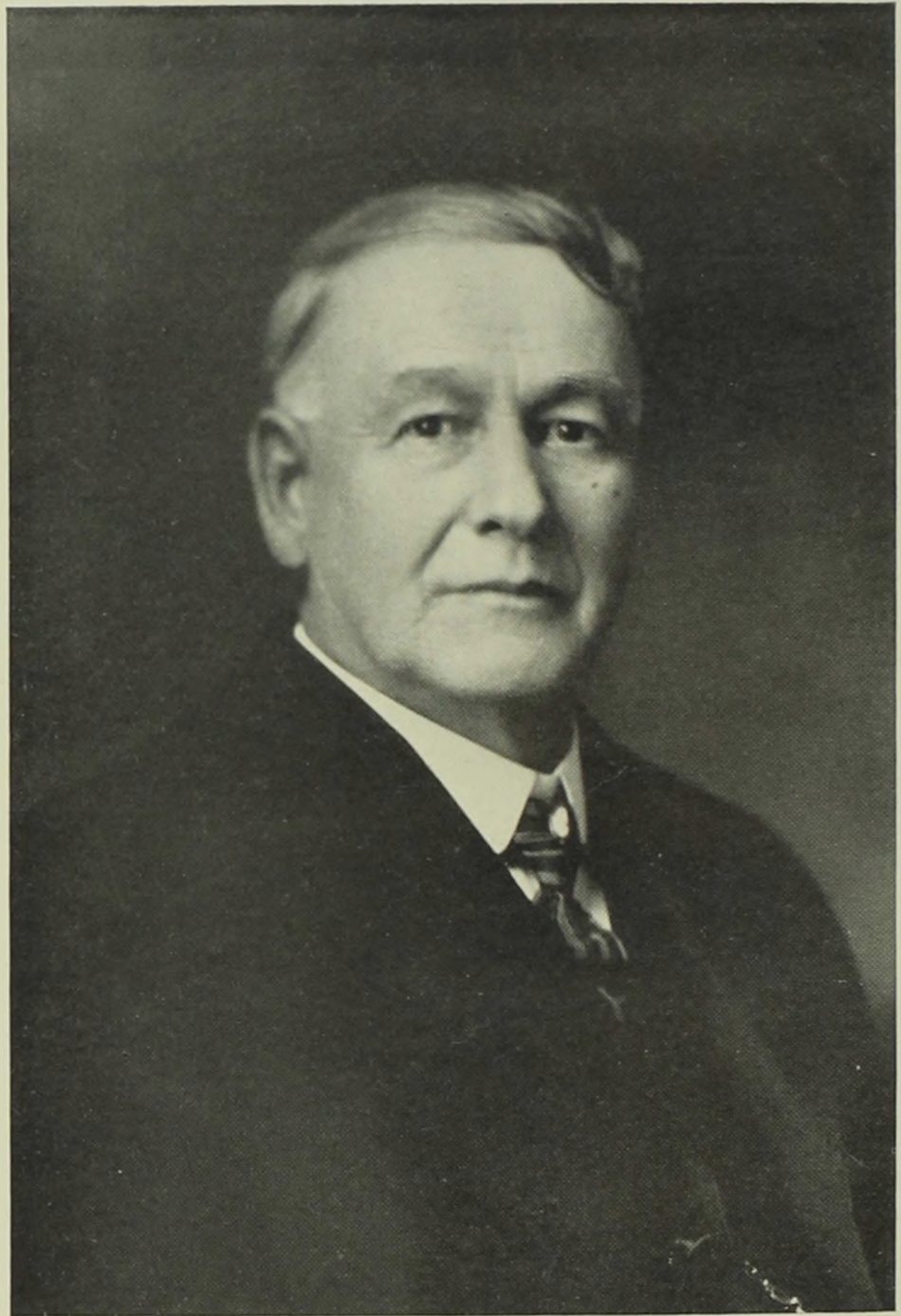
THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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DAVID SANDS WRIGHT

THE PALIMPSEST

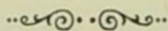
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Founding the Normal School

Before the close of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Iowa was one of the most backward States in the Union in the matter of teacher-training. While Minnesota had three State normal schools, Wisconsin four, Illinois two, Missouri four, Kansas three, and Nebraska one, the Hawkeye State had none. There were private normal schools—real and alleged—galore. Courses in pedagogy were offered in the State University and in the numerous denominational colleges; yet no institution for the professional training of teachers was mothered by the land “where the tall corn grows”. Progressive teachers, seeking the best in pedagogical training, had to go to Oshkosh, Kirksville, Emporia, Carbondale, or other prosperous and approved training schools in adjoining States. Thus Iowa was fairly shamed into action, and early in the year

1876 the first and only Iowa State Normal School was established.

Cedar Falls was chosen as the site of the State training school for teachers, because that city chanced to have within its environs a sightly plot of ground and a big brick building that belonged to the State. Situated about two miles southwest of the business section of town, the tract was guarded on the east by a board fence eight feet high, as if to prevent an invasion of the prairie with its riotous wild flowers. West of the fence stood a plain, three-story brick building, surrounded by playgrounds and gardens, yet seeming to frown at every one in sight. It was the home built by a grateful State to house the children orphaned by the Civil War. Meanwhile, the orphans had grown up and had left the shelter of its roof. Here was a commodious building and the State needed a place for a teachers training school. Eloquent boosters of "The Lawn City" convinced the legislators at Des Moines that, with slight remodeling, the Soldiers' Orphans' Home could be transformed into a school of pedagogy.

In accordance with the provisions of the bill creating the institution, a board of six trustees was appointed by the Governor of the State. This body met in Cedar Falls for the first time in June, 1876. Two major problems confronted the trus-

tees at their initial meeting. The first was that of providing for such a remodeling of the "Home" as would adapt it to the purposes of an educational institution. In almost every particular it was found unsuited to the ends desired. Dormitories had to be converted into recitation rooms; the heating plant had to be reconstructed from basement to attic; children's desks had to be replaced by seatings for adults; in short, an asylum was to be converted into a school. One redeeming feature the building did possess — it was well supplied with lightning-rods.

