

*The*  
**PALIMPSEST**



THE PICNIC PARTY

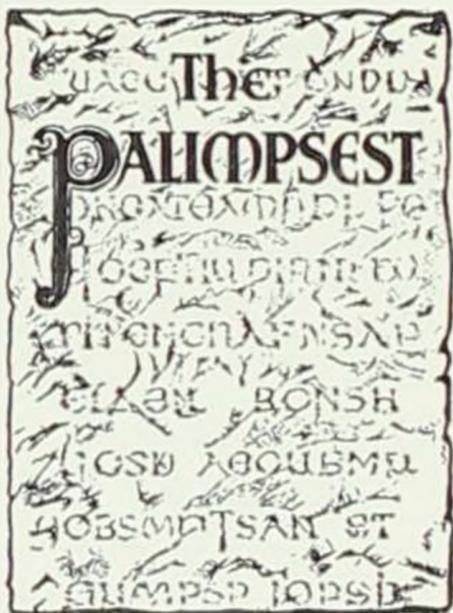
When Knighthood Was In Flower

Published Monthly by  
The State Historical Society of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

NOVEMBER 1969

SPECIAL PIONEER WOMEN ISSUE — FIFTY CENTS



## *The Meaning of Palimpsest*

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material 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 record 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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WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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## *Illustrations*

The Currier & Ives color illustrations are from the State Historical Society collection.

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THE PALIMPSEST is published monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City, William J. Petersen, Editor. It is printed in Iowa City and distributed free to Society members, depositories, and exchanges. This is the November, 1969, issue and is Number 11 of Volume 50. Second class postage paid at Iowa City, Iowa.

PRICE—Included in Membership. Regular issues, 25¢; Special—50¢

MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$5.00

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society, 402 Iowa Avenue  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. L

ISSUED IN NOVEMBER 1969

No. 11

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## Darlings of the Press

In the forty years that have elapsed since the writer began his research in Iowa and Upper Mississippi Valley newspapers, he has gone through almost two thousand years of these valuable historical sources. While his original research, which began in 1927, dealt with the Mississippi River and steamboats, he was not long in discovering there were tremendous gaps in Iowa historical research, particularly in the period prior to 1870. Some fields of history, such as the French and Spanish Periods, or Prehistoric Man and the Indian, had received considerable attention. Far greater attention, on the other hand, had been accorded the constitutional, political, and governmental phases of Iowa history. Meanwhile, agriculture and industry, religion and education, music and drama, theater and lyceum, blacksmiths and locksmiths, carpenters and bricklayers, had been largely bypassed and had received scant attention by the historian.

Newspaper editors played an important role in

furthering those things which were for the public good. Thus, they were prime movers in the founding of schools, churches, and Sunday schools, in the development of bands and other musical groups, in the planting of trees and the improvement of streets, and in the encouragement of theater and lyceum programs. Many communities could attribute their growth and development to the enthusiasm and energy of their local editor.

In addition to these very desirable pioneer needs, editors were wont to fill their columns with words of advice to young and old, rich and poor, on the importance of following strict moral and spiritual precepts. There was no need for a "Dear Abby" or a "Dear Ann" in pioneer Iowa for newspaper editors invariably filled this role—most of them with relish. The best way to court a girl, the problems of love and marriage, and the dispensing of free advice to young people became an editorial prerogative. Not all such advice was original, for editors found plenty of grist in the columns of other newspapers. For example, while much of this advice was in a serious vein, a surprising amount might be characterized as humor. In other words, almost all editors had a good sense of humor and accordingly they were not slow in recounting to their readers any funny incidents that happened in their own community, or copying such incidents as they appeared in the columns of

their fellow editors. The character and personality of an Iowa editor is frequently revealed in the columns of his papers.

One must not gather from the above that all Iowa editors were sanctimonious, or that only they had a sense of humor. The press of the Nation, and especially the Midwest, seemed to revel in this policy. Thus, the following item from the *Prairie du Chien Patriot* of November 10, 1864, paid the usual high praise to American women, and won widespread attention from Iowa editors.

She is generally graceful in her figure, slow in her gait, mild in her looks, proud in her mien, engaging in her conversation, delicate in her expressions, quick at blushing, chaste in her thoughts, innocent in her manners, improving on acquaintance, generous to a fault, ready to weep with one in her distress, solicitous for the poor, sincerely religious, eminently humane, constant in her attachment, a fond wife, a tender mother, tenacious of her word, jealous of her honor, prudent in her conduct, circumspect in her house, and what is very natural, cannot keep a secret.

Another tribute, widely disseminated in the Iowa press, appeared in the *Clarence Iowa Age* of June 4, 1868.

### *A Wife's Love*

Woman's love, like the rose blossoming in the arid desert, spreads rays over the barren plain of the human heart, and while all around it is black and desolate, it rises strengthened from the absence of every other alarm. In no situation does the love of a woman appear more beauti-

ful than that of a wife. Parents, brothers, and friends, have claims upon the affections—but the love of a wife is of a distinct and different nature. A daughter may yield her life to the preservation of a parent—a sister may devote herself to a suffering brother; but the feelings which induce her to this conduct are not such as those which lead a wife to follow the husband of her choice through every pain and peril that can befall him; to watch him in danger, to cheer him in adversity, and ever remain unalterable at his side in the depths of ignominy and shame. It is a heroic devotion which a woman displays in adherence to the fortunes of a hapless husband. When we behold her in domestic scenes, a mere passive creature of enjoyment, an intellectual joy, brightening the family with her endearments and her love for extreme joy which that presence and those endearments are calculated to impart, we can scarcely credit that the fragile being who seems to hold her existence by a thread, is capable of supporting the extreme of human suffering; nay, when the heart of man sinks beneath the weight of agony that she would maintain her pristine powers of delight, and, by her word of comfort and patience, lead the murmerer to peace and resignation.

Such were the qualities with which many Iowa women were blessed. And a legion of Iowa men stood ready to attest to the truth of these abiding virtues.

## Romancing in Pioneer Days

It is amazing how early the word "Hawkeye" became associated with Iowa maidens. Originally suggested as the nickname for Iowa by James G. Edwards in the *Fort Madison Patriot* on March 24, 1838, the *Quincy Whig* of July 25, 1840, quoted the *Chicago Democrat* as follows: "*Economy and Courting*: Nothing exceeds the modesty of the Hawkeye girls. They won't be courted by daylight, and not in the evening, unless the candles are extinguished."

Twenty years later, on April 13, 1860, the *Page County Herald* published a long poem that set forth the rules to be followed in courting a Clarinda girl.

### *Clarinda Sparking Rules*

In modern times each gallant blade  
Must understand the sparking trade,  
As done by systematic rule  
And taught in the Clarinda Sparking School.  
For here the unpracticed youth is taught  
To handle ladies as he ought;  
To do the thing genteel and fine,  
Exactly to the ladies' mind.  
But I, unlettered in the art,  
Was forced to act a neutral part;  
At length, on further knowledge bent,

Straight to the sparking teacher went.  
"Now, pray, dear sir, can you teach fools  
The mystery of the sparking rules?"  
The teacher cast a glance or two,  
And seemed to think I'd spoken true,  
And promised to do all he could  
To make the matter understood.  
So with a most portentous "hem!"  
The following dialogue began:  
"Now, sir," said he, "On Sunday eve  
If there's a girl you wish to sleeve,  
Be sure to scan the distance right—  
Be there by early candle light.  
Now try the old folks to amuse,  
And tell them all the weekly news,"  
"Oh, ho!" said I, "but it may be,  
They'll think it's them I come to see."  
"Fear not, my lad," the teacher said,  
"For they'll soon patter off to bed.  
Then buckle up and plant your chair  
Beside your loved *Dulcinia* fair.  
Be not too forward nor too slack,  
But lay your arm across the back,  
And in an easy, fluent style  
Content to sit and talk awhile.  
Now as to business, you proceed,  
Of candle light there is no need.  
And thus to do the matter slick  
Turn top for bottom in the stick."  
"Hold! hold!" says I, "why man, but hark!  
Put out the light? 'Twould then be dark.  
In such a case, how in the deuce  
Could any fellow see to spruce?"  
"Thou stupid mule!" the teacher cried,  
"The thing has oft been fully tried;

