

## Life In Amana

"Once upon a time," as the children say, a band of Germans left the fatherland, settling near Buffalo, New York. Their advancement being retarded by the rise in the value of real estate, the prosperous community removed in a body some forty years ago to Iowa County, Iowa, occupying a tract of land ten miles square.

The Amana settlement is near the Iowa River, from which extend canals, their ramifications watering the gardens and lending their force to the great mills, whose tall smokestacks are reflected in the calm waters below.

There is really but one street—a rambling affair—meeting other lanes at all possible angles. Not a soul is in sight. You learn afterward that the children are in school, the older people in the fields and mills.

There are a few brick houses in Amana, more stone ones, but the material most used is wood. Often all three are used in the construction of a single house, the result being somewhat remarkable. The style of architecture is the same throughout. Each house has its trellises of climbing rose and grapevine, reaching to the eaves and often to the very peak. The frame houses are never

painted, and years of sun and rain have left them a softened brown, in perfect harmony with the mass of foliage in which they are imbedded. In every nook are beds of foxglove, peonies, pinks, and roses without number. There are porches galore, and tiny windows, like inquisitive eyes, peeping out of the blackened roof.

Many of the houses have the heavily-barred, massive double doors, with immense brass knocker, known in our own colonial days, flanked on either side by broad, low, pew-shaped settees.

The older houses are built of sandstone, which, in color, is a mingling of every conceivable shade of brown from cream to chocolate. This was obtained in the colony, but the supply has become exhausted. There is a brick kiln, but it is not constantly worked, as they manufacture only for local use and the growth of the colony is slow.

The furniture of the house is more modern than one would be led to expect from external appearances. Since no cooking is done at home there is neither kitchen nor dining room. The long, light calico curtains are held back by tin clasps. Upon the walls are numberless mottoes in illuminated script. There is a great display of vases of dried grass and wax fruit. Everything is in pairs. The beds are very high. In the corners, behind the long, low stoves, are comfortable lounges, with numerous fat pillows. The windows are long, horizontal, prettily draped, the sills half covered by roses.

There is a tin shop, paint shop, doctor's office, meat market, harness and watchmaker's, post office and store. They are found, however, with difficulty, being scattered about the town, and in buildings differing in no wise from a private house. The sign, if there be one, is almost illegible from sun and rain. There is also a bakery, dye works, cobbler's, wine manufactory, soap manufactory, flour, calico and woolen mills. There are two large rooms in the soap establishment, in one of which we saw two great vats, half sunk in the floor, one for hard, the other for soft soap. Tar soap is also manufactured. From the vats the boiling soapy mixture is pumped into barrels, where it is allowed to cool, being sent afterward to the woolen mills.

In the woolen mills we saw all the processes which the raw material undergoes, from the time it leaves the sheep's back until it is sent from the looms as flannel blankets and dress goods of every kind and color. The thick, dark-blue flannel generally finds a constant market in the western states as shirting for miners.

We found the calico mills equally interesting. Great bolts of unbleached muslin, printed, encased and labeled, were sent forth on their mission as "Calico—Dutch Blue."

In Amana the cattle are pastured outside and driven in every night to be cared for at the six cow barns—from which the milk is distributed to the

several kitchens where churning and cheesemaking are carried on. These cow barns are immense structures, the lower half of stone, beautifully clean. No sheep are raised here, the woolen mills being supplied from the Homestead ranches.

Though the town be small and your stay lengthened, the artistic resources are inexhaustible. To those in search of rest and the genuinely picturesque it is a veritable paradise. There is a lake that covers 180 acres, and along its margins are pleasant drives and winding, shady bypaths.

To form any idea of the character of the people, you must know them thoroughly. Though courteous, it is not to strangers they reveal themselves. It is not to be wondered at that on slight acquaintance they are entirely misunderstood and misrepresented. They are remarkable for their cordiality and unaffected kindness. The children, too shy almost to lift their eyes, pause in passing to clasp our fingers for a moment. In every circumstance the people show a fineness of good breeding that is often lacking in circles where it is to be expected.

At the farthest confines of the town lie the vineyards, sloping gently toward the canal and the level lands beyond. Opposite the vineyard is the apple orchard, its trees set at wide intervals, the scent of new mown hay beneath mingling with the breath of the sweetbrier clambering over the hedge.

This hedge encloses the colony burial ground.

It is of evergreens—the only kind ever seen here—too high and thick for even a glance to penetrate. Within is neither bush, flower nor tree—only line upon line of small white headstones like corn rows, so narrow and so exactly proportioned are the spaces between. The headstones are of wood, painted white, with black lettering, some almost colorless from the onslaught of sun and rain. The name and date of death—nothing to indicate the age except the length of the hillock, over which grows the long, rank grass. The graves are placed according to the date of death, the latest dead being placed by the side of his predecessor. The earliest date we saw was in 1854. Isolated by its distance from the town, its height and green enclosure beyond reach of sight or sound, this republic of the dead lies upon the summit of a hill, strangers in a strange land, with but a name and a date, the rest known only to the heart of God.

