WHITTIER AND IOWA

In 1848 Augustus Caesar Dodge, a Democrat, went to Washington as one of Iowa's first two United States Senators. Iowa had been admitted to the Union two years before. Dodge had been born in Missouri thirty-six years before. His wife also came from Missouri and all her connections tended to strengthen his southern sympathy.

His father, Henry Dodge, an able soldier and statesman, served from 1836 to 1841 as Governor of the Territory of Wisconsin which until 1838 comprised the present States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and the eastern portion of the Dakotas. In 1838 the territory west of the Mississippi was cut off as the Territory of Iowa. When Wisconsin became a State in 1848 Henry Dodge became one of Wisconsin's first United States Senators. Thus it came about that father and son were in the Senate at the same time. Both were men of conviction as is shown by the fact that the father voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, strongly sympathizing with the north, while his son, Augustus Caesar Dodge, voted for the bill, to the intense displeasure of his anti-slavery constituents in Iowa. Whittier and the eastern abolitionists as well as the Salem Quakers rose in indignation when they heard that the Iowa Senator had described the bill as "the noblest tribute which has ever yet been offered by the Congress of the United States to the sovereignty of the people."[1]

In the north, *abolitionism,* a dreaded movement, had taken on flesh in the person of William Lloyd Garrison, who on January 1, 1831, had published the first number

[1] See the *Dictionary of American Biography* and Pelzer's *Augustus Caesar Dodge.*

of the *Liberator,* a paper without moderation or toleration. Influenced by New England Transcendentalism, Garrison felt that slavery was a great wrong and could not be shown any toleration. To him as to Emerson, Thoreau, and Whittier, the word toleration meant allowing slavery to exist as an American institution. "On this subject", he wrote, "I do not wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation . . . . tell the mother to gradually extricate the babe from the fire into which it has fallen — but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. . . . I will be harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice . . . . I am in earnest. . . . I will not retreat a single inch — and *I will be heard.*" In the eighteen forties nobody in Iowa talked in this manner. The pioneers were too much occupied with the difficulties of making a living to think about such questions.

Before 1834 several Quaker families who had been living in North Carolina adopted the abolitionist position. Finding themselves uncomfortable and entirely out of harmony with their neighbors, they emigrated north. At first they settled at Newport, Indiana, but later came into the territory of Iowa. This Quaker nucleus founded the town of Salem in 1835 and was destined in time to have great influence in developing an anti-slavery sentiment in Iowa.[2]

Almost from the day of its founding Salem became an important station on the Underground Railway and proved so formidable that few of the Missourians across the border, only a few miles distant, were able to regain the slaves who were fortunate enough to reach the Quaker settlement. The abolitionist sentiment in Salem waxed so fervent that it divided the community. One section, fearing to take the bolder part, fought slavery but in a more "Quakerish", that is a more pacifist, manner. But the

[2] See *The Palimpsest,* November, 1935.

more radical abolitionist group, maintaining contacts with eastern Quakers, agreed in every detail with Garrison.

With the establishment of the *Liberator,* John Greenleaf Whittier openly and definitely espoused the unpopular cause of abolition. The New England Anti-Slavery Society began its work in 1832, and the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. In after life Whittier declared that the happiest day in his life was the day he signed his name to the roll of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Whittier edited and published the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* from June to November, 1833. From 1835 to 1837 he wrote articles against slavery for the *Anti-Slavery Record,* and from 1838 to 1839 he edited the *Pennsylvania Freeman.* But Whittier's editorial work which deals most directly with Iowa appears in the files of the *National Era.*[3]

This paper, established in 1847 by Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, was printed in Washington, D. C. Decidedly abolitionist in purpose and spirit, it printed serially from June 5, 1851, to April 1, 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which did more, perhaps, than any other book to bring the slavery issue to a head. But this contribution to the *National Era,* although more widely known and more spectacular, had in the immediate period much less influence on Iowa than did Whittier's stinging editorials and his poems on slavery.

From the beginning of Augustus Caesar Dodge's career as an Iowa Senator, Whittier assumed the position of "watchman", like the Prophet Habakkuk of old. He had been for some time interested in the Salem Quakers and their daughter colonies in Iowa. His keen observation of affairs in the Middle West comes as a surprise to many who have thought of the gentle Quaker poet only as a

[3] See files of the *National Era.* The editorials cited in this article are all from the *National Era.*

writer of hymns embodying a quiet mysticism. In reality he was an example of the "terrible meek". His righteous indignation overflowed into statesmanship of the sort almost unsurpassed in American history. An almost continuous output of articles and editorials by him marked the 1830's and 1840's. No one in America understood better than Whittier the issues which eventually resulted in the compromises of 1850 and the Civil War.

In the year 1850 the searchlight of abolitionism was turned directly upon Iowa. In Congress, Augustus Caesar Dodge held the leadership of the Iowa delegation. His sympathy and that of his wife were with his native south. Until he reached the age of fifteen he had lived in Missouri where slavery was taken for granted. It was recognized by the Constitution, protected by law, and defended by the religious institutions. Now he represented Iowa which stood for the new west. Since he believed that the majority of the inhabitants of Iowa had more sympathy with slavery than with the abolitionists, Dodge felt he could more easily follow his own feelings and the line of least resistance.

During the preceding November the "forty-niners" had declared against slavery for the new Eldorado — California — by adopting an anti-slavery Constitution. Iowa sentiment had helped to make this new platform of liberty, and the Salem Quakers were interested in the new "land of gold". Bayard Taylor's *Eldorado,* published in May, 1850, interested them not only because Taylor was a Quaker, but also because he seemed to represent the eternal spirit of adventure which appealed to them.[4] Several members of the Salem community soon began preparations for the trip. Among those to leave was Reuben Dorland,

[4] Taylor's *El Dorado,* p. 270, mentions the "Iowa rangers", one of whom he met in California in 1849.

founder and head of the Dorland Academy. Death overtook him on the way, and when the Academy was finally revived, it had a new champion in John Greenleaf Whittier. During this time Whittier's interest in Iowa continued unabated.

