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# The life of Levi Merrick Stewart

Maynard W. Quimby

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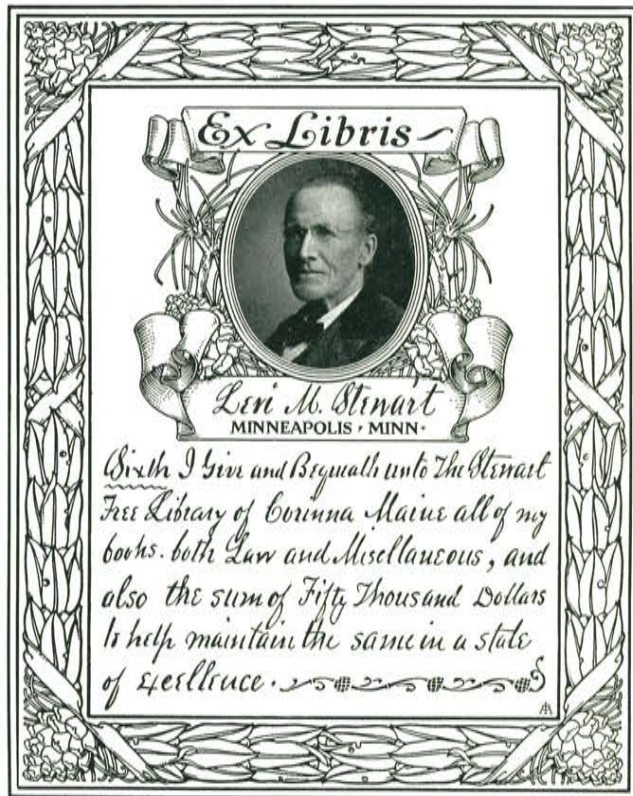
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THE LIFE OF  
LEVI MERRICK STEWART

by

Maynard W. Quimby  
H

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BANGOR ME.



FAC-SIMILE OF SIXTH SECTION OF LEVI M. STEWART'S  
WILL WRITTEN IN HIS OWN HAND

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# PREFACE

In the writing of this paper the purpose has been to bring together in a somewhat orderly manner certain details and facts concerning a man who, throughout his life, did much for others. The material herein has been obtained from various sources and an attempt has been made to include only that material which is known to be authentic.

The writer is very grateful to the following persons for information which they so willingly gave: John Howard Winchester, St. Petersburg, Florida, M. B. Mower, registrar of Colby College, Waterville, Maine, Craven Laycock, dean of the faculty, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Guy H. Holliday, secretary of the Law School of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Gratia A. Countryman, librarian of the Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis, Minnesota, G. K. Plant, assistant secretary of the Minneapolis Civic and Commerce Association, and Lois Fawcett of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Much of the material included in this paper was obtained at the Stewart Free Library, Corinna, Maine.

This discussion has been divided into three separate parts, first a short account concerning the Steward family, secondly Levi M. Stewart's life as a young man in Maine, and thirdly his life and accomplishments in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

It is hoped that, at some later time, a more extensive account of Mr. Stewart's life may be prepared.

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Note: The numerals enclosed in parentheses refer to the sources of the material directly preceding them. The numbers correspond to those in the list of references at the end of the paper.

Orono, Maine,  
May, 1932.

Ithaca, New York  
February, 1934.

M.W.Q.

## CHRONOLOGY

Born at Corinna, Maine, December 10, 1827.

Attended common schools there.

Went to academies in Hartland, Corinth, and  
Bloomfield, Maine.

Attended Waterville College, 1851-52.

Worked on fishing boat.

Graduated from Dartmouth, 1853.

Taught school at Searsport for 2 years.

Read law to his brother for a time.

Studied at Harvard Law School, 1855.

Admitted to bar in Maine, January, 1856.

Practiced law with brother until October, 1856.

Went to Minneapolis, Minn., October, 1856.

Stayed first at Bushnell House in Minneapolis.

Later stayed at home of W. P. Curtis.

Rescued two children from burning house.

First office was in Woodman block.

Foresaw the future of Minneapolis.

First real estate venture a failure.

Purchased a half block of land upon which  
his residence was located.

Moved office to Harrison block, 1862.

Dealt extensively in real estate.

Moved office to Kasota building, 1890.

Installed his library there.

From middle of 1880's was largest  
tax payer in Minneapolis.



Presented his native town with a  
fine building and library.

Was considered an authority on real  
estate law.

Never married.

Donated ground upon which Northwestern  
Hospital in Minneapolis was built.

City grew up around his residence, but  
he declined to part with his home.

Died in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 3,  
1910

## I

## THE STEWARD FAMILY

That branch of the Steward (Stewart) family in this country with which we are concerned probably began with Duncan Steward, who is known to have been in Ipswich, Massachusetts as early as 1658. After this date he moved to Newbury, Massachusetts and there engaged in shipbuilding until about 1680. In 1664, while he and his wife Anne were living in Newbury, a son, James was born to them on October 8th. James Steward married twice, both of his wives having the name Elizabeth. He lived in the towns of Rowley and Boxford, Massachusetts.

