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EARLY TIMES IN IOWA.

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BY CHARLES NEGUS.

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*From a Private Diary.*

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Dickey's Hotel.

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[Continued from page 103.]

AMONG the first settlers of Fairfield was Fulton Brown, who was a shoemaker by trade, and a man of peculiar parts. He was quite a small man, and a cripple, one leg being much smaller and about two inches shorter than the other, which gave him a very peculiar walk. To look at him one would suppose that he had not much more strength than a child; but his composition was all bone and sinew, not a pound of surplus flesh about him. His natural disposition was rather pleasant and sociable, but he was quick to resent an insult, and seemed to be in his element when in a quarrel, and had his full share of fisticuffs, and in most of them was victorious. Almost every evening he was to be seen loafing about Dickey's Hotel. Although scarcely any person showed him respect, and almost everybody shunned his company, yet he would manage to make himself prominent in every crowd he chanced to be.

Owing to his physical defects he was able to do but little labor other than work on his bench, and in those days shoemaking was rather a precarious business for a man to rely on for supporting his family. He had his second wife, a woman many years younger than himself. His wife was a sister of Medley Shelton, who had squatted on a claim about a mile south-west of Fairfield, and his family consisted of himself, his widowed mother and two sisters.

It was said Brown obtained his wife through deception by representing to her that he was a man of wealth. He appeared to be fond of his family and strove to give them a good support, but was not very scrupulous how he obtained the means, and had the reputation of getting considerable money by gambling. He was an expert in penmanship and could imitate the hand-writing of almost any one. At one time his provisions were exhausted; he had no money, and but little credit. Starvation was hovering around his premises, and to supply his wants he forged a note for a small amount on John Minton.

Minton was a man responsible for his debts, but was fond of sporting; kept fast horses, and often went from home to run his horses for wagers, and when on these excursions frequently took Brown with him. These circumstances gave semblence that he might rightfully have Minton's note.

Brown took the forged note to a groceryman and pawned it for some provisions, the value of which was much less than the note, with the understanding that in a short time he was to pay for the provisions and lift the note. When the time expired, Brown not having the money to pay for the provisions, the groceryman dunned Minton to pay the note. Minton denied the execution of the note, caused legal proceedings to be commenced, and Brown was arrested and lodged in jail. He had been imprisoned several days. None of his friends coming to his relief, he sent a message by the jailer for me to come and see him. I went, and found him alone in the log jail in not a very inviting or comfortable apartment, seated on a bench with his head resting upon his hands, as if in deep thought. When I entered his room he supposed it was the jailer bringing him his meal and did not look up until I spoke to him. As soon as he looked up and saw me the tears profusly poured down his cheeks, and the first thing he said was to inquire after his family. With all his faults he had

his good qualities : he loved and cared for his wife and children. Without apparent concern for his own safety his whole mind, at the time, seemed to be absorbed about the wants of his family, and he requested that I should see that they were provided for. I left the jail and went to his home, which was a log cabin on the outskirts of the town with only one room. The inside of the cabin presented a most beggardly appearance. There was a tall, and by nature, a fine looking woman and three little children with clothing scarcely sufficient to cover their nakedness, and without a mouthful of anything to eat in the house. After learning the condition of the family I hastened to inform her brother of the facts. At first Shelton was very indignant and severely reflected upon his sister for having married against the wishes of the family. But the wave of anger soon passed over and the passion of love and kindness controlled his feelings, and he hastened to relieve the wants of his sister and her children ; but he refused to go bail for Brown to relieve him from his imprisonment. This was done more to teach him a lesson to correct his morals, than a lack of regard for his welfare, for he showed great anxiety and put himself to much trouble to have him acquitted.

Minton's evidence was positive as to the forgery, and the circumstances corroborated his statements, and with his testimony before the jury it was almost certain that Brown would have to serve a term in the penitentiary.

The time for holding court came, business commenced, Brown's case was reached and he was brought into court. His confinement and anxiety had affected his health. He looked haggard and pale. The jury was impaneled and the witnesses called and sworn. The preliminary proceedings of the trial were strongly contested and consumed much time. When Minton, the main witness, was called he was so exhilarated with liquor that he did not know what he was about, and his testimony was not explicit on the important facts. How

he got his liquor I did not enquire, but the presumption was, it did not cost him much. After a short deliberation the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty and the prisoner was discharged. As this moment joy came over his countenance he sprang from his seat, rushed through the crowd, made long and rapid strides over the ground with as much activity as though his limbs were all perfect, did not turn to the right or left, or speak to any one he met till he arrived in the presence of his wife and children.

