

The **P**ALIMPSEST

JULY 1921

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THE EDITOR

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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

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Amana

WHAT IS AMANA

In one of the garden spots of Iowa there is a charming little valley through which the historic Iowa River flows peacefully to the eastward. A closer view reveals seven old-fashioned villages nestling among the trees or sleeping on the hillsides. About these seven villages stretch twenty-six thousand goodly acres clothed with fields of corn, pastures, meadows, gardens, orchards, and vineyards, and seas of waving grain. Beyond and above, surrounding the little valley, are richly timbered hills forming as though by design a frame for this quaint picture of Amana—the home of the Community of True Inspiration.

And what is Amana? To the traveller, viewing the fleeting landscape from the observation car of the Rocky Mountain Limited, it is a singular cluster of unpainted houses and barns amid battalions of vine-covered bean poles and blossoming onion tops,

surrounded by well tilled fields. To the speeding motorist on the River to River Road, bent on making the distance between Davenport and Des Moines in a day, it furnishes a curiously delightful stopping place for rest and refreshment and a fresh supply of gasoline. To the historian it is a bit of Europe in America, a voice out of the past on the world's western frontier; while to the political and social philosopher it is the nearest approach in our day to the Utopian's dream of a community of men and women living together in peace, plenty, and happiness, away from the "world" and its many distractions.

To the villagers themselves, with their aversion to mixing "philosophy and human science with divine wisdom", Amana with its villages and gardens, its orchards and vineyards, its mills and factories, its rich harvest fields and wooded hills, and its abiding peace and cheerfulness is the visible expression of the Lord's will: to them the establishment of villages, the growth and development of industries, and the success of communism are all incidental to the life and thought of the Community whose chief concern is spiritual. Born of religious enthusiasm and disciplined by persecution, it has ever remained primarily a Church. And so the *real* Amana is Amana the Church — Amana the Community of True Inspiration.

In language, in manners, in dress, in traditions, as well as in religious and economic institutions, the

Community of True Inspiration is foreign to its surroundings — so much so that the visitor is at once impressed with the fact that here is something *different* from the surrounding world. In the eighteenth century the Inspirationists paid the penalty in the Old World for their non-conformity to established customs by imprisonment and exile: in the twentieth century they are objects of curiosity to their neighbors and the subject of no little speculation. The Inspirationist is by nature and by discipline given to attending quietly to his own business; and much impertinent inquiry on the part of visitors has intensified his reticence. But Amana has no secrets to hide from the world. To be granted full liberty to worship in their own way and to work out their own salvation is all that the men and women of this Community have ever asked.

There is much in the life of the people of Amana that seems plain and monotonous to the outside world. And yet we are compelled to acknowledge that in many respects theirs is a more rational and ideal life than that which is found in the average country village. It is more genuine and uniform. There is less extravagance; less of shallow striving; no keeping up of "appearances"; and fewer attempts to seem what one is not.

But of more fundamental concern than plain living is the fact that the Community of True Inspiration has throughout its history been dominated by a spiritual ideal and a determined purpose to realize

that ideal. To this end the Inspirationists persevered, suffered, and sacrificed for more than two hundred years. And finally, that their ideal of a simple religious life might prevail, they substituted a system of brotherly coöperation for one of individual competition.

It is apparent, however, that that isolation from the "world" for which the Community of True Inspiration has so earnestly striven and which it has so jealously guarded for six generations becomes less and less easy to preserve. The railroad and airplane, the telephone and telegraph, the newspaper and magazine, the endless procession of automobiles, and the great World War have at last brought the Community and the "world" so close together that marked changes are taking place in the customs of the people and in their attitude toward life. Indeed, it is the intelligent adjustment of the life of the Community to the new order that explains the "blessed continuation" of Amana in this day and generation.

WHENCE CAME THESE PEOPLE

To the German Mystics and Pietists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Community of True Inspiration traces its origin — developing into a distinct religious sect about the year 1714. Protesting against the dogmatism of the Lutheran Church and refusing to conform to its ritual, the Inspirationists were persecuted and prosecuted.

They were fined, pilloried, flogged, imprisoned, legislated against, exiled, and stripped of their possessions.

It was a simple faith—a belief in guidance through divine revelation—that held together the early congregations of Inspirationists despite humiliation and torture. “Does not the same God live to-day?”, they said, “and is it not reasonable to believe that He will inspire His followers now as then? There is no reason to believe that God has in any way changed His methods of communication, and as He revealed hidden things through visions, dreams, and by revelations in olden times He will lead His people to-day by the words of His Inspiration if they but listen to His voice.” And so from time to time spiritual leaders arose and “prophesied like the prophets of old”, and all their sayings were faithfully recorded by scribes and published as sacred “testimonies”. It was this simple faith that sustained the Community through years of persecution and trial in the Old World and through years of suffering and sacrifice in the New World.

Although the Community has enjoyed the spiritual leadership of a very considerable number of great personalities—such as Eberhard Ludwig Gruber, Johann Friederich Rock, Michael Krausert, and Barbara Heinemann—it is to the religious zeal and practical genius of Christian Metz, a young carpenter of Ronneburg, that the Community owes its greatest debt. Even to this day the spell of the

influence of this remarkable leader is felt throughout Amana.