The colonists are distinctly religious. From earliest infancy habits of reverence and of church attendance are inculcated. There is one man who has in his charge the religious affairs of the colony, although he cannot be called a minister in the general acceptance of the term. He presides over the service which is held every Saturday morning at 8:30 in the assembly room. The elders have charge of all other services. There are three places of worship, differing in no way from a house. The largest of these is a long building with four divi-

sions. The first is for children and young girls, the second for boys, the third for young people of both sexes, and the fourth for adults. There is a prayer meeting held every evening at each of the buildings. Everyone is expected to attend the place nearest his home. No distinction is made in regard to sex or age. In the bi-weekly morning services and the four on the Sabbath, these regulations are rigidly enforced.

Upon their twenty-first birthday, however, the girls are allowed to worship with the young men. They are then supposed to have reached the age of discretion. Every room is kalsomined in blue, with a strip of blue rag carpet down the aisle. The large, many-paned windows on the women's side are adorned by long, light calico curtains, held back by tin clasps. The pews are snowy white benches with a railing at the back. The women sit on one side, the men on the other. Psalms are sung, no instrument being allowed. The entire service is conducted with the greatest reverence. They are dismissed by rows, the first row on the women's side passing out first. In mixed assemblies they are seated according to age, the young people on the first seats, the patriarchs at the rear.

We sallied forth to visit the school, but alas! we reckoned on a 9 o'clock opening, whereas each small German was in his place promptly at 7. The hours are from 7 to 11:30, 12:30 to 6. They have no holidays or vacations. There are three teachers

employed—all old men. The children show the effect of careful drill. English is taught from the primaries up. The girls, always arranged on one side of the room, wear black knit caps and high-necked sleeveless aprons. The older girls discard the apron and wear a kerchief crossed in front, the ends brought around the waist and tied. At thirteen, when they are obliged to leave school, the kerchief is simply crossed and the end held in place by a black sateen apron. These dress distinctions are religiously adhered to.

The boys may go to school until their fourteenth year. They are then assigned a trade by the officers of the colony. All day pupils are obliged to knit—boys not excepted. The knitting department is in the hands of several middle-aged women, who shake hands kindly with each newcomer and pass generous slices of bread at regular intervals. The janitor work is always done by the children.

As most of the women work in the gardens, a room has been provided where the little ones may be kept during the mother's absence. This is but a single room, in charge of four women, who take turns in caring for the wee folk. Furnishings are a chair, two tiny tables, high-backed benches, a wire-screened stove, and last but not least, a good Dutch cradle, wide enough to make six children comfortable. At regular intervals, dry bread and little tincups of hot coffee are served. Outside is a wide porch with low benches and in the yard a

grape arbor ten feet square. In its shadow is a great sand pile in which the children dig.

Houses, land and livestock are common property. Each person owns his own clothing and the furniture in his house. All must work and the work of each is definitely assigned. Wages and hours are the same in every department. No piano, organ or other "needless" expenditure is permitted. There are severely enforced restrictions in regard to women's dress, and the men are obliged to go clean shaven. The women sew for themselves and the children, the colony tailor providing for the men. The school children knit all the stockings. The laundry is done in one place, the baking at another.

Girls leaving school at thirteen are placed at once in the kitchens. The first week, cooking; the second, setting tables and churning; the third, preparing vegetables. For the first year or two they are allowed their afternoons free.

In Amana proper there are sixteen kitchens, each caring for about forty persons. The unmarried men are obliged to board at the hotel. Connected with every kitchen is a garden in charge of two gardeners who have the right to ask the assistance of any other woman in the colony. There are five meals a day. Men leave the mills in instalments, so the constant coming and going gives one the idea that life is a continual scramble for something to eat.

However, it is all accomplished with the usual deliberation. No one is ever hurried, worried or careworn. Contentment rests upon every placid face. The simplicity of their lives frees them entirely from mental strain, while regular hours, plain food, simple pleasures and life in the open air tend to promote a strong physical organization.

Social lines are not sharply drawn, since no one is more cultured, more wealthy than his neighbor. So closely have they intermarried, that almost without exception, there is no family that is not connected by family ties to every other family. This engenders a clannishness, a brotherhood, that embraces every individual, follows him out into the world and draws the wanderer back.

The young people, it is true, often become discontented and leave the colony for the great world outside but they return sooner or later. Their education has not fitted them for the professions and they know little of manual labor except mill work. The Amanite's knowledge of English is limited. He is as helpless as an infant. In all his days someone has directed him, planned for him, cared for him. He drifts back to the colony, where wages are unvarying, the market steady, competition unknown, where every want is provided for, and where every man is his brother.

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