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EARLY TIMES IN IOWA.

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From a Private Diary.

Dickey's Hotel.

THOMAS DICKEY in the early days of Iowa was quite noted as a hotel keeper, and was the first man who opened a house for that purpose in Fairfield. He commenced this business in a log house about twenty feet square, with only one room on the ground, and a loft made by the elevation of the roof, sufficient for two beds. But the profits of his business were such, that he was enabled to enlarge his house; and when I first came to the place, his hotel consisted of a log house and a frame. The frame was about twenty by thirty feet on the ground, two stories high, with a small addition to the back part for a kitchen. The frame was partitioned off below into a dining room, a parlor, and a bed room. From the dining room between the bed room and parlor was a flight of stairs, for access to the upper story, beneath which there was a large closet. To ascend the stairs there were two steps before passing the door, and then there was a very broad step. The upper story was all

in one room, which was pretty well filled up with beds, and was called by the boarders, the prairie bed room. The log department was used mostly as a reception room, but in it was kept the post office, and Dickey had the honor of being post master.

Dickey's family consisted of himself and wife, a son and daughter just entering upon their teens, and a youngster wrapped with his swaddling-cloth. When I arrived at the hotel it was after the middle of the day and the regular hour for dinner had passed, but a meal was soon prepared and I sat down to the table by myself, and the only food on the table was fried middling, corn bread, a cup of coffee, and crab-apple butter. I was waited upon by Miss Adeline Dickey, who was very polite, and rather attractive in her manners and dress. Her outer covering was a pair of coarse heavy shoes and a red woolen frock. Her hair was neatly tied up with corn shucks. There were at that time as regular boarders, Charles F. Emery, James Rice, Thomas Jones, Richard Irwin, and David and William Lyons, all bachelors. Emery was a painter by trade, assumed many airs, was not fond of work, and it was a mystery to many how he made his living. A clerk in one of the stores accused him of being a little too free with the goods, at which Emery became very indignant, and made a fierce attack upon the clerk, in which pistol shots were discharged but no one was hurt. This affair caused Emery to leave rather unceremoniously and he went to parts unknown, and it was afterwards reported that he was sent to the penitentiary for robbing the mail. James Rice was a man about thirty years old, claimed to be of high southern blood, and was fond of telling of what he had been and done. While at the hotel he had no business. He suddenly disappeared, and no one knows what became of him. Thomas Jones was a plasterer by trade. He had a blemish in one eye and to hide the deformity he wore green glasses. He was rather prepossessing in his manners, very fond of, and had the faculty to ingratiate himself into the good will of the fair sex, and his inclina-

tions that way frequently led him into trouble. He left the place at an early date, and of his career after leaving Fairfield but little is known. Richard Irwin was a little red-headed Irishman, a man of business turn, and was noted for his cleanliness, and for having every garment of his wardrobe neatly adjusted to his person. He clerked in a store for a while and then went into business for himself. One day he undertook to take some liberties with the kitchen girl, which she did not like. Although she was of German birth, her parents poor, and she had to maintain herself by her own industry, yet she was naturally rather interesting, and had a due respect for herself, and for his impertinence she slapped him in the face with a dirty dish-cloth, which very much besmeared his face and clothes. He wished to keep this matter a secret, but it became known, and his associates were not backward in asking him about the Dutch kiss. This rebuff wounded his pride, and made a deep impression on his feelings, and soon after he was the means of the girl leaving her situation, and going to parts unknown to her employer. Irwin had been engaged in mercantile business about two years, when he closed up his business and fitted himself out to cross the mountains for Oregon. The slap he got from the German girl was attended with peculiar results. Instead of raising his contempt, it caused him to not only respect but to love her. After Irwin left for Oregon, it was ascertained that when the girl left Fairfield she went to Illinois, where she attended school at his expense, and when he started on his journey he took her with him as his lawful wife.

David and William H. Lyons were brothers, and carpenters by trade. David, the elder of the two brothers, was noted as being of a very sedate, dignified demeanor, and on account of his bearing he was frequently called deacon. A few days after I came to the place, one bright sun-shiny afternoon, we were sitting on a bench in front of the hotel, when there come in sight an emigrant wagon, in which there were a large number of youngsters, who, as soon as we saw

them, for some intuitive cause, attracted the special attention of Lyons. In the hind end of the wagon there were two nearly full-grown buxom-looking girls. He steadily fixed his eyes upon them, and closely watched them till he could no longer see their faces, when he remarked, "that girl on this side is going to be my wife." At that time, no one in the place knew the emigrants, or from where they came, or where they were going. But it turned out, that they went into the western part of the county and squatted down upon the public lands, and a few weeks after, this girl came to the hotel to work. This buxom girl was Miss Mary Ann Priest, and in less than a year, she became the wife of Lyons. Lyons soon after his marriage was elected justice of the peace, and in his official capacity commanded respect, and dealt out justice with an impartial hand. But he did not long enjoy the society of his young wife or the honor of his office, for he was taken sick and departed this life.

