

A Territorial Centennial Number
Iowa in 1838

The
PALIMPSEST

DECEMBER 1938

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

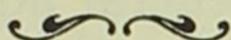
EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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Homespun Amusements

Hoot! Away, despair,
Never think of sorrow,
The darkest day may wear,
The brightest face to-morrow.

It was with such lilting verses that Miller, Yale, and Howes informed readers of the *Iowa News* that the American Arena Company would arrive at Dubuque on September 5th to entertain residents of the mineral region. Described as a "traveling world of wonders", this colorful circus had already performed for citizens of Farmington, West Point, Fort Madison, Augusta, Burlington, Wapello, Bloomington, Rockingham, Davenport, and Bellevue. The owners told Iowans their show was "unexcelled by any in the world" and invited gentlemen to pay a visit and be convinced. The spacious arena, with its upper tier of seats reserved for the ladies, was arranged in a "most beautiful style" and could accommodate one thousand spectators. The horses were unsurpassed in

"agility, muscle, and sagacity" and the distinguished and daring riders included six-year-old Master Howes. Jack May, the "humorous and facetious" clown, was also a notable member of the troupe. A military band played during the performance. The general admission for all this was fifty cents.

The American Arena Company circus was the principal entertainment attraction in the Black Hawk Purchase in 1838. Except for an occasional steamboat excursion (the *Brazil* carried a party to the Falls of St. Anthony), the Iowa pioneers had little imported diversion. Talking pictures were unknown. The proud possessor of a daguerreotype portrait would have been incredulous of modern candid photography. The motor boat, the automobile, and the airplane were reserved for future generations. Baseball, football, basketball, tennis, and golf were to become commonplace entertainment for the sons or grandsons of the Territorial pioneers. The simple amusements of 1838 were commonly homespun and fitted into everyday affairs.

The resourceful pioneers utilized every element of their social life as a vehicle for fun. Log raisings were usually accompanied by feasting and drinking, interspersed with wrestling, foot racing, and feats of strength. Housewarmings were gen-

erally featured by dancing and games. Quilting bees, paring bees, husking bees, all offered an opportunity for fun and frolic. Spelling bees and temperance lectures were held in schools or churches. A literary association at Dubuque afforded both intellectual stimulation and amusement. In the same community Azor Richardson conducted a singing school in the Methodist Chapel to "cultivate the science of Sacred Music". In his opinion, "if those who now compose the choir in our church, would devote a few evenings in cultivating their musical talent, they would render that part of the worship more interesting." The Territorial militia offered social advantages apart from the more serious military duties. Births, marriages, and deaths afforded occasions for social intercourse.

Hunting and fishing supplied food for the family larder as well as sport for local Nimrods. The streams were full of the best fish, while prairie and forest teemed with wild game. The editor of the *Iowa News* mentioned seeing a quantity of pike, twelve to eighteen inches in length, that had been caught with a seine. There were only a few sunfish and perch in the catch. On another occasion he noticed a flock of wild pigeons light on the land office building. "Whether they are old settlers and called to obtain certificates, we are not aware,

but this fact we feel assured of, — if they are, their lots have been 'jumped', and a second application can be made only at the peril of their lives."

When the *Missouri Republican* editor boasted that some Saint Louis hunters had bagged 131 grouse in August, he was upbraided by the *Iowa Territorial Gazette* for condoning grouse shooting before September 1st. "It's 'flat burglary'," the Burlington editor declared. "No real sportsman will kill a grouse till the first of September! Grouse are not now, or at least at the date of the hunt referred to, in bagging order — they are too young, and poor. Sportsmen should regard these things — poachers will not. We, an humble member, but an ardent one, of the Shooting Club, would as soon think of 'fishing for trout in a peculiar stream,' as of killing grouse at this time of day. Three weeks hence, and if any of the St. Louis boys have conceit in their skill, let them come up to Iowa, and they will learn a lesson in the art of bird bagging."

In September the *Iowa News* observed that several "sporting fellows" from the Dubuque-Belleveue region intended to hunt elk and buffalo at the headwaters of the Maquoketa and Turkey rivers where the game was said to be plentiful. One pioneer farmer near Dubuque caught a young elk and tamed it. Misfortune stalked two duck hunters at

Davenport. The men were brothers and had only recently arrived from Ohio. While hunting in the neighborhood of the Wapsipinicon one shot a duck in a small pond and went in search of it. According to the *Iowa Sun*, "he became entangled in the grass and weeds, and called on his brother for help, who immediately rushed into the pond, became also entangled, and before assistance could arrive they were both drowned."

