

Grinnell, Iowa, Tuesday, Apr. 12, 1904

—Mr. Charles W. E. Hurd died at the home of Charles Stafford Saturday morning at the age of 74. Mr. Hurd had no relatives here and had lived alone for many years on 8th avenue. Though he had always lived in a very plain way, he had acquired considerable property. He had lived in Grinnell for about fifty years and was a familiar figure on our streets. Though he had not mingled much with his fellow townsmen, he was respected by all. There has always seemed to be some mystery about his past history and his life was that of tragedy. The body is now at A. D. Woodruff & Co's. undertaking parlor awaiting the arrival of a brother from Kansas to be taken to New Hampshire for burial. Funeral services will be conducted at the undertaking parlor tomorrow afternoon at 4 o'clock.

-29 C. W. E. HURD 1904

EDS. OF HERALD: In a recent issue of the HERALD I noticed the statement was made that there was a story about the life of Charley Hurd. I knew Charley as well as any man in Iowa. He worked for me at different times for about twenty years. I never had a man who was more rough or painstaking in his work. He always took pride in doing a good job. Contract work would not be imperfectly done. In his best days no man could pitch more hay or build a fence better than he. Charley had peculiarities. He would instantly resent any scolding or unkind words. He did not work for a person who offended him a second time. His own father scolded him for not cutting wood. Charley seized an axe and cut wood until pitch dark and then he went to his father's home. He was extremely sensitive and could not bear the slightest criticism even from an unthinking boy. Unkind words or actions were remembered for years. He imagined that persons were plotting to hinder his success in life. He had me and for years believed that a certain restaurant keeper put poison in his coffee. This hallucination grew on him. It was several years before I induced him to tell me the man's name. I tried to show him the absurdity of his suspicions by asking him to give good grounds for thinking he had been poisoned. I believe that his trouble was caused by his way of living.

I knew Charley about ten years before he told me of his wife. He said that his uncle Hubbard was getting ready to go out west and he concluded to go with him. Three weeks before they started he was married. He intended to see the west and earn enough to pay the expense of bringing his wife here or in case he did not like the west, to return to the east. He came west but found the settlers poor, with scarcely any cash. He had a hard time to get along alone. His wife was living with her grandmother. The times were very hard and he could not get money enough to pay traveling expenses for his wife to the west enough to go east himself. His wife now demanded his return. A daughter was born. Charley intimated that a threat was made if he did not return. My recollection is that she said she "got a bill" for divorce. Charley's sensitive nature kept him from telling anyone that his wife had obtained a divorce. I think it is better that I should tell the above than hide any peace. It may throw light on the character of a man who told me that he was not satisfied with his life. If Charley had not been so sensitive, his wife had been more judicious and had written him letters laden with love, if the people had known of his aching heart and spoken words of cheer. C. W. E. Hurd would have been a different man.

Some of the boxes of ointment we open for friends when too late, are only unsealed when wounds could be healed. How different would oft be their fate. And flowers that are laid on the coffin, if strewn in the pathway of life, could oft bring relief to the bitterest grief, And smother the embers of strife.

RAY A. CLARKE.