The second major problem concerned the selection of a corps of instructors, who should serve as the first faculty of the school. The small appropriation of funds at the command of the board limited the number of instructors to four. With only one dissenting vote, James C. Gilchrist was selected as the man among many candidates who was best qualified to be the first principal. Professor Gilchrist assumed the headship of the Department of Mental Philosophy and Didactics. To Moses W. Bartlett was assigned the Department of English Language and Literature, to D. S. Wright the Department of Mathematics, and to Miss Frances Webster the Department of Geography and History. Professor Bartlett, a graduate of Dartmouth College, was then a middle-aged

man of dignity and erudition. Miss Webster was a graduate of the Pottsdam State Normal School of New York. She was chosen on the recommendation of the head of her alma mater and because the "Pottsdam Methods" had become a term to conjure with in educational parlance. She was young, ambitious, and too pretty to continue long at the teacher's desk. Through her, the famous "Methods" became a permanent inheritance of the new Iowa institution.

The first Wednesday of the ensuing September was appointed for the opening day of the school. This date was premature, however, for the reconstruction of the building was far from complete. The sound of the saw and hammer was still to be heard in the basement and in the corridors and rooms above when the students arrived. Moreover, the weather man frowned upon the enterprise. Monday had been misty, on Tuesday the mist had become a drizzle, and by Wednesday the drizzle was a cold September downpour. The chill penetrated the unfinished building. There was no artificial heat to mitigate the cold and all went unmerry as a funeral. Shivering flesh and chattering teeth and weeping eyes within were in unison with the lowering clouds and the dripping eaves without. Everybody was strange to everybody: it was impossible for the teachers to smile

the welcome that they felt. There was little comfort in the Virgilian thought, "Hereafter it will rejoice us to be mindful of these things." The only partially comfortable people in the building were the cooks and the maids who huddled about a dilapidated cook stove — a relic of the "Home".

On this most memorable morning, summoned by the twanging of an iron triangle, the four faculty members and the twenty-seven waiting students gathered at the hour of nine in the Assembly Hall. The principal stood "aloft in awful state", his associates beside him on a raised platform, and rapped for order. With a manner worthy of a larger hall and a greater company, he proclaimed with stentorian voice: "The Iowa State Normal School is now in session." To the accompaniment of an antiquated church organ, a hymn, not inappropriately chosen, "Nearer My God to Thee", was sung. The principal then read a portion of Scripture, and offered a brief prayer. An afternoon session was announced; a roll of the charter-member students was taken; and, after a half hour's session, all were left to shiver through the remaining morning hours as best they could. Thus inauspiciously began the life of the institution destined to become the Iowa State Teachers College.

D. SANDS WRIGHT

James Cleland Gilchrist

The blood that flowed in the veins of James Cleland Gilchrist was unadulterated Scotch. His parents, James Gilchrist and Grace McCleland Gilchrist, were born in Scotland. Soon after their marriage they emigrated to America and settled first in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, where their son James Cleland was born. A few years later they moved to a farm near Coitville, Mahoning County, Ohio, where James grew to manhood.

His youthful day-dreams of a life vocation early turned to teaching. To become a teacher of teachers was the acme of his ambition. Though not a child of poverty, his father's limited income would not allow his son the type of training he wanted. Thus thrown upon his own resources, he overcame the difficulties that lay between him and a higher education. In later life, when talking to his students in his reminiscent and inspirational moods, he was wont to relate an incident of his collegiate days, descriptive of his thrifty Scotch training. It ran thus: "Once I was to deliver a school oration. To clear my throat for the ordeal, I spent a penny for a stick of candy. For this extravagance, I suffered pangs of conscience for many days."

As a boy he followed the plow, plied the hoe, swung the scythe, and dreamed his dreams. About all that education can do for its patrons is to teach them to think, and there is no better place to acquire this important art than in treading the straight and narrow furrow between the handles of a plow. The plowboy can not whistle all the time: his mind must be active, he must think. James Cleland's formal education began in a country school. Later he attended an academy called Poland Seminary near his home.

By the practice of rigid economy, by accepting whatever of manual or mental toil came to his lot, he finally acquired sufficient means to allow him to enter college, and presently made his way to Antioch College at Yellow Springs, Ohio — a famous seminary presided over by the illustrious Horace Mann. In this great teacher, young Gilchrist found the inspiration of his own career. What Socrates was to Plato, what Plato was to Aristotle, what Aristotle was to Alexander, what Gamaliel was to Paul, so was Horace Mann to James Cleland Gilchrist. The disciple never forgot his master: whether he were in the social circle, in the round-table discussion, in the classroom, or on the lecture platform. His ready words of eulogy for the sage of Yellow Springs were often on his tongue. Perhaps there exists no

American school that has not been made more efficient because of the voice and pen of this Ohio teacher of teachers. It may certainly be said, "He being dead still speaks", and will speak forever in the traditions and attainments of the Iowa State Teachers College and through the impress of the personality of this admiring student. Of Professor Gilchrist's educational lectures, his masterpiece was entitled "Horace Mann" — a sincere and notable tribute of a faithful follower to a trusted guide.

After his graduation, James C. Gilchrist served for a time as principal of an academy at Hubbard, Ohio. There, in one of his pupils, he found a loved and devoted life-companion whom he designated as the "prettiest and brightest of the Hubbard girls." They reared a remarkable family.

The dreams of the boy came true when as a man he became principal of a State normal school in Pennsylvania. In this capacity he served for ten years. Next, he resigned to accept the principalship of a State normal school in West Virginia. Two years later the Civil War broke out and he found himself a loyalist in the midst of treason, driven by the exigencies of war to resign and return to the North. Having chosen Iowa for his future home and work, he first conducted a private normal school for one year in the city of

Cedar Rapids. Then followed a year as city superintendent of the public schools of Mason City. Finally, in 1876, he was selected as head of the newly created Iowa State Normal School.

As a citizen of the community of Cedar Falls he promptly identified himself with its literary and religious activities. He was an ordained minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Liberal in his attitude to those of other faiths, he was welcomed to the pulpits of his home and neighboring towns. His practical and impressive sermons were always welcome.

