

wise counselor and a powerful advocate, his rhetoric being effective rather from argument than from tropes or imagery. Making no pretensions to oratory, yet men hung upon his words. Money could not tempt him to encourage needless litigation, or to promote family dissention. As a judge, patient in investigation, discriminating in judgment, compassionate in sentence, his decisions are accepted as final and just.

If we follow him to the fireside, or to the social circle, we find the traits of character distinguishing him in official position still ascendant, but tempered to the occasion. As friend, husband, parent, son, or brother, he more than fulfills every obligation of duty. As a citizen, a civic functionary, or a military officer, duty has been the pivot on which every action turned.

Being in the prime of vigorous manhood, with a clear mind and mature judgment, the state may hope for many years of still further service from him on that bench which he at present illumines and adorns.

✓
THE RIVER OF THE MOUNDS.

BY CHARLES NEGUS. ✓

NEARLY every state has some one particular river which especially attracts the attention of its citizens, on which their minds delight to dwell, about which they bestow their praise. Iowa has the beautiful river Des Moines, on which her citizens delight to bestow their eulogies. More has been said, done, and thought about this river than all the other rivers in the state. In beauty of native scenery, in productiveness of soil, in mineral wealth, and in the many things which attract the attention, and add to the comfort of man, the valley Des Moines is not surpassed by any locality in the world.

The banks of this great water course and the surrounding country bear the marks of having been the home of a numerous people centuries in the past, and that this people were possessed of many of the arts of civilized life. But of what race of people they were, and of the acts and scenes which have taken place in this beautiful valley, we may imagine, but probably never know. Of their habits and customs they have left some marks; but still there is wrapped around these evidences of their doings a mystery which is hard to solve. The record history of this locality is of quite modern date.

The first discovery of this river by Europeans has its romance, and the incidents attending it are apt to make a vivid impression upon the mind of a person when he first learns their history. James (Jacque) Marquette and Louis Joliet made a bold adventure into an unexplored wilderness to find out the truth of reports made to them by the Indians, of the existence of a great river in the west. When they had paddled their canoes up the Fox river, crossed the portage, and reached the waters of the Wisconsin, their guides tried to dissuade them from further pursuing their journey — “telling us,” Marquette says, “that we would meet nations that never spare strangers, but tomahawk them without provocation; that they were at war with each other, which would increase our danger; that the great river was full of perils, and of frightful monsters, which swallowed up men and canoes; that it contained a demon that engulfed all who dare approach; and, lastly, that the excessive heat would infallibly cause our death.”

Failing to dissuade them from pursuing their journey, their guides returned, and left them “alone in this unknown land, in the hands of providence.” Without any one to direct their way, accompanied by only five companions, Marquette and Joliet navigated their canoes down the Wisconsin in search of the great Mississippi; and in seven days “they entered happily the great river, with a joy that could not be expressed.”

They did not stop here, but pursued their journey further

upon unknown waters, and as they sailed down this magnificent stream, passing the numerous sand-bars, the resort of innumerable water fowls, glided by the many islands which dotted the water, covered with dense thickets, and viewed the lofty bluffs and extensive prairies, not a sign of a human being interrupted their course or met their vision for eight days, and they began to think this mighty river was dedicated alone to wild beasts and birds. About sixty leagues below the mouth of the Wisconsin, on the west bank of the Mississippi, for the first time, they discovered the signs of human beings. There they found in the sand footprints of a man. Following these tracks, they discovered a trail leading across a beautiful prairie, and Marquette and Joliet, leaving their canoes in the care of their companions, by themselves alone pursued the unknown path to ascertain whose feet had made it. After walking about six miles they discovered an Indian village on the bank of a beautiful river, and three other villages on a slope at the distance of a mile and a half from the first. This stream was what is known at this time as the crystal waters of the river Des Moines, which at that time was called by the natives *Mon-in-gou-e-na*, or *Moingona*. From whence came the change of name, and what the words *Des* and *Moines* mean, have been matters of some speculation. It has been stated by a learned historian (Bancroft, vol. III. p. 158) that *Des Moines* is a corruption of the Indian word, *Moingona*. It has also been claimed that the meaning of the latter word is, *at the road*. (Iowa Gazetteer, p. 18, Nicollett's report to congress, February 16, 1841, published in 1849, pp. 22 and 23.) It is claimed by others that the name *Des Moines* is of French derivation; that the word *de* or *des* in English means *of the*, and the word *moine* means *monk*, and is here used in the plural, and that the name, as applied to this river, means, the river of the monks. A monk is "a man who retires from the ordinary temporal concerns of the world, and devotes himself to religion. Monks usually live in monasteries, on entering which they take an oath to observe certain rules." It is claimed that there was once a monastery estab-

