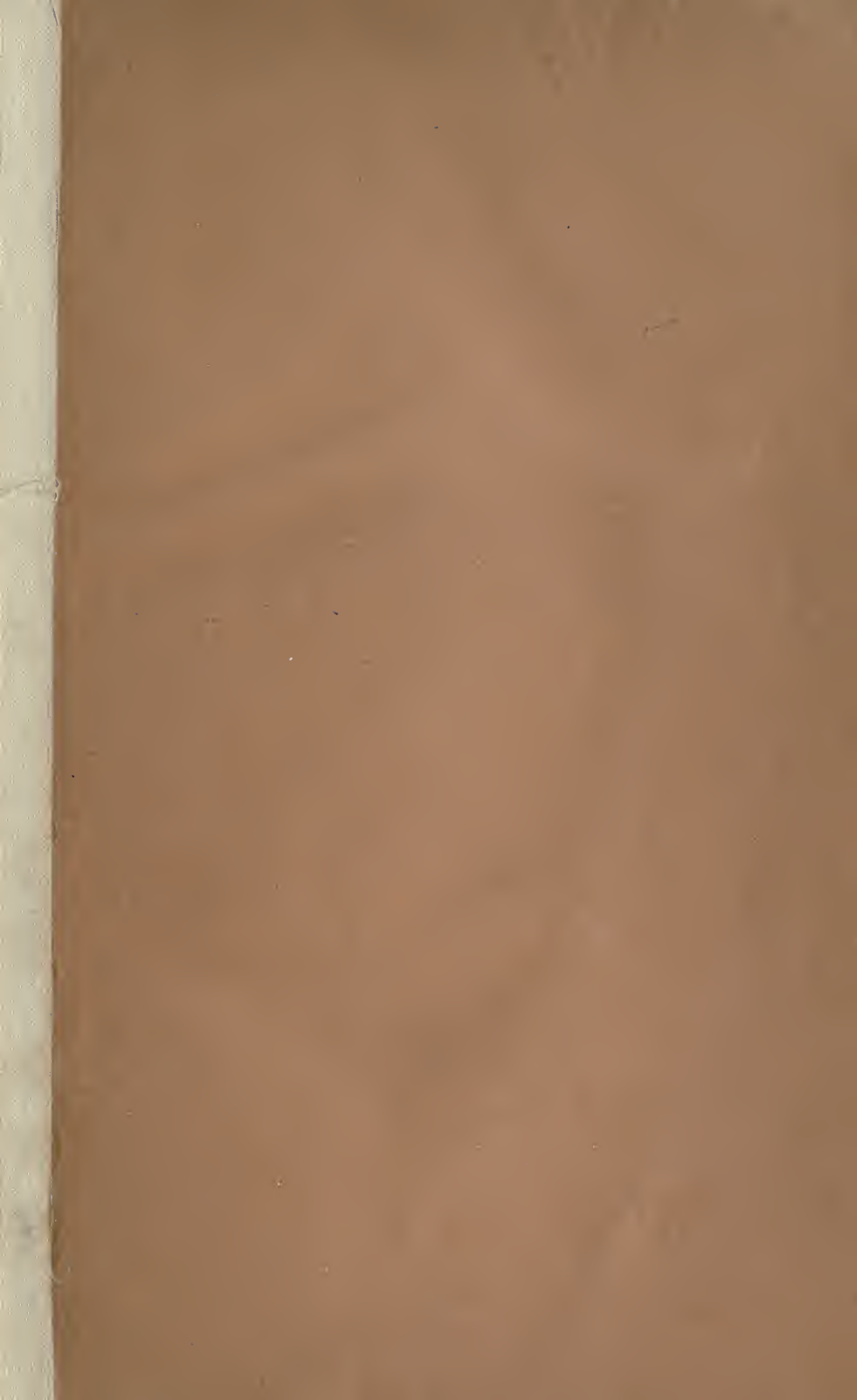


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RECOLLECTIONS OF JAMES M. GOODHUE.

BY COL. JOHN H. STEVENS, OF MINNEAPOLIS.

(Read before the Minnesota Editorial Association, at its Annual Meeting, February, 1894.)