The result of this trial was a source of joy to myself, and though the penalties of the law were not fully enforced, I thought the results were as beneficial to the community as though the prisoner had been consigned to the solitary cells of the state prison.

Among the customers of Dickey's was Anson Ford, who came to Fairfield early in the spring of 1843. He was a man of curious composition in every respect. His arms and legs were of the size and length of an ordinary man six feet in height, but his body had the appearance of having been pressed down to about one-half of its height, making it very large in circumference. His spinal column formed a section of a circle, which gave him a round or humped back. He had a large head, phrenologically well organized, an expressive countenance, and a keen, piercing eye. He was about forty years old, of extensive reading, had seen much of the world, a splendid penman, a good accountant, had had much experience in business, though like many others had been unfortunate and reduced in his finances. When he started for the west he gave up a position in the post-office in the city of New York. He not only had business talent, but was quite a mechanical genius.

Soon after he came to the place he painted for Dickey an elegant sign, and to while away his leisure hours he made a martin house, exhibiting the most exquisite architectural skill, which he placed over the sign, both of which attracted much attention. He came west with

but little money, and necessity demanded that he should do something at once for his support. At first he engaged in teaching a writing school. But that not being a permanent business, as soon as warm weather came, not being able to get other employment, he gave his attention to painting, though at that time there was not much demand for labor of this kind. Yet, during the season, he saved means enough, over and above his expenses, to send for his wife in the fall and prepare for house-keeping. Soon after his wife came he left the hotel, and they provided for themselves.

His wife, like himself, was well informed. She was a lady in her manners, and a perfect model of neatness in her person and about her house. They were fondly devoted to each other, and a well matched couple in every respect.

Ford, by his industry and frugality, the second season after he came to Fairfield had a home of his own. He bought some lots on the outskirts of the town, on which was a grove of young trees. He cleared out the undergrowth, trimmed up the trees, and built a small house. He laid off his grounds with much taste. There were in his garden, walks, flower-beds, shrubbery, and grass lawns, all arranged in order and style. At the entrance of his yard, for gate posts, were placed two large sticks of timber, on the top of which was framed another, representing an arch, which he painted so they were a perfect imitation of granite. Ford and his wife worked at their homestead till they made it one of the neatest and most attractive places in the town.

He was of a popular turn, and a whig in politics. In 1844 he was a candidate for a county office, and although the county had a large democratic majority, he only lacked six votes of being elected. He was twice a candidate again, ran ahead of his party poll, and was only beaten by small majorities. In 1847 he was elected recorder and treasurer of the county, and was re-elected in 1849. At this time this was the most important and the

best paying office in the county. Ford was a cogent letter writer, and had an extensive correspondence.

After the whigs came into power, by the election of General Taylor president, he had his influence at the seat of the federal government, and was consulted about the disposal of the public patronage in Iowa, especially in the post-office department, and for a while there were but few persons in the state, among those in the whig party, who had more influence than Anson Ford. The success which he had had since he came to Iowa, both financially and politically, his influence in the state, and his pleasant home, were sources of gratification and pleasure to him. But there was a cause for uneasiness and discontent in his domestic circle. Both Ford and his wife were very fond of children, but there were no little Fords about their household, and from the length of time they had been married they had given up all hopes of there being any, and this was a cause of uneasiness and discontent.

Ford, like most of politicians, had his days of prosperity and adversity. Frequently little incidents are attended with big results, and this was Ford's experience. A little while before the time for nominating candidates for office, Ford, with several others, among the number was Fulton Brown, were sitting on a bench in front of the hotel, when the elder Miss Shelton, having attired herself in her best apparel, came up to town and passed where Ford was sitting. Miss Shelton was naturally rather a fascinating girl, and on this occasion she appeared particularly interesting, and attracted the special attention of Ford. Just as she passed the hotel, Ford made the remark, "That is a fine young lady; I wish I was a young man, I would be for marrying her." Miss Shelton heard the remark, and turned around to see who had made it, and without saying anything passed on. A few days after, Ford received a letter, signed Elizabeth Shelton, expressing kind regards and devotion for him, and wishing to know if the remarks he made at the

hotel reflected the true sentiments of his heart. This unexpected letter made a deep impression on his mind; the fervency of youth was stirred up; his fondness for children, the thoughts of having some one to perpetuate his memory, caused a strong conflict in his mind between passion and duty; but he answered the letter, giving her the strongest assurance of love and devotion for her ladyship. That their letters might not fall into other hands, Brown was selected as their mail carrier, and it was a mutual understanding that they would not be seen together. Now follows a lively correspondence. Scarcely a day passed but letters were sent and received. The vows Ford had made to his wife at the time of their nuptials were forgotten, and soon it was understood that Ford and Miss Shelton were to elope together. That she might have a respectable wardrobe, Ford sent her a liberal amount of money, and she bought much clothing. But this excited no suspicion with the family or others, for she caused it to be reported that she was going to be married to Irvin Shamp, a respectable mechanic, and she got her money to purchase clothing from him.