Solomon Steward, son of James, was born in Rowley on July 24, 1698. He later married Martha Farrington, and lived in Bradford, Massachusetts until about 1733. Shortly after 1733 he and his wife moved to Salem where a son, William, was born in March, 1737. Later Solomon Steward and his family lived in Lunenburg, Massachusetts.

William Steward, known to his acquaintances as "Deacon William", married Abigail Ireland in Lunenburg on July 25, 1758. One of their five children, a son Jonathan, was born in Fitchburg on January 27, 1765. About 1776 Deacon Steward came to Bloomfield (now Skowhegan), Maine with two of his brothers. He later settled in the town of Canaan.

Jonathan Steward, minister and farmer, married Hannah Jewett who died before many years, leaving her husband with two small children. Several years later Jonathan married Mrs. Lucy Pattee and during their married life six children were born. He died in Bloomfield on July 31, 1848. (1)

David Steward, the father of the man with whom we are mostly concerned, was born about 1798, probably at Bloomfield. He was the son of Jonathan and Lucy Steward. As were his father and grandfather before him, David was a preacher of the gospel. He first came to Corinna in



1821. Elizabeth Merrick of Warsaw (Pittsfield) came to Corinna for the purpose of teaching school at about the same time. The intentions of their marriage were published on November 16, 1822. They were wed on the nineteenth of the following month. (1). Immediately they settled in Corinna and remained there for the balance of their lives. (2).

Being a Baptist preacher and a man very Puritanical in his views, it is needless to say that Mr. Steward both preached and practiced temperance. Besides being opposed to the use of liquor he was also opposed to slavery. He delivered many strong temperance and anti-slavery lectures. "He was one of the first to give anti-slavery lectures here and spoke on the stump with Hon. Hannibal Hamlin." (2).

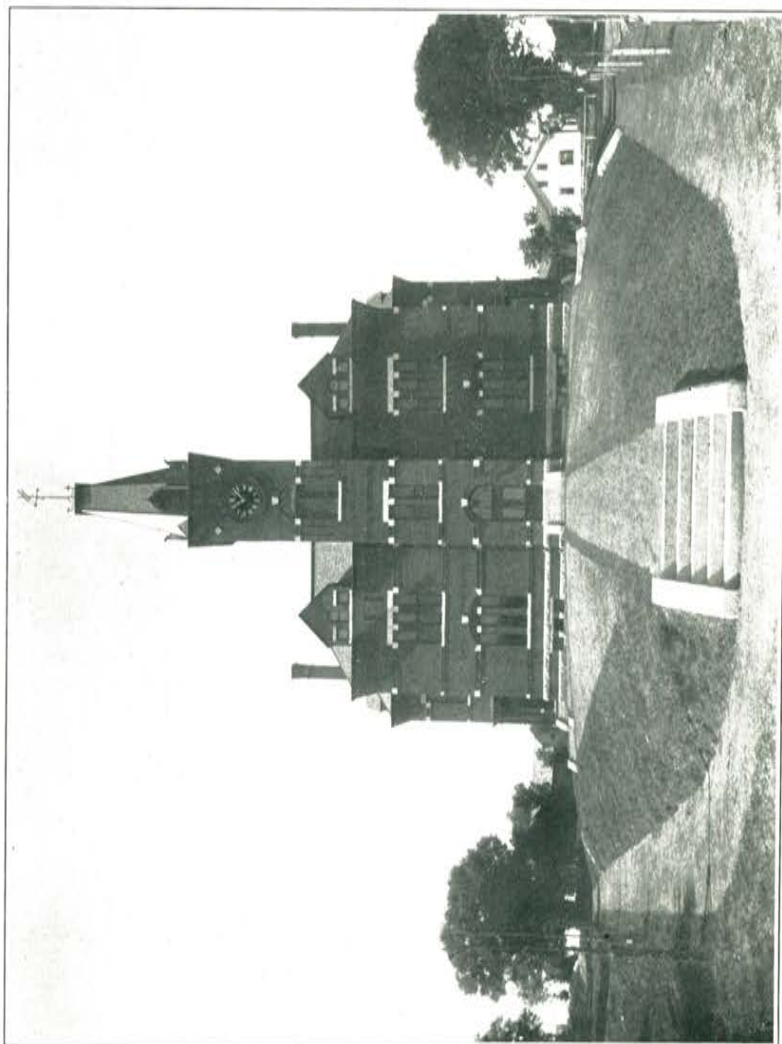
Mr. Steward was among the best educated men of the town and held numerous town offices, as well as teaching school. That he was extremely thorough in his preaching was shown during the dedication of the Pleasant Street Church at Corinna. When he offered the prayer at these dedication exercises he prayed for every part of the building, not even forgetting the nails and the cuspidors.

