

The **P**ALIMPSEST

MARCH 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

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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Bradford—A Prairie Village

In times past, the rising sun each morning spread its rays over the great expanse of undulating grassland, and quickened to life the pulse of a little prairie village. Bradford, in Chickasaw County, the home of "The Little Brown Church in the Vale", was a bit of old New England set down on the prairies of northeastern Iowa. The village was far from new when the first white settler discovered it. It was an early habitation of the Indians, for the little stream filled with silvered life which had cut its way through the very marrow of the land of this region, the little glades of its tributaries with their shade, their wild life and their willing offerings of wild fruit, all combined to make this a favored spot with the red man, a delectable place for a camping-ground. Here too, beside the stream, were the bodies of their dead.

For generations the Land of the Passing Ones kept its sacred secret. The log structures above ground were placed only where nature could best conceal them. And the bark-encased bodies which

were committed to the keeping of the oldest of the oak children where they might ever hear the whispered words of hope and lyrics of eager life, were only found in the most interior part of the grove.

Then came the first white man, and here at the Indian village, a trading post was established. Little did the forest dwellers realize what this outpost of the white man's power would mean to them. But the time came when it seemed as though their gods had entirely forsaken them; and discouraged and saddened with the thoughts of leaving the camping-ground of their ancestors they turned one last, long glance toward the land of their memories, then set forth to a new home. The land of their dreams, the heritage of their forefathers, was no longer theirs. Is it any wonder that these white intruders were looked upon with such bitterness?

The log cabins sprang up on every side with the departure of the Indian, for the white man also found this a pleasant vale for the location of a home. Great trees were felled, and within a fortnight, it almost seemed — so rapidly was the prairie silence broken — there had appeared on the Iowa prairies a little village. In the course of time it became a thrifty place, a metropolis of the prairies. All stages of that region included it in their daily routes. When the main street was reached the horses were driven at a terrific speed, for the entrance of the stage was a matter of great importance. It was the only communication with the outside world and

many of the town worthies made it a point to be on hand when it arrived. The occasion was of especial importance to the small boys for their fancies pictured a wild rush from one bandit holdup to another, with towns interspersed to make the dash interesting.

Down the long main street of the village the stage came madly dashing — past the church, the school house, the Academy (a red brick structure which was the pride of the day), past the old log courthouse, the wagon-shop, the brewery, the saw-mill, the blacksmith's, and the public square. At the Bronson House, the big hotel of the time, it stopped. Here it was that the mail had to be left, new bags taken on, and a change of horses made. Then it was free to continue on its way over the prairie, traversing a distance of nearly twenty miles before the next village was reached. Occasionally it ran parallel to the Indian trail which was worn deep in the prairie soil, but for the most part the voyage was one of monotony, unless the driver happened to be awake to the wonders of bird and plant life about him.

Of the buildings of the village, the church became the nucleus. About it, the lives of the settlers came to a focus. And such a church as that was! A small brown building of Puritan severity in its straight unornamented architecture. It was but a meeting house, why decorate it? From this building and the principles for which it stood, the spirit of the people flowed out. Near by, just over the little hill which arose abruptly from Dry Run, was the old manse.

It was a little stucco structure, and there the good "Brother Nutting" lived. But as we are watching, the door opens and there steps forth none other than the minister himself.

His long parson's cloak and stiff hat would at once proclaim him a member of the village aristocracy. But his face contains nothing of scorn or pride. He is a young man, filled with eagerness and energy. Only such a man could have started these people on the way toward the building of a new church, at a time when they had been worshipping in an old shed with no windows and doors to keep out the cold. Well known is he in these days for his learning and his wit. He startles the audience with his quick flashes of humor. His eyes never dull. There always flames in them the fire of some great enterprise, some worthy undertaking. They twinkle in the joke of the moment, but there always gleams beneath, that severity, that soberness which again is Puritanic, that seriousness which comes of the deeply thinking theologian, pointing the way to eternal life. He is the master mind of the people, their leader in intellect. But when the service is over, he is a builder, a business manager who knows how to carry on the financial affairs of enterprises which command the fortunes of many a pioneer. He is a man among men, ever ready to share the lot of the poorest member of his congregation. He accepts vegetables and harvest products in pay for his services and wedding fees may be paid in apples.