In the meantime Whittier had become acquainted with Bayard Taylor through their mutual interest in Scandinavian literature. In his later years in his Amesbury home, one of Whittier's most prized pictures on his wall was a sketch of a far northern church brought back by Taylor.[5] Their acquaintance began with Whittier's editorship of the *National Era.* It was in 1847 that he became contributing editor of this paper which Gamaliel Bailey started in Washington, D. C., for the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. As contributing editor from 1847 to 1860 Whittier submitted a vast amount of material not all of which has to this day been sought out and collected.

The editorials which he wrote on Iowa are among the forgotten pieces. But for the history of Iowa, in the period immediately preceding the Civil War, they are of the utmost importance. Through this paper Salem and Iowa became ever more interested in both Taylor and Whittier.

Another point of contact with the Iowa Quakers was the friendship of Whittier and that eminent abolitionist and public benefactor Benjamin Lundy.[6] Just when this friendship began is not definitely known. Lundy was born in New Jersey in 1789 and was therefore Whittier's senior by eighteen years. Early coming in contact with slavery, Lundy, true to his heritage as a birthright Quaker, became violently opposed to the system. Moving from place to place during his youth he finally settled in St. Clairsville,

[5] This was told to the writer of this article during his visit to the Whittier home.

[6] See Jones's *Later Periods of Quakerism,* Vol. II, pp. 561ff., also the *Dictionary of American Biography.*

Ohio, where in 1815 he established an anti-slavery society which he called "The Union Humane Society".

At the beginning of the following year he issued an appeal for the formation of similar groups which should take the same name and work for the abolition of slavery. This move resulted in the rapid growth of many societies throughout the United States. Lundy also sent numerous articles denouncing the slave system to a paper known as *The Philanthropist* published at Mount Pleasant, Ohio. After a short time he was given a position on the editorial board. In 1821, however, he began publication of a new paper, *The Genius of Universal Emancipation.*

In addition to his editorial work he made constant journeys in the interest of abolition. In 1828 during a trip through the New England States he urged Garrison to join forces with him. It is likely that Whittier, then twenty-one, heard and met Lundy at this time. In 1829 Garrison went to Baltimore for a short time as associate editor with Lundy. In 1836 Lundy began a new publication which he called *The National Enquirer and Constitutional Advocate of Universal Liberty.* In March, 1838, Whittier went to Philadelphia to edit *The National Enquirer.*

The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society bought the paper from Lundy and on March 15th Whittier began his work as editor, changing its name to the *Pennsylvania Freeman.* Under Whittier's editorship it became a sort of second *Liberator.* The following year Lundy left for Illinois where his family had preceded him. He at once associated himself with all anti-slavery societies in the Mississippi Valley and as public Friend continued his visitations. It is obvious that his influence on the Iowa Quakers was very strong. His work was cut short, however, when, after a brief illness, he died in 1839. He was buried in the Quaker cemetery on Clear Creek, Putnam County, Illinois.

Thus the Quakers of Iowa at the beginning of 1850 had come to feel a responsibility for the extermination of a system which they believed so fundamentally wrong that it could be no longer tolerated. They had been trained by abolitionists who would neither give nor take quarter. As a result they watched the compromises, and prepared to meet any emergency. The Iowa Quakers were as determined as Whittier and Garrison.

The attention of the country was now turned to the "West". The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo had added an immense new territory to the original area plus the Louisiana and Florida purchases. Should this be free or slave territory? The abolitionists with one accord declared for freedom and their supporters continually increased in strength and number. The Wilmot Proviso was killed by the Senate. John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis held that slaves were property and as such Congress had no authority one way or the other.

The Congress of 1850 represented one of the most brilliant groups of statesmen Washington has ever seen — Webster, Calhoun, Clay, Douglas, Benton, Cass, Bell, Davis, Seward, and others of marked ability. Iowa's Augustus Caesar Dodge took sides with the members supporting slavery. In the midst of the difficulties, Henry Clay, then an old man, continued his efforts at reconciliation. Calhoun, too ill to deliver his last address, heard it read, and soon after died. Webster took the easier way to compromise. His "seventh of March speech" sealed his fate. His northern friends, among them his cousin, Whittier, were cruelly disappointed. Whittier's *Ichabod* ranks with Browning's *Lost Leader* as a lament over a fallen hero. To a man of Whittier's character Webster's attitude was unforgivable, especially when he upheld the Fugitive Slave Law which Emerson and other New Englanders so

thoroughly denounced. Then, too, Webster denounced abolitionists since they put their consciences higher than the country's law.

Seward sided with Whittier and Emerson, holding that there is "a higher law than the Constitution". Dodge failed to see the "higher law". Whittier kept all this in his mind as he followed Dodge's career, noting that he voted for all the provisions of the compromise measures. He also noted every word in Dodge's outspoken remarks against the abolitionists. But the last straw came in the passage of the new Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. This made it a Federal crime to help a runaway slave to freedom. Every station on the Underground Railroad was automatically outlawed. But Salem's stations became even more active. Henry Clay was held by the south as the "Great Pacificator" but by the abolitionists as the great traitor. Webster's glory was gone as in reality was Clay's. The latter died disillusioned two years later, and the former died broken hearted in the same year.