On the fifteenth of October, 1827 Mr. Steward delivered what was probably the first temperance lecture given in the county. (3). At this time Corinna was in Somerset county and had a population of four hundred and eleven. (4). Shortly afterwards he helped in organizing a temperance society made up of nearly forty members. Mr. Steward was often referred to as the "Cold Water Preacher". Because he was always interested in the proper education of the young people Mr. Steward was active in aiding in the founding of Corinna Union Academy in 1852. He preached many sermons in Corinna and nearby towns during a period of nearly sixty years, delivering the sermon at what is now the Methodist church in Corinna just eight weeks before his death which occurred in April, 1884.

Besides Levi M., Mr. Steward had three other children, a daughter

Elizabeth M. born January 7, 1825, and two other sons, David Densmore Stewart born October 22, 1823, and Charles M. who died while on his way to Australia about 1854. It will be noted that these children changed the spelling of their family name.

D. D. Stewart attended the common schools in his home town and later studied law at Bowdoin College. He began his practice of law at St. Albans, Maine in 1847. After serving as a member of the Maine legislature he was elected to the State Senate, becoming the president of this governing body in 1864. (5). In 1879 he was elected to membership in the Maine Historical Society. (6). Mr. Stewart was long recognized as one of the leading attorneys in the state of Maine. During his life time he accumulated considerable wealth, and he died in St. Albans on December 3, 1917 after having practiced law there for a period of seventy years. (5).



STEWART LIBRARY AND HALL, CORINNA, MAINE



## II

## LEVI M. STEWART IN MAINE

Levi Merrick Stewart, teacher, capitalist, lawyer, and philanthropist, was born in Corinna, Maine on the tenth day of December, 1827. His birth-place, a log house which was located about two and one-half miles south-east of Corinna Village, has long-since been replaced by a set of farm buildings. He spent his boyhood days in his native town and received his early education there. His parents intended that he should become a minister, but he was not destined to follow such a career. At the age of fifteen years he began teaching school. He appeared considerably older than he actually was, and later said: "when I was fifteen I looked well over twenty." (7). While still in his 'teens Mr. Stewart worked in a saw mill near Corinna and later, accompanied by another youth, set out to get a job on a fishing boat. They visited Bangor, and failing to obtain work there, proceeded on to Portland. Finally they obtained work on board a mackerel schooner at seven dollars per week and "keeps". Determined, however, to obtain an education Mr. Stewart arranged with the captain of the vessel to alternate fishing with studying.

After attending the common schools of his own town Levi Stewart prepared for college principally at Hartland, but he also went one term each at academies in Corinth and Bloomfield. (8).

After finishing his preparatory schooling he entered Waterville College, and in 1851 he was listed as a member of the junior class there. At that time there were eighty-eight students in the school, twenty-six of them being members of Mr. Stewart's class. The faculty, among which there were three preachers of the gospel, consisted of five members. (9).

From Waterville College he continued his education at Dartmouth. The records of that college for the period around 1850 are rather

incomplete and the exact time at which Mr. Stewart entered Dartmouth could not be obtained from the records there. Conflicting statements have, however, been found in other sources of information. One record states that he attended Dartmouth only during his senior year (8), while another places the time which he spent at that school as three years. (7). Which of these statements is the correct one I cannot say, but he did receive his bachelor of arts degree at Dartmouth on July 28, 1853. (10). His diploma may still be found in its original leather case at the private library in Corinna. The graduating class of 1853 was made up of forty-eight members, five of whom were from the state of Maine. (11).

The title of "Elder" was given Mr. Stewart during his childhood. His father, Rev. David Steward, was called Elder by the people of Corinna, and because it was known that Levi M. was intended for the ministry he was referred to as "young Elder Stewart". While he was attending Dartmouth, however, the "young" was dropped and he was generally known as Elder Stewart for the remainder of his life.

When a young man Mr. Stewart had considerable reputation as a wrestler. Even though sparely built he was muscular and quick in his movements. While at college and still insistent upon supporting himself as far as possible he secured a position as teacher in a school at Searsport, Maine. The call was for a "young, healthy, male teacher". At that time there were about one hundred and twenty pupils in the school, among them a few girls. Nearly half of the pupils were captains or mates of coastwise and sea-going vessels, and during the winter they wanted to "get a little schooling". One of Mr. Stewart's duties while at Searsport was to teach his rather deficient pupils the mysteries of Bowditch's Navigation, a renowned text on the subject. Some of the pupils thought that they knew more about navigation than did the author of the book, and they tried to force their belief with



physical arguments. But Mr. Stewart mastered them and won their respect during the two years which he taught at the coastal town. (7).

On February 2, 1855 he entered the Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. (12). There were forty-five students in the senior class of which Mr. Stewart was a member. While at Harvard he roomed in Graduates' Hall. (13). Much of his knowledge of law, however, was obtained under the tutelage of his brother D. D. Stewart in St. Albans. In January, 1856 Elder Stewart was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of Maine. Returning to the office of his brother, he remained there until October of the same year. (7).

Dr. Jacob Eliot, a friend of the Steward family in Corinna, had gone to Minneapolis, Minnesota, and it was due to his suggestion that Mr. Stewart finally decided, in the autumn of 1856, to establish a law practice there. (1). Even though he visited his native town several times after this he always considered the midwestern city as his home once he had settled there.