The church yard is rapidly filling with people, and carriages are constantly arriving. Country people are coming in from the district around. Here comes a pioneer family in Sunday attire. Hoop skirts and small bonnets enter the church and bob down the aisle. Stove-pipe hats and swallow-tails are displayed in the entrance. And when these aristocrats of the village have been seated, in come others. A cheery, pink-cheeked little mother leads her brood of five down to one of the front seats, while behind them comes the beaming father.

Ah, here is the renowned Mrs. ———. She comes of a very dignified and noble Canadian family, and is always looked upon as the very model for extreme nicety of taste in dress and manners. Her paisley shawl, her blue satin gown, so delicately made, her pearl ear-rings, and shapely hat, all bespeak for her the very best of style. Her face is filled with interest in the lives of those about her. She walks in a half deliberate, half eager manner. She receives nods from everyone as she passes down the aisle. She is a distinguished member of the congregation. Well indeed may the tall, straight, high browed, intellectual gentleman who follows her be proud of his prize. They live some little distance from Bradford, but are stopping with friends in the village. They left their place last evening, came to Bradford, did their Saturday shopping, stayed with a friend over night, and when they have attended the sermon by "Elder Nutting", and eaten a perfectly served chicken din-

ner at some other friends, they will drive back to their home late this afternoon. That will give them time to do the chores before the evening comes on.

There were many manners represented in the folk of this congregation, but it was the best manners of the town-folk, the nucleus of the best society which here gathered every Sabbath for worship. Stern Scotch Presbyterians, former Baptists, critical Methodists and many more who had never professed faith in any denomination, here came together in the common interests of the welfare of their community. It was a great spirit which could unite this group of people and maintain their constant interest and help in any enterprise, but Mr. Nutting seemed to possess just that spirit. He combined sympathy, tact, and humor, as he mingled with his people, in quite the proportion needed to accomplish the best results.

One element, and one only, was lacking from the congregation among those who could rightfully be considered the personae of the village. There is no record that the little hunch-backed saloon keeper ever entered the church. And with him, there was the group of the rougher element such as always establishes itself in any new Western outpost. The town worthies might bring eternal damnation upon this group, for all it mattered to the men comprising it; their interest was in the saloon and not in the matters pertaining to some vague, uncertain hereafter.

From the pastor and Dr. Pitts, a music-master who came over from Fredericksburg to conduct the sing-

ing school, there flowed out to the people the beauty of the holy message in word and song. Perhaps the influence of this young doctor who conducted music classes when he was not actually practicing his real profession, was greater than we of to-day can realize. Many a man may have been stirred to intense emotion by the ardor of the music-master's eager, well modulated voice. The man was tall, dignified and of noble appearance. In the newly built church, nearly sixty years ago, he sang for the first time in public the song "The Little Brown Church in the Vale." This was only one of his noble efforts to make life, the real life of song and beauty, the one which should become the prize of the people. The world heard the echoes of that simple song, and responded to it, while the Doctor lived on in his unpretentious manner, uplifting those who needed his cheery word and song.

In the spirit of these two men — pastor and singer — the village people "lived and moved and had their being." The words of God rang continually in their ears when they were at work, and their life was a constant association with the beauty of the region about them. So a sincerity to their ideals and a loyalty to their deepest convictions became community traits of the prairie village of Bradford.

H. CLARK BROWN

The Little Brown Church in the Vale

At the edge of the village of Bradford stands a little, weather-beaten, old church, painted a quiet brown and half hidden among the trees. The bit of forest that civilization has left clustering about the building half hides and half discloses it; the short square belfry is only partly screened by the boughs of several oaks and a towering pine. This is the church immortalized in Dr. Pitts' lyric song "The Little Brown Church in the Vale".

The church itself is very plain — plain in a simple, homely way that gives to it a rare charm and beauty. In the simplicity and dignity of the structure are reflected the New England ancestry and training of the architect, the Reverend J. K. Nutting. The main gabled building, low and rather broad, is fronted with a dignified little tower. Everything is neat although unadorned; even the old doors of the Gothic portal are without ornament.

Little and plain as the church is, it represents courageous undertaking and noble sacrifice on the part of the inhabitants of now deserted Bradford. It was built just after a panic and during a period of inflated war prices. Money was practically unknown; Mr. Nutting indicates this when he writes that his cash salary for 1859 — four dollars — had been brought into the community by an Easterner.