lished on the banks of this beautiful stream, and from this circumstance it was called the river Des Moines, or the River of the Monks. This conclusion was probably arrived at from the fact that the French word *moine* is sometimes used to designate this class of individuals, and if such was its only use such might be a natural inference. But it is believed that it will be hard to find any well authenticated history, establishing the fact that a monastery was established in this region of country previous to this river bearing this name; or that any monks ever took up their abode in this locality.

The voyage in which this river was discovered was prosecuted by two individuals of different callings, and for different purposes. It was patronized by the French government and the Catholic church. The former, stimulated by a desire of making discoveries and enlarging their possessions; the latter, by a zeal to spread its religion and convert the Indians.

It is difficult to conceive any object the church would have to establish a monastery here, or that this class of individuals of the Catholic faith would have, that would cause them to desire to locate themselves in this far-off lonely wilderness. From these circumstances, to satisfactorily account why this name was given to this river, will require further investigation. In the valley of this river, and on the banks of the Mississippi, especially about Montrose, they found, when these localities were first explored, many mounds. A mound is, "an artificial elevation of earth, terms used technically in the United States as synonymus with barrow, or tumular, designating a large class of aboriginal antiquities or earth-works, scattered through the valley of the Mississippi river and tributaries." There are to be found in the valley "a succession of earth-works extending from the lakes southward to the gulf." Some of these works appear to have been erected for military purposes, and others in connection with religious ideas and the burial of the dead. Most of these mounds are constructed of earth, but some with earth and stone. These works are of various shapes; some "square, terraced, and

ascended by graded ways; some hexagonal, octagonal, or truncated, and ascended by spiral paths;" and some are of an enormous size. There is a mound "on the plain of Cahokia, in Illinois, opposite to the city of St. Louis, which is 700 feet long, by 500 feet broad, at the base, and is 90 feet high, covering over eight acres of ground, and estimated to have 20,000,000 cubic feet of contents."

In some of these works are found many relics of art, "displaying greater skill and advancement in the arts than was known to exist among the tribes found in occupation of this country at the time of the discovery by the Europeans; such as "elaborate carvings in stone; pottery, often of elegant designs; articles of use and ornament in metal, silver, and copper." Things which must have come from distant localities are often found side by side in the same mound. These monuments indicate that the ancient population were numerous and wide-spread; "that their customs, habits, religion, and government, were similar; and that they pursued an agricultural calling; and were possessed, to a great extent, of the arts of civilized life, and a state of society essentially different from the modern race of North American Indians." These works bear the marks of great age, from facts gathered concerning them "we may deduce an age for most of these monuments of the Mississippi valley of not less than 2,000 years. But by whom built, and whether their authors migrated to remote lands under the combined attractions of a more fertile soil, and a more genial climate, or whether they disappeared beneath the victorious arms of an alien race, or were swept out of existence by some direful epidemic, or universal famine, are questions probably beyond the power of human invention to answer." These mounds are numerous in Iowa, and especially in the region of the river Des Moines, and the lower rapids of the Mississippi.

About six miles north of ¹/₂ Ft. Madison, on the road to Burlington, near the brow of a bluff, is a mound about thirty feet long, and fifteen feet wide, making it elliptical in form. In the spring of 1874 a party made an examination

of the interior of this mound, and there was found, "a large number of separate compartments, which were each occupied by a skeleton, and articles of flint stone, and ornamental bones." "The compartments were constructed as follows: first, there was a floor made of limestone, which was evidently brought from a quarry some miles distant, this being the nearest point at which limestone could be obtained. the floor was regular and smooth, the best rock only being used." The sides of these graves seemed to have had stone walls, but when examined had caved in. "The roofs were made of limestone, and closely built. The contents of these compartments were a queer assortment of flint and curiously shaped stones. All the skeletons of human origin were placed in a sitting position, the knees drawn up, and the head leaned over between them." The arms were placed by the side and sometimes dropped over the knees. "Besides human bones, there were bones belonging to large birds, also the bones of some animals, and quantities of charcoal."