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## III

## LEVI M. STEWART IN MINNEAPOLIS

Few men would have foreseen the future of Minneapolis as did Levi Stewart. Going into a totally strange part of the country did not seem to bother him in the least. In 1856 Minneapolis had only a few hundred inhabitants and in spite of a rather poor beginning financially Elder Stewart refused to become discouraged. "He also saw early what many shrewd men did not so clearly see until twenty years later, that the geography of the Northwest was such as to make Minneapolis, in time, not only a large city but a great industrial and commercial metropolis." (7).

Upon arriving there in the autumn of 1856 he went immediately to the Bushnell House at the corner of Fourth street and Sixth avenue south. Just how long he remained there I have not been able to determine from existing records. Mr. Stewart's first law office was located in the Woodman Block, the office building par excellence of the town. This building stood at Washington and Second avenues south. In 1857 the Elder boarded for a time at the home of W. P. Curtis on Fourth avenue. (14). While staying here the house caught fire and burned. He rescued two small children from the burning house. Later Mr. Stewart could never be induced to talk of this event and resented every inquiry made of him about it.

A short time later he purchased a half block of ground on the northwest corner of Hennepin avenue and Fourth street. To a portion of this property he gave the name of "Zion's Hill", and there he lived for the remainder of his life.

Mr. Stewart's first real estate venture was a losing one financially. Shortly after establishing himself in Minneapolis fifteen hundred dollars was placed in his hands by his brother back in Maine.

This he invested in property in North Minneapolis, the title of which was uncertain. That fifteen hundred dollars, however, was not wholly lost. He often said in later years that he learned much from the failure of his first attempt at dealing in real estate. His brother was not insistent that the money should be repaid, but this would not do for Elder Stewart. With that same quiet determination that was characteristic of him throughout his entire life he insisted that he would pay back the money, and this he did. Not only did he repay the original amount but also an additional five hundred dollars as a "bonus". No doubt this poor beginning had much to do with his success in future years when he became the most conspicuous holder of strategically located property in the entire city of Minneapolis. (7).

In all of his affairs and transactions Elder Stewart was extremely secretive. Never would he occupy an office with another person. His private charities were never mentioned by him. It was his custom for many years to send coal to poor and needy families. He never wished the recipients to know from whom the fuel had come. A certain dealer one day commented on the large number of loads that he was sending to other people. That dealer never received another order for coal from Mr. Stewart. Another of his customs was to dress in old clothes and visit the houses of the poor after dark, his arms loaded with bundles. He would place the bundles on the back doorstep, knock on the door, and then run away before anyone discovered him.

Although never married Mr. Stewart often spoke to others of his "wife". This was especially true when he was considering a business deal with someone. Before coming to any decision he would say, "well, I'll have to refer this matter to my 'wife'." Undoubtedly the "wife" which he spoke of was his conscience.

Even though Mr. Stewart lived almost wholly within himself and was



a man of great secretiveness he appreciated a good joke. One day a young man who was working for a book bindery came to his office for the purpose of seeing the lawyer about binding some magazines. "You will have to ask my 'wife' about them", the Elder told the young man. "You'll find her at the corner of Hennepin and Nicollet avenues." Of course, such a corner did not exist because these two thoroughfares are parallel.

In a few minutes the youth returned to Mr. Stewart's office very much out of breath. "I can't find your wife", he said.

"Well, young man", answered the elder, "don't be discouraged. I've been hunting for her for more than forty years, and I haven't found her yet."

He always leased his property instead of selling it. Some of the leases which he made were for one thousand year periods. His excuse for not selling his property was that he "could not get his wife to sign the deed." (6).

Probably a more kind-hearted and munificent man has never lived in the city of Minneapolis or elsewhere. Many of his gifts were never known to anyone but himself and the beneficiary. On one occasion Mr. Stewart became interested in an aged Baptist clergyman whom he chanced to meet. He learned that the pastor and his wife, who were visiting in Minneapolis, owed five hundred dollars on their little home "back East". This man was evidently invited to call at the lawyer's office at this time. Upon the departure of the old preacher from his office Mr. Stewart, who usually made his gifts in the form of currency, presented the eighty-year-old man with a check which the recipient supposed was for five dollars. The next morning when Elder Stewart arrived at his office he found the excited old pastor waiting at the door. Upon being told that the check was for five hundred dollars instead of five Mr. Stewart smiled and said to the minister: "Well, I never allow myself to make mistakes, and if



STACK IN FRONT CONTAINS CIVIL WAR COLLECTION, 400 VOLS.



"I've done this fool thing, you just keep the money."

A poor woman who lived in one of the many houses which the "Elder" owned and rented had been ill for a long time. The collecting agent had told her that unless she paid her rent immediately she would have to move. The next day the woman came to Mr. Stewart and told him what the agent had said. He told her to come back to his office on the following day. When she did this Mr. Stewart handed her the deed to the house in which she was living.

These are only a few of the examples of his many acts of kindness.