The time for them to take their departure had nearly arrived, when, for a little recreation, Ford thought he would go hunting, and taking his gun, he started down the road leading by Shelton's house. Just before he got to the house, Miss Shelton came out of the yard on her way up to town, and met Ford in the road a short distance from the house. He, supposing this meeting was sought on the part of Miss Shelton for a consultation about their departure, familiarly broached the subject; but to his astonishment, instead of meeting with her smiles, she became very indignant, dealt out to him some severe reprimands and immediately returned to the house and reported his conduct to her brother. Her brother became highly incensed at the indignities offered to his sister, and being well armed, the next day called on Ford to redress the wrong. At the meeting, Ford, in vindication of his conduct, produced the letters he had

received. The producing of these letters in the handwriting of his sister, and bearing her signature, arrested his vengeance from Ford towards his sister, and with the letter in his possession, he returned home and called her to an account, and as proof of his knowledge of what she had done, he presented her with the letters. The contents of the letters not only gave evidence of her having been conniving at improper conduct, but her own name was signed to them as proof that she was the author. This produced a very unpleasant state of affairs, but she most positively denied the writing of the letters, or of knowing anything about their contents, and on further examination it was shown that Brown had the skill to imitate Miss Shelton's hand writing; had written these letters, and had applied to his own use the money Ford had advanced to replenish Miss Shelton's wardrobe.

This expose prevented Ford from being re-nominated for office, and was the commencement of the waning of his popularity. About this time there seemed to have been enkindled in his mind a ruling passion for the caresses of other women than his lawful wife. On his direct way from his house to his office, he had to pass the residence of Mr. R. Mrs. R. was rather a fascinating woman, and as he passed by the house frequent salutations were passed between Mrs. R. and Ford. This was noticed by her husband, and became the source of much irritation; but to avoid trouble he took his family and moved to Burlington. He had not been there long until Ford had occasion to go to Burlington, and while there called at Mr. R.'s house. It happened that Mr. R. was not at home, but on his return, learning that Ford had been there, deserted his wife, took his children and came back with them to Fairfield, had Ford arrested, and succeeded in having him bound over for his appearance at court.

After being deserted by her husband, Mrs. R. left Burlington and went to parts unknown, and never after



wards lived with her husband. Ford stayed about Fairfield until the sitting of the court. The grand jury did not find a bill against him and he was discharged. These series of misfortunes very much injured his popularity. Most of his former supporters deserted him. He became disgusted with place, and soon after his discharge, having furnished his wife with the means of support for a short time, left her in charge of their homestead and went away without informing any one where he was going. At the expiration of his term of office, Ford made a settlement with Moses Black, the county judge, for all the moneys which had come into his hands, as state, school, and county funds, by delivering them up to him, and having canceled all county orders which he had received in payment of taxes, his official bond was canceled.

The state and school funds amounted to about \$2,000. But this amount was not paid over to the state or school fund by either Judge Black or Ford's successor, and the result was that suits were brought on his bond for these amounts. The commencement of these suits brought Ford back to Fairfield, and he employed counsel and strongly contested these claims, but the final result was that judgment was rendered against him for the amounts claimed. Ford then sued the county to recover back the amounts he had paid over to Judge Black, and in the district court got a judgment. But the county took an appeal to the supreme court, who reversed the judgment below, the court holding that Black, as county judge, had no legal right to settle with Ford for the state and school funds; deciding for the first time, that moneys paid through a mistake in law could not be recovered back. (IV. Green's Reports, 273, 367.)

The final result of this litigation was, that the means, which he had by his industry and economy laid up since he came west, were exhausted, and his beautiful home on which he had spent much time and money was sold on execution, and himself and wife left nearly

destitute. As soon as he was through with his litigation, he determined to leave the country and go elsewhere. He disposed of his household goods and paid every dollar he owed, after which he only had means enough to send his wife back east on a visit to her friends, and to take himself to the mountains, where he designed to go, to again try the chances of fortune.

