

THE STORY OF MAHLON DAY COLLINS

The Collins family record in this country parallels that of America from the first days of Plymouth down to the present. The spirit of the family was ever that of the pioneer, impelling them to move on to still unsettled frontiers. These pages outline the experiences of Mahlon Day Collins, one of the eighth generation.

Within the lifetime of the subject of this sketch, vast areas of country were won from savage owners and developed into closely populated Commonwealths. His home life started with the tallow dip and sperm oil lamp for illumination; it ended with the electrical development of the twentieth century. The cotton gin, sewing machine, telegraph, telephone, wireless, radio, phonograph, airplane, submarine, giant battleship, automobile, all and more were developed during this man's life span. With these came thousands of contributions for the comfort of our daily life, making hardware stocks, for example, develop from less than one hundred articles to over five thousand.

This man had his part in the national development. As was the case with other pioneers, many material fortunes showed themselves, opportunities knocked often at his door, but were not recognized by reason of the lack of knowledge of what lay ahead. His path finally led along lines of spiritual endeavor for the church of his choice. Character moulded in the rough life of the frontier rose above material things, until he builded himself a record of unselfish, conscientious, gentle, Christian living. High ideals contributed to lofty ambitions, making the basis of the indomitable energy portrayed in this story.

About the year 1900, the writer of these lines suggested to his father that he should set down his own story. After his death we found that he had, in part, acted on the suggestion, and had set down his version carrying him to the year 1860. His own story will make up the first part of this record.

To his children remained the task of filling out what is missing to make the whole story. Ralph Peter Collins, the eldest, who was born when his father was a young man of twenty, took over the task of filling in details down to the '80s. Stories related by father filled in the gaps. The writer has called on each of the remaining members of the family and a cousin, Oella Collins Hewitt, to add to his own personal knowledge, but the story still lacks a vast amount of material which is lost to memory. Twenty years after a man's death is a long time to wait for the recording of his life's work.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

[The autobiographical sketch which appears below bears the inscription, "*The Story of A Collins Including the Tree from Which He Sprang*, by M. D. Collins, Minister of The Gospel". It was written in 1901 and is dedicated "To my dear children who survive—four are upstairs in the heavenly home—Ralph, Mabel, Hubert, Centenella, and Roy, who may take some pleasure in the perusal; and I trust may profit by avoidance of the mistakes, and may find inspiration to honest work and devotion to God, in the record of the life of their father." The story is printed as it was written by Mr. Collins with only a few minor changes.—THE EDITOR.]

LINEAGE

In the Mosaic dispensation, a man was not ready to be a warrior, worker, or worshipper, until he could come before the national assemblage and show his pedigree.

The Collins family are of good lineage and long time residence in America. The first of the line in America was Henry Collins, who embarked in the brig "Abigail" of London, England, on the 10th day of June, 1635, for Plym-

outh Colony, America. In 1638 he had a grant of land. In 1639, he was a member of Salem Court, having fixed his residence on Essex Street, Lynn, which was then contained in Salem Town, all in Massachusetts. This much the early history of Salem records in its brief annals.

Henry Collins, who was born in 1606, and Anna, his wife, who was born in 1605, had four children — Henry, John, Margery, and Joseph. Of these, John and his wife had sixteen children, the youngest of whom was at first named William. This John and a son John were drowned at sea. After this the mother renamed her youngest son John, so that he would bear the name of the father and the older brother.

This second John married Susannah Daggett, and their children were named Rebecca, Sarah, Hezekiah, Jedediah, Lydia, John, Ebenezer, Benjamin, Samuel, and Abigail.

Hezekiah of this family married Catherine Gifford in 1735. They had twelve children. The second child of this union was named Joseph, in my direct line.

This Joseph married Bathsheba Hoxie in 1764. Their family consisted of two daughters and seven sons, one of whom, Joseph, Jr., carried on the line for me.

This Joseph, Jr., married Hannah Sheffield. This couple had six sons and five daughters. Of these children, the youngest was Peter Collins, my father.

Peter Collins was born on May 16, 1804, at Hopkinton, R. I. In 1825 he married Sarah Hall, another native of Hopkinton. They were married in Brookfield, N. Y., whither the parents of both had migrated from Hopkinton about the year 1810. My mother, Sarah Hall Collins, was a daughter of William and Mary Hall.

The first of the Hall family to come to this country was Colonel Hall of the British Army, who came to America about 1638. For "services rendered" the King of England

had granted to him a tract of land, including a large part of Rhode Island. One of this line was George Hall who married Mary Durfee — and their son, William, and his wife Mary were the parents of Sarah Hall Collins who became my mother.

Eight children were born to Peter and Sarah Collins, five of whom reached manhood and womanhood. My brothers and sisters were Joseph, Thomas Elwood, Hannah, Amelia Jane, Henry Hinsdale, Huldah, and Anna Frances. These with myself, the fifth in seniority, completed the list of eight.

Joseph, the eldest, and Henry Hinsdale, the sixth, died in infancy, the former in New York State, the latter at Salem, Iowa. Sister Huldah also died in girlhood at Salem and since then, Hannah, Amelia, and Anna have also joined father and mother in the skies, leaving brother Elwood and myself as the sole survivors of the family.¹

I was born on August 13, 1838, in New York City. My parents were Friends, or Quakers, and were conscientious Christians after the orthodox standards of that society.

EARLY IOWA

My father was a life sufferer from asthma, due to the effects of a cold while a child. While engaged in business in New York City, his health became so impaired by the damp sea breezes, which greatly aggravated his disease, that his physician advised a change of climate. He accordingly made a trip westward in search of recuperated energies.

He first went to Ohio, thence to Richmond, Indiana, without satisfaction. There he joined an exploring party of Quakers bound for Iowa. They came in wagons, bringing up at Salem, Henry County. The town had been laid out by

¹ Mahlon Day Collins died in 1904, and his brother Elwood in 1917.

Quakers, for Quakers, and had been in existence some two years at the time of their arrival. Hiram Street, a Quaker of Salem, Ohio, had laid out the town and when father decided to settle in Salem, Street became father's first partner in the mercantile business.

He wrote mother of his purpose, while she was yet in New York City. To reconcile her to the undertaking he wrote, "The modern facilities for travel are so perfected now, it will require about three weeks to make the trip". Mother at once set about preparation for the migration and a few days after father's return all was ready for the move.

We traveled by the best and most modern transportation methods of the time — from New York City to Philadelphia by boat, thence westward by rail for sixty miles, then by canal to Pittsburgh. We went down the Ohio by steamboat and up the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa. From here a wagon bore us to our new home in Salem. At that time this comprised rapid transit from New York City to Salem, Iowa. The journey took us a little more than three weeks, as father had estimated in his letter. You can now pass between these points in two days and nights, scarcely realizing how it is done, per Pullman sleepers and dining car service.²

When we reached Iowa Territory in 1842 the country was very new and but partially organized in settlements. A row of counties on the south bordering the State of Missouri had already been established and a line two counties wide bordered the Mississippi River. Many of these were crudely organized. The remainder of the territory was inhabited by Indians, buffalo, elk, deer, wolves, and other denizens of that virgin country.

The followers of George Fox made up the greater number

² Since this was written in 1901, the traveling time between New York City and Salem has been reduced to hours instead of days, by the use of airplanes.

of inhabitants of the village of Salem, while hundreds of others filled the surrounding country. These peaceful people came from all parts of the United States, east and south, and gave character to the society in this region during its formative period. Education, temperance, religion, and anti-slavery sentiments were early and thoroughly propagated and good seed sown, which has been bearing fruit nearly sixty years in one of the most progressive parts of the American Union. The Salem Seminary, afterward a college, was one of the first educational institutions of a higher order in the State. My father had much to do with its founding, and with the bringing of Rebecca Dorland, its first principal, from the Nine Partners Boarding School on the Hudson River to take charge of the new school. Here the principal educational advantages I have had were enjoyed. Precious are the memories, life-long the inspirations and impressions there experienced.

Salem figured largely in the growing anti-slavery agitation throughout the West. It was one of the first stations by which escaped slaves made their way to Canada on the "Underground Railway" of that day. Being but thirty-three miles north of the line which separated slave from free territory, it was often the "point of hope" where fugitive slaves began to experience "their first breath of liberty". My father was one of the pioneer "conductors" on this "subterranean" path to freedom.

At one time — about 1850 as I recall it, for I have no page save that of memory for reference — fourteen colored people who had escaped from their masters made their way to Salem.³ There they found temporary rest in various homes of known and trusted ones among the "broadbrims".

³ This story of the escape of the two slaves at Salem differs in some particulars from other accounts. For other versions see Jones's *The Quakers of Iowa*, pp. 189-191, and Garretson's *The Underground Railroad in Iowa* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, July, 1924, pp. 431-434.

The next day, I think it was, while the fugitives were resting quietly in the homes of Friends, preparing for the journey northward, a company of slave hunters, numbering fully one hundred men, rode into town. They were all mounted on swift steeds and dashed up under full speed, accompanied by blood hounds, so necessary in such a chase.

At that moment I was attending school, and I well remember seeing our teacher's expression as she glanced through the open door to the south. We also looked and down the road toward Missouri we saw a cloud of dust which betokened a crowd of horsemen rapidly approaching. The teacher guessed their errand, hastily called school to attention, and hurriedly dismissed us to our homes.

The horsemen came on apace, and soon dashed into the village looking very like an army of occupation, armed as they were with rifles, shot-guns, pistols, sabers, bowie knives, and other furnishings for their work. They took possession of the town, and having warrants began at once to search the houses for their lost property.

The Quakers were anti-war and anti-slavery people, but they were adept in secreting fugitives and aiding them in eluding their masters and owners. Though these raiders swore and blustered, threatened personal violence, and called on the law then in their favor, yet a hard day's work on their part brought no results. My father helped them to hunt most carefully and thoroughly, where he knew there were no fugitives. They were about to give up in disgust when an old negro man and child ran in terror from a hiding place, where they might well have remained in safety.

Although these two ran into the hands of those who would bear them back to slavery, and the law was on the side of the masters, yet their Quaker friends did not give up. They resorted to strategy.

There were none better fitted for this than some of the

meek appearing followers of him who was fittingly named — Fox. Court was held in the anti-slavery meeting house and the law in favor of the slave owners was quibbled over pro and con until it was time to adjourn court for the day. As the crowd poured out of the house, a demure looking Quaker from the country rode up to the door, mounted on a horse apparently from the work field. He led another horse. The rider seemed attracted by the crowd and curious to know the cause. He made his inquiring way into the confusion of the dispersing assemblage. Suddenly, the old fugitive slave and the child with him were both seized and placed on the back of the led animal. Every Quaker in the crowd immediately started yelling and running about, getting in the way of slave hunters, and at the same time giving the mounted Quaker and his charges the opportunity to ride away. Then it became evident that the Quaker's mount and the led animal were both fast steeds. The riders were rapidly borne away from the clutches of the law and before the slave hunters and the sheriff's posse had recovered from their surprise at what was going on, the slaves were far away and safe in the country.

The next day the slave hunting crew, full of wrath at the failure of the previous day's work, set about intimidating the townspeople. The Quakers were men of peace but they had many friends in the surrounding country not so peaceably inclined. These had been apprised of the situation, and early in the morning after the escape of the two slaves, companies of men, on horseback, in two and four horse wagons, and afoot, began to arrive in town. They put up with the inhabitants and at the hotel. Every man was armed. By the middle of the afternoon the enemy began to take alarm, when they discovered they were outnumbered more than two to one by quiet men who evidently intended to stand by the Quakers. By night time, these men, so

brave when dealing heartlessly and relentlessly with slave men, women, and children, were thoroughly frightened. After the shades of night had fallen on their camp near the village, they "folded their tents like the Arab and silently stole away".

Thus ended without violence what would have been a bloody day had one gun been fired. This was one of the early throes of that "irrepressible conflict" which ultimately ended in the "War of the Rebellion", in the midst of which the shackles were stricken from the limbs of three million slaves.

During the years immediately following 1850 a rapid flow of immigration came pouring into the new Commonwealth. Our family joined the movement into the portions of the region where new settlements were being made.

We moved to Muscatine first. There my uncle, Brinton Darlington, had lived since 1838, when he had emigrated from Fayette County, Pennsylvania. His second wife was my aunt, mother's sister, Amelia Hall.

Father and Uncle Brinton united in the business of a furniture store located on Second Street, Muscatine, and I became clerk in this store in the fall of 1853, living with uncle in the town. The following spring father moved his general dry goods and grocery business from Salem to Muscatine. With the goods came the family, so Muscatine became our home town and continued so for several years.

In 1854, father started a branch store in Marshall County. Thomas Darlington, brother of Brinton Darlington, became father's partner in this newest store, which was located in the town of Marietta, at that time the county seat of Marshall County. This was 125 miles distant from Muscatine, and all the goods were transported from the latter place by wagon. As soon as the branch store was opened, I was made the "freighter" for the firm. All goods used in the

store at Marietta were carried there by wagon under my guidance. In the interim between long trips with goods, I acted as clerk in the store. It was on the edge of the frontier and we did a large business trading for furs with Indians, hunters, and trappers.

In the spring of 1854, father moved his whole stock of goods and family to Marietta, and the family lived there for a short time. But the moving tide bore us on. The same year we were to shift again.

Father and three others laid out the town of Rocksylvania, adjoining Iowa Falls, which had been platted the previous year. My brother, Thomas Elwood, had married Sarah Williams who had emigrated from Ohio that year with her sisters, Mary and Kate, and her brothers, John and Benjamin. Elwood purchased a farm on the Iowa River six miles north of Iowa Falls in Hardin County.

Our family soon removed to Rocksylvania where father and I started a store. We conducted the first post office in that place as an adjunct to the store. I already had office experience while conducting the post office at Muscatine for John A. McCormick. We tarried about a year in Rocksylvania.