About half a mile above Montrose, and about five hundred yards from the river bank, on the prairie, there are five mounds, situated in a straight line, and evidently not the work of nature, but of some anterior race. Their height is about eight feet, and their circumference about one hundred, all nearly of a uniform size. At Kilbourne, in Van Buren county, there are three mounds on an elevated piece of ground, in the back part of the town, in close proximity to each other, which, when built, must have been of a large size. On the middle one, since the county has been settled by the whites, there has been a cabin built, and a large excavation made for a cellar, which has much changed its natural appearance, and the other two have been plowed over till they are apparently much flattened down from what they were originally. A little east of the town, on the brow of a high bluff, there are eight mounds in close proximity to each other. These mounds are located in a straight row, measure from thirty to forty feet across their bases, and are from three to four feet high. About a quarter of a mile north-

east from them, there is another mound about one hundred and fifty feet in circumference, and about five feet high. This mound has been dug into in the centre to the depth of eight feet, but nothing discovered, except that the earth showed that it is artificial work; for, after digging to a level with the surrounding country, the earth was found to be of a dark color, like the prairie soil. About two miles south-east of ^VKilbourne, on the south side of the river, there are two mounds, about fifty yards from each other. These mounds are about one hundred and thirty feet in circumference, and about six feet high, both of which have been dug into and human bones discovered. About a mile from ^VIowaville, on the high bluff on the north-east quarter of section 5, township 70, range 11, there are six mounds of nearly uniform size, each about ninety feet in circumference, and four feet in height, so close together that their bases touch. About a third of a mile, across a deep ravine, on a high hill east of there, there is another mound which is fifty feet across its base, and about five feet high. On the prairie, within the bounds of the laid out town of Iowaville, and on the prairie back of it, there are a large number of tumulars, but none of them exceed two feet in height, are not symmetrical in form, or placed in relevant position to each other, like the works of the mound-builders, and it is not likely they were built by them. Here was once the noted village of the Iowa Indians. The prairie is level, and in wet seasons the water does not readily run off from it. These elevations of the earth were probably made by the Indians, on which to build their wigwams, so that they might not be exposed to dampness.

In Wapello county there is a chain of mounds "commencing near the mouth of Sugar creek, and extending twelve miles to the north-west, at a distance between reaching as far as two miles. The one nearest to the Des Moines is one hundred and forty feet in circumference, and is situated on an eminence, the highest point in the vicinity. The second mound lies directly north of the first, at a distance of about one-fourth of a mile. This mound is two hundred and

twenty-six feet in circumference. In May 1874, a party made an examination of the larger mound, and upon digging into the centre they found "a ledge of stones at the depth of four feet, which bore all the marks of having passed through fire." They also found "a mass of charcoal, a bed of ashes, and calcined human bones.

In sections 30 and 31, in township 72, north, of range 10, west, in Jefferson county, there is some romantic and picturesque scenery. Here may be seen the waters of the Cedar meandering their course along its zigzag channel, sometimes swift and turbid, overflowing its banks, and attaining the size of a large river, but most of the time quietly and gently moving along as clear as a mountain spring. On the south side of this stream the ground is low and level, intersperced with small prairies and groves of timber, with here and there a little pond. On the north side the country is elevated and very broken, being interspersed with high hills and deep ravines, and at the first settling of the country, for a long distance, it was mostly a forest of woodland. At one point, for a number of rods, a high bluff comes up to the stream on one side, and a beautiful low prairie of several acres stretches out from the bank of the creek on the other.

At the first settling of the country, the bluff on the north side, from the bank of the creek for some thirty feet or more high, was nearly perpendicular, and mostly composed of a solid sand-stone, and then, for several feet more, gently sloping back, was earth and rock. This location must have been a place of attraction, and visited by those who had some knowledge of the arts of civilization, long before Iowa was permitted to be settled by the whites; for when this place was first seen by the early settlers of the country, at a point on this bluff most difficult of access, near the top, there was discovered, bedded in, and firmly bolted onto, the solid sand rock, an *iron cross*, the shaft of which was about three feet, and the cross-bar, eighteen inches long. A short distance from this place, a little north-east, on the summit of a high ridge, there is a series of mounds which give evidence of having been built by human hands many years in the past.

These mounds are from twenty to fifty feet across at their bases, and from three to five feet high.