In the year 1862 poverty due to war conditions compelled the parish to reduce the minister's salary from five hundred dollars to four hundred and fifty dollars payable in goods. With his characteristic energy, the young pastor not only accepted the reduction, but increased his already heavy burdens by making his acceptance conditional upon the building of a church.

The young men were in the army; those who remained were practically penniless, but they enthusiastically undertook the task. One man donated the lots, a second gave logs, and a third sawed them into lumber. A "bee" quarried the stone, which Leander Smith fitted into a slanting wall. Since his knowledge of masonry came from experience with the fences of Massachusetts, it happens that the foundation of the church has the same inward pitch that he habitually used in New England. The Reverend Mr. Todd, a friend of Mr. Nutting's father, now came to the aid of the little church. A collection from his Sunday school at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, bought the finishing lumber, which was hauled eighty miles by wagon from McGregor. "And so", Mr. Nutting says, "we finished the building."

Meanwhile the words of the song "The Little Brown Church in the Vale" had already been written. They had been inspired by the beauty of the spot upon which the church stands, but the picture of the building itself was purely imaginative. Dr. William Pitts, while visiting Bradford in 1857, was

impressed by the beauty of the valley that sheltered the little village. Leading from Bradford to Greenwood, a shaded nook on the Cedar River, was an inviting path that became the haunt of the young musician. Nearly every afternoon of his visit found him following the trail up through the grove of oaks and out across the plain to Greenwood. Just where the verdure of the forest merged into the blossoms of the prairie was a little glade that Dr. Pitts described as "an attractive and lovely spot". And this broadening of the wooded lane into the more open country, held for him an enchantment that found expression in his famous song. The place was also a favorite with the people of Bradford, and it was here, a few years later, that they built the Little Brown Church.

The song was written at Dr. Pitts' home in Wisconsin, but it was first publicly sung in the church which it eventually named. A passionate lover of beauty, the young man carried home with him a vivid picture of the little prairie valley, and embodied this vision in what the world knows as "The Little Brown Church in the Vale". Five years later, Dr. Pitts moved to Iowa and settled in the neighboring town of Fredericksburg, but twenty miles from the Little Brown Church, then in the process of construction. In taking charge of the musical organizations of the vicinity, he became the teacher of a little singing school at Bradford. In the spring of 1864, Mr. Nutting, who was a member of the Doctor's class, led the party to the church which, although

enclosed, was as yet unfinished; and here, to an audience seated upon improvised board benches, Dr. Pitts sang from his original manuscript the song "The Little Brown Church in the Vale". Thus the bare, unplastered walls that the lines immortalized were the first to echo their sweet melody.

Published by the H. M. Higgins Company of Chicago, the song became immensely popular. It was sung by the Fiske Jubilee Singers throughout the country and before the royal courts of Europe. Bradford's little church, already closely connected with the song, soon became definitely identified with it. The building, dedicated on December 29, 1864, only a few months prior to the publication of the song, had been appropriately painted brown. Whether this was due to the cheapness of brown paint or whether it is traceable to a desire to conform with the unpublished poem, will probably never be known.

The building that we know as the Little Brown Church expresses very well the sentiment of the lyric whose name it bears. It may be interesting to note just how the little church has fulfilled the statements and predictions of each stanza of the poem. Allowance must be made, however, for the fact that at the time of writing the nook selected by Dr. Pitts had never been popularly considered as the site for a place of worship, and that the church and graveyard of the song are the product of an idealistic imagination that felt no necessity for conformity with the real.

There's a church in the valley by the wildwood,
No lovelier spot in the dale.
No spot is so dear to my childhood,
As the little brown church in the vale.

The valley that shelters the church is charming in its simple beauty. The building stands at the edge of the break in the prairie. To the east, and yet really including the church within its borders, lies the vale, scatteringly wooded and appropriately set with the old-fashioned buildings. To the west stretches the blossoming prairie until it ends in the wooded skyline along the Cedar River. A few rods from the church, a wooden bridge spans the grassy-banked creek that courses through the valley. It all reminds one very much of an etching of an English landscape. Lofty oaks and stately pines still enshrine the little church, but the wildwood of the poem has gone with the life of the village that it surrounded. In the days when Dr. Pitts described the village as "a veritable beehive for industry", Bradford boasted of two saw mills, and these were so busy that the logs for the frame of the church had to wait several months before there was room for them in the mill yard. The size of the forest monarchs that once surrounded the church is indicated by a black walnut timber, three feet square and forty feet long, which supported the top saw in one of these mills. A very pretty grove still clusters about the little building, and though it is but a suggestion of the former wealth of verdure, it forms a glade that

at once secludes and dignifies the structure. The simple little church has sequestered itself among the protecting foliage, and there, enshrined in memories, it continues in its quiet homely way.