In October, 1841, I was a resident of White Oak Springs, then a little mining town in the extreme southern portion of Iowa county, Wisconsin Territory. At that period I was engaged in mining. Wishing to prospect for a "stake," before winter set in, my partner and myself determined to visit the mines in the neighborhood of Platteville, in Grant county, some twenty miles distant from our humble cabin. With picks, shovels and spades on our backs, the "miner's kit," we started out bright and early on an October morning for the mines in that vicinity. Just as the sun was sinking behind those picturesque mounds near Platteville, we reached a hotel in the village, known as the Peavins House. With tired limbs and blistered feet, the fruits of our long journey over the prairies, we determined upon an early bed; but, returning from the supper table to the office, we found a large gathering of miners excited over the result of a lawsuit of little more than a trivial character, which had been decided a few minutes before in a justice court. As miners we became interested in the controversy, which banished all our tired condition.

Then and there I met, for the first time, James M. Goodhue, a lawyer in the territory, and one of the attorneys in the miner's suit so recently disposed of in the court. Then and there, too, I became a friend in my humble way of Col. Goodhue, who was destined eight years subsequently to become the pioneer editor of Minnesota. From that period until his death we were friends. The editors in Minnesota at this time know but little of the life of their great predecessor, hence I will now briefly address you in regard to that wonderful man, more particularly in regard to his early life.

James Madison Goodhue was born in Hebron, N. H., a small town situated in a niche of the White Mountain range. His father was conspicuous as the principal merchant of this and several adjacent towns, during the period of his residence there, which was from about the year 1790 to 1828. His children surviving to maturity were eight in number. James M. Goodhue was the sixth child, born March 31, 1810. Hebron was settled, probably, about the year 1725, and by immigrants mostly from the lower settlements in New Hampshire and from Massachusetts. They were strict religionists, generally of the sect of the Puritans. The most feasible approach for the immigrants to Hebron was by the southeast, over the left shoulder of a dome-shaped mountain, called Sugar Loaf. This mountain arose at a point some three miles short of the plain which was the central point of the settlement. On this shoulder the migratory procession probably halted, having their attention suddenly arrested by the beauty and grandeur of the scene that lay beneath their view. On their left, in near proximity, arose a huge palisade of rock some thousand feet high and thousands in length, and on the right a lake. A prospector upon the dome of Sugar Loaf would have stood some two thousand feet above the lake, which is seven miles in length by two miles in width. Probably the lake took its name Newfound at this time. At the base of the mountain on the lake side is a palisade that descends to the surface, and thence graduates to a depth 350 feet below. Looking northeast, the vision extends over our town, and over a mountain range that walls it in; and thence to the Franconia stacks of mountains some fifteen miles further on. Further on in the same direction, the vision would rest upon the white dome of Mount Washington, some thirty miles away, and upon numberless domes of mountains that huddle around.

Had our prospector looked westward, he would have viewed Mount Cardigan, some eight miles away. A little way southeast of Cardigan is the birthplace of our Pillsbury family. One of the early settlers in Hebron was Rev. David Page, a Congregationalist minister from Hanover, which is in the same county with Hebron, and the seat of Dartmouth college. During his early ministrations in Hebron, a meeting house of generous size was built from the tall tufted pines that graced its

plain. It mounted a grand steeple based upon the ground, and sustained a belfry. It was about the year 1790 when Stephen Goodhue, the father of James, came to Hebron to reside. Having previously made the acquaintance of the daughter of Rev. David Page, a Congregational minister, he married her and took her to his inheritance of wild land in Sanbornton, some twenty miles away. The father's name is preserved in the annals of Sanbornton as that of a person of handsome address, who began his public life as a schoolmaster. Col. Goodhue's grandfather on the paternal side was descended from one of three brothers who came over from England, known as Puritans, and of the political party of Oliver Cromwell, no doubt. The grandmother on the paternal side was Miss Barker of Stratchano, N. H. The grandfather on the maternal side, Rev. David Page, served as chaplain in the Revolutionary war, leaving his wife with several small children to manage affairs at home. While he was in the war, his wife yoked the oxen and held the plow while one of the sons held the goad. Meanwhile, the youngest child, who may have been the mother of our subject, sat upon the ground at the end of the furrow. As a result, a harvest was in waiting for the return of the husband in the fall.