Brother Elwood and John Williams, his brother-in-law, explored the newly opened region on the upper Des Moines River, and secured claims on Lotts Creek in what afterwards became Humboldt County,⁴ but was then Kossuth County. After we sold out in Rocksylvania, father, mother, the two youngest daughters, and I returned to Muscatine.

⁴ The original Humboldt County was established by a law approved on January 15, 1851. On January 24, 1855, it was joined to Webster County and another act divided it between Kossuth and Webster counties. Humboldt County was created on January 28, 1857. It had much the same territory as Humboldt County, but was not exactly the same.—Swisher's *History of the Organization of the Counties in Iowa* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. XX, pp. 530, 551, 557, 558, 575.

Father then made an exploring trip to Minnesota. Seeing — as he had peculiarly prescient faculties for discerning — that there was to be a metropolis adjoining St. Paul, he went in with others to lay out Minneapolis. As one portion of the partnership contribution, he agreed to send a store to the young city and intended to have me fulfil the bargain. But while he was away on this trip, Elwood had emigrated to the new region in Kossuth County and had started to lay out a town to be called Sumner, for one of his political friends. He had written me ordering a stock of goods, and instructing me to join him with them in the new country. This scheme was so far consummated when father returned from Minnesota, that his scheme was abandoned. Father saw then and repeated it often afterwards that this was a great mistake. So it was. His plan would have made us prominent shareholders, one of the eight partners in Minneapolis, which he said would yet be a great city. He was right. Our town of Sumner never materialized. Minneapolis was laid out in 1855 and has become one of the most enterprising and beautiful cities of the West. Our holdings would have been of immense value.

It was in the fall of 1856 that I reached my brother's place just south of Lotts Creek in Kossuth County. My goods had preceded me and Elwood had dug a cellar and placed them in it. Awaiting the erection of a store building in the new town, he had begun a survey just across the creek to the northwest. I afterwards purchased from the government a quarter section of land north of the creek in the section he surveyed. There I made my home.

I think it was October when I reached the new settlement on Lotts Creek. The weather was beautiful Indian summer, and continued most delightful until the first day of November. Then all was changed. With the ground yet unfrozen, and from one of the most bland and beautiful

falls, we were within three days ushered into one of the most severe, even terrible winters I have ever seen either before or since. The first day of November it began to snow, gently and beautifully at first, but with increasing volume and violence for three days and nights. When it halted on the third day the mantle of snow was four feet deep on the level in the woods and all depths on the prairies where the wind had piled and windrowed it in fantastic shapes and depths.

From that time until the following April the cold was intense, reaching 40° F below zero a number of times. The snow was followed by rain turning into sleet which laid a heavy crust over the whole snow surface. This icy veneering was not heavy enough to hold horses, however, and they could not be used as an aid to transportation. Mails were carried on foot from Fort Dodge to Algona, a distance of forty-five miles, and we went there for it — afoot. Transportation of goods was reduced to what men could draw on hand sleds from one place to another.

My future brother-in-law, Ben Williams, and I made one memorable trip during that severe winter, from our settlement on Lotts Creek to a point near Liberty in Wright County. Houses were no nearer to each other than twenty miles at any point on this route. A load of my goods had been left near Liberty by my brother, when he had been forced to abandon it by the first storm described. He had been caught out and frozen so badly that he was laid up the remainder of the winter, and never entirely recovered from his experiences. Ben Williams and I crossed this wintry waste of prairies which were ridged and furrowed with deep lines of snow. The entire surface was covered with a deep crust of ice. We harnessed ourselves to a hand sled we had made, and with this we glided over the icy surface the full distance with little trouble and no fatigue. We were

young and vigorous, delighted to face the weather and defy Boreas on his own field of battle. We made the trip out in quick time. The next day we returned with about three hundred pounds of freight on the sled. It comprised the most needed things for our use during the Arctic weather, among which I recall a heating stove. The return trip with this load was not so easily accomplished as the out-going one had been. The loaded sled would sometimes break through the crust and require tugging to move it forward. However, we reached the nearest house of our settlement in the dark that evening pretty well fagged out, and were hailed as successful Arctic explorers. The winter continued relentless and severe.

Brother Elwood was laid up the whole winter, nearly helpless from his freezing experience, and during the whole time his live stock was penned up on the north hillside in sheds, so shut in with the heavy snows, they could not be gotten out. I carried water to them, and hauled the hay they ate, on a hand sled the distance of a half mile. Caring for brother's stock and his family, in addition to my other duties, gave me ample employment. I remember some years afterwards I applied for a certificate from the county superintendent of common schools to authorize me "to teach the young idea how to shoot". He gave me this sentence to parse, "Long will the settlers of Iowa remember the hard winter of 1856-57". I can testify to its severity in the West, and I think it was general throughout the United States.

The long, weary winter wore away at last, to be succeeded by a very wet spring and summer. The country was flooded and the level regions of northern Iowa were covered with water. Streams were high and facilities for crossing them were crude and primitive. We must needs take our grist to a mill thirty miles away at Fort Dodge to obtain

our flour. Ben Williams and I worked together on these errands. The only stream that had a bridge the previous year was minus it on our trip that spring. We found the floor of the bridge, held together by some stringers, lodged down stream in some bushes on the bank. Reclaiming this for our use, we got it back in the water and used it for a raft. On this we placed our grist, fastened a rope to our float, swam across and pulled the raft after us, thus keeping the precious grain dry. We swam the horses across. Then we chained the wagon body to the gear and pulled it through the flood. When we came to the West Fork of the Des Moines River, we took another means of crossing. Finding a large walnut log, we hollowed out a canoe. In this we ferried our grist and wagon in separate pieces, assembling the latter after crossing. We swam the horses but passed dry ourselves in the canoe. Thus we proceeded on our way rejoicing. Such experiences developed resourcefulness and gave us confidence in ourselves. This was needed in conquering the difficulties of a new country.

The lakes, ponds, and streams harbored myriads of water fowl. Geese, ducks, sand-hill and white cranes, an endless variety of birds such as I have never seen since, were everywhere on the prairie and in the woods. This condition of bird life was universal over Iowa that year of 1857. If you were on one of the prairies spending the night, as we frequently were, you would hear "voices in the night" of almost endless variety known to the vocabulary of bird tongues.

Doctor Williams, my future father-in-law, lived about two miles down the creek from my brother's place. I was attracted to his home by his daughter Keturah who graced the hospitable home as no other could. Sundays, and every other time I could spare during the spring and summer of 1857, I spent in the company of this magnet.

The following fall, September 24, 1857, I was married to Keturah A. Williams, daughter of Doctor Dearman Williams, then of Lotts Creek, Humboldt County, Iowa, but late of Ohio. He had migrated two or three years before and settled first in Marshall County, then followed his children to Humboldt County. The Williams and Collins families were finally united in a four-fold bond of marriage, of which mine was the second. The Williams family were of Welsh origin with considerable residence in America at the time.

The first of this family to come to America was Robert Williams, who was born in Wales and died in North Carolina. His first marriage was to Elizabeth Dearman, a native of England. From her Doctor Williams, my wife's father, had his first name. It is said that Elizabeth Dearman had been maid-of-honor to Queen Anne of England. By this marriage there was one child, a son named Richard. Robert Williams was married a second time to Elizabeth Dew, by whom he had three children — Samuel, John S., and Elizabeth.

Richard Williams, the eldest son of Robert Williams, was born in Newbern, N. C. He was quite highly connected. Sir Richard Church was a cousin. The Backhouses, bankers of York, England, were relatives on the mother's side. Elizabeth Robinson, noted minister of the Friends, was also a cousin. Richard Williams married Sarah Dew, by whom he had one son, Robert. His second marriage was to Sarah Stanton, a native of Beaufort, N. C. She was born on January 12, 1778, and died in Stark County, Ohio, on November 11, 1843. The children of these two marriages and the dates of their births were as follows: Robert, born August 29, 1797; Elizabeth, born September 9, 1799; Abigail, born September 19, 1802; Dearman, born October 12, 1804; Deborah, born November 30, 1806; Asa, born Decem-

ber 27, 1808; Mary, born April 7, 1811; Benjamin, born April 3, 1814; Lydia, born May 2, 1816; David, born September 23, 1818; and Edward, born February 5, 1821.

Dearman Williams was my wife's father. On November 27, 1830, he married Mary Farmer. To them were born eight children — John F., born August 17, 1831; Rebecca, born January 17, 1833; Sarah, born January 29, 1835; Benjamin, born January 17, 1837; Keturah, born September 22, 1839; Mary E., born May 20, 1842; James, born June 19, 1845; and Edwin, born February 3, 1847. John F. Williams married Amelia Bond Collins; Sarah Williams married T. Elwood Collins; Benjamin Williams married Anna F. Collins; and Keturah Williams married Mahlon D. Collins.

TRAVELS IN THE WEST

The hard times of 1857-1858 made business precarious, and although I had opened a farm adjoining the village we had started and kept the store going, yet with building and improving, it was largely outlay with too small an income. By the spring of 1860 Ben Williams and I were ready to join the flood of fortune seekers who were pouring westward to the Eldorado that had the winter before been discovered in the Rocky Mountains. On the 8th day of May, 1860, Ben Williams, his sister Mary, my wife, and I, with our son Ralph, started for the gold mines in what was then known as the Pike's Peak Region.

We outfitted at Omaha, which was then a young city of three or four thousand people, and the capital of Nebraska Territory. After a few days at this outfitting point we joined the tide which poured westward.

We started with two yoke of oxen, two cows, and a wagon full of supplies. For nine weeks, with some stops to recuperate the animals, we trudged toward the setting sun. A few villages were scattered along to Fort Kearney, where

we bid good-bye to any organized civilization until we reached Denver at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. We arrived there on July 1, 1860. Wild game was plentiful, and although the main stream of buffalo had already passed the line of travel in their annual feeding northward, yet we saw a goodly number of them who had lingered behind the main army.

My wife, her sister, and Ralph, while returning to the States in the fall, encountered the stream of buffalo at full tide, and found the company innumerable. With these were wolves, coyotes, antelope, deer, elk, and all the denizens of the prairies. They were scattered over the entire area from the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri River.

Crossing the plains at that early date was much like a voyage at sea. Supplies must be carried the whole way. White wagon covers, like sails at sea, dotted the expanse from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, which formed the western shore of this wild sea.

We found Denver a brisk young city of perhaps three thousand people. Many were living in tents, and the only houses erected were light and temporary in character. The capital of the Territory was located at Colorado City soon after the date of our arrival. Colorado City bid fair to surpass Denver in importance — then. Denver was chaotic, with its motley company of people from all parts of the country, East and West. Its government was nothing but form. Gamblers had free sway. We stayed from the first to the fifth of July in this wild place. Seven men were shot in Denver on the Fourth of July, and I do not think any of the murderers were arrested. Little attention was paid to it.

On the fifth of July we started for the mountains by the Mount Vernon route. We paid \$1.75 toll for the chance of reaching the mines by this route. It was barely passable by

teams, and was very rough and difficult. I remember one mountain side we descended, so steep that we chained a log to the rear of the wagon for a drag to prevent its getting the best of us. Often we took to the bed of a mountain stream for our course, passing through its rapidly flowing waters.

We reached Lake Gulch where some who had crossed the plains with us from Glenwood, Iowa, had located and opened a store. Here we tarried a few days, and then purchased a claim in Graham Gulch. We removed thither and entered at once on a miner's life. We built a log cabin on the south side of the gulch and began mining with "Long Tom and Sluice". We had to strip the ground down 12 to 15 feet to reach pay. The return was fair, but inexperience, water which would fill the pits, and many other things made it difficult to make money there. Companies came in there later, bought the claims, and with hydraulic machinery cleaned up from \$2000 to \$5000 on each claim in that gulch. We soon found it was not profitable to keep the women there. They had no society to mingle with and when we found some friends returning to the States in the fall of 1860 we sent the two women and Ralph back to Iowa.

The mining season closed early in September, and Ben and I decided to have a hunt. He had some experience trapping beaver in Iowa, and had brought along a box of Newhouse traps. We fitted up a handcart with which to transport our supplies, for we were to enter a country where there were no wagon roads. We set out one bright September morning for the headwaters of North Boulder Creek. Making our way up the north branch of the creek toward Long's Peak at a point pretty well toward the head of North Boulder, we found an abundance of beaver dams. Selecting a beautiful, romantic spot to the south of the creek, we built a cabin and set to work trapping beaver.

In two weeks we caught thirty-seven beaver, the pelts of which were fine, dark, heavy fur. Game was plentiful and we fared sumptuously. Beaver tails were a rich dainty among hunters and trappers, and of these we had plenty to add to all other kinds of game meat. Altogether we had more than we could use.

Needing supplies and some pack animals, we returned to Central City to dispose of our furs, bought some donkeys and returned to our camp. As we had cleaned up the beaver in that locality, we determined to cross the range and find our way to Middle Park, which we knew lay to the west. We set out on this trip late in September or early October. Our task was to scale the Rockies at one of the most rugged parts of this mighty masonry of the Supreme Architect. We knew nothing of the way, but followed the stream to its source in a large lake just at the foot of the "snow line". The going was bad. We had left our pack animals behind, and were carrying guns, blankets, and such supplies as we could pack on our backs. We relied on the game for our living.

We reached the summit of the mountains about 2 P. M., one day, and looked around on a range of points extending as far as the eye could reach, all covered with snow and ice. Hardly had we glanced over the scene when the sky was overcast, and in a few minutes we were in the midst of a whirling, roaring blizzard on the top of the Rocky Mountains. We hastened back to the lake we had passed on our upward course, and on the south side of the lake in the shelter of an overhanging shelf of rocks, we built a camp fire and passed a sleepless night. The snow would come in great gusts and nearly extinguish the fire. Piling on more fuel we would resuscitate the fire, and then take a turn at trying to sleep between it and the rock wall. Work, smoke, and snow kept us awake all night.

