

The
PALIMPSEST
MAY 1931
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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

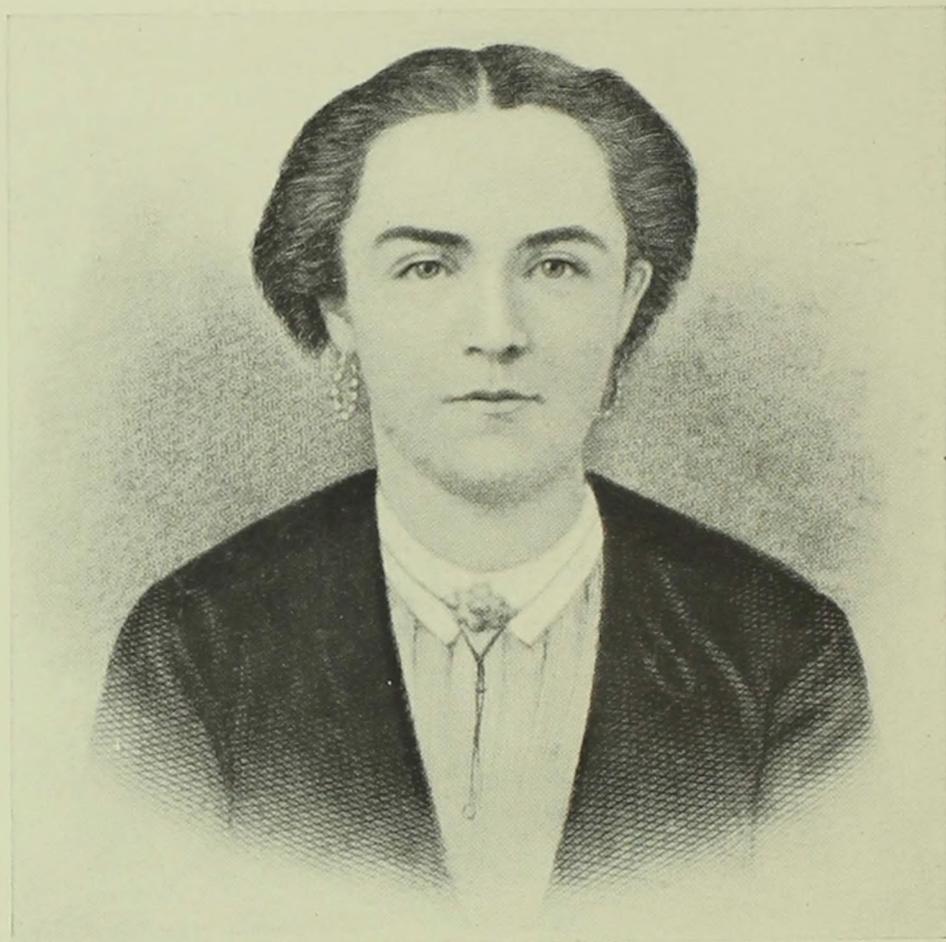
THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

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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FROM A STEEL ENGRAVING OF A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1854 AND PUBLISHED AS
THE FRONTISPIECE IN REBECCA H. S. POLLARD'S CENTENNIAL AND OTHER POEMS

Kate Harrington.

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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An American Lady

In the summer of 1856 the book stores of the "north-western States" displayed a new novel by an Iowa author. "We are pleased to announce an Iowa book to the public — the first of a purely literary character, of any particular pretensions", wrote the editor of the *Des Moines Valley Whig*. Because it was in some respects a fictional reply to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the two books were frequently paired to encourage sales. In Keokuk the novel was announced with enthusiasm: "*Emma Bartlett, or Prejudice and Fanaticism*, for sale by Cave & Son. Fifty copies sold in one day!"

The title page of *Emma Bartlett* did not reveal who, by means of this novel, was presuming to expose the hypocrisy of Know-Nothingism and the dogmatism of Abolitionism. It was written simply by "An American Lady", and was dedicated to the "True Upholders of the Constitution and of the Union". According to a Keokuk newspaper, the author was "one whom we

esteem and who is well known to the readers of this journal, to which she has contributed much and frequently under the *nom de plume* of 'Kate Harrington'." That name was familiar beyond the boundaries of Iowa. The editor of the *Louisville Journal* wrote that the young lady had lived in Kentucky, and that he had "known her for some years as a very charming writer."