In early life he developed traits of speech that characterized him throughout life. From the time of his youth he manifested a predilection for polysyllabic expression. He always reveled in the use of such unusual terms as "elite", "flamboyant", "anomalous", "potentiality", "adaptation to environment". This fault, if it was a fault, he neither sought to palliate nor deny.

The Cedar Falls Parlor Reading Circle had been founded in 1875, and was entering upon its second year simultaneously with the founding of the Normal School. One of its first acts at the initial meeting that year was to elect the entire faculty of the school to membership. Principal Gilchrist's wide reading and his wise suggestions made him an authority in the discussions.

He enjoyed this social circle, and found open hospitality and a cheerful reception in the refined homes of the city. Not only was he an excellent conversationalist but a good listener. In his conversation he scorned gossip and frowned upon the trivial small talk of dilettante social groups. At times of companionable relaxation, he combined a philosophical bent of mind with a decorous sense of humor.

These traits sometimes involved him in amusing predicaments. Professor Gilchrist and I were once guests in the home of a garrulous and bombastic man who was the proud father of a daughter on whom he doted exceedingly. Our invitation to the home was due to the fact that this daughter was a graduate of the State Normal School. This young lady was an idle, unambitious, and superficial student, yet somehow she had managed to graduate. Duly certificated, she had taught three months in a country school. After we had partaken of an excellent chicken dinner, our host delivered a carefully prepared speech in which he enumerated his daughter's achievements and prophesied great things for her future. He ended his fulsome eulogy by placing in her hand a pretty little package which, when opened, revealed an elegant gold ring.

To Gilchrist, the performance was most amus-

ing. A derisive smile played upon his features, and at intervals he winked at me. The speech completed and the presentation made, the father continued, "I think it proper on all occasions like this to invoke the divine blessing. Brother Gilchrist, will you lead us in prayer?" Every dictate of courtesy compelled assent, and the derision on "Brother Gilchrist's" face gave place to dismay as he kneeled to comply. Whatever the effect of this devotional period upon others, at least one auditor was tremulous with laughter as he heard the prayer.

In the later seventies of the century past, the Iowa State Teachers Association was in session at the town of Independence. At the annual banquet Professor Gilchrist was on the program for a toast. The toastmaster was a practical joker, a master in the art of comic acting. At the proper time the master of ceremonies announced the speaker as "J. C. Gilchrist, Principal of the Iowa State *Reform* School." A ripple of laughter ran through the assembly at the evidently purposed blunder. With extravagant looks and acts of pretended dismay, he essayed a correction, while the ripple grew to uproarious and long-continued laughter. The toastmaster, seeing that he had made a hit, made the most of it. When at last quiet was restored, Principal Gilchrist was ready

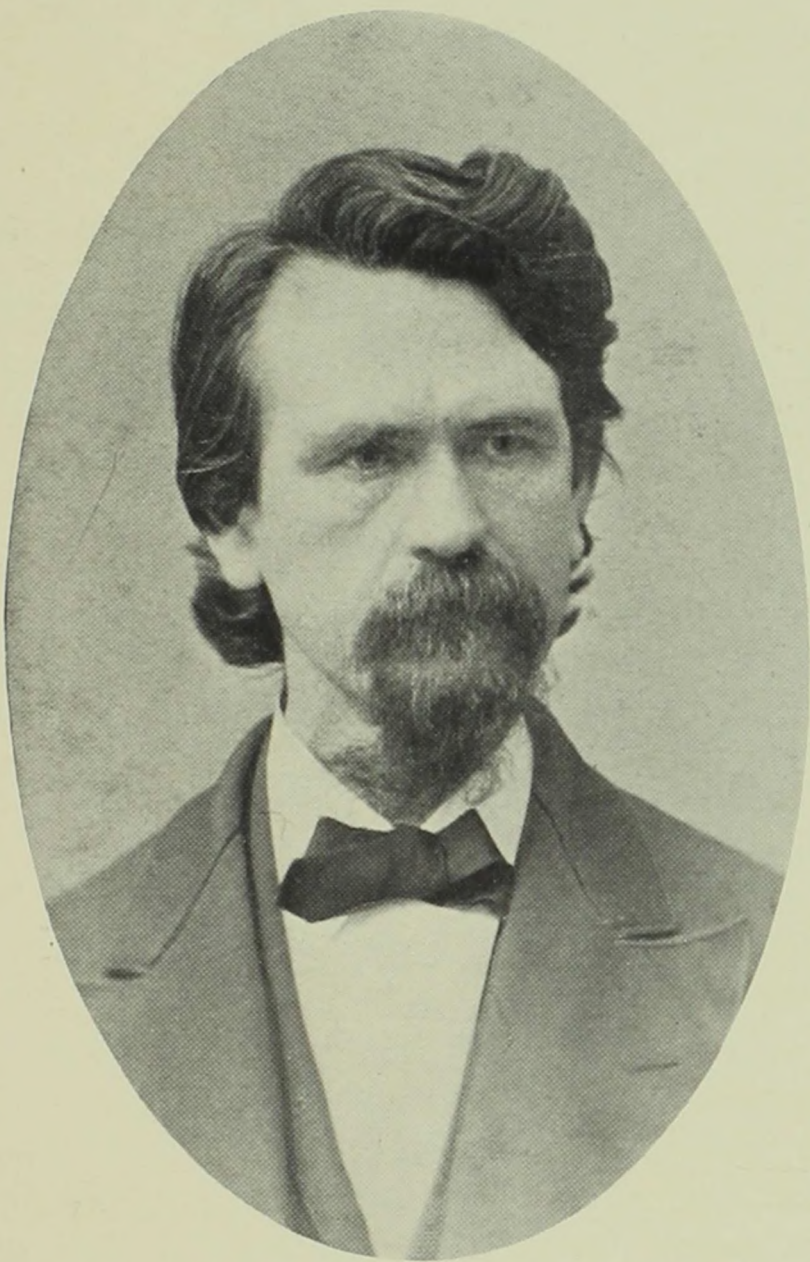
with an apt retort, "I must begin by thanking the toastmaster that he has solved a problem for me. I was just wondering what I could say to put the company in a good humor, but his pleasantry has happily solved it for me."