It was Christian Metz who first conceived the idea of leasing estates in common as a refuge for the faithful; and while the original intention had been to live together simply as a congregation or church, Christian Metz foresaw that a system of communism would be the natural outcome of the mode of life which these people had been forced to adopt. And he foresaw that exorbitant rents and unfriendly governments in the Old World would one day make it necessary for the Inspirationists to find a home in the New World "where they and their children could live in peace and liberty".

Never shall I forget the day, some years ago, when from the ruined tower of Ronneburg Castle I looked out over those German estates which had been the Old World home of the Community of True Inspiration. The friendly keeper eagerly called my attention to eleven villages in the distance, and apologized for a gathering rain which obscured "Oh so many more". Then he pointed with pride into a mass of clouds where on a clear day and with a field glass one could see Frankfurt. But through the mists I seemed only to see the beautiful Iowa Amana with its villages and vineyards, its gardens and orchards, its fields and pastures and meadows "where all that believed were together and had all things in common". I seemed only to hear in the

rising wind the hum of Amana's varied industries "where each was given an opportunity to earn his living according to his calling or inclination". My thoughts were of Christian Metz, the carpenter prophet, "who kept these things in his heart and pondered them over". And I thought too of the splendid young men of Amana of my own day, six generations removed from the worshiping congregation on the hill of Ronneburg, still making the ancient sacrifice for a spiritual ideal in this turbulent quarter of the twentieth century when brotherly love and idealism have grown timid in the company of selfishness and materialism.

It was in 1842 that a committee of four led by Christian Metz set out to find a new home in America, and it was their sincere and devout belief that the journey had been "ordained and directed by divine revelation". For three months these conscientious Inspirationists, ever mindful of the responsibilities that rested with them, suffered the winter wind and cold of the region of the Great Lakes while they examined tracts of land, dealt with unscrupulous land companies, and weighed the advantages of various situations. In the end they purchased the Seneca Indian Reservation — a tract of five thousand acres near Buffalo, Erie County, N. Y.

Within four months of the purchase of the Reservation the first village of the Community was laid out and peopled. Five others were soon established,

and more than eight hundred members crossed the water to join the group of pioneers at "Eben-ezer" — so named in a song by Christian Metz recorded before the final purchase was made:

Ebenezer you shall call it
Hitherto our Lord has helped us
He was with us on our journey
And from many perils saved us
His path and way are wonderful
And the end makes clear the start.

Each village had its store, its school, and its church; soon there arose the cheerful hum of saw-mills, woolen mills, and flour mills. A temporary constitution providing for "common possession" was adopted, and the Community was formally organized under the name of "Ebenezer Society". For twelve years they toiled in the mills and factories and tilled the newly broken fields when it became apparent that more land than was available so near the growing city of Buffalo would be necessary to accommodate the increasing membership. And once more a committee of four, with Christian Metz as its leader, was "ordained and directed" to go forth to "find a new home in the far West". To Kansas they went, but returned discouraged and disheartened. Then out to the new State of Iowa they journeyed to inspect the large tracts of United States government lands that were still available. Lands in Iowa County were described in such glowing terms that a purchase of nearly eighteen thou-

sand acres was made by them without further delay.

A better location or more valuable tract of land than the new site in Iowa could hardly be imagined. Through it ran the beautiful Iowa River bordered with the wonderful black soil of its wide valley. On one side were the bluffs and the uplands covered with a luxuriant growth of timber — promising an almost limitless supply of fuel and building material. There were a few quarries of sandstone and limestone along the river; while the clay in the hills was unexcelled for the manufacture of brick. On the other side of the river stretched the rolling prairie land. To the Inspirationists, who had been obliged to cut heavy timber and remove stones and boulders from the Ebenezer land before it could be tilled, the long green stretches of virgin prairie “ready for the plow” seemed the most wonderful feature of the splendid new domain on which all the hopes of the future were centered.

But it takes more than a beautiful location and natural resources to make a successful community: it takes moral earnestness and untiring industry. These the Inspirationists brought with them to their new home. Then, too, the Ebenezer experiment had added twelve years of experience in pioneering. Unlike Etienne Cabet’s French tailors and shoemakers of the Icarian Community, the Inspirationists knew how to turn the matted sod of the prairie. Bountiful harvests rewarded their industry and skill.

With a will they set to work to cut the timber and quarry the stone and build anew houses, shops, mills, factories, churches, and schoolhouses. They planted orchards and vineyards, and purchased flocks and herds. They revived the old industries and started new ones. There was some sickness incident to pioneering, but withal they felt that in this new home to which "the Lord had directed them" the fulfillment of all the early prophecies was at hand. Bodily ills are more easily healed than spiritual ones; and so, in spite of the malaria and the ague the Inspirationists flourished and were content in their new home.

There was no rush to the country so gloriously described by the Iowa fore-guards — though no one can doubt the eagerness with which every member looked forward to the upbuilding of the new home. The removal from Ebenezer extended over a period of ten years and was carried through with that prudence, judgment, and common sense which has always characterized these people in the conduct of their business affairs.