Although the "American Lady" may have been widely known as Kate Harrington, neither the book nor the contemporary newspapers identified the author by her real name. The copyright notice alone afforded a clue to the authorship which the title page concealed. The novel, *Emma Bartlett*, was "entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by R. H. Smith". Investigation would have revealed that R. H. Smith was in reality Miss Rebecca Harrington Smith, the "American Lady", who lived at Farmington, Iowa, and signed her newspaper articles and poems "Kate Harrington".

Rebecca Harrington Smith was born in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, on September 20, 1831. Her father, Nathaniel Ruggles Smith, was a playwright and an authority on Shakespeare. His interpretations attracted the attention of John Wilkes Booth and the tragedian, Edwin Forrest, who came regularly to Pittsburgh to read with him. Both in Allegheny City and in Pittsburgh, Professor Smith taught in private schools; and in the former city he was editor of *The*

Hesperus, a literary journal. Kirkham's *English Grammar*, whose pages Abraham Lincoln perused by candle light, was based upon Professor Smith's method of presentation.

Eventually Nathaniel Smith with his wife and four children moved westward, settling first in Ohio, and then in Kentucky. It was at Crab Orchard, near Danville, Kentucky, that Rebecca, dark-haired, energetic, keen-witted, and kind-hearted, began her teaching career as a young girl in a fashionable school for girls. Her influence among Kentuckians, however, did not end with this experience. About thirty years later, while teaching in a private school in a fashionable district of Chicago, she lived and worked again among people whose names were already familiar to her.

It was at Louisville, Kentucky, that her literary work began. There she was a contributor to the *Louisville Journal* — considered to be the best edited and most widely read newspaper in that region. George D. Prentice, whose opposition to secession had an important influence in keeping Kentucky from withdrawing from the Union, was the editor at that time. Through him, Rebecca Smith imbibed much of the spirit of Unionism, and through him she met Oliver I. Taylor, a New York poet and editor, whom she married in 1858 at Farmington, Iowa.

Her regular contributions to the *Journal* were entitled "Letters from a Prairie Cottage". She also con-

ducted a children's corner, containing stories of the taming of wild animals; of raising domestic animals; of a cat that was taught to mother some orphan chicks.

After her marriage, she moved from Farmington to Keosauqua, where she and her husband edited a newspaper, the predecessor of the *State Line Democrat*. About a year later, Oliver I. Taylor purchased the *Burlington Argus*, and changed the name to *Gazette* at the suggestion of Mrs. Taylor. Wherever she lived, in Farmington, Keosauqua, Burlington, and later in Keokuk and Fort Madison, she was constantly called upon to write verses and special articles, often of a political nature, for the local papers. Her first collection of poems printed in book form was *Maymie*, published in 1869. It is a tribute to her ten-year-old daughter, who died in that year. Henry W. Longfellow, in one of his frequent letters to her, wrote that this poem "brought tears to my eyes".

After the death of Mr. Taylor, Rebecca Smith Taylor returned to Farmington where she devoted her time to teaching. Even after her second marriage in 1862 she continued in that work. James Pollard of Bloomfield, her second husband, seems to have had political ambitions. In 1862 he was elected to the State Senate, where he sat for one session in the seat of Cyrus Bussey who was serving in the Union army as colonel of the Third Iowa Volunteer Cavalry. Pollard's friends thought he was qualified for higher public offices. His

political enemies pronounced him "the smartest man in Iowa and the biggest fool".

In her private schools at Farmington, Keokuk, and Fort Madison, Mrs. Pollard developed unique methods of instructing small children. All the battles of the Revolutionary War were re-fought in the school yard. Broom-guns, blackboard-eraser pistols, the roll of the beating drum, served to revive the Spirit of '76 in 1876. "Tomorrow we are going to have Bunker Hill. Ralph is to be Warren and will speak: 'Stand! The ground's your own, my braves!'"

One of the children who attended that peculiar school writes: "We planted a garden each year and an extra one where we could pull up the plants to study how they grew. Botany was always studied out of doors and we could go out to the woods carrying picnic baskets of lunch and finally bringing them full of specimens we had gathered under her direction."