James C. Gilchrist was a man of strong convictions and boundless determination. Even his boyhood was characterized by remarkable singleness of purpose. Having devoted his attention to a problem, he invariably came to a positive decision. Vacillation was unknown to his temperament. A member of the board of trustees said of him, "He would turn neither to the right hand nor the left, but with an energy that approached the superhuman he would overcome the most serious obstacles."

In his teaching one of his many pedagogic mottoes was: "Make the lesson difficult for your pupils." A profound thinker himself, he recommended to the learner,

Think for thyself, one grand idea
If known to be thine own,
Is better than a thousand gleaned
From fields by others strown.

He would not condescend to simplify the abstract at the expense of the learner's own research. On one occasion, at the close of a lecture at a county



JAMES CLELAND GILCHRIST

institute, a hearer said to him, "Mr. Gilchrist, you over-shot your audience to-night." Whereupon he retorted characteristically, "They ought to understand it." He believed and taught and practiced that teaching another to think was the highest reach of pedagogic attainment. Men of action are rare, men of thought are rarer, and in few indeed are both qualities combined. To this small class Professor Gilchrist belonged.

He refused to supply a crutch to the dependent student who could walk without one. In his thought and practice there was no "easy road to geometry", or to any other science. Sometimes when he faced a class for the first time, in assigning them their initial lesson he bade them learn not the opening chapter of the text employed, but a chapter near the middle of the book instead. When asked his reason for this course, he was wont to reply, "In medias res". The learner must acquire his mastery of the text by working backward as well as forward to the goal. He was purposely making it hard for the beginner.

A most predominant trait in the life of Principal Gilchrist was his capacity for hard work, an industry that never acknowledged defeat. The two most diligent men that the writer has ever known were Principal Gilchrist and President Homer H. Seerley, his successor. At the outset

of the founder's work at Cedar Falls, in addition to his multifarious administrative duties, he invariably assigned to himself the same modicum of classes that he apportioned to his subordinates. According to Henry Sabin who was State Superintendent of Public Instruction, "toil was his pastime, and study was his favorite occupation. Difficulties but increased his zeal, and he searched for knowledge as for hidden treasures." He daily personified the principle which he taught and lived, that the way for a person to grow is found in the exercise of his powers to the limit of his strength. To his associates and to his students his example was a mighty and enduring influence to thoroughness in research, to self-restraint, to devotion to the work in hand, to the mastery of the problems of the school as a preparation for grappling with the greater problems later.

Principal Gilchrist appeared as the author of but one book — a *Physical Geography of Iowa*. Through the kindness of Miss Maude Gilchrist, the archives of the State Teachers College have been enriched by many manuscripts of his sermons, lectures, and other addresses. Among these valued papers is the manuscript of an unfinished book, doubtless intended to be his literary masterpiece, entitled "Theory and Practice of Teaching".

After leaving his work at Cedar Falls in 1886, James C. Gilchrist established a private normal school at Algona. From there he was called in 1893 to the deanship of Morningside College in Sioux City. But he was soon compelled by failing health to retire to his home in Pocahontas County, where he died at Laurens on August 13, 1897.

Into the Gilchrist home there came several children, six of whom attained to maturity and all of whom nobly blessed their parentage. The eldest daughter Maude was one of the most brilliant students ever registered in the State Normal School. She blended in her inheritance the intellectual endowment of her father and the fine womanly characteristics of her mother. Entering at the age of fifteen, she was brought into competition with men and women in their twenties, yet she became a recognized leader. After her graduation at Cedar Falls, she entered Wellesley College where, upon finishing her course, she was selected for a position in the Department of Botany in that institution. After seven years of service in that capacity, she was allowed a sabbatical year of study and travel in Europe. Returning to America, she served as Dean of Women in the State Agricultural College of Michigan, and later in a like capacity in Illinois Woman's College at Jacksonville. In 1912, she

was recalled to Iowa to care for her mother during her declining years.

The second daughter Grace became the wife of Joseph H. Allen, one of Iowa's most prominent public men, and the mother of Byron Gilchrist Allen, who has served in the State legislature. Another daughter, Norma, became the devoted wife and helpmate of Professor B. B. Roseboom of Lansing, Michigan. Two sons, Cleland and William, are prominent farmers and citizens of Pocahontas County, Iowa.

His third son, Fred Cramer Gilchrist, after completing his collegiate course, served for a term as superintendent of schools in Pocahontas County. Later, having graduated from the law school at the University of Iowa, he became a successful attorney with a strong predilection for politics. For ten years he represented his district, first in the House and then in the Senate of the Iowa General Assembly. In this capacity he made a favorable legislative record and commended himself to his constituents so thoroughly that he was elected in 1930 to represent the Tenth Congressional District in the national House of Representatives.

D. SANDS WRIGHT

The First Decade

In the inauguration of his work at Cedar Falls, Principal Gilchrist faced appalling difficulties. The institution was at first half dormitory and half school, so that in addition to his administrative duties he must needs be the director of a hostelry. His time was divided between educational endeavor and commissary duties.

To internal complications were added external perplexities. The legislative enactment that created the school was passed by a majority of one in each house, and the friends and the opponents of the enterprise continued in much the same proportions. The large minority that opposed the measure, and predicted the failure of the new educational adventure, afterward talked and worked and prayed that their prophecies might come true. Defeated candidates for faculty positions could see nothing good in their successful rivals, and belittled them without mercy. Even prominent citizens of Cedar Falls, who had planned other uses for the Orphans' Home, withheld encouragement and patronage.

And worst of all the meager legislative appropriation for the first biennial period for the maintenance of the school left it pauperized almost to

helplessness. Furniture made for children had to be utilized by adults. Apparatus there was none, excepting an antiquated and wheezy air-pump and a device for testing the breathing power of a child. There were no maps or charts upon the walls, and no funds available to meet the need.

Corresponding to this lack of suitable apparatus, there was a dearth of books. I hasten to add that the Normal School inherited the alleged library of the "Home" and that Principal Gilchrist generously placed his large and well-selected personal supply of books at the disposal of the school. The inheritance of books from the orphans was a sorry collection of soiled and dog-eared volumes, juvenile in character, and unsuited to the uses of a normal school. To a committee, of which the writer was one, the task was committed of culling from this mass of cheap and microbe-infected volumes such as could be accounted worthy of a place upon the shelves of what was destined to become one of the most useful libraries in the State. A baker's dozen were reclaimed and the remnant shipped to the State Training School for Girls. Among the books retained were Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, a life of Daniel Boone, and *The Dairyman's Daughter*.