That this grandmother was a notable woman, there is no doubt; and there are indications that Col. Goodhue inherited her peculiar qualities, physically and mentally.

It is said that an ancestor of this grandfather is portrayed in an historical painting in Connecticut as holding with his left hand a bear at arm's length, while, with his right hand at liberty, he stoops to the ground to seize a club. It may as well be noted at this point in our narrative that Col. Goodhue was known to be as remarkable for his physical strength as for the force of his intellect. While at school no man could, from a dead stand, leap so high over a pole as he. He never was worsted in an encounter with fists. One morning while at school, seeing from his chamber that his roommate, on the street, was being worsted in a setto with one of his irate countrymen, he rushed below, and, quick as thought, planted in the breast of the countryman both feet and fists in one point of time, left the man upon his back, and without a word spoken, retired to his room.

He, who in his native place was called Madison, except in time of war, when he was called Mad, was at an early age

placed in the academy at Andover, Mass., the place of the theological school.

He finished his preparatory studies for college at Meriden, N. H., afterward entering Amherst college. A graphic history of his life in college was no doubt impressed upon the mind of every student there. While it was full of adventure, he was singularly happy in having almost every member of every class his admirer for his talents and also his friend. It was said that his retainers in any unauthorized enterprise were as likely to be from the older classes as from his own. While he was freshman he often set the seniors to do his playful work. Mr. Henry Ward Beecher was in the class next below him. In after years Mr. Beecher showed his admiration of Col. Goodhue by making diligent inquiries for him whenever he met mutual friends.

On commencement day, at Woburn, many clerical and other dignitaries were in attendance.

He took a part in the exercises by representing John Randolph, in a speech composed by himself, in which the eccentric orator of Roanoke was represented in his long surtout with riding whip and spurs. In varied mood he discoursed upon matters of national concern; then turning back pathetically upon his dear old Virginia, dropping tears of fondness, when he would suddenly turn in modulated pathos to the faithfulness of his servant, Juba. The rhetorical effect of this monologue was electric. Dignified listeners became lost in a sense of reality, and women wiped their eyes, not in sympathy with the actor, but in sympathy with the real Randolph.

On the same occasion, he composed and spoke a speech for Old Hickory, with staff in hand and gray hair erect. This was soon after the time of the memorable commotion of the Kitchen Cabinet, in the White House, when President Jackson defended the honor of Mrs. Eaton by significant words. This representation of Old Hickory was heard of by a Lowell paper fifteen miles away, and was branded as an outrage committed upon the Democratic idol.

I mention these exercises as showing his theatrical talent. It is evident that as an actor he would have achieved a world-wide reputation. This composition representing Randolph he spoke upon some exhibition day after his return to college.

He produced stillness, mirth and tears in quick succession, as if with a magician's wand.

In due time, he achieved, at Amherst, his diploma.

There were unsettled opinions respecting the place which he would hold in after life. But his professor of rhetoric and oratory, Dr. Samuel Worcester, said: "That young man will be heard from one of these days." This professor had observed in his literary compositions the nobility of his conceptions and the elegance of his diction. During his last sickness, the late Mr. J. W. Bass, of St. Paul, while in Boston, had occasion to call at the office of the Evening Journal. The editor of the Journal overheard the name St. Paul mentioned. Whereupon he instantly started toward Mr. Bass and earnestly inquired after the condition of Mr. Goodhue, for he had read of his sickness. He then went on to remark that Mr. Goodhue's descriptive articles were equal to the best writings of Cooper.

He had noble imitative faculties. For instance, he would, behind the closed door of a college lecture room, deliver for the hearing of curious students casually in the hallway, a homily in the familiar words and voice of President Humphrey, a man of marked individuality. The listeners unhesitatingly took the discourse to be by the president.

After graduation he went to Elmira, N. Y., from which place, the year before, had arrived his earlier college mate, who in our day is a distinguished citizen of that place, Judge Thurston.