Since the settlement of this country, this sand stone bluff has very much changed its appearance, and no longer presents the lofty front of earlier days. Large quantities of rock have been quarried out and taken away for building purposes: so much so that, instead of being almost perpendicular, it now presents a gradual slope, and the rock on which was fastened the iron cross has been undermined and tumbled down from its elevated position, and the cross has been pried off and carried away by the seekers of curiosities.*

† Sac City, the county seat of Sac county, is situated on a beautiful site in the bend of the Raccoon river. Within the limits of this town there are found eight mounds "arranged in a general direction from north-east to south-west, but without regular order, the distance between the extremities in that direction being a little less than six hundred feet, and in the transverse direction, less than one hundred feet." Two of the mounds are elliptical in form, and the others are circular. The two elliptical ones are located farthest to the north-east. One of the elliptical mounds is ninety feet in diameter, east and west, and thirty feet north and south, and two feet high; the other, sixty by thirty feet, and two feet high. The circular mounds range from sixty to eighty feet in diameter, and from two and one-half to six feet high. These mounds have been dug into, but no human bones or works of art have been discovered.†

These works are peculiar to the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries, and are not found in European countries, and when the French took possession of this country, they had to designate them by some name, and called them

* A portion of this cross is now in the possession of the author of this sketch, and has the appearance of having been long exposed to the weather.

† The writer is informed that these mounds are found all along the valley Des Moines, and in various other parts of the state. It has been quite recently that his attention has been turned to the inquiries about the mounds, and the above described are the only ones of which he has been able to get accurate information.

moines. And from the fact that there were a great many mounds found in the valley of the river Des Moines, and about the lower rapids of the Mississippi, especially at and near Montrose, it is reasonable to suppose that the Indian name of Moingona was abandoned, and that this river and these rapids were designated by the French as the river Des Moines, and the rapids Des Moines, which mean the river of the mounds, and the rapids of the mounds. Gen. Pike and other early writers in speaking of this river, and these rapids, call them the river Des Moines and the rapids Des Moines. But in the act of congress defining the boundaries of the state of Missouri, it describes the line of the northern boundary as being in the "parallel of latitude which passes through the rapids of the river Des Moines." From these words, after the settling of Iowa, the Missourians claimed the rapids referred to were in the great bend of the river, near the town of Keosauqua, and set up title, and claimed jurisdiction over the territory in Iowa to a line due west through that point, which was the cause of much ill feeling between the authorities and citizens of the two governments, and the means of calling into requisition the civil and military authorities of both parties interested, and of a lengthy litigation in the United States supreme court. All of which would probably have been avoided, had the true meaning of the words been understood, or the rapids described as the rapids of the mounds.

Those of the European race who first set foot on Iowa soil, have a history that is worthy of being known and remembered. Louis Joliet, one of the company who first explored the eastern border of Iowa, was born at Quebec, probably in the first half of the sixteenth century; he lived to be quite an old man, and died about the year 1730. He was noted as being a bold, daring youth, and fond of adventures. He received his education at the Jesuit college at Quebec, but instead of turning his attention to some profession, he in early life pushed his way into the western wilderness, and engaged in the fur trade with the Indians, and thus became familiar with their habits and language. His

reputation for boldness, prudence, and experience, with the Indians, became such that he was selected by Frontenac and Toland, the governor and intendent of Canada, acting under the direction of the French government, to explore the great river of the west, about which there had been so much heard from the Indians. Accompanied by only Marquette and five other Frenchmen, he left Quebec to push his way into the far distant prairies of the West, among unknown savage tribes of Indians. In this exploration he was engaged four months, and traveled 2,500 miles; took observations of the country, and made notes of the things he saw, with a view of making an elaborate report to his government on his return. He had the misfortune of losing his journal in "the rapids below Montreal," but he wrote out from memory, as well as he could, a history of his voyage, and made a map of the country he had explored. The French government gave him for his services the island of Anticosti, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, where he built a house and fort for the purpose of settling there with his family, and embarking in trade; but he seems to not have remained there long, and subsequently engaged in business in the west. "In 1691 this island was captured by a British fleet, and his property destroyed," and "of his subsequent history but little is known."