In looking over the situation early in 1850 Whittier seized upon the bold plan of drafting Charles Sumner for the Senate to oppose Dodge and the other pro-slavery leaders. Whittier would have run for the office himself had his health permitted. Since it did not, he sought out the brilliant orator, pacifist, and abolitionist of Boston.

Sumner, a Harvard man of great talent, studied law only to become convinced that politics was a loathsome thing. After two years of intense study of languages, peoples, governments, and politics in Europe he returned to Boston to enjoy the friendship of Emerson, Longfellow, Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Wendell Phillips, and Whittier. All went well till he shocked Boston with his Fourth of July address in 1845. Before the military he took the pacifist position and opposed all war. The Mayor of Boston

is reported to have said that by this position Sumner had cut his own throat, and the elite of Massachusetts predicted his political and social ostracism. But just the opposite occurred. He became almost overnight a popular lecturer before lyceums.

All this pleased Whittier, who, with his intuitive grasp of adroit political action, selected Sumner for Congress. In 1850 he visited Sumner and told him of "the large future" which he had shaped for him.[7] Sumner answered the prophet's call; Massachusetts elected him and on December 1, 1851, he took his seat in the Senate with advice from Whittier to annihilate Dodge and all his ilk. Sumner immediately attacked the Fugitive Slave Law, taking the same position in regard to it as Emerson did. He also violently opposed passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill which Dodge called "the noblest tribute which has ever yet been offered by the Congress of the United States to the sovereignty of the people". Some of Whittier's most important and as yet uncollected editorials in the *National Era* concern his fight against Dodge's championship of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.

WHITTIER, WILLIAM FORSTER, AND IOWA

A further connecting link between Whittier and Iowa was the English Friend, William Forster, an influential minister, writer, and traveler.[8] Born near London in 1784,

[7] See Jones's *Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol. II, p. 654.

[8] See Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster* (London, 1865). Forster kept a journal which forms the basis of this *Memoir*. He visited Nine Partners, New York, in 1823. Reuben Dorland, a teacher at that school, had left Nine Partners for Salem a few months before Forster reached America. He was now struggling to found his Academy. The interest in Dorland's project as well as his interest in slavery induced Forster to make the arduous trip to Salem. Whittier's first interest in the educational projects at Salem evidently dates from the account which Forster brought back to him from Salem. When Whittier finally gave up his plan to go "west" he began sending money to help the Salem schools.

Forster early showed a tendency to leadership in the Quaker Society. Like George Fox, he led the peripatetic life of a Quaker preacher for several years. About the year 1818 he settled at Norwich and for the rest of his life was known as William Forster of Norwich. In 1820 Forster came to the United States in the interests of the American Friends. His journey lasted five years during which time he visited all the important meetings in the United States and made a study of the slavery question.

After visiting the eastern States he went to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. While in Ohio he had printed "at Mount Pleasant 1,000 copies of three of the sections in the Book of Advices issued by our Yearly Meeting". He penetrated as far west as any settlements had been made, and, as Benjamin Seebohm, the editor, observes, "many were his privations in what was then truly a wilderness country". At this time he came in contact with persons from Missouri.

While in Indiana, Forster records in his Journal, after meeting he went home "with Matthew Coffin, an elderly friend, lately come with his wife and daughter from North Carolina". The Coffin family, with other North Carolina Friends, a little later became part of the nucleus of the settlement at Salem, Iowa. Later he mentions the Thomas Newsome family and adds: "There are four or five families in the neighborhood recently emigrated from Carolina".[9]

Following his visit to the Mississippi Valley, Forster returned east and visited New York and New England. His biographer records that he "was closely occupied in visiting the meetings of Friends in the southern parts of New England Yearly Meeting to the end of the First Month; but no detailed record has been met with his religious engagements during that period".[10] It must have

[9] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster*, Vol. I, p. 348.

[10] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster*, Vol. I, p. 376.

been during this period (1822–1823) that Forster paid the visit to the Whittier home to which Samuel T. Pickard refers as one of the sources of comfort and encouragement to the family living on their lonely farm between Haverhill and Amesbury.[11] The admiration which the young Whittier formed for Forster in this early visit never diminished. Thirty-one years later when Forster died in Friendsville, Tennessee, Whittier, then a famous poet, paid him a tribute in a poem, *William Forster*. This poem, first printed in the *National Era* on July 20, 1854, Whittier introduced by a prose explanation of the work of Forster in America.

During these remaining thirty-one years Forster continued his interest in America and its problems. When the London Yearly Meeting in 1845 voted to send representatives to America, William Forster was selected to bear the Epistle. The Epistle referred to the separation of a group of the Indiana Friends from the main body due to a difference of opinion in regard to slavery. On August 23, 1845, Forster set sail with three other Friends, Josiah Forster, George Stacey, and John Allen.

The party landed in New York on September 9, 1845, after spending seventeen days on the Atlantic. The Friends of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and vicinity gave the party an enthusiastic welcome. Whittier at this time was considering "going to the West" to live, but he gave up the plan probably because his health could hardly endure the exposures and hardships of the wilderness.[12] If he had gone "west" he probably would have settled at Salem, Iowa, with the Quakers whom he admired most of all.

It seems also at this time that he conceived the idea of

[11] See Pickard's *John Greenleaf Whittier*, Vol. I, p. 37.

[12] Pickard's *John Greenleaf Whittier*, Vol. I, p. 307.

building in the unspoiled west a Utopia, a place of freedom. It was this very year, 1845, that Reuben Dorland came to Salem and founded his justly famous Seminary. What would the future have held for Whittier if he had followed his plan and had come to Salem the same year and perhaps in company with Dorland and Forster? Whittier was probably in New York to help welcome Forster and may have urged him to visit Salem. His *Lines Suggested by a Visit to the City of Washington, in the 12th month of 1845* probably refers to the voice of Forster calling for union and united action against slavery. The question now assumed a moral significance. The pulpit, the lecture platform, and literature all discussed the issue.