As he left his home for the last time, he came out of the gate and took a long earnest look over the grounds on which he had built his beautiful house, and spent with his own hands many hours of toil, and carefully eyed everything about the premises, and as he gazed his eyes watered, and the big tears ran down his cheeks. But suddenly a flash of anger came over his countenance, the tears dried up, and after a pause of a few moments, he spoke and said, "I am going to the mountains to try and make some money; if I succeed, I will return and have this place back, and I will build a fence so high that no one can get over it, and have no entrance but at one gate. I will make it a hospitable and pleasant place for my friends; but I will sit in the porch with my rifle in my hand, and will shoot every one of my enemies who may attempt to set their feet on the premises."

At an early date there came to the hotel, from Virginia, William Pritt and wife. Pritt was a blacksmith by trade; but a man of more than ordinary mental capacity; and his wife was very ladylike in her bearing, and neat about her person and clothes.

Pritt rented a shop, hired hands, and carried on the business of his trade quite extensively. They had no children, and for a long time found it convenient to board at the hotel. Pritt finally quit the blacksmith business and went to merchandising, and then they left the hotel and went to keeping house in part of the building in which he had his store.

The Methodists were among the first of the religious denominations to organize a church in Fairfield. They

had made several attempts to raise means enough to erect a house for public worship, but without success. To accomplish this object, Mrs. Elizabeth Culbertson, one of the first settlers of the place, and an active member of the church, conceived the idea of raising some money for this purpose by having a public supper. The suggestion was encouraged by most of the citizens, and the enterprise was undertaken. There being at that time no public hall or private residence of sufficient size for that purpose, Dickey generously offered the ladies the use of his hotel.

Provisions were liberally donated, and great preparations were made; the entertainment being open to all who choose to come, and it being understood that the proceeds were for the benefit of the church, the entertainment was well attended. This was the first of the kind ever held in Fairfield, and parties came from all parts of the country. There were the aged, and those of grave and serious thought; the youth, and those of gay appearance and jovial mind; and nearly every apartment of the hotel was crammed full with visitors, and this was an evening long remembered by those of early times.

A few months previous a young man by the name of Joseph Knott had come to Fairfield, and was, at the time of the supper, boarding at the hotel. Knott was of a genteel bearing, and quite a lady's man, assisted the ladies and made himself quite prominent on the occasion. A few days before the entertainment a man by the name of Lamb and his lady came to the hotel, who bore the appearance of having much wealth. Lamb and his lady took supper, and besides paying the stated price for their meals he made a donation of ten dollars. This liberality raised him high in the estimation of the company, and he was decidedly the lion of the evening. His fame soon spread through the village, and among those who claimed to be of the aristocracy of the place, there was quite a rivalry as to who would show him and his lady the great-

est honor. And Lamb, if not from one of the first families of his native state, bid fair to soon become one of the first citizens of Fairfield. But it was not many weeks before public sentiment, ever fickle, underwent quite a change in relation to their new citizens, for some of his old neighbors got on his trail and followed with a requisition from the governor of Ohio, to take him back to his former residence to answer the charge of swindling some of his former friends out of large sums of money, and also for abandoning his lawful wife and family, and taking another woman for his bosom companion. Previous to this he had purchased a dwelling house, made preparations for going to house-keeping, and had gone into business with Pritt, keeping what they call a family grocery.

This unexpected visit from Ohio caused Lamb to leave very abruptly to escape the grasp of the officers of the law. He stayed away a few weeks till his pursuers had left, when he returned, sent his mistress to her home, sold out his interest in the store to Pritt, and either in payment for his goods or by some other manoeuvre, secretly took the wife of his partner and left for parts unknown, and neither Lamb or Mrs. Pritt were ever heard of afterwards. After these scenes were enacted, those who had been so eager to show honor to Lamb were now doubly zealous to bemean and heap approbrium upon him. A striking instance of the instability of man's popularity.

During Lamb's absence his mistress stayed at Pritt's. She being apparently deserted, young Knott paid particular attention to her wants and was a frequent visitor at Pritt's establishment.

A few evenings after Lamb returned he was seen to go into the apartment where the ladies stayed at a late hour of the night, but was never seen in Fairfield afterward. He was supposed to have had a considerable amount of money about his person, but he left all his clothes except what he wore, and did not collect some

money due him from his employer. He gave no one any account of his intention to go away, and the cause of his leaving or what became of him was unknown to any one, but there were strong suspicions that his remains rested in some secret place not far from where he was last seen.

