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EARLY TIMES IN IOWA.

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From a Private Diary.

THE first settlers of Iowa might be divided into three classes,—persons who had large families, were in limited circumstances, and moved west so as to get cheap land for their children; persons who had been wealthy, but by misfortune in business had lost their possessions, and came west to regain their fortunes; and young men, who came west to start on the journey of life.

The Sunday evening after I came to Fairfield, I took a walk, and about a mile from town I came to a cabin, the home of R. Taylor. Taylor was the first squatter on this piece of land, had built a comfortable house, and there was a large pile of logs laying by his door for a stable. It was a pleasant spring evening, and either by design or accident, Taylor, with his whole family, had left their domicile, and seated themselves on a long log. The family consisted of himself, wife, and fourteen children. On the log was first Taylor, then his wife, the largest child next, and tapering

off with a regular grade, the last being a youngster just able to toddle about. In this little group were three pair of twins, and the oldest child was only about fourteen years of age. After a little conversation I continued my walk about a mile further, and came to a cabin situated near the prairie in the edge of a beautiful grove. This was the home of Alvah White, who had squatted here on the public land and made some improvements. He was a cooper by trade, and near his dwelling he had built a cabin for a cooper shop. These two families were a different cast. Taylor was a hard working man, had always been in limited circumstances, and moved west for the benefit of his family. White had been in the enjoyment of wealth, had lost his possession, and come west with the hopes of regaining his fortune. Taylor, after procuring the title to his land, and making valuable improvements, sold his possessions, moved west, and squatted on other lands. And he and his numerous family, by their industry, provided themselves with comfortable homes. White was of a speculative turn, and preferred to make his living by sharp trading rather than hard work. He was the owner of a valuable claim, and had a considerable amount of personal property about him. He was the only cooper near Fairfield, his work was in demand at high prices, and there was no individual in the whole settlement who had a fairer prospect of future wealth than Alvah White.

A short time before my visit, John White, a younger brother, had come west and stopped with his brother, and at this time the cooper shop was occupied as a dwelling. John White was then a young man, about twenty-five years old, had a wife and three children, the oldest about three years old. His wife, though the mother of three children, was not out of her teens; she was prepossessing in her looks, her clothes cleanly, and neatly adjusted to her person: and she bore about her an air of fascination. The scanty furniture about the house was well arranged, a place for everything, and everything in its place. The clothes, her person, her

house, and everything about it, were a perfect model of neatness and order. John White was tall and slim in person; had a keen black eye; sharp, shrill voice; a firm, bold bearing. They were apparently fondly devoted to each other, and perfectly harmonious in their views and feelings. There seemed to be something about this young couple, it is hard to tell what, that attracted the attention of the observer, and impressed the mind they would make for themselves a history in the future. They came west poor; at this time they could not sum their possessions by thousands, nor hardly by hundreds; but they both cultivated a determination to get property, and become wealthy.

That season congress passed a bankrupt law. Alvah, having a large amount of debts hanging over him, contracted where he came from, thought to relieve himself from these liabilities by taking the benefit of this act—and not long after John became the owner of Alvah's claim, and most of his personal property, and the brother moved to Van Buren county, applied for the benefit of the bankrupt law, and in due process of time got his discharge. Soon after getting relieved from his debts, Alvah came back to Jefferson county, and desired to buy back his property; but John did not feel disposed to sell to him. Alvah claimed that John had wronged him, but however this might have been, after having complied with the requisitions of the bankrupt law, he was in a poor position to contend with his brother. From this time on Alvah's life was beset with hardships and disappointments; he struggled along for a few years to support his family, but his health failed him, so that he could not labor, and he died a county charge.

In the winter of 1842-43 the lands about Fairfield were brought into market, and John, not having the money to purchase his land, sold his claim, for which he realized about a thousand dollars. The purchase of Indian lands made in the fall of 1842 were to be open for settlement on the first of the following May. But previous to that time, John White, in company with John Montgomery and Phe-

nix Gestford, went into the Indian country on an exploring expedition, for the purpose of finding a desirable location for making claims. They selected their locations, and as soon as they were permitted to settle on the new purchase, took the necessary steps to perfect a claim title to the lands of their choice.