As soon as possible Forster set out for Indiana hoping to meet the Friends at Richmond, Indiana. He arrived there on September 29th. The Friends' Meeting received Forster as a peacemaker, and the differences began to heal.

Forster now determined to visit Iowa. The Iowa situation had been discussed in detail. Politically it was of vast importance to the anti-slavery party. By the Missouri Compromise, adopted in 1820, slavery was "forever" prohibited in Iowa. When the Territory of Iowa was organized in 1838, the territorial legislature passed an act to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law provided ownership of the fugitive slave was proved in the courts. The whole country watched with intense interest the first case tried in the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court. This case, known as the Ralph Case, was tried in 1839.

Ralph, a slave owned by a certain Missourian named Montgomery, entered into a contract with his owner to obtain his freedom for $550, and was given permission to leave Missouri and to work in the Dubuque lead mines to earn the freedom money. After working five years he found it impossible to save the necessary sum. At this

juncture, he was kidnapped by two Virginians and was being transported back to Missouri, when a writ of habeas corpus was procured and the case tried before the Supreme Court. The Court gave Ralph his freedom. This set a precedent and it was ever after extremely difficult to convict a fugitive slave in Iowa.

On October 12, 1845, Forster set out for Iowa. After two weeks "diligent travel westward" the party found themselves in Salem. On October 27th Forster wrote this description to his wife:

> Here we are, twenty miles west of the Mississippi, 1140 from New York, and, as far as I know, we have now arrived at the most remote point of our travels. We reached the river about an hour before sunset on Seventh-day evening. The ferry-boat was on this side, and it was long before they came for us; however we had daylight to enjoy the scenery, which was soft and very fine; the western banks steep. The average width of the river is about a mile; and as we went some distance down the river, it took us about half an hour to cross it. We found capital quarters at the Madison Hotel; a striking contrast to our previous night's lodging; — nine of us in a moderately large cabin — two travellers and the nephew of our landlady in a bed in one corner of the house — five of us on the floor — the sixth sitting by the fire all night. The next morning we managed to get to the meeting at New Garden, twelve or fourteen miles distant, before Friends were all assembled. A log house in the open prairie — neither tree nor fence within a considerable distance — pretty well filled with new settlers and their children: such a lot of babies as I had never before seen in so small a meeting. Friends were hospitable and affectionate.[13]

After leaving Iowa, Forster returned to Indiana, thence to Washington where he spent some time discussing the question of slavery with Congressmen and other leaders. Finally he went back to New England for a visit with Whittier, Garrison, and others. Considering his mission accomplished, he sailed with his party from Boston on May 1,

[13] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster*, Vol. II, pp. 198 ff.

1846, landed at Liverpool on the 14th, and went at once to London to report to the Yearly Meeting. The portion of Forster's report to this meeting dealing with Iowa read as follows:

> On deliberating on the course which we should take, there being obvious reasons why we should proceed in the first place to the remotest settlements, we lost no time in setting out for *Iowa*. In that territory several meetings of Friends are now settled, and there is one meeting of those to whom the Epistle is addressed. We passed about a week in that country, and then proceeded to see two small companies of those who had seceded in the northern parts of Indiana, and one within the southern limits of Michigan.[14]

In 1853 Forster felt again the call to America. He was now sixty-nine years old and his health, due to the extreme labors of his peripatetic ministry, was no longer robust. In spite of all this, however, he embarked on the *Canada* at Liverpool on September 3, 1853. On this trip as on the preceding, Forster was accompanied by his brother Josiah, by John Candler, and by William Holmes. On this trip Forster brought an address from the London Yearly Meeting which he presented to the President, to the Governors of all the States, and to certain influential statesmen. The address advocated the complete abolition of slavery. The party reached Boston on the 15th of September, and gradually working its way south reached Washington in October. On "10th mo. 1st Seventh-day" he had the famous interview with President Franklin Pierce. The account as written by Josiah Forster supplemented by John Candler is as follows:

> 10th mo. 1st. Seventh-day.— We had an interview with Franklin Pierce, the President of the United States, at the Government House in the city of Washington; he received us affectionately and courteously. My dear brother introduced our errand, speaking of the long-felt interest of the Society of Friends in the termination of

[14] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster*, Vol. II, p. 202.

slavery and the slave-trade; and of the extended circulation of the address in Europe and in the Brazils. The President made some remarks on the present and more recent state of the question in the United States, and took a discouraging view of the prospect of an early termination of slavery amongst them. He recognised the concern of Friends as a religious one, and did not regard our coming as an interference. He encouraged the visit to the several governors as a likely means to carry out the concern, reminding us, as a reason for this, of the independence of the several states. The pressure of his duties as president would not allow of our reading the address. It was remarked to him that we had not much to do with slaves, but with slaveholders, and that we wished to pursue a quiet course. He appreciated this, believing it would facilitate our object. After expressing a belief that, if there was a sincere looking to our Father in Heaven, a way would open to terminate the system, we withdrew.[15]

The itinerary from Washington took Forster to Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. While on their way to Indianapolis they were entertained at the home of Elijah Coffin, a relative of the Coffins at Salem, Iowa. From Indianapolis they continued to Illinois and Wisconsin. They next turned south, and the Journal tells of the continued interest in Iowa.