William H. Lyons was a large, well-formed man, but his face was a little freckled, and he had carrot-red hair. He was ambitious of honor, had much to say about political matters, was elected to represent the county in the first state legislature, and served at both the regular and called sessions.

Among the early settlers at Iowa City was the Rev. W. W. Woods, who had the honorable title of D. D. attached to his name, and was generally known as Dr. Woods. He was a man of genteel address, well educated, an eloquent speaker, pleasing in his manners, and had a very interesting family, consisting of himself and wife, and some ten children, of whom six were girls. At the time Lyons was in the legislature, Lourinda and Eudora, the two oldest girls, had arrived at the age of maturity, and were regarded as the belles of the city. The Doctor lived in one of the largest dwellings then in the place, and his house, for early times, was elegantly furnished. The girls were all good-looking, well informed, naturally of a most lively turn, and could discourse sweet music with their voices, and play on the or-

gan or piano. The Doctor kept a sort of an open house, and almost everybody who visited Iowa City, particularly the younger class, called on the Doctor's family, and there was scarcely an evening that his house was not visited by more or less company. At an early hour in the evening, while the two oldest girls remained at home, they generally presided in the parlor; later, after he had left his study, the Doctor, with his wife and younger children, frequently participated in entertaining company, and there were many individuals, who visited Iowa City in early times, that could bear witness of whiling away leisure hours very pleasantly in the company of the members of this family.

Lyons, fond of gay company, early in the first session of the legislature, sought an introduction to these young ladies. He became very much interested in the family, and particularly in Miss Eudora, and his visits were frequent; and from the polite attention he received he fancied himself to be a special favorite. And presuming on his standing as a member of the legislature, the thought frequently flashed across his mind, that at some future day he might be regarded as a member of the family. About the close of the extra session, he made bold to unfold to his favorite the thoughts of his bosom. Miss Eudora had a great aversion to red hair, and to his proposal she was frank to mention this, and she also enquired after his calling and his means of giving her a support. On his way home, this young lady's image seemed to be constantly before his vision, and he could hardly think or talk about any thing else. And he soliloquized after this manner: "I am young,—healthy,—have a good trade—but I will not work at that. Miss Eudora shall not be the wife of a mechanic. I have talent for business. I have been honored with a seat in the legislature. My prospects for honor and wealth in the future are equal to those of any young man. To gain the hand of Miss Eudora, I shall work hard, she shall never want. The objection to my poverty, I can overcome. But my red hair! It was not my fault that I had red hair. I was thus

born. I never liked the color of my hair. I would have changed it in my childhood if I could. But oh! she objects to my red hair. What shall I do?"

Early in the spring, after the adjournment of the legislature, there was a political convention called at Iowa City, and Lyons succeeded in getting himself elected as a delegate. A few days before the convention, early one morning, I got up and took a walk. The street on which I returned, led me to pass from the back part to the front part of a store; and as I turned the corner, my eyes unexpectedly met with a hideous, deformed, and frightful looking object. On the head was long black hair, standing out like the quills of a frightened porcupine. The face had some semblance to that of a human being, but was unlike any thing had ever seen before. From the head down to the ground was long, shaggy, dark hair; not a sign of a foot or a paw was to be seen. The image startled me. I could not imagine what it was. I thought to make a hasty retreat, but on reflection, I concluded to take a second look. Tremulous fear came over me, and I could not decipher what was before me. I exclaimed with an agitated, emphatic tone: "What are you? Are you man, beast, or the devil?" My mind was made up to leave as fast as my feet would take me, when there came a voice that I recognized. It was the voice of Lyons. Lyons in his anxiety to change the color of his hair, had sent and got some hair dye, an article which was at that time unknown to me. The dyeing material was a powder, and the process of using it was to sprinkle the powder in the hair, then wet it, and tie up the hair with a napkin, and let it remain until the hair was dry. Lyons had applied the preparation just before going to bed, and the moisture had run down over his face and neck, in large and small quantities, till his visage presented as many shades and colors as the leaves of the forest, after the autumn frosts. He had arisen early and gone to the looking glass, to see what effect the dye had on his hair, and being much pleased with the color, had carefully combed it, and