At the opening of the first session, such stand-

ard text-books were introduced as were most in vogue at the time. Osgood's Readers and Harvey's Grammar were adopted because both Osgood and Harvey were intimate personal friends of the principal. The Fish-Robinson Arithmetics became the guide to instruction in what was latest and best in number-teaching. From Cornell's Geography and Atlas the students learned to bound the States, to name their capitals, and to trace the courses of the rivers from their sources to the sea. Cutter's *Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene*, Swinton's *General History*, and Haven's *Mental Philosophy* ranked high in the estimation of the faculty of four.

The principal, a gospel minister and a devout Christian, was imbued with a deep sense of his accountability to God and to the State for the moral influences that should go out into the schools with those who had imbibed the atmosphere of the Normal School. On the first Sabbath afternoon of the initial term, a preaching service was held in the assembly room at which the principal functioned as director and minister. Inasmuch as the students housed in the building were two miles or more from the nearest church and the only way to get there was to walk, this vesper service became a permanent feature of the school and was maintained for a quarter of a century or

more. It was only discontinued when street car service made the downtown churches accessible to the student body.

For these preaching services, ministers of practically all denominations in Cedar Falls and nearby towns gladly rendered their services without money and without price. Near the middle of the opening term, a students' Wednesday evening prayer meeting was instituted, and was maintained with scarcely a break far into the twentieth century. This service received the unqualified support of the principal and all his faculty. It was almost unanimously attended and participated in by the students, a large majority of whom were members of Christian churches and active Christian workers. There is that about the teacher's calling and the responsibilities it involves, more perhaps than in any other profession, which conduces to sensing the need of guidance that is higher than any human help can render. The consecration of the faculty and the ready response of the student body to that which is noblest in life made the State institution at Cedar Falls distinctively a non-denominational yet a religious school.

Upon enrolling, each student was presented with a term program showing the hours of recitation. On the back of this sheet was printed a long list of "Rules" to which the recipient was expected

to conform. The most famous of these requisitions was numbered and known as Rule II — "It is expected that the ladies and gentlemen of the institution shall treat each other with politeness and courteous civilities; but whenever they transcend the proprieties of refined society, they are liable to dismissal. Anything like selection is strictly forbidden. Private walks and rides at any time are not allowed. Students of the two sexes, by the special permission of the Principal, can meet privately for the transaction of business, but for that purpose only."

This, though intended seriously, soon became in the eyes of the students a stupendous joke. "Selection" became a word to conjure with. Its very mention was provocative of a smile. New students were solemnly warned to beware of the criminality of "selection". Notwithstanding the severity of the rule, its promulgation could not quell the mating impulse in the student's heart. Over against the principal's dictum was the decree of Holy Writ, "It is not good for man to be alone", and their own hearts added, "Nor woman either". Will and Fanny took great delight in the study of botany; but it enhanced immensely the pleasure of the pursuit if they could stroll together in search of flowers to analyse; and it is said that they became so enthusiastic in the study

of pollen grains that they both tried to look through the magnifying glass at the same time. Despite the rigidity and severity of the rule, selection among the students was the natural anticipation of matrimony.

When the first class was ready for graduation in June of 1877, Principal Gilchrist, doubtless following the practice he had pursued in his eastern school experiences, inaugurated a system of State examinations to determine the scholastic qualifications of the candidates. The committee of examiners consisted of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Principal of the State Normal School, the President of the State Teachers Association, and two county superintendents chosen respectively by the State Superintendent and the Normal School Principal.

Whatever such a system may have accomplished in the East and South, it proved to be ill-adapted to conditions in Iowa. To the candidates it was a nerve-wracking ordeal, to the examiners a jolly junket and a farce. The latter were a company of kindly disposed mortals, who attributed a failure in recitation to other causes than ignorance and graded the unfortunate reciter accordingly. At the end of a two days' ordeal, each member of every class was duly "passed", except in some unusual cases when the candidate

was "conditioned" but not "failed". Even these were allowed to stand in line on commencement day and receive the diploma with the understanding that they must return it to the principal until the deficiency had been remedied by further study. The system of State examinations was discontinued after Principal Gilchrist left in 1886.

One of the principal's antipathies was the high school graduate. He maintained throughout his administration a stolid prejudice against the city high school. A diploma from one of these had no significance in his eyes. The graduate of the most approved city schools of the State such as Des Moines, Sioux City, and Dubuque, had to submit, alike with the boy from the rural school, to a preliminary examination in the common branches in order to determine his status as a student.

Whatever of justice there may have been in this attitude of the principal toward these aspirants for higher learning, it was naturally resented by the city superintendents and high school principals. Their graduates, seeking preparation to be teachers, were more likely to be directed to some one of the flourishing denominational colleges than to the one institution maintained by the State especially for the training of teachers. One of the first acts of President Seerley was to bid for the patronage of this class of students. A high school diploma

became the passport to the best the institution could afford. The most honored body of students in the school, the ones most sought after by the faculty, the ones who were given uppermost seats at chapel, were known as the High School Graduate Class. This change of policy brought at once to the institution a new type of student.

Only one school building was added to the campus during Gilchrist's administration. It was originally known as South Hall, but after many years it was appropriately rechristened Gilchrist Hall by the State Board of Education.

Principal Gilchrist's greatest work, accomplished in the prime of his manhood, was the laying of the foundation of Iowa's one and only State Normal School. His service may be likened to Aesop's story of a mother fox that chided a lioness for having only one offspring, and of the lioness's reply: "One, but that one a lion".

He laid the foundation and laid it well — the base of a superstructure that was to become the pride of the State, the admiration of other Commonwealths. After ten years of ardent, untiring, and sometimes unappreciated labors, he retired, leaving the indelible imprint of his personality upon the institution.