The *Iowa News* chronicled a hunting episode less serious in its consequences. "Two sons of Hibernia being a ducking, Pat discovers a large bed of ducks close by the shore. After having his piece levelled for about five minutes, his companion asked him why he didn't fire? Pat replied — 'By zounds, I can never get aim at one, but there's another swims right between him and me.' "

Sleigh-riding and skating were popular on the frontier, the frozen Mississippi and its tributaries often providing splendid glassy highways. A Dubuque editor was delighted when five inches of snow fell early in November. "The upper part of our harbor is frozen over," he declared, "and the boys are enjoying the fine sport of skating." At Burlington the editor grumbled as others joyously sped past his shop. "The sleighing, we take it, is now very good, but we have not enjoyed it, having neither horse, sleigh, or leisure. Indeed, we have

not had a real old-fashioned sleigh-ride for many a day, and the last we enjoyed, we *took on foot!*"

Dancing was probably the most popular form of amusement, for that brought men and women together. Every community could boast of at least one fiddler who put plenty of swing in the strains of the "Irish Washerwoman", "Old Dan Tucker", and "Pop Goes the Weasel". The Chicago *Democrat* chronicled the anniversary celebration of the opening of the first tavern at Blue Ruin, Iowa, on September 10th. All the young people within twenty miles came to the number of forty-two gentlemen and six ladies. They danced "amid the utmost unanimity and hilarity" from six P. M. to six A. M. The fiddler was delighted that there was a lady for each of the six sets. After putting a proper amount of rosin on his bow and tuning his fiddle, Old Cuffee gave the following order for the evening:

"The gentlemen will have so much kindness as to parade themselves in companies of seven along the hall and take their numbers, remembering that the one in each set who gets the first number will dance with the lady first. The gentlemen must remember that the main object of dancing is to encourage the polite arts; therefore, I shall allow fifteen sets danced this night. Fourteen sets will be danced by numbers so that each gentleman can

dance twice with the lady of his set. But the fifteenth will be the rubber and is designed to encourage good breeding. So the gentleman who 'walks into the affections' of the lady best in the fourteen, shall have her the fifteenth dance. Now, gentlemen, remember the rubber." The advice had its effect, the dancers pairing into the "Double Shuffles" and "Break Downs" in a most "genteel" manner.

A marriage was always the signal for general rejoicing; feasting, drinking, and dancing being the order of the day. Since the men greatly outnumbered the women, a marriageable girl usually had a corps of suitors. At Ever Green Grove on the Icy Fork of the Yellow River the young men assembled one afternoon and, according to the *Chicago Democrat*, after proper warning, "drummed a very respectable young lady out of town for expressing a resolute determination to remain in a single state." This announcement provoked the ire of one, "Philo", who declared in the *Iowa News* that every young lady who emigrated to Iowa always took the precaution "to declare her intention to marry the *first* honest industrious young man that offers himself", and the Ever Green Grove men must therefore be "dishonest and lazy".

A common custom was the presentation of a

piece of the wedding cake to the local editor. This never failed to elicit a friendly comment. The Burlington editor felt that the champagne and fruit cake he received were not to be "snuffed at", particularly when they were so "nice and good". But James G. Edwards fared best of all when Elizabeth S. Knapp and Henry Eno joined hands in holy wedlock. "We were kindly remembered by the parties," the Fort Madison *Patriot* recorded, "having received, not a slice merely, but six or seven slices of as many different kinds of the very best of bridal cake. Verily, if this is the way they do such things in Wisconsin, or Iowa, that is to be, we shall not need to visit the Confectioner's".

Homespun entertainment reached its highest point of development with the theatrical performances of the Iowa Thespians in the large upstairs room of the Shakespeare House in Dubuque. The talented young men who established this first "Little Theater" in Iowa opened with William Dunlap's *The Glory of Columbia* on February 26, 1838. A variety of songs, duets, and trios added to the pleasure of the audience. A week later they repeated their performance, adding the laughable farce, *Gretna Green*, as a special attraction. "One evening devoted to amusement beguiles the tedious moments of a dull Saturday evening to those

who are situated, like ourselves, far from the home of friends, or even early acquaintances", observed the pioneer newspaper critic. "What harm can there be in the Thespian cause, which is devoted by all young men to innocent amusement? Tell us, ye critics, does it lead to dissipation? No."

Holidays were few in number in 1838. No mention was made of Easter services, although preachers must have dwelt on the Resurrection. Labor Day was unknown and Thanksgiving as a national holiday was not established until 1864. Only the Fourth of July seems to have been universally observed.

The celebration of St. Patrick's Day at Dubuque was accompanied by much conviviality as over sixty guests sat down to a "sumptuous" banquet prepared by Timothy Fanning. Patrick Quigley was president of the day and John B. Russell vice-president. Fifteen regular toasts were followed by thirty-eight volunteer sentiments: the Sons of Erin, the Emerald Isle, and St. Patrick vied in popularity with tributes to the United States, the Territory of Wisconsin, and Governor Henry Dodge. Some there were who held a double allegiance. John Foley toasted St. Patrick and George Washington: "One established Christianity on the ruins of Idolatry — the other, Liberty on the ruins of Tyranny."

The celebration of Christmas, according to the *Iowa News*, was a "day of jubilee" as well as a sacred and hallowed" event in the Christian religion. Although nothing was printed in the papers concerning the Yuletide festivities, there can be little doubt that the pioneers observed the day according to their meager resources, and in the customary manner of a hundred years ago. German immigrants had not yet imported the candle-lighted Christmas tree, but many a little boy and girl hung a stocking by the fireplace in anticipation of Santa Claus.

For the older folks it was a day for recollections of the past. "Thoughts of early days rush into our minds like welcome guests", mused the editor of the *Iowa News*. "Alas! that we should have traveled so far on the pathway of three score and ten;" he continued, "but Christmas brings all fresh to memory. It carries us to our first recollection of its observance as a holiday: — it is the magic that re-enacts the scenes of earlier days — that unlocks the sepulchre, and calls forth the dead to assume their part in that play of life. But it brings hilarity of feeling; sectarian prejudice is forgotten, the distinction of wealth silenced — and all join in the wish of — 'A Merry Christmas.'"