One day, just after dinner, I was in the bar-room, when there came in a boyish looking young man, who, with an air of self-confidence, laid down a small bundle he carried, took a chair, and after a few moments repose called for entertainment. He wore a straw hat with part of the rim torn off; his clothes were much worn; his shoes had seen hard service; he came to town in company with some emigrants; his appearance indicated he had come a long journey and had made most of it on foot. He had sandy hair, full face, was low in stature, and was quite corpulent. There was nothing prepossessing in his appearance, yet there was something in his bearing which indicated that he was possessed of more than ordinary mental capacity.

He was at the hotel several weeks, with rather a down-cast appearance, had but little to say to any one; his wardrobe was quite limited; seemed to have but little money, but sought no means to earn any, and he appeared undecided what to do with himself.

After spending several weeks in a very passive mood, a letter came to the post office for him. After the reception of this letter his demeanor was changed; he assumed an air of cheerfulness; had money to meet his wants; got himself some new clothes; and went into the office of *Shuffleton & Gray* to study law.

This young man was the only son of a very respectable and wealthy family of New Hampshire; had been a member of *Dartmouth College*; and advanced to his junior year. One night, in company with some of his schoolmates, he visited a farmer's watermelon patch, and while helping themselves to a few melons, the farmer caught them, reported them to the college fac-

ulty, and they were publicly reprimanded before their schoolmates. They considered this to be severe punishment for the offence, and became very much incensed at the farmer, for informing on them. The farmer had on his premises a very fine grist mill. The boys, to have revenge, went one night, hoisted the gates, and set the mill to running. There being no one to supply the stones with grain, the mill run till it was very nearly ruined. The perpetrators of this mischief became known; the farmer became very much enraged, and threatened the penalties of the law; the boys became frightened, gathered up in a hurry a few things, and left the college, and the leader in this mischief did not stop his flight till he got to<sup>v</sup> Fairfield.

He had left the east without the knowledge of his parents, and with but little means, which was the occasion of his destitute appearance and dejected demeanor when he first came to the place.

But as soon as he advised his father of his locality, he supplied his wants. This young man's name was Ezra<sup>v</sup> Drown.

Drown was an apt scholar, a close student, and in an unusually short time after commencing the study of law was admitted to the bar. He was not very scrupulous as to what he did to accomplish his ends; but he was of a popular, pleasing turn, and had the faculty of ingratiating himself into the good feelings of those with whom he associated, and made many warm friends.

After he was admitted to the bar he became the editor of the democratic paper at<sup>v</sup> Fairfield, and he gained much notoriety for his sarcasm and wit. Soon after he commenced his editorial career, Moses<sup>v</sup> Black was a candidate for county judge. About that time the abolitionists got up an organization in the county, and it was supposed they had the balance of power, and Black was in favor or against this party, just as he thought would make him votes. Drown took about a square of type which had been knocked into pi, and put it into his

paper, and headed it, "These are Judge Black's principles." He was for several years prosecuting attorney for the county, and discharged the duties of his office with much ability.

✓ Drown, in his personal appearance, his disposition, and ways, was a second Sir John Falstaff. Though he did not have the merry wives of Windsor with whom to while away his leisure hours, he found others who were nearly their peers.

At one time Col. A., his wife, and Drown, started in a carriage together for ✓ Fort Des Moines, to witness the payment of the Indians. Mrs. A. was the Colonel's second wife, good looking, several years younger than himself, and fond of gay company. On this journey the Colonel drove, and Mrs. A. and Drown occupied the back seat, their jovial turn making time pass off agreeably. They discussed many schemes of speculation, and some in a tone that was not heard by the Colonel. At the end of the first day's journey it was dark before they reached their stopping place. The Colonel was very fond of good liquor, and soon after they put up for the night Drown proposed that they should go to the saloon and get some refreshments. They went, became jovial and drove away dull care, and the Colonel forgot his duties as a husband, and fell into a profound sleep. Drown, not wishing to expose the weakness of his traveling companion, had him carefully stowed away in the back room of the saloon, but was very particular to return to the tavern for lodgings for himself.

Mr. Colonel enjoyed his bed so well that he did not wake up till a late hour the next morning. At this Drown pretended to be very much displeased, and made grave complaints to his landlord about his livery man imposing upon himself by sending with this team such a trifling driver.