We now turned southward, returned to Chicago, and, traversing the wide prairies of Illinois, we crossed the Mississippi from Alton to St. Louis, and arrived there on the 16th of the Eleventh Month. During our tarriance in that city my dear brother printed an edition of 1,500 copies of the "Lock and Key," by J. J. Gurney; giving orders for sending them in packets to schools in Illinois, in Iowa, and in this city, and taking other copies for distribution in the Southern states. We went about forty miles westward, on the way to Jefferson City, by railroad; but my dear brother felt so run down in health and unequal to exertion, that he relinquished the remainder of the journey thither. John Candler and I, therefore, went forward by the stage, and, after a comfortable journey of twenty-four hours, on rough roads, through a wilderness country,

[15] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster,* Vol. II, p. 357.

and being ferried over several rivers, we arrived at the city, near the banks of the Missouri river.[16]

The account of the interview with the Governor of Missouri, Sterling Price, is as follows:

22nd.— We obtained an interview with the Governor of Missouri. He kindly granted us liberty to read the address. I felt the home-strokes which it contained. He asked at the close what we intended to do or proposed as a remedy. He was told it was not our business to presume so much; we left that with them, and believed a remedy would be found, if rightly sought for; whilst we saw the case encompassed with difficulties, and sympathized with them. He said Great Britain had inflicted slavery on them. It was replied, when the American Colonies threw off the yoke, they could have terminated the system; but that we thought it well to look forward and not backward. He spoke of some states that had already set free their slaves; and that in past years Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky were about to terminate slavery, had not other states interfered; here again we urged attention to the future. He spoke of some ministers of the Gospel who openly advocated slavery. We asked for a candid, serious meditation upon the address, and its scriptural argument, and pressed this upon his conscience. He spoke of the intelligence of his slaves. It was remarked the more the intellect is exercised, the more galling is the yoke of slavery found to be — for the love of liberty is inherent in man as his faculties are developed. The subject was calmly treated on both sides, and we came away acknowledging his kindness. A copy of the "Life of John Woolman" was given him.

We went early to rest, expecting to depart before three in the morning. Before midnight the address and the book were returned, and a letter stating that he was not satisfied with us or our views. On the 25th we returned to St. Louis.[17]

After leaving St. Louis the party continued to Baton Rouge, and then turned back through Mississippi, to Ala-

[16] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster,* Vol. II, p. 365.

[17] Seebohm's *Memoirs of William Forster,* Vol. II, pp. 365 ff. Sterling Price, later a Confederate general, was greatly feared by the pioneers in Iowa County because of his threat to raid their settlements.

bama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, where Andrew Johnson, the Governor, received them "kindly".

Forster was now in his seventieth year, and his body could scarcely stand the severe strain to which he put it. In January, 1854, the party reached Friendsville, Tennessee. The Friends here received him with joy, and he rejoiced with them and in their history. The settlement in Tennessee is closely connected with Iowa, and at one time the society considered migrating in a body to the latter State.

The first settlement of Friends in eastern Tennessee is not definitely known, but there was a settlement on the Nolichucky River in Green County in 1784, and another settlement at Lost Creek in Jefferson County in 1787.[18]

These pioneer Friends came mainly from New Garden, North Carolina, the original home of the first Iowa Quakers. In 1808 the Newberry Monthly Meeting was set up in Blount County, where Friendsville is now situated. The Constitution permitted the States to make laws regulating slavery. This turned the tide of immigration from the south to the territory which eventually became the State of Iowa. The proposition was laid before the Newberry (Friendsville) Monthly Meeting to close the Meeting entirely and form a colony in Kansas. David Morgan, a Friends' minister had already gone with James Allen, an Elder, to spy out the land. The Kansas colony was voted down. The result was that the majority came to Iowa. A few of their grandchildren have since returned to Friendsville from Iowa.

It was to this Newberry Monthly Meeting with its Iowa relationship that Whittier's friend, William Forster, came

[18] The following material dealing with the relation of Iowa to the Newberry (Friendsville) settlement was kindly furnished me by Anna Ethel Foster, Librarian of the Academy at Friendsville. The letters containing this research are in possession of the writer of this article.

in January, 1854. In a few days he was dead. The minutes of Newberry Monthly Meeting held on February 4, 1854, had this memorial:

> Our friend Wm. Forster of Earlham road Norwich in England died at the house of Samuel Low near the Holston (i. e. the Tennessee) River in Knox County East Tennessee on the 27th of the 1st mo. 1854 being 69 years of age; and was buried in friends burial ground at Friendsville in Blount County East Tennessee on the 29th of the same month; The recorder is requested to incert this in the Book of Records; The Clerk is directed to forward a copy of the foregoing minute to Norwich Monthly Meeting of friends.
>
> And this meeting believing that it will be servisable to Truth in encouraging others to do likewise to prepare a Testimony of his Gospel Labors in this land and of his peaseful Close it appoints David Morgan and James Catlen to prepare and produse one to next meeting.

Thus passed one of Iowa's interested friends as well as the Friend who, when Whittier was an unknown farm boy, visited his home and inspired him to a life of service. On hearing of Forster's death Whittier wrote the well-known memorial poem *William Forster* which was first published in the *New Era* on July 20, 1854. In the opening stanza he refers to the first visit when Forster put his hand on the head of the unknown farm lad and thereby stirred within him an undying ambition like him to become a prophet.

> The years are many since his hand
> Was laid upon my head,
> Too weak and young to understand
> The serious words he said.

The final stanza relates Whittier's determination to take up the mantle left by the dying prophet:

> Methinks the mound which marks thy bed
> Might bless our land and save,
> As rose, of old, to life the dead
> Who touched the prophet's grave!