While one detail of members prepared the new home in Iowa, the other looked to the profitable selling of the old estate in New York. As they found purchasers for the latter, they sent families to the former. To their business credit it is recorded that they were able to dispose of the whole of the eight thousand acre tract in the State of New York with all the improvements without the loss of a single

dollar, notwithstanding such a sale presented great difficulties — for the six communistic villages and their peculiar arrangement of buildings, with mills, factories, and workshops had peculiarities which detracted from their value for individual uses. Much of the Ebenezer land had been surveyed and laid out in lots; and when disposed of it was sold piece by piece, a task which required much time and patience.

The first village on the Iowa purchase was laid out during the summer of 1855 on a sloping hillside north of the Iowa River, and it was called "Amana" by Christian Metz — the word signifying "remain true" or "believe faithfully" and was suggested, it is said, by the resemblance between the bluff overlooking the site of the new village and "the top of Amana" described in the Song of Solomon. Five more villages were laid out within a radius of six miles from Amana and were named in accordance with their locations, West Amana, South Amana, High Amana, East Amana, and Middle Amana.

Modelled after the country villages of middle Europe, the houses of the "Amana Colonies", as they are commonly called, were clustered together on one long straggling street with several irregular offshoots, with the barns and sheds at one end, the factories and workshops at the other, and on either side the orchards, the vineyards, and the gardens.

Up to 1861 the nearest railroad station had been Iowa City, which was twenty miles distant; but in that year the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad

was completed as far as Homestead, a small town south of the Community's territory. All goods from the East would now be unloaded there, and it would also form the shipping point for the neighboring farming population. The Community saw the necessity of owning this railroad station, and so the entire village of Homestead was purchased.

In the system of village life, which has been the great conservator of the Community's purity and simplicity, the Inspirationists have shown their farsightedness. The villages are near enough to one another to facilitate superintendence and to preserve a feeling of unity. At the same time they are far enough apart to maintain a simplicity of living, which would probably be impossible with the same number of people congregated in one place. By this means the Community, while taking advantage of every progressive step in the methods of agriculture and the processes of manufacture, has been able to sustain in its social, political, and religious life an insular position.

By the time the sale of the Ebenezer land had been completed, the Community's territory in Iowa consisted of twenty-six thousand acres — which is approximately the amount owned at the present time. With the exception of some seventeen hundred acres in the adjoining county of Johnson, all of the land lies within the boundaries of Iowa County.

Two steps of great importance were taken by the Community soon after its removal to Iowa. One

was its incorporation under the laws of the State as the "Amana Society"; and the other was the adoption of a new constitution.

Unlike some of its contemporaries, the fundamental law of the Amana Society is neither a "Declaration of Mental Independence" nor the outlines of a scheme of a "World-wide Socialistic Brotherhood". On the contrary, it provides simply and briefly a civil organization for a religious society. It is worthy of comment that, unlike Owen's New Harmony Society which adopted seven constitutions in two years, the Amana Society still lives under the provisions of the instrument which went into effect on the first day of January, 1860, and which has received the signature of every member of the Society since its adoption in December, 1859.

Materially all of the fondest hopes of the little band of Inspirationists in the Old World struggling to pay the rent of their first estate have been realized in the Iowa home. The membership, numbering eight hundred when the Community migrated to New York and twelve hundred when the removal to Iowa took place, has increased to fifteen hundred at the present day. Bountiful harvests have rewarded their untiring industry; the products of their mills and factories have found a market from Maine to California; and in the books of the Auditors of Iowa and Johnson counties, their real and personal property was listed in 1920 at \$2,102,984.

Communitistic societies are like individuals: many

have been able to stand adversity, but only the steadiest minded are able to stand prosperity. The Amana Society belongs to the extremely small class of the latter. In spite of the continued material success of the last half century, the "solidarity" of the Community is still intact. To the force, patience, sagacity, broad-mindedness and withal the faithful service of competent leaders the Community of True Inspiration owes in a large measure its success and continuity. And the difficulties of administration of so human an institution are apparent. Six generations of precept and practice in self-denial and brotherly love have not of course completely annihilated the dissatisfied and troublesome. Nor was there ever a congregation of fifteen hundred souls without its hampering Brothers — those upon whom the responsibility of protecting the highly cherished good name of the organization rests but lightly, those who enjoy its material blessings and benefits but are reluctant to share the burdens and cares and the necessary sacrifice.

Under the terms of the constitution of the Amana Society such presumptuous members can be expelled as from any other church organization. But such an expulsion, however, presents baffling complications since it involves the actual turning out of house and home of the disturbing elements. It is in the successful solution of such problems quite as much as in the business foresight of its administrative officers that one discovers the explanation of

the Community's long life. The predominating spirit is still the spirit of the forefathers. Were it not so the Community could not be held together, for the Amana Society is after all simply a voluntary association depending for its perpetuity upon the general good will and good faith of its members.

TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL RULE

Extreme democracy in government and administration has never been the political ideal of the Inspirationists, but rather a strong central authority wisely administered and implicitly obeyed. The entire conduct of the affairs of the Amana Society rests with a Board of Trustees consisting of thirteen members who are elected annually by popular vote out of the whole number of Elders in the Community. Moreover, the members of the Board of Trustees are the spiritual as well as temporal leaders of the Community, and as such are known as the "Great Council of the Brethren". Thus there has been effected in the Community an harmonious blending of temporal rule and spiritual authority, which is regarded as the fulfillment of the will of the Lord as revealed through Inspiration.

The Trustees elect annually on the second Tuesday of the month of December out of their own number a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary. The incumbents are usually reëlected; for rotation in office has never been a part of the Amana theory of government.

There has always been a strong religious sentiment against allowing personal ambition to play much if any part in the government of the Community. To disregard any of the duties entrusted to a member is to "break the sacred covenant which the Brethren have made with the Lord and with one another." The officeholder is expected to accept office not for its honors or its perquisites, but as a sacred responsibility.

In the month of June in each year the Trustees exhibit to the voting members of the Society (who comprise, according to the by-laws, all male members who have signed the constitution, all widows, and such female members as are thirty years of age and are not represented through some male member) a full statement of "the real and personal estate of the Society". In matters of great importance special meetings of the whole Society may be called. But in general the Society has avoided the mistake (common enough in many contemporary communities) of too many mass meetings. It took five upheavals of the Icarian Community to teach the lesson of leaving routine administration to committees instead of discussing every detail in frequent meetings of the assembly.

The Amana Society aims to keep its members informed on the general condition of affairs; but there is a decided tendency to reduce unnecessary discussion to the minimum by "leaving such things to those that best understand them." The Board of

Trustees is the high court of appeal in cases of disagreements, dissension, and complaints within the Society. Owing to the nature of the Community there are no lawyers in Amana. However, in suits with outside parties the Society does not hesitate to employ counsel.

Each village is governed by a group of elders varying in number — not necessarily old men, but men who are deemed to be of deep piety and spirituality. At the same time the Community profoundly believes that “Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” By that nice adjustment of functions that necessarily grows up in such a community, the highest authority in the village in matters spiritual is the Head Elder; in matters temporal, the resident Trustee. And although the Trustee is a member of the Great Council itself, which is the spiritual head of the Community, in the village church the Head Elder outranks the Trustee.

Each village keeps its own books and manages its own affairs in accordance with the resolutions of the Great Council; but all accounts are finally sent to the headquarters at Amana where they are inspected and the balance of profit or loss is discovered. It is presumed that the labor of each village produces a profit; but whether it does or not makes no difference in the supplies allotted to the village or to members thereof. The system of government is thus a sort of federation wherein each village

maintains a certain sphere of independence in local administration, but is under the general control and supervision of a governing central authority — the Board of Trustees or Great Council of the Brethren.

THE INSPIRATIONIST

Generations of right thinking and right living seem to have produced a distinct type in the Community of True Inspiration. The older men and women are plain and direct of speech, self-possessed and sedate. They have strong faces and honest eyes — faces refined by much thought upon spiritual things and purified by sacrifice and high aims. There is a gentleness in their demeanor that reminds one of the Quakers, and a firmness and a seriousness in their manner that bespeak their Pietist ancestry. They live quiet and peaceful lives and do not like to admit strangers to their privacy. They have a reputation for honesty and fair dealing among their neighbors and wherever their products are bought and sold. “If you have made a promise so keep it, and beware of untruthfulness and lies”, is one of the fundamental precepts in the training of the Inspirationist.

It is doubtful whether there are many places in the world outside of Amana where more tender care and respectful attention are given to the aged and infirm. Unproductive members of the Community enjoy all the privileges and comforts that the Community has to give. When the dissolution of the corporation was suggested in a recent lawsuit, it

was the problem of the old people that caused the greatest concern in the Community. "It would be wrong to dissolve our brotherhood", said the Elders, "for if this should happen, what would become of our old people?"

There is no prettier picture anywhere than an Amana grandmother with her knitting (and what wonderful things she can do with those needles without seeming to look at them!) unless it is, perhaps, the homage she is paid by the younger members of the household. And what a wealth of stories the dear grandmother has to tell the eager little folks of "our forefathers in the old country", of the early days at Ebenezer and the trouble with the Seneca Indians, and of the long, long journey across the country to the Iowa prairie! And grandfather, his forefinger marking the place in the old Bible he is reading, looks up to add his word of testimony to the fulfillment of the "gracious promise of the early prophecies". Who can estimate the influence on the younger generation of the memory of these "old defenders of the faith" who embody in their personalities fourscore years and more of the most romantic history of the Community?

While the Community of True Inspiration aims at the widest possible community of goods there is in the homes of its members a fine blending of individualism and communism which would hardly be possible in a community established with communism alone as its ideal. The Teutonic instinct of indi-

vidual freedom, coupled with an intense love of home, led its members to preserve a wholesome sphere of domestic independence. Each family lives in a house which is the property of the Society. But the Amana "home" is nevertheless the sanctuary of its occupants. And to each member of the Community there is allowed, out of the common fund, enough personal property to assure personal comfort and to satisfy that desire of every human heart to have something of its very own. Indeed, the separatism of the Amana home, though not in accord with the principles of complete communism, has been an important factor in the perpetuity and prosperity of the Community of True Inspiration.