He wrote back to a brother that he had boated down the stream in a skiff from Olean and had one cent left in his pocket and so he was glad to say he was not without money. At Elmira he taught the winter's school and at the same time began the study of law. Next season he resumed the study in New York city, where by clerical work he paid his way, also writing for the press some ephemeral compositions. He was admitted to the bar in New York. Next he passed some three years in Plainfield, near Joliet. There, to supply his want of means, he cultivated the black soil. Agricultural products were high in those days. He earned a two-horse team with which to plow; carried his potatoes one fall to the workmen upon the Illinois canal; and next he appears in Platteville, Wis. There he staid for a season, probably with a view to the practice of the law.

In that place was a young lady from Central New York, who in this Wisconsin town was supplementing a visit to a relative by teaching the village school. She was prostrated there by the smallpox, while suitable attendants stood aloof in fear of taking the disease. Thereupon Col. Goodhue, who had probably caught a glimpse of the maiden, volunteered his services at her bedside. His proffer was accepted. The result was marriage. Her name was Henrietta Kneeland. No better opportunity for a tribute to her virtues is offered in this narrative than at this point. Miss Kneeland was stately in person, highly intellectual, and possessed the kindest of hearts. The twain settled in Lancaster, which is near the place of their marriage, where he became attorney. But his literary taste led him to the purchase of the Lancaster Herald. This he conducted in a graphic manner, surprising to his readers, and awaking among them an unprecedented interest in newspaper literature. His occupation with the Herald held him until the opening, by proclamation, of Minnesota Territory. He had built an ambitious two-story house in Lancaster and was living in it, when, without much preliminary, he packed his press and type, and took with him his family, and, with the wand of a talisman, set up at once the Minnesota Pioneer.

A clerical gentleman visited the Pioneer about the time of the first issues and found the editor bareheaded, sitting upon the floor, and cutting from other papers clippings, while a prairie hog was seen through the cracks rooting beneath the floor.

The first number of the Pioneer will, to the curious, probably show at once the peculiar qualities of the editor. It may be observed that the most of the issues of that paper are on file in the capitol—some of the latest numbers are lost.

I am aware that these incidents, illustrating the characteristics of our subject, are trivial in themselves, not even equivalent to the toe of Hercules, that survived his statue. That toe was a measure of the statue: for the toe was material; while the incidents in our subject's life can be taken with propriety only as indices directing the curious to the qualities that may be found in the files of the Pioneer.

I have in my breast one serious subject of regret, which is, that in my companionship with him, I had not noted in a book

the witticisms that came out spontaneously on the way. His brother and associate's (Isaac N. Goodhue) approval was always evident, but the colonel took to himself no pride in his own utterances, but ascribed their pleasing properties to the good nature of his laughing brother. It may in this connection be noted that while boys in Hebron, in their trouting pastime, the younger brother was always desirous that James should throw the line while the younger carried the bait and fish. He never retailed other men's wit. Whatever he said was his own; and its aptness was to his readers the occasion of surprise.

His method of composition for the Pioneer was peculiar. It was his habit on the day of issuing his sheet to take his papers upon his arm, and distribute them among his subscribers all over town. While so engaged he noted in his mind every change in the features of the town; and all the entertaining events of the week that he had learned by the way. Thus he formed in his mind a picture of the place and its various interests; so that when the time came of preparation for the press, he had but to state what was already in his mind.

It was his wont on Sunday, after breakfast, to repair to his desk, and, sitting with his hat on, compose his editorials.

On one occasion his brother, unobserved, stood in the doorway of the sanctum and saw him, whose back was toward the door, raising and lowering his shoulders rapidly in mirth. The action foretold the coming-out in the next paper of some special wit or humor that was sure to convulse his readers. The town still remembers the advertisement in the Pioneer of the race which was to come off at a certain hour between a little wheezing steamboat that was always struggling against the current and a saw mill standing below town. The anticipation may have directed some eyes to the place of the trial.

One intensely cold morning the mail brought from below the weekly news. The Pioneer gave as an interesting item of news the invention of a mercurial thermometer that in intensely cold weather served the purpose of a spirit thermometer. The invention was in the appliance of a small oil lamp beneath the mercury; so that it did not freeze. On the next day drowsy readers awoke to a sense of the joke.

