

## THE OLD CAPITOL AT BELMONT.

BY DR. J. L. PICKARD.

The cut of the first Capitol of Wisconsin and Iowa which is given in the January number of *THE ANNALS OF IOWA*, carries me back to November, 1846, when my eyes first rested upon that notable structure. As my home was but six miles away, it became a very familiar object. At the time mentioned and for some years after there stood near it its exact counterpart, which was occupied by Territorial officers. This last was transformed into a dwelling-house of respectable appearance, but has long since suffered demolition.

The Capitol which your artist has so accurately delineated suffered a worse fate and stood for a long time as a way-side inn, whose bar was its chief attraction. The railway left the little village of Belmont isolated, and the plow-share has furrowed the site.

Belmont was doubtless named from the picturesque mounds near the village. These were three in number—the two larger about two miles apart, and covered with trees, and in places by a dense undergrowth. The third mound, much smaller, was entirely barren of trees and covered with grass to its pointed summit. Its shape was almost a perfect cone. During the palmy days of Belmont, a race-track was constructed around the base of the mound exactly one mile in length. The sides of the mound became a natural "grand stand." The spectators could easily follow around the mound and have fine view of every part of the track below them. It was an ideal track, but lost patrons with the removal of the Iowa part of the Capital to Burlington, and the Wisconsin part to Madison.

The view from the mounds was very extensive, reaching into Illinois at the south and Iowa upon the west. I have counted from the top of the west Mound over twenty reapers at work upon as many farms upon the half-circle at the south with a radius of twenty-five miles. No fairer land lies beneath the sun, though with a suitable elevation a like view might be obtained in the country east of Iowa City.

IOWA CITY, February, 1896.

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EMIGRANTS TO IOWA.—There is a ferry across the Mississippi some five miles below here called "Junction Ferry," and a ferry plying between the lower town of Prairie du Chien and McGregor. There is still another ferry here which plies between our upper steamboat landing and a point below the mouth of Yellow River, called the "Upper Ferry." Each of these ferries employs a horse-boat, and is crowded all the time with emigrants for Iowa. Sometimes the emigrants have to encamp near the ferry two or three days to await their chance of crossing in the order of their arrival. They come in crowds a mile long; they come with wagon-loads of household fixings, with droves of cattle and flocks of sheep—they come from every land that ever sent adventurers westward, and the cry is, "still they come!" The emigration to the northern part of Iowa this year exceeds anything in the way of inland emigration we ever saw or heard of, except perhaps, the first stampede across the Plains to California. The instances we have mentioned are only indices to what is passing on every road leading into upper Iowa, to say nothing of the multitudes brought up by the boats.—*Crawford County (Wis.) Courier, July, 1854.*

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