then tried to wash the stains off his face with water, but did not succeed. This so much excited him, that he did not stop to put on his clothes, but gathered up a large buffalo robe which was in the room, wrapped it around him, and hastened to the store, to get a cake of cleansing soap to take the dye off his face, and was pounding at the door for entrance, when I met him. Lyons worked at his toilet, till, by the time he went to Iowa City, he had got his face, hair, and every article of his clothing to his liking. When he arrived at Iowa City, he met at the hotel Dr. W., a young man from the northern part of the State, of fine address, and dark hair. He had just finished his course of medical studies, and had come down to Iowa City, for a little recreation. Quite an intimacy sprung up between them and in the evening Lyons proposed to the young Doctor to go with him and visit the Misses Woods. The young ladies treated their guests with unusual courtesy, so much so, that it was a late hour at night before they left. The consideration shown him at this visit by Miss Eudora, led Lyons to believe that the objection to him on account of his red hair was removed, and that his future prospects were bright. Early the next morning, the young Doctor and Lyons bid each other good bye, and started for their respective homes. The previous evening's entertainment had made a deep impression on the feelings of the young Doctor, and though he had started for his home, his thoughts were more from whence he came, than where he was going. When he got to Cedar River he found it full of floating ice, and the ferryman told him that it was not safe to cross. Just at this time it did not take very strong arguments to convince him that this was a fact; and not wishing to endanger his life, he concluded to return to Iowa City, and stay there until the floating ice ceased to obstruct the crossing. This delayed him at Iowa City for three days, and a large portion of his time was spent in the company of the Misses Woods. These visits of the young Doctor made such an impression on the mind of Miss Eudora, that if she

had ever had any intentions of marrying Lyons her feelings became changed by the time of their next meeting. Not many weeks after the convention Lyons found it convenient to visit Iowa City again, and at this time renewed his proposal to Miss Eudora, to which she replied, "Mr. Lyons, you bear deception on your head, I fear you do in your heart," and got up and left the room. This ended Lyons' visits to Dr. Woods', and not many months after Miss Eudora became the wife of Dr. W.

Lyons next paid his addresses to Miss Dickey. Her hair had some semblance to his own, and as the color of his hair formed no objection to a mutual attachment, their partiality to each other led to the belief that they would be married. But there was an interruption to their mutual affections, and quite unexpectedly her hand was given in marriage to another. Lyons became disgusted with Iowa, and soon after Miss Dickey's marriage left and went to California, where he found a lady who was willing to become his wife. They were married, and he settled down to business habits. He was several times a member of the legislature, and became a man of prominence and wealth.

Mrs. Dickey was a fine looking woman, and when a girl, must have been very attractive. She was a member of the Methodist Church, rather sedate in her manners, exemplary in her daily associations, and was beloved and respected by all her acquaintances.

Adeline Dickey was a full-faced, plump, little girl; always full of life and activity, fond of sport and fun, and afforded much amusement to the inmates of the house.

Dudley Dickey was a fine looking boy, of a taciturn disposition, and but little disposed to associate with those of his years. He became very fond of cards when a youth, and as he grew up to manhood he became quite an expert in handling these devices. He was not disposed to labor, always dressed well, and seemed to have plenty of money, and there were frequent speculations where it came from. He studied medicine, and after finishing his course of lectures he went to California.

Such were the inmates of Dickey's Hotel, when I first came to the place, and at this hotel, though not furnished with the luxury of public houses of later days, all were contented, and they passed many pleasant hours.

Thomas Dickey was a stout, well-built man, had a dark piercing eye, heavy eyebrows, black hair, a projecting chin, and big mouth and nose. There was something forbidding in his countenance, and he seldom looked a person in the face when in conversation with him. He was very polite in his manners; always treated his guests with great attention and the best his means afforded; a man of perfect control of his feelings, and seldom ever showed anger; was kind-hearted, social and companionable with those he liked, never contentious, or openly resented an insult. His neighbors used to complain about losing wood, and other small things, and were not backward in telling Dickey he stole them, which was generally turned off with a laugh as being a joke. He was very indulgent to those who owed him, his boarders and guests frequently leaving without paying their bills; but he always had money when needed, though he was slack in paying his debts, and it was with some a mystery how he kept up his house.