When morning broke we looked out on a blanket of snow covering the mountains two feet deep, with more coming down. We took up the descent toward the lower mountains after a breakfastless good-bye to our snowy camp. Our last food had been devoured the day before. We expected to find game that day, but the animals had scented the storm and put out for lower levels. We trudged along wallowing through snow to our arm pits for several days. I think we passed full ten days under these conditions without food. During this time we saw one grouse flying high. The last night before reaching the settlements, we found a deep place in the stream where there were beaver "signs". Cutting a hole in the ice we found beaver stores of food, and a runway to the bank. Setting three traps down beside this runway, we were rewarded in the morning by a fine young beaver, caught in all three of the traps — one had him by a forefoot, one by a hind leg, one fastened on his tail. We had a fine breakfast and started on our way rejoicing. Near noon we shot a fine elk. We stopped to dress the carcass, hung it up out of reach of wolves, and had another feast. The next day we reached Lump Gulch at late dinner time. In spite of our feast the previous day, we were so emaciated that the men immediately saw our need of food and told us to sit down and help ourselves. We soon made ourselves sick, and it was several days afterwards before we felt right.

During the stress of our difficulties, as we saw no food in sight day after day, Ben and I both became very irritable toward each other. I recall one day as we marched along in arduous toil, the following conversation. "One good thing about this, Mahlon", said Ben. "What is it, Ben?" I snapped back. "It couldn't be any worse." After this one outburst we journeyed the balance of the day without another spoken word.

From Lump Gulch we set out for the lower country and brought up in Denver again. It had been long since we had received mail. I went to the express office to get letters. At that time letters were brought across the plains by the pony express, and cost us twenty-five cents each, in addition to postage. While waiting in line for my opportunity to call for mail, a gentleman whom I had seen before, named Van Camp, called to me that he wished to see me as soon as I was at leisure.

After securing my mail I went outside and Van Camp told me of a "discovery" having been made in the San Juan country of northeast Arizona. He asked me to act as hunter of an expedition of about two hundred men who were going to open up the country. A bargain was soon closed, and we started before daylight the next morning with myself in this official position, all bound for the Sangre de Cristo Pass of the Raton Range of the Rocky Mountains.

MORE STORIES OF THE EARLY YEARS

[The personal account of the life of M. D. Collins ends at this point. The story of his life is continued by the author, but before going on with the subsequent events, he adds some items to the information given in this autobiographical sketch. Much of this has been derived from stories told by Mahlon D. Collins, authenticated wherever possible by documents found among his effects at the time of his death.—THE EDITOR.]

Mahlon D. Collins at one time visited the shores of the Mississippi River above the city of Keokuk. That he possessed daring and determination is clear, for he plunged into the water and swam across to the Illinois shore and back again. This was some feat for a boy. It might not be so considered in these days of Gertrude Ederles, but it was in that day of self instruction. He had mastered the breast stroke while a boy and used it in the water through life.

During the hard winter of 1856-1857, of which he writes, M. D. Collins led a busy life. In addition to the care of his

brother's family and stock, he had his own duties to perform. To fill in time, and no doubt for his own amusement, he added to the life of that snow-bound, frontier community by printing a daily paper. This was called *The Daily Moccasin*. In it he printed all news of the settlement and what came to him in the mail. That, no doubt, was the first newspaper in what is now Humboldt County, Iowa.

Of his courtship he never spoke, but there is a bundle of letters extant which show his ardent thoughts. He addressed his future wife as Mary Grove. The use of this name shows the romantic nature of the young man for she had been christened Keturah Williams, and there seems to have been no necessity for a pseudo-name. The correspondence lasted through one winter and spring, after which the two lived in the same community and personal calls took the place of writing.

Mahlon Day Collins and Keturah Ann Williams were married according to the tenets of the Society of Friends, in which both had been raised and trained. Immediately afterwards they took up housekeeping in their own home on Lotts Creek, now Livermore, Iowa.

That fall of 1857, the bride was alone one day when a neighbor's boy rode up to the cabin and told her that Sioux Indians were raiding the country. A day or two before the Indians had killed the settlers and destroyed the homes at Spirit Lake, not over seventy miles from the Collins home. Other settlers had died by the acts of Indians on Lake Okoboji. Kate was alarmed, and was only partly reassured when Mahlon returned in the evening. The few people in the vicinity gathered together in one or two houses, and spent an anxious night as the men stood guard.

More rumors came next day, and it was not at all certain the Indians would not reach Lotts Creek. They still laid claim to the country and wished to drive all whites from it.

Mahlon headed a squad of frontiersmen who decided to remain on the ground and defend their homes from the savages. They placed the women and children and some old folks in charge of a group of men and boys and started them for Fort Dodge. The sickly ones were placed in wagons, but the majority walked across the prairies of northwest Iowa. At Fort Dodge they were huddled in a few shacks for several weeks before they could return home.

Mahlon Day Collins was yet in his twentieth year when his friends and neighbors elected him justice of the peace of the newly formed county of Humboldt. Justice Jonathan Hutchinson signed the affidavit making Mahlon secure in this office. Mahlon heard a case the first day of his tenure.

Benjamin Williams was always close to Mahlon in companionship and the two were real pals. Ben was notably hotheaded. This quality frequently led him into hasty action and trouble. On the morning when Mahlon took over the justiceship there was an altercation in a neighbor's yard, in which Ben Williams had taken part. Angered at the neighbor's words, he had cleared a dividing fence at one bound and in the next stride he had knocked the neighbor flat to the ground. The neighbor was soon thoroughly thrashed and begged for mercy, but he still felt that he had not merited punishment. Ben also continued to make threats. There was a new justice of the peace sworn to look after such happenings, deal justice, and protect the timid. The neighbor swore out a complaint and Ben was brought before his friend for judgment. "One dollar and costs", said Mahlon, and "Keep the peace".

Mahlon once drove a team of oxen to Fort Des Moines to purchase stock for his store on Lotts Creek. Some incidents and conditions on that frontier were related to me in the city of Des Moines thirty years later. An experience of my own led to the story.

One of the dim recollections of my youth is of having accompanied my uncle Ed to some relative's home about the year 1877. The relative lived on the east side of Des Moines and my impression of this visit seems to have been effectively engraved by the fact that I saw men working in a coal mine, at the foot of a bluff. The vein lay horizontal and a shaft had been run into the bluff just above the level and parallel to the surface of the river. I carried this picture in my mind for eleven or twelve years until one day when the family were living in Des Moines, I found myself looking for the mine location. Father was with me, for I had told him of the memory. He had replied that there was a mine at one time, along the river shore under the bluff. We finally found it abandoned, with some industrial track and rusting cars lying about. The opening was at a point close to where the southern boundary line of Capitol Park now reaches the water's edge.

As we stood there recalling our mutual memories, I noted a far-away, quizzical expression on father's face. Memory was taking him back thirty years into the past. "Yes", said he. "It was just about here". Then he explained.

On the journey down from Lotts Creek in the year 1858 he had traveled a long distance without watering his oxen. They were thirsty and smelled water ahead of them while yet some distance from the river. He noticed that they walked faster and faster, finally breaking into a run which he could not check. The team galloped down the road to a point where it turned south along the edge of the bluff. There they left the road and plunged down the precipitous bluff with the wagon. Strange as it may seem, neither wagon nor oxen were seriously damaged by the fall, and the animals were drinking their fill in the river by the time father reached them. The point where the team had tumbled over the bluff was close to the mine shaft we had just found.

Asked further of conditions in 1858, father said his road led him down the river to about where the Coon River enters the Des Moines. It led him past a grove of trees, at that time a deer park, where he shot a deer. That park was where the present State Capitol building now stands. The place, then known as Fort Des Moines, had a few hundred inhabitants in 1858. In the year 1888 a city of 40,000 inhabitants was named Des Moines. In 1925, 67 years after his experience, the inhabitants numbered 141,441 — an illustration of the growth of our mid-western cities.

In his written account of crossing the plains in the year 1860, M. D. Collins left out much of what happened. He also wrote as though there were not many buffalo encountered. His wife added the three stories which follow.

The warlike Cheyenne and Sioux Indians seemed more occupied with hunting fugitive Pawnees than otherwise. The Cheyennes were chasing the Pawnees all over the plains, killing, making captives, and burning villages. This chase took much attention from the whites. Acting as scout, Mahlon often discovered war parties drawing near. At such times the travelers would prepare for defense until the marauders were gone. Refugee Pawnee women and children fled to the wagon train for protection from their foes and they were sheltered and fed.

Once Mahlon was lost for two days. He ranged the trackless prairies and slept on the ground without protection. Eventually he found his way back to camp through the thoughtfulness of his wife, who ordered the camp held in one spot and had a lantern lighted and hoisted up on the end of a wagon tongue at night. This served as a beacon which guided the lost one back to camp at the end of the second day.

At one stage of the trip, the wagon train was threatened with extinction by a stampede of buffalo, which was averted

when Mahlon led the men in making a "split" of the oncoming herd. Thus the lives of the company were saved.

While the Collins party were spending the few days in Denver on the way to the mines, they became acquainted with a man by the name of Brown. This man owned a forty acre plot of ground taking in the new camp and extending beyond, and had built a cabin on the bank of Cherry Creek. Mahlon and his wife had brought a cook stove all the way from Iowa. Such stoves were evidently scarce in the camp for Brown offered to trade the forty acres for the cook stove.

Mahlon gave the man a withering look and said, "Do you see any green in my eye?" Then he continued, "I guess not". "Trade you a perfectly good cook stove for your forty worthless acres of sand hills". He left Brown with indignation.

Forty years after this incident, Mahlon Collins spent some days in the city of Denver. Looking about he finally came to the conclusion that the forty acres which had been offered him for a cook stove, lay in the heart of the city and that the cabin site had been approximately where the Lorimer Street viaduct now spans the bed of Cherry Creek.

The following story has also been handed down of the trapping expedition of Mahlon Collins and Ben Williams. One day the two men ascended to the top of a nearby mountain. Daylight was on the wane by the time they reached their objective and in order to return more quickly they selected a short cut down the trailless mountain side. Soon they were going over cliffs which prevented a return, for they dropped from ledge to ledge. They finally brought up on a ledge where further progress seemed impossible, and they could not go back. Lying on the ledge, Mahlon discovered another ledge below them which he could reach by backing off the one they were on and holding Ben's hand

to let him down a few inches until he could swing in to his new footing. Mahlon accomplished this maneuver in safety. It was now Ben's turn to reach his pal's side and there was no one to hold him from above. Mahlon finally directed Ben to slide over the edge and let himself go, assuring him that he would be caught and pulled to safety.

At the word "ready" Ben lowered himself over the cliff edge, noting as he did so the canyon bottom some hundred feet or more below. Letting his body down as far as his hands could be used to hold him, he let go as Mahlon grasped him about the waist and drew him back beside him. After a time they discovered a way leading downward to a point where they could leap to the canyon floor and reached the cabin soon afterwards.

Mahlon Day Collins had reached his twenty-second year in the year 1860. Six feet tall, with broad square shoulders, he had not an ounce of fat in the 190 pounds weight he carried. His hair was of dark, reddish-brown color, very curly then and all through life. Bluish tinted, grey eyes looked sharply from well-formed brows. He never took on weight, nor did his hair grow thin to any extent. His appearance was about the same to the end of his days, aside from the usual shrinkage of age and the streaks of white in the hair. As soon as he could, he raised a full beard which he retained, with variations of trimming, all his life.

Outdoor life on the frontiers made an athlete of him. The habit of walking long distances stayed with him ever. His stride was a series of short steps, as he successively placed each foot in alternation, one before the other as an Indian does. He walked so rapidly that one with him was often compelled to trot to keep pace. On long trips afoot, such as while crossing the plains, he averaged thirty miles per day. This distance was made in addition to stops for hunting.

On his trips to Colorado and New Mexico he was clothed as the hunter of that day. Fringed buckskin shirt worn belted at the waist, over-leggins, and moccasins. He carried a rifle and hunting knife. With the former he was expert among gun users. Among his brothers-in-law and the immediate family, he was conceded the quickest, most accurate shot, for he seldom missed a shot and birds fell pierced through the head by his unerring aim.

Companions of his young manhood gave him credit for continual cheerfulness and he was a rare raconteur of tales about the camp fire of evenings. He loved to joke others, and could as readily enjoy one at his own expense. Always considerate, he showed the instincts of a born gentleman.

HUNTER-TRAPPER-SCOUT

The early morning start of the San Juan expedition was made from Denver late in October or early November, 1860. Some of the crowd of nearly two hundred adventurers traveled on foot, some were mounted on horses, while the others rode in wagons. Thus they moved as fast as the slowest, the men on foot. The country teemed with game, and meat was the principal fare. Mahlon Collins was to furnish this and did so as long as he was with them.

Each morning he started on foot as the expedition broke camp, going ahead along a line agreed upon for the day's march. He would start at a trot which carried him ahead of the van. When he was a sufficient distance ahead he would start work. Antelope, deer, elk, and buffalo furnished acceptable meat. Having made a kill, he would skin and clean the carcass, and deposit the dressed meat on the hide placed close to the line of travel to be picked up by the cooks. When he found buffalo or elk his day was not so long. Antelope and deer took more time to hunt and more of them to make up the required poundage. The trail followed the

base of the foothills. Game had been driven from the mountains by the snows, and the country was a veritable hunter's paradise. That crowd of men never wanted for enough meat to satisfy their hunger. It was there; the hunter secured it.

They traveled from Denver over the divide into the Arkansas Valley at Pueblo. The cavalcade progressed at the rate of twenty miles per day. From Pueblo they journeyed west by south, finally pointing for Moscow Pass in the Wet Mountains. Just after reaching a location where a forward look through the pass revealed the Sangre de Cristo Range beyond, the whole crowd was snowed in. Camp was made and a pow-wow held. A retreat was decided upon, for the higher range ahead was buried in snow. The expedition leaders then led the men on the backward trail, leaving only the two who had decided to push ahead.

