

Seventy-five years ago Lucien G. C. Peirce entered upon the journey of life and is today living retired at Grinnell in the enjoyment of a competency which he earned through industry and good judgment. He looks back on many years of activity, in the course of which he extended a hand of sympathy to many a wayfarer whose lot was less fortunate than his own. He comes of an illustrious line of ancestors and was born in Villenovia township, Chautauque county, New York February 5, 1836, a son of Austin and Mary Ann (Sterling) Peirce. The father was a native of Thetford, Vermont, and was born in 1799. He was married to Mary Ann Sterling, March 17, 1826, and they removed to Villenovia township, Chautauque county, New York, three years later when that section of the state

was still only thinly settled. He engaged in the practice of medicine until 1850, when he was attacked by spinal disease and confined to his bed for nearly twelve years. He passed away June 17, 1891. He was a firm believer in the Christian religion and a devout member of the Presbyterian church. For many years he took an active interest in politics and was supervisor of his town, serving also as member of the state legislature of New York in the winter of 1841-2.

The Peirce family was very prominent in the early days of New England. The emigrant ancestor, Thomas Peirce, was born in England about 1583 and emigrated to this country in 1633 or 1634, settling at Charlestown, Massachusetts. His wife, Elizabeth, was born in England about 1595. Thomas Peirce was made a freeman in the colonies May 6, 1642 and was one of the twenty-one commissioners appointed by the general court of Massachusetts to see that saltpetre heaps were made by all the farmers of the colony. Several members of the family served in the Revolutionary war and since that time many of them have been prominent in public life and also in business in various states of the Union. On the mother's side the subject of this review is descended from noted ancestry of Scotland, Mary Ann Sterling having been a daughter of Lord Sterling. The ancestry is traced back to Walter De Streverlyng, who lived about 1130 A. D. The name underwent various changes until it became Sterling.

Lucien G. C. Peirce was reared in his native town Villenovia township and educated in the public schools, remaining at home until seventeen years of age. In 1853, having a desire to see the world and also to carve out a fortune for himself, he went to Kane county, Illinois, where he worked on a farm in the summer and clerked in a store in the winter. For several years, beginning in 1858, he was employed by Brady & Pease at Aurora. He spent ten years in Kane and Kendall counties, Illinois, and for two years was deputy postmaster at Aurora.

In the meantime Mr. Peirce purchased one hundred and sixty acres in Poweshiek county, Iowa, four miles southeast of Grinnell and in the fall of 1862 he visited this county and in the spring of 1863 brought his wife and two children to their new home. It was for some time a lonely spot as there were no neighbors within several miles, the eye being greeted only by the open prairie and blue sky. He built a house fourteen by eighteen feet in size, still standing, in which the family lived until 1880, when he erected a modern residence, having meanwhile applied himself to good advantage as a farmer and stock-raiser. In 1889 he removed to Grinnell and for three years was interested with a partner in the creamery business. Since that time he has lived retired. He is a member of the board of directors of the Interurban Telephone Company, which operated between Grinnell and Montezuma, and for twenty-five years was secretary of the Poweshiek County Farmers Mutual Insurance Company, displaying in the discharge of his duties an ability that made his services highly acceptable to all concerned.

In 1860 Mr. Peirce was married at Batavia, Kane county, Illinois, to Miss Esther M. Snow, who has been to him a true and loving companion. Nine children came to bless this union, namely: Austin P., now living at Des Moines, Iowa; Byron B. of Kearney, Nebraska; Edna L., widow of William Philpott, of Grinnell; M. Geneva, now engaged in teaching at Blue Island, Illinois; Lucia E., who is also a teacher and is living at home; Gordon D., deceased; Helen T., now

Mrs. C. S. Williston, of Chicago; William S., an osteopathic physician, who is engaged in practice at Lima, Ohio; and Tiny V., deceased.

Mr. Peirce and his wife are identified with the Universalist church, in which he has served as clerk. He is now independent in politics but for many years was a prominent factor in political affairs in this part of the state. Originally a republican, he became an advocate of the greenback party and was a candidate for the state legislature, carrying every precinct outside of Grinnell with a majority of fourteen votes, but he was defeated by the labor element of the city. He was prominent in the organization of the populist party and was one of the leaders in the Fusion of Husbandry, occupying all the chairs in that body from secretary to master. He is also an active worker in the Grange, remaining with it until the local organization went out of existence. He has been a director of the Poweshiek County Central Agricultural Society and served as its treasurer for three years. He and his estimable wife have a legion of friends in Poweshiek and adjoining counties who have been attracted by their interest in the welfare of others. As the shadows lengthen this venerable couple are blessed with the love of their children and neighbors, and they have the satisfaction of feeling that in an important degree they have performed their duty. Always progressive in business, kindly in disposition and generous in estimate of others, Mr. Peirce has retained the high regard of those with whom he has come in contact either in social, business or political life, and is one of the most honored residents of this city.