The cheerless cloisters of the Ephrata Community (notwithstanding the religious fervor of the early Brothers and Sisters) are empty to-day. One by one the "Family Houses" of the True Believers of the Shaker Communities have been closed. Even the great five-storied home of the Centre Family of Lebanon has been deserted; and the United Society of Believers is represented by only a small group of the old guard. The Oneida Community with its Mansion House "as a peculiar form of Society", to quote one of its own members, "is practically no more." In truth the whole host of brotherhoods that have set sail on the communistic sea with the "Unitary Dwelling" and "Great House" ideal (despite the undeniable saving of labor and expense of such a plan) have miserably failed. The devoted

men to whom the management of the Community of True Inspiration has been entrusted for the past century may not have been students of social science; but that they have been profound students of human nature is evidenced on every hand.

The Amana houses are substantially built, and quite unpretentious. It has been the purpose of the Community to construct the houses as nearly alike as possible. There is no hard and fast rule, but the aim is to make one as desirable as the other. There is in the private homes no kitchen, no dining-room, no parlor — just a series of sitting-rooms and bedrooms, which are, almost without exception, roomy and homelike. In addition to the general family sitting-room, each member of a household has as a rule his own individual sitting-room as well as his own individual bedroom. Here he is at liberty to indulge his own taste in decoration — provided that he does not go beyond his allowance or violate the rules of the Community. Here he may ride his hobbies or store his keepsakes without being disturbed — which accounts in part for the general content of the young people.

General housekeeping in Amana is a comparatively simple matter. At more or less regular intervals in each village there is a “kitchen-house” — a little larger than the ordinary dwelling — where the meals for the families in the immediate neighborhood are prepared and served. From sixteen to fifty persons eat at one kitchen, the number depend-

ing largely upon the location. The places are assigned by the resident Trustee or local Council, the chief consideration being the convenience of those concerned.

The kitchen-house system of Amana may lack the economy of the communistic ideal—the unitary dining-room—but there is much to be said in its favor. To the Great Council of the Brethren the purity and simplicity of the Community have ever been more important considerations than minimum expenditure. And they have felt that these could best be preserved by avoiding, what has proved to be the cause of the downfall of so many communities, frequent congregations of large numbers of individuals. Moreover, the mass meeting is in no way a part of the working scheme of the Amana Society. Even in the church there are separate apartments or meeting-rooms for the young men, the young women, and the older members. Indeed, if Amana has made any distinctive contribution to practical, working communism it is in the combination, or rather the nice adjustment, between separatism and communism whereby mutual interest is maintained without inviting the pitfalls of “too much getting together”.

The Amana kitchen is large and airy, often extending through the full depth of the house. Each kitchen has its supply of hot and cold water and its sink and drain. Every pan and kettle has its shelf or hook; and there are more conveniences for paring

and slicing, chopping and grinding, than the average housewife of the world ever dreamed of. But the really distinctive feature of the Amana kitchen is the long low brick stove with its iron plate top. This is built along one side of the room; and back of it there is a sheet of tin several feet high which shines like a mirror. From its upper edge hangs a most surprising variety of strainers, spoons, dippers, and ladles. On top of the brick stove are the hugh copper boilers and kettles which a community kitchen necessitates. In recent years there has been added to each kitchen a modern cook-stove, which is used during the winter for heating as well as for cooking purposes.

In the kitchen everything from the floor to ceiling is as clean and bright as it can be made by soap and water, brooms and mops. The Amana woman knows none of the vexations of the village housewife of the world, in whose home as a rule proper conveniences for the kitchen are the last to be provided. Woodsheds and store-houses are built in the most convenient places; there are covered passage-ways from the house to the "bake-oven" and outbuildings; and there is commonly a hired man at the kitchen-house for the carrying of water and hewing of wood. There is absolute system in every detail of the housework. Everything is thoroughly and effectively done; and the women do not appear to be overworked.

Each kitchen is superintended by a woman ap-

pointed by the Elders, who is assisted by three of the younger women, each taking her turn in attending to the dining-room, preparing vegetables, cooking, and washing dishes. As a general rule one week of "part time" follows two weeks of service in the kitchen — which, it must be admitted, is a great improvement over the ceaseless routine of the life of the average housewife of the world. The older women do not work in the kitchen as a rule; hence it is sometimes necessary to hire help from the outside. It is the aim of the Community to have hired help in the hotel kitchens in order to shield its own young women from too close contact with the world. The fact that the average summer visitor too often leaves his manners in the city when he chances to take an outing makes the wisdom of such a rule evident.

Wagons from the village bakery, butcher shop, and dairy make the daily rounds of the kitchens. Cheese and unsalted butter for table use are made in each kitchen, along with its own special cooking and baking. Large dryers at the woolen mills, where steam heat can be utilized, are now used for the drying of vegetables for winter use. Ptomaine poisoning and adulterated foods have little chance to do their deadly work in Amana.