When Whittier turned his attention to Iowa he found in Senator Augustus Caesar Dodge the enemy of every ideal for which Forster had sacrificed his life. Curiously the influence of Forster on Whittier had been quite overlooked. But it may have been Forster who gave to Whittier the political and moral power to make Sumner Senator for Massachusetts and to help drive Dodge from power in Iowa. The judgment of Blaine, that Whittier was the greatest politician he had ever met, seems likely in time to be generally adopted.

WHITTIER TRIUMPHANT

During the thirteen years that Whittier served as corresponding editor of the *National Era* the paper published his editorials, book reviews, and the majority of his other writings. Whittier believed religion should side with right against wrong, with genuine love, which to him was charity in the sense of a cosmic power. When the clergy attempted to prove from the Bible that slavery and Christianity were compatible, he was filled with a righteous wrath. He became the "terrible meek". This side of his life he demonstrated significantly in his attack on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The bill as introduced provided for the organization of the Territory of Nebraska. Stephen A. Douglas was chairman of the Committee on Territories and when the bill came to him in January, 1854, he rewrote it to provide for two Territories, Kansas and Nebraska. Senator Dodge gave the bill his vigorous and enthusiastic support to the horror of the Iowa Quakers. The bill was intended to make Kansas slave territory and Nebraska free. This meant a virtual annulment of the Missouri Compromise. The North rose in deep indignation. The legislatures of Massachusetts and several other northern States sent protests to Congress.

On April 6, 1854, the *National Era* reprinted an editorial from the Washington, D. C., *Sentinel* violently attacking the *Era* as "the great gun of abolitionism". It also called upon "the clergy whether for or against Nebraska, to keep the subject disconnected from religion". It continued by claiming that "the doctrines of the divine Founder of the Christian system, like the Constitution under which we live, neither establish nor inhibit slavery. They permit and protect it. . . . Men are not commanded by the Saviour, in any of his teachings, to abolish Slavery. So far from there being any command to abolish it, certain rules are prescribed for the treatment of men held in servitude and bondage".

The unsigned editorial comment in the *National Era* following the reprinted editorial seems certainly to be from the pen of Whittier. In the style of Whittier the answer is whipped back to the "theological politicians". "The *Sentinel* arraigns Doctor Beecher for meddling with a political question, and at the same time undertakes himself to meddle with a religious question. Is not the Doctor as well qualified to deal with the politics of his country, as the politician of the *Sentinel* is with the polemics of the Bible?" It should be remembered that Whittier greatly admired Beecher. In his Amesbury library a photograph of Beecher hung on one wall and opposite it a bust of Marcus Aurelius. Whittier is said to have sat between them and to have claimed that he himself was a combination of the two.

In the same issue of the *Era* (April 6) in a long signed editorial entitled "The Occasion and its Duties" Whittier points with pride to the fact that several of the northern legislatures, public meetings, and several municipal elections have all repudiated the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. (Whittier always calls it the Nebraska Bill.) "Never

within the memory of man have the people of the free States been so united upon any political question as they are at this moment in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the introduction of Slavery into the great territory of the West." Whittier continues: "Do we not know that Young America is grasping after new territory, now without the limits of the United States?" A little further on he quotes his fellow worker in the cause: " 'The Fugitive Slave Law', says Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'partially unglued the eyes of the North, and now the Nebraska bill leaves us staring.' " Whittier concludes this long editorial by a call for action to defeat the bill.

During this period there was an animated correspondence between Iowa and the *National Era.* A sample communication is the "Meeting in Lee County, Iowa", in the issue of April 27, 1854. Whittier received it from Henry County, in which Salem was located. It follows:

> The citizens of Marion township, Lee Co., Iowa, have been in the habit of holding township meetings every week, for the past three months. There has been a good attendance generally. At their last meeting the following resolutions were passed. They were presented by Joseph D. Hoag.
>
> "1. *Resolved,* That the sovereign people have never delegated to Congress the right or power to legislate in favor of slavery, and that the attempt to do so, now being made, is a usurpation of power dangerous to our rights as freemen, and subversive of the principles of our Republican Institutions.
>
> "2. *Resolved,* That that man who will lend his influence and vote to break down and destroy the plighted faith of the Nation, to promote his own sinister views, is unworthy of public confidence, and should be held to a strict account by a free and enlightened people.
>
> "3. *Resolved,* That we look upon the Nebraska bill, as reported, amended, and supported by Judge Douglas, as aiming, in its provisions, at the above ends, and we therefore solemnly protest against it."

The secretary was instructed to send the above resolutions to the *National Era* and Iowa *True Democrat*, for publication.

William Payne, Secretary

Henry Co., Iowa, March 22, 1854.

In these resolutions Whittier's attitude stands forth in all its simplicity. Congress has no right to impose slavery, Senator Dodge is unworthy of public confidence, the Nebraska bill must be defeated. Joseph D. Hoag, a Quaker, submits the resolutions, and they are sent from Henry County.

In the issue of the *National Era* for April 27th, there appears a long editorial signed by Whittier entitled "A Miracle Needed". It reads in part as follows:

The Nebraska Bill, as a peace measure, does not work well. The more the troubled waters are oiled by it, the more they are disturbed. Every day adds more new embarrassment; every mail brings Job's tidings. Every wind comes loaded with an ominous growl of discontent. Democracy, which has been accustomed to sit in patient incubation upon all manner of queer projects, is ruffling her feathers and looking suspiciously upon the new claimant of her maternal solicitude. There is danger that she will take it for a snake's egg, and toss it out of the nest.

No one could better appreciate the difficulties in his way than does Senator Douglas. He has struggled against them with a perseverance worthy of the best of causes; but, so far as appearances go, he is losing ground; and it would seem that some novel and startling expedient is needed, to save him from the irretrievable consequences of a blunder, which, in the scale of political morality, is even worse than the crime which it involves.