Their claims joined each other, and upon the organizing of Mahaska county, the county seat was located on a portion of their lands. White selected a site for his cabin about a mile north of where the town was laid out, on an elevated piece of ground, in a grove, two or three acres in extent. The natural scenery here was beautiful, and nature's beauty was improved by the hand of toil and skill, until it became a lovely spot, and here John White made his home. As soon as he got his log house tenable, he moved into it, and was among the first, if not the first, man who settled in Mahaska county with his family. Immediately after he had got his family into their cabin, necessity compelled him to go back into the settlement for provisions, and his wife, with her three little children, remained eight long days at their new home without seeing a solitary individual they knew. But they had a mutual determination and will to endure privations and hardships, that they might lay the foundation for their future success. And by their industry and saving, by the time the lands were brought into market, they had accumulated money enough to purchase their lands from the government, and make themselves a comfortable home.

White, by his foresight, industry, and perseverance, was successful in his undertakings, and, like Midus of old, every thing he touched appeared to turn into gold. He first farmed, then dealt in land warrants, loaned money, and became an extensive banker, so much so, that most of his time was devoted to financial affairs. Yet he took much interest in public affairs; was generally around the court house when court was in session, attended conventions, and was quite a politician. At these public gatherings I fre-

quently met him. Though active in public life, his predominant passion was making money; and he seldom engaged in a private conversation, unless he could turn the discourse upon financial subjects.

As an illustration of his ruling passion, it was told of him, that at one time he was informed that a stranger was coming to town to borrow some money. While engaged near the road, he saw a person coming whom he imagined was the man, and when the stranger came up, the following colloquy took place:—

Stranger. "Is this the road to Montezuma?"

White. "Ten per cent with real estate security of twice the value of the money loaned."

Stranger. "I think you did not understand me."

White. "I do not take into consideration the improvements."

Stranger. "What are you talking about. I want to know if this is the road to Montezuma."

White. "I will take a judgment note waiving all valuation, loss, and stay of execution."

At this response the stranger pursued his journey.

White was kind and benevolent when properly approached, but vindictive and revengeful when accosted. In his dealings he was prompt to fulfill his contracts, paid every cent he agreed to, and wanted all that was due him. In his bargains he carefully calculated every contingency of the future, and had his contracts made to meet them, and he wanted the conditions of his bond, however close it might cut. White accumulated wealth, till, instead of calculating his possessions by hundreds of dollars, he estimated it by hundreds of thousands. He was fondly devoted to his family, and particularly to his wife; they became the parents of thirteen children, but disease fastened hold of one after another, till they only had one left.

When left with his wife and only one child, a little girl, a belief came over his mind that he was poor, and that his wife and child would come to want; a foreboding he could

not endure. Though he was regarded as the richest man in the county, had his broad acres of well improved land, a spacious brick mansion luxuriously furnished, his town property, and bank stock—possessions worth a quarter of a million, yet he could not divest himself of the thought that he was poor and would come to want. While under this depression of spirits, he had occasion to go to Chicago, to adjust with the bank there his accounts. After having satisfactorily closed his business, he proposed to borrow ten thousand dollars to take home with him. The bank officers thinking there was something wrong about him, declined to give him the money, but told him he might draw on them for the amount. This he construed to be a want of confidence in his ability to pay, and he frequently uttered, in plaintive tones, this expression—“Poor John White; can’t borrow ten thousand dollars!” After he came home his foreboding continued to weigh heavier and heavier upon his mind. One day he took a walk over his farm, and carefully examined the fields, fences, and stock; came back to the house, threw himself upon a sofa, called his wife to his side, and told her everything was going to ruin; she would come to want; that he could not endure it; and wept most bitterly. She talked to him with kind and consoling words. His excited feelings became apparently composed, and his fearful foreboding seemed to pass from his troubled mind, and he assumed an air of cheerfulness. After resting a while, he got up, walked about the yard, then towards the barn; his wife, anxious about him, aimed to be where she could watch his movements; while he was near the barn, domestic affairs called her into the house for a few moments. As soon as he saw he was not watched, he slipped into the barn, and securely fastened on the inside every entrance. His wife soon came out of the house, not seeing him, fearing something was wrong, hurried to the barn, endeavored to gain admittance, but could not. She called, in a loud shrill voice her husband, by name, but that voice, which had been accustomed to respond to her calls

in accents of love and affection, made no answer. She tried every avenue of entrance to gain admission, but found them all firmly fastened on the inside. She at last, by running a stick through a crack, succeeded in unloosening a fastening, and gained admittance. She gave a hasty look about the premises, but saw nothing of her husband; she hurried up the stairs that led to the loft, where her eyes were met with the lifeless body of her husband, suspended in the air by the neck, with a log chain. The companion of her life had gone; he was no more. And now, in the grave yard near his residence, a costly monument designates the final resting place of John White, one of the first settlers of Mahaska county.