And every skillful knowing lark  
Says courting's better in the dark;  
For nothing then can intervene  
To mar the beauty of the scene.  
Be sure you sit beside the miss,  
And give the first, the sweetest kiss,  
Till echo sends the echo back,  
And makes the wall and ceiling crack,  
Suiting the action with a squeeze,  
If you the maid e'er wish to please."  
"What! kiss a girl! And squeeze her too?  
Why, bless me! that will never do.  
'Twould be too bad, too high a strike—  
Besides, I never did the like!  
In short, to own the truth, I vow  
I am afraid—and—don't know how!"  
"So much the worse," he quick replied,  
"A craven heart ne'er won a bride.  
Don't fear 'twill be too bold a move,  
For 'tis the very thing they love,  
The more you hug and kiss and squeeze,  
So much the better you will please.  
Then hug and kiss with all your power,  
Till quarter past the eleventh hour;  
And then stop short, a respite take  
For very human nature's sake;  
Some pumpkin pie must then be brought,  
No other kind will do, 'tis thought;  
Likewise some milk to wash it down,  
No better beverage can be found.  
Now quiet eat—'twould be a joke  
To kiss her now; perhaps you'd choke!"  
"Right true," said I, "you've spoken well,  
For who the consequence could tell.  
Thy view with mine exactly chimes,

For I should choke at the best of times."  
"No danger man," the teacher said—  
"It's no choking job to kiss a maid,  
Except you vary from the rule,  
And kiss her when your mouth is full.  
But of this parley there's no need;  
So with the business let's proceed.  
Of pumpkin pies you've had your fill;  
As much of milk as you can swill;  
So now go leisurely to work  
And make no rash or hasty jerk.  
Now lay all cambrous things aside,  
And clear the course for action wide;  
Take off the collar, 'tis no use  
To care for looking fine and spruce,  
Besides 'twould be a cruel shame  
To crumple up and spoil the same.  
Now set to work with might and main  
To act the former part again.  
And now the business course is run,  
Till somewhere near the hour of one.  
So then bring matters to a close,  
And seek your home—you'll need repose."  
"Yes, faith, I think I shall," says I,  
"But can't I have more pumpkin pie?  
I think it now would relish good,  
Besides I should require some food  
Exhausted nature to sustain,  
And bring me back to life again."  
"Oh, yes," says he, "'tis not so bad,  
Provided more may yet be had.  
But let's proceed. The race is run  
And all the sparking fairly done.  
A few kind words to please the miss,  
And then the last, that longest kiss.

Be all equipped—prepared to start;  
 Then clasp the maiden to your heart—  
 A lengthened press—a world of fuss,  
 And then a half and two-thirds buss,  
 No longer now you need to stay;  
 Make your best bow and walk away;  
 Before you go it won't be amiss  
 To stop and have another kiss.  
 Now bow again, and start to go,  
 And walk, perhaps, a step or two,  
 Then turn around and ask her plain  
 If you may come to spark again.  
 If she says 'yes,' as she will surely do,  
 Then take another kiss or two;  
 Then take her hand, so small and white,  
 Another kiss, and say, 'Good night!' "

W. W. C.

Sparking in pioneer days was not without its dangers and difficulties. Young men did not always become enraptured with the girl next door, or down the road apiece to an adjoining farm. Sometimes, as in the case of two Dubuque youths, they crossed the mighty Mississippi to "keep company" with the objects of their affections in Dunleith, better known as East Dubuque. In the summertime this need not be too difficult, but in the winter the frozen Father of Waters presented some real hazards, as recorded in the *Dubuque Weekly Herald* of January 24, 1866.

### *Sparking and Ducking*

"Sparking Sunday night" was formerly deemed a very harmless amusement for the indulgence of young people

just assuming the *toga virilis*, and passing from pantalettes to long skirts, and none of those ills popularly supposed to inevitably follow the wrong doing of maturer years were thought to attach to the pleasant fiction of "keeping company" thus indulged. But even this agreeable cultivation of the tender passion, and we can all attest that it is agreeable, or was, seems not to be exempt from the tribulations incident to other joys. The course of true love may have run smoothly in the case of two young bloods from this city, last Sunday night, but if at all like the the current of the Mississippi they are prepared to denounce it as most confoundedly frigid. It fell out and they fell in, in this wise: They are young and ambitious editions of embryo manhood, and sought feminine flowers, to use a metaphor, in the rural paths of Dunleith, not, perhaps, that they are more beautiful there than here, but "distance lends," &c. It was Sunday night and the time was propitious for such botanical explorations. The dangers of a tramp on treacherous ice but lent additional charm to the visit. The hours fled sweetly but too soon, and late they essayed a return. Having crossed the river to near Rhomberg's Distillery, (how horrible localities take the romance from a narrative) the ice gave way and down plunged one of the swains. A desperate struggle with the breaking ice and the tide and he regained firm footing. His companion sought to "pass over dry shod" by avoiding the pit into which his friend had fallen, but had proceeded only a short distance when down he went, completely submerged and only at last rescued by the greatest exertion on the part of the other. Drenched clothes on a January night are not comfortable, we presume, at least our young friends so testify, and as there seem to be possibilities in a visit to the fair daughters of Dunleith, we think we can name two youths who will hereafter be satisfied with the fair daughters of Dubuque.

If crossing the frozen Mississippi in the winter could prove hazardous to young Dubuquers, a long horseback ride into the country was not without its peril to a youthful Cedar County lad bent on visiting his loved one in her home. The editor of the *Oskaloosa Herald* of May 18, 1865, took an almost hilarious delight in recording the following incident for his readers.

The following circumstance happened in Cedar county, Iowa.

A certain young man being out on a courting expedition, came late on Sunday evening and, in order to keep the secret from his acquaintances, determined to be at home bright and early Monday morning.

Mounted on his horse, dressed in his white summer pants, and other things in proportion, he arrives at the residence of his inamorata, where he is kindly received and his horse promptly cared for—being turned into the pasture for the night. The night passed away, and three o'clock in the morning arrived. Three o'clock was the time for him to depart, so that he might arrive at home before his comrades would be stirring. He sallied forth to the pasture to catch his horse; but there was a difficulty—the grass was high and loaded with dew.—To venture forth with the white pants on would rather take the starch out and lead to his detection. It would not do to go in with his unmentionables, so he quickly made his resolve. He carefully disrobed himself of his valuable whites, and placed them safely on the fence, while he gave chase with unscreened pedals, through the wet grass after his horse.

Returning to the fence where he had safely suspended his lily white unmentionables, O, horrible dictu! what a sight met his eyes. The field into which his horse had

been turned was not only a horse pasture, but calf pasture too, and the naughty calves, attracted by the flag on the fence, had betaken themselves to it and calf like, had eaten them up, only a few well chewed fragments of this once valuable article of wardrobe now remained—only a few threads—just sufficient to indicate what they once had been! What a pickle this was for a nice young man to be in.

It was now daylight, and the farmers were out and our hero far from home, with no covering for his "traveling apparatus." It would not do to go back to the house of his lady love, neither could he go to town in that plight. There was only one source left to him, that was to secrete himself in the bushes until the next night and go home under cover of the darkness—Safely had he remained under the cover of the bushes for some time; and it may be imagined that his feelings towards the calf kind were not of the most friendly character; but ere long his seclusion was destined to be intruded upon. By and by the boys who had been out to feed the calves returned with the remnant of the identical white garment which adorned the lower limbs of their late visitor.

They were mangled and torn to threads! An inquest was immediately held over them. Some awful fate had befallen the young man. The neighbors were summoned to search for the mangled corpse, and the posse, with all speed set out with dogs and arms. The pasture was thoroughly scoured, and the adjacent thickets, when lo! our hero was driven from his lair by the keen scent of the dogs, all safe, alive and well—minus the linen.