James (Jacques) Marquette was born in Laon, France, in 1637, died in May, 1675. At the age of 17 he entered the society of Jesus, and in 1666 sailed for Canada as a missionary. He spent about eighteen months in the vicinity of Three Rivers, where he learned the language of several Indian tribes, and in April, of 1668, he went to lake Huron, where he established a missionary station. He did not stop here long, but during that year he was sent still farther west to a place called La Point, among the Ottawas and Hurons, who at that time lived in the northern part of Wisconsin, near the shores of Lake Superior, where he learned from "an Illinois captive the dialect of that nation," which was afterwards of much service to him.

The Ottawas and Hurons became involved in a war with

the Sioux, and were driven from their country, and Marquette followed the Hurons to Mackinaw, where he pursued his labors as a missionary, and built a chapel. But his being driven from La Point did not abate his zeal; he wrote to his superior from Mackinaw, "I am ready to leave this place in the hands of another missionary, and go, on your order, to seek new nations toward the South sea, who are still unknown to us, and teach them of our great God, whom they have hitherto not known."

In his intercourse with the Indians he had heard of a great river in the west, and as early as 1669 had resolved to explore this country and visit "the river and the nations that dwell upon it, in order to open a passage to so many of our fathers who had so long awaited this happiness." But his desire to see this great river was not gratified till 1673. In that year the French government sent out Joliet to explore this country, and find out the direction and mouth of the Mississippi, when Marquette was instructed to accompany the party as a missionary.

The company left Mackinaw in two canoes on the seventeenth of May, and made their way for the Wisconsin by way of Green bay, Fox river, and the portage, and floated down the waters of the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, which they reached on the seventeenth of June. Marquette, with Joliet pursued their journey down the river to near the mouth of the Arkansas, where they held a council, and on the seventeenth of July turned their course homewards. Marquette stopped with the Indians to pursue his labors as a missionary, while Joliet returned to Quebec to report the results of their exploration.

Marquette remained with the Indians till in the spring of 1675, when, his health failing him, he started to Canada. He entered a little stream in Michigan, where he made a stop to engage in religious devotions. Here he erected an altar, and when he had said mass he asked those who accompanied him to leave him by himself for a half-hour.—

———"in the darkling wood,
Amidst the coolness and silence knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks and supplication."

At the end of the half-hour his companions returned to him: his body was there, but his spirit was gone. His companions buried his body on the banks of this stream, which circumstance caused it to be called Marquette, and his memory is perpetuated by this river still bearing that name. But the respect for him was such that his remains were not permitted to rest in this then lonely place, but in 1677 were taken up and carried to Mackinaw, there they were deposited in the place assigned for the dead.

On the 25th of June, 1673, Marquette and Joliet stood on the high bluffs of the Mississippi, examining a little foot-path leading into a beautiful prairie, somewhere near the point where has since been built the town of Montrose, which was then many days travel from the abode of civilized man. Imagine the thoughts which passed through their minds. They were alone, far from home and protection. It was evident this path had been beaten by the wild uncivilized savage, whom to meet in this wilderness the chances might be death. They had been sent to make discoveries; their missions prompted them to see and learn all they could, and it was evident to them that to pursue this path they would meet with those who made it. Their eagerness to learn prompted them to hazard all danger, and leaving their five companions with their boats they commenced to tread the beaten track, and pursue its winding way till they discovered the wig-wams of those who had made it. They advanced undiscovered near enough to hear the talk of the occupants. In order to show they meant no surprise or harm, they made a halt "and commending themselves to God," by a loud cry announced their presence. And here on the picturesque banks of the river Des Moines was the first meeting of the white Europeans and the red man of the wilderness on the prairies of Iowa.

Their apprehensions of danger were soon made to vanish; they found themselves among friends who were glad to see them and give them their hospitality, and do them homage. Their reception, so far as the means and ability of the red

man would permit, was a splendid ovation. Four of their old men were deputed to meet them, and as they approached near the strangers, introduced themselves by saying, "we are Illinois" (which means, we are men), and presented them with the calumet of peace, and invited them to their village. As they entered the town an aged chieftain, on receiving them at his wig-wam, with uplifted hands, exclaimed, "How beautiful the Sun! Frenchmen, when you come to see us, our whole village awaits thee; you shall enter in peace into all our dwellings," and tendered them with unfained sincerity their hospitality. On arriving in their village, all the inmates turned out with a wondering curiosity to see their strange visitors.