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Mandatory Thrift

“Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds aught and six, result misery”, counselled Mr. Micawber as he bade David Copperfield farewell. Governor Lucas would have given the same advice. In a letter to Secretary of State John Forsyth the Governor wrote: “A common opinion appears to prevail among the members of the Legislature and expressed by them without reserve, that, as the U. S. pays the expenses of the Territorial government, the greater the expenditure the better for the Territory. To this opinion I dissent.”

Because of this attitude Governor Lucas antagonized some of the members of the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa. The quarrel between Secretary Conway and the Council had not been settled when the legislature and the Secretary aligned themselves against the Governor in a controversy over public expenditures which drifted into an irreconcilable conflict over the absolute veto power as exercised by Governor Lucas.

The trouble started innocuously. On December 5, 1838, the legislature by joint resolution provided for the payment of the Secretary of the Council, Chief Clerk of the House, and "additional clerks, Sergeant-at-arms, Doorkeepers, Messengers, and Firemen" upon the presentation of a properly signed certificate to the Secretary of the Territory. The next day Conway requested Lucas for a written opinion "stating whether the certificate in question, is or can be legally regarded as a sufficient voucher". The Governor's reply offended the members of the legislature who "raved, stamped, etc.", when they received the Chief Executive's message.

In describing "the nature of our government", Lucas observed that the legislative power was "vested in the Governor and a Legislative Assembly". He could find no authority for the Assembly to act independently of the Governor. The resolution therefore had no legal effect. Lucas concluded by saying the "officers named in the resolution and certificate are legally unknown to us, and must continue to be so until a law is passed creating these offices, fixing the salaries and defining the manner of payments."

Did the Governor have a right to dictate to the legislature? Perhaps a convention made up of the legislators and the Governor could settle the issue.

On December 8th members of both branches of the Assembly met in the hall of the House of Representatives, but Governor Lucas refused to attend. Thomas Cox, who had been appointed President of the meeting, thereupon appointed Councilmen Hempstead, Browne, and Payne, and Representatives Grimes, Wallace, Hastings, Taylor, Temple, and Swan to draw up an appropriate statement of their position.

The first of four resolutions contained the severest indictment of the Governor. It declared that the Governor of the Territory "is not invested by the organic law with advisory and restraining power over the legislature", other than the veto of bills. The second and third resolutions declared that the Secretary had full authority to disburse the Congressional appropriation for the Territorial expenses. The fourth concluded that these opinions were in "no way connected with political, religious or sectional prejudices, but contain an honest and deliberate explanation of the Organic law". All the charges were sent to the various newspapers of the Territory, and to Governor Lucas, Delegate Chapman, and President Van Buren.

Eight members of the legislature were opposed to adopting the resolution defining the powers of the Governor. "I protest against wasting

our time in the discussion of so unprofitable, not to say distracting a subject", said Frierson. "Had not the Governor the right to express his opinions, on this or any other subject when called to do so? Sir, my opinions are sacred, I claim the right to express them at all times; nor would I, while I claim this right myself, deny it to others, even to the Executive of this Territory." Mr. Bailey felt that the resolution did not promote the public interest, while Mr. Beeler complained that his constituents did not send him to the legislature "to go in convention upon a trivial matter of difference between this House and the executive officers". On the other hand Chauncey Swan claimed that he "did not wish to create any harsh feelings" in offering the resolution to call the convention.

And so the quarrel continued. Secretary Conway refused to pay for the furniture of the executive offices out of the appropriation made by Congress, but did allow bills authorized by legislative resolutions. When the Assembly proposed making the Secretary the sole fiscal agent of the Territory, and passed a bill "regulating the intercourse between the Legislative and Executive departments of the Territory of Iowa", the measures encountered the veto of the Governor — a veto which could not be surmounted.

The seeds of the controversy were inherent in

the organic act. Two provisions clearly stated the position of the Governor. The Territorial constitution provided that the Governor "shall approve of all laws passed by the Legislative Assembly before they shall take effect", and definitely made the Governor a third branch of the legislature. Thus Lucas had the weight of legality in his favor when he insisted that no legislative act was valid without his assent.

The quarrel actually arose out of a vague clause relating to Territorial expenditures. The salaries of the Governor, the Secretary, and the Supreme Court Judges were fixed, but there was an annoying ambiguity as to the compensation of other officials. The organic act pledged an annual appropriation of "a sufficient sum, to be expended by the Secretary of the Treasury, and upon an estimate to be made by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, to defray the expenses of the Legislative Assembly, the printing of the laws, and other incidental expenses". Furthermore, the Secretary of the Territory was made responsible for the manner in which the sum was expended. Lucas assumed that all Territorial expenditures were to be authorized through the regular channels of legislation. To this interpretation the Legislative Assembly would not agree. Claiming a traditional right of independent control over the

internal organization of each house, the Assembly insisted on choosing the legislative officers and fixing their compensation.