When I first came to Fairfield there were about a score of bashful young men, but not a marriageable resident young lady in the place; and there were but a very few grown young girls in the country. A few months after my arrival, there came to the county a Miss Scott, from Ohio, on a visit to her sister, who lived about eight miles from Fairfield. On her arrival she stopped a short time in the town, and was a frequent visitor of the place afterwards. Miss Scott gave evidence of having moved in good society where she came from, was good looking, well informed, and was able to dress in her silks and other costly apparel. A young lady of this bearing, at that time, made no small sensation among the young men of this locality. Miss Scott was inclined to be coquettish, and knowing her position, she was not slow in drawing the attention of young men, and exciting their admiration. A few months after she came west, one Saturday, some parties came into town to get me to go into the neighborhood where Miss Scott's sister lived, to attend to a law-suit before a justice of the peace. Not having any conveyance of my own, my clients took me out in theirs. The suit lasted till a late hour, in consequence of which I did not come home that night. The next day being Sunday, I was in no hurry about getting home, and there was to be held a Methodist quarterly meeting in

the neighborhood, and I concluded to stay and attend it. At the appointed time most of the family with whom I stopped, with myself, repaired to the place appointed for divine service, which was at a neighboring farm house. It being a warm spring day, the audience was much larger than could get into the house, and many found seats in the yard. This meeting was on the circuit of the Rev. Joel Arington, who was a man of the west, a popular preacher, and much respected. He had his own peculiarities, was fond of cracking his jokes, never happier than when surrounded with a company of young folks, and generally officiated at all the weddings within the bounds of his circuit. The presiding elder was the Rev. Henry Summers, who, with his family, made his home in Illinois, but his district was in Iowa, and he was the first presiding elder in this locality. His apparel was neat, but peculiar; his outer garments were of jean cloth; the front of his coat was cut oval from the neck to the extremity of the skirt, and had a standing collar; he wore a white cravat without shirt collar; and a broad-brimmed white hat; his whole wardrobe was very plain, and of the quaker fashion, and was in marked contrast with the apparel of Methodist preachers of late date. He was a devoted Christian, and a good orator, and on this occasion he poured forth a strain of eloquence which frequently brought tears from the eyes of his hearers. This part of the country at that time had only been settled a little over two years, and the first settlers were in limited circumstances, and of a class of people not very polished in their manners, though possessed of kind and generous hearts. At this meeting an incident happened which made a lasting impression on my mind.

A hat was passed around to take up a collection in behalf of the elder, and not the first dime was contributed; his hearers had a plenty of bacon and corn, which they were willing to give, but had no money to spare. After this effort to raise money the elder, in a very modest way, alluded to his wants; and remarked that he had not the money

to pay his ferriage across the Mississippi; but his trust was in his God, and He would provide for his wants. This appeal touched my feelings. I had a silver half-dollar in my purse, the only money I then possessed, which I took from my pocket, and placed in my closed hand, and as he came out of the house I saluted him with a friendly grip, and passed the half-dollar from my hand into his, and felt much more comfortable with it in his possession than in my own.

At this meeting there were about one hundred and fifty persons present, many of whom had come a long distance, some on foot, some in wagons, but most on horse-back. There were in this assembly noble heroes, devoted Christian souls, and strong minds. But their exterior appearance was rather savage and grotesque; buck-skin entered largely into the material of the garments of the men, and linsey dresses were the prevailing apparel of the women. Most of the women, instead of bonnets, had handkerchiefs tied over their heads; occasionally there was a hood or sun bonnet. The coverings for the heads of the men were of various sizes, shapes, and fashions. Most of this assembly had come from different localities, and their clothing represented the fashions of their former residences. One man, who particularly attracted my attention, wore a cap made out of wolf skins, apparently of home manufacture. On the front was placed the face of the wolf, and great pains had been taken to make the ears, eyes, nose, and whole countenance look life-like; just back of the frontispiece were the fore paws, one on each side; on the back part were placed the hind feet, extending a little below the lower edge of the cap, between which hung down the back of the owner a full-length wolf's tail, the whole cap representing a wolf, as if squatted down to make a pounce upon his prey.