In 1860 the Harrison Block was erected at the corner of Nicollet and Washington avenues. Because this building was more centrally located and more imposing he moved his office there in 1862, to remain for twenty-eight years in a single room on the second floor. (7). Several other lawyers had offices in this same building.

Almost from the very beginning of his life in Minneapolis Mr. Stewart dealt extensively in real estate, reinvesting his money as rapidly as he made it. Eventually he became recognized as the leading authority on real estate titles and values in the entire city, if not in the whole state of Minnesota. By 1886 he had become the largest tax payer in Minneapolis, and the value of the property which he owned was estimated at two millions of dollars. (15).

Even though Elder Stewart made money and saved it he never allowed it to "get the best of him". In a letter which he once wrote to a Minneapolis newspaper he said: "I have always endeavored to make money my servant and not my master." (16).

His figure was familiar on the streets of his adopted city for many years. As a youth he had been slight of build, weighing less than 140 pounds when entering college. Later, however, he weighed nearly two hundred. Putting his health above everything else, he always lived

simply. For many years he ate only two meals daily, and he never tasted tea, coffee, tobacco, or liquor in any form. Elder Stewart once told a newspaper writer that he had worked eighteen hours a day since he was seventeen years of age. He often said that he had never been ill and never expected to be. (17). After taking up his abode at "Zion's Hill", which he often called "my health resort", he always cared for the grounds himself. For many years he could be seen moving the grass or shoveling the snow around his residence. Wholesome exercise and plain food were extremely important to him. After working or reading in his office until midnight he would go home and retire for three or four hours. Then he would arise early and go for a walk or take some other kind of exercise in his "park". "I have sawed all of the wood I have ever burned in my office", he would often say with more or less pride. (16).

Possibly I am quoting Mr. Stewart too extensively, but is it not true that a person's statements best describe his character.

He was at times criticized for insisting upon holding the property in the middle of the city upon which his little cottage stood. Great buildings sprung up about him, but still he insisted upon retaining his "health resort". In answer to charges that he was selfish in not allowing his home to be torn down and replaced by some business block or other public building, he once made the following statement. "If a man desires to be and continue to be healthy, it is absolutely indispensable that he shall have regular physical exercise of so violent a character that he shall put his blood in rapid motion enough to sweat, because sweating winnows and purifies the blood as nothing else will, and without it no person can enjoy good health. Yet, if a man happens to be worth a little money, fashion steps in and forbids him to saw his own wood, to draw his own water, to run his own lawn-mower, or his own grounds, or to perform any other physical labor that will be of any



practical benefit to himself or anyone else..... When I think a fashion is a good, sensible one, I adopt and follow it, but if it is a silly, senseless, or absurd one, or one at variance with common sense, I ignore it..... Whenever I believed money would do more good or be the means of giving me more pleasure or satisfaction than the thing offered for it, I kept the money. But whenever I believed a thing would give me more pleasure than the money, I swapped the money for it. And when my health was the compensation, whatever the price I had to pay, I have invariably and unhesitatingly paid it and made sure of the health..... Without that life is worthless and money is of no comparative value.

"With these rules of life as a compass and chart to run by, when I had many chances to lease the place where I live, so as to receive twenty-five thousand dollars a year and taxes, and for which I was receiving comparatively nothing in money, I declined the offer because I was so situated that I had my regular daily exercise that has preserved my health....."

"I thought also that as long as I had acquired the property by myself, by my own hard work, I was entitled to a little consideration in the decision to be made....." (18).

In 1880 the Kasota Block, a handsome stone structure, seven stories in height, and at that time one of the finest buildings in Minneapolis, was erected on the corner of Hennepin avenue and Fourth street, directly opposite Mr. Stewart's home.

Having at this time accumulated a library of considerable size, Mr. Stewart rented a suite of five rooms in this building in 1890. (7). Minneapolis had, by this time, grown to a city of nearly one hundred sixty thousand inhabitants. (19). That Elder Stewart was very fond of fine books there can be no doubt. His own library consisted of more than six thousand five hundred volumes which occupied four of the five rooms

which Mr. Stewart rented in the Kasota building. The fifth room was used as an office. His Civil War collection alone numbered four hundred volumes. He was an ardent admirer of Napoleon and he purchased every available work having to do with this man. In the Napoleon collection there were two hundred seventy separate books. "Probably few men in the country were better informed on the life and time of Napoleon." (16). He also had in his library a collection of seventy volumes concerning Abraham Lincoln. His law library was one of the largest and finest in the entire United States. Most of his books on law were bound in leather and into the front cover of each was burned the name "L. M. Stewart".

Every book agent knew him, and seldom did one leave his office without an order for books of some sort. Elder Stewart would say to this in his characteristically humorous manner that he did not buy the books because he cared for them, but because he wanted to "help the agents along". (16).

He delighted in showing his books to visitors. Upon Mr. Stewart's death his entire collection was given to the library in his home town of Corinna, Maine. In every book of this fine collection he wrote the date and place of purchase and also the price which he paid. This is only a single example of the systematic way in which he did everything.