On January 8, 1839, William B. Conway denounced Lucas to President Van Buren. He insisted that "the time had arrived for a proper adjustment of the relations of the parties. The Secretary understands his duty, has performed his duty, and is disposed to perform his duty; — but notwithstanding all this, this superannuated and irritable Governor would ride down the Secretary, and every other object or thing that would not bend, with servile pliancy, before his rude and offensive assumptions."

On January 25th the General Assembly adjourned. The legislators were still "mad about money" and angry over the Governor's veto power. This controversy could be settled only by amending the organic act and so the debate was transferred to the floors of Congress. The formal struggle in Iowa was actually over. Secretary Conway, however, still sensitive and very egotistical, widened the breach between himself and the Governor during the summer months.

Lucas, disgusted with Conway's actions, had even refused to give the Secretary custody of the Territorial Seal. Thus a quarrel which began between the legislature and the Governor was con-

tinued by the Secretary. By mid-summer the Secretary was writing that "He seeks no triumph over Governor Lucas. He wages no war against obstinate imbecility. But to be a Secretary of State, *without a seal*; — a recording officer, *without the records*; — an accounting, and an accountable officer, *without evidence of the authority* which sanctions and requires his disbursements, is to possess very equivocal honors, with which even contented meanness could not hope to mitigate the severity of official responsibilities, under the rigorous system which enlightened opinion is very fortunately predisposed to enforce."

Meanwhile, Lucas was corresponding with the Secretary of State, John Forsyth. On March 12, 1839, the Governor reviewed the entire controversy and stated his opinion of Conway. He claimed that the Secretary "has not only done nothing to render me assistance, but, *is generally believed to be the prime mover of the opposition to my proceedings, and the author of the documents forwarded to Washington by members of the Legislature.*"

The agitation for the removal of Conway by friends of Lucas was stopped by the death of the Secretary in November, 1839. By the time the Second Territorial Assembly met, the organic law had been amended. A statute approved on March

3, 1839, provided that a two-thirds vote of both houses was sufficient to overcome the Governor's veto and that a bill not returned to the chamber in which it originated within three days would become a law without the Governor's signature. Thus the United States government solved the deadlock between the Chief Executive and the legislature of the Territory of Iowa.

Lucas in his second annual message on November 5, 1839, stated that the amendment "is truly gratifying to the executive. It defines the powers and duties of the executive, when those duties stand connected with the Legislative Assembly, relieves him from much legislative responsibility, and places it where all legislative responsibility should ever rest, with the immediate representatives of the people." And, concluded the Governor, "This amendment will doubtless tend to harmonize the proceedings between the Legislative Assembly and the Executive, and lead to a more convenient despatch of business."

JACK T. JOHNSON

Journalistic Literature

In the year Iowa became a Territory, four pioneer editors in their respective Mississippi River towns were harriedly seeking to collect news, to elicit advertisements, and to secure payment for subscriptions. In spite of these engrossments, all four maintained the position that weekly papers ought to do more than encourage the immigration of "moral, industrious, and intelligent cultivators of the soil" into the new commonwealth. In addition to extolling the "boundless resources of Iowa" and furnishing their communities with local and national news, they weekly set aside from one to four columns for literary pieces leaning expressly toward "morality, edification, and relaxation".

In the words of one editor, the ideal paper "should possess a style of parity and taste" and "should breathe sentiments of the loftiest and purest morality." He furthermore felt that it lay wholly in the realm of good taste for a journal's essays and stories to be "grave and gay by turns", and on occasion to cause "the obtrusive tear to trickle down the sternest cheek" or to permit the "wrinkled brow of care to be made convulsive with the impulse of laughter."

This self-imposed duty of filling editorial, news, and literary columns with "wholesome, elegant, and moral" matter, the editors accepted seriously. The influence of William H. McGuffey upon literary taste in Iowa was as yet negligible, for he had just begun to publish his *Eclectic Readers*. The ideal of "laying a basis for good taste in reading" was better realized by the editors in the essays they selected than in the grave and gay fiction they printed.

Except for some minor instances, very few of the articles and stories represented original contributions to the Iowa journals. The majority were borrowed from eastern papers and from current English and American magazines. The essays varied in length from résumés of editorials in metropolitan papers to a long excerpt from a lecture on "The Political Necessity of Popular Education" delivered by Henry Ward Beecher before the mechanics of Cincinnati. The stories likewise either related briefly a humorous anecdote, or told a long, lugubrious story of a maiden who died of a broken heart. One such story, "He Will Come Tomorrow", lifted from *Blackwood's Magazine*, filled seven columns of the *Iowa News*.

Copyright was neither generally used nor respected. Editors everywhere borrowed whatever they wanted and often neglected to give credit to

authors and magazines. Indeed, anonymity had been encouraged by publishers. Such magazines as *The Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* had but recently relinquished their habit of concealing the names of their contributors. Often in levying upon the columns of eastern and southern newspapers, Iowa editors had no way of knowing who wrote an admonitory article, "On Courtship", or the humorous portrayal of "The Adventures of a Bashful Man". In these pioneer papers, the editors acknowledged the sources of scarcely a third of their literary borrowings.

Where the authority was known it was often freely acknowledged. *Blackwood's Magazine*, for instance, is credited with an informative essay on "Irish Blunders"; *The Edinburgh Review* with Lord Brougham's "Character Sketch of George Canning", and *The Knickerbocker Magazine* with "The Blunderer", a story based on the question: do manners civilize? From this magazine too was borrowed a scientific article entitled, "The Gulf Stream, A New Theory", and from *The Southern Literary Messenger* a biographical sketch entitled "Roger Brook Taney", proclaiming Taney's fitness for the post of Chief Justice.