A little out of the crowd, sitting on a pile of rocks, was a large, well made, fine looking man of about sixty years, dressed in broad cloth, though his garments looked rather rusty, and as though they had seen much service. I had heard of this individual, and knew he had quite recently

come to the settlement, but I had never seen him before. This man was Matthew Spurlock, who had gained the sobriquet of Bogus Spurlock. He was sitting by himself, with a pensive, down-cast look, as if meditating about matters of grave importance. Spurlock afterwards settled on lands purchased from the Indians in 1842, and was among the first settlers of Polk township, and the first man that built a house in Abingdon. He came to the county from Illinois, and was a man of much notoriety in the west, about the time Iowa was first settled. Spurlock was not only prepossessing in his appearance, but was possessed of much more than ordinary intellect, well informed, perfectly versed in the dispositions of men, and had a peculiar faculty to ingratiate himself into the confidence of those around him. At some periods of his life he was inclined to dissipation, and at others to be very religious, and sometimes assumed to preach the gospel. He was a stoic in his disposition, and seemed to be at ease and have self-command, whatever might be his surroundings. He was a smith by trade, and possessed of great mechanical skill, manufactured bowie knives of the finest finish, and could make dies as perfect as those used by government for coining money. He was generally known by the name of Bogus Spurlock, a title which he seemed to covet and be proud of. When the lands in Iowa were first brought into market, nothing was received at the land office but gold and silver coin; and a great portion of the money was silver, among which was a large quantity of spurious coin, which was generally called bogus money; and he was called Bogus Spurlock from the fact that his name was extensively published as being the manufacturer of this kind of money. This seemed to be in accordance with his own wishes, for he would frequently have in his possession brand new silver coin, which he claimed he had made, and gather around him, in some secluded place a few individuals, and make exhibitions of his new money, and give a description of what it was composed and how it was made, and defy any one to detect it in Illi-

nois—claiming that such money could be made for about twelve cents to the dollar, and representing that if any one would give him good money to manufacture, he could afford to give two dollars for one. Genteel appearing, well dressed strangers were frequent guests at his house, who would stay a few days and then disappear, and who they were, where they came from, or what their business was, was not made known to any one. There was no doubt but he could make dies, and coin money; but it was very doubtful whether he ever made any spurious coin, further than specimens to boast his skill. He held to the axiom that those who were disposed to cheat others ought to be cheated themselves. And probably the extent of his manufacturing spurious coin was to use such means as induced those who were dishonest and disposed to defraud others, to deposit with him good money, for the purpose of being manufactured into spurious coin, and when once in his possession, appropriating it to his own use, thinking that those who left the money with him for this purpose would not dare to make the matter public. And when the parties came back for their deposits, instead of giving them spurious money for their good, as they expected, he would deliver to them a lecture on morality, and exhort them to endeavor to make a living by honest industry; and tell them, to enforce these admonitions on their minds, he would keep their money for his own use. This might be regarded as rather an unusual mode of reforming the morals of men, yet it is probable that many individuals received from Spurlock in this way, lessons which checked their evil inclinations, and that they profited thereby in after life.

Spurlock at one time was the owner of a large farm in Illinois, and was regarded as being wealthy; but through the means of obtaining his wealth, or from some other cause, he had some very vindictive enemies; and he became involved in law-suits, till he spent most of his means; and among other difficulties, he was indicted for stealing a buggy, which had been found, taken to pieces, and conceal-

ed under the hay in his barn. The pressure in his neighborhood in Illinois was so great on him, that he thought it advisable to leave without much public ceremony, and took up his abode just on the border of the Indian country. He had been put under bond, for his appearance at court, and his bail not wishing to pay the forfeiture, hunted him up, and came to Iowa after him, with a requisition from the governor of Illinois. Spurlock was arrested, and the officer started with him for Illinois; but during his short residence in Iowa, he had made for himself some devoted friends; and as soon as it was known he was in difficulty, his friends pursued and overtook the party in Fairfield, and gave bond for his appearance at court, and he was released from custody. Spurlock, at the appointed time, went to Illinois and had his trial, in which it was shown that some of his enemies had concealed the buggy in his barn, for the purpose of involving him in difficulty. Spurlock may have been the greatest of scoundrels, and this reputation, to a certain extent, was awarded to him by public opinion, and he may have deserved the severest punishment as a violator of the law, but if this was the case, he was shrewd enough to manage his affairs in such a way that he could not be detected, for he was never convicted of any crime. Soon after Spurlock settled in this county, there was discovered, on Walnut Creek, a substance which was supposed to be silver ore. This for a while created much interest in the county, and the most influential men in the neighborhood became very much interested in testing its qualities, and ascertaining the extent of its supposed value. But no one of those interested were possessed of sufficient chemical skill to make a test. Application was made to Spurlock to analyze the mineral. On inspection, Spurlock gave it as his opinion that it was silver ore of the richest quality, but informed those interested that he could not test it for the want of suitable chemical apparatus. To supply this deficiency money was raised and put into his hands, and for his own services he was presented with a fine horse. Spurlock