One stormy winter evening a well-dressed young man came to Dickey's with a pair of fine horses. At a late hour that night two other men came to the hotel, making inquiries for a man and horses of like description. The sequel showed that these animals were two celebrated race horses. The young man was arrested, and after a trial was bound over by the magistrate under a heavy bond. There being no jail at Fairfield at that time, and the young man not being able to give security, it was determined to take him to some other county for safe keeping. It being late in the day before the trial was finished, it was concluded not to start with the prisoner till the next day, and that he might not get away, four trusty men were appointed to guard him. The prisoner had been lodged on a pallet in the closet under the stairs. The only door to the closet

opened into the parlor, and that night the guard staid in the parlor and sat up all night, but, to pass off the time, engaged in playing cards. That he might not be disturbed in his sleep, the prisoner requested that the door might be closed, which was granted. The next morning, when the guard came to look for their prisoner, they found the chamber door open, the broad step in the stairs taken up, and the prisoner and the best horse gone. It was evident the young man could not have effected his escape without help, and it was noticed that after he was gone Dickey was flush with money, but as to who helped him there were many surmises, but no proof.

Dickey was always forward in condemning the evil acts of others and in bringing wrong-doers to justice. At one time Matthew Sparlock, a reputed manufacturer of dies and spurious coins, had been arrested and brought to this hotel. While the officer was waiting to give him an opportunity to get bail, Dickey, not supposing Sparlock was within his hearing, commenced denouncing him in the most bitter terms. Sparlock listened to his remarks a short time, then advanced to his view, and remarked: "Dicky, won't you lend me your button-molds?" Dickey apparently would not have been more alarmed had some one shot at him with a deadly weapon, and immediately left the crowd, and was not seen any more till after Sparlock left. An explanation to this sudden change in Dickey's bearing was sought, when it was ascertained that Sparlock at a previous date had made for Dickey a set of dies for making spurious coins.

At one time Dickey had a large number of visitors, and his provisions were rather short. A man from the country came into town with a parcel of chickens to sell, for which he wanted the money, and offered to sell them to Dickey, but he not being able to pay for them at the time did not get them. When the countryman had done bantering with Dickey, he offered them to John Ratliff, who was the keeper of a grocery store, and at the time under the influence of liquor, and had been standing by while Dickey was trying

to purchase the chickens. Ratliff and the farmer soon made a trade, and after Ratliff had bought the chickens he divided them into two equal parts, and, coming up to Dickey, in the presence of his guests, said: "By G—d, sir,—here, I give you one-half of these chickens, sir. I know you are just waiting to see who would buy them and where they would be put, so that you could go to-night and steal them, for these gentlemen have got to have something for supper and breakfast, and you have not got a d—n thing to feed them with, and cannot get it unless you steal it, so just take one-half of these and let the other alone, for I am going to have some company and want some chickens myself, sir; so just take them and let the others alone, for you know you are an old thief, stealing everything you can get hold of." And having thus addressed Dickey, threw down the chickens at his feet, and Dickey, laughing, gathered them up and carried them away. But Ratliff afterwards claimed that Dickey was not satisfied with one-half of the chickens, and insisted that in order to feed his company he had to have more chickens, and came in the night and stole those he had reserved for himself.

In the spring of 1842, for the purpose of getting rid of some old debts which were hanging over him where he came from, Dickey filed his petition in bankruptcy, and in due course of time got his discharge. But immediately after commencing proceedings in bankruptcy, he tore away the log part of his house, bought an addition to his lot, and commenced the erection of a new addition to his hotel, a building about thirty by forty feet on the ground and two stories high, an enterprise of such an extent that but few persons in those days undertook in Iowa. But Dickey was ambitious, and the house, in due course of time, was finished.

Many wondered, after having sworn that he had surrendered all the property he possessed for the payment of his debts, how he got the means to erect so extensive a house, but none of his creditors saw fit to make this inquiry, and

where the money came from was known to none but himself. The front part of the upper story of the house was finished off into a dancing hall — the back part into bedrooms. After the house was finished, on the 22d of February, 1843, the hall was dedicated by one of the largest and most brilliant parties that at that time had ever been held in this part of Iowa.

In the latter part of the summer of 1842 there was a horse race at Fairfield between a celebrated horse owned by Orson Kinsman, of Brighton, and a young horse owned by Jonathan Dyer, who lived about three miles south of Fairfield, commonly known as the "Dyer colt." The expectation that this would be an interesting match brought a large number of sporting men to witness the race. This was the first time the Dyer colt had ever been matched against a regular race horse, and he succeeded in winning. About the time the race was over two men came up on horseback, and hitched their horses in front of the hotel. One was riding a large, strong, well-made horse, which, from every appearance, was more suitable for a dray horse than the course; the other rode a small pony. The men were rather coarsely dressed, with small bundles fastened behind their saddles, and had every appearance of travelers. After the race was over, there was a large collection of men assembled at the hotel, and the friends of the Dyer colt were very jubilant at the result of the race. Jacob L. Sears, a prominent man from the western part of this county, proposed to bet three hundred dollars that the Dyer colt could beat any horse in Iowa. This remark coming to the ears of the strangers, one of them evidently became interested, and in a low-toned, drawling voice, as though half in sport and half in earnest, remarked:—
"Stranger, I will take that bet."