The current Annuals or Gift Books were freely pillaged for moral, romantic, and sentimental tales. From the *Ladies' Garland* the editor at Davenport

selected "The Last Herring". In this moral tale the widow of Pine Cottage and her five very ragged and very hungry children shared with a stranger the last bit of food in the house, a "smoking herring fresh from the hob". Shocked at the discrepancy between the bare board and the family needs, the stranger, breaking into sobs, revealed himself as the long lost son of the widow.

From a Bulwer-Lytton contribution in *The Amulet* was drawn a passage of polyphonic prose, dealing lyrically with a dazzling maiden brought into a tapestry-like setting with Eros and Bacchus in the foreground surrounded by a bevy of dancing nymphs and dryads. From *Bentley's Miscellany* came a terror story of "An Extraordinary Memoir of that Most Extraordinary Italian Archfiend, Mascalbruni", purporting to have come from the pen of Captain Medwin.

Less frequently editors drew upon books, fresh from the press, such as Irving's *Astoria*, Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*, and Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers*. At least three travel essays were cut from J. L. Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Greece, Turkey, Russia and Poland*, first printed in 1838. One of these vividly described the battle of Krakow. The greater proportion, as ascriptions indicate, were clipped from the *New York Mirror*, *New York Sun*, *Boston Post*, *Boston Ad-*

vocate, *Pittsburgh Visitor*, New Orleans *Picayune*, and the Saint Louis *Bulletin*. Often, however, credit was loosely given to a Boston, a Western, or a Scotch paper.

Gravity and gaiety, exalted and humdrum style, proverbs and puns, elbowed one another through the four pages of the *News*, *Sun*, *Gazette*, and *Patriot*. One week an editor might supply in a "Letter from Paris" an account of the dancing Bayaderes from India, who sometimes moving "to the sound of the castanet resembled animated suppleness". Just below he would insert a criticism of Henry Clay, or a philosophical consideration of "What is Life?", or reprint one of the *Essays of Elia*. The *Iowa Sun* in October, 1838, carried copious extracts from Emerson's "Oration on Bonaparte" delivered before the Literary Societies of Dartmouth College on July 24th.

In the essays, humor consisted largely of advice to the love-lorn or instructions for the bashful lover in the technique of courtship. In the stories, a humorous element was essayed by introducing into the conversation a few words imitative of German, French, or negro dialect. The effects were grotesque rather than convincing.

Very few of the authors of the short stories are still known. Among the almost forgotten names appear those of George D. Prentice, Miss Win-

chester, Miss M. Miles, C. F. Hoffman, William L. McClintock, and Mrs. Samuel Carter Hall. Rather strangely, Washington Irving, widely known at the time, was represented only by a sketch, "The Hunters of the Prairie, or the Hawk Chief", and by a descriptive account of Oregon taken from *Astoria*.

Two stories came from the pen of John Greenleaf Whittier who, unlike Irving, was just then coming into recognition. In the first of Whittier's stories, "The Bachelor's Dream", a crusty old bachelor was vividly impressed by a vision in which, in the realm of an icy-cold hell, he met the woman he had loved in his young manhood. Nothing except his heart and hers held any semblance of warmth. So haunted was he by the symbolism of the frigid realm and the futility of keeping an old sentiment alive that even though he had passed his fiftieth birthday, he not only resolved to marry but did so, and, of course, the ending implied that he lived happily ever after.

The other, "A Night Among Wolves", published in 1831 in Whittier's *Legends of New England*, vividly narrated a legendary tale which was climaxed with an incident of horror. A group of young men and women, returning from a New England quilting party, were overtaken by a pack of hungry wolves. To escape, the young people

had but one recourse — that of climbing a pine tree. Numbed with the cold they waited through the long hours of the night while below in the moonlight “the gaunt and attenuated wolves” filled the night with their howls. Suddenly, toward morning, a large branch snapped. The helpless onlookers watched Caroline Allen, who a few hours before had been the life of the gay party, plunge into the midst of the pack and, as the maddened wolves tore her to pieces, they saw the snow redden with her blood.

In the choice of essays, as space fillers or as leading articles, the editors generally selected moral, political, or philosophical themes. Very often an item treated as news in one number became a topic of reflective comment in a succeeding issue. Few biographical sketches of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Dolly Madison, or Henry Clay reached their final sentence without the author’s sermonesque comment upon the virtue of character or the vicissitudes of life.

The coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 furnished the theme for two fairly long essays in the *Iowa Territorial Gazette*. As a means of extolling American democracy by satirizing monarchy, one writer ridiculed the English approval of monarchy and the retention of the outmoded tradition of employing the throne as a symbol of power. Cynic-

ally he showed that the nineteen-year-old girl, "thanks merely to the *glorious principles and privileges* of a monarchical government", through the demise of William IV and the accident of her own birth was only by chance born to be a queen. To the writer it seemed preposterous that through heritage any person might be

Deemed e'en from the cradle fit
To rule in politics as well as wit.