D. SANDS WRIGHT

Moses Willard Bartlett

Moses Willard Bartlett was born at Bath, New Hampshire, on February 26, 1834. Impelled by the impulse and will to teach, he prepared himself for his life work in Dartmouth College. Immediately upon his graduation in 1857, he was offered a lucrative position in a mercantile firm in the East. To the disappointment of his would-be employers and of many of his friends, this proffer he rejected, and steadfastly sought his career in the less remunerative but, to him, more attractive engagements of the classroom and the college campus. For the privilege of guiding youth into the paths of wisdom and virtue, he gladly turned his back upon the common man's aspiration for wealth and its concomitants — a sacrifice for the good of his fellows, as noble as it is rare.

His first professorial position was in Western College, located at Western, Iowa. There he taught for ten years and, during an interim, served for one year as acting president of the college. While at Western, he was married to Miss Julia Abbott, an accomplished woman who courageously bore with him the hardships of pioneering. He served for six years as principal of Denmark Academy at Denmark, Iowa, and for

the five following years held a similar position in Scotland County Academy at Memphis, Missouri.

One of the first acts of the Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Normal School was the election of Professor Bartlett to the senior professorship of that institution. His culture and his reputation as an instructor in Iowa schools of higher learning made him the board's logical choice for this honor. Practically all his college work was dedicated to the State of his adoption. He brought the culture of New England to Iowa during the adolescent period of the State's development. Few people realize what a tremendous influence was exerted upon educational policies in Iowa by such men as Moses Willard Bartlett.

He was a gentleman of the old school. His accurate scholarship, his urbanity, his deference to his compeers, his freedom from ostentatious display, his familiarity with the man with the scepter and the man with the hoe marked him as one whose honor could be trusted always and whose friendship was a thing to be desired.

Though he chose to make his home and carve out his career in the West, still he was justly proud of his Yankee origin and he tenaciously adhered to many of the idioms and provincialisms that during his childhood infixed themselves by force of habit into the warp and woof of his per-

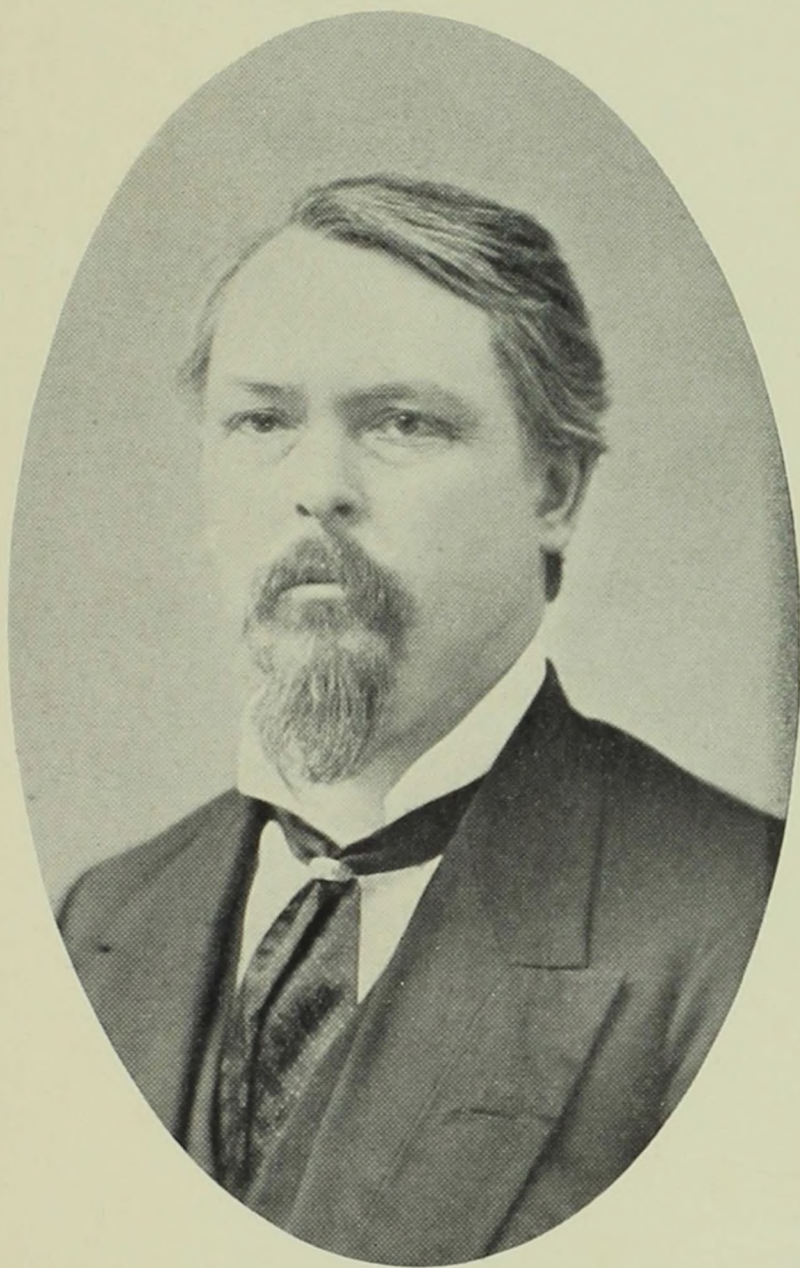
sonality. His pronunciation was not quite the "dollah" of the South, nor the "doller" of the Middle West, but was a medium between the two. His mountains were the "mountings" of Vermont. His tongue was free from slang, and he detested slang in others. His associates in the faculty often found themselves silently rebuked by the unconscious expression of his face when they inadvertently deviated from the approved forms of correct English. Yet he was never obtrusively critical nor sternly dogmatic as to the linguistic shortcomings of those about him.

Possessed of a fine sense of humor, he could employ his ready wit ever in a way that left no sting. Once in an audience he was speaking in a reminiscent way of his early experience as a teacher. He chanced to remark that he taught his first school at a salary of only twenty-five dollars per month. Henry Sabin, known in educational parlance as Iowa's "Grand Old Man", called out from the audience, "I can beat that story; my first salary was only twenty dollars a month." "Oh yes", retorted Bartlett, "I know that inferior teachers received less." In the laughing that followed none joined more heartily than Sabin.