The editorial proceeds to compare Stephen A. Douglas to Emperor Nicholas of Russia, and to Bedini, Governor of Bologna. In the case of each a miracle occurred to support his governmental policy. Douglas needs one too. Whittier proceeds with a caustic satire worthy the pen of Swift.

It occurs to us that the Senator's friend, the honorable and "reverend Mr. Johnson", ex-missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and delegate from Nebraska, might aid him in his present emergency. Might not the reverend gentleman recollect and certify to the fact, that while his Senatorial friend was defining with so much pious unction the duties of the Clergy on a late occasion, he, casting his eyes upward to the great dome of the Hall, in a state of ecstatic satisfaction, was favored with a vision of the Apostle of the Gentiles, carrying into execution the old Roman Fugitive Slave Law, and tying Onesimus hand and foot, to give him over to his master, Philemon?

In the meantime public sentiment in Iowa was working to defeat the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and Whittier was keeping in close touch with Iowa events. It was now all important to hold Iowa as a defender of freedom. As Iowa went, so must the nation go! Whittier watched the Iowa papers. This was easy to do since in the 1850's a general newspaper exchange was in effect. What Whittier did not see Gamaliel Bailey carefully noted.

In the *National Era* for May 4, 1854, appeared an editorial entitled "The People of Iowa and their Senators". This editorial, evidently written by Whittier in the first place, seems to have been added to by Bailey when he received it. The *Era* editorial was inspired by a three column editorial in the Washington, D. C., *Union* "intended to influence the election for state officers in Iowa, to be held in August". The *Union* editorial, said the *Era,* purports to be an answer to an address by James W. Grimes, the Whig candidate in that State for the office of Governor. Its particular object is to counteract the natural resentment felt in Iowa at the position maintained by its Senators in the late Nebraska debate in the Senate and certain remarks then made by Southern Senators. The *Era* editorial continued:

This electioneering document, full of misrepresentations, will be

circulated, we doubt not, by the Iowa Senators, all over the State, and be received as gospel by thousands of readers.

Now, we have nothing to do with Mr. Grimes or his statements, but we do not like to see people imposed upon.

The impudent claim is again set up, that the Nebraska Bill recognizes the rights of the inhabitants of a Territory to govern themselves — in other words, the principle of "popular sovereignty." This is notoriously false, as has been shown a hundred times. The Territory is treated as in a condition of wardship.

The editorial in the *Era* goes on to say that the sovereignty is to be in Congress not in the people.

The pretence that the Bill recognises the principles of Popular Sovereignty is a miserable humbug, got up expressly to cheat the People.

Mr. Chase, an opponent of the bill, but a determined Democrat, as his record shows, used every exertion to bring the measure into conformity to the principle of Popular Sovereignty. . . . by moving to amend, so as to give to the People of the Territory the election of their Governor, Secretary, Judges, &c., instead of reserving their appointment to the President, after the pattern of the British rule for governing its colonies. These efforts were stubbornly resisted by Messrs. Dodge and Jones, of Iowa, and their "British policy," as they would style it, had it been pursued by their opponents, is thus excused in the electioneering document:

"Now, we happen to know that both these gentlemen would have been glad to vote for such a provision, if by their votes it could be carried. That they did not go for it when offered by the deadly enemies of the bill — the abolition leaders in the Senate of the United States — who, with the true recklessness of their trade, sought to embarrass the friends of popular sovereignty, is quite true! No senator favorable to the Nebraska bill was verdant enough to be caught by the tricks of men whose avowed object was to destroy that measure, by any means, no matter how dishonest."

This is rather too transparent. Actions speak more loudly than words. Because the opponents of the Bill, aware that it would pass the Senate, sought to make it less anti-Democratic, they are to be charged with striving to defeat the Bill! It is confessed, then, that the Bill, had it been amended so as to recognize the principle of

Popular Sovereignty would have been defeated; that its passage was secured only by provisions most grossly violative of Popular Sovereignty! . . . . Their plain duty, then, was to vote for it, whether their votes could carry it or not. As it is, we have their *votes,* their *acts,* for anti-Democracy, their *words* for Democracy. The country is cursed by self-styled Democrats, whose acts are forever giving the lie to their words.

Let the people of Iowa ask their Senators why Mr. Douglas and his *Democratic*(?) associates who reported the Bill, did *not exclude from it its present monarchical features?* . . . . Messrs. Dodge and Jones know this, and so voted to retain its monarchical features.

The electioneering document next notices the anti-alien clause, which, if the Bill pass, will prevent all alien settlers and cultivators in the Territory from taking any part in governing themselves; and it excuses Messrs. Dodge and Jones for voting for the Bill with this clause in it, because they knew it would be stricken out in the House. They did not know any such thing, nor can any one know whether this will be done or not.

As to the attempt to fasten this mean provision on Whigs, let the people of Iowa recollect that it is understood to have originated with a so-called Democratic Senator, and was sustained by the slaveholders, without distinction of party. It was not carried by Whigs against Democrats, but by slaveholders, with the aid of Mr. Brodhead of Pennsylvania, against non-slaveholders. . . .

Messrs. Dodge and Jones must be judged by the company they keep.

Much ado is made in this electioneering document about the following statement of Mr. Grimes:

"I abhor the sentiment announced by Senator Butler, that Iowa would be more prosperous with the institution of Slavery than with her industrious and patriotic German population."

This speech by Senator Butler of South Carolina, reported in the *Des Moines Valley Whig,* was made on the preceding 24th of February. It appears that neither Dodge nor Jones took exception to Butler's expressed belief that Iowa would be more prosperous with a slave population than with a German population. The *Era* editorial continued:

Their silence under such circumstances was disgraceful to themselves and disloyal to their state; and the lame explanation of Senator Butler on the 25th, made doubtless at their instance, cannot extenuate their conduct.