Many of the books which were in his private library are extremely old and valuable. Baker's Chronicle of the Kings of England, published in London in the year 1684, is the oldest one which I have noticed, but there are undoubtedly others which are still older.

For many years Mr. Stewart spent several hours a day with his books, and he valued them highly. In the library at Corinna there is now a black covered ledger in which he kept a record of the books which he loaned to other people. In the front of the record book he kept an accurate account of the law books which he loaned and also the names of the



borrowers. Farther on in the same ledger he kept a record of other books which he loaned. There are at least two thousand names entered in the second list alone. (20). These records cover a period of nearly thirty years. At the top of the first page may be seen the following inscription in Mr. Stewart's own handwriting: "We, the undersigned, have severally borrowed from L.M. Stewart the volumes immediately preceding our respective signatures, at the several dates written in the margin: and we severally agree to return to said Stewart all such books within one week from the said marginal dates, unsoiled and in just as good order and condition in every respect as when the same were borrowed". (20). On the inside of the front cover there is a "black list" made up of the names of several persons who had failed to return books which they had already borrowed, and to whom Mr. Stewart declined the privilege of borrowing others.

Mr. Stewart was very exacting at all times in matters of business. He always insisted that every transaction should be carried out absolutely according to agreement as to the minute of delivery, the fraction of a pound, and the decimal part of a cent. If there was a mistake in a bill, no matter how small, he would never pay it until the mistake was corrected. (7).

Because Elder Stewart did live almost entirely within himself and did not associate with those about him he was at times accused by various newspapers and individuals of being eccentric. But no matter what the criticism was he always had an answer for his accusers. He disliked publicity. This may be readily seen from letters which he wrote to Minneapolis newspapers at various times.

An article had evidently appeared in one of the papers concerning his quiet and unassuming generosity. In answering this comment he wrote: "Only keep my name out of the paper and I will be contented. I may be





FAC-SIMILE LEVI M. STEWART'S OFFICE IN MINNEAPOLIS

eccentric and peculiar, but if so it is due to the fact that I do not thirst for notoriety. I am contented to live in my own way, that is my business and mine alone." (16). In the same letter he makes a reply to someone who had evidently aimed some remark toward him. To his accuser he said: "Fashion compels or calls everybody to neglect their own business, but to stick their noses into all of the business of everybody else..... I attend to my own business and let other peoples' business severely alone..... The less a person knows, the more absolutely sure he is that he knows it all."

At still another time Mr. Stewart was accused by another newspaper of having made his fortune from tax titles and from loaning money. As was usually the case he had a very emphatic and appropriate answer for the criticizers. "This country", said Elder Stewart, "is today just about as thoroughly infested with and cursed by scribbling newspaper vermin as were the banks of the Nile with lice and locusts during Moses' superintendence of that department." (21).

It seems that newspapers reproached him considerably for not disposing of the land in the center of the city upon which stood his modest home. One asserted that he moved his office from the Kasota Block to his residence in order to economize upon rent. This, of course, was untrue because after having rented the five room suite in 1890 he kept his office there for the remainder of his life. The same paper accused him of being penurious. This was just enough to raise the Elder's ire thoroughly, and in his answer he said: "Instead of being penurious I give away more in charity every year that the whole Tribune Company is worth above its debts." (22).

Another lawyer in Minneapolis who handled some of Mr. Stewart's legal matters, made the following statement after the millionaire's death: "Withal the "Elder" was self-centered and apparently indifferent to the conclusions of others, he was really an unusually sensitive man and one who took great pleasure in the good opinion of the people of Minneapolis. Nothing gave



him so much distress as the occasional disposition of the newspapers to make light of his eccentricities, even when this was done in a kindly or playful spirit." (18).

His natural reticence and secretiveness combined with his disposition to live within himself, kept him from securing the full measure of public appreciation and esteem to which he was entitled. In spite of the criticism which the newspapers aimed at Mr. Stewart there can be no doubt but that nearly everyone who knew this man respected him highly. Being always friendly and kind to the poor he often gave them free legal advice, as well as aiding them with gifts of food or money. Many educational and charitable institutions benefited greatly through his generosity. He donated the ground upon which the Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis was built. (7).

On every Saturday morning for many years Mr. Stewart bought caramels and took them to the girls who worked in the office of the register of deeds. He always said that he was buying this candy for his "lambs". (16).

"Toward childhood and genuine suffering Mr. Stewart had as deep sympathy as any man I ever knew. He delighted to perform acts of secret charity." (18). Such comments concerning this man could be cited without number.

In his law practice Mr. Stewart attained considerable success. He was reputed to be among the most prominent attorneys who established themselves in Minneapolis between 1854 and 1856. (23). When he first began his practice there as a young man he took great delight in fighting a case against an older lawyer. He was an authority on real estate values and titles, and his decisions were never questioned. At all times he was a clear headed man of business.