How sweet, on a bright Sabbath morning,
To list to the clear ringing bell,
Its tones so sweetly are calling,
Oh come to the church in the dell.

This praise of the bell is upheld in the love that the community bore it. Bells play a prominent part in many of Dr. Pitts' songs, but no other ever held for him the charm of the one whose soft enticing tones he immortalized. "The Bells of Shandon" may be as grand as the poet has pictured them, but you will never convince an old Bradfordite that they can rival the clear sweet tones of the bell that calls from the Little Brown Church. "The bell", it was called throughout the countryside, for it was the only one in the county and was the pride of all Bradford. Cast in Meneeley's famous foundry at Troy, New York, it was personally selected by Mr. Nutting because of its clear sweet tone. The bell was obtained through the benevolence of the young pastor's eastern friends; the inscription proclaimed it the gift of Mr. Thomas Cole and Catherine, his wife. Brought from Dubuque by wagon, the bell was rung almost the entire distance, and a considerable crowd gathered to view its entrance into the village, for the

arrival of "the bell" was an event in Bradford's history.

There close by the church in the valley,
Lies one that I loved so well.
She sleeps, sweetly sleeps 'neath the willow,
Disturb not her rest in the vale.

A pretty myth to the effect that Mrs. Pitts was buried at the Little Brown Church has grown around the sentiment that is expressed in this stanza. To the rear of the church is a little swale that would have been beautiful as a graveyard. This is the mythical resting place of Mrs. Pitts, and here the willows still grow, just as the poet described them. But there are no signs that the spot was ever used as a burying ground. The writing of the lyric seven years before the dedication of the church accounts for the inconsistency in regard to the graveyard. At the time of writing, Dr. Pitts never suspected that a house of worship would later be built upon the very spot on which he erected his dream church. With his usual sense of aesthetic fitness, he not only created the church for which nature had supplied the setting, but he added the churchyard that completed the picture.

There close by the side of that loved one
'Neath the tree where the wild flowers bloom,
When the farewell hymn shall be chanted,
I shall rest by her side in the tomb.

The sentiment of this stanza was fulfilled in the

case of Dr. Pitts, though the burial did not take place at the Little Brown Church. In his later life the Doctor moved to Clarion, Iowa, and then to Brooklyn, New York, where he died in 1918. The ceremony for him at Fredericksburg was fittingly simple; the singing of "The City Four Square" by his eight year old grandson was the only distinguishing feature. He was buried beside his wife in the local cemetery at Fredericksburg where at last he "rests by her side in the tomb".

The very simpleness of The Little Brown Church endears it to all who knew old Bradford. After all it is only a little, very plain, storm-beaten church. But within it dwell the hope and love of God-fearing pioneers; around it cling the fondest memories that a scattered people cherish for their deserted village.

CHARLTON G. LAIRD

The English Community in Iowa¹

The usual crowd gathered on the platform of the railroad station at Le Mars, one day in the spring of 1881, greeted the arrival of the train, and gazed curiously at the passengers it deposited before puffing its way on across the prairies. A sprinkling of local farmers and merchants who were returning from business trips, a drummer or two, and a family coming to make a home in the Northwest attracted only incidental attention, but there was a rustle of curiosity as some well-dressed but plainly foreign travellers appeared. They were a typical group of the English settlers at that time coming into northwestern Iowa, of whom a local editor drew this composite picture:

They descend from the recesses of the Pullman palace cars dressed in the latest London and Paris styles, with Oxford hats, bright linen shining on their bosoms, a gold repeater ticking in the depths of their fashionably cut vest pockets and probably carrying in their hands the latest agony in canes. If ladies accompany the party their graceful forms are shrouded in the most elegant of cloaks or dolmans, their heads being surmounted by the most coquetish of bonnets and their fresh countenances beam with the ruddy glow of health and good nature. . . .

¹ Much of the material from which this account has been compiled was collected by Mr. Jacob Van der Zee.