soon got crucibles and all things necessary for the test, and made the necessary experiments, and exhibited pieces of silver, which he claimed were produced from the mineral. ^VSpurlock being of such a notorious character, fearing there might be something wrong in his tests, the parties interested proposed to witness his experiments. This was readily assented to on the part of Spurlock, and at the appointed time they went to his shop, examined every thing critically, and carefully watched the process of the experiment. After applying a suitable heat to the crucible, Spurlock poured out the contents, and there was found to be about fifty per cent of the mineral in pure silver. This experiment gave confidence to those who had procured the mineral, and for a while there was no lack of applicants to join in organizing a mining company. But by some means it was circulated around that Spurlock, previous to making this experiment, had cut up with a file some silver coin, mixed the filings with beeswax, and with this compound lined the inside of the crucible, which he used in making the experiment. After this report was circulated, on further examination it was concluded that the discovered mineral was nothing but iron-pyrites, and the excitement about the silver mine soon died away.

Spurlock, for a series of years, was a justice of the peace, and I occasionally practiced before him. He had clear conceptions of right and wrong, his decisions were generally equitable and in accordance with law, and he presided over his court with much dignity. On one occasion I called at his house on some professional business, and found him, somewhat exhilarated, seated at a table with pen, ink, and paper, a pitcher of water, a tumbler, and a bottle of whiskey before him, very busily engaged in writing. I asked him what he was doing, and his reply was, that he was writing a sermon, and that heretofore his hearers had complained that his sermons were not spiritual enough, and to improve in this respect he had got some spirits to aid him in his composition, and he felt confident the discourse he was then

preparing would be satisfactory to his audience in this respect.

Spurlock lived to be quite advanced in years, and was a remarkable man; wherever he went he attracted attention, commanded respect, and always had warm devoted friends, and whatever faults he might have had himself, he raised a large family of children, who did not imitate the habits which were attributed to their father, but grew up to make highly respectable citizens.

At this meeting there were only two maiden women,—Miss De Tashmat and Miss Scott. Miss De Tashmat was a stout, well proportioned girl, fresh countenanced, and neat in her person, but she had had but little culture other than nature's own. She had on a linsey well-fitted dress, probably of her own manufacture and make; a pair of coarse shoes, unpolished; around her neck she wore a string of large yellow glass beads; on her hands were a pair of red wollen mitts, and she wore a white quilted sun bonnet, with the front part turned back, so as to give a full view of her face. She was of a lively turn, spry and active as a cat; she could pick corn, dig potatoes, wash dirty clothes, scrub the floor, leap on a horse's back and ride equal to any of the young men; and never seemed better pleased than when running a race with some of her gallants.

Miss Scott was dressed in a gorgeous attire, and shone in splendor, far above any of the other attendants. She was about the last to come out of the house, and she walked with a majestic step, neither turning her head to the right or left. I was standing by the gate-way, and as she passed me she gave me a gentle nod, the only one she deigned to honor with her respects. Her way home and mine led in the same path, and after a few friendly salutations I started on my way home. She did not go far till she looked back, and seeing me coming, waited till I came up. This was a source of pleasure and mortification. I was pleased that she showed me so much consideration, and felt mortified at my personal appearance, for when I left home I had

not thought of entering the company of ladies, nor did I in the hurry stop to change my linen, clean my boots, or shave my beard; and my personal appearance was not as prepossessing as I would have desired it to be on this occasion. Our path for about a mile led through a woodland; it was now in the blooming spring; the cold blasts of winter had passed; the pinching frosts had let go their icy grips; cold, dreary winter had gone. The trees were just beginning to put forth their green foliage; the plum bushes were white with blossoms; the crab apple trees were in full bloom; all nature seemed lovely; time was not pressing, and our walk was not hurried. After about a mile's walk we came to the residence of Capt. Wright, whose wife was a sister of Miss Scott's, and the place where she made her home. As we came near the house the road to town and the one to the house separated; she took the path to the house, and myself the one for town; on noticing this, Miss Scott, with a smile, fixing her keen piercing eyes upon me, said: "You had better stop and get some dinner, you will get hungry before you get home." I had no inclination to decline an invitation of this sort, particularly at that time of the day, and coming from the party it did. So I turned my course into the path that led to the house. The house was located a short distance from the thick timber, on a ridge, between two large oak trees, which, from their size and appearance, looked as if they had occupied that place for the last hundred years. Standing isolated from other trees, their branches had grown to great length, and when clothed with thick foliage, their branches afforded a refreshing resort, when the rays of the sun were pouring down their heat on a midsummer day, and no doubt many red men had rested their weary limbs for many sultry hours beneath the branches of those sturdy oaks. As the green grass was just starting up, and those oak trees were just putting forth their fresh new leaves, at this time, this was one of nature's beautiful spots.