Sears replied: "Where is the horse you propose to run?"

The traveler answered: "That horse hitched to the post."

At first the attention of the spectators was turned to the man, and then to the horse with earnest looks, as if the inquiry was being made in their minds, whether the man was drunk or a fool.

After attracting the attention of the bystanders a few moments, the stranger said: "May be you think I have not got the money," and pulled out of his pocket a large roll of bank bills.

The attention was then turned towards Sears, to see what he would do. Sears eyed the stranger closely, and apparently come to the conclusion in his own mind that he could make the stranger decline to bet, and pulled out his money. But the stranger did not decline. The wager was made, and the stakes were placed in a third party's hands.

This large, clumsy-looking horse proved to be a regularly trained race horse, able to beat nearly every horse with whom he was matched, and belonged to the Freeland Brothers, who at that time were quite noted in the west, and made sporting their business. There were five persons in their party, and they had camped a short distance from town, and sent these two men ahead to accomplish the very thing they had done. The Freelands had a fine stud of race horses, fitted to run from a quarter to a four-mile race. They staid in the vicinity all the fall; went up into the Indian country with their horses at the time of the treaty at which the Indians sold their land, and were said to have taken away with them a large amount of money. While in the Indian country they kept their horses at the stables of William Phelps.

The man who rode the big horse into town was James Drake, a person of curious composition; by trade he was a blacksmith, but little inclined to follow that business. He was a ventriloquist, a sleight-of-hand performer, sung comic songs, and played on the fiddle; always apparently happy and in good humor, full of fun, and gave lip and amusement to any crowd he might chance to be in, and always ready to make a bet. Drake went up into the Indian country with

the Freeland's, where he met with Phelps, who was something of Drake's turn, worked himself into his good graces, and through his influence got the appointment of blacksmith for the Indians, a position in which he received good pay and had but little to do. Phelps at that time lived on the banks of the Des Moines, about three miles below Ottumwa, and had charge of an Indian trading house, and kept several persons in his employ.

In the fall of 1842 a company of United States dragoons, commanded by Capt. James Allen, were stationed near Phelps's trading house, and remained there all of the following winter. Barracks were built for the men and stables for their horses, and for a while Phelps's trading post was quite a noted place.

Phelps had, in his younger days, been captain of a steamboat, but had quit that business, and, with his family, moved to this point to engage in trade with the Indians; and there was living in his family Miss Eliza Langford, a sister of Mrs. Phelps. Miss Langford was good looking, neat in her person, fascinating in her manner, coquettish in her turn, and wherever she went attracted attention.

In the fall of 1841 there came to Dickey's hotel, from Springfield, Illinois, a young man by the name of Evan Butler. Butler was a man of genteel appearance, from an influential family, and of a popular turn, and he soon got employment as a clerk in a store. In his political sentiments he was a whig. While in the store he became acquainted all over the county, and made many warm friends. The next summer he became a candidate for recorder, and although the democrats had a large majority in the county, Butler was elected, and entered upon the duties of his office.

Butler became acquainted with Miss Langford, and paid his addresses to her. Drake being at the agency, where young ladies were scarce, was in the habit of whiling away his leisure evenings in her company; and there sprang up a spirited contest between Drake and Butler for her favors,

and she made manifestations of showering down the rains of her love upon each when in her presence, and led each to believe he had the strongest hold upon her affections. Things thus coursed along till Butler proposed marriage, and received in return plighted vows, and it was agreed that the time and place for the marriage should be the 22d of February at the ball which was to come off at Fairfield. On his way home, Butler stopped at Smart's, the Indian interpreter, who lived near the agency and entertained travelers, where he met with Drake and told him of the engagement, and that they were going to be married at the ball. Drake tauntingly replied: "I will bet you fifty dollars you don't." To which Butler said: "I will take that bet," and accompanied the saying by exhibiting fifty dollars. "Enough said," replied Drake, putting his hand into his pocket and pulling out fifty dollars, and the stakes were deposited in the hands of Smart.