The scene at the baggage car is as peculiar. Stout japanned and heavy leathern boxes and trunks are tossed on the platform by the inveterate baggagesmasher, who seems to make a final effort to sunder their seemingly invulnerable joints. Box after box, trunk after trunk, until a miniature mountain has been built on the platform. We recall an instance last summer of a single family that had eighty-two pieces of baggage, all of the strong and desirable variety.

They are by no means so dainty as they seem. In a day or two the men are seen on the streets with the plainest of stout corduroy suits, with knee-breeches and leather leggings. Great, strong, hardy-looking fellows they are, and though most of them are fresh from the English schools and universities, they have plenty of muscle and snap. . . .

The question will be asked, what kind of settlers for a new country do these dainty and wealthy looking persons make? and the answer is, the best in the world.

This picture is representative of an immigration that brought hundreds of settlers and millions of dollars to assist in opening up the new lands in the frontier corner of the State. The vanguard of this peaceful British invasion was William B. Close, a graduate of Cambridge and the captain of the university rowing crew of 1876, who came to the United States that year to take part in a regatta which was one of the features of the centennial celebration. The young man, however, was interested in business as well as in sport, for the Close family had some money to invest — preferably in land — and, hearing through a chance acquaintance of the lands for sale

in northwestern Iowa, he decided to investigate that location.

It happened that for a number of years the grasshoppers had invaded the farms in the Northwest and swept away almost everything which had been raised, leaving the settlers destitute and discouraged. Many desired to sell their homesteads and, partly as a result of this plague, land there was cheap. It was, however, well adapted for stock raising, and this was exactly what was wanted. There were also thousands of acres of railroad lands which might be secured at a reasonable price.

A trip to Le Mars and vicinity convinced Mr. Close that here was an opening for the profitable investment of English capital. He formed a company with his brothers, James B. Close and Fred Brooks Close, and the firm purchased some 30,000 acres in Plymouth County for about \$2.50 per acre; the two younger brothers came to Iowa; and the firm of Close Brothers and Company began their farming and real estate business. Thus the foundations were laid for one of the unique social experiments in Iowa history, although there was nothing socialistic or communistic in the minds of the English settlers who followed the Close brothers to northwestern Iowa.

Some of the land was farmed directly by the owners. William B. Close, for example, had a farm of 2000 acres at West Fork, some twenty miles west of Le Mars, where he had 2000 sheep and some 1600

head of cattle. His two brothers had a farm of 960 acres near Le Mars with a three-story frame house and stables for thirty horses. Tracts of 1000 acres, belonging to other wealthy Englishmen, were not uncommon and many of these farms were given such names as "Gypsy Hill", "Inchinnoch", and "Troscoed". It is said that letters addressed to a farm by name but not having the town and State designated were always sent to Le Mars. Stock raising was the chief activity on these farms and high grade horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs were imported. A servant of William B. Close is reported to have made eighty-five trips across the Atlantic in charge of stock for the Iowa colony.

The greater part of the land handled by the firm, however, was laid out in small farms of 80 or 160 acres. It was estimated that 160 acres of this unimproved land cost about \$1000. A small house, stable, well, and sheds were added, costing perhaps \$500 additional, and usually some breaking — the first plowing of the tough prairie sod — was done, for which the firm paid about \$2.25 per acre. In the summer of 1881 the arrangements were made for breaking 30,000 acres in Lyon and Osceola counties; and William McKay was given the contract for the erection of 90 houses and an equal number of stables. These improved farms were then sold outright to any persons who wished to buy land — Americans, English, Irish, Dutch, or Scandinavians — or they were rented, the tenant usually providing the labor

and stock, and giving to the firm one-third or one-half the crop or, in some cases, a cash rent. Three hundred of these farms were advertised in Lyon and Osceola counties in 1881 and no difficulty was found in securing purchasers or renters. On such farms the firm frequently made as much as fifty per cent profit, while the settler also made a larger profit than he would have been able to make on unimproved land.

The English firm believed that this plan would require less supervision and was less likely to result in serious loss than the system followed by Oliver Dalrymple of St. Paul who cultivated some seventy thousand acres in Minnesota, furnishing the machinery, seed, and horses, and employing the necessary laborers. An English newspaper man reported that Dalrymple had one hundred and twenty reaping machines and twenty-one threshing machines. The grain was hauled directly from the field to the threshing machines and from there to the market. The large amount of capital needed for this method of farming, the danger of a crop failure, and the difficulty of securing laborers who would take the proper care of the stock and machinery were the chief reasons for the decentralized system followed in the English projects.