From a very different angle the author of the second essay, clipped from the *New York Star*, wrote sympathetically of the present and future responsibilities which the young and carefully reared Victoria faced. While he most sincerely hoped that the coming age of Victoria might be one of widening potentialities, he wondered whether the young girl on the British throne would develop into another Queen Mary, an Elizabeth, or an Anne. To this writer the coronation did not consist of medieval pageantry; he was concerned, almost pensively, with the responsibility which had fallen upon the young woman.

In the editorial selection of stories to be read by the light of tallow candles in pioneer cabins while hickory slabs crackled in open fireplaces, the editors exhibited a decided preference for wholly decorous stories. Had any one raised the objection that many of the stories failed to present life

realistically or face it squarely, these men probably would have resented the criticism. A few tales, generally very brief ones, were designedly pietistic, little apologues preaching generosity or honesty; a few others by detailing misery and squalor pictured the miseries that the drunken father brought to his home.

From one of the popular gift books, *The Violet*, one editor selected "The Cottage", a parable teaching the lesson that if one desires happiness in life he must disregard public opinion and live by his own decisions. A farmer wanted to paint his cottage grey to match the overhanging rocks. One well-wisher advised white paint, another black, but neither color proved serviceable or harmonious. He finally compromised by mixing black and white and found that they produced the original grey which he had intuitively felt made the cottage an integral part of its surroundings. The theme itself was probably old before Aesop clothed it with the story of the father, the son, and the ass. The author of "The Cottage" closed his lengthy apologue with these sententious words: "If then neither the council of our foes nor of our partial friends is safe to be taken we should cultivate a correct judgment which like the grey paint mixing both together may avoid the evil and secure the good."

Throughout these newspapers, legends dealing romantically with distant times and places and with themes of love and heroes occupied generous allotments of space. "Gertrude Vonder Wart or Faithful Unto Death" was a story of eleventh century Swabia. The husband, tortured for days and kept at the point of death, lay on a platform, his body bruised by the wrack. His wife dared hunger, thirst, cold, and threats against her life to remain on the wrack with her husband — truly faithful unto death. The tale of "Eustace de Santerre" retold a story dealing with the Crusades in twelfth century France, with mistaken identity as the motif; and "The Village Prize" recounted the long jump by which, with the assistance of General George Washington, Henry Carroll won his Virginia bride, Annetta.

"The Mountain of the Lovers" embodied the sentimentalism and romanticism which had dominated English literature for several decades. The caption gave a forecast of the theme. Pride of nobility ruled the baron, while love possessed the daughter and her yeoman lover. In ridicule of the lover's presumption, the cruel father promised his daughter to his low-born neighbor if the latter would carry her to the summit of a high mountain. The peasantry assembled. Eyes measured the ascent and heads were shaken. On horseback the

father rode to watch the feat. The lady stood nearby "pale, desirous, and dreading". The lover was resolute, and even eager for the contest, for "if he died for it, he should at least have had her in his arms and looked into her face." He began the ascent.

Throughout the tale the peasants supplied the note of sympathy. Whenever he hesitated the women burst into tears and the men shouted their encouragement. If he staggered "the multitude made a movement as if it would assist him." At the final moment of achievement, the father, still angry, sullenly spurred his horse and shouted that his attendants should separate the lovers who had collapsed at the summit. An old counsellor who had watched the agonizing climb leaned over the lovers but made no move to separate them. Instead "he turned his old face, streaming with tears, up to the baron," crying, "Sir, they are dead."

However much an editor might approve of fiction which "caused the obtrusive tear to trickle down the face", he must have realized that such a story as "Tears and Smiles" satirized the absurdities of current fiction. By combining melodramatic language with the machinery of the epic, the author so drenched his story with tears that it provoked smiles. Betrothed in her cradle to John

Draguignor, June Falaise at the age of sixteen awaited word that John would presently come to claim his bride. When the expected message was found to contain a laundry list of male attire, June died in a swoon and her father lost his mind.

Perhaps the Iowa editor who reprinted this story had some vague realization that such nonsense ought to mark the end of a literary era. Nearly two decades earlier Thomas Love Peacock had ridiculed the clap-trap of the romantic novels and sentimental tales in *Nightmare Abbey* and *Headlong Hall*. After a hundred years it is difficult to know whether the Iowa pioneers enjoyed the absurd sentimentality or the broad satire in such literary rubbish.

For including in their papers at Dubuque, Davenport, Burlington, and Fort Madison essays and stories calculated to provide an imaginary relief from the hardships of primitive life on the frontier, Editors Russell, Logan, Clarke, and Edwards may have had considerable justification. Through fictitious suffering, pioneer readers could vicariously escape from their own cold cabins, dreary work, and snow-blocked roads. Though the editors' taste may have been faulty, they reflected the standards of the time and showed some concern for cultural attainments.

LUELLA M. WRIGHT

A Commonplace Calendar

The history of 1838 ended, as it began, in political, economic, and spiritual pioneering; but the daily lives of ordinary folks were filled with commonplace tasks and events of personal importance.