Professor Bartlett was originally chosen by the Board of Trustees to head the Department of English Language and Literature, and as such he

was advertised in the first circular of the institution. The trustees proposed, but this time Principal Gilchrist disposed. In the first assignments to service by the principal, the mathematical subjects were entrusted to Professor Bartlett and the English courses to his associate, D. S. Wright. This arrangement prevailed during the first four years of the institution. At the beginning of the fifth year, the Board voted to return to their original plan, and transferred the senior professor to the chair of English Language and Literature. In this position he served for twenty-four additional years when, because of advancing years, he retired from educational work in June, 1904.

In the seventies, the parlor reading circle was a fad, ardently fostered in practically all the larger towns of the State. The Cedar Falls Parlor Reading Circle was instituted in 1875, antedating by one year the coming of the Normal School to that city. It met from time to time in the parlors of the well-to-do people who possessed literary taste or pretensions to the same. Duly officered with a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and an executive committee of three, it was regarded as one of the most important social and intellectual organizations in town. Studies were outlined in the lives and works of great writers, in the world's products, and in the manual



MOSES WILLARD BARTLETT

arts. With the opening of the Normal School in the autumn of 1876, the new faculty was welcomed into the Circle. To the literary proficiency and taste of Professor Bartlett the atmosphere of the Circle was most congenial. Some men are born literary leaders, some achieve such leadership, and some have the distinction thrust upon them. To all three classes, Professor Bartlett belonged.

Admitted to membership in the Circle, he became immediately its lion. Ministers deferred to his literary judgment and the city superintendent, principal, and high school teachers revised their opinions when he delivered his dicta as to the supremacy of Butler's *Analogy* or the literary shortcomings of J. G. Holland and E. P. Roe. For many years he served as president of the Circle, and the impress of his personality is still felt in the city. While the reading circle fad has had its day and has passed its age of usefulness in most communities, the Cedar Falls Circle is still a flourishing organization. It has survived the storms of fifty-six Iowa winters and still shows no mark of decadence. Perhaps the impact of Professor Bartlett's personality is a partial explanation of the secret of its longevity.

After the "most straitest sect" he was a Christian, a communicant of the Congregational

Church. He believed and lived the religion that he professed. As a lay preacher, he occasionally occupied the pulpits of his own and other churches, and always to the edification of his congregation. His greatest sermon was the life he lived, for he was "a living epistle known and read of all men". In his school relations, he inspired his students to walk not only in the ways of the wisdom of books, but also in the paths of righteousness; and his students in turn loved, followed, and strove to reproduce his Christian character in the schools of the State.

Though his schoolroom work was first in his thought and effort, he was not forgetful of other calls to duty. He was a patriot, and a pioneer in the prohibition movement. A Republican in politics, he was always in the caucus of his party, and staunchly stood for whatever policies or candidates he approved. When the campaign was on, with voice and pen he sought to promote the glory of the land and flag he loved.

In December of 1885, the members of the Iowa State Teachers Association bestowed upon him the high honor of the presidency of that organization. The paragraph below, from his presidential address, is an index to his character and faith:

"No foreign power, by its armed soldiery, can injure this republic; our dangers are within, and

from ignorance and defective or wrong education. Experience shows that it is not enough that the laborer be *skillful in his work*, that his hand merely be trained to a deft handling of the spade, the chisel, or the steam engine; the laborer is still a man, with human wants and desires, to be qualified, endowed with reason, by which he *should* be controlled."

Professor Bartlett's classroom methods were distinctly Socratic — in the opinion of some excessively so. Woe unto the student in his class who erroneously answered one of his well-put questions. Upon receiving the answer he would look edified and proceed to ask other questions pertinent to the reply, until his unwary victim found himself entangled in a mass of absurdities from which there was no escape but in the acknowledgment of his mistake. The lesson was often severe, but one most thoroughly and indelibly learned.

The twenty-ninth of January, 1904, is a memorable date in the annals of the Iowa State Normal School. It marked the occasion of a double all-day celebration; first, the completion by Professor Bartlett of fifty years of service as a teacher; second, his approaching retirement from the State Normal School, after twenty-eight years of continuous work in its faculty. In the forenoon Dr. Thomas McClelland, president of Knox College,

who had received his own inspiration for a successful professional career from the man whom he had come to Cedar Falls to honor, delivered a speech on the theme of "Fifty Years of Service".

The afternoon was devoted to a series of platform addresses. First came "The Founding of the State Normal School", by Hon. H. C. Hemenway, who as State Senator from Black Hawk County had been most influential in securing the establishment of the school at Cedar Falls and who became the first chairman of the board of trustees. Then followed in chronological sequence, "The Early Days of the Normal School", by D. S. Wright. "The Normal School and the State" was the subject chosen by Hon. E. D. Chassell, an early graduate of the school and for three terms an active member of the General Assembly of the State. This was followed by "The Schoolmaster of Fifty Years Ago", by Henry Sabin. And at the close of the program came the valedictory address by Professor Bartlett.

"A poor Jew, it is said, prided himself on helping to build the temple at Jerusalem, because he was allowed to help, once or twice, in lifting a stone to its place in the foundation. My friends, I have been present, for a time, when the foundations were being laid of the lives of many hundreds of my fellow beings, and among them are

two who have honored us by their presence and good words today, and if I have been fortunate enough to help to place even one small stone of value in any one of such lives, I count it of more worth than if I had conceived and built entire the most beautiful material temple the world ever saw." That was the tenor of his whole speech.

In the course of the addresses on this occasion, a classical poetical quotation was given as appropriate to the personality of the man of the hour.

Genteel in personage,
Conduct, and equipage;
Noble by heritage,
Generous and free.

Brave, not romantic,
Learned, not pedantic,
Frolic, not frantic,
All this is he.

Honor maintaining,
Meanness disdaining,
Still entertaining,
Engaging and new.

Neat but not finical,
Sage but not cynical,
Never tyrannical,
But ever true.

In the college paper, which recorded the events of this great day, appeared another tribute.

"Three years ago", said Professor Colegrove to his class in school management, "I was teaching in the institute at Marengo, Iowa. One evening when I was sitting out in the yard at my boarding place, a man came up the street, just the other side of the fence. He stopped near me, leaned on the picket fence, and said, 'Are you Mr. Colegrove from Cedar Falls?'"

"I said, 'Yes, sir.'"

" 'And do you know Professor Bartlett?'"