Marquette (who could speak their language) told them of the object of their visit, that they had been sent by the French, their friends. He spoke to them of the great God of the white man and the red man, and of his peaceful teachings. To which the sachem of the tribe replied as follows: "I thank the black-gown (Marquette), and the Frenchman (Joliet), for taking so much pains to come to visit us, never has the earth been so beautiful, nor the sun so bright as now; never has the river been so clear, nor so free from rocks, which your canoes have removed as they passed; never has our tobacco had so fine a flavor, nor our corn appeared so beautiful as we behold it to-day. Ask the great spirit to give us life and health, and come thou and dwell with us."

Such was the first interview between the white man and the red man, within the boundaries of Iowa. After these ceremonies the cravings of hunger were provided for, by a feast of Indian delicacies. Marquette says, "the feast consisted of four courses, which we had to take with all their ways. The first dish was a great wooden dish full of sagamity, that is to say, of Indian meal boiled in water, and seasoned with grease. The master of ceremonies, with a spoon of sagamity presented it three or four times to my mouth as he would to a little child; he did the same to Joliet. For the second course, he brought in another dish

containing three fish; removed the bones, and having blown upon it to cool it, put it into my mouth as he would food to a bird. For a third course, they produced a large dog, which they had just killed, but learning we did not eat it, it was withdrawn. Finally, the fourth course was a piece of wild buffalo, the fattest portions of which were put into our mouths."

After six days delay and an invitation to new visits, Marquette and Joliet took their departure from the village of their new acquaintances, accompanied to their boats by an escort of six hundred Indians. They bid the Indians a parting farewell, embarked in their boats, and soon passed down the river out of sight of their new formed acquaintances. Thus ended the first social interview between the untutored Indians and white men, that ever took place on the soil of Iowa.

The Illinois Indians, a nation composed of the Kaskaskian, Cahokian, Peorian, Michigan, and Temori tribes, were once a great and powerful people, and occupied as their hunting grounds a large portion of Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. Tribes that once ranked among the largest and most powerful nations on the continent, they numbered their warriors by thousands, and bid defiance to their enemies. But, like other nations, they had their rise and fall, they came and went. At first they were weakened by the powerful Iroquois from the east, and the fierce and warlike Sioux from the north, and west. The once subdued Sacs and Foxes, leaving their former homes on the St. Lawrence, moved west, and by uniting their forces as one people, gradually became strong and powerful, and commenced their aggression on the grounds of the Illinois.

About the middle of the seventeenth century there lived in his prime, the great Indian chief Pontiac, who, by his power of intellect, art of combination, industry, skill, and bravery, had made himself the acknowledged leader of the tribes in the west; a ruler with despotic power, who had endeared himself in the hearts of the red men as their father. He was wantonly murdered by a Kaskaskia warrior,

a member of the Illinois confederacy, which act aroused the wrath and vengeance of the Sacs and Foxes, and enkindled a fierce and terrible war against this nation, which was carried on with hate and slaughter by the Sacs and Foxes and their allies, till this once great and powerful nation was exterminated, and no longer had a power or name among the nations of red men. The name of a great state and a noted river perpetuate their memory, but as a people they have long since ceased to exist.

The river Des Moines was embraced in the Louisiana Purchase, and came into the possession of the United States April 30th, 1803. The contracting parties at that time knew but little of the beautiful scenery and rich soil skirting the banks of this river, and little did they calculate the vast population that was to reside, and the enormous wealth that would be accumulated, here in this great valley. This locality must have especially attracted the attention of the French and Spanish Indian traders before the United States became possessed of it, for Gen. Pike, in his report of the exploration of the Mississippi in 1805, gives the names of five forts and two places on his map, located on this river, but he did not tell when they were made, or by whom occupied.

Not only did this locality attract the attention of the French and Spanish traders, but as soon as the whites were permitted to take possession of Iowa soil as their own, the valley Des Moines especially attracted the attention of the emigrant, and of the first purchases from the Indians, this part of Iowa, for many years, had a more dense population than any other part of the territory, and Farmington and Keasauqua, for a long time, were the most noted townsoff of the Mississippi river.

THE WET SEASON.

The year 1851 is noted as the wet season. A great portion of the country which nature designed to be arid, was, for several weeks, deep lakes of water. It commenced to be wet weather the fore part of May, and the heavens were almost daily blackened with angry clouds, and the rain poured down in torrents, frequently accompanied with violent winds and loud pealing thunder, till into July; and for most of this time the public highways, where they crossed streams, could not be traveled by teams. In almost every ravine there was a good sized rivulet, so that the finny tribes left their accustomed haunts, and swam up to, and had their sports on the highlands in the grassy prairies, and large numbers were found in the sink holes, after the flood had subsided. In the cultivated low grounds, the places where the farmer was accustomed to see the golden harvest, instead of rich fields of grain, were pools of muddy water; but very little was raised this season, and scarcity and want were hovering around the homes of the peasants.