The cabin was about eighteen feet square, built apparent-

ly in a hurry, to afford a resting place for a family without a home. The logs were laid up in their rough state as nature had formed them, and the cracks between the logs were stopped up with mortar made of prairie soil. The roof was covered with split boards or shingles, about four feet long, and resting on logs beneath, and confined to their place by laying on them heavy poles. The floor was made of what in early days was called puncheons, which were sections of large trees, split off and hewed to an even surface. The fire-place was built up some four or five feet high with logs, and lined on the inside with rocks and mud; the chimney was then carried up with prairie turf, dug up and cut into the shape of large bricks. There were two small windows in the house, but in place of glass there was greased muslin, which let in some light and kept out the cold. The door was also made of split boards, pinned on to large wooden hinges, and fastened with a large wooden latch and catch. To open the door from the outside there was a hole bored through the door, into which a string was put and tied to the latch, and the latch string to Captain Wright's house "always hung out." There was not a sawed plank or a nail in the whole structure. This tenement, though of a rude structure, was always kept neat, and had an air of cheerfulness about it. On the outside walls of the house were hanging quite a number of coon and wolf skins, stretched to their full extent, over hoops; and on the roof lay a large number of buck horns.

Not far from the house was a small field, fenced in, and around the house was inclosed a yard and garden, and near the house was a small log stable. These embraced all the improvements. The furniture of the family was quite limited; a bake oven, a tea kettle, a coffee pot, and one or two iron kettles composed the cooking apparatus. There was not a chair about the premises; but to supply their place they had a long bench and several stools, made out of hewed plank. They had a table around which could be seated from four to five persons, made out of the same kind of

lumber as the stools. There were two beds and a trundle-bed; the bedsteads of the two higher beds were made by boring holes into the logs of the house, into which the ends of poles were driven, the outer angles of which were supported by being fastened into a post, thus forming a section large enough for a bed. To these were fastened, for the support of the bed, at suitable distances from each other, ropes of hickory bark, on which were laid ticks filled with prairie hay. Around the beds were hanging curtains, which had seen much wear, and had probably been around beds of more costly style, and in rooms of better finish than where they now hung. There was at one side of the room a large red chest, which not only answered as a seat to sit on, but was the repository of the wardrobe of the family. On one side of the house, supported by wooden pins, driven into the logs, were suspended a powder horn, a bullet pouch, and a rifle, whose unerring aim, in the hands of Capt. Wright, had brought down many coon and deer. And from one of these pins hung a sword, which had the appearance of having seen much service. In one corner of the room was fastened up a small goods box, which served the purpose of a cupboard for the queensware. In another corner was fixed up a shelf, on which was set a water bucket, and on a pin just above it hung a crooked handled gourd, with which water was dipped from the bucket to quench the thirst at meal-time, and for such other purposes as it was wanted. Over head, from the roof was hanging a large quantity of dried bacon and venison.

Such was the house, and such was the furniture of the house occupied at that time by Capt. Wright. Though it was of small dimensions, of a rough finish, and scantily furnished, it compared favorably, and was on an equality with most of his neighbors, and it was a home with which his family appeared to be satisfied and contented. Capt. Wright was a man between thirty and forty years old, had a few gray hairs; apparently in former times had seen better days, been possessed of wealth, and moved in good soci-

ety, but had met with misfortune, lost his property, and came west to regain his standing. When I entered the house I found Capt. Wright lying in the bed, rather in a pensive mood, brooding over the accidents of the previous day, and it was apparently with great effort and much pain he moved. He was captain of a company in a regiment of militia, which in those days had their regular drills, and he took great pride in manœuvering his men. When on parade he wore a long tailed blue coat, with oval brass buttons and gold-colored epaulets, and around his waist a red sash. He wore a high crowned, broad brimmed, white hat, on which was fastened an eagle cockade, and a white plume, topped with red; and by his side hung a long broad-sword, all of which had seen much service, and were probably equipments he had used many days before he came west. The Captain, the day previous to my visit, had been to town to attend a military drill, and had got, as was a common saying, "a brick in his hat," which made him rather top-heavy, and being in a hurry to get home, he and his companions rode their horses at a lively gait, and on turning a short corner, on account of the brick in his hat, he bore an unusual weight on one of his stirrups, and the strap, not being very strong, broke, and the result was, the Captain tumbled to the ground, and was severely bruised; and the next day he found it comfortable to occupy his bed. In stating this accident, the Captain was very particular to impress upon my mind that whiskey had nothing to do with his misfortune, but it was wholly on account of the defective stirrup strap.