On another cold morning a cluster of droppers-in were standing about the stove in the Pioneer office; among them being a

demure little old man who was content to serve his day and generation by selling ginger pop. While the man was warming his hands at the stove, James, in solemn mood, said to him, "Mr. Spicket, haven't you been taking a little something this morning—just a drop too much?" Mr. Spicket said he had not, when the crowd directed their gaze toward the man and saw the evidence against him in a jewel of a huge tear-drop pendulous at the end of his nose. This is a trivial matter, but it is as passable as many of the small anecdotes coming from the Sangamon.

His main object in his editorials was the advertising of the territory, that people who were looking westward might be induced to locate here.

While intensely loyal to St. Paul, during all of his editorial career in Minnesota he never lost an opportunity to speak a good word for the whole territory. St. Anthony was a lively rival of St. Paul during those early days. Col. Goodhue would occasionally indulge in a joke or two at the former's expense, but it was in such a good-natured manner no one could take offense.

An apology is needed for the Pioneer's change from a Whig to a Democratic paper; the editor was by birth of the Democratic party. Before coming West he had become a Whig and a protectionist. The brother came to St. Paul as still a Democrat, and exercised his personal persuasiveness to bring James back to the true faith. It so happened at the same time that the Southern sentiment dominated the United States senate, and that sentiment was needed to sustain our scheme for the admission of the territory as a state, and also to promote an Indian treaty, in order to clear the way. So he, in his overpowering zeal for the prosperity of the territory, in a single issue of his paper declared for the Democratic faith. He carried through the change with a single issue of his paper. If the act was a sin, was it not a sin to be winked at?

During the residence in Lancaster there were born to them three children. Their names were James Kneeland and May, twins, and Edward. May and Edward are deceased. May married Charles A. Moore. James K. resides in St. Paul. In St. Paul was born Eve, who became the wife of Morris Lamprey, now deceased. She is now married to Jasper B. Tarbox. James

said that in searching the catalogue of names for this daughter he looked from the beginning to the end. Finding none suitable, he resorted to the name of the first woman, Eve. Either the name adorns the lady, or the lady adorns the name, so that no one who knows her would have the name and the woman separated.

The most evident characteristic of the pioneer editor of Minnesota was his love of nature. He was born within the order of nature's priesthood; within her temples he was a Druid in the intensity of his devotion. His ideal of scenery which he brought away from his native hills was never again realized.

While sojourning upon the prairies of Illinois he felt the sublimity of the silent scene bounded by the far distant horizon and fancifully vested it again with the heads of buffalo and the skirmishing Indian, and yet he once said: "While I am a citizen of the West, and love the West, I would give one-half of all the prairie I have seen for one good mountain."

But he went up to live in Wisconsin. There he found a diversified surface: lakes, rapid streams, forests, mounds, and more than all else, the atmosphere of the White mountains. He was now essentially in a mood for Western life.

When Minnesota opened for settlement, he knew its landscape before he went upon it; as if beneath the flash of a meteor, he saw the Mississippi and its tributaries, also lakes, forests, groves of pine and the shore of our inland sea; especially was pictured before his imagination the historic falls of St. Anthony.

When Col. Goodhue had actually arrived in St. Paul and climbed its bluff, and surveyed the river and the heights that wall its channel, he was overcome, as was the queen of Sheba, who had seen the surroundings about King Solomon—"so there was no more spirit in her."