This great flood was most severely felt in the valley Des Moines. The fences which protected the growing crops were nearly all swept away by the angry flood, carried onto other premises than the owner's, and the material mostly imbedded in common piles of drift, so that it cost more than it was worth to restore it to its proper place.

The surface of the smooth cultivated field was cut up into deep gullies and huge holes, and the meadows were covered with large piles of sand and debris, so that the fertility of the soil, and the ready cultivation of the land, were very much impaired.

All the towns on the banks of the river from Des Moines to the Mississippi, were more or less covered with water, and injured by the flood, and where had been the busy tramp of business, swam the finny fish. At Des Moines the river at one time was twenty-two and a half feet above low water mark. East Des Moines was under water to the second bank, and the citizens, instead of traveling the streets with

carriages, paddled their way in canoes. The town of Eddyville was, for many days, entirely submerged in deep water, and the citizens were forced to leave their well furnished homes, and seek shelter in hastily constructed tents, made with quilts and blankets, on the hill-side.

At Ottumwa, the flood run so high that all the bottom lands were many feet under water, and a long log about two feet in diameter, was floated up into the town, and lodged against a sign-post in the main traveled street in the place, which prevented teams from passing till it was removed. The water rose several inches over the floor of the principal hotel, and the guests sought egress and ingress by means of boats. The commonly traveled road from Ottumwa to Agency City, for several weeks, was obstructed with deep water. About the time the river commenced overflowing its banks, the stage undertook to make its usual trips, and in attempting to pass a low place in the road, before he was aware of danger the driver found his horses swamped in deep water, and to save them from being drowned, had to cut their harness, and abandon the coach, and the passengers with much difficulty saved themselves from a watery grave. The water continued to rise till the coach was several feet under water, and the current washed over it so large a quantity of drift-wood that when the water went down, the drift settling upon the coach crushed it to pieces.

At Iowa ville the wide beautiful bottom prairies were one vast sheet of water; the flood reached from bluff to bluff; the river was a mile wide, all the buildings which stood near the banks of the river were raised from their foundations and floated down stream, and several families, when the flood abated, found themselves without a home. The waters of the river, when they were at their highest stage, as they rushed along in their mad career, presented a most singular appearance. The surface of the river was oval; being several feet higher in the middle of the current than at the banks, so much so, that a person of ordinary height, standing at the water's edge, could not see the bank on the opposite side.

This flood surpassed anything that had ever been known in the history of the country, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, or that of the natives who resided here before the country was settled by the whites; nor did any traditional account of the Indians give any evidence of a like flood in all past times, and it is to be hoped the citizens of Iowa will never see the like again.

After the rains had ceased to pour down their torrents, the remainder of the season was very hot and dry, and the vegetation, which, in the fore part of the season had been so excessively moistened, in the latter part was parched up with heat and drouth, and the valley Des Moines stripped of its fencing, and covered here and there with piles of sand and debris, appeared like one vast desolated waste. Near [✓]Iowaville there was a large inclosed field, which had been under cultivation many years, and while the husbandmen were tilling the soil they did not dream they were walking about, and that the luxuriant harvest was waving over the graves of the departed dead, and little did they consider that many beings of their own race had trod on those grounds many years in the past. This flood disclosed mysterious information which was not known before. The waters in their mad career, being swollen out of their natural channel, rushed with force and violence over this inclosed field. And like as in other cultivated lands, the flood washed out deep excavations; it removed earth which had before been dug out and replaced by human hands; it developed the resting place of the dead, the graves of those who had lived and died at unknown times in the past. For when the water had subsided, in these excavations were found the remains of human beings; bones which had been clothed with flesh in the past, skeletons of a gigantic race, trinkets and ornaments, badges of distinction. These discoveries at the time attracted much attention and much speculation.

Dr. Peter [✓]Walker, who lived near by, made a careful examination of some of these remains, and found them of an enormous size; from the length of the bones of one which

he examined, he judged that the individual when living must have been from eight to twelve feet high. The jaw bone, which was in a perfect state of preservation, was so large that the Doctor, though a large man himself, could easily put it over his own face, and in this position, the extremities extended past his own ears, and some of the teeth measured an inch and a quarter across the face.