Mrs. Wright was engaged in preparing dinner. She was apparently several years younger than her husband, rather prepossessing in her bearing, and had the appearance of having been in her maiden days very handsome. She, as well as her husband, had probably in early life seen better days, and reverses in fortune had worn upon her mind, as her face was wrinkled, and bore marks of deep anxiety and care; though at this time she assumed an air of cheerful-

ness. Her clothes were of a coarse kind, yet everything about her person was cleanly and neat. They had two little girls, about six and eight years old, who were playing under the big oak trees. They were beautiful children, keen black eyes, fair skin, with rosy cheeks, curly black hair, and the picture of health. Such was the family of Capt. Wright, and there was an air of cheerfulness about this humble home, which made it agreeable to the visitor. The dinner being prepared, the rude table was covered with a clean white cloth, a few dishes arranged in proper order, the food, though not containing many varieties, was well cooked and in abundance, and we sat down and partook of a hearty meal.

After dinner was over Capt. Wright and family found it convenient to be absent, and Miss Scott and myself had the entire possession of the premises. Miss Scott was apparelled in a rich purple silk dress, with wide heavy flounces, a low waist—so much so as to expose a full view of a beautiful bust; she had bracelets on her arms, a gold necklace around her neck, rich costly jewels suspended from her ears, and gold rings with sparkling gems on her fingers. Her skin, though a little dark, was fair, with flush rosy cheeks; she had ivory white teeth, set in beautiful uniformity, a keen piercing black eye, and glossy black hair, which naturally hung in beautiful ringlets. She was smart, intelligent, gifted in conversation, and her voice was musical in song. Her dress, her bearing, everything belonging to her were in striking contrast with her surroundings. When we found ourselves alone, conversation was brisk, and no lack of topics to converse about. The inclination was strong to place a gentle kiss on her cheek, but her bearing was such that prudence dictated it was not best to make the attempt. Thus situated, time flew rapidly, hours seemed like minutes. I spared no pains to gain her respect, esteem, yea, her affections; and was vain enough to think my efforts were not without effect; for after uttering some expressions of kind consideration and devotion, she quickly arose from

her seat, advanced towards me, drew from her hand a gold ring sparkling with gems, and placed it upon my finger, uttering a few words expressive of devotion for myself, and returned to her seat.

I was sitting leaned back against the jam of the door, which was ajar; and a few moments after being presented with the ring, I cast my eye down the path leading up to the house and saw a gentleman on horseback coming up the path to the house. At first I did not know who it was, for he appeared unlike himself. But as he drew near the house I recognized Mr. Chandler, who lived a few miles beyond Fairfield. Chandler had the reputation of having money, and at that time was quite extensively farming his claims. He was mounted on a spirited noble looking black steed. The horse had been groomed in the best of order, his hair was bright and glossy, his mane straight, long, and flowing; the saddle, bridle, and martingale were all nearly new, and their trimmings bright and shining. Chandler himself was in his finest apparel, his boots carefully cleaned and blacked, and so polished that they reflected images almost equal to a looking-glass; his pants, vest, and coat had been carefully brushed and neatly adjusted to his person. His shirt bosom and collar were white and unsoiled, the collar high and stiff; his beard closely shaved, his whiskers brushed, and his hair neatly combed and oiled; and on his hands were a pair of black kid gloves, a rare article of apparel at that time in Iowa.

He thought he was neat and handsome, but his freckled face, red whiskers, and sandy hair presented to my vision an ugly appearance, particularly just at that time. But his physiognomy did not strike the perceptions of Miss Scott with the same unfavorable impression that it did mine. He was very politely invited into the house, and great consideration shown him by Miss Scott. My slovenly appearance was by no means as attractive as his, and he soon engrossed her entire conversation. I could not get in a word, unless it made an unpleasant interruption and she would frequent-

ly give me a piercing significant look, as though she wished she had her ring back, but she did not get it.