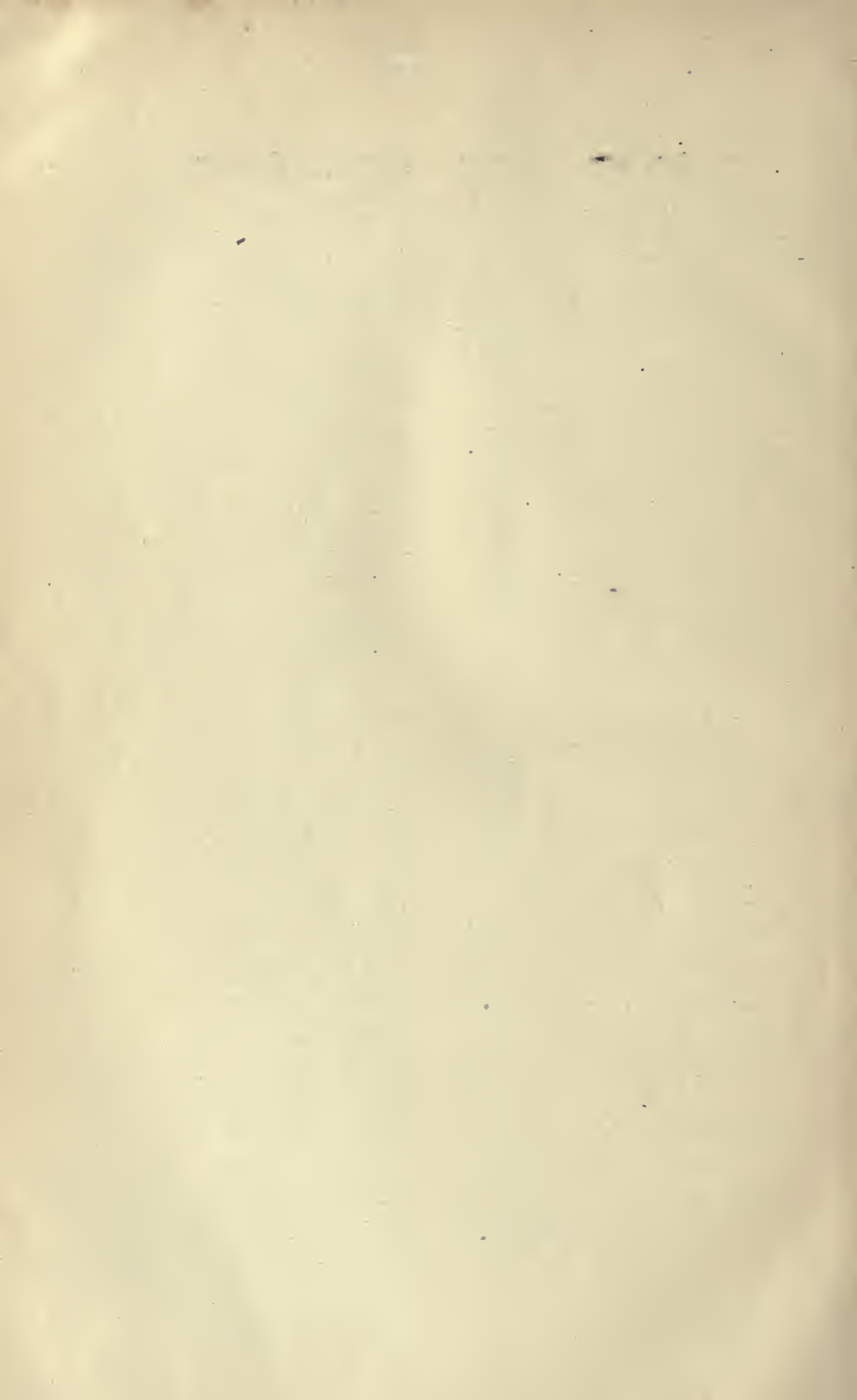
In part he comprehended the resources of the territory for becoming this magnificent state. He felt himself for the first time in his life to have reached the goal of his ambition for a livelihood and a home. He was here as if by birthright; and as editor assumed at once a supervising care of the then public interests; also upon the coming of any immigrant as his accessories; he was constantly upon the alert to find whatever might contribute to the general prosperity of Minnesota.

Soon after my acquaintance with him in the lead mines, he wrote a novel, portraying the life of a miner, under the title of "Striking a Lead," which was published by H. H. Houghton, of the Galena Gazette. It was one of the most popular stories of the day, clearly indicating, if he had devoted his time exclusively to literary pursuits, that he would have excelled as an author.

Mr. Goodhue, at the time of his last sickness, spoke of his purpose to take up this work and carry it on to completion.

His memory should always be cherished as the pioneer editor of Minnesota. His name is perpetuated in that given to one of the best counties in the State of Minnesota.







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