An explanation ensued at the expense of our hero, but he was successful in the end and married the lady and is now living comfortably in one of the flourishing towns of Iowa.

Sometimes the best laid plans of lovers went strangely awry. In 1848 an Iowa City editor re-

vealed an unexpected shift in circumstances that left the willing and eager bride in her bedroom weeping while her own mother made off with her beloved and intended groom. Under the caption, "It Takes the Widders," the *Iowa Standard* of May 3 records:

It Takes The "Widders,"—Quite a mistake took place in a love affair at the North. A couple of young fools agreed to elope together, and by some mistake in the preliminary arrangements, the male lover put his ladder up to the window next to that in which her mamma, a handsome widow, reposed. She turned the mistake to her own advantage, got into his arms, returned his embraces, was borne by him to the carriage, and by preserving a becoming silence until daylight, kept him in error, and then by the potent power of her blandishments, actually charmed him into matrimony with herself.

The art of making love, whether by maidens or widows, appears to have been a well-cultivated practice in the Hawkeye State. Iowa papers were filled with advice and instructions to the lovelorn. Iowa editors either gave their own personal opinions on how to win a lover, or quoted the best suggestions of their fellow editors. On June 6, 1880, the *Boone County* (Boonesboro) *News* contained the following sound words of advice.

#### *Hints to Young Ladies*

Don't begin your crotchet work or embroidery unless you have first mended that hole in your stocking. No use crowding it under the heel of your shoe—rags, like murder, will out; and they speak with terrible loud voices and at inconvenient seasons, sometimes.

Don't undertake to write skim milk poetry when you feel a little disposed towards enthusiasm. Go and do a kind action, or speak an encouraging word to somebody, if the feelings must have vent. Depend upon it, you will be better satisfied afterward.

Don't pretend to be angry because gentlemen have the audacity to look at you, when you promenade the streets in your best bonnet. What do you go there for, if not to be seen? The more you affect indignation the more the offending wretches won't believe it.

Don't pay thirty or forty dollars for the aforesaid bonnet, then complain that "Pa" is in such narrow circumstances you can't afford to give twenty-five cents in charity!

Don't eat blue and yellow the whole time, like a mouse nibbling at a pineapple cheese, and then lament because you haven't any appetite for dinner.

Don't keep a gentleman waiting half an hour when he calls, while you put on lace and ribbons, and arrange curls; he isn't a fool, whatever you think on the subject, and will probably form an opinion of his own upon your original appearance.

Don't run and hide like a frightened rabbit, when a gentleman puts his head into the room where you are sweeping and dusting. If there is anything to be ashamed of in the business, why do you do it?

Don't proclaim to the world that you can't exist without six Paris bonnets in a year, and that life wo'd be a burden without an opera box and diamonds and then wonder that the young men "sheer off!"

And, above all, when some one does propose, don't say no, when you mean yes! He may take you at your word!

A Marengo editor presented the following words of advice in the *Iowa Valley Democrat* of December 4, 1861. The suggestions apparently

met the warm approval of other Iowa editors, judging by the number who copied it for the benefit of their young unmarried readers.

*To Unmarried Ladies*

The following items of advice to the ladies remaining in a state of single blessedness are extracted from the manuscript of an old dowager:

If you have blue eyes, languish.

If black eyes, affect spirit.

If you have pretty feet, wear short petticoats.

If you are the least doubtful as to that point, wear them long.

If you have good teeth don't forget to laugh now and then.

If you have bad ones, you must only simper.

While you are young, sit with your face to the light.

When you are a little advanced, sit with your back to the window.

If you have a bad voice, always speak in a low tone.

If it is acknowledged that you have a fine voice, never speak in a high tone.

If you dance well, dance seldom.

If you dance ill, never dance at all.

If you sing well, make no puerile excuses.

If you sing indifferently, hesitate not a moment when you are asked, for few persons are competent judges of singing, but every one is sensible of the desire to please.

If in conversation you think a person wrong, rather hint a difference of opinion than offer a contradiction.

It is always in your power to make a friend by smiles: what folly to make enemies by frowns.

When you have an opportunity to praise, do it with all your heart.

When you are forced to blame, do it with reluctance.

If you are envious of another woman never show it but by allowing her every good quality and perfection except those which she really possesses.

If you wish to let the world know you are in love with a particular man treat him with formality, and every one else with ease and freedom.

If you are disposed to be pettish or insolent, it is better to exercise your ill humor on your servant, than on your friend.

From the start, Iowa editors seemed to assume the role of advisor, defender, and protector of the gentler sex. Thus, on November 9, 1836, Judge John King printed the following in the *Du Buque Visitor*, the first newspaper published in Iowa.

#### *A Bachelor's Idea of a Wife*

A wife should have *nine* qualifications which begin with the letter P.—*Piety, Perseverance, Patience, Prudence, Patriotism, Politeness, Persuasion, Penetration, and portion.*—That which *should* be *first* of all, and *most* of all in consideration, which is *piety*, is now-a-day the *least* of all, the *last* of all, and with many *not at all.*—That which *should* be the *last* of all, and *least* of all in consideration, which is *portion*, is now become *first* of all, *most* of all, and with some *all in all!*

Although most Iowa newspaper editors were generous in the space allotted for advice to young people who were intent on marrying, a number seem to have carried an unusual amount of stories, suggestions and editorials on love—its joys and blessings, its pitfalls and its sorrows. The Estherville, Boonesboro, Council Bluffs, Iowa City, and

Dubuque editors were among the most liberal in offering free advice. On December 30, 1868, the *Northern Vindicator* (Estherville), printed the following rules for young ladies.

### *How to Avoid a Bad Husband*

The following rules will teach young ladies how to avoid the catching of a bad husband:

1. Never marry for wealth.—A woman's life consists not in those things that she possesseth.

2. Never marry a fop, or one who struts dandy-like in kid gloves, cane, and rings on his fingers. Beware, there is a trap!

3. Never marry a niggard or close-fisted mean, sordid man, who saves every penny, or spends it grudgingly. Take care, lest he stint you to death.

4. Never marry a stranger, or one whose character is not known or tested. Some women jump right into the fire with their eyes wide open.

5. Never marry a mope or drone, or one who drawls, and draggles through life, one foot after another and lets things take their chances.

6. Never marry a man who treats his mother or sister unkindly or indifferently. Such treatment is a sure indication of meanness and wickedness.

7. Never, on any account, marry a gambler, a profane person, one who in the least speaks light of God or of religion. Such a man can never make a good husband.

8. Never marry a sloven man who is negligent of his person, or dress, and is filthy in his habits. The external appearance is an index of the heart.

9. Shun the rake as a snake, a viper, a very demon.

10. Finally, never marry a man who is addicted to the use of ardent spirits. Depend upon it you are better off alone than you would be were you tied to a man whose

breath is polluted and whose vitals are being gnawed out by alcohol.

That there was need to observe such rules can be aptly demonstrated by the following incident recorded in the *Oskaloosa Herald* and reprinted in the *Boone County (Boonesboro) News* of May 25, 1859.

A Heroic Woman.—A New Way To Cure A Drunken Husband.—Mr. — of this place, a man with a wife and a family of children, indulged in his first drunken spree one day last week. He went home staggering under the influence of strong drink. His wife, a cool-minded woman, who had seen the havoc and the wretchedness, the poverty and misery occasioned in other families by drunkenness, took a novel method to correct her husband, and to impress him indelibly with the truth that "the way of the transgressor is hard." When he had sulked away to his room to sleep off the influence of liquor, she provided herself with a good "gad," such as Pike's Peakers are wont to urge forward their lazy oxen with, and going into his room proceeded to give him a most thorough and vigorous thrashing. The drunken, drowsy husband begged his loving wife to remember that this was his first offense and that she ought to treat him mercifully. She replied, that she knew it was his first drunken spree, and that she meant it should be his last, and thereupon increased the vigor of the blows already well laid on.