I stood this indifferent treatment a while with efforts to change the state of affairs, but in vain. I got up, took my hat, and bid the enchanted pair good bye, which appeared to give them both satisfaction, as they apparently thought my room better than my company. I left in not a very good humor, my mind bent on mischief, and the only consideration with me was, how I could accomplish it. The sun was now sinking close to the western horizon, and I had about eight miles to trudge afoot and alone over a muddy road to reach home. As I left the house my path led me by where Chandler's horse was hitched; and as I came up to the steed the thought flashed across my mind, here is a chance to ride. I gathered up a small switch, untied the horse, and sprang upon his back. Just as I lighted into the seat, I heard the mutterings of Chandler and the tramp of his feet coming towards me; I did not stop to learn what he wanted, but I applied the switch to the horse, and he went over the ground with the rapidity of the wind, and soon the voice of Chandler was left in the distance, and I got home before dark. And the result of his impudent intrusion was, that I got a ride home, and he, in his neat clothes and his fine polished boots, had to trudge his way through the mud on foot.

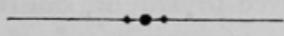
Chandler was rather of a vicious disposition, and I did not know but he might feel disposed to give me trouble. I left the horse at the hotel stable, with directions to give it to him when called for, made friendly negotiations with the magistrates, and found it convenient to be absent about the time I thought Chandler would come to town. But he did not feel disposed to make trouble, thinking that his triumph over me with Miss Scott was ample satisfaction. But Chandler's days of triumph, like my own, were of short duration, for not long after his achievements over myself, a company of cavalry was ordered into the Indian country, and stationed about twenty miles from Fairfield. Their

mail came to Fairfield, and the officers were frequently in town, and they made the acquaintance of Miss Scott. Shining buttons and shoulder straps had a greater attraction for her ladyship than the fine horse and nice clothes of Chandler, and in the circle where the rays of her love and affections shone forth, he was laid in the shade. A few months after my Sunday visit, and after Chandler had lost his strong hold on her affections, I accidentally met Miss Scott at the house of our mutual acquaintance, and we had some pleasantries at Chandler's expense. I returned to her the ring I had received at her hand, and we parted good friends.

After the purchase of 1842, the Sacs and Foxes, who at that time had their villages on the Des Moines, in what is now Wapello county, moved higher up the river, and located their wigwams near the Raccoon Fork, and the government established a garrison at that point, which was called Fort Des Moines; and in the spring of 1843 this company of cavalry, with other troops, were ordered to that place. As attaches to the garrison, several persons with their families got permits from the government to settle in the vicinity of the fort; and Miss Scott was induced to go to that place and make her home with one of these families. And it was said to the wiles she had practiced upon others, she became a victim herself, and in an unguarded hour lost her self-support, and to hide her shame, resorted to improper medical treatment, which was the means of terminating her existence, and she died not a very happy or enviable death.

Miss Scott's going away terminated my acquaintance with her, but not with Miss De Lashmat. The contrast between the appearance and bearing of these two young ladies when I first became acquainted with them was great, and their future prosperity and happiness was equally so. Miss De Lashmat placed her affections upon a respectable and industrious young man, which were cordially reciprocated, and they were married. Though starting on the journey of life with very limited means, by their joint industry they rapidly accumulated property, and soon were in possession

of a good farm and a comfortable home. They became the parents of six children, and spent many happy days. While the children were of tender years the father took sick and died, but the mother took charge of the farm and raised the children. After the children got old enough to provide for themselves, she was married again to a man of means and influence, and she was beloved by her children, and honored and respected by all her acquaintances.



NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY.

by J. C. Bloomer

NO. 8.

AT the January session of the Board of Supervisors, John Bratten was elected chairman for the year 1863, and the following new members took their seats: Perry Reel, from Crescent; J. M. Sigler, from Boomer; Samuel Kirkland, from Rockford; A. M. Battelle, from Knox; and W. W. Wilson, from Macedonia. The proceedings of the Board this year did not extend beyond the usual settlements with county and township officers, auditing claims against the county, and the management of the swamp and school lands. The state tax was two mills, the county tax four mills, and school tax one mill. In June, the Board resolved to contribute towards the expense of suits brought in this and other counties to test the right of the railroads to swamp land situated in the odd sections. The claim of the county to these lands had been set aside by an order of Secretary Thompson, of the Interior Department, and the lands certified to the railroads, which, in spite of all opposition, have continued to hold them. The suits commenced to test the titles were all compromised before being passed upon by the Supreme Court of the United States. In many cases, the county had given a quit-claim

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