

for three or four months ahead, but the packet ship, Sheridan, withdrawn from the New York and Liverpool line, was advertised to sail for San Francisco, and these four Vermontville gold-seekers engaged passage around Cape Horn. Homer and Hinman spent about two years gathering gold dust and nuggets and then returned home by way of the isthmus of Panama, their treasure worn in leather belts around their waists. Soon after reaching home, Homer bought the farm just east of the village that later was owned by Hinman S. Dickinson, to whom he sold it in 1855, and engaged at once in what became his life work, a successful career as a merchant, and continuing in it until his last illness and death.

For a longer period than any other citizen of Eaton county, he was engaged in business as a general merchant, and for more than half a century was closely identified with the industrial, social, political, intellectual and moral interests of his village, town and county.

In 1861, when Lincoln became president, he was appointed postmaster, and held the office for eleven years; he also served as town clerk, justice of the peace and in other local offices; and in 1870 was elected state senator for the district composed of Barry and Eaton counties, but he never sought for political office or the distinctions of political life. True to his own inclinations and tastes he adhered to a business career, and the result was a notable success. When talked of as a candidate for representative in congress,

in 1880, he declined to permit the use of his name.

With all local affairs of the town and village of Vermontville, whether of a moral, religious, educational social or political nature, he was more closely and intimately associated and helpful than was any other citizen for so long a period as half a century. By natural selection he became chief counsellor and advisor for the people, who knew him from boyhood in the troubles and business problems which perplexed them, and he never betrayed the confidence reposed in him. A ripened experience and sound judgment made him a wise advisor. He knew all about the lives of the plain people who are the bone and sinew of the country. With the life of the village and the town that has been his home for three score years and ten his own life was intertwined in the closest of human relations, and his clear perception and good judgment rendered his advice almost inerrant. Ever widening through a long career has been the circle of his influence, and greatly will he be missed. A man's final departure, when he has lived justly, is, as Victor Hugo says, "like the end of a beautiful day."

Homer G. Barber was as honest and true to himself as he was honest and true with others. The best years of his life were the mature years of his manhood. The closing hours of sunset and of twilight should always be the most beautiful part of this mortal life. Retrospect and prospect unite as dim mortality merges into clear immortality. A life well lived here, a



HOMER G. BARBER

character well established here, is the basis and surety of continuous growth in the hereafter. Our departed brother belonged to no church, he accepted no religious creed in its entirety, he was tied to no party, and he upheld such policies and principles as he believed to be best and right. He saw the element of goodness in all things, and, believing in the church as an agency for the betterment of humanity, he held the office of trustee for the Congregational society many years, brought to the conduct of its affairs the same business methods that prevailed in his own personal interests, and was a generous contributor to its support. The general welfare was his motive.

A limited school education was sup-

plemented by a wide reading of histories, biographies and works relating to modern science and thought. In all things he was an independent thinker, and brought to bear upon current doctrines and beliefs his candid and careful reason and judgment. He was an excellent conversationalist, a ready public speaker, and his success in business was achieved because of strict integrity he had gained the confidence of others. He never failed to give an honest answer when his opinion and advice were asked. Added to these qualities were mental alertness, systematic methods, a comprehensive grasp of details, and close devotion to work. What he could do himself he never asked others to perform. As those who knew him longest and best think over the record of his life and the good he has done in the sphere of his activity, the thought will naturally find expression in the sentence, "we ne'er shall see his like again."

Born in New England, reared amid and environed by the peculiar ideas of his time, he had the manhood and courage to think for himself, and he had the sincerity and courage to express his honest doubts, yet he was tolerant of the opinions of others, and gained their confidence while disagreeing with them. He was sincere, and sincerity is the perfect mirror of a just and fair mind. It reflects in speech and honest thought.

Within the compass of his life the world has changed. The railway, the steamship, the telegraph has made neighbors of all nations. Countless inventions have made the luxuri-