"Levi M. Stewart was one of the best real estate lawyers I have ever known", said Dean William S. Pattee of the College of Law at the state university. "I have often consulted him in disputed points, and if he did not have the information and citations in his head he turned to his Index Rerum<sup>1</sup>, as he called it, and I have never known this remarkable index to fail

to produce citations and a great many of them on any question that was raised as to real estate law. His 'index' ought to prove extremely valuable to the person who is fortunate enough to obtain it. It contains a wealth of information." (18).

In spite of the fact that his interests centered in Minneapolis Mr. Stewart did not slight his native town of Corinna, Maine. The building there which had been used as a town hall was badly in need of repair and an attempt was being made to raise money for its renovation. Someone wrote to Elder Stewart in regard to a donation for this purpose, but he failed to answer. Later it was learned that he was to donate a building to his home town as a memorial to his parents, the Rev. David and Elizabeth Steward. In order that it might be built in the location which he wished, he purchased a number of pieces of property and had the buildings removed. The fine building which is known as the Stewart Library Building was erected in the 'nineties. It is constructed of brick and is surmounted by a tall clock tower. On the ground floor there are offices of the town officials and the Stewart Free Library, while on the second floor there is a hall having a seating capacity of several hundred.

When it was first suggested by Elder Stewart that he was to build the library his brother Densmore said to him: "If you do it Levi, could you put the books in? I think it would need them."

"What would a library be without books", was the millionaire's answer.

When the building was finally opened the library shelves were filled with books, the reading room was in order, and the big hall on the second floor was furnished with removable seats.

The library originally contained three thousand volumes, everyone of which was personally selected by Mr. Stewart. There are now in the private library at Corinna nearly thirty book-publishers catalogues from which the



three thousand books were chosen. On the front cover of each catalogue is pinned a list, in Mr. Stewart's own handwriting, of the books which he selected from it. The selection contained nearly every type of book from fiction to the most abstruse mathematics.

From time to time he purchased additional books for this library, and upon his death his private collection was placed there. At the present time the Stewart Free Library contains nearly sixteen thousand volumes.

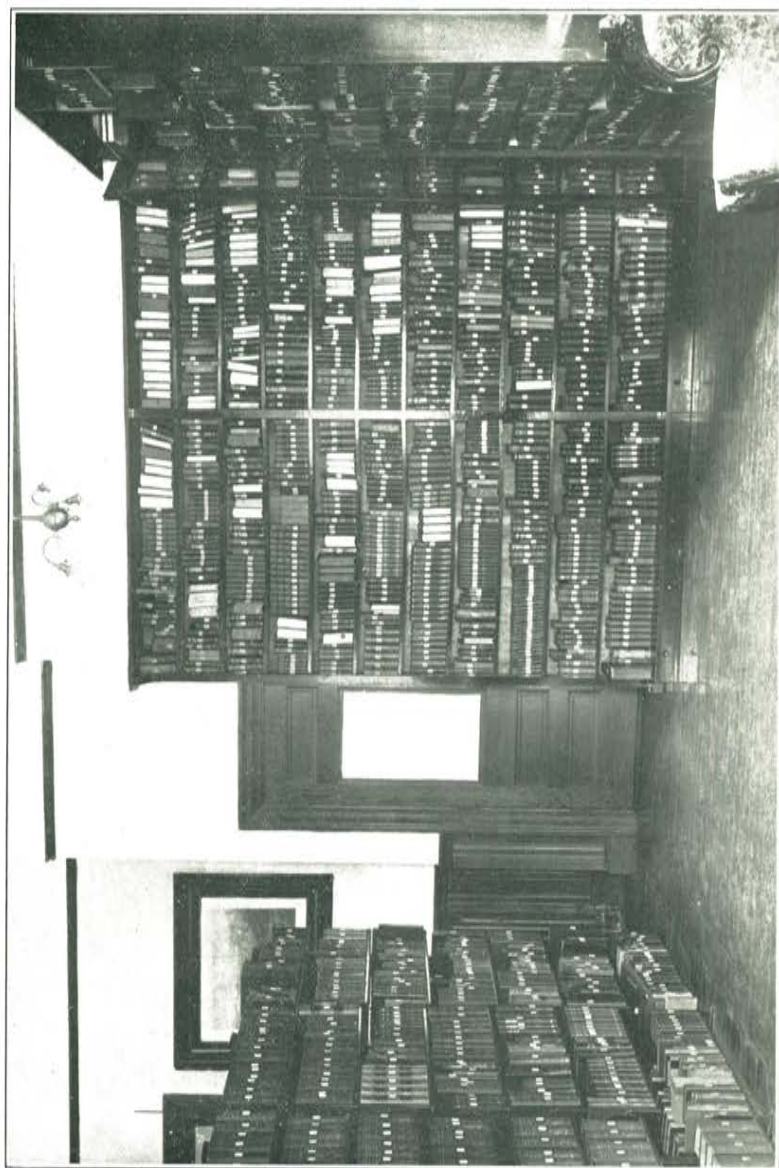
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One should not get the impression that Mr. Stewart thought only of his business matters, because this is not true. He was an ardent sport fan. Seldom did he fail to take in a good boxing or wrestling match, and he often witnessed baseball games. He attended the theater regularly for many years. One of Mr. Stewart's fads was to be a "first-nighter" at some theater. In the days of the Dime Museum at Washington and First avenue south, he would attend regularly and would sit in the front row of seats in the little theater on the second floor, reached by coming down from the museum above. "He always liked to have a good laugh", said a friend who knew his peculiarities. (18).