At that time pleasure carriages were very scarce; most of the traveling was done on horseback or in farm wagons. At the proper time, Butler procured a pair of fine horses, mounted one with a side-saddle, and with his horses started for Phelps's. When he got there he found Drake with like means of conveyance, ready to take Miss Langford to the ball. And now came a spirited contest as to who should escort Miss Langford. As the spirit of ambition rose high, and to settle a temporary dispute, Phelps proposed to take Miss Langford in his carriage, which was assented to by the contentents, and Drake and Butler accompanied the carriage as cavaliers.

All those living in the Indian country at and near the agency were invited to this dance, and prominent among those who attended were Capt. John Beach, Capt. George Wilson, and Capt. James Allen, with quite a number of his subordinate officers, Josiah Smart, and Phelps. Beach had been educated at the West Point military academy, and graduated in 1832; was promoted to the rank of captain in the regular army, but his hearing became impaired, which

caused him to resign. At that time he held the position of agent for the Sac and Fox Indians, which trust he held as long as these Indians remained in Iowa. When they moved west he resigned his agency and went into the mercantile business at Agency City. But his deafness increased upon him, which caused him to retire from business. Beach was a man whose abilities were such that if it had not been for this misfortune he would have been one of the prominent men of the country. Wilson graduated at West Point in 1830, was promoted to captain, and resigned in 1837; was afterwards a member of the Wisconsin legislature, clerk of the United States district court for Iowa, and at that time had charge of what was called the "Pattern Farm," in the Indian country, made by government to raise produce for and teach the Indians how to cultivate the soil. He afterwards surveyed much of the public lands in Iowa and Wisconsin; was appointed register of the land office at Fairfield, and after he left the land office went to Missouri and engaged in banking. Allen graduated at West Point in 1829; was a classmate of Charles Mason and Robert E. Lee—the former was the first chief justice of Iowa, and the latter became the commander-in-chief of the southern forces in the rebellion. He was a man of small stature, but of a natural military turn, and very popular with his men. He was commissioned captain of a company of dragoons in 1837. In 1842, at the time of the treaty, his company was ordered to Iowa, and remained near the agency till the spring of 1843, when they were stationed at Fort Des Moines, and remained in Iowa till 1846. On the breaking out of the Mexican war he raised a body of troops from the Mormon emigrants on the western slope of Iowa, generally known as the "Mormon Battalion," of which he was commissioned lieutenant colonel. But he did not long enjoy the honors of his promotion, for he was taken sick on his way to New Mexico, and died at Fort Leavenworth on the 23d of August, 1846. Josiah Smart had for a long time been interpreter for the Sac and Fox Indians. At this time

he lived in a large log house, with two rooms below and two above, situated near the agency house. He had quite a large farm made on the Indian lands, and kept teams and hands to work it. He had taken for his wife an Indian squaw, and was the father of two half-breed children — two little girls, both smart, good looking, and interesting in their manner, and he took great pains to give them a good education. He was the owner of two negro slave women, whom he kept to do his domestic work. His house was open for the entertainment of those who visited the agency, and the traveler always found at his house hospitable receptions. He remained in Iowa as long as the Sacs and Foxes staid here, and when they left he followed them to their home west of the Missouri. He died in the winter of 1856-7, and though he spent most of his days in the society of the untutored savage, and took for his bosom companion a woman of the western wilds, yet it was said of him by one who well knew him,—“He was one of the noblest men ever born.”

Everybody in the vicinity in the habit of engaging in such amusements were at this ball. Prominent among the number was John W. Ross. Ross was the son of the late Wm. Ross, at that time the register in the land office. Col. Ross and family were natives of Virginia, and were possessed of the manners and feelings of the first blood of that old state, where they resided till the spring of 1841, when the Colonel received the appointment of register in the land office, and afterwards became a resident of Fairfield. The two Miss Jewetts were there, beautiful and interesting girls, the daughters of John and David Jewett, who were the first settlers in Libertyville. They made claims in the middle of this large prairie when there was not a family living within ten miles of them, and on account of their isolated position this point for many years was called “The Colony.” Andrew J. Davis, from Keosauqua, with the beautiful Miss Alvira Weir, were in attendance. Davis at that time was quite a young man, had just commenced business as a mer-

chant, and became extensively known as a business man. Miss Weir was a girl of medium size, well formed, snow-white skin, with flush cheeks, a keen, piercing, black eye, long, curling black hair, which she generally wore loosely hanging over her shoulders, was well educated, had many admirers, and was generally regarded as the "belle of the west," and on account of her curly hair she was commonly known by the sobriquet of "Miss Curly." Drake contributed to the music for the occasion, and was master of ceremonies.

