

an important initial step in the formation of this great commonwealth of Iowa, the intent will not have been in vain.

If some one in Lee County, who was "on deck" fifty years ago, and whose memory has not forsaken him, will write the story of "The Half Breed and the 'Possum," another reminiscence will be placed upon the record, possibly to be of use to the future historian.

RECOLLECTIONS OF C. F. CLARKSON.

DECLINING A NOMINATION.

In the summer of 1856 a Republican Convention was held at Eldora to nominate a candidate for delegates to the State Constitutional Convention from the Senatorial District, composed of the following counties: Fayette, Bremer, Butler, Franklin, Grundy, Hardin, Hamilton, Wright, Webster, Boone, Story, Greene and Humboldt. Of course there was no way to reach Eldora except by private conveyance. The consequence was that none of them were fully represented, except Hardin. The writer was the delegate from Webster, and had proxies for Humboldt and Greene. He left Fort Dodge for Eldora the morning of the day preceding the convention, and arrived at Webster City at noon. Here he was joined by Morgan Everts, the delegate from Hamilton county, who also had a proxy for Wright. Occupying the same conveyance, we drove across the then sparsely settled prairie, arriving at Eldora late in the evening. The next morning when the delegates from the different counties had arrived we found that there was really no declared candidate for the nomination, except that the delegation from Hardin county proposed to present the name of S. G. Winchester, of Eldora. Everts and the writer talked the matter over, and concluded it would at least enliven the proceedings a little by having a candidate of our own. Among the delegates was a man by the name of Seeley, and who was the sole representative from



C. F. CLARKSON.

This excellent portrait of "Father Clarkson" is copied by permission from
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Fayette county—the most populous county in the district. We suggested to him our purpose, and he unhesitatingly said that he wanted to be “counted in on that deal.” Then the question arose as to whom we could vote for with any assurance that if he was nominated he would accept; as in the large district, populated by recent immigrants, there was little knowledge of the men suited to the duties of public life. The writer had previously met at the land office in Fort Dodge, Hon. C. F. Clarkson, who had lately moved into the State. He was struck with his impressive personality and his evident intelligence. Mr. Clarkson was the delegate from Grundy county, and both Everts and Seeley had met him during the day. We all agreed that his experience and evident ability would make him a useful member of a convention to frame a constitution of the State. We therefore determined to make him our candidate. Our plan was to say nothing to Clarkson about it, as we feared he would decline; but we thought if voted for and nominated, he would accept the nomination. When the convention finally met at 2 o'clock P. M., John W. Jones, then a citizen of Eldora, had scented that there was something in the wind that Hardin county had not been apprised of, and to the astonishment of the writer, he nominated him for chairman of the convention. He pleaded youth and inexperience and asked that some older person be made chairman. But there was a concert of voices crying out: “No excuses! Take the chair.” He had hardly reached the chair before some one nominated C. F. Clarkson for Secretary. The preliminary organization was settled in a few moments, and a motion was made to proceed by ballot to nominate a candidate, the delegates being authorized to cast the full vote of their counties. Two tellers were appointed to take up and count the ballots, and the vote was taken. I shall never forget the peculiar expression on Mr. Clarkson's face, as he sat keeping tally, when his own name was called by the tellers as the ballots were read. And when Fayette county was announced, *thirteen votes for Clarkson*, it was evident that he was the nominee. He then took the floor and

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.

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