

precious mementoes, our students and scholars, our press and our law makers will come more and more as the years roll on, and we indulge in no idle dream when we assert that to them it will prove endlessly useful and inspiring in infinitely various ways to the better upbuilding of our great commonwealth.

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### THE FOUNDER OF SALUBRIA.

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Time works wonderful changes in our estimates of men and their work. Fifty years ago the name of Abner Kneeland was one to conjure with in Iowa. The pious and devout never spoke it except in tense terms. Throughout the land from New England to the Missouri it was anathema. Almost universally Kneeland was regarded as the arch advocate of atheism and the blasphemous promoter of infidelity to the commandments and institutions of the Most High and he and all his works were in the *Index Expurgatorious*. Even yet some whose memories go back to the decades preceding the civil war may think as much.

But increasing years have softened the shadows that once made Kneeland's name loom large and awful in the imagination of the Christian churchman. Commerce, science, sociology, and higher criticism in the past fifty years have produced vast and momentous changes in man's notions of theology and of the authority of doctrine and creed. The heresies of the last centuries have become the commonplace and the matter of fact of to-day. The terrific controversies of our forefathers astonish us and we wonder what could have made men and women get so exercised over views that now strike us as tame, immaterial or vain or mayhap as simply sensible.

The days of our pioneers are so rapidly passing that only the very elect who yet remain with us will have vivid memories stirred by Miss Whitcomb's interesting article in

this number of THE ANNALS relating to the career of the founder of Salubria in Van Buren county. It is well worth perusal; first because the subject of the sketch was no inconsiderable factor and force in the history of religious thought in these United States and a decided influence in public discussion in our pioneer life in Iowa, and second, because Abner Kneeland was a man of marked ability and force of character. He lacked many of the qualities that make for personal or political success. He was too prone to talk straight out precisely what he thought. If he had any doubts about the foundations of belief or conduct he did not deal mincingly with them or keep still in order to retain position and his stipend. He nearly always turned the contents of his skillet into the fire and there was a blaze. His work was for the most part iconoclastic rather than constructive. He was one with such men as Paine and Priestley, who broke lances against the stiff-backed notions of theology of the last half of the eighteenth century. But while he was disposed to be belligerent in the advocacy of views that greatly perturbed his contemporaries, he had an unsullied character. Those who knew him intimately found a man of sweet and gracious disposition. \*

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### IOWA'S EXPERIMENT IN GOVERNMENT.

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We seldom appreciate the full significance of events to which we are party, and in the midst of which we live daily. They become commonplace and are passed by without interest and accepted without comment. Since 1898 the people of Iowa have been making a momentous experiment in the art of government. In that year our General Assembly worked a revolution in the methods of controlling and administering the charitable, reformatory and penal institutions which are maintained by the State. The various separate boards of trustees theretofore in charge of them had

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