There were quite a number of articles found with the bones which had been washed up, that gave evidence those persons who had been buried there were in the possession of the arts of civilization. The large skeleton which was particularly examined by Dr. Walker, was probably a noted character in his time, not only for his size, but doubtless held some important station among his people, for among other things, there were found several of what was supposed to have been badges of distinction; around his thighs were steel bands, and on his arms, silver bracelets, which were neatly wrought and nearly two inches wide. The thought of a man from eight to twelve feet high, decorated with badges of influence and honor, majestically walking over the green prairies, excites the wonder and astonishment and leads to the inquiry, Was it in the days of mammoths that men of this dimension lived? and did they, like the latter, pass away and cease to exist? If a man of the nineteenth century lived of this dimension, he would excite the curiosity of the civilized world.

Who were these people whose bones were uncovered by the boiling flood? When did their race live here? Where did they come from? And where have they gone? Were they the builders of the mounds which are found scattered up and down the Mississippi valley, and over the plains of Mexico?

Of the builders of these mounds "history is silent concerning them, and their very names are lost to tradition." The principal remains of antiquity in Mexico are the ruins of temples, and the structures dedicated to defensive purposes. Those of undoubted high antiquity are most massive in character, and display remarkable evidence of tact and skill. The present generation can "learn but little of

the building of those works, and less of the builders." Who those people were, how they came and disappeared, the mind can imagine, but will probably never know.

On the bluffs just back of Iowa ville, about a mile from this burying-ground, on the land of Joel F. Avery, there is a vein of coal about four feet thick, which crops out on the surface. In December, 1873, Benjamin F. Bryan was employed to work this mine. In drifting an entrance into the bank, twenty-three feet from the surface, imbedded in the solid vein of coal, about a foot from the bottom, he found a bone about seven inches long, and an inch in diameter, of a redish color, which, from examination by those familiar with anatomy, was supposed to be the bone from the arm of a human being. From the solid manner in which it was imbedded in the coal, it was evident it must have been deposited there at or before the coal formation, which would indicate that this locality had been inhabited by human beings many hundred years in the past.

This season was also noted for several severe storms of wind, one of which passed through Jefferson county, broke down nearly all the timber within its reach, leveled the fences even with the ground, and destroyed several houses. During the fore part of the summer of this year, the terrible scourge, cholera, prevailed along the river Des Moines, and in most of the thickly settled parts of the state, and large numbers were swept away by the fatal malady. The most healthy and robust persons, while feeling no symptoms of disease, would suddenly be taken with vomiting and purging, and in a few hours large and fleshy persons would be reduced to mere skeletons, the skin become loose and shriveled like that of some very old persons; then cramping would set in, which convulsed the whole body with the most excruciating pains, till death relieved the sufferer. Persons not apprehending any danger, would frequently be attacked, and in a few hours breath their last. When one of a family became sick, another and another would be attacked, till often whole families in a few hours would be taken away. Neighborhoods became alarmed and many

left their homes, and frequently it was difficult to get any one to take care of the sick, or bury the dead.

The flood, the failure of the crops, and the sickness in Iowa, made many dissatisfied and anxious to leave the country, and many of them who could, disposed of their farms and left the state. The working of the gold mines in California increased the discontent, for some had gone from the state to California as early as 1849, and quite a large number in the spring of 1850, and the most wonderful accounts of the rapid accumulation of fortunes were constantly being sent home to the states. The prospects of rapidly accumulating great wealth west of the Rocky mountains, and the almost a famine in Iowa, from the wet season, had such an effect on the citizens, that the future prospects of the state were very gloomy and unpropitious. Business became stagnant, many houses and farms were tenantless, many sold their possessions at reduced prices, and it seemed, for a while, as if every body were bound to leave Iowa.

On account of the failure of the crops, and the large emigration which passed through Iowa to California and Oregon, all the provisions which could be bought were consumed by the emigrants, and much more was wanted. There was also a great demand for horses, mules, oxen, and cows, to take west of the mountains, and any farmer who had anything to sell found a ready market at his own door. Corn went up from ten cents to a dollar a bushel, and every thing else in the same proportion, except real estate, which declined in value as fast as other things increased.

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