The husband, smarting under his chastisement but afraid or unable to make any other than a verbal remonstrance, then told his wife that he had been persuaded to drink by some friend and that he didn't intend to get drunk. She told him in reply, that if he hadn't any more sense than to drink just because he was asked, he deserved a good thrashing, and continued to lay on the

blows thick and fast. A neighbor hearing the disturbance came in to see what the trouble was. The heroic woman very calmly came out of the room and informed the neighbor that her husband was drunk and that she was whipping him for it, and that she thought she understood her own business. She then went back and gave her now subdued and penitent husband another round with the gad, and made him solemnly promise that he would never drink again.

These are literal facts, and the names of the parties would be given were it not thought best to withhold them from the public. The castigation which the man received will doubtless do him a great deal of good. If he ever gets drunk again he deserves to be flogged still more severely. The courage, the determination, and the physical force required on the part of the wife for such a temperance reformation as this, may not accord altogether with our notions of womanly refinement and delicacy, but the end justifies the means, and the man who has no more respect and regard for his wife than to go staggering into her presence deserves to be soundly thrashed by her, as often as he commits so great a wrong. It may be disgraceful to be whipped by a woman, but it is infinitely more disgraceful to be a habitual drunkard, to abuse one's family, and to bequeath to them a dishonored name. Under all the circumstances, Mrs. — did a creditable deed, and there are hundreds of noble, suffering women who are cursed with drunken husbands, to whom it might be said, in good faith, and sober earnestness, "go thou and do likewise." *Oskaloosa Herald.*

Not many women would have had the courage to punish their husbands as did the Oskaloosa heroine. Then as now, physical abuse was more likely to be meted out by the male inebriate from

whom the romance of earlier days had departed. One difference did exist in the period under survey. Newspapers, as has been shown, would have been far more sympathetic to the woman than they would today. The Sons of Temperance counted a large membership in the Territory of Iowa. During the 1850's the need for temperance had become so deeply ingrained in the hearts of Iowans that in the decades that followed, Iowa was destined to adopt almost every form of liquor control before it joined the majority of states that finally led to passage of the Volstead Act and National Prohibition.

## When Men Were Hard to Get

It was a common experience on every American frontier that men outnumbered women, frequently by a large majority. This same situation prevailed in Iowa, particularly before statehood was achieved in 1846, and especially in such areas as the lead mining country around Dubuque. The arrival of a contingent of single women in Iowa was the subject of comment in a nationally read magazine—*The Spirit of the Times* on September 14, 1844.

### *The Way They Marry Out West*

A western newspaper says (Thorpe is our authority) that the arrival of 41 ladies, all at one time, in Iowa, has caused "a sensation." We think it should. But the manner of "paying addresses" and getting "hitched," is what we want to come at. It is said to be done in a business-like way, something in this wise:—When a steamboat-load of ladies is coming in "at the wharf," the gentlemen on shore make proposals to the ladies through speaking trumpets, something like the following:—"Miss with blue ribbon on your bonnet, will you take me?" "Hallo thar, gal with a cinnamon-colored shawl! if agreeable we will jine." The ladies in the meantime get ashore and are married at the "hotel," the parties arranging themselves as the squire sings out, "Sort yourselves! sort yourselves!" A great country, that "Far West."

The need of women on the Iowa frontier was recognized from the beginnings of permanent settlement on June 1, 1833. Frequently the males were considerably older than the females who were ready and willing to be married. On October 27, 1838, the editor of the Dubuque *Iowa News* commented on the sad state of affairs in Scott County.

"So Fades the Lovely Blooming Flower."—

In Scott county, Iowa, after a residence of four years, the last single lady found a market on the 10th ult. A correspondent writes, "our gentlemen are three to one, and so anxious are our settlers for wives that they never ask a single lady her age. All they require is *teeth*." (Exchange paper.)

What a story this fellow tells, as many a rosy cheeked, pearly teethed damsel in Scott county can testify. It is also a slander on the bachelors, who, like those in any other country, choose wives for their good qualities, views consonant with their own, and a reciprocity of kind and tender feelings, without placing an improper weight upon personal appearance. The general disposition of some persons to make sport of the manners and customs of the people of a new country, renders them fit tools in the hands of impudent ignoramuses discarded and shunned by prudent females. Disproportioned as the sexes are in Iowa, the heart of a bachelor is too well worthy that of a LADY to be thrown away on the female companions of a person so destitute of truth as this lying 'correspondent.'

Doubtless there was good reason for the Scott County lass expressing her resentment at the above account of the dearth of women in Daven-

port. The situation at Dubuque had been far more acute, leading to what was probably the first elopement in Iowa. It happened that a young Iowa lass was influenced by her parents to marry a much older man. Not long after her marriage the young lady took note of a brawny, good looking young miner, who in turn cast deeply appreciative eyes at her. The two met clandestinely, became deeply enamored, and soon agreed that they were meant for each other. They determined to elope.

The event actually took place in September, 1835. While her husband rested, lulled to sleep, it is said, by the bewitching strains of "Coming thro' the Rye," the young woman made ready for her departure with the younger man. A local bard has thus best expressed her feelings in a parody on the Scotch ballad:

Every lassie has her laddie;  
 None they say have I,  
 And yet there's one—(I hear his step,)  
 I'm off, old chap—goodbye.

The persistence of the stories relating to the dearth of unmarried women in Iowa continued for over forty years. The actual male and female population in Iowa is shown by the following figures:

	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880
Male	24,355	101,052	354,493	625,917	848,136
Female	18,757	91,162	320,420	568,103	776,479

The following newspaper story, containing an irate Guthrie County maiden's letter of protest against the proposal to import Massachusetts "Old Maids," received widespread publicity and possibly some new subscribers to the *Iowa State Register* of Des Moines.

Iowa is one of the twenty-three States of the Union in which the masculine sex predominates, the late census showing an excess of males of just two and a tenth per cent. This information has excited the press of the State to unite in a cordial invitation to the surplus females of the Eastern States to emigrate to Iowa. The result is no little indignation on the part of those Iowa maidens who are still in the market despite the male surplus. A letter published from a Massachusetts girl describing the only kind of husband which would be acceptable in that quarter was too much for one of the Iowa sisterhood, who sent the following vigorous protest to the editor of the *Iowa State Register*:

I wish to "speak my piece" on the subject of "surplus" men in Iowa. There is another side to the subject—one that interests the single women who are here now. We are decidedly opposed to having 50,000 women, or even 10,000, sent in here to take the few men who can be induced to marry.

I have not had a "beau" this winter, and am not willing to share my chance for a husband with those of Massachusetts ladies (it is hopeless enough now), for a new face always attracts attention, even if not so pretty as the old one. I think any Iowa man answering the description given by A, etc., of Boston, can very easily find an Iowa girl as pretty, neat and good-natured as those Massachusetts "old maids." We are not so particular about

height, weight or color of hair, so they have all the other accomplishments.

You need not pass this by as an "idle tale" or the "growl" of some ill-natured, "flat-nosed," red-headed "old maid." I am a little past 22, and to put it modestly, nice looking; can sew, knit, teach school, play the organ, etc., and am willing to do my part toward supporting a husband. Where I live there are four marriageable men, two widowers, one 50 years old and smokes, the other 30 years old and drinks whiskey; two bachelors, one about 40 or 50 with two old maid sisters to support, and the other not intelligent enough to be a Republican—in fact, he is a whining, howling Greenbacker, who thinks everything is going to smash and won't marry. Do take pity on the single Iowa girls and get a "surplus man" for each one of us before sending to Massachusetts and we will ever remember you with grateful hearts, and have those same men subscribe for the Register.

A Guthrie County Girl.

Not all "Old Maids" in Iowa could blame their lot on a dearth of men. Sometimes the young maids were a bit too choosy, a fact which a Dubuque editor brought out in the October 18, 1838, issue of the *Iowa News*.

