

made a strong and fervid speech. Said that while he was thankful for the good-will of the convention, he could not accept the nomination. That he had recently moved into the state; was opening a new farm; was not yet fully prepared for the winter, either to secure the comfort of his family, or the proper care of his stock. So he said: "I want to be excused this time, and in future years, if desired, I shall be ready to aid in fighting the political battles of the country whether there is a prospect of electing the candidate or not," and closed by naming S. G. Winchester, which was carried unanimously. After the adjournment of the convention he invited me to walk with him, out upon one of the bluffs overlooking the Iowa river, from which, pointing to the east, he said: "Where you see those long hay-stacks away on the Grundy prairie is where I am laying the foundation of a home."

CYRUS C. CARPENTER.

ORGANIZES RESISTANCE TO A MONOPOLY.

A public service that should not be forgotten by the farmers of the west originated in Des Moines twelve or thirteen years ago. An eastern syndicate had purchased the most important patents issued to various inventors of barbed wire fencing, together with the machines used in its manufacture. Possessed of immense capital this syndicate had formed an iron-clad combination having for its object the absolute control of the entire output, and also the fixing of prices at which the product should be sold to dealers, and by them to farmers. As barbed wire was coming into general use for fencing prairie farms, the control of its manufacture might become one of the most oppressive monopolies ever organized in America, and these movements were watched with anxiety by thousands of intelligent farmers of the west.

When the combination was finally completed, a few concerns only were licensed by the syndicate to continue the manufacture upon arbitrary terms, and all sales were required to be made to dealers at most exorbitant prices. All factories left out of the combination were notified to quit business.

This syndicate backed by millions of dollars, seemed too powerful to be combatted by individual manufacturers, and most of them closed their doors to avoid expensive litigation. For a time it looked as though the farmers were to be taxed enormously to pay two hundred per cent profit to the syndicate for an article which was rapidly becoming a necessity. C. F. Clarkson, as agricultural editor of the *State Register*, was ever watchful of farmers' interests. He saw clearly the enormity of the tax proposed to be levied upon Iowa farmers, and acting as a leading spirit in consultation with others, a public meeting was called at the capital to arrange for resistance. A large assemblage of intelligent farmers came together to devise means for mutual protection. "Father Clarkson" opened the meeting with one of his most vigorous speeches, in the presence of the paid attorneys of the syndicate. His address will be long remembered as one of the clearest statements of the coming controversy ever made. He proposed the organization of a Farmers' Protective Association to resist the extortions of the "Barbed Wire Syndicate." His advice was followed, and a free factory established to supply farmers direct, ignoring dealers. Then began the most determined and uncompromising legal contest ever known in Iowa. W. L. Carpenter, a man of unflinching courage and stern integrity, was placed in charge of the Farmers' Free Factory, and for five years it furnished fence wire to farmers at prices *less than one-half* of those first fixed by the syndicate. This little factory never closed its doors until the battle was won, and the iron-clad combination was broken down. A. B. Cummins, then a young lawyer, won his first fame in this historic litigation. He was matched against the ablest patent lawyers in the country, and in every conflict proved equal to the occasion, winning a national reputation. The old proverb that "every man has his price," was proved false in this case, for Father Clarkson, M. L. Devin, W. L. Carpenter, or A. B. Cummins, could either have named his price at any time during the long years of this notable contest, and have realized a fortune in cash for betraying the cause in which he was enlisted.

They had no price to set on their manhood; but they won names which are synonyms for stern integrity.

While many other good and true men were for years earnest and faithful co-workers in this historic struggle, it was C. F. Clarkson whose brain devised the plan which discomfited a powerful combination which was, by most men, regarded as too strong to be successfully resisted. The magnitude of the victory can be measured by millions of dollars saved to western farmers in the forced reduction of more than 100 per cent. from the syndicate price fixed upon fence wire. During his long and useful life Father Clarkson did his adopted State much valuable service in various capacities, but he regarded that above briefly noted, as his greatest achievement, as will history, when it is faithfully written. B. F. GUE.

ZIMRI STREETER — "OLD BLACK HAWK."

BY PETER MELENDY.

One of the unique characters among the pioneer lawmakers of Iowa, thirty years ago, was Zimri Streeter, "Old Black Hawk," as he was familiarly called by his colleagues in the General Assemblies of 1858-60. He was born February 7th, 1801, at Granville, Washington County, N. Y., where his boyhood years were spent on a farm. In 1824 he married Lucinda Dean, and in 1852 removed to Iowa, settling on a quarter section of prairie on the banks of the Cedar River, midway between Waterloo and Cedar Falls, which he had entered as government land. He built a good log cabin, into which they settled down and made their home for many years. He was a man of excellent judgment and sturdy integrity, always held in highest esteem by his neighbors. They believed in him, trusted him, and elected him to represent them in many responsible positions. He was honorable and straightforward in all the relations of life, a man of courage and convictions, with ability to maintain his views upon all occasions. He was.

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