The Close brothers soon made plans to promote the extensive investment of English capital in Iowa lands and to encourage the emigration to Iowa of men from England, especially those with at least

\$2500 to \$5000 capital. Artisans, mechanics, and laborers were not encouraged to emigrate, unless sure of employment, as agriculture was practically the only industry and labor was cheap. "A man entirely without means of subsistence is worse off in the United States than in England", they were told. Whether the people in England were considered more charitable or death by starvation less painful there we are not informed.

In order to get in touch with the people who had sufficient capital to purchase farms in Iowa, William B. Close returned to England to take charge of the publicity work there and to direct those who wished to join the Iowa colony. A commission of fifty pounds was charged for the advice and assistance of the company in selecting land and beginning farming.

To reassure investors who had had dreams of Indians carrying tomahawks and bad men shooting up the towns for recreation, Mr. Close explained that there were no Indians near Le Mars and the population was settled and orderly, drawn largely from New England and northern Europe. "The Negro and other disturbing elements are conspicuous only by their absence", the possible emigrant was informed. "Fire-arms, revolvers, bowie knives, and such playthings are never carried about and are not wanted." The possibility of invasions by the grasshoppers, the cold of the winters, and the heat of the summers were frankly conceded in some of

this publicity material. Moreover, though the respectability of the other settlers was unquestioned, it seems that their social status was not, for Mr. Close added this reassurance: "The lack of society, which is inevitable to a new colony and which the first ladies who went out have felt a little, is being rapidly obviated by the class and number of the people going out, and the want of trained servants, by one of the best societies in Scotland for training young girls having offered to supply their best girls to good families going out."

Just how much land this English firm bought and sold in Iowa it is difficult to say, but purchases of 40,000, 18,000, 25,000, 19,000 and 14,000 acres at various times indicate that their real estate business was extensive. In addition, they acted as the agents for the sale of the railroad lands. That their property holdings were large is evident from the fact that in 1882 the Close interests paid taxes to the amount of some \$13,500 in the five counties of Woodbury, Plymouth, Osceola, Sioux, and Lyon, while another English land company paid \$10,000 in taxes in Osceola County alone. This was the Iowa Land Company, with a capital stock of \$2,500,000, organized largely by the Close brothers and the Duke of Sutherland for whom the town of Sutherland in O'Brien County was named.

In addition to the real estate business, there was a definite attempt to establish an English community in northwestern Iowa. Some five or six hundred

English people came to the vicinity of Le Mars bringing with them their English ideals of business, food, living conditions, and recreation. These people were not the type we usually visualize as immigrants: they were not seeking a haven from religious or political persecution, nor were they driven into exile by poverty. They were educated, well-to-do, and self reliant, accustomed to comfort and even luxury at home. There was even a sprinkling of titles among the newcomers, and university graduates were not uncommon. "No young English gentlemen could work hard on a diet of beans and bacon, such as he gets in the house of the Western American farmer", declared a visitor, and it seems that these English farmers added roast beef, marmalade, plum pudding, and tea to the usual frontier fare. Pianos, furnaces, and bathrooms were sometimes mentioned in descriptions of the houses on the larger farms.

Since many of the younger men who came to Iowa knew nothing of farming, especially under American conditions, some of the older and more experienced residents offered to receive a number of such young fellows into their homes, teach them the fundamentals of stock raising, and give them advice when they began farming for themselves. These agricultural apprentices usually paid a certain premium for this instruction in addition to working on the farms.

This plan of employing the younger sons of well-

to-do and aristocratic families as farm laborers seems to have struck the London *Punch* as a joke. It published a picture representing two young women, designated as Lady Maria and Lady Emily, dressed as kitchen maids, busy getting dinner. Lord John and Baron Somebody had just come in from work loaded with shovels and picks. The picture was entitled "A hint to younger sons of our aristocracy and eke to the daughters thereof" and Lady Maria was represented as saying, "How *late* you are boys: your baths are ready, and I've mended your dress trousers, Jack. So look sharp and clean yourselves, and then you can lay the cloth, and keep an eye on the mutton while Emily and I are dressing for dinner."