If the people of Iowa are not like their Senators, they will take care in their August election to show these gentlemen that they have sagacity enough not to be humbugged, and self-respect enough to prefer free labor to slave labor, or a free to a slave population.

The most important of Whittier's editorials in the *National Era* regarding Iowa, however, was the one entitled "Free Slave States". This appeared on July 27, 1854, just before the August election of that year. It follows in full:

We are among those who look with hopeful interest upon the movements of the Association for aiding emigration from the free states to Kansas. It is conducted by practical men, who are not accustomed to failure in the enterprises they undertake. There is, nevertheless, a question in respect to it, which we would like to have satisfactorily answered. Granting a preponderance of free State emigrants to the territory, and that, in consequence, Slavery is denied a place in the Constitution of the new State, we would still like to know what security we have that the moral and political power of Kansas will be found on the side of Freedom in the National Councils and in Presidential elections. We really cannot feel entire confidence in the stability of emigrants who, at home, have been by no means reliable. The slavery-prohibition clause in the Constitution of California was hailed as a Northern triumph, but it has thus far proved a very barren victory. The Representatives of that State have uniformly voted with those of the ultra slave States; their whole tone and bearing on the question of Slavery have been such as to lead a disinterested observer to suppose that the protection and extension of the detestable institution were the grand objects of their participation in the national legislation. When to this is added the fact that its local Legislature has cunningly evaded the constitutional prohibition of Slavery, and afforded slaveholders all needful security for holding and reclaiming their human chattels, we really cannot see much to boast of in "the free State of the Pacific."

Iowa — the near neighbor of Kansas — is another specimen of a

Free Slave State. From the hour of its admission to the present, its influence and votes have been given in favor of Slavery. Augustus Caesar Dodge's vote has always been as certain for any villanous [sic] scheme of Slavery Propagandism, as those of Butler and Atchison. Where the special blame of this state of things lies, we do not pretend to say — we hope, at least, that our Quaker friends there have clean skirts in the matter — but there is no disguising the fact that Iowa is now, and has been from the outset, so far as her action in the Confederacy is concerned, to all intents and purposes a slave State. We are glad to notice, at the present time, signs of reaction and protest against this unnatural and degrading alliance, sufficient, at least, to warrant the hope that, at the election about to take place, a new order of men will be returned to Congress. We notice, with pleasure, among the anti-Nebraska candidates, the name of R. L. B. Clarke, a brother of Grace Greenwood, and, like her, loving Freedom and hating Slavery with equal heartiness. He can scarcely fail to unite upon himself the entire anti-Nebraska strength of his district. Of the anti-Administration candidates in the other districts we have no personal knowledge; but, if they are reliable men, it is to be hoped that they will have the support of all parties opposed to Slavery extension. There is no time left for new arrangements and combinations. The anti-Administration candidates, as a matter of course, stand pledged to reverse the mischievous policy of the Dodges and Henns, and their election would go far to place Iowa where she belongs on the list of Free States.

In an unsigned editorial under date of December 28, 1854, entitled "Iowa" there appears the valedictory for the year. The editorial note sums up the vote by which Grimes was elected Governor of Iowa. "The Legislature, after some trouble, succeeded in effecting an organization. Governor Grimes, in an excellent Inaugural, thus refers to the Slavery Question: 'It becomes the State of Iowa — the only free child of the Missouri Compromise, — to let the world know, that she values the blessings that compromise has secured to her, and that she will never consent to become a party to the nationalization of slavery.' "

In his debate with John P. Hale in May, 1850, Dodge had declared his irrevocable determination to oppose the abolitionists and the "higher law" doctrine, which had come to be held by an ever increasing number of persons, and he held fast to his belief that the Constitution defended slavery and must be preserved. He affirmed the good faith of Iowa to abide by the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law. He cited the case of Ruel Daggs against Elihu Frazier and other Salem Quakers[19] to prove he was backed by Iowa sentiment. But the Iowa attitude was changing, and changing more rapidly than Dodge realized. Causes are not won by words but by establishing new spiritual attitudes.

This new attitude is suggested in a letter published in the *National Era,* on September 21, 1854, giving a picture of pioneer life and changing opinion in Iowa:

Eureka, Iowa, Sept. 6, 1854

To the Editor of the National Era:

It is now more than a year since I gave you a sketch of home-hunting in Iowa. Our selection on a beautiful stream (Richland Creek) was away back in the wilderness . . . . It is now in the heart of a thriving neighborhood, with but little land vacant within seven miles of us. No one unacquainted with Western life of late years can realize the change one year has made. . . . We are now no longer ashamed to be known as Iowaians. Dodge and Jones! Whenever I thought of them, I wished they lived in some other State. The change is radical; it will last. In our precinct, not one Nebraska vote was given. The in-coming population is of the right sort.

Yours truly,

M.

This letter of a pioneer reflects the changing spirit. The dangerous doctrine of the "higher law", the tenets of the

[19] An article in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. VI, pp. 9ff., gives in full this interesting case. The counsel representing Daggs insolently referred to the Quaker Meeting House at Salem as the "Abolition Meeting House".

abolitionists, and the determination of the Quakers made the change. The powerful anti-Nebraska sentiment heightened by the *National Era* overwhelmed Senator Dodge, and in January, 1855, he was succeeded in the Senate by James Harlan. Whittier had triumphed. But this was only the beginning of his interest in Iowa. Soon a college in Salem was to bear his name, and from this college sturdy pioneers were to carry his name to California there to establish a city and a college each proudly to bear his name.

Charles Arthur Hawley

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