Mahlon Collins had found a kindred spirit and the two pushed on through Moscow Pass. It was no small task for two men thus to brave the terrors of winter in the high altitudes of the Rocky Mountains. Endurance and resourcefulness were needed. The two proved equal to the requirement. For many days they struggled through the lonely, unknown territory. Without snowshoes, they floundered through drifts, flailing their arms to get breath. After an almost continuous fight for life, their will and stamina won, and they emerged into the Rio Grande Valley. There they found smiling skies and snow disappeared from their course. Recovering quickly from the strain, their youthful vigor allowed them to proceed on their way at a good pace.

Indians, and Mexicans with Indian blood and as wild, met them with surly glances. They soon learned that Mexicans or Indians, although they might attack one in the open day or night, would protect the same person should he happen to be a guest in adobe home or tepee. One needed to fear

for neither person nor property so long as he was within the walls of a Mexican or Indian home as a guest. Mahlon Collins and his companion adopted the plan of reaching Mexican settlements or "plazas" each night, instead of camping in the open. This protected them but did not avoid some scares before they thoroughly understood their hosts. Thus the two men reached the settlement of San Luis. Mahlon's companion left him at this place, and Mahlon proceeded alone with Santa Fe as his next objective, pausing at Taos while en route.

Before reaching the latter place he remained with some Mexicans one night. All appeared well until the moment of departure in the morning, when the host suddenly sprang to his feet and drew a butcher knife from his belt. There was nothing reassuring in the move, for this man had a saturnine cast of countenance while his face was in repose. But Mahlon need not have worried; real villains seldom look the part. The man dashed out the door ahead of Mahlon, went to the carcass of a sheep hanging in the shelter of the porch, quickly cut off a ham, and presented it to his guest for food on the trail.

Near Taos, Mahlon was entertained one night by a Pueblo Indian in his part of the community house. During the evening Mahlon was lying on the dirt floor, resting from his day's tramp, when the Indian suddenly sprang upon him placing one knee on his chest, and drawing a war arrow to the head as he held it pointed down at the white man's breast. The Indian looked sternly, fixedly into the other man's eyes as he threatened. Mahlon felt his last moment had arrived, but knowing he was helpless, he decided to take what would come with calm bearing. Some minutes passed as the two men looked at each other. The white man lay passive, did not flinch or speak. The end of the tableau came as suddenly as its start. Springing to his feet, the

Indian threw down his bow and arrow as he broke into an approving grin. He then signified approval of the other's bravery.

When he reached Taos Mahlon looked for the home of Kit Carson. At that time Carson was acting as government agent over the Indians of the Southwest, and he lived, as befitted the great Indian fighter and scout, in a collection of adobe houses or rooms placed in a square surrounding a central patio, through which ran a small stream of water. The arrangement was for defense in the event of attack or siege. The scout was at home and invited Mahlon to remain with him as long as he wished. This invitation Mahlon accepted for several days.

With the skill of a born administrator, Kit Carson here attended to his multitudinous duties as government representative. Delegations of Indians from near and distant points, Mexicans, frontiersmen, soldiers, all made this their headquarters. They were going and coming all the day, and filled the patio at night. Mahlon absorbed much of the atmosphere and took his first lessons in Spanish, the universally spoken language, while tarrying there. That the noted scout learned to regard Mahlon with respect was evidenced when the latter left. Carson asked him to make that his stopping place whenever passing. Mahlon left with Santa Fe as his next scheduled stop, finally arrived there, and sought employment.

He soon found work in the trading house of a man named Hovey, who afterwards won the title of colonel in the service of the Confederacy. He took Mahlon Collins into his service as clerk, paying him \$5.00 per day. This arrangement existed all the year 1861.

While he was working for Hovey, Mahlon lived with a family whose home was some distance from the store. Conditions were unsettled, the native Mexicans were antago-

nistic to American rule, and to Americans as individuals. Assassinations were frequent — the knife a favorite means, dark streets the places. Mahlon soon acquired the habit of walking in the middle of the street while on his way to or from work, day or night.

Hovey learned to think well of Mahlon Collins and finally offered financial backing to the young man with which to start a business of his own. Mahlon gladly accepted. A wagon train was sent east along the Santa Fe Trail headed for St. Louis, Missouri, for the purpose of acquiring goods for the new enterprise. This wagon train did not return. A courier reached Santa Fe about the first of the year, 1862, with news: the wagon train had been confiscated by the Federal government after it had reached Missouri. The Civil War had begun, and measures for protection of the government were being enforced.

With this opportunity for going into business lost, Mahlon Collins became restless as all able-bodied men were at that time, and decided to leave Santa Fe and return to his home in Iowa. There he could confer with his family while deciding on his own course in connection with enlistment. Ed Anderson, another young man who had entered Hovey's employ with Mahlon, also wished to go home before enlisting, so the two decided to travel back to Iowa together.

Each man equipped himself with a minimum of gear for traveling through wild country. Mahlon fitted himself completely with buckskin clothing and several pairs of moccasins. In a money belt he carried several hundred dollars in gold coin, savings from the year's earnings. He also carried a rifle, knife, ammunition, and a small amount of flour. A blanket for bed made the pack which held the flour sack. A prospector's pan furnished the only cooking utensil.

Mahlon's trip back to Iowa was, to use his own expression, "the ebb of the tide in his pioneering experiences". Setting out on the first lap of their journey, the two men worked back over the same course Mahlon had followed the year previous. They subsisted on the country by shooting game. The average progress was between twenty-five and thirty miles per day. It is doubtful if any present day expert in camping out can surpass the actual methods used by those old time frontiersmen. Finding a suitable place for a night camp near wood and water, the men selected a convenient flat rock and built a fire upon it. While the wood was burning down to a good bed of coals, the outdoor cook mixed flour and water into a dough with a pinch of saleratus. Raking the live coals to one side, dusting off the hot rock with a balsam brush, he placed the dough where the fire had been, covered it with the prospector's pan, and raked the live coals over this. While the bread was baking, strips of meat were skewered on sticks, to be broiled over the coals which were baking the bread. One pan and one knife constituted the total cooking and dining equipment. The two men soon reached Taos and Mahlon again met Kit Carson in his home. Of course Ed was included among the guests entertained by the great scout.

The two men did not tarry at Taos as long as Mahlon had done the previous year, but took up their trip northward in a few days. While they were tramping across the Hondo land grant they were overtaken by night while yet in a deep canyon. They camped close to a stream where the trail lay without much room to spare between water and cliff wall. The meal was quickly dispatched, and the two were soon in deep slumber. The night passed without incident. They rose early in the morning, cooked and ate a meal, and were on their way when the morning sun bathed the peaks about them.

Just as they noted the trail disappear around a high canyon wall ahead there came the sound of an owl, "Who-whoo-whoo". "Yip-yip-yip-yip-yip" came the answering cry of a coyote. Mahlon grasped Ed by the arm, motioned for silence, and whispered, "No owl or coyote makes cries at this hour of the morning. Something is wrong." Mahlon directed their steps back along the canyon trail until they found a place where they could scale the mountainside. The two men worked upward and ahead until they could look down upon the trail, and on either side of the cliff they had been approaching. There they saw eight or ten Apaches concealing themselves behind rocks which hid them from the trail. The topknots of other Indians appeared from behind rocks on the opposite side. A real ambush had awaited the men.

Knowledge of the habits of birds and beasts, added to keen intuition possessed by Mahlon, prevented him and his companion from becoming victims of murderous Apaches in that far-off, lonely canyon. But they were not yet safe; the savages would soon realize what had happened and would be hunting their intended victims.

So Mahlon and Ed lost no time in scrambling higher up over the rocks. Finally they found cover in which they successfully hid all that day while their pursuers searched for them. In the darkness of the next night they pushed ahead and managed a complete escape from the savages.

About three days after eluding the Apaches, the young men came across an equipage fallen into an arroyo by the side of the trail. Close by stood a Catholic priest who explained that he was the owner of the vehicle and the animals in the bed of the dry stream. He had driven too close to the bank edge and it had caved in precipitating wagon and burros into a pit whence they had need to be assisted. The priest was on the point of abandoning his property in

despair and proceeding without them, when Mahlon and Ed appeared. The three men set to work with a will, dug an inclined path up the bank, and finally had vehicle, animals, and goods back on the trail. From that point forward the three men traveled together for Denver.

When they reached the high altitude of La Veta Pass there was snow to struggle through as there had been when Mahlon had gone south over a year previous. His companions followed his leadership, however, and they won through to the valley of the Huerfano, which they followed to Pueblo.

As they traveled north over the divide from Pueblo and while yet a day's journey from Denver, they came upon a score of men bent on lynching a prisoner. What crime doomed this man to death we do not now know, but he was destined to swing into eternity by decree of Judge Lynch. Mahlon and his two companions joined the crowd and watched the proceedings until they learned more of what had happened. There seemed to be some hesitation on the part of the lynchers and this gave Mahlon Collins time to address the assemblage. He spoke of having heard that the Territory was organizing to deal with all crime with a court sitting in Denver and he urged that the men obey the law and turn the man over to constituted authority for trial. His speech won the day. The man was bound and put under guard until he was delivered to the sheriff in Denver when they arrived there the following day. Thus Mahlon Collins saved a man's life and won a victory for law and order in that wild country. This occurred early in February of 1862 and the event must have provided a case for one of the earliest courts of that future city. It also cast light on the early Quaker training of Mahlon.

The clerk of the court at Denver ordered Mahlon to stand up and "swear", for he was a witness. Mahlon refused,

and the clerk became angry. The order was repeated. Mahlon said, "I will only affirm on my honor, to tell the truth". The officer was on the point of arresting Mahlon for failure to do as he was told, when the judge ordered the clerk to accept the affirmation.

At Denver Mahlon was engaged as hunter for a wagon train headed east across the plains, and left the mountain metropolis soon after his arrival from Santa Fe. Acting as hunter and scout he set out on the tramp across to the Missouri River. There were adventures on the way.

On one occasion the chase of an antelope led Mahlon into difficulties. Having sighted a band of the animals, he crept toward them on hands and knees. They could be brought to a halt by waving a handkerchief, but seemed to know enough not to approach within rifle shot of the hunter. All day long, until mid-afternoon, the animals lured Mahlon, until he finally realized that he was far from water and desperate for it. Giving up the chase, he started for water. It was a long way off; there came hours of trudging in a hot sun while his lips became parched and cracked, and his tongue swelled his jaws apart. Under such conditions, one becomes distressed mentally and physically. Mahlon's stride changed to a slow, painful dragging of the feet. His will alone kept him on his course.

Dusk was spreading over the land when he reached the south bank of the Platte River. There he fell over the low bank into shallow water. For hours he lay in the water and soaked it into his pores. Gradually his fever subsided, his tongue resumed its normal size, and he could finish drinking his fill. Dragging himself across the width of the river flats onto the north bank, he lay for the balance of the night in the open. Although without breakfast he was able to proceed in search of his camp. After reaching there, he spent the balance of the day resting up, but the following

day saw this man so recuperated that he took his place as hunter and scout as the wagon train took up its eastward course. Thus he worked his way across to the Missouri River. There he parted with his friends and crossed the Big Muddy on floating cakes of ice.

Mrs. Peter Collins was living in Muscatine, Iowa, that year, and the young adventurer reached her place after a tramp across the lower tier of counties, relieved by some lifts by wagon. This was his first visit to his old home in some years, and mother and son spent several days together. Another trip by "shanks-mare" brought Mahlon diagonally across into the northwestern section of the State. The last stream before reaching home, the Upper Des Moines, was swollen with spring freshets, offering some obstacle to crossing, but it did not delay him long.

Mahlon found the same log dug-out he and Ben Williams had made and used some years previous. This boat was so narrow that a full grown man found himself tightly wedged in place. This was Mahlon's predicament at the start of that crossing, when he struck out for the farther shore with pack and gun helping to fill the boat. Cakes of ice and floating logs were dodged as he made his lone way across the rapid flood, but when he was almost within landing distance of the home shore, a log capsized the boat. Precipitated thus into cold water, Mahlon was forced to struggle for his life while floating head down below the surface of the water. There was a minute or two of desperate struggle before Mahlon kicked loose and was free to swim ashore. Dug-out, gun, and pack were lost for the time as he struggled ashore, and proceeded at his best pace for home. His clothes dried on him as he traveled afoot over the remaining miles.

In his home on Lotts Creek, he found his family which now included a daughter who had been born since he last

had seen his wife and his son Ralph. At this time Mahlon Day Collins was a man in his twenty-fifth year. He was in splendid health and hard as nails. Having tramped over two thousand miles, endured hardships, and suffered privations, he had returned to northwest Iowa where he now planned to make a home for his family on the frontier.

CHURCH WORK OF MAHLON COLLINS

Mahlon Collins reached home while the country was in the midst of the turmoil occasioned by the War of the Rebellion. The majority of the Lotts Creek settlers were then of Quaker persuasion and they did not approve of war, but their sympathies were on the Union side because of their anti-slavery tenets. The older members of the Collins and Williams families had been active members of "Underground Railroad" in Ohio and in Iowa, and a member of these families had never been known to refuse aid to any fugitives from slavery. There was much private discussion of duty in view of the struggle then starting. The older members were easy in their conscience while they refrained from active enlistment in the army, but some of the young men were becoming "modern" and debating whether they should join the army and do their part.

While Mahlon was yet in Santa Fe, his comrade, Ben Williams, had hurried home and enlisted in the Fifth Iowa Cavalry. In fact he was in the fighting around Fort Henry and Fort Donelson at the very time Mahlon reached Lotts Creek from Colorado. The latter was anxious to join his friend, yet he had much to think of before taking the step.