Capt. Beach, with Miss Langford for his partner, who was gaily attired for her nuptials, led off in the dance. The Captain, trained in military drill and the West Point hop, made a graceful appearance. Next was Phelps, with Mrs. Smart for his partner. Phelps was a man about five feet high, and weighed about two hundred and fifty, but for a jump or a foot-race there were but few who could beat him, and he moved nimbly and gracefully over the floor. Mrs. Smart was a woman of medium size, well proportioned, and straight as an arrow, her long black hair tastefully done up; her dress, neatly fitted to her person, though plain, was probably the most costly of any one in the company; though raised in uncivilized life, and unable to engage in social chat, she gracefully went through the evolutions of the dance, spun across the floor like a top, and attracted general admiration. The first floor was filled up mostly by those from the agency, and the United States uniform showed forth brilliantly. The dance commenced in splendor, and joyfully and merrily went on.

But in a log cabin near by there was, that night, a scene of sorrow and sadness. Dobney Bragg, a young man of much promise a few months previous, had got married, and, with his young bride, left the parental roof and the associations of his youth and came to the new country, among entire strangers, to shape his own course in the journey of life. Bragg and his young wife had made their calculations to attend this ball, but a few days before it came off he was

taken down violently sick with what was called the "winter fever," and as nearly everybody wished to attend the ball, there was no one to watch by his bedside but his wife and myself. Dr. J. C. Ware was his physician, and that evening went to the dance. Medicine had failed to have its desired effect, and his fever increased with alarming fierceness, and about ten o'clock I went to the ball-room for the doctor.

When I entered the room, the doctor was on the floor engaged in a cotillion. I took a seat near one of the bedroom doors; the door was a little ajar. I had been here but a short time when my attention was attracted by an earnest conversation within. In the bedroom was Miss Langford, seated near the corner of the room next to the door. In the opposite part of the room, leaning against the jam of the window, was Drake. Resting his arm on the post of the bedstead stood young Butler, earnestly pressing his claims for Miss Langford's hand in marriage; while Drake remained in his position with an apparent thoughtful, downcast look, but had little to say. Now was a critical time in the events of life. Miss Langford was apparently undecided whose hand to prefer.

The cotillion was over, the music had stopped, and every one was seated, waiting in a speculative suspense for the bridal parties to appear, to show which of the gallants was the favored one. Just at this critical moment a voice was heard, apparently coming from the adjoining room, resembling in tone the voice of Phelps: "Don't take Butler—he has the ——." This surprised Butler, and stopped his entreaties; and Miss Langford, after a searching look at both of her suitors (not suspecting the voice came from Drake), slowly arose from her seat, advanced towards Drake, took his hand, and they, arm-in-arm, came into the ball-room. Poor Butler followed in the rear, and took his position in the opposite part of the room from the doomed couple.

The marriage ceremonies commenced. When they came

to the part, "You promise to take this man for your lawful husband," &c., a tremor came over Miss Langford's person, and she made an effort to unloose the grasp of Drake's hand; but this was not accomplished—he held her fast. This produced a deep sensation among the spectators, and every one was in a breathless silence to see the result. The countenance of Butler lighted up with brilliant hopes. But after a moment's pause she became calm, relaxed her effort to sever the grasp, and firmly answered the question in the affirmative, and Miss Langford and Drake were pronounced husband and wife. A few moments after, Smart advanced, congratulated Drake, and gave him the hundred dollars bet, which Drake, with a pleasing smile, quietly put in his vest pocket.

After a few moments spent in receiving congratulations, they wheeled from their positions into place for a cotillion. The set was soon made up, and the dance went merrily on with the married belle.

As soon as the dance commenced, Butler disappeared from the room, and was missing. Dr. Ware started for the sick room, and in a short time after I followed. Just as I turned the corner to go to Bragg's house, I heard the low mutterings of some one. I stopped to listen, and soon discovered in the rear of the hotel, seated on a log, young Butler, soliloquizing thus: "Oh! God! sad I feel! sad I am! My bright hopes of the future have been blasted—and in a way I little thought of, and by one whom I adored and worshipped—Miss Langford. I thought her the best, the noblest, of her sex. With her smiles I was happy; had she given me her hand and heart, as she vowed she would, then I could have braved the rough paths of life, and bid defiance to the frowns of the world. But I have been deceived; my prospects of the future are blasted; life to me is now a burden; I wish I was out of the world. But did Miss Langford intend, did she purpose to deceive me? Though she has given her hand to another, I cannot but think she loved me—that she did intend to fulfill her promise. But that

Phelps — that scoundrel of a Phelps — he caused my disappointment. Why should he have interfered? He is the most contemptible of men — lurking in silent obscurity to hear our talk, and then, at that critical moment, speak — and speak falsely — lie about me, and bemean me. I will have revenge, sweet revenge — but on whom? — not Miss Langford? — no! — but on the scoundrel Phelps. But then — can I forgive Miss Langford? She has wronged me — she has deceived me! Poor, fickle woman — I have not the heart to do her harm; she is a woman, and that shall shield her from my vengeance — oh!! Woman — what is she? she is an angel or a devil! — she can make man's home a heaven, or a hell!"

