CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Bar (1870-1881)

The last paper referring to the bar announced the coming of G. A. Forrest. I stated half jocularity that his arrival marked an era in the history of the bar. It is, however, the fact that he was the first of a group of young men of about the same age and educational attainments who afterwards did a goodly share of the law work in Manitowoc County. Forrest had a university training, having taken the full course at Lawrence University. Later he graduated in the law department of the State University, being a member of the first class which that institution sent forth. He practiced alone for about a year or so, making his headquarters in the office of E. B. Treat, and later entered into partnership with C. W. White. The firm lasted for about six years and did a very large business. About 1880 he formed a partnership with G. G. Sedgwick, who came from Kewaunee about that time and so continued for about two years. After an interval he formed a partnership with C. A. Blesch, who came to the bar here about 1881, a connection which lasted only a year or two. Since then Mr. Forrest has practiced alone, and at the present time, after fifty years, is still "carrying on."

The following year Oscar F. A. Greene was admitted. He came here as a teacher in the Second Ward School, and taught there for two years. He was a native of Maine and fought through the Civil War till disabled by wounds. After his discharge, he attended Bowdoin College and graduated from there. After his term of teaching he entered the office of Charles H. Walker, and studied until his admission, and remained there for a time, continuing his studies. The following Spring he entered into partnership with his teacher, the firm being Walker & Greene.

In 1874, the firm was dissolved and the firm of Greene & Nash was formed with L. J. Nash as partner. The firm lasted only about six months, being broken by the removal of Mr. Greene to Colorado. Mr. Greene located at Boulder, Colorado, and was quite successful, attaining considerable prominence. He was a hard student and very scholarly, but rather eccentric.

J. S. Anderson was the next to be admitted. He came to
the bar at the December Term, on examination in open court. He opened an office for practice in June, 1872, remaining in the office of J. D. Markham till that time.

L. J. Nash came to the bar on December 14, 1872, and has maintained his connection with it up to the present. It is hardly necessary to write of his achievements. For many years he was one of the busiest and hardest working members. After his short partnership with O. F. A. Greene he practiced alone until October, 1875, when he formed a partnership with Adolph J. Schmitz, under the name of Nash & Schmitz, which lasted till January 1, 1881, when he entered into partnership with his brother Edward G. Nash under the firm name of Nash & Nash which lasted until a few years ago, when he was appointed by the justices of the Supreme Court to the office of Revisor of Statutes, which office he held until about a year ago, when he resigned. At present he is nominally not in practice, but can nearly always be found in the offices of Nash, Nash & Ledvina, the firm consisting of his brother, E. G. Nash, and his son Archie Nash, and L. Ledvina, a younger member of the bar. A younger son of L. J. Nash, named Francis Nash, became a member of the bar in 1913 and was with the firm until the outbreak of the World War, when he went to the front with a Red Cross Ambulance Corps, at the very first, not waiting until the United States declared war. Like those previously mentioned, L. J. Nash was college trained, graduating from Lawrence University in 1870, in the same class with the writer. G. A. Forrest was an attendant at college in that same period and for a time we were members of the same classes. William A. Plaice was admitted at the same time as Mr. Nash. He never practiced here. He was a student in the office of J. D. Markham.

The year of 1873 brought no accessions to the Manitowoc bar, but at the January Term of 1874, Charles E. Estabrook was admitted. Mr. Estabrook came to Manitowoc to fill the position of principal of the First Ward School, which he taught for one year. He had the law profession in view before coming to Manitowoc, and for a time read law in the office of William E. Carter, a prominent lawyer of Platteville, Grant County, and while here continued his reading in the offices of J. D. Markham up to the time of his admission. In April following his admission he was elected city attorney and opened an office for general practice. He held the office of city attorney until December, 1880, when he resigned, having been elected a member of the legislature. He represented the city in the legislature three successive annual terms, ending with the year 1884. In 1887 he was elected to the office of attorney-general, and two years later was re-elected, serving to 1891.
In the meantime he had formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, William A. Walker, the firm being known as Estabrook & Walker, which later was added to by the addition of Emil Baensch, the firm being known as Estabrook, Walker & Baensch.

In June, 1893, he removed to Milwaukee and engaged in practice there until the time of his death several years ago, after a short illness. While in Milwaukee he represented his district in the legislature for three terms. He had much to do with matters of legislation, some of which proved valuable to the people.

In June, 1875, came William J. Turner from Ozaukee County, where he had been admitted to practice. He opened an office on Eighth Street, South Side, and almost at once acquired a large practice. He was a tireless worker and had a genial winning manner which gave him a large following. In the next year his father, a veteran lawyer, removed his residence from Port Washington to this city, and the firm of H. G. & W. J. Turner was formed. Their practice was large and varied, and looking for a larger field the firm removed to Milwaukee in 1885.

After a long and lucrative practice in which several law firms were made and dissolved, W. J. Turner was elected circuit judge in 1908, which position he held until his death in 1919, being twice re-elected. Though I believe he was not a graduate, Judge Turner had collegiate training, having attended Beloit college and was also a graduate of the Albany Law School. His great success as a lawyer was in the trial of cases, and for the period of his active life, he tried more and more varied cases than any other lawyer in the state.

At the June Term, 1875, William A. Walker was admitted. He, like Mr. Estabrook, came to Manitowoc as a teacher and was principal of the Third Ward School. He read law in the intervals of his school teaching. I cannot recall what law office he entered, if any, but he spent a year or so before his admission in the office of Mr. Estabrook, and for two or three years after. He did not at once enter active practice. He was elected county superintendent of schools in the fall of 1875, and served in that capacity during the years 1876–79, after which he went into partnership with C. E. Estabrook. He served as district attorney from 1881–86, and proved himself a good working lawyer. He removed to Milwaukee about the same time as Mr. Estabrook and practiced there until his death a few years ago.

A. J. Schmitz was enrolled about the same time as Walker, having previously graduated from the Wisconsin University Law School. Mr. Schmitz is purely a Manitowoc
product, having been born in the county. Much of his history has been told in connection with others. He was a hard worker with the firm of Nash & Schmitz and later with the firm of Schmitz & Kirwan. Later he removed to Milwaukee, entering into partnership with ex-Attorney-General J. L. O'Connor, the firm being O'Connor & Schmitz. He is still a resident of Milwaukee, actively engaged in his profession—and politics.

At the June Term of 1877, Edwin G. Nash and William Bach were enrolled. As the latter never practiced as an attorney it is not necessary to mention him further. E. G. Nash had read law with his brother, L. J. Nash, and remained with him. In 1881 the partnership of Nash & Nash was formed and continued until L. J. Nash was appointed State Revisor, when he became head of the firm of E. G. & A. L. Nash, the latter a son of L. J. Nash. The existing firm is Nash, Nash & Ledvina, the last named being one of the later accessions to the bar.

At the June Term of 1878, Michael Kirwan was admitted. He had been preparing for the law for some years in the intervals of his work as teacher and County Superintendent of Schools and was already elected to the office of County Judge in which capacity he served until January 1, 1882. After that the law firm of Schmitz & Kirwan was formed, which lasted for several years, doing a large business in general practice, in all the courts, in which Judge Kirwan actively engaged.

In was a training which stood him in good stead, when in April, 1898, he was elected as Circuit Judge, which position he still holds.

There were no additions to the bar until June Term, 1881, when Emil Baensch and Charles A. Blesch were enrolled. About the same time George G. Sedgwick came from Kewaunee County, where he had been engaged in practice several years.