It is the aim of the Community to produce as far as practicable all the food consumed by the members. At the same time the Amana people do not deny themselves any comforts which are compatible with simplicity of life. The tables are bountifully

laden with wholesome food; but the menu is practically the same from day to day, except as varied by the presence of fresh fruits and vegetables in their season. The Inspirationists are not faddists in their diet; they have no theories regarding the effect of a vegetable and fruit diet on "the health of the body, and the purity of the mind, and the happiness of society". They have no decided opinions regarding the relative merits of lard and tallow, and no rule against the "eating of dead creatures". Tea and coffee are commonly used. In short the food throughout the Community is well cooked and substantial, but unmodified by any modern "dietetic philosophy".

Breakfast is served in the Amana kitchens at six o'clock in the summer-time and half an hour later in the winter-time. The dinner hour is 11:30 the year round. With the supper bell, which rings at half past six in the winter-time and at seven o'clock in the summer-time, the day's work closes. In addition to these three meals the Inspirationist takes a lunch in the middle of each half day. Those who work at considerable distance from the kitchen carry their lunches with them. When the supper things are cleared the members gather in small groups at different places in the villages for the evening prayer-meeting.

There was a time in the pioneer days of the Community (when all energies were bent to the building of a new home in the wilderness) when the women,

in the manner of our Puritan grandmothers, shared almost equally the physical labors of the men. But as the Community prospered the lot of the women became easier; and to-day the woman of Amana knows nothing of the cares of the average house-mother who is expected to perform the combined duties of housemaid and nurse, hostess and church worker.

In every department of service in which woman participates the work is carefully apportioned to her strength. The woman with children under the age of two is not required to take part in the general village work, and her meals are brought to her home in a basket from the nearest kitchen-house. There is a nursery or kindergarten in each village well supplied with sand piles and the variety of playthings deemed necessary to keep children interested. Here the little folks between three years and school age are cared for when necessary to enable their mothers to take part in the village work.

In connection with every kitchen-house is a vegetable garden of from two to three acres. The heaviest of the garden work is always done by the hired man, but the superintendence and general care of the garden are entrusted to the women. This work is lighter than the kitchen work and the hours are shorter; and so the garden work is allotted to the middle-aged and older women.

Whoever has fared on the produce of the kitchen-house garden can understand the feeling of the

Amana prodigal who returned to the Community because there was "nothing fit to eat in the world". There is fresh lettuce from March to December, grown in hotbeds at one end of the season and kept in sand in the cellar at the other. There is ever-green spinach that is delicious the whole summer long; and the garden superintendent knows how to lengthen the green pea and wax bean season to the most surprising extent. There are great white cauliflowers averaging ten inches across; there are kale and salsify, red cabbage and yellow tomatoes, and much more that the visitor from the world does not even know by name. At one end of the summer the kitchen garden brings forth huge strawberries and raspberries, to which even the gorgeously illustrated seed catalogues can not do justice; and at the other end a marvelous variety of apples, and pears, and plums, and grapes.

In their dress (like the Shakers, the Mennonites, and in truth all of the communities whose religion prohibits "a life of vanity") the members of the Amana Community are "plain". And like the Shakers, too, they do not profess to adhere to a uniform, but claim to have adopted and retained what they find to be a convenient style of dress. This is particularly true of the dress of the women.

There is nothing distinctive in the dress of the men of Amana to-day. While there is still a great aversion among the pious to "looking proud", there is an equal dislike on the part of the younger members

of being conspicuous on account of their clothes. And so the men, particularly those who come in contact with the world, dress in much the same fashion as do men of the world—a little more given to “plain goods”, perhaps, and a little less responsive to the latest edicts of fashion.

Formerly the village tailor made all of the clothing for the men, but it was found to be cheaper to buy “ready-made” clothes for ordinary wear. The “best clothes” are still quite generally made by the Community tailor; for the young man gets his goods at cost from the woolen mills and, as the time of the tailor belongs to the Society, he is thus enabled to dress well on less than one-fourth of what it costs his brother in the world. The older Brothers are a little more orthodox and still wear “Colony” trousers and a Sunday coat without lapels; but unlike the Amishman, with whom he is often confused, he does not regard the button as an “emblem of vanity”, nor cut his hair in “pumpkin-shell” fashion. He does, however, resemble both the Amishman and the Shaker in the cut of his beard and in the absence of a moustache, which latter is regarded as a badge of worldliness.

The costume of the women might almost be called a uniform two hundred years old, the dress of to-day among the more orthodox being practically the same as at the founding of the Community. “Do not adorn yourself in dress for luxury’s sake”, reads one of the precepts of the Community, “as a feast

for the eyes or to please yourself or others, but only for necessity's sake. What you seek and use beyond necessity is sin." For mother and grandmother this is still the law and the gospel; but granddaughter, in the manner of the "growing-up-youth" of all ages, is less inclined to follow rules and regulations and oftentimes discards the "shoulder-shawl" and black cap, originally designed to suppress pride, changes perhaps the cut of her Quaker-like gown, and wears a bit of jewelry or a pretty slipper. Until recently the summer clothing of the women was made largely of the calico printed by the Community and known from Maine to California as "Amana Calico". The printing works, however, were closed during the World War owing to the impossibility of obtaining reliable dyes — particularly the indigo for the Society's best known "Colony Blue" — and up to the present time the industry has not been resumed. The only head dress in the summer time is a sun bonnet with a long cape; a hood takes its place in cold weather.