Saturday, December 1. Education, declared the editor of the *Burlington Gazette*, is essential if "those high and important duties which devolve necessarily, on the inhabitants of a *free* country" are to be performed with "talent, taste and moral worth". § The weather turned cold. Large cakes of ice filled the river at Dubuque. At Burlington T. S. Parvin commenced to keep his daily "Journal of the weather". § Wells were so scarce in Dubuque that drinking water was being sold. § The Burlington public land sale ended, and speculating strangers departed. § Bayless & Cooper offered fifty lots for sale in the "flourishing town of Bloomington" and a fine claim at "Tameytown Prairie" five and a half miles up the river from Burlington. § Dubuque merchants were "never so destitute of goods", but E. Mattox had got his supply early and remodelled his new store "in a plain and neat style". § The Iowa Thespians opened the season at the Shakespeare House with "Intrigue" and "'Tis all a Farce".

Sunday, December 2. The Reverend Mr. McMurtry preached in the Burlington Methodist Church at eleven o'clock, and Mr. Scott of Mount Pleasant immediately after him. § Patrick O'Mara and Mary Nagle were married in Dubuque.

Monday, December 3. The council had not met for so long that the citizens of Burlington had almost forgotten they had a mayor and aldermen. § The Burlington land office issued a notice that it would be open for private entry of land at nine o'clock on January 2, 1839.

Tuesday, December 4. A man convicted of larceny "broke jail and made his escape". § The House of Representatives adopted a memorial to Congress asking that preëmption rights be extended to mineral lots of ten acres to protect miners' claims. § John S. David hired Robert Burns to superintend his stable just west of the printing office in Burlington. He had the best arrangement of stalls and the "most accommodating and industrious ostlers" in the Territory.

Wednesday, December 5. John Chapman and Elizabeth Hetherington were married in Dubuque. § A House committee on expenditures estimated that the expenses of the legislature would exceed \$32,000. § Representative Swan proposed that the engrossing clerk be "employed

in punctuating the different bills of this House."

§ T. S. Parvin was busy reading the first volume of De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Thursday, December 6. The river at Burlington was covered with ice. § Governor Lucas informed Secretary Conway that certificates by the presiding officers of the legislature were not sufficient vouchers for the disbursement of Territorial funds. § W. S. Edgar, proprietor of the new Burlington Drug Store, invited physicians and others to examine his stock of fresh medicines.

Friday, December 7. The investigating committee of the legislature discovered nothing that "could in the least detract from the credit" of the Miners' Bank. The cashier announced that "Post Notes of this Bank" would be redeemed on demand regardless of the date of maturity. § Another committee reported that the commissioners had no authority to reject eighteen votes for Rockingham which gave Davenport a majority of three in the county seat election last August. § John E. Miller, one mile north of Dubuque, took up a stray red ox with short horns. § R. W. Patterson offered the "highest price" for green or dry hides.

Saturday, December 8. The Legislative Assembly in joint session censured the Governor for opposing their authorization of expenditures,

which convinced Editor Logan that "prodigality, rather than economy is the characteristic of a majority of the members." § T. S. Parvin began to read Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. § Sheriff Martin Godard warned citizens of Scott and Clinton counties to pay their taxes to him before December 25th. § James McIntosh served notice that he would prosecute trespassers who cut wood on his land near Davenport. § Justice of the Peace W. H. Morrison married Thomas Moore and Rebecca Brady at Dubuque.

Sunday, December 9. A minister of the Dutch Reformed Church preached at S. Barkley's hotel in Davenport.

Monday, December 10. A "Rail Road Engineer" wrote a letter to the editors of the *Iowa News* reciting the benefits of a railroad between Lake Michigan and Dubuque. He thought Congress should grant "a few townships of wild land" to pay for it. § Sheriff B. W. Gillock declared that he would offer for sale from day to day at the courthouse door in Fort Madison all lands in Lee County on which taxes were delinquent. § Several valuable lead deposits were discovered near Dubuque in crevices running east and west. § John McGary bought a mineral claim "known as the O'Connor and Kief lot".

Tuesday, December 11. The weather was fine

at Davenport, "air dry and bracing, the atmosphere unclouded and serene", but the river was finally closed with ice. ¶ In response to a request from a farmer on the Little Maquoketa, who was concerned with the disparity between the prices of agricultural products and the cost of merchandise in the stores, the *Iowa News* published current retail prices in Dubuque. Salt was listed at \$5 a bushel, fresh pork at \$9 a hundred, beef at \$6 a hundred, country flour at \$12 a barrel (for which local millers got only \$4), corn 75 cents a bushel, oats 75 cents a bushel, potatoes 72 cents a bushel, butter 50 cents a pound, wood \$3.50 a cord, sugar 20 cents a pound, and coffee 25 cents a pound.

Wednesday, December 12. David Hender-shott bought from a farmer in Van Buren County forty bushels of Baden corn which he offered to sell for seed at \$3 a bushel. ¶ T. S. Parvin began reading Niebuhr's history of Rome.

Thursday, December 13. James G. Edwards issued a "specimen number" of his Burlington *Patriot* to ascertain "whether such a paper will be sustained in this community." He thought a Whig journal deserved support, but his Fort Madison *Patriot* had failed "purely for the want of patronage and the obscurity of its location." ¶ Old members met to reorganize the Dubuque Ly-

ceum. § The death of Mrs. Mary Delashmutt was mourned by "a large circle of friends".

Friday, December 14. Burlington merchants were hauling goods in wagons from the crowded warehouses below the rapids. § The Governor approved an act of the legislature authorizing Joseph Williams and Charles A. Warfield to operate a ferry at Bloomington for twenty years.