I never looked at an *old* maid without thinking of the lesson that was read to a *young* one in one of our Southern States. The story, as I heard it, runs thus:

A very pretty, a very proud heiress had a good many suitors, and was so long making up her mind which to have, that some of them gave up the chase. She was waiting for the chance of an offer from someone wealthier than anyone that wooed her. The meanwhile, she was becoming *passe*. Her uncle, a shrewd man of the world, spoke

to her one day, remonstrating against her folly in not accepting the suitor. She laughed and said there was full time enough, and that a better offer would yet come. "Very well," said her uncle, "enough is said on the subject. Go into the canebrake, and cut me the best cane you can get. But, mind, you must not turn your back to cut one." The young lady smiled at the oddness of this stipulation, and proceeded to execute his behest.

She entered the canebrake, and was met by her uncle at the other end. She handed him a stunted, shabby cane. "This," said he, "is a sorry cane. Were there none better to be found?" "There were plenty," said she, "I saw many fine canes at first, but I did not cut one of them because, to say the truth, I hoped that as I went on, I might see better ones.—But they got worse as I went on, and at last I was obliged to take this rather than bring none." Her uncle replied, "This is exactly your own case. You refuse good offers now, in the vague hope of having better. Life is like that canebrake. You will not find better offers as you advance—just as you did not find better canes—and at last you may be compelled to put up with a middling one, or take none at all." What reply the lady made is not recorded—but she married before she was a month older.

Not all men were handsome or wealthy. Girls were constantly reminded that there were many manly virtues that should be considered in choosing a husband. The *Iowa News* of August 5, 1837, must have been particularly helpful in steering marriage-minded maidens into a safe and snug harbor. The editor's advice was aptly captioned:

*How To Choose a Good Husband*

Girls, when you see a young man of modest, respectful,

retiring manners, with unpretending yet noble independence of mind, of amiable and pious disposition, not given to pride or vanity—such a one will make a good husband for he will be the same to his wife after marriage that he was before.

When you see a young man who would take a wife for the value of herself,—for her beauties of mind and purity of heart and not for the dazzle of wealth, that man will make a good husband, for his affection will never lessen, and years will but serve to strengthen his attachment and open new fountains in the heart, which shall murmur sweetly to the ocean of continual happiness.

Never make money an object of marriage; if you do, depend upon it, as a balance for that good, you will get a bad husband—one whose love and ambition will soon be irretrievably engrossed in reckless schemes of speculation, to the utter disregard and neglect of kinder sympathies of nature, and more social enjoyments of life. When you see a young man who is tender and affectionate, and endowed with happy intellect, no matter what circumstances in life are, he is really worth the winning—take him, who can, girls, for he will make a good husband—if you do not improve such an occasion, you may live to learn and regret that you had but one opportunity.

While there were not many men who would possess all the virtues listed in the above tribute, there were doubtless a large number who exhibited a goodly number of them. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that such men invariably would demand that their partner-for-life would possess personal attributes that would be pleasing to her liege lord. On May 13, 1871, the *Estherville Northern Vindicator* declared:

A bachelor says that all he could ask for in a wife would be a good temper, sound health, good understanding, agreeable physiognomy, pretty figure, good connection, domestic habits, resources of amusements, good spirits, conversational talents, elegant manners, money!

Despite some facetious intonations in the above there can be little doubt that the same standards would hold today. Love and mutual attraction are always basic, but a number of ingredients always form the mystical compound out of which these grow. The *power of love* may be described in the song—"Love Makes the World Go Round." With this *power of love* there must also go mutual and readily accepted responsibilities, best expressed in the song—

"Love and Marriage, Love and Marriage  
Go Together Like a Horse and Carriage."

May it ever be thus.

## Boys, Keep Away from Muslin

One may be surprised at the almost universal practice of newspapers in alerting young ladies against the scheming males who lay in wait ready to entrap them. Editors, it should be pointed out, were almost equally concerned about innocent young men who might fall a victim of the scheming wiles of the female of the species. Care in the choice of a mate, the need for constancy and high ideals, the importance of true love, these were important qualities to be considered in selecting a companion for life.

The *Boone County News* of August 17, 1859, was particularly apprehensive in its editorial which it captioned "Boys, Keep Away from Muslin."

### *Boys, Keep Away from Muslin*

If you don't want to fall in love, keep away from muslin. You can no more play with those girls without losing your hearts, than you can play with gamblers without losing your money.—The heart-strings of a woman, like the tendrils of a vine, are always reaching out for something to cling to. The consequence is, that before you are going you are—"gone," like a lot at auction. A woman will cling to the chosen of her heart like a fly to a "catch-'em-alive," and you can't separate her without snapping strings

no art can mend, and leaving a portion of her soul on the upper leather of your affections. She will sometimes see something to love where others see nothing to admire; and when fondness is once fastened on a fellow, it sticks like a penny-stamp to an envelope, or a tax-gatherer to your hosedoor. Beware, then, of muslin.

There were those, of course, who took an opposite view in urging young men to marry. One widely quoted Divine was Reverend Lorenzo[?] Dow, who ended a sermon by urging young men to marry. The *Fort Dodge Sentinel* of July 28, 1860, felt Dr. Dow's Discourse was "as singular for its quaintness as practical in its advice."

#### *Young Men Should Marry*

I want you my young sinners to kiss and get married, and devote your time to morality and money making. Then let your homes be provided with such comforts and necessaries as piety, pickles, pots and kettles; brushes, brooms, benevolence, bread, virtues, wine and wisdom. Have these always on hand and happiness will be with you. Do not drink anything intoxicating, eat moderately, go about business after breakfast, lounge a little after dinner, chat after tea, and kiss after quarreling. Then all the joy, the peace, and bliss the earth can afford shall be yours until the grave closes over you, and your spirits are borne to a brighter and happier world.

The *Northern* (Estherville) *Vindicator* of August 24, 1872, spoke with approbation of the following advice to young men which the editor had reason to feel might be helpful in expanding the population of northwestern Iowa.

*Advice to Young Men*

We find the following advice to young men in the *Altoona Tribune*: Young men, get married; you will never be worth a last year's robin's nest unless you do. The fruits of disobedience are misery and misfortune, and you will never be truly happy while in disobedience to God's commandment to our first parents in the Garden. Remember that there are seventy-five thousand more marriageable ladies in the United States than gentlemen, and three hundred thousand more females than males. Imagine yourself at the bar of judgment, with seventy-five thousand spinsters with tooth-less jaws, and tongues sharpened on the grindstones of temper, and honed on the strap of unrequited affection of your accusers; surely your chances for eternal bliss would not be very flattering. And furthermore, remember that unperformed duties always come home to roost, so you will be likely to go through the world with holes in the heels of your stockings, and your elbows out, and finally die unregretted and be forgotten like any other brute.

On December 19, 1866, in the *Dubuque Weekly Herald*, the editor emphasized the need for young men to "dress well" if they expected to gain a position of respect in their local community.

*Dress Well*

It is the duty of all men, young and old, to make their persons, so far as practicable, agreeable to those with whom they are thrown in contact. By this, we mean that they should not offend by singularity or slovenliness. Let no man know by your appearance what trade you follow. You dress your person, not your business. Be careful to mold the fashion of the times to your own personal peculiarities. Fashion is to be your servant, not your master.

Therefore never dress in the extreme of fashion. Only adopt it as far as it is consistent with your face and figure. That which will become one man ill becomes another; and for all to follow the same model is obviously absurd. The exercise of a little judgment on your part will enable you to adopt so much of the prevailing style in your dress as to show that you are acquainted with the fashion, without sacrificing your personal appearance for a scrupulous conformity to its laws. The best possible impression you can make by your dress, is to make no separate impression at all, but so to harmonize its material and shape with your own figure, that it becomes part of you; and people, without recollecting how you were clothed, remember that you look well and dress becomingly.