At another time Drown and myself started away in a buggy together, to attend court, and on our way we stopped for the night at the house of Mr. B. B.'s house

was situated in a little grove, at the head of a deep ravine which extended far into the prairie. B. was the first settler in this part of the country, and his house was so located that before public roads were laid out the natural lay of the country caused much travel to pass by that point, which induced him to open a house for public entertainment; and in early times this was quite a noted house, and the resting place for many weary travelers. This house was built of logs. At first it consisted of a story and half, with two rooms below and two above. But his business became such that he needed more room; and he built an addition which was attached to the back part of the main house, of two rooms, with a broad porch. The room next to the main house was occupied as a bed-room, the other for a kitchen—to enter these rooms they had to go from the main part of the house out on to the porch. The entrance to the front and back part of the house was in the same room, which was about eighteen feet square, and was the reception room and the dining room, and contained two beds. B.'s business was so profitable that, besides making a large farm, he was enabled to open quite an extensive store, which was located across the road from the house.

Drown, before starting on the journey, had supplied himself with an unusual quantity of whisky, for what purpose I did not inquire. The fore part of the evening Drown spent with B. at his store. At rather a late hour, after the younger portion of the family had gone to bed, Drown and myself were in the reception room by ourselves, when Mrs. B. came in from the porch, passed leisurely through the room, and went out at the front door; as she went out she turned around and gave Drown a sly wink, which indicated that it was not the first time she had met with him. A few moments after Drown got up and, without saying a word, went out, and I was left to while away the time by myself. I had been by myself but a short time when B. came in from



the store with a lantern in his hand; apparently had just wakened up from a nap, somewhat under the influence of liquor. He hurriedly cast his eyes around the room, and seeing no one but myself, without saying a word, he went out on to the porch with a light step, he quietly opened and shut the bed-room door, and then walked to and opened the kitchen door. As soon as he opened this door I heard the shuffling of feet, the upsetting of chairs, and in quick succession the rattling of broken glass, and, after a moment's pause, there followed the tramp of feet, as though one person was following in close proximity to another, and both making very rapid strides over the ground. I waited till a late hour for Drown to come to bed, but he did not return; and I retired for the night.

The next morning I noticed that the sash in the kitchen window had been broken out, and the glass shattered into many pieces, and that Mr. and Mrs. B. maintained a cool reserve to each other; but I did not ask for any explanation, and none was given. But as soon as breakfast was over I got ready and started on my journey. After traveling about a mile, at a farm house, I found Drown alive and unhurt; but haggard and pale, as though he had been through some very fatiguing exercise, when I heard a partial history of the previous evening's proceedings.

From Drown's account it appeared he was hungry, and wanted something to eat, and the landlady took him into the kitchen to get a lunch; they did not take the trouble to light a candle, and while he was enjoying his repast in the dark, suddenly and unexpectedly the room was lit up by B's lantern. The landlord being a little exhilarated, was not as considerate as prudence might have dictated, became very much excited, seized a carving knife and made for Drown.

Drown did not have time for explanation, but to escape the danger of the carving knife, flourishing in the hands of a drunken man, with deadly threats, made a

bound through the window, and B. in quick succession, with the knife in his hand, followed, and then a lively foot race ensued.

It was escape or death with Drown, and he called into requisition every possible effort to quicken his speed; it being warm weather, the sweat poured off of him profusely,

“ And he larded the lean earth as he walked along,”

so much so that the next morning he looked as though he had been through a severe spell of sickness.

In the fall of 1849 I had occasion to meet some parties in Dickey's parlor. Just about the time they left Drown came in. After a little conversation, I threw myself on a lounge, and Drown picked up the newspaper, seated himself in the rocking chair, raised his feet upon the table, and went to reading. I had fallen into a gentle snooze, when I was startled by the sharp, angry tones of Miss Adeline Dickey's voice.

Miss Adeline had prepared the parlor for some private company for that evening; everything had been put in the nicest order; and a clean cloth spread over the table, on which Drown had put his feet. She had arrayed herself in her best apparel, and had come to the room to await her expected company, when she discovered that the dirt from Drown's boots had much soiled the table-cloth. On seeing this she dealt out to him some very severe words, to which Drown said: “ Come Ad. don't get in a pet about the table-cloth; really, I did not mean to do it; it was a careless act in me; I am sorry for it; will not do the like again. You look very interesting to-day; suppose we kiss and make up friends;” and with a roguish smile on his face, advanced towards her.

Adeline (quite pettish) said:— Mr. Drown, sir, I do not allow any gentleman to take such liberties with me.

Drown (assuming a serious air) replied:—“ Now, Miss Adeline, don't get angry because I proposed to kiss you,

I did not mean to insult you, for really there is no girl living that I think as much of as I do of you, and have been thinking for some time of proposing marriage — what do you say to our getting married?”