Sentiment and love of adventure combined to make him want to enlist. On the other hand, the new home needed attention before he left. The older folks begged him to remain loyal to the teachings of Fox. Uncertain as to the

right course to pursue in the face of these arguments, Mahlon proceeded to break sod, plant crops, and fence them in.

The spring of 1862 was one of privation for the settlers on Lotts Creek. Few had raised crops the year before and there was not enough grain for grinding into flour for their needs. They had to freight in from Fort Des Moines and prices rose until they were compelled to pay as high as ten cents per pound for flour. Luxuries such as coffee were entirely out of reach. A substitute was made from bread soaked in sorghum molasses and toasted. One settler set up a sorghum mill on the creek and there was enough of this to go around by fall. It was the substitute for sugar. Game was plentiful and formed the principal article of diet.

No frontier community was ever organized long before the old time itinerant minister visited them. So it was that meetings were held around at various homes during the summer of 1862, and a Methodist preacher held forth at Hands settlement. He was a typical revivalist; every week must see concerted effort of brethren to bring sinners into the fold. Mahlon Collins and his wife attended these meetings and professed conversion. These two had always been devout believers in God, followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ. This conversion meant more than mere adhesion to the teachings of Wesley, in preference to those of Fox; it was the consecration of their lives to the work of one church. Earnest young people they were, and a consecration meant literally "We give all our time, substance, and our lives to the work of our Master". How well this was followed will reveal itself in the balance of this story.

THE CIRCUIT RIDER

Mahlon D. Collins was immediately licensed as an exhorter of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Fort

Dodge District, Upper Iowa Conference. He served two years as an exhorter while he studied for the ministry, living at home the while and improving his 160 acre farm and otherwise providing for his family. His first exhorter's license was signed by D. B. Billings, preacher in charge at Algona.

Collins had unbounded ambition and energy, for while studying for the ministry, he also sought for and secured a license to teach in the public schools of Kossuth County in the fall of 1862. P. C. Taylor, county superintendent of schools, signed his certificate on November 29th of that year. Collins taught "the young idea how to shoot", studied theology, preached somewhere every Sunday, attended meetings during the week, and took care of crop gathering and feeding stock all the winter through.

Another year he taught school and followed the same general routine. He had passed to the rank of local preacher in the same conference, receiving his appointment from J. B. Taylor, the presiding elder, on August 13, 1863. His father-in-law, Dearman Williams, was at this time superintendent of schools, and signed Mahlon's certificate on November 27, 1863.

Preaching, holding class meetings, directing prayer services on a circuit which increased from week to week, teaching school during the winters, and attending his farm made full schedules for those first two years of novitiate in the Methodist ministry. He used the family horse to aid in covering all points of his frontier circuit. Not once did he cease studying for the yearly examinations at conference.

— The yearly conference met at Clarinda in Page County in the fall of 1864. There Mahlon Collins was admitted to the Des Moines Conference on trial. This conference came into being at that time, thus making Mahlon a charter member and automatically transferring him from the Upper

Iowa Conference. His appointment came on September 3, 1864, and with this he felt he could give up the teaching which he had been doing to aid in the support of his family, and rely on the support of the church. Often this did not amount to more than a total of \$200 per year, part cash, mostly food and provender for his family and stock.

At the time of his acceptance into the ministry came his drafting into the Union Army. Before taking up his ministerial duties, he hurried across the State by team from Clarinda to Fort Dodge and reported to the officials there. On examination he was found physically fit and stepped into line with every intention of signing the Articles of War. The man in front of Mahlon signed and the officer in charge announced, "Quota filled". Collins immediately received an honorable discharge from military duty, dated September 29, 1864.

Returning home to his family on Lotts Creek free from military duty, with the appointment from his bishop, Mahlon Collins took position on the "firing line" of his church. Loading up a light wagon with a few articles of bedding, and placing his wife and three children in it, he left home. Indeed that was the last real home of his own. He never returned to it as such and parted ownership with it in a few years, as we shall note. Driving across the virgin prairies of upper Iowa, he took his family 150 miles to the small settlement of Denison.

There was neither church building nor parsonage to greet him. Morris McHenry and H. C. Laub⁵ were his active supporters in Denison and their homes were always those of Mahlon Collins and his family whenever they afterwards returned there. Preaching services were first held in a schoolhouse and later in a courthouse which was built in

⁵ A daughter of H. C. Laub later married Leslie M. Shaw, Secretary of the Treasury under President Roosevelt.

1865. The Chicago and Northwestern Railway was graded through the town that year, and the place was filled with Irish "Paddys". There were frequent fights between "Railroaders" and "Townners". These disturbances sometimes invaded church services and were kept out only by the courage and resourcefulness of this pioneer preacher and his able assistants. One story will illustrate conditions.

After the courthouse had been built at Denison, the Methodists secured its use for services. The Reverend Collins preached from the judge's desk and the "Bar of Justice" became the "Altar Rail". Almost every service of that day witnessed "Works of Grace"; no hungry souls went away without opportunity being offered them to "repent of their sins and become saved".

The town was well filled with men, most of whom we would now class as "roughnecks", and there were some happenings not laid down in the discipline. Such was the case when Reverend Collins turned a Sunday evening meeting into a combined "experience and praise service". Naturally, this was followed by invitations for sinners to "throw themselves upon the mercy of the Lord". "Experiences", songs of exaltation and praise, followed one another in continuous succession. In the midst of the excitement which always resulted, while mourners "wrestled with the Lord", and shouts and Hallelujahs filled the air, a group of railroaders tiptoed in and arrayed themselves in a line against the rear wall of the room. They comprised some of the railroad toughs led by a burly man who held authority over men by physical prowess. These men gazed upon the scene before them with ill-concealed contempt, and growled words of derision. The timorous members of the congregation showed alarm which soon became evident to Collins.

To quiet the fear of some of the audience the preacher started the congregation singing a favorite song of praise and then stepped from behind his rostrum and started to move among the assembled worshippers. Whenever a song ran out the leader started another. Here and there he moved, taking no apparent notice of the row of men at the back, but his zig-zag course led him toward the rear of the room.

Collins reached a position in front of and beside the leering bully just as he sang the last words of a hymn. His habit of singing under such conditions was to throw his head well back and close his eyes. With a grin on his face the rowdy leader had been watching the seemingly somnolent singer as he drew near.

At that moment, Mahlon Collins opened his eyes, reached out, and threw both arms about the surprised man pinioning the man's arms to his side. With this movement came a blow on the back of the knees which brought both to the floor in a most approved Methodist attitude. Collins had surprised his opponent and was able to hold him on the floor as he shouted, "Pray for us, Brother McHenry". Brother McHenry obeyed. Always "powerful in prayer", McHenry presented that sinner to their maker in no choice phrases, and strongly recommended him to pardon. The man struggled, but had met his match in the frontier preacher, who held his man fast and aided the praying brother with shouts of "Amen" and "Praise God". The would-be trouble maker afterwards became a member of the congregation.

On that frontier of civilization the church needed to fight the Devil with his own weapons. The old timer who enlisted in the fight had his work cut out for him. Iowa of this day owes much to the men who fought for right and decency in that early day. The experience of Mahlon Col-

lins at Denison was not the last of such work for him. Neither was he the only preacher who had such experiences. But this incident at Denison no doubt influenced Mahlon Collins in a decision which he made two or three years later, and thereby hangs another tale.

The Reverend John W. Snodgrass had joined the ministry in 1843 while in Illinois, came to Iowa, and became a charter member of the Des Moines Conference. He was a large framed, exceedingly muscular man, a Peter Cartwright type, serving the church in that day. As with the more noted man, Snodgrass was outspoken in denunciation of evil, brave, generous, self-sacrificing. He was holding a series of "protracted meetings" one winter in a schoolhouse near Missouri Valley. The rough element of the community did not relish the verbal lashings Snodgrass was handing them, and this sentiment became united under a leader reputed to be the toughest man thereabouts. He decided to "lick" this preacher before his congregation and put him in his place. Having no doubt of his ability, the man essayed the feat.

At the close of an evening service at which Snodgrass had unmercifully flayed the cohorts of the Devil, members of the congregation came to him in a panic and warned him of imminent danger to his person. A commotion could be heard outside. Shouts and curses reached the ears of those inside. The "bully" was outside declaring, "I have come to give that preacher the licking of his life". The man had his gang with him, all fortified with "forty-rod". Timorous parishioners begged Snodgrass to remain inside until the man departed.

Snodgrass did not wait. After attending to a few details of the next day's meeting, he pushed his friends aside and stepped from the door of the schoolhouse. There he found partisans and enemies grouped in two solid rows facing

each other and bordering a path leading to the preacher's chief opponent. This man stood in the bright moonlight, coat off, arms waving in a threatening manner, shouting curses of defiance.

Aside from the roaring of this man at the head of the lane, dead silence prevailed as the preacher walked forward. Looking straight at his opponent, speaking no word, Snodgrass stepped up to his man. As they met, Snodgrass quickly reached out and grasped the man by the shoulders in a vise-like grip. The power of the preacher became evident in an instant. He raised his man bodily from his feet and threw him backward with such force that the man's feet flew into the air and he struck heavily on his shoulders. The man lay groaning and only partly conscious. Snodgrass walked onward and never looked back as he proceeded to his home. The friends of the fallen warrior looked their champion over and found both collar bones broken by the manhandling he had received. A thoroughly cowed, beaten man was borne groaning away to a sick bed which he occupied for several weeks. There is no record of this man's having joined the church, nor of his having attacked a preacher again.

The matter did not rest there. Some members of the congregation thought the preacher had been too rough with the man and they managed to have charges preferred, alleging "conduct unbecoming a minister of the Gospel". The indictment was brought during the fall conference and the bishop appointed a committee to try Snodgrass. Reverend Mahlon Day Collins was chairman of the trial committee and no doubt recalled his own experiences. All evidence was received, after which the committee deliberated and reported. The spokesman said, "We find the brother was compelled to argue with a man. He set the fellow down on the wrong end. That is all". "Charges

against brother Snodgrass are dismissed", decided the bishop. The "tough guys" soon reformed or ceased to be tough around the "gentle dominies" and John W. Snodgrass continued his work to the age of retirement.

This story was later confirmed by an eye witness. During the eighties the writer was working for a Mr. William Henry Wilder on his ranch in Colorado. Bill had roughed it and was a typical frontiersman. He never professed adherence to any creed, but it was evident that he admired muscular Christianity. He had been among the spectators lining the path which guided the Reverend Snodgrass to his foe on the night in question and he repeated the story one evening as an incident to his trip from "the States" across the plains after the Civil War. With gusto he told how the preacher had bested the bully. He closed his account of the happening with the words, "That preacher sure did knock Hell out of that fellow".

Mahlon Collins rode circuit to outlying districts while he resided at Denison. At this time Denison was still the rail head outpost and supplies were freighted by wagon from there to Sioux City. The tide of settlers flowed into this newer region and their spiritual needs must be supplied, so in 1866 Collins went out from Denison beyond the railroad and served new centers named Onawa and Smithland.

As it had been at Denison there were, in these new places, no church buildings or parsonages for his use. Other settlements opened up and he soon was preaching regularly at the above places and at Correctionville, Moingona, Barker's Landing, and Floyd's Creek.

His circuit was now 200 miles in extent. He covered this whole circuit on horseback or by wagon in summer, and on runners in the winter, until the fall conference of 1866, when six ministers were assigned to the work one man had started and carried forward.

During the conference year of 1867-1868, Mahlon Collins was stationed at New Jefferson — now Jefferson, Iowa — in a new country served by a newly built railroad. He also was covering much territory, the eastern border of which ended in a settlement named Collins Chapel, now known as Collins, Iowa. At this point there seemed urgent need for a house of worship to hold the new congregation. The people were poor but furnished what aid they could in personal service. Before the edifice was well under way, Collins realized there would not be enough money to pay for it. Conferring with his wife, they decided to raise the money personally by the sale of their land at Lotts Creek. Their home was sold, and all the money went toward building the chapel named after them. In this way, Mahlon Day Collins and his wife literally gave their all for the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the State of Iowa. In this manner his name is perpetuated at the scene of some of the pioneer struggles for his Master.

The fall of 1869 found the Reverend Collins transferred to Boonesboro, Iowa, where he resided for several years. Here he rented a house for his family. From Boonesboro he rode circuit during the years 1869-1871.

The first year of his pastoral work had been accomplished with the aid of one horse he brought with him from the home on Lotts Creek. Having no permanent home for his family, he soon saw the need of taking them with him on the circuits. He later traded his one horse with some added cash for a team and carriage. The team was composed of one iron grey, a long-legged, big-boned, steady animal, paired with a small, tough, morgan-red, fiery-eyed beast. The large one answered to the name of Robin, the smaller was called Star. These two are famous in Collins family legend.

Robin and Star carried the Collins family thousands of

miles over roads, across trackless areas of Iowa prairies, through summer's sunshine and rain and winter's icy blasts. They drew a two-seated surrey in summer. A bobsled was the winter vehicle. In these the circuit rider carried his family from place to place through every kind of weather, fording streams where bridges did not exist.

The extremes of summer weather and winter's storms imposed many hardships upon this family. Many trips were undertaken in the midst of storms. At such times during the winter, the wife and children were hidden under blankets and buffalo robes, and the man faced the elements with Robin and Star. The road must be broken through snow drifts by the man tramping the way. The family traveled thus for the greater portion of six years.

There was no complaint. They proceeded with cheerful hearts to the work of their Master. Optimism was the spirit of the frontier. America was awakening to its great destiny. The only time when the road seemed heavy was when death lay in the path.