An objection may be urged here that attention to dress is dangerous. We think not. Extravagance is dangerous, but extravagantly dressed people are seldom dressed well. We constantly meet multitudes of people dressed in every imaginable style. Here is one in the best of broad cloth and the costliest jewelry, but who looks exceedingly vulgar; here another, habited plainly, in good taste, is gentlemanly in his appearance at half the cost. Showy and flaring clothes argue menial poverty of the wearer. The secret of being well-dressed is but the exercise of judgment and good sense—it invariably requires more care than cash; and instead of making a young man extravagant it is a saving of half the money it would cost to clothe him in the vulgar and pretending style which so many, now-a-days, unfortunately adopt.

Countless poems appeared in the press in which young men expressed their feelings and ideals about what they expected in a wife. Some were in a serious vein, others were definitely humorous in character.

*On Choosing a Wife*

I ask not beauty—'Tis a gleam  
 That tints the morning sky;  
 I ask not learning—'tis a stream  
 That glides unheeded by.  
 I ask not wit—it is a flash  
 That oft blinds reason's eye;  
 I ask not gold—'tis glittering trash  
 That causes many a sigh  
 I ask good sense, a taste refined,  
 Candor with prudence blended,  
 A feeling heart, a virtuous mind  
 With charity attended.

On the humorous side it was not uncommon for young men to express their views as to the qualifications they felt most desirable if they were to become willing partners in matrimony. The *Sioux City Weekly Times* of July 13, 1872, contained an unusually long list of requirements that reflect in no small degree a number of female activities that doubtless caused some husbands to become irritable.

*Advertising for Sealed Proposals*

A chap issued a leap-year invitation, and sent the following notice to the papers for publication:

## TO CONTRACTORS

The undersigned, feeling the need of some one to find fault with and grumble at, when business matters go wrong, and being lonely with no one to hate him and whereas, having arrived at the proper age, he is therefore determined to "crawl out."

Sealed proposals will be received until two o'clock p.m. on the 31st of December, 1872.

Applicant must possess beauty, or its equivalent in currency.

She must possess a sweet and forgiving disposition, and when one cheek is kissed, turn the other—that is, if the right man is kissing.

She must not chew gum.

Nor wear long dresses in the street.

Nor frequent sewing circles.

Nor go around begging for charitable purposes.

Nor read the papers first in the morning.

Nor talk when I am sleepy.

Nor trade off my clothes to wandering Italians, for flower vases.

Nor borrow money from my vest pocket when I am asleep.

Nor hold a looking glass over my face at such times, to make me tell all I know.

She must believe in sudden attacks of chills, and make allowances for their effect on the nervous system.

When the "old bear" comes home from "a few friends" rather affectionate, she must not take advantage of his state and wheedle him into trips to watering places.

And above all, she must not, on such occasions put ipecac into the coffee she prepares for his "poor head."

She must sit up for him, when he happens to be detained to a late hour on his committee.

A lady possessing the foregoing qualifications, positive and negative, can hear of something to her advantage by addressing the undersigned, and inclosing a stamp.

All proposals must be accompanied with satisfactory evidence of the ability of the applicant to support a husband in the style to which he has been accustomed.

Young ladies were not so modest but that they

would refrain from inserting their own advertisements in Iowa newspapers to snare an eligible young man, particularly if it was Leap Year. The *Waterloo Courier* of April 3, 1860, carried the following plea:

### *Husband Wanted*

A young lady residing in one of the small towns in Central New York, is desirous of opening a correspondence with some young man in the West, with a view to a matrimonial engagement, should the preliminary correspondence be satisfactory to both. She is about 24 years of age, possesses a good moral character, is not what would be called handsome, has a good disposition, enjoys good health, is tolerably well-educated, and thoroughly versed in the mysteries of house-keeping. The real name and post office address can be ascertained, by those desirous of opening a correspondence, by addressing the Courier Office. None but young men of good moral character and strictly temperate habits need address.

The editor of the *Courier*, on another page, declared the above advertisement offered a "rare chance" for a young man "to obtain that useful and essential article of household furniture—a Wife." He declared with "all due respect to the fair damsels of our own town" that the young lady in quest of a husband was "good-looking . . . writes a very pretty letter and will doubtless make a devoted and loving companion." He was confident there would be a "marked increased" in the number of letters enclosed in "white envelopes" that would be deposited in the post office.

The need for sharing the news of the day with a wife was considered a sine qua non for a successful married life. The editor of the *Boone County News* of December 28, 1859, felt it particularly important for young men to keep their wives well-informed on the events of the day.

### *Post Up Your Wives*

Keep them posted duly, promptly, cheerfully. Impart to them all the light you can. Do you, husbands, post them up on subjects of importance; interest and reform; collect facts, passing events, things interesting, probably edifying; things moral, intellectual and political? Sensible, intelligent, virtuous, wives highly appreciate this, especially those pressed with domestic cares and duties, who have very little time for extended reading and investigation. Some husbands are remiss in this benevolence: others we are pleased to say, are happily communicative, take special pains and delight in posting their wives and children in imparting life and information. At table, during mealtimes and on every occasion, they open their minds freely, cheerfully, give a condensed, succinct, bird's eye view of their book and paper readings and all the interesting and important facts, gathered variously daily, weekly, monthly.

A century ago it was considered both unwise and reprehensible to spend beyond one's income; today business and industry, banks, savings and loans, and numerous other loan associations, encourage by every means and device, the assumption of an ever-increasing indebtedness. The editor of the *Northern Vindicator* of Estherville im-

parted the following sound words of advice to young men on October 19, 1870.

*Advice to Young Men*

One of the most fatal mistakes—and a common one—leading to many beside itself, which I have often heard with amazement, is conveyed in the almost proverbial phrase: "The world owes me a living." The world does no such thing. It is not debtor to you, but you are debtor to it, and you cannot work too hard to discharge your obligation. It not only does not owe you anything, but it is not going to pay you anything except as you earn it. And just so fast as you do that, it will pay—not wealth necessarily, not what you may call success or repute, but the honest return of wage, while God stands by to throw in his benediction to make up any deficiency. We are none of us going to thrive except by work—not by waiting for this or that, not by looking to this and the other man, not by expecting to be lifted, boosted into success. There are Micawbers all the world over—men waiting for the world to get ready to pay the obligation they suppose it to be under, men as miserably useless as they are contemptible. The fact is, this is a very busy world—a bit selfish if you will—and too thoroughly absorbed in various and varying interests to think much about individual men, young or old. Any of us is of mighty little consequence, and if you would like a healthy snub to your estimate of yourself, shut yourself up for a week and see how superbly indifferent the world is as to your absence, and with what marvelous facility it accommodates itself to your loss. The fly upon the coach-wheel in the fable is not more insignificant. The only thing that gives significance to you is your work, your industry and fidelity.

After reading such sound advice, a young man might be excused if he gave serious thought to the

additional responsibilities a wife and family would bring him. But there were other valuable assets a young bachelor would have to forego once he entered the holy bonds of matrimony. On September 16, 1837, the *Iowa News* of Dubuque summed it up as follows:

*How a Man Feels When About to Get Married*

It is said to be a serious thing for a girl to leave her mamma and entrust herself to the keeping of the man of her heart. No doubt it is so, but we propose to show that even the sterner sex cannot surrender up their singleness without some misgivings and trepidations.

In the first place, then, the victim of matrimony feels that he must surrender up the companions with whom he has so long held close communion, his evenings, instead of being spent at the club or the engine house, must be devoted to the charming young creature, whose guileless heart must find him very different from that to which he has been accustomed. But this is not all; he knows that after he has become bound in the silken chain of marriage, he is no longer a welcome visitant in those circles where, while free, wreathing smiles and glaring eyes, strove to weave a knot for his feet. He knows that while a bachelor is welcome wherever he goes, a married man is regarded as one dead—crossed off the books—and no longer available to the fair. In addition to all these unhappy circumstances, he has become the head of a family. Then through the busy shapes into his mind, of silks and calicoes, [come] doctors bills and duns for debts that he has never reaped the benefit of. Like the horse in the mill, he has a task to perform for others. He is no longer free to embrace poverty or wealth. No wonder that with an angel at his side he looks gloomy.