Adeline (becoming calm) — “Well, Ezra, maybe I might marry you, but you shall not kiss me.”

Just at this time some persons came in, and this chit-chat was stopped.

A short time after this, I had occasion to go to Indiana, and on my return home, when I landed at St. Louis, I met on the wharf, William Alston, from Fairfield, who had come down to buy goods. As I came up to him, I said: Well, Billy, is there any news from home? To which he replied: Drown and his wife came down on the boat with me, on their wedding tour.

You say Drown and his wife — to whom has he got married?

To my inquiry Alston replied — Ad. Dickey.

Alston's word, in business matters, was not to be questioned; but he was fond of a joke, and if he could play a hoax upon a person he would not stop to accompany his yarn with many fictions. I thought of the chit-chat in the parlor about two weeks previous, and then of Alston's sportive propensities. When I said to him: “Billy, are you in earnest?” his reply was: “Certainly I am; they have just taken a hack to go up to the hotel.” I parted with Alston, went up into the city, and put up at Barnum's. I here carefully looked over the register, but found no name that I knew. After a little delay I went to the Planters' House, and here I found written in the register: “Capt. E. Drown and lady, U. S. A., Iowa.”

When I saw the title attached to Drown's name, I said to myself: Sold — Billy has caught me this time; this is Drown — Capt. Drown — but not our Fairfield Drown. I was about to leave without further investigation, but on second thought I concluded to find out who this Capt. Drown was, and sought his room. As I

came to his number I found a negro servant standing sentinel at the door. I inquired if this was Mr. Drown's room. I was answered in the affirmative, but was told that Capt. Drown had given orders not to admit any person, but if any one wished to see him to inform him that when convenient he would meet him in parlor No. 2. I wrote on a piece of paper :

“To Capt. E. Drown, U. S. A.

CHARLES NEGUS,  
Of Fairfield, Iowa,”

gave it to the servant and told him to give it to Capt. Drown, and went down to parlor No. 2 to await the result. After a few minutes delay in came Drown, dressed in the most tasteful style, in a new suit, but not a military uniform. I addressed him: “Good day Drown; I am glad to see you; I learn that you have got to be Captain. Of how many does your command consist, of one or more; and what kind of a uniform do your subordinates wear, tight coats or petticoats; please to explain.” With rather an air of surprise he replied: “Where the d—l did you get that notion into your head, to ask me such a question?” My reply was: “I see in your own hand writing on the hotel register, the name of Capt. E. Drown, so I suppose you are entitled to that rank.” Drown appeared to be a little disconcerted, but soon replied: “Now look here Charley, you recollect the little chit-chat me and Ad. had in the parlor; well we met the next evening and made it a matter of business, and quick work at that, and Ad. and I have got married, came down here on a little pleasure excursion, and to give myself a little importance, I registered my name as you have seen it; but look here, don't say anything about it in the city or to the people about Fairfield. They think at the hotel here I am of some consequence; as you see, they have assigned me, for my own special use, a servant.”

Drown returned to his room and brought down his wife. In their physical organization and mental turn

there was a striking similarity between the two; they were devoted to each other, and were a well matched pair in every respect.

After a short social interview I left the hotel and the next day started for home. But Drown remained in the city about two weeks, during which time he put on military style and visited the principal places in the city, and was treated with that respect due to the rank of Captain in the regular army. This was in accordance with his notions and desire, but it drew rather heavily on his finances, and a little more than his means justified.

Drown had been appointed Administrator of the estate of Thomas H. Gray, and had the assets in his possession, and to meet the expenses of his wedding tour had to draw heavily on the trust fund. Shortly after his return he was called upon to make a settlement, and to make his accounts balance forged a receipt for a large amount, swore to his statement and it was approved. The party on whom the receipt was forged lived at a distance, and it was some time before the truth of this transaction was known, but it was found out, Drown was returned to the grand jury on indictment for forgery and another for perjury was presented against him. At this he assumed an air of indifference, but he evidently was annoyed at these proceedings. He had acquired a reputation of being rather careless about court papers, and sometimes important documents were missing when it was for his interest they should be. Soon after these indictments were presented the clerk's office was broken open, and the place where indictments were usually kept thoroughly searched, but those papers were not found, and nothing was taken from the office. Suspicions were aroused as to the cause of this depredation but there was no proof. The clerk had taken the precaution to remove these indictments from their usual place of keeping and had put them under lock and key at his own house.

Caleb Baldwin and Samuel Clinton were co-partners in the law business, and Baldwin at this time was prosecuting attorney, and he had taken the forged receipt and affidavit into his own custody for safe keeping.