The failing to win the hand of Miss Langford was a sad disappointment to Butler; his pride was wounded, his ambition checked. His friends noticed a sudden change in his bearing; he dwindled and drooped. Being naturally of weak lungs, consumption fastened upon him with its strong hold, and in less than a year he bid adieu to the sorrows and disappointments of this world, and his remains were consigned to the silent grave.

After listening to Butler's tale, I went back to the bed of the sick man. The doctor carefully examined his patient, changed his medicine, and, after a little delay, went back to the dance. I staid by the bed of the sick man, closely watching the effects of the medicine, but instead of getting better he grew worse, so much so that I became alarmed, and about two o'clock in the morning I went again to the ball-room for the doctor. At this time, instead of the merry dance, there was excitement, noise, and confusion. On this evening Miss Weir was robed in her best attire, and attracted the special attention and admiration of all present. She was decidedly the star of the occasion, and there was quite a rivalry for her hand as a partner in the dance. John W. Ross sought this honor, but for some reason she did not feel disposed to favor his wishes, and to his request she told

him she was too tired to dance at that set, when the following colloquy ensued : —

Ross.—“ I bespeak you for the next set.”

✓*Miss Weir.*—“ For that set I am engaged.”

R.—“ Then for the next set ? ”

W.—“ For that I am engaged also.”

R.—“ For the next ? ”

W.—“ I am engaged.”

R.—“ For the next ? ”

W.—“ I am engaged.”

✓*Ross*, thinking she intended to slight him, pettishly replied : “ I presume, madam, by that time you and your partner will want to go to bed,” and wheeled upon his heel and left.

To this tart repartee *Miss Weir* took exceptions, and became very indignant at the treatment received. She made known her grievances to her gallant, *Davis*, and he immediately, in the ball-room, took *Ross* to task for his impertinence. At this *Ross's* Virginia blood was heated up, and this little punctilio made a fearful break in the joviality of the evening. The ladies were frightened, the men became excited, and there was a fair prospect of serious consequences ; but by the interposition of mutual friends, due apologies were made, the difficulty settled, and the merriment of the evening went joyfully on.

As soon as I could, I procured *Dr. Ware* and *Dr. Spencer* ✓*Crary*, and returned to the sick man. The doctors carefully examined the patient and then retired for consultation. When they returned they gave him more active medicine, and after a short stay returned to the ball-room. The doctors intimated to their patient that he might not get well. At this information he rallied, with all the power his feeble condition would permit, and, casting an anxious look at the companion of his bosom, exclaimed : “ Oh, my wife ! what will become of you if I die ! I can't leave you — I won't leave you ! I won't die — I will get well ! ” Expressions of this kind were frequently uttered in deep agony. At his

bedside could be heard the music of the dance, which before taking sick he had made his arrangements to attend, the thought of which, with the music, seemed to buoy up his sinking spirits. About four o'clock the ball broke up, the music ceased, and the tramp of feet were heard in the streets. He remarked, "The ball is over," which were the last words he spoke, and he rapidly began to sink. I took hold of his arm to feel his pulse, which flickered fainter and fainter till it could be felt no more. He rolled up his eyes, gave one final struggle, and his spirit was gone. His young wife fixed a long, steady gaze upon his lifeless body, then threw herself upon the bed, clasped her arms around his neck, applied sweet kisses to his pallid cheeks, and poured a shower of burning tears over his face. The scene was most affecting. His wife and myself staid by his bedside alone till daylight appeared. I then got help, and his body was duly cared for.

Thus was spent, in Fairfield, the night of the 22d of February, 1843.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY.

BY D. C. BLOOMER.

(Continued from page 53.)

THE beginning of the year 1871 was marked by the assemblage, during the first week in January, of a farmers' institute at the court house in Council Bluffs. It was said to have been the second meeting of the kind ever held in the country, and was attended by President Welch and several of the professors in the state agricultural college, and also by a large number of the farmers in the county. The exercises consisted of addresses, lectures, and discussions on questions connected with farming and stock

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