That a sense of humor was not lacking among these English visitors — contrary to the usual opinion — is evident also from a letter written by a young Englishman and published in the *Manchester Courier* in which he said: "To us English it is wonderful how civil all Yankees are, nothing could be too good for us. They opened doors for us, carried our bags and never took a 'tip' during our travels; but there the English, as a rule, carry revolvers and now and then use them, which creates respect."

Among the gentlemen who joined the Close brothers in assuming responsibility for these young fellows was Captain Reynolds Moreton, a retired officer of the English navy and a brother of Lord Decies. Moreton's farm was a short distance from

Le Mars and an English newspaper correspondent has left the following description of the activities there on the day he visited Le Mars:

Captain Moreton is a father to the Colony, a good religious man, with great influence over all the young fellows. He farms about one thousand acres near the town, and has twenty-two young fellows with him, on the same principle as the Close pupils, and these Moreton boys are taken especially good care of; but, of course, admission to the captain's establishment is not an easy matter to procure. His boys do all the work of the farm. Lord Hobart, when I was there, was mowing, assisted by two of Lord St. Vincent's sons, and the hon. captain was feeding a threshing machine. It was hot, but every one looked happy, even young Moreton, who was firing and driving the steam engine.

This establishment was nicknamed "Moreton's pup farm" by the neighbors to whom the escapades of these English boys were a constant source of criticism and amusement. Many were the stories related of "Moreton's pups" and the other young fellows who refused to take life as seriously as frontier conditions demanded. Their labor must not have been altogether an asset for they sometimes used the handles of their hay forks as targets for revolver practice or ran hurdle races in the field with horses hitched to hayrakes. It is said that a group of these boys once rode their horses into the saloon in Le Mars, popularly known as the "House of Lords". This establishment seems to have been

a general rendezvous for many Englishmen and the local editor declared that the first rural telephone in the vicinity was from Captain Moreton's farm to the "House of Lords" for the benefit of the "pups".

The dangers of intemperance were recognized by the leading men in the English colony and one of the advertising pamphlets contained the following warning: "The great drawback to English settlers is the difficulty they experience in keeping from drink. Unless a man will keep from that vice he had better stay in England, where he can get the drink he is used to, for a drunkard will no more succeed in Iowa than in England." It appears, however, that despite this warning the Le Mars colony did not take kindly to prohibition — at least opponents of the prohibitory amendment of 1882 used this as an argument against its ratification. They asserted that English investors would cease to come to Iowa and that the Close brothers would transfer their business to Minnesota where they already had large interests. The vote in these counties on the prohibitory amendment in 1882, however, reveals no pronounced opposition.

To counteract the tendency to dissipation and maintain the traditions of English life, the leading men encouraged and fostered sports of many kinds. "We have started a cricket club and a new clergyman this month, and both of them are, I am glad to say, a success", wrote one of the settlers in August, 1881. To the American settler or the hard-working

European immigrant, the devotion of their English neighbors to cricket or hockey must have seemed incomprehensible, but the English middle classes have always believed that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" and these young Englishmen took time for chess, hockey, cricket, polo, lacrosse, football, and deer hunting. Even cock-fighting was occasionally reported. The English football was described as "an exciting game, resembling for all the world an Arkansaw rough-and-tumble free fight". Some of the young men with musical talent organized the Prairie Minstrels and gave public entertainments.

Horse racing was par excellence the favorite sport, however, and in this interest the Americans joined. The Le Mars derby was, for several years, an event of some importance in the northwest. Special trains were run from Omaha, St. Paul, and Chicago and a race horse valued at \$25,000 was sent from Europe to take part in the races. Some international competition seems to have developed at these races for the local paper reported that in all races to which American owned horses were admitted they carried off the honors. General satisfaction with the fairness of the English promoters of the affair, however, was frequently expressed.

On the whole, there seems to have been the most friendly relations between these English settlers and their neighbors. Some criticism resulted from the escapades of a few young fellows who were more

interested in a good time than in agriculture; and there was also some friction over naturalization, for many of the Englishmen were not certain that they would remain permanently, and did not ask for citizenship. Resolutions of sympathy for Mrs. Garfield, addresses by prominent Englishmen at memorial services in honor of the dead president, and a gift of \$200 from the Close brothers to aid flood sufferers, in keeping with their "reputation for generosity and public spirit", however, are examples of the sympathy which did much to allay what little dissatisfaction arose over the question of national allegiance. A Le Mars church is said to have been the only one in the United States where prayers were offered for the Queen of England; and the spirits of John Hancock and Thomas Jefferson must have marvelled at the sight of a British flag raised in honor of the Fourth of July on the prairies west of the Mississippi River.

