

Comment by the Editor

THE FAITH AND THE LIGHT

The first step in transforming the cluster of settlers into a community was Father Blew's invitation to "meeting" at his cabin on Sunday. Many came and got better acquainted. During the summer the invitation was often repeated and always accepted. So the custom was established. Not that Father Blew was a minister ordained, but the charm of his personality won the friendship of the people and the sincerity, tolerance, and simple faith of his sermons expressed the spirit and aspiration of the pioneers. Any fine Sunday afternoon would bring the neighbors across the prairie on horseback and in wagons until the house and yard were filled to overflowing.

At one such gathering early in the autumn, Father Blew observed that the children of the settlement were as numerous as "prairie chickens in a buckwheat patch", and almost as wild. They were growing up in ignorance. A school should be started at once. In that opinion every man in the community acquiesced and the enterprise was planned. By sunset on the following Saturday, a spacious log schoolhouse adorned the most convenient hilltop.

Thus closely were religion and the means of education associated on the frontier when the settlers

were community conscious and the highways between cabins were hoof-beaten paths over the prairie, hard-surfaced with sod. To lonely homestead and isolated settlement came the Catholic priest and the itinerant preacher, the Methodist circuit rider and the band of cultured theologians. They all brought spiritual comfort and all were zealous in the cause of salvation. Ever with their religious teaching they encouraged education. First, neighborly meetings for communion with God were held, and next was the passion for knowledge appeased. Church and school came hand in hand, jubilantly.

J. E. B.