The Angel of Death took Mary, a child of two years, at Denison. Again the grim reaper visited the family at Jefferson and took a baby daughter — Edith. These two died from hardship imposed by the life of the family. Lillian and Stella died after reaching Boonesboro in a scarlet fever epidemic. Mahlon Day Collins was always a loving father and these deaths saddened him exceedingly, but they did not halt his work for the church. During those days of hardship and trial, he never missed an appointment if it were humanly possible to keep it. He forced himself into all kinds of weather, and if the family could not be left behind, they suffered with him.

Entering the ministry in that early day entailed responsibility, even more than now, by reason of difficulty in pursuing the needed studies, for there was no school and there

was a growing family to support. Mahlon Collins met and conquered the problem with innate energy backed by perseverance and a devout consecration to the work. It was a day of literal interpretations of the "Voice of God". One felt a definite "call", answering which, one dedicated oneself and all he possessed to the service. The record of Mahlon Collins from the first day of his ministry to the time of his death reveals that he lived according to that belief.

Along with all his labors, he managed to study a regular course from year to year, which advanced him in accomplishment to the highest offices within the organization of his conference. Starting with extemporaneous discourses, he soon worked into regular sermons. He thought these out and made mental notes as he traveled from one appointment to another. His son Ralph started driving Robin and Star when he was a lad of less than ten years. As they journeyed the father would study and jot down notes. After locating in his own house at Boonesboro, Collins was able to give sermons still further thought as to proper delivery and effective oratory. Real study was a lifelong practice.

Collins often held four quarterly meetings a week, and never let a like period go by without starting a revival meeting, to be carried on by others until he could return. His preaching became popular; so much so that there is record of great gatherings attending his meetings. More than once, the sheriff and deputies were called upon to control crowds at meetings addressed by the Reverend Collins. Summer revivals and camp meetings were occasions of great gatherings, even greater than winter meetings.

Camp meetings were held in some convenient grove, often situated on a river bank or a lake shore. Some off season, such as the period between planting and harvest, was the

time given to such meetings, which were a source of inspiration to some, while others found entertainment in meeting neighbors and receiving news of each other.

At such meetings, evening services often filled the week until Sunday, which was entirely taken up with services, starting at sunrise, and ending with one at midnight.

Saturday afternoon and evening witnessed the greatest gathering of those who were from a distance and who intended to stay over to attend the Sunday services. Whole families arrived in wagons, and either brought a tent or slept in the open. Many spent the nights in their wagons or lying beneath them on the ground. Others came on horseback or afoot. These were often entertained by brothers on the scene, literally — on the ground.

Interest centered on the evening meetings, scenes of solemnity as the congregation assembled in the open and seated themselves on rough benches, made on the spot. A rough bench in front of the clergy was vacant until "mourners" were brought forward. This also served as an altar rail. There, in the open, one heard the whispering of wind in the leaves, followed by crackling sounds from sputtering fires of fagots lighting the whole space. A feeling of subdued excitement permeated all who took part.

After the announcements, services were opened by the officiating clergyman, or he sometimes called upon a brother in the Lord who was powerful in prayer. Prayer was followed by singing two or three hymns. Then would come the sermon, which closed with a call on sinners to repent. Prayers, songs, and exhortations interspersed the work with those who signified willingness to lead a better life.

During the sermons one heard frequent, fervent "Amens", "Hallelujahs", "Praise Gods", and other words of approbation, signs of exaltation. With the opening of the after meeting came more frequent shouts min-

gled with vociferous rendition of gospel songs. When a sinner stood up and thereby signified conversion, the welkin rang with a bedlam of shouts by brothers and sisters. Some rose up to shout, others sat still and cried. Many other sounds of religious fervor increased the excitement.

The frontier harbored many rough characters, others were simply severe in thought due to the hard life they led. The Methodists seemed to have a system which was efficacious in bringing the diverse elements into line, and performed a large share of winning the rank and file over to law abiding citizenship.

Mahlon Collins had roughed it before he entered the ministry, had met all sorts and conditions afterwards, and was instrumental in winning hundreds over to right living by his example and sincerity. The meetings of that early day of which we can have but faint idea were crude, lacking in culture if you will, but when we contemplate the evidence that this man's work won to his side many who afterwards held high position in the government of the State and nation, we must admit "the end justified the means". His brothers in the ministry were doing the same, and we award them honor as a body of efficient workers.

In that day of fundamentalism, some individuals had odd ideas of literal translations of the Holy Word. While Mahlon Collins always gave unquestioning allegiance to his faith, he leavened translation with common sense. That this is true is illustrated by a story he told of a happening at one of the old time camp meetings.

A zealous, devout brother had signified his intention of entering the ministry, provided "the Lord called him". The wish for the call was ever present in his mind. There was no question of his receptive mood, but there must be no doubt of it. The brother was woefully illiterate, but his ardor was of the highest.

This man was present at the meeting and filled all his prayers with earnest supplications for "the call". As was the custom, he often went into the surrounding woods alone to "wrasse with the Lord in prayer". The brother was known to be thus occupied one morning and as the others were sitting down to breakfast, he came rushing wildly into camp, waving his arms and giving exultant shouts.

"I've got it", he cried. "I've got it, brothers and sisters. I have the call. I went into the woods this morning and knelt down to pray. I said, 'Oh Lord, you know I want to work for you in your vineyard, I am waiting for the call. Call me, Lord, call me in an audible voice'. And he did, brothers and sisters. The Lord be praised. He said, 'G-o-o-p-r-e-a-c-h, g-o-o-p-r-e-a-c-h, g-o-o-preach, g-o-o-preach, go-preach, e-h-a-w, e-h-a-w, e-h-a-w, e-h-a-w'." It seemed that a mule carried "The Voice of the Lord".

Another story told by Mahlon Collins shows that he recognized that all human beings are weak in spirit, liable to "slips from Grace". One of his deacons living on an isolated farm with his family was the subject of this tale. His home was a typical farmhouse of early Iowa, a shelter, a place to sleep. One day he needed a gimlet for use on some job. He had one about the house somewhere.

It was near the noon hour and the wife was preparing dinner. The man hunted high and low for the gimlet. He did not find it and blamed everyone but himself for mislaying it. As it happened, he had been using the needed tool on the ceiling of the dining room at another time, and had left it sticking there in plain sight if any one should look toward it. He looked everywhere but in the right direction, growing angrier all the while. Finally his wife said, "Come, John. Dinner is ready. Sit down and eat, and no doubt we will find the gimlet afterward." John walked to the table with heavy stride, yanked a chair into

place, and slumped down with his feet under the table. He always asked a blessing at such times, and as he slid into the chair he put his hands before him with finger tips joined in suppliant attitude, cast a glance upward, then half rose from his seat, and, pointing, exclaimed, "There's that damned gimlet."

In pursuit of his duties during the year 1867, Mahlon Collins met with a mishap which nearly proved fatal, a severe injury which only a life in the open aided him to withstand.

He set out one summer day with his wife and daughter Lillian to reach an appointment. They rode in a two-seated surrey. Robin and Star were in fine fettle, and drew the party over the prairies at a merry pace. The appointment was filled, after which the party set out on the return journey.

When they reached a gully where the trail led down a steep declivity to water and as steeply ascended the other side, disaster overtook them. The carriage lurched over an obstruction with force enough to break the supporting straps which held the tongue of the surrey in place. The tongue dropped to the ground, allowing the carriage to bump into the team, prodding them into a gallop on the down grade. This left the driver holding the reins as the only means of keeping the carriage in control. He braced himself against the dash-board and kept the vehicle moving with the now frightened team. Down to the water, through it, and up the incline they went at full speed.

When they reached the top of the incline and were on the level again, the tongue, with the front end scraping the ground, struck a stump in the road. The momentum was so great, that the tongue doubled up like a jack knife and broke its fastenings from the carriage. The rear end of the tongue, freed from restraint and carrying the double-tree,

flew upward and backward and caught the driver full in the face. The terrific impact flung him high in the air and to the ground, as it also cut away the buggy top over Mrs. Collins and Lillian, as clean as a scythe could do.

The carriage came to a stop without injury to the other occupants and Mrs. Collins and Lillian hastily ran to the husband and father. He lay by the road with his face apparently torn away, covered with blood, a terrifying sight. He was carried senseless to the nearest house, where he lay for days before he regained consciousness. His lower jaw had been broken in several places, the upper was minus an inch of bone, and the flesh was in shreds.

Within six weeks from the date of his accident, the Reverend Collins was out and conducting services again, although he never fully recovered from that accident, for his face healed with the lower jaw out of line.

A piece of bone also obstructed his nostrils and afforded Collins a means of amusement. He discovered that by holding one nostril and blowing through the other past the bone obstruction, a peculiar sound could be made. Among his people in social gatherings this was often his contribution to the round of gayety. He sometimes embarrassed his wife when he had received from the family wash a handkerchief which contained a hole too generous for public display, by placing the remnants over his nose, reaching through the aperture, grasping the nostrils, and giving a tremendous blast, thus drawing attention to the defective handkerchief. In this way he turned calamity into a source of fun.

THE PRESIDING ELDER

After filling the Boonesboro circuit for three years and being in the town pastorate the two following years, making five full years of service, Mahlon Day Collins was appointed presiding elder in charge of the Boone District.

Thus in a comparatively short time his energy and faithfulness for and to the Methodist Episcopal Church was rewarded by the greater responsibility. He had reached the age of thirty-four.

While performing his new duties during the years of 1872-1875, he exceeded previous records of energetic pastoral work. His district was large and required his attendance at, and supervision over, four quarterly conferences per year on each separate charge. As new appointments were made, it was his duty to cover them and induct new pastors into the work. He was called upon to preach every week day, as well as twice on Sundays. During those years he was never home with his family more than a day at a time.

In the fall of 1876, the death of the Reverend John H. Swope, presiding elder of the Des Moines District, was reported at conference. His death left a destitute, dependent family. The bishop in charge conferred with Reverend Collins and found him ready to assume additional duties. If he could cover the Des Moines District in addition to the one at Boone, the Reverend Swope's salary could be saved for his family. This was agreed upon between them, and during the conference year of 1876-1877, Mahlon Collins covered two conference districts for the sake of providing his dead brother's family with the means of existence until they could get on their feet.

Thus he exerted almost super-human efforts while covering the two districts, one of which was enough for any man. He closed the year with a record of having preached 375 sermons. Needless to say, he was not at home much that year.

Railroads were now an aid to the busy man while covering so much ground. Robin and Star had been left behind at Boonesboro when the family moved to Des Moines in the

fall of 1876. Still having use for a horse, a new one was procured and became the pet of the Collins children. This was a large, gentle bay, named Deck.

One night horse thieves visited the home and took away the family pet. The head of the house returned the very next morning, heard the story, and listened to the pleadings of his children, "Please go and find Deck". This frontier preacher laid aside his duties for the moment, armed himself with his old hunting rifle, and set out on the trail of the thieves.

He had not been absent from his house long before Bishop Andrews rang the bell and inquired for his presiding elder. The writer, then a child of five, answered the bell. To the stranger's inquiry I replied by informing him that father was not at home. Then feeling that the situation would be cleared by an explanation, I volunteered the following, "Papa has gone away with a gun to shoot a man". The bishop seemed satisfied and left me at the door, but father did not hear the last of that affair for many years. Bishop Andrews soon told the story among the brethren, and father was frequently met with such greetings as, "You are the preacher who shoots men?" or "Did you get your man?"

He did not recover his property or meet the thieves, but the horse returned of its own accord a few days later, evidently having been turned loose after serving as the means of a "getaway".

The eldest child of the Reverend Collins, the son Ralph, had entered Simpson College at Indianola. In order to provide this son a home while attending school, the family moved to the college town and lived there during the conference year of 1878-1879. The youngest of the nine children in the Collins family, Roy, born on May 22, 1879, made his advent into the world during that year at Indianola.

BACK TO THE PASTORATE

Mahlon Collins requested and was granted the privilege of returning to a charge again in September, 1879. He reported for duty in charge of Broadway Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa. For the first time on a charge, he found a substantial brick building to house his congregation, but Iowa still had frontier conditions. The practical brand of Christian living, ever his forte, was in evidence during the two years he was in the Bluffs.

Needless to say, Mahlon Collins was an absolute, unqualified exponent of prohibition as it applied to the saloon, and fought "Demon Rum" at every opportunity. Yet he was willing to acknowledge that saloon keepers were human and worthy of just treatment. His influence with this class of business men was evident before he left Council Bluffs. He went to them for money to purchase a needed organ for the church, after he had found his membership too poor to raise it. While soliciting these funds, he found a poor German emigrant driver of a brewery wagon who understood music and could sing. The Sunday School needed a music teacher to lead them and Reverend Collins arranged with this man to teach music and lead the singing in his Sunday School. The preacher even arranged with the employers to allow the man to perform this service. They coöperated by allowing the driver to make his rounds of the saloons in time for him to clean up for church duties. Neither the dominie nor the German thought this arrangement out of order. One saw the need, the other most willingly obliged. Due to the influence of Mahlon Collins, two of the saloon keepers at Council Bluffs sold out and entered other lines of work.

One year while M. D. Collins lived at Council Bluffs, Memorial Day came on Sunday. The committee on arrangements experienced trouble in obtaining the promise of

some minister to lead them in prayer at services to be held in a nearby grove. Praying for G. A. R. members on a Sunday was a problem for the ministers. Reverend Collins was out of town at the time; the others refused to act. On Saturday afternoon the committee was still seeking some one to grace the occasion. Feeling quite desperate by that time, the committee awaited the arrival of Reverend Collins. To their great relief he said, "Certainly I will be glad to go with you and pray for you". He added, "I will bring my congregation along".

He at once called on some of the elders and arrangements were made as he wished. The whole congregation, which included the Sunday School with Superintendent Colonel Tulleys and the German song leader, fell into line and marched with the veterans. At the grove, the Reverend Collins prayed, and his children led the singing. In thus rendering service where it was needed, he augmented rather than diminished interest among his workers. He received an engrossed set of resolutions from the G. A. R. Post, thanking him for the timely service.