The *Fayette County Pioneer* was in complete agreement with the Dubuque editor. Mindful of the frequent harping in the press against bachelors, the West Union editor penned the following powerful defense of bachelors on April 4, 1857.

### *A Bachelor's Defense*

Bachelors are styled by married men who have put their foot into it, as only half-perfected human beings, cheerless vagabonds, but half a pair of scissors, and many other titles are given them; while on the other hand they extol their state as one of such perfect bliss, that a change from earth to heaven would be somewhat of a doubtful good. If they are so happy, why don't they enjoy their happiness and hold their tongues about it. What do half the men get married for? Simply that they may have somebody, as a married man once said, to pull off their boots when they are a little balmy. These fellows are always talking of the loneliness of Bachelors. Loneliness, indeed! Who is petted to death with marriageable daughters?—invited to tea and to evening parties, and told to drop in just when it is convenient?—the bachelor. Who lives in clover all his days, and when he dies has flowers strewed on his grave by the girls who couldn't entrap him?—the bachelor. Who strews flowers on the married man's grave?—his widow? Not a bit of it; she pulls down the tombstone that a six week's grief has set up in her heart, and goes and gets married again, she does. Who goes to bed early because the time hangs heavy on his hands?—the married man! Who has wood to split, house hunting to do, the young ones to wash, and the lazy servants to look after?—the married man. Who is taken up for whipping his wife?—the married man.—Who gets divorced—the married man. Finally, who has got the Scripture on his side?—the bach-

elor! St. Paul knew what he was talking about—"He that marries does well; but he that marries not does better."

An Iowa bachelor must have gained genuine comfort from the words of St. Paul. And yet, staying away from "Muslin" was not an easy thing to do. Nevertheless, the bachelor probably reasoned, there were some definite advantages to it. For example, if it was important for him to dress well, he could do so much better as a bachelor, unhampered by a wife who squandered his hard-earned dollars on fetching Paris bonnets. Furthermore, some bachelors would not relish the "task" of "posting" their wives daily when a snooze after a hard day's work seemed more to his liking. Finally, what a boring life it would be without those delicious free meals prepared by designing mothers with eligible daughters. Despite the advantages held out for bachelorhood, most readers will probably agree it was fortunate for Iowa that only a small minority chose this status in life. And just about every reader will breathe a sigh of relief that there were no bachelors in his or her direct family lineage.

## From Puns to Poetry

### *Miscellaneous*

Why is a muff like a fool? Because it holds a lady's hand without squeezing it. *The Franklin Record* (Hampton), April 18, 1859

Better die an old maid than marry a drunkard. *Delaware County Union* (Manchester), May 19, 1865

What a man wants—all he can get. What a woman wants—all she can't get. *Spirit Lake Beacon*, June 5, 1872

Never trust with a secret a married man who loves his wife—for he will tell her, and she will tell her sister, and her sister will tell everybody. *Delaware County Union*, May 19, 1865

Women want nothing but husbands, and when they have got them, they want everything. *Iowa Capitol* (Iowa City) *Reporter*, November 5, 1845

A young lady went into a music shop and asked the clerk if he had "Loving Eyes." He replied, "I'm told so by the girls." *Spirit Lake Beacon*, May 29, 1872

There is a young lady down east so modest that she won't carry a watch in her bosom, because it has hands. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, April 19, 1845

There are two important eras in the life of a woman—one when she wonders who she will have, the other when she wonders who will have her. *Iowa News*, (Dubuque) March 24, 1838

A termagant told her spouse she believed him related to the devil; "only by marriage," was the reply. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, December 30, 1843

*Charming Man.* A fellow who has a bow and a smile for every one abroad, and beats his wife at home. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, June 25, 1845

*A low-bred Woman.* One who stays at home, takes care of her children, and never meddles with the business of her neighbors. Species almost extinct. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, June 25, 1845

A Printer's Toast.—Woman—the fairest work of creation—the edition being extensive, let no man be without a copy. *The Franklin Record*, (Hampton) April 4, 1859

The latest way to pop the question is to ask a fair young lady if you can have the pleasure of seeing her to the minister's. *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, November 26, 1864

"To cure your love for one girl, fall in love with another." A chap who has suffered in this way says it is the only antidote. *Iowa Standard* (Iowa City) June 24, 1846

An editor has married a girl named Church. He says he has enjoyed more happiness since he joined the Church, than he ever knew in all his life before. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, February 18, 1846

Economy—"The last balloon sleeve was cut up the other day at this place; it made two dresses for a little girl, one apron, six capes and a dozen night-caps!!!!!!" *Iowa News*, June 17, 1837

Do you like novels? asked Lydia Languish of her Iowa lover.

"I can't say," he replied, "for I never ate any, but I'm tremendous on young persimmons." *The Franklin Record*, April 18, 1859

An enlightened damsel, sent to a music shop by her master, for some *catgut*, ashamed to pronounce the vulgar word, and to show her gentility, asked the shopman for some *puss's bowels*. *Iowa News*, December 8, 1838

A preacher once said that ladies were very timid; they were afraid to sing when they were asked; afraid of taking cold; afraid of snails or spiders; but he never knew one afraid to get married. *Delaware County Union*, May 12, 1865

Two men were conversing about the ill humor of their wives. "Ah," said one, with a sorrowful expression, "mine is a tartar." "Well said the other, "mine is worse than that; mine is the cream of tartar." *Delaware County Union*, May 12, 1865

It is the confession of a widower who has been thrice married, that the first wife cures a man's romance, the second teaches him humility, and the third makes him a philosopher. *Davenport Democrat*, July 3, 1878

It is an error to fancy that because a woman can play a piano and embroider she is accomplished, or because she speaks in a low voice and rolls up her eyes with tenderness, she is amiable. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, February 22, 1845

*Heroine* is perhaps as peculiar a word as any in our language; the two first letters of it are a male, the first three a female, the first four a brave man, the whole word a brave woman. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, November 5, 1845

A few years ago the ladies wore a kind of hood called "kiss-me-if-you-dare." The present style of bonnets might with equal propriety be called, "kiss-me-if-you-want-to." *Page County Herald* (Clarinda), December 23, 1859

An Irish servant girl was requested by a lady to go to

one of our dry goods stores and get a "bed comforter" for her. About an hour afterwards she returned with one of the clerks. It is needless to add, perhaps, that the lady fainted. *North Iowa (McGregor) Times*, July 24, 1857

*Love Letters.*—A young lady about to sue for a breach of promise, placed the love letters she had received in a bag, for the purpose of producing in court; when, sad to relate, their own mutual warmth caused spontaneous combustion, and ashes alone remained. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, November 5, 1845

A most interesting "sight for to see," is that of a young lady, with "eyes like a gazelle," and with "lips like rubies," and with "teeth as pearly whiteness," and with cheeks that have "stolen the deep carnations of the deathless rose," and her mouth full of gingerbread. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, February 22, 1845

The *Norwich Advertiser* says: "A young lady, very pretty, walked around the new road (7 miles) in one hour and forty-five minutes. We remember escorting one around that road by moonlight. Time—four hours and forty minutes. But then she said she wasn't in a hurry. The old folks had gone to camp meeting, and she had a night key." *Spirit Lake Beacon*, June 5, 1872

"A person who has been traveling in the western States says there is not a lady West of the Alleghenies over the age of fifteen who is not either married or spoken for." From the *Boston Mail*. How did he ascertain the latter? *Davenport Gazette*, March 6, 1845

*Reason why Women Have no Beards.*

Nature, adapted all things in their place,  
Planted no beard upon a woman's face;  
Not Rodgers' razors, tho' the very best,  
Could shave a chin that *never is at rest.* *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, March 1, 1845

Frank Confession—It is said that a young lady went into J. N. Waggoner's music store the other day to buy a piece of music entitled, "When I sleep I dream of thee," but by some mistake frankly confessed to the young man in attendance by enquiring if he had the music entitled, "When I dream I sleep with thee." *Dubuque Weekly Herald*, June 6, 1866

"Girls are females under twelve years of age. After that period they are, in their own estimation, women, and accordingly devote their time solely to the consideration of love, and the practice of all its fopperies and follies, which they continue to do until they cease to call themselves young women—That is, when they are half a century old; then, they begin to think of religion, and that is compulsory. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, April 19, 1845

"At a party up street a few evenings ago, the company concluded to each repeat a verse of Scripture, in which should be found the word "love." When it came to the turn of Miss S — —, we almost mentioned the name—a beautiful young lady of eighteen, and "in the market"—she was unprepared with an answer, but thinking for a short time, repeated the verse, "I love those who love me, and those who seek me early shall find me." Excellent girl, that. *Weekly Gate City* (Keokuk), June 11, 1867

"Mister, how do you sell sugar today?"

