

Comment by the Editor

AN IOWAN IN CALIFORNIA

The fragment of reminiscence which we have printed in the foregoing pages came to us in a recent letter from Mr. John P. Irish, now living in Oakland, California. Other items from his letter will be of interest. "I built on my ranch in the mountains here a log cabin", he writes, "and dedicated it to the memory of the Iowa pioneers, and it was the summer home of my family for 20 years". He speaks of "the time when we slaughtered our pork in December, took it on bob-sleds and sold it at Ogilvie's packing house in Muscatine for \$1.00 per hundred and brought back the money to pay taxes and letter postage, which was then 25 cents". And he adds: "I am in my 79th year and hope to visit my birthplace again before I go to join the hardy souls of the frontier".

We join him in the hope. For many years John P. Irish was a prominent figure in the political history of Iowa. He was a son of Captain Frederick M. Irish who is mentioned in the article in this number on the steamboat *Ripple*. In 1864, when he was but twenty-one years of age, he became editor of the *State Press* at Iowa City (the successor of the *Iowa Capitol-Reporter*), and for nearly twenty years his paper was a power in Iowa politics. From 1869 to

1875 he was a member of the General Assembly of Iowa; he was largely influential in the establishment of the College of Law and the College of Medicine at the State University of Iowa, and next to John A. Kasson was probably the greatest influence in the movement to construct the present State House at Des Moines — a project which was fought bitterly in the General Assembly and throughout the State by men who drew pathetic word-pictures of the “barefooted women and children” who would be still further crushed to earth if the extravagant new capitol were built. He was nominated for Congress in 1868 and for Governor of the State in 1877, but the Democratic party was unsuccessful in both campaigns.

In 1882 he removed to California where he has edited several newspapers, held civil office, farmed, and been nominated for Congress. He has acted as counsel before several arbitration courts in cases involving international law, and has maintained an unusual interest and influence in political affairs. At the present time he is engaged in an active controversy in opposition to the anti-Japanese attitude of United States Senator Phelan and other prominent Californians.

BUILDERS OF THE FAR WEST

Iowa began early to contribute men to the up-building of the West. In 1849 Serranus C. Hastings — who had served a number of years in the Iowa

Territorial legislature, had been one of Iowa's first Congressmen and had held the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State — went out with the gold hunters to California. He served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California, was elected Attorney-General of the State, and for many years carried on a very successful law practice.

William W. Chapman, the first Delegate to Congress from the Territory of Iowa, and delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1844, travelled across the plains by ox team in 1847 to Oregon. In 1848 he worked in the gold mines in California, but returned to Oregon where he was elected to the legislature, edited the first newspaper in the State, and served as Surveyor-General.

IOWA IN THE EAST

Nor has the East lacked inspiration from Iowa. Witness those two remarkable jurists, John F. Dillon and Samuel Freeman Miller. Both of them studied and practiced medicine — Miller for ten years — before they began the study of law. Dillon, after serving as Judge of the Supreme Court of Iowa and Judge of the United States Circuit Court, removed to New York City to become a member of the faculty of the Columbia University Law School and general counsel for the Union Pacific Railroad. For a third of a century he was one of the leading members of the New York bar, and one of the most eminent of American law authors. Samuel Freeman

Miller after ten years of medical practice in Kentucky and twelve years of law practice in Iowa spent the rest of his life — twenty-eight years — on the Supreme Bench of the United States.

IOWANS AND IOWA COLONIES

Iowans have gone east, west, north, and south. Herbert Hoover, born in Iowa, goes to California and from there becomes an international figure. George E. Roberts becomes an influence in financial affairs in Chicago, Washington, and New York. Frank O. Lowden reaches high position in Illinois. Horace Boies, the only Democratic Governor of Iowa in two generations, is living, at the age of ninety-three, in California.

There are Iowa colonies everywhere — from Seattle to Florida, in London, in China, and in the Philippines. Thousands of Iowans gather in a picnic celebration at Los Angeles each year to talk of the land between the rivers, and at the other end of the continent the Iowa Club of New York City has frequent dinners. We send greetings to the members of all colonies for they are Iowans still; and whenever they can come home for a visit to the prairies of their youth, the State will welcome them.

J. C. P.