Confidence in the business integrity of the English firms likewise promoted this spirit of coöperation. A Sibley paper congratulated the community on securing the headquarters of the Iowa Land Company and added: "Those who have had dealings with Close Bros., in the way of contracts for breaking, find them to be honorable gentlemen and always ready to do what is right. And as James B. Close will have charge of the business of the Iowa Land Company, the relations of our people with it will be pleasant." Since these English investors improved

their land holdings and thus raised the value of the property in their vicinity instead of merely holding their purchases for the purpose of securing the profits when other people made the improvements, they were heartily welcomed in all sections of the Northwest. A Rock Rapids paper estimated the amount expended by the Close brothers for improvements in Lyon County alone at \$100,000 for one season. As early as 1881, \$600,000 in English capital was said to have been brought to northwestern Iowa.

Business and sport, however, did not occupy the exclusive attention of these English settlers. Episcopal services were first held in Apollo Hall, but St. George's church was dedicated in July, 1882. In addition to the rector, Major Nassau Stephens of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, after twenty-two years' army service, arrived in Le Mars to act as lay reader in the church. Captain Moreton was an active leader in religious affairs and was one of the founders of the Young Men's Christian Association in Le Mars, raising some \$1500 from friends in England for that purpose.

How cosmopolitan was this little group of English settlers and investors is revealed by newspaper items concerning them. Lord Hobart returned to England to enter the army for service in the Soudan. Admiral Farquhar of the British navy arrived to visit his sons. Henry and Reginald Moreton returned to England for a year. Hugh Watson, who had a ranch on the Big Sioux River, was killed while

hunting in Scotland. A tragedy which spanned the Atlantic Ocean is glimpsed in the notice of the death of Hugh Hornby, a son of Sir Edward Hornby of Sussex, who died at Le Mars aged twenty-three years. It was a world outlook which most of these people brought to the wind-swept prairies of north-western Iowa.

The home ties, indeed, in the end recalled many of the members of the colony to England. Others moved to Minnesota, when headquarters were opened at Pipestone, following the cheap lands and the extending line of settlements upon which they depended for the success of their real estate business. Those who remained here became so identified with the communities in which they lived that the English colony as a separate social unit has ceased to exist, and only here and there in these northwestern counties does one of the old company houses recall the events of forty years ago. Similarity in race, speech, ideals, and religion has easily obliterated the distinction between English and Americans.

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Comment by the Editor

COSMOPOLITAN ORIGINS

Iowa is often mentioned as a region of homogeneity, and the characteristics of its landscape are said to find their counterpart in the "dead level" of its inhabitants. It is true that there are few very poor people and few very rich people in Iowa. There are no very large cities and no deserted wilds. And in living together in peace and prosperity its people have become somewhat alike. But to show the cosmopolitan origin of the people of the State we only need to remind the reader of the groups of people that came from Canada, from New England, and from the Old South, as well as from all parts of Europe, and became component parts of the population.

The present number of *THE PALIMPSEST* tells of the knickerbockered Englishmen who brought English capital and English sports to the prairies of northwest Iowa. At a somewhat earlier date there trailed up the Des Moines Valley wagon trains driven by men with velvet jackets and wooden shoes, while perched high up on astonishing assortments of boxes, chests, and trunks were women with caps instead of bonnets on their heads. They founded the Dutch town of Pella in Marion County. Villages with long streets, for all the world like German

towns, grew up in Iowa County where the Amana people lived their old world lives. Count Ladislaus Ujházy, friend of Kossuth, led his Hungarian exiles, shipwrecked by their revolution against Austria in 1848, to Iowa and began a settlement known as New Buda in Decatur County. And in Adams County the French Icarians built their log cabins about a common dining hall and tried to live out their communistic ideas.

The long-robed Trappist monks established their monastery and are still practicing their vow of silence at New Melleray near Dubuque. The Amish Mennonites with hooks and eyes on their garments and whiskers under their chins drive their autos into Iowa City for their Saturday shopping. Denmark and the other Scandinavian countries, and Ireland and Switzerland and Bohemia have sent their contributions. Some elements have been transitory but most of them have been assimilated. They have become a part of the homogeneity—a population prairied by general prosperity as the land was prairied by the ancient glaciers.

J. C. P.

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