

## Comment by the Editor

### *QUAKER SCHOOLS*

Iowa is a commonwealth of colleges. Before the elementary school system was well established, the pioneers began to plan academies and collegiate institutes. In their zeal to plant the seeds of culture which would some day blossom into enlightened society, the early settlers founded schools for advanced study before students were ready for them. Men and women of high ideals had their eyes fixed on the character of the State that was to be. They were thinking more of the future than of the present. Their work was to lay broad and firm foundations fit for the magnificent edifice of civilization that would certainly be erected upon the bountiful prairies of Iowa.

Of all the kinds and classes of people who pioneered across the Mississippi, none contributed more to religious and educational advancement than the Quakers. They came well laden with their ideals of liberty, equality, and peace. Deep in the nature of these sturdy individualists the "inner light" of righteousness burned clearly. Their steadfast devotion to the democratic tenets of their faith was as prevailing as it was unwaver-

ing. Quaker communities were remarkably alike. And everywhere the promotion of education was a dominant concern.

Hardly had the Quakers settled in their Iowa homes at Salem before they appointed a committee to "endeavor to have schools put in operation". Two years later the committee reported that one hundred and eighty-five children were in schools taught by Friends and that no child was "growing up without education". So it was in the other Quaker settlements — at Springdale, Oskaloosa, and New Providence, in Marshall, Jasper, and Warren counties, among forty-five meetings of Friends by 1860. Thus the influence of a great purpose spread like the roots of a tree in the deep soil of the prairie.

At Salem the Dorland Seminary and Whittier College were typical expressions of the Quaker zeal for intellectual and spiritual training. Academies were established by many other Monthly and Quarterly Meetings — Springdale, Ackworth, Stanford, LeGrand, Pleasant Plain, New Providence, Earlham. The names are indicative of their character. Penn College, sponsored by the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends, was opened in 1872. In some respects the most remarkable school, located in the midst of the Salem settlement, was White's Iowa Manual Labor Institute, designed