

The Grinnell Herald

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OBITUARY

HENRY KINGMAN EDSON.

Henry Kingman Edson was born in Hadley, Mass., October 5, 1822, and died in Grinnell, Iowa, March 13, 1906, in the 84th year of his earthly life. He received a common school education and fitted for college at Hopkins Academy, Hadley, Mass., and graduated from Amherst College in 1844.

For five years following his graduation he was principal of Hopkins Academy. During this time he had studied theology under the tutoring of Dr. John Woodbridge, his pastor, and he then spent a year in Andover Theological Seminary and a year in the Seminary at East Windsor, Conn. He was licensed to preach by the East Hampshire County Association in April, 1852, and preached for some time at Westhampton, Mass. He was married to Mrs. Celestia K. Maynard, the widow of a foreign missionary, on the 30th of August, 1852. In September, 1852, Mr. and Mrs. Edson came to Denmark, Iowa, and gave their united efforts to the building up of Denmark Academy, the pioneer educational institution of its kind in Iowa. In this work they remained for practically twenty-five years, retiring by resignation in the spring of 1880, in the fall of which year they removed to Grinnell and Mr. Edson accepted the chair of pedagogy created at that time for him. Here he remained and labored until 1892, when he resigned and retired from active teaching. In 1889 Mr. Edson lost his wife of his youth by death.

About a year later he was united in marriage with Miss Lizzie Scammon who survives him. From this union came a son who was the joy of his father's later years and is left to be the comfort of his widowed mother.

Of Mr. Edson's life and work it is hard for those who knew and loved him best to speak so that those who were but passing friends or acquaintances may rightly understand and appreciate. Denmark Academy is the monument to his life. There his best years were spent and his strongest

characteristics developed. There he planned and labored incessantly for the development of character, the promoting of a Christian education. There he had the hearty support of the strongest men and women of the community and could gather around him congenial and enthusiastic helpers in both the religious and the educational part of his work. Thousands of the former students of that Academy are living today to testify to the faithfulness and efficiency of their old preceptor and their love for the institution as he and his devoted wife and helper made it. Intensity of purpose and a faithful adherence to the right as God gave him to see the right were the crowning qualities of this man. He had many calls to go elsewhere, but he remained true to Denmark Academy, his first Western call, until failing health of both himself and wife, and the strenuousness of the work, demanded a change and they were given leave of absence for a year which they spent in Europe, June 1878 to June, 1879. Mr. Edson was ordained as a Christian minister of the Congregational denomination at Grinnell, Iowa, in 1881, and often made use of the privilege thus accorded to him until age and weakness compelled him to cease from such labors.

The manner of passing from earth's activities was fitting for the ending of such a life. There was no long sickness, no weariness, no pain, no suffering of body or mind, or of friends in view of the struggles of dissolution. He was in attendance, upon the last evening of his life with us, upon the gospel meetings in progress in this city and came home at an early hour blessed in soul with what his eyes had seen and his ears had heard, but not indicating even bodily fatigue. He retired at the usual time and gave no evidence of any disturbing element through the night. The indications are that with the rising of the sun his spirit took its flight without arousing even a change of position or of countenance. He simply "fell asleep."

FUNERAL SERVICES OF H. K. EDSON.

A large company of friends after holding short services at the home yesterday at half-past one gathered at the Congregational church at two o'clock to pay their last tribute to the memory of Prof. H. K. Edson. The services were throughout well fitted for commemorating such a life as Prof. Edson's had been.

Prayer was offered by Prof. S. J. Buck and appropriate remarks made by Rev. E. M. Vittum, President J. H. T. Main and President McClelland of Knox College, a former pupil of the deceased. Three beautiful selections were sung by the Iowa College Quartette and the body was then borne to its last resting place in Hazelwood Cemetery.

Brief memorial services were also held at the college chapel this morning.

3-16-1906

—Prof. Edson, who is abroad these days looking up an endowment for a chair of "Theory and Practice of Teaching," gets a cheering word every once in awhile from the press of the state. Here is one from the Clarinda Journal: "Prof. H. K. Edson, of Grinnell College was in the city, Tuesday, the guest of Mr. Hanna. The Professor is one of the pioneer educators of Iowa, having stood at the head of Denmark Academy, with marked ability and wonderful success, for over a quarter of a century. He has traveled extensively in this country and Europe, and is withal a cultured christian gentleman, whose influence upon the youthful mind it of the highest order. It is with such men as he that Grinnell College fills her professional chairs, and in so doing acts wisely indeed. Grinnell College has a wide-spread reputation for healthiness of location, purity of morals, and excellence of instruction. An endowment fund will soon be raised for the establishment of a chair of the 'Theory and Practice of Teaching,' and thus another branch of that worthy institution will be placed upon a solid basis. It gives us pleasure to record this advance movement in Iowa education, and we have no hesitancy in commending Grinnell College to parents seeking educational homes for their children." 3-31-02