" 'I do, very well,' I replied."

" 'Well, when you see him, will you give him my love.'"

" 'I shall be very glad to do so', I said. 'You know Professor Bartlett, then?'"

" 'Yes', said the gentleman, 'I do. Thirty years ago, he was my teacher, and all through these years, he has been to me the ideal of what a man ought to be. I can not tell you how much I owe to him, how completely he changed my life, and how thoroughly I respect him.'"

"After some further conversation, he turned to go away, when I said to him, 'You have not given me your name, and I do not have the pleasure of your acquaintance.'"

" 'My name is Rumble', he answered."

" 'Oh, you are the Congressman from this district', I said, as I recognized the name."

“ ‘Yes sir. Good evening’, he said and went away.”

Mr. Colegrove added, “Of course it was a great pleasure to me to give the Congressman’s message to Professor Bartlett when I returned to Cedar Falls; and I shall never forget how pleased and happy he looked as he said, “Well, it is worth while to be a teacher’.”

Professor Bartlett was in disposition one of the most retiring of men. He avoided the limelight. Though ready of speech, he sought no reputation as a platform speaker. He wielded a graceful pen, writing with faultless diction and with Addisonian precision. In press and pulpit he was a fearless champion of righteousness and temperance. To the State he brought a high cultural standard.

In June, 1904, he retired from the active service of the School and the State. The remaining eight years of his life he spent in the home of Austin Burt, envired by the assiduous care of his daughter, Mrs. Mary Bartlett Burt, happy in the love and laughter of his grandchildren and the companionship of the books he loved. He calmly met the messenger that comes to all; and on the thirtieth of November, 1912, he peacefully resigned his body to mother earth and his spirit unto God who gave it.

D. SANDS WRIGHT

Comment by the Editor

DAVID SANDS WRIGHT

Fifty years of right living

Fifty years of tireless loyalty

Fifty years of inspirational effort . . .

What higher tribute could be paid to any man!

As the most fitting climax to the celebration of Founder's Day at Iowa State Teachers College on December 7, 1925, the State Board of Education conferred upon Professor D. Sands Wright a super-diploma. The school was then in its fiftieth year, and during that whole half century Professor Wright had served continuously as the head of a department — first as the professor of English Language and Literature, then from 1880 to 1915 in charge of Mathematics, and afterward as the first Director of Religious Education. His tenure exactly paralleled the life of the institution, for he had taught the first class on the opening day of the Iowa State Normal School in the autumn of 1876. That his birthday should be selected as the date of Founder's Day for the commemoration of this double golden anniversary seemed altogether appropriate.

David Sands Wright was born on December 7,

1847, on a farm in Highland County, Ohio. He was the direct descendant of three generations of Quaker preachers, and he himself, a steadfast disciple in that faith, became an eloquent exponent of Christianity, preaching in many pulpits of various denominations. Educated as a boy in common country schools, he later attended the National Normal University at Lebanon, Ohio, where he received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1871 and the Master of Arts degree in 1873.

It was in the fall of 1872 that he began his long career as a teacher of teachers in the official capacity of associate principal of Whittier College at Salem, Iowa. For four years he labored in that little Quaker academy and then, upon the solicitation of his friend, Lorenzo D. Lewelling, a member of the first board of trustees of the new State Normal School at Cedar Falls, he was chosen as one of the four teachers who composed the first faculty of that institution.

"With an earnest few," his super-diploma testified, he "laid the foundation for the *Iowa State Normal School*. With a saving sense of humor in the dark hours that followed and always with unflagging zeal" he "helped to build the superstructure of the *Iowa State Teachers College*." During the fifty-three years of his association with the school, it grew and improved, not alone because

such men as he desired "to *have* it better" but because of his "ceaseless effort to *make* it better." Not until he had passed his eightieth birthday anniversary did he retire from the service of the college, only three years before his death on October 30, 1931.

Professor Wright was a splendid teacher. Many of his students, who number in the thousands, declare that he was the best instructor they ever had. Not only was he a master of his subject, but he had that rare capacity of inspiring others to strive for similar proficiency. He made mathematics exciting. If a lull seemed imminent, he averted the dull moment with a flash of wit, or casually did tricks with chalk. Perhaps his success was partially due to his custom of devising original problems instead of using a text-book. To work those exercises in algebra and geometry was a guarantee of mathematical comprehension. Though he was rigorous in his requirements, he was most generous in explanation and encouragement. Any student who succeeded in solving one of his particularly tantalizing problems received the prize of a new lead pencil — and there are many people who still cherish those precious pencils.

Education is not entirely a process of intellectual training: physical and spiritual development

are also essential. "Complete education", declared Professor Wright in his presidential address to the State Teachers Association in 1904, "demands the education of the conscience as well as the intellect, the emotions and the will." If the curriculum of the schools is to be symmetrical, it must provide for "the harmonious development of the entire man — body, mind and soul." Of this trinity, he conceived moral education to be the most neglected, on account of the deplorable commercial spirit of the age. Money seems to be more esteemed than character.

He regarded the eradication of this pernicious influence and the substitution of an ethical standard as a more important function of the schools than "any lessons in language, history or science". Let teachers, by precept and example, instruct their pupils "in the common virtues of every day life", inspire "exalted reverence for whatsoever things are true," stimulate "sublime loyalty to whatsoever things are honest," arouse "holy love for whatsoever things are pure," and create "unyielding preference for whatsoever things are lovely and of good report".

As a tolerant and devout Christian, he believed that the principles of right living could be taught best through religion. Out of this conviction came, perhaps, his most distinctive contribution to

education in Iowa. Mainly because of his efforts, the Teachers College began to offer credit in 1915 for courses in Bible study. It was not long before high schools adopted the same policy.

His own conduct was an exposition of his ideals. In domestic felicity, in unselfish devotion to his profession, in life-long loyalty to the college, in a friendly disposition, in a gracious love for little children that won a confident response, in a subtle wit and never-failing sense of humor, in mellow wisdom and the grace of righteousness, D. Sands Wright impressed the pattern of his character upon the community in which he lived. He touched the lives of Iowa youth, and "that touch has left a vital spark, an inspiration to sane and Christian living."

J. E. B.

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