How it came to pass that the planting of flowers escaped condemnation as "a pleasure to the eye" is more than the "worldly minded" can explain. We only know that it is so and are thankful. For all the pent up love for the beautiful in the Community of True Inspiration for six generations seems to find expression in the cultivation of flowers, which are found in great profusion everywhere — around each dwelling, in front of the church, and even in the hotel

and school yards. Indeed, the Amana village from June to October is one huge garden all aglow with quaint old-fashioned flowers. There are great rows of four-o'clocks and lady-slippers, borders of candy-tuft and six-weeks-stock; gorgeous masses of zinnias, marigolds, and geraniums; great pansy beds and rose gardens — all laid out with precision and cared for with such devotion and such genuine pleasure that the visitor too rejoices.

The picturesqueness of the Amana estate is enhanced by a mill-race — a canal seven miles long which furnishes the water power for the mills and factories. This mill-race is now old enough to be fringed with pickerel weed and dwarf willows bent by the weight of wild grape-vines. Here and there the race is spanned by quaint wooden bridges. Half-way between two of the villages the mill-race expands into a lake which covers about two hundred acres and is now almost filled with the American lotus or yellow nelumbo. In July when the lotus lifts hundreds of great buff blossoms above the water, the Sunday quiet of the peace loving Inspirationist and his family is sadly disturbed by the endless procession of automobile visitors and their attendant noise and dust.

THE REAL AMANA

“To be a church always” is the essential aim of the Community of True Inspiration; and it is in the personal service and the practical devotion of six

generations to a spiritual ideal that we find the real explanation of the Amana of to-day. The dreams of men live on triumphantly through the ages when the visible structure of their civilization has crumbled away. The old feudal castle of Ronneburg is an empty echoing shell, but the spirit of "the old defenders of the faith" who there strove for religious liberty in the early years of the eighteenth century still lives in the little valley of the Iowa River which has been the dwelling place of their descendants for more than three score years.

Sincerely and most devoutly do these people believe that from the beginning of the "New Spiritual Economy" they have received in all spiritual matters, and in those temporal affairs which concerned their spiritual welfare, divine guidance through specially endowed individuals. They believe that the beautiful Amana of to-day is simply the expression of the Lord's will as revealed directly to them from time to time through their prophets. They believe they were commanded by "a decisive word of the Lord" to dwell together in the Fatherland; to come to America where they might "live in peace and religious liberty"; to adopt communism in the "new home in the wilderness"; to leave Ebenezer and move to Iowa; and there to buy land and establish factories in order that the brotherhood might be maintained in "the faith which has love and the bond of peace for its essence."

Since the death of Barbara Heinemann, who re-

ceived her gift of inspiration at about the same time as Christian Metz and who outlived him by sixteen years, there have been no "Instruments" and no new revelations; but "still living witnesses" and "well founded Brethren" carry on the work as of old, and much inspired literature remains for the assurance and guidance of the congregations of to-day. Of testimonies alone there are forty-two printed volumes, besides many collections of poetry and songs.

The stranger in the Amana villages would have some difficulty in finding the church buildings, unless perhaps his attention were challenged by their inordinate length; for the Amana church is no "steeple house", but simply a series of rooms made necessary by the fact that in the larger villages the men and women of certain spiritual orders meet separately on Sunday morning, when four services are conducted simultaneously. The general meetings on Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon are held in a large assembly room of the church.

The interior of the Amana meeting-house is marked by its plainness. The whitewashed walls, the bare floors, and the long unpainted benches worn smooth with much use and frequent scrubbing, all bespeak the character of the service which is simple, sincere, and deeply impressive. There is no pulpit, but instead a plain table where the presiding Elder sits. On either side of him, facing the congregation, is seated a row of Elders who possess the necessary

“measure of enlightenment and discrimination” to “fulfill the calling of the shepherd of souls.”

In the general meeting the men sit on one side of the church and the women on the other, both groups according to age and spiritual rank — the youngsters on the front benches under the watchful eye of the Elders, the older members behind. Each member of the congregation from little Wilhelm and Johanna to the presiding Elder comes armed with a Bible and a copy of the ponderous Psalter-Spiel in a pasteboard case.

The religious services of the Community of True Inspiration are numerous but extremely simple. There is no attempt at rhetorical effect or eloquence on the part of the Elders, the hymns are chanted without instrumental accompaniment and oftentimes the prayer is “unhindered by words”. The service is dignified and breathes throughout a reverent and devout spirit, and ever there remains the sincere effort of the forefathers to eliminate all that is formal and bound to the letter. At the close of the service the congregation quietly files out of the church. If it chances to be a general meeting the women all leave the church by one exit and the men by another. This no doubt is calculated to prevent “silly conversation and trifling conduct”. There are no greetings, no good-byes, no visiting on the steps of the church — nothing in fact that would tend to lessen the solemnity of the occasion.