Saturday, December 15. With "friendship for their motto, amusement their aim", the Iowa Thespians beguiled "the tedious moments of a dull Saturday evening" with their performance of "England's Iron Days" in a "style not often surpassed". The boy who danced the hornpipe was twice encored. § A two-days Methodist meeting was begun in Burlington at candle-lighting. § A three-room house on Main Street was advertised for sale; Charles W. Pierce and James Prine moved their cabinet shop and chair factory to Second Street above the land office; William J. A. Bradford opened a law office in the "Executive Buildings adjoining Burlington House"; but not a store in the capital advertised any Christmas toys.

Sunday, December 16. The Reverend Mr. Arrington preached a "sound and practical" sermon. § After being delayed a week at the Iowa River and spending another week on the road, Editor Russell arrived at Dubuque from Burlington.

Monday, December 17. Mary Walling of Muscatine County transferred her dowry of personal property to her husband. § Miss Mary Ann Barkley, "an amiable and accomplished young lady", died at her father's hotel in Davenport of "abscess of the lungs". § Township plats were received at the Dubuque land office and settlers were invited to make their preëmption claims. § Members of the Dubuque Lyceum enjoyed "a rational, an interesting, and useful hour" discussing the question: "Should any law of imprisonment for debt exist?"

Tuesday, December 18. Lamson, Bridgman & Co. had on hand, perhaps for Christmas trade, 20,000 cigars, four boxes of "smoking pipes", ten boxes of "lump tobacco", a big supply of coffee, tea, and sugar, and 300 yards of "elegant Lowell carpeting".

Wednesday, December 19. The thermometer registered zero at Burlington. § A sale of property by Richard Barrett of Springfield, Illinois, to William Yokin was recorded at Bloomington. § Twenty or more citizens of any county were authorized by law to form an agricultural society to encourage better methods of farming and stock-raising.

Thursday, December 20. Friends who attended the wedding of Amos Matthews and

Amanda Brandon hoped their "love and happiness may increase with age according to the rules of compound multiplication." § Nine-year-old Catharine Jane Sleeth died near Burlington.

Friday, December 21. To collect payment of a note for \$952.50 given by Timothy Fanning and Arthur Conway, Patrick Quigley gave notice that he would sell at auction the lot on which the Jefferson Hotel in Dubuque was located. § School committees and trustees were notified by the Dubuque land office to select "good land, as required by law" in certain townships. § Augustus W. Scott, of the Dubuque firm of Scott & Taylor, died at his home, leaving a wife and baby. § The Legislative Assembly adjourned for "an opportunity of enjoying the Christmas holidays."

Saturday, December 22. A post office was established at Salem with Aaron Street as postmaster. § Daniel Grandbeck advertised that his wife has left his bed and board "without cause", and warned everybody to give her no credit in his name. § C. F. Rowell, who cleaned teeth without acid and filled cavities "with little or no pain", began to practice his profession at Mrs. Parrott's hotel in Burlington. § David Hendershott announced himself as candidate for mayor of Burlington at the next election.

Sunday, December 23. Five degrees below

zero. § T. S. Parvin read a sermon on "Gospel doctrine and Christian duty".

Monday, December 24. On Christmas eve, soon after midnight, the new frame house on Fourth Street occupied by Augustus C. Dodge was discovered to be in flames. It burned so rapidly that only a little furniture was saved. Amos Ladd, the owner, estimated his loss at \$1500.

Tuesday, December 25. Christmas Day. Governor Lucas signed a law to prevent gambling. § T. S. Parvin loaned Secretary Conway a sermon by Beecher on "Intemperance".

Wednesday, December 26. John Carnes and Charles Davis, commissioners of Van Buren County, asked their constituents not to be dissatisfied with their work in locating the county seat. § T. S. Parvin received a copy of *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Thursday, December 27. The Legislative Assembly convened. § According to a backwoods lawyer, the penknife quarrel between Conway and the Council was "squashed". § A bill to locate the Territorial capital in Johnson County was reported in the House of Representatives. § Henry Janes and E. O. Janes (administratrix), for the William Janes estate, requested that all debts be paid and claims filed within nine months.

Friday, December 28. The R. S. Adams & Co.

shoe store on Water Street in Burlington was open for business.

Saturday, December 29. A bright day, five degrees below zero. § Governor Lucas signed laws regulating divorce, legalizing interest rates up to twenty per cent by contract, and establishing a seminary of learning at Wapello. § The Iowa Thespians performed "Pizarro", with the "petite comedy", "Gretna Green", as an afterpiece. § Charles A. Warfield invited orders for 200,000 brick to be burned in his Bloomington kiln before June 1st. § Citizens in Township 70 met at the home of Jonathan Morgan to adopt claim rules.

Sunday, December 30. William Vail sold to John Steven his house and farm on the "Little Maquoquita", including "300 rails, 2 pigs, one horse saddle and Bridle, and 2 Cows".

Monday, December 31. T. S. Parvin started for Saint Louis with team and wagon to get the stationery he had bought in Cincinnati. Secretary Conway refused to pay for this material or the expenses of Parvin's trip until the goods were delivered. § No marriage licenses were issued in Muscatine County during December.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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