In the private library at Corinna there are two wooden blackboard crayon boxes filled with old stubs of theater tickets which accumulated during his life time. When planning to attend the theater Mr. Stewart always bought two tickets instead of one. He would go to the window of the ticket office, run his finger over the seating chart to the seats which he desired, telling the clerk that he wished two tickets, one for himself and the other for his 'wife'. He usually purchased seats on the aisle. Upon reaching the theater before the performance he would place his hat in one of the seats, sit in the other himself, and between the acts he was able to read his newspaper undisturbed.

Because of his peculiar manner of dress Elder Stewart was always a source of wonderment to strangers who saw him on the streets of Minneapolis. He





SMALL CASE AT RIGHT CONTAINS LINCOLN COLLECTION, 70 VOLS., NAPOLEON COLLECTION, 275 VOLS.

usually wore a tall silk hat, but never did he wear an overcoat, even during the coldest weather. In the latter years of his life the following statement was made concerning his appearance: "Dressed always in black, stooped and bent, yet bearing the unmistakable carriage of a man who was an athlete in his youth, Levi M. Stewart, until a recent time, passed through the streets of Minneapolis, gazed at by those who knew him, wondered at by strangers..... The story of Elder Stewart was told and retold on the streets everyday. Yet no one could really tell the story of the quaint old man who could be seen cutting the lawn on fine days or striding lustily down to the courthouse on business, without an overcoat, on days when the thermometer was low and the wind sharp." (18).

Mr. Stewart called himself a "Home Baptist" because he never attended church. He said that he had no religion, but one cannot help doubting this after all of the kindhearted and beneficial deeds which he performed during his lifetime. Once when speaking of his father, the Rev. David Stewart, he said: "he used to preach brimstone by the bushel and hell by the acre."

A noted revivalist while visiting Minneapolis once asked him: "Elder, don't you want to go to heaven?"

He replied: "No, I guess not, Minneapolis is good enough for me." (24).

At another time an agent who was selling a certain brand of liquor came into his office. Mr. Stewart was so angered when he learned the purpose of the agent's visit that he said: "I would like to see all of the manufacturers of liquor in hell, with the door locked, and the key lost." (15). As one may well imagine the agent's visit was rather short.

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During the last two years of his life Mr. Stewart was not seen working about his grounds on "Zion's Hill". He spent most of his time with his books. From November, 1909 until his death he did not go to his office himself but sent someone to get whatever he wanted there. During this time he carried on



his business affairs at his residence. Although he had not been in good health for a considerable period he managed to get about his house. On May 2, 1910, however, Mr. Stewart's condition became worse. Lying on his death bed in the little white house which was situated in the heart of the Minneapolis retail district he deeded a piece of property in another part of the city to Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Gordon, who had lived with him for eight years. Just five hours later, at twenty minutes past two on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 3, 1910, Levi Merrick Stewart passed quietly away. (18). His body was taken to his native town of Corinna, Maine for interment.

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Many charitable and educational institutions, as well as relatives and friends benefited from the will of this man who, fifty-four years before, settled in Minneapolis as a young lawyer. The brief will of ten paragraphs was written on lined paper in Mr. Stewart's own handwriting. It was drawn on May 9, 1909. (18). Numerous schools and colleges of Maine received aid either directly through Mr. Stewart's will or from money which he requested his brother, who was named as one of the executors, to distribute. Some of the schools that received benefit were Bowdoin College, Colby College, Bates College, Maine Central Institute of Pittsfield, Higgins Classical Institute of Charleston, University of Maine Law School, and Corinna Union Academy of Corinna.

The law school of the University of Maine, which was located in Bangor, received from the Hon. David D. Stewart and from the "Levi M. Stewart Estate" sums of money which totaled between thirty and forty thousand dollars.

The sixth section of Elder Stewart's will was worded as follows: "I give and bequeath to the Stewart Memorial Free Library of Corinna, Maine, all of my books, both law and miscellaneous, and also the sum of \$50,000 to help maintain the same in a state of excellence." (18).



The Home for the Aged of the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Home for Children and Aged Women were among the charitable institutions of Minneapolis to receive aid. (18).

The "Zion's Hill" property, upon which Mr. Stewart had paid taxes enough every year to provide himself with a palatial home elsewhere, sold for \$510,000 on April 15, 1911. (18).

That he was loved and respected by the people of Minneapolis, his adopted city, there can be no doubt. "In none of the residents of the city from its foundation up to the present time has Minneapolis had a more striking illustration of self-reliance and self-containment, strong and unyielding individuality, strict and exacting integrity, and remarkable force of character, all combined with high mental endowments and stern regard for the rights of others, than was furnished in the person and career of the late Levi M. Stewart." (7).

The End

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