From this point forward it can be said, this pioneer preacher of the West began to reap the benefits of civilization in connection with his work. Towns had sprung up everywhere in place of the virgin wilderness of a few years before. Railroads now crisscrossed the area in every direction. Where once he built his church buildings, he now found established congregations with their houses of worship already built. In place of spending each week day and Sunday away from home, he could now remain with his family during the weeks and months he served in one place. His sojourn on one charge could be extended to three years of time, whereas he had been sure of change of location every year at the start of his itinerancy. All these facts combined to make him happy when he moved to Council

Bluffs, and the satisfaction was growing when he moved to Corning in the fall of 1881.

He found an active membership at Corning led by such men as Lew F. Darrow, D. S. Sigler, C. T. Cole, L. M. Mann, O. J. King, Ralph Newcomb, O. A. Pease, Chas. R. Miller, and others who served on his board of trustees and as stewards. The building was a small frame structure grown much too small for the growing congregation. Collins personally drew plans for, and superintended the construction of, an addition to the building, increasing the floor area about one-third.

Iowa communities of that day were largely made up of people who were self-reliant and law-abiding, with an intense desire for learning which transcended the wish for material advancement, while not decrying the latter. Many became wealthy in later years, and others who once lived in Iowa, or who still reside there found fame in many parts of the world. Every community fostered literary and musical learning and effort. The citizens of Corning of that day were interested in such worth while accomplishment and the Reverend Collins assumed his share of such endeavors.

Of the Methodist membership at Corning, D. S. Sigler and Lew E. Darrow were both prominent in banking circles. L. M. Mann was in the grocery business there but afterwards became the foremost real estate operator in Des Moines where he was again in Collins's congregation at Wesley Church. He conceived, fostered, and carried through many worthy developments in the capital city during the middle '80s and later.

C. T. Cole and his wife, Carrie, were members of the Methodist congregation at Corning. They entertained the minister's children when they moved from Council Bluffs and before they were settled in the new home. Charlie Cole became a playmate of the writer of these lines. The daugh-

ter of this couple, Harriet Elizabeth (Hattie), was then just graduating from the children's class of the Sunday School. She afterwards married Horace Mann Towner, who for many years was Governor General of Porto Rico.

Towner was then a young attorney practising in Corning. He was not a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but he endeared himself to Mahlon Collins by his defense of a member of the congregation, in court by reason of the loose talk of a family of colored people there. Acquittal was a relief to the worthy man and eased the worry of his spiritual adviser who had stood loyally by.

Reverend M. D. Collins served his church three full years at Corning—the time limit for Methodist preachers of that period. His salary had increased to \$1,200, a marked advance over the \$200 of his first year. He took his family to Chariton in September, 1884.

At Chariton he found another congregation imbued with zeal for the church. It was housed in a substantial brick edifice which went with a story and half frame parsonage. This was the first parsonage in the experience of the Collins family. It nestled in the enclosure next the larger building, surrounded by sugar maples and a fruit orchard. The inhabitants of the community were typical Iowans. There were not many rich according to the standards today, nor were there any poor to the extent of need or dependence. The Methodist preacher felt affluent in comparison with pioneer days, even if his salary did not keep pace with the needs of a growing family.

The leading members of the Methodist Church here were such men as O. A. Bartholomew, J. Lee Brown, L. A. Brown, John W. Cully, M. D., D. Eikenberry, W. C. Penick, F. H. Reeves, E. M. Waynick, and W. R. Yost. Among others, we mention Miss Willa Walker who fostered art and brought to Chariton Miss Delano, a teacher. Not least

among the ladies was Miss Mary Ann Baxter, the typical country village first-aid in every emergency.

Church affairs continued at even tenor during the pastorate of the Reverend Collins at Chariton. Life in the parsonage, however, had its amusements.

It is presumed that the officiating clergyman at all weddings always receives some honorarium for his share of the service. The children of the parsonage soon learned this, and rejoiced at news of every wedding to be. They knew there would be some extra treat afterwards. Thus it was that anticipation ran high one evening when four colored couples appeared unannounced at the parsonage next the Methodist Church in Chariton. A retinue of friends accompanied them, and the crowd was ushered into the tiny dwelling where they overflowed the parlor and dining room.

The minister's family were overjoyed when a spokesman announced that eight of the party intended to be joined in matrimony. The family crowded about listening to the speaker as he declaimed and recited the good qualities of his friends, and the eminent fitness of each for entering the sacred state of matrimony. While father was examining credentials of the contracting parties, this spokesman entertained one and all in a manner of his own.

He had enormous lips and a large mouth, his forehead was low and sloped downward to the brows. Taking a heavy rubber band he would stretch it around his face from hair to neck, then let go and allow the band to pucker his face into indescribable contortion. He repeated this often, to the unbounded entertainment of the children present.

When father was ready he arranged the four couples in a line and repeated the marriage service, receiving the replies one after the other as he came to the ones involved. Much fun was directed at the brides and grooms, and the service was punctuated with many suppressed snickers.

The ceremony was finally completed and all were donning their wraps preparatory to departure, when the spokesman took the floor once more. Stepping up to father, he held out one hand which he opened and exposed to view — four silver quarters. To show the world that he was no cheap sport he said, ‘‘H’yah Pahson, he’p yo’sef’’. Great expectations filled four pairs of youthful eyes as the man had stepped forward, disappointment followed the disclosure of the amount of the anticipated fee, despair came when father picked up and took — one quarter of a dollar.

During May, 1886, word came to the Reverend Collins that Wesley Church, Des Moines, was vacant through the death of the pastor in charge. It was arranged for him to go there and take the place of the deceased brother and the Collins family left Chariton before the conference year had expired. They bid friends good-bye in Chariton, and journeyed to the larger city on June 1st of that year. This was the second sojourn of the family in the city of Des Moines. They rented a house at 913 E. 12th Street, where they lived until the next call of the itinerancy.

About that time rumors were going through the State concerning the doings of a strange sect of people who had come over from England. They had been reported in Philadelphia and Chicago. One summer afternoon two men, two women, and two children appeared at the Collins home on E. 12th Street. All were dressed in uniform, the like of which had never been seen before. The leader was a young man sporting his first mustache and goatee. He introduced himself and party as members of the Salvation Army. They all spoke with a decided British accent, but seemed the jolliest crowd one could wish for.

The party was made up of Major John Dale and his wife, Adjutant Simmonds and his wife and two children. Mrs. Dale was some years her husband’s senior and had been

married before. Mrs. Simmonds was her daughter. All of them had come over from England with Ballington Booth, had worked with him in Philadelphia, and had then gone to Chicago to inaugurate the Army's work in that city. Leaving the latter place in other hands the party set out with the intention of organizing in Iowa, and had brought up at the door of Reverend Collins for the start. Their arrival proved the genesis of Salvation Army work in the State of Iowa.

The methods of this great body of workers were viewed askance by staid members of the established creeds. Their street meetings created much discussion and not a little derision. This party of workers was invited into the Collins home, and there their story was told. Their experiences made them skeptical of a warm reception, and they were too poor to go to an hotel with their flock. Mahlon Collins was not long in making up his mind to help them, no matter what others thought.

They were told to make the Collins home their headquarters and there they remained during the weeks they were getting settled in Des Moines. Toughs pelted them with decayed vegetables and clods of Iowa dirt, and hooted them the first night they paraded and conducted services on the street. Mahlon Collins gave moral aid by partaking in some of the first parades and assisted these people in every way possible. This man should receive credit for assistance in the establishment of Salvation Army work in the State of Iowa. Friendships were fostered there between all the parties mentioned, which continued through the years.

L. M. Mann had worked with the Reverend Collins while both were in Corning, and it was he who had been on the committee which brought Mahlon D. Collins to Wesley Church. On the official board with L. M. Mann were such

men as Samuel Green, L. C. Carpenter — one time mayor of Des Moines — Doctor Kennedy — at that time head of the Iowa State Board of Health — John Bailey, a contractor, Mr. Day, a prominent real estate operator and developer of Capital Park section, Park Wilson, C. D. Coddington, J. M. Ferree, George Anderson, E. P. Drake, W. I. Sutton, and others.

On the fly leaf of a Bible presented to a member of the Collins family by members of Wesley Church is found a partial list of the church roster which includes the following: Mr. and Mrs. Coombs, Mr. Snodgrass, Estella Tenant, Mrs. Holt, Clara Holt, Minnie Holt, Dr. La Mont, Clem Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. Hedges, Garnett Hedges, Roscoe Lang, Halleck Lang, C. Hartman, C. E. Rossiter, Ward Bannister, Frank Wilson, Fred Wilson, Willis Wilson, Wilber Sutton, Tanie Sutton, Ben Mann, Lulu Mann, "Nonie" Kostenbader, Ella Malone, Amos Hiatt, Mrs. Witter, Jennie Reed, Frank Hogh, Etta Pearson, and Alice Hockersmith. Most of these names were of the younger members.

One Sabbath morning of the early winter, the Reverend Collins had reached his morning prayer for the service. He stood with his hands clasped before him on the reading desk of the pulpit, his eyes closed. As he proceeded with his supplications, he became aware of a murmur from the audience. This rapidly rose in volume until the ejaculations of alarm caused him to open his eyes to ascertain the cause. He beheld puffs of smoke and jets of flame coming from the partition between the body of the church and the Sunday School room. Lifting his eyes he beheld flame shooting down from the ceiling of the auditorium. Over his head as he stood in the pulpit, embers detached themselves and came hissing down, and the loud roar of a fire under full headway smote upon his ears. The audience held

their excitement until their minister became aware of the situation, then gave way to incipient panic. The entire congregation arose from their seats and started a mad rush for the doors.

Instantly sensing the situation and need, Mahlon Collins raised his voice in leading the long meter doxology. Others took up and carried the old song until its sound rose above the roar of flames. Sam Green and one or two other cool heads aided with shouted words of direction as they sprang over the backs of pews into the crowd at the exits. The panic was quieted, the audience filed from the building in orderly manner, and not a one was injured. As the last one left the building the whole auditorium was filled with flame and hurtling embers.

The fire had started from an overheated furnace in the basement, spread along the ceiling rafters to openings between partitions, followed upward, reaching the open space overhead, thence across the breadth of the building to the cupolas ornamenting the roof corners. The fire had gained full headway before it was discovered, and the fire department could not prevent an almost complete gutting of the interior. The United Brethren congregation on 12th Street immediately offered their building for services, and there the Methodists met until they could again return to their own church building.

Reverend M. D. Collins reached the fiftieth milestone of his life's journey while at Wesley Church. He honored the occasion with a sermon in which he reviewed his life to that point. Many declared this sermon to have affected them as no other ever had.

After a year and three months at Wesley Church the Collins family removed to Clarinda, in September, 1888.

At Clarinda, M. D. Collins returned to the spot where he had been admitted on trial in the ministry, in September,

1863. This place was also destined to be the scene of his last work on a regular charge for the conference he had aided in organizing. It was fitting that he then receive the highest salary of his preaching career, and the family was housed in a commodious parsonage next the church structure.

He here met a congregation equal in numbers and quality to any he had presided over. Among his people were such leaders as C. R. Vance, C. A. Lisle, Dr. S. A. Lymer, W. P. Hepburn, member of Congress many years, L. M. Greene, the superintendent of schools, I. VanArsdale, L. R. Ausbach, H. L. Prather, Edward Henshaw, Thomas Tomlinson, H. E. McGee, D. C. Ferrys, and their families. The entire membership comprised over four hundred people. Of single persons, the name of Nora Saum remains as that of one of the most loyal members, and friend of the Collins family. They liken her to Mary Ann Baxter of Chariton, as one ever ready to aid in any emergency. Indeed this can be said of many individuals in any of the church organizations served by the Reverend Collins.

Let us touch some of the high points of the record of M. D. Collins. He was a student from boyhood, studied his work after he entered the ministry in a manner no one ever exceeded. Step by step he worked his way, jotting notes and speaking from them in his first years. Then he wrote out sermons in long hand. After his death we found over six hundred written sermons which he had used. He finally reverted to speaking on subjects which he classified under seven hundred headings. A small note book which he had carried about with him contained these written out ready for reference. When an appropriate subject suggested itself he found suitable texts under the heading, turned to it in his Bible, and then spoke from memory. His life had been so full of experiences that he often used them to illus-

trate points in his sermons. A series of written lectures were based on life's experiences. Many sermons were printed in pamphlet form. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him in 1885. Unbounded energy carried him through work and studies. In spite of a busy life he found time to help others as he journeyed forward.

In the early days of Humboldt County, he taught Barney Divine to read and write. Barney afterwards became a very wealthy railroad contractor. In spite of the wealth, Barney often declared he never would have been a gentleman but for the education Mahlon Collins aided him to. Old country Irish training gave him that slant on the value of knowing how to read and write. While Reverend Collins was at Corning, Elliott Voorhees entered the ministry and came to him for aid.

Personal contacts in early Iowa brought Mahlon Collins in touch with the elder Clarkson and his sons, known locally as the Clarkson Brothers. They founded the *Iowa State Register*, forerunner of the present *Des Moines Register*. Leslie M. Shaw, U. S. Treasurer under Roosevelt, was a young member of the congregation at Denison. J. Lee Brown of Chariton was a pugnacious, one-armed, Civil War veteran, who served as State Treasurer, and declared that his successor in office was not legally entitled to the position. To keep his opponent from the place, Brown barricaded himself in the old Capitol building and held the fort until it was carried by storm. Other parishioners over the State attained fame and fortune.

Reverend Collins served his conference as alternate to the General Conference at Baltimore in 1876. He was a delegate to the General Conference at Cincinnati in 1880, and the same at Philadelphia in 1884. During the years 1884-1886 he was secretary of the Des Moines Conference. That was in the day of long hand transcription, but as an

aid to this work, he mastered the Pitman system of shorthand.