The religious service which is held upon the death

of a member is conducted in the church. The body, however, remains in the home. The service is the regular church service with the lesson drawn from the life and death of the departed Brother or Sister. After the service the entire congregation, including the children, are permitted to go to the home to view the remains. Then the plain casket is placed in a light open wagon and the little procession proceeds on foot down the flower-bordered street to the cemetery. At the side of the wagon or behind it are the pall-bearers, the family of the deceased, and the relatives, who are followed by the Elders, the school children accompanied by their teacher, and the members of the Community. There is no service at the grave save a hymn and a silent prayer offered by the entire congregation with bowed heads as the body is lowered into the earth.

There is no outward mourning for the dead. Indeed, the faith of the Community teaches that death is but "the blessed release of the spirit" from the pain and suffering, the sorrow and trouble which is the lot of man during his "pilgrimage on earth". The unencumbered spirit passes beyond into "a blissful eternity" where other souls will join it as they in turn are "freed of their burdens".

BROTHERS ALL

Amana's simple doctrine of "Brothers all as God's children" is maintained even in death. In the cemetery there are no family lots, no monuments.

The departed members of each village are buried side by side in the order of their death in rows of military precision, regardless of birth, family, or spiritual rank. The graves are marked by a low stone or white painted head-board with only the name and date of death on the side facing the grave.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity”, quoted Gruber to his little congregation two centuries ago. Eloquenty the simple, silent, clover-scented Amana cemetery with its incense-breathing hedge of cedar speaks of the many sacrifices of personal ambition, of material prosperity, and of individual pleasures dear to the human heart made and suffered by those who have endeavored to “remain true”, to “believe faithfully”, and to live together in unity. In the center of that quiet solemn place the men whose wealth made possible the establishment of the new home in the West sleep beside their Brothers who had naught to give to the Community save the labor of their hands. And beyond, resting beside the least among them, lies the great-hearted Christian Metz, whose head-stone reads simply: CHRISTIAN METZ 24 JULI 1867. The rest — the loving tribute of his followers — is graven upon the heart of every member of the Community.

Two generations have passed since that gifted Brother was “recalled from the field of his endeavor”. One by one the “still living witnesses” have joined the silent Brotherhood in the cedar-bordered

lot, and a newer generation with less of the austere spirit and more of the ways of the world have quietly accepted the call to service. The casual visitor notes the changes and asks: "What of Amana in the future?" Were Amana simply an experiment in communism one might venture an opinion as to its permanency. But the *real* Amana, in spite of modifications in the distinctive life which characterized the Community in an earlier day, is still Amana the Church — Amana the Community of True Inspiration.

The Community to-day is a living history of all of the work and character and ideals that have been associated with it in the past; and when we look into the faces of the splendid young men and women to whom it has been handed on as a precious inheritance, when we hear the chant of the "primer class" as it floats out of the vine-covered school window, we know that in spite of external modifications and adjustments, in spite of the occasional "emblem of vanity" and "worldly amusement", in spite of the inevitable "black sheep" in the fold, much of the beautiful spirit of "the old defenders of the faith" still pervades the Community. The history of mankind teaches that "religion often makes practicable that which were else impossible, and divine love triumphs when human science is baffled."

BERTHA M. H. SHAMBAUGH

Comment by the Editor

As this number of THE PALIMPSEST goes out to its readers the lotus is lifting its great yellow blossoms above the placid waters of the lake of the Amanas. They are now wide open to the sky, and their long stems reach deep down into the rich soil at the bottom of the lake. But when torn from their roots they close up into the conventional lotus of ancient Egyptian architecture.

Dwelling in contentment in the vine-covered houses of the Amana villages are a people of unusual ways, deeprooted in historical traditions, in religious beliefs, and in love of home and surroundings. The glimpses which Mrs. Shambaugh gives of these people and their home constitute an explanation of the Community of True Inspiration: here there is no attempt to describe the more obvious aspects of this interesting group of Iowa villages and villagers.

These glimpses are taken largely from the author's book on *Amana: The Community of True Inspiration* published by The State Historical Society of Iowa in 1908. For many years Mrs. Shambaugh has been interested in and has written about the Community and its history. It is a noteworthy fact that her first contribution to the literature on

Amana appeared in 1896 in *The Midland Monthly* — the article having been awarded a prize by Mr. Johnson Brigham who was then the editor and publisher of the magazine.

After a brief but noteworthy career *The Midland Monthly* was discontinued, but the stimulating encouragement given by Mr. Brigham to many young writers led in the case of Mrs. Shambaugh not only to her book on Amana but also to a long list of articles on the same subject — the last one of which, entitled *Amana the Church and Christian Metz the Prophet*, appeared in *The Midland* edited and published by Mr. John T. Frederick.

All of which associates these two literary idealists of different generations in a way which seems to us worthy of comment. When the literature of the Middle West comes into its own it is probable that no influence in the history of its development will stand out more clearly than the devoted work of these two Iowa editors — Johnson Brigham of *The Midland Monthly* and John T. Frederick of *The Midland*.

J. C. P.

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