"Only twenty cents the pound."

"Can't give it; I'll drink my coffee without sugar, and kiss my wife for sweetening, first. Good day, sir."

"Good day, sir. When you get tired of that kind of sweetening call again."

He called the next day. *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, December 30, 1843

"Let us avoid that handsome woman coming up the street," said a physician to a friend; "she always looks so cross at me that I do not like to meet her."

"Is there any reason for it, doctor?"

"Yes, I attended her husband once when he was low with a fever."

"Ah, I see. It was one of your bad cases; you lost him."

"On the contrary, I saved him, and that is what she has never forgiven me for—she would have made such a magnificent widow, and she knows it." *The Weekly Citizen* (Centerville), December 24, 1870

A Dime for a Kiss. A traveler near the close of a weary day's drive over a lonely and muddy road, came to a little log cabin in the forest, and asked for a drink. A young woman supplied his wants and as she was the first woman he had seen for several days he offered her a dime for a kiss. It was duly taken and paid for, and the young lady, who had never seen a dime before, looked at it with some curiosity then asked what she should do with it. He replied, what she chose, as it was hers. "If that's the case," said she, "you may take it back and give me another kiss."—Good girl! *Weekly Oskaloosa Herald*, June 8, 1865

Jinks Explains the Significance of Nine Weddings:

A wooden wedding—Marrying a blockhead.

A golden wedding—Marrying for money.

A crystal wedding—Marrying a glass eye.

A tin wedding—Marrying a milkmaid.

A paper wedding—Marrying an editor.

A silver wedding—Marrying an old maid of sixty.

An iron wedding—Marrying a blacksmith.

A plain wedding—Marrying a carpenter.

A brass wedding—Marrying an impudent man. *Northern Vindicator*, November 9, 1869

*MY WIFE**By an Invalid*

I heard her. Oh! how cautiously,  
    Open my bedroom door;  
I heard her step, as noiselessly,  
    To my couch across the floor;  
I felt her hands my temple press,  
    Her lips just touching mine,  
And in my anguish and distress,  
    'Twere sinful to repine.  
Our pilgrimage is nearly through—  
    We've passed life's mountain brow—  
I thought I loved her years ago—  
    I know I love her now.

Her face was hovering over mine,  
    Her warm tears on my cheek;  
Her whispered prayer of thought divine,  
    Rose fervently but meek.  
Her bosom rested on my arm,  
    I felt its tremulous throe;  
I knew the cause of its alarm,  
    And felt its source of woe  
And then the blood my system through  
    Came pressing on my brow—  
I thought I loved her years ago—  
    I know I love her now.

Thus watched that tried and patient one,  
By night as well as day;  
In sadness and almost alone,  
Till weeks had passed away.  
Bereft of sleep—deprived of rest—  
Oppressed—borne down with care,  
Till, Oh! her labors have been blest,  
For God has heard her prayer.  
Her cheek resumes its wonted glow,  
And placid is her brow—  
I thought I loved her years ago—  
I know I love her now.

*Boone County News* (Boonsboro)  
October 26, 1859

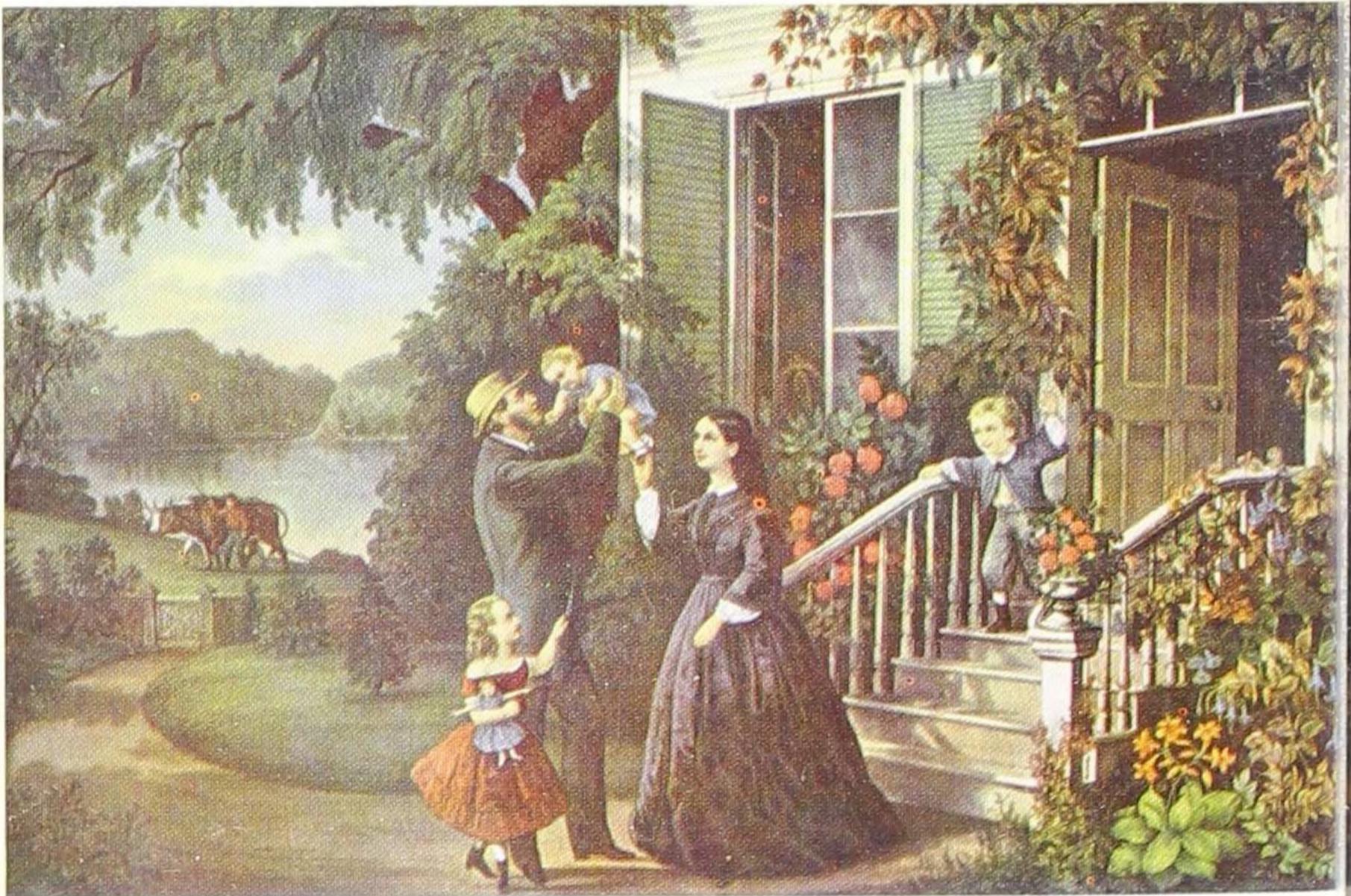
# IOWA WOMEN

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The Four Seasons of Life: Youth



The Four Seasons of Life: Middle Age