The Salvation Army followed the Reverend Collins to Clarinda and was there again assisted by him. Major Dale, Adjutant Simmonds, the wives, and children made the Methodist parsonage their headquarters for several weeks. They established a post down near the railroad station in a portion of the village dubbed "Guntown".

With them came another Englishman who had also come to the United States with Ballington Booth at the time of his first invasion. This man had tarried at Philadelphia and Chicago. He bore the title and name of Sir John McGlasson. Sir John was of such easy manner that the title did not seem to fit him. It was never used. John McGlasson was how we knew him. He was left in charge of the post when Major Dale and Adjutant Simmonds moved to other fields. This marked the genesis of Salvation Army work in Clarinda. This record shows that M. D. Collins had much to do with the organization of what is now considered one of the wealthiest conferences in the Methodist Episcopal Church. And he had not a little to do with fostering Salvation Army work in Iowa in the day when it needed friends.

PREPARING FOR THE MISSION FIELD

Bishop William Henry Taylor, famous missionary of the days of '49 in California, South America, India, and Africa, visited the Des Moines Conference in session in the fall of 1889. His majestic presence, deep-toned voice, and evident sincerity combined to persuade individuals to take up his work. He gained many recruits at that session, among which was the Reverend M. D. Collins, D. D.

Returning to Clarinda with the new idea in mind, Reverend Collins laid plans for departure to a missionary field

in Africa, but he continued work at Clarinda for another year. At conference in September, 1890, he received a transfer certificate from the Des Moines to the African Conference, Congo District, signed by Bishop Isaac W. Joyce.

The call of another frontier had come to this frontiersman. The urge made him want to leave the work he had built up, to rough it once more in the Dark Continent.

Once the decision was made, he never wavered and he set about preparation with characteristic energy. Lightly he prepared to break away from the field that had received twenty-six years of his attention. That his brethren thought more of his sacrifice than he did is shown in a set of resolutions of respect and regret at the parting. These were given him at conference in 1890 and are signed by C. L. Nye, W. S. Hooker, J. R. Horswell, J. W. Bott, W. E. Hamilton, E. M. H. Fleming, B. F. W. Cozier, W. F. Harned, and J. Hestwood, members of the committee.

Returning home to Clarinda after conference, he took his family to camp meeting at Marysville, Missouri, before his final departure. Three members of the Collins family contracted typhoid at this meeting, two of whom were soon very ill.

In the meantime Reverend Collins had decided to enter a medical college and fit himself as a medical missionary. Arrangements were made for him to enter the Boston College of Physicians and Surgeons, now Tufts College, that fall. In order that he might start the school year on time, he took his youngest son with him and hurriedly departed for Boston. He secured an appointment to preach in a church at Beverly and made his headquarters in the parsonage there. Due to the illness of two children, he left his wife and three children in Clarinda until those who were ill could travel.

When Reverend Collins decided to fit himself for practising medical surgery, he did not consider his fifty-three years a handicap sufficient to discourage him from taking up a four years' course, to be completed in three. He proceeded with his plans in the face of all difficulties and hardships, which would have made a younger man pause.

The Missionary Society graciously allowed him to finance himself in the enterprise. Intending to aid, friends had raised a farewell gift of two hundred dollars. This fund was depleted by railroad fares and sickness and the family arrived in Boston with no funds in hand. To make matters worse, the youngest son had developed typhoid soon after their arrival at Beverly. This boy's case was very severe and, of course, did not lessen the expense. The first pittance of salary due at Beverly did not come any too soon.

Here the family lived for two years as the father traveled daily to and from his studies forty miles away, and he filled in with appointments for services in the New England Conference, to which he was temporarily assigned. The two oldest children at home found work, thus taking care of themselves and aiding the general fund. Later on, after he had recovered from his illness, the youngest also added his mite to the earnings. But for all that, the load of responsibility carried by the head of the house those years was far from light. It is certain that Mahlon D. Collins had all his youthful optimism as his ally in that monumental struggle. He never faltered and seemed to enjoy his life as never before. Old Iowa friends with children in school at Boston hunted the family up at Beverly and added to the contentment.

After two years at Beverly, Reverend Collins transferred to Scituate, Massachusetts, as pastor in charge of the Methodist Church. Neither Beverly nor Scituate had done more than promise a few hundred dollars per year

support; the reality was less, for they were poor. During the summer there was special work as evangelist at camp meetings, and in this work he was compelled to travel over New England. With these sources of income, he still could not meet the demand on his pocket book. Tuition, traveling expenses, medical books, living expenses for himself, wife, and two children, all kept him scrambling. In extremity he resorted to parting with the library accumulated in Iowa. Many trips to Boston saw him with arms full of books which he parted with at second hand rates.

Thus he cheerfully fought his way and won his diploma as a physician, graduating on the 4th day of May, 1893, while in his fifty-sixth year. Two of his children returned and joined the other two with their mother to witness the graduation of this husband and father. A fine figure he made in cap and gown, six feet of stature, crowned by a bushy head of curly hair streaked with grey. Now he could add M. D. to the D. D. after his name. Delivering the valedictory for his class, he said: "My parents anticipated this event when they bestowed my name, the initials of which are M. D." He expressed real satisfaction over winning the M. D. The D. D. he felt had been given him.

M. D. Collins was now prepared for the movement to the field in Africa. In 1891 he had been appointed presiding elder of the Congo District, Africa, by Bishop Taylor. The appointment embraced the whole Congo Basin. Boma, a native town just above Stanley Falls, was to be his headquarters. As a last formality, preparing the way to landing at Boma, he had written early in the year 1893, to King Leopold of Belgium for royal sanction to practice medicine in the Congo Free State. The authorization received is dated at Brussels, March 21, 1893, and is signed by Cornven Emeld, Secretary of State.

Relieved of the strain of study and with happy anticipa-

tions, M. D. Collins proceeded to New York City. He was to take ship there for England, and there re-embark on some boat which would land him at the mouth of the Congo. Mrs. Collins and four children were to go with him. Two of the children who had been earning gave up their work for the purpose and the whole party came on to New York City. The pooled interests of the family were exhausted by the time they had reached New York and paid a month's rent on some rooms in which to reside while supplies were being bought and final arrangements made.

Not one cent had yet come from the Missionary Society. From the day of his arrival he expected to be taken care of. Under the Taylor plan of self-supporting missions, the worker was to be furnished three years' supply of clothing, equipment, and food with passage expenses, one way.

The purchase of clothing and supplies had progressed to a point where half the necessities were in hand. Like lightning from a clear sky came the word, "No funds". It proved too true. There was not a cent available for further purchases, let alone the passage money. This faithful worker had been allowed to leave his Iowa charge, spend three years fitting himself for duties as medical missionary at his own expense and with great sacrifices. He was allowed to come on to New York City and dally there without one word of warning.

The revelation marked the darkest hour in the life of M. D. Collins — a great trial to his faith. The gloom was not lessened by the fact that he and his family dependents were abandoned in the heart of New York without one cent of money. His faith was somewhat restored by the arrival of his eldest son and wife who had come on from the West to bid the family bon voyage. Funds were provided by this son, with which the family levered themselves from a tight place.

Two of the children drew on these funds to return to the work they had left, two others and the mother tarried at the home of Ross Taylor at Nyack, while the head of the family looked about for a location. He must work from the ground up again. A home location was found at Ocean Grove, N. J., where he established the wife and two youngest children.

THE HOME MISSIONARY

The crisis in the affairs of Reverend Collins left him in a quandary for a time. Would he return to his old conference in Iowa, or not? He had been doing evangelistic work, and in that there seemed a good field. The decision was made and he started that phase of his work in the fall of 1893.

The family lived at Ocean Grove three years and then moved to Philadelphia so that the youngest daughter might be aided through a course in dental surgery.

During the years as evangelist the Reverend Collins had engagements which took him into every eastern State, many southern States, much of Canada, back to Iowa, and in the western States of Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. He wrote and published many pamphlets during the time and one fair-sized volume entitled *Common Sense Salvation*.

At conference time in 1900, M. D. Collins paid a visit to Iowa and met some of his old comrades there. They tendered him a complimentary dinner at Boone. It was arranged for him to take an appointment under the Home Missionary Society of the Des Moines Conference at Rapid City, S. D. It was his own request, that he go into the home missionary field on fading frontiers.

Rapid City was a thriving town even though its Methodist Church had not emerged from the paternal care of the Des Moines Conference. In spite of this, there was a good-

sized congregation with substantial church building and parsonage to greet the pastor at that time. It seems somewhat incongruous that a man with titles of D. D. and M. D. would serve in what was then an obscure field of the church. There were worth while considerations.

The eldest son, Ralph, was then superintendent of the Sioux Indian School just outside the town. The older couple derived much pleasure and comfort from the contact with this son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. The daughters, Mabel and Nellie, lived at home in Rapid City for a time. Nellie had graduated in dentistry and opened her first office there. Thus the scattered family was partially assembled and the parents enjoyed the close contact. To add to the contentment, several old Iowa neighbors were in the congregation, and for the first time in his ministerial life the Reverend Collins was free of debt and had a bank account. The warrior for his church and his companion of the years passed two of the most happy, contented years of their lives there. Conditions were too good to last.

During the summer of 1902, the son Ralph left Rapid City to take an appointment under the government at Albuquerque and Acomita, N. M., taking his family with him, and he secured an appointment for his sister Mabel as field matron at Acomita. Nellie married and followed her husband to Montana. Thus the aging couple were separated from their children, as the younger ones followed the paths of life's destinies and their vale of contentment no longer lay in Rapid City, in spite of the love and esteem of their parishioners. Then came word of the serious wounding of the daughter Mabel by a wild Navajo Indian. She lay sick at Acomita.

M. D. Collins had been negotiating with the Austin Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He had the idea of locating in that field so that he might be somewhat

closer to Ralph at Albuquerque. An acceptance of his proffered service reached him at the same time as did the news of Mabel's illness. The couple hastily packed their goods and bade good-bye to friends in Rapid City.

They visited Ralph and Mabel at Albuquerque and Acoma. After a week there, M. D. Collins went on to Houston, Texas, where he took an appointment under the Woman's Home Missionary Society. This was work in a new territory of the northern division of the church. The appointment embraced a congregation in Houston Heights, another at Alvin, a third at Pearland. Thus in the thirty-eighth year of his ministry, this man took up work similar to his first on the frontiers of Iowa.

As in the old days, each congregation of his triple circuit worshipped without church buildings. M. D. Collins covered this appointment for over a year. In that time he started his first church building plan at Houston Heights, and pastors were placed on the other two locations.

Concentrating on the growing locality, M. D. Collins at first held services in houses. At night sometimes he tramped through mud in the darkness, for street lighting had not been installed. The new congregation was made up of loyal workers who were ambitious for better things. The new building was soon started, but money was hard to get, and the Home Missionary Society red tape long delayed needed help from them. The Reverend Collins worked hard recruiting labor, directing it, holding services, raising money. At the last, he took paint brush in hand and painted the new structure himself.

Pleasure came in the midst of this period — a visit from Benjamin Williams to his sister and brother-in-law. This old companion of their youth came on from California for the sole purpose of seeing them. Some weeks were spent by these three as they relived the days of their youth, and

recounted hopes realized and lost. Mahlon said to Ben one day, "Well Ben, we always seemed to steer clear of anything there was money in".

Two weeks before his death Mahlon Collins wrote in a letter, "I never felt better in my life and eat like a boy". Feeling thus he went to a surgeon and had the bone remaining in his nostril from the runaway accident removed. There was some slip in the proper closing of the wound and he bled from it for several days, in spite of his own professional attention. In this weakened condition, he overtaxed his strength while continuing work on the church building. Added to this was worry over money to pay the labor bills. Workmen became angry and threatened bodily harm when money was slow coming in for wages.

One morning in February, Mahlon Collins did not rouse himself. He would reply to speech, start to dress, be overcome with drowsiness, and lie back on the bed. Doctors were called and diagnosed a clot on the brain. Lingered one day longer, he passed away the second morning of his illness, February 13, 1904. A few moments before he died he rose in the bed, swung his feet to the floor, and spoke to his wife saying, "Well Kate, we soon will all be in our Heavenly home". With the last word he lay back in composure and died. The end had come in the 67th year of his life while he was still in the harness, and without suffering. He would not have asked a better closing to his active career.

Mahlon Collins had always been the ideal lover to his wife, a most devoted and tender father of his children. His remaining children gathered from New York City, Washington, and Colorado to attend his funeral. Many of his fellow ministers in the Austin Conference paid homage to his memory on that occasion. The Houston papers carried long eulogistic write-ups. He was laid to rest in the Ger-

man Society Cemetery of Houston Heights, Texas. The long looked for check from the Home Missionary Society arrived the day following his death. He was buried from the new church on the day he had set for its dedication.

This church was organized under the title of First Methodist Church of Houston, Texas. The seed there planted has grown into a congregation of 600 members in 1928, worshipping in enlarged quarters, and the need is for a new building of much larger dimension. The name has been changed to the Collins Memorial Church in honor of the man who died for its initial appearance.

His life was crowned with success in turning thousands toward a more complete life. His monuments are the name of Collins, Iowa, and the Houston Church. Those who read this record will agree that the honor was well earned.

Mahlon Day Collins lived his life joyously, always happy in his blessings. Never once was he heard to complain of life's difficulties. To him, there were none which could not be surmounted.

Those who knew him will remember how he always closed a service with his blessing. It was more than the ritual. The unmatched enunciation given with evident sincerity of feeling for his fellow men, made of his rendition a masterpiece. His passing from the stage of life was so in accord with his desires, if he could express them, the writer feels that the reader audience would be dismissed with the words, "And now may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost rest upon you, and abide with you always, now, and forever, AMEN."

HUBERT E. COLLINS