I was retained as Drown's counsellor, and he was industrious in devising ways and means of defence, but of all his plans proposed there were doubts of success with the positive proof that would be produced, and as the time for trial drew near, Drown became very uneasy and anxious as to the result. The evening before the case came on for trial, Drown came to my office for consultation about another case in which he was interested.

Clinton and Baldwin were the attorneys on the other side and had the papers in the case. We wanted them for examination, and Drown went to their office to get them. He found Clinton alone busily engaged. Drown asked for the papers; Clinton, being busy, without much precaution, hastily took the papers from their place of keeping, handed them over to Drown, and he immediately returned to my office.

When he came back I was busily engaged in writing and, without saying a word, he took a seat and commenced looking over the bundle. All at once Drown sprang from his seat, upset his chair, made a bound so high that when he came down on the floor it shook the whole room, and he cried out with a tremendous voice: "Eureka! Eureka!" (I have found them.)

This sudden freak at first rather frightened me. I could not imagine what had happened. I quickly dropped my pen, and rather excitedly asked, "What is the matter with you, Drown? Are you crazy?" He quickly advanced towards me and held up before my face some papers, and being very much excited, he exclaimed: "Look here!" I cast my eyes at the papers and saw at once that he held in his hand the alleged forged receipt and affidavit to his settlement in the estate of Gray. As soon as I saw what they were I said, "Look here, old fellow, where did you get them docu-

ments?" He replied, "Why, they were with the papers Clinton gave me." After a few moments pause, Drown very gravely remarked, "I think this room is getting rather cold; we ought to have a better fire," and then quickly advanced towards the stove, opened the door, threw the papers into the stove upon the glowing coals, made a step back and then stopped, and intensely fixed his eyes in silence upon the fire in the open stove.

At first there was seen a kind of white thick smoke rising from the papers, and making its way up the stove-pipe; then followed a bright flash of flames, the legible parts of the paper soon disappeared and left a thin scum which soon settled down among the coals. When Drown saw the last vestige of the papers dissolve into fine ashes, he broke the silence by exclaiming, "D—m you! I guess you will not be a witness against me any more," and a joy flashed across his countenance as though he had the assurance that he was now safe from the vengeance of his persecutors. The next morning the cases of the State of Iowa *vs.* Ezra Drown, were called. Drown came into court apparently very much dejected, bore the air of laboring under much anxiety, and was very particular in having those rejected from the jury he thought were prejudiced against him. The jury was impaneled. Baldwin made his opening statement which was replied to in behalf of the defendant. The first testimony to be introduced was the forged receipt and affidavit.

Baldwin took out from his satchel a bundle, and began to look for those papers, but his eyes did not meet with the superscription; a flush of redness and marks of confusion came over his face. He went over the bundle again and again, and carefully undid and examined every paper. By this time the eyes of the judge and all in the court-room were fixed upon him. After a few moments of earnest look, the judge said: Mr. Baldwin, proceed with your case. Now comes a tug of mental war. The prosecutor resorted to every possible means to save his case, but the affidavit and the forged receipt

were indispensable and could not be found. Both cases were abandoned, the jury discharged, and Drown released to go and do as he pleased.

He immediately left the court-room accompanied by a large number of friends who bestowed upon him their warm congratulations. There was much speculation about what had become of the lost papers, but among all the surmises no one ever accused Drown of having anything to do with their disappearance.

At the time of the great excitement about the discovery of gold in California, Dickey had disposed of his hotel for other property, and he went across the mountains and left his business in the care of Drown, and being pleased with the country gave directions to have his property sold, and for his family to come to him.

Drown's shortcomings, and particularly his acts in settling up the estate of Gray, had very much prejudiced public opinion against him, so much so that it was not very desirable for him to stay in the vicinity of Fairfield, and he concluded to accompany Mrs. Dickey. Drown had become the father of an interesting child, and he, with his wife and child, Mrs. Dickey and her younger son, all started for California in the spring of 1854, by water.

The steamer they took on the Pacific was wrecked; Mrs. Dickey was taken off the wreck in a life boat, young Dickey floated ashore on a chicken-coop, Drown put his wife in what he supposed would be a safe place for a short time, seized his child by its clothes with his teeth and swam ashore with it, deposited it in safe keeping, and then went back to the wreck for his wife, but when he got back she was not to be found; in the confusion some one had jostled her from the place he left her into the boisterous deep. Her form never met his vision any more—she found a watery grave.



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