Who could forget volcanic action when a pot of boiling mush was prepared to illustrate it? Spilled milk was far from being a matter for tears. To seeing eyes there were created innumerable geographical formations — milky bays and peninsulas and islands, naturally distributed. Sand piles were used *during* school hours. Apples might be eaten in school, but they were divided, and so a lesson in fractions was simultaneously digested.

Out of her resourceful experience in teaching, Mrs.

Pollard produced a series of spellers, readers, stencil pictures, and a teacher's manual. The "Pollard Series" was adopted in practically all places where it was tried. Sarah Winter Kellogg at one time urged Mrs. Pollard to send some one to present her method of reading at a teachers' meeting. Miss Kellogg was at first chagrined when she met the tall representative, a Kentucky woman with a very noticeable accent, who was to illustrate the new way of learning to pronounce English. But she capitalized her own imperfections of diction and thus emphasized the virtues of Mrs. Pollard's system. "You will perceive befo' I have sayed ten words that my pronounciation an' my enunciation air incorrec'. I confess that at the staut — an' I explain that it is so because I did not learn to speak an' read English by the Pollud synthetic method. I stan' befo' you a livin' example of how the pronounciation an' the enunciation of a smart chil' may be spoiled for want of the Pollud. Take wahnin' by me, all you teachers, an' put the Pollud in you' schools."

Edward Everett Hale firmly championed Mrs. Pollard's methods. After an entire day with her, visiting in the suburbs of Boston where her system was used, he told her that the columns of his journal, *Lend a Hand*, were open to her at all times.

Although she was widely known in educational circles as Rebecca Pollard, her literary reputation pertains mainly to her earlier years when she was known

as Rebecca Harrington Smith, or, more popularly, Kate Harrington. Nevertheless she continued to write all her life — if not stories for children, nature studies, or articles on current politics, then textbooks and poetry. Even in her eightieth year she produced a thirty-seven page poem, *Althea, or The Morning Glory*.

Kate Harrington, the poet, was keenly patriotic and sensitive to the beauties of nature. Rich in metaphor, her verse is full of rhythm and color. In an unpublished poem relating to Iowa these couplets appear:

Here we stand on a threshold with crystal inlaid —
Its mosaic of lakes, by Omnipotence made —
With the hearth-light of sun in the azure-arched door,
And the Prairie beyond with its emerald floor.

During her later years she wrote many hymns. Ira D. Sankey, the evangelist, encouraged her in this work. Her *Songs of the Red Ribbon Club*, written in the cause of temperance, were widely used. It was probably her interest in religious matters which led to the frequent confusion of her identity with that of Josephine Pollard, a New York author who wrote chiefly on religious topics.

Although a Presbyterian, she staunchly defended Catholicism against Know-Nothingism. The religious intolerance of the period before the Civil War she thought was only one manifestation of a general social attitude that was rooted in prejudice and fanaticism. Her political and social views were already pronounced

at the age of twenty-five when her most notable book, *Emma Bartlett*, was published.

Having lived both in the North and the South, she felt qualified to judge the temper of the people in both sections. During the impressionable period of her girlhood in Kentucky she formed her views of social and political affairs. And like most people of her class and character, she learned to take politics and religion very seriously. While her home was in Louisville she was associated with slave owners who treated their negroes with kindness. "Aunt" Theodocia was a trusted member of her own household. It was out of this experience that she produced *Emma Bartlett*.

The contemporary opinion of this book was both favorable and unfavorable. "We noticed, some weeks ago, that a new work, in the style of a novel, on the exciting and immediate political themes of the day, by a lady well known, by her excellent contributions to American literature, was in press", wrote a reviewer in the *Ohio Statesman* on July 3, 1856. "It is a book of 500 pages, very neatly printed and bound, the leading feature of which is an exposition of political and religious prejudice and fanaticism as seen in Abolitionism, Know Nothingism, and kindred heresies. The great and alarming evils of these popular delusions are depicted principally in the social and domestic circles, and though the characters are fictitious in name we do not doubt that the fair authoress has had living

originals in her eye, as the characters are life-like and true delineations of personages who figure, some of them very conspicuously, at the present day and hour. The heroine, Emma Bartlett, is the off-spring of a young and lively German woman, who is driven, with her relatives, by political and religious persecution, from her own land, to seek a home in America. From the hour of her birth, which is the result of a cunning plan of deception contrived by one who disgraces the name of an 'American,' to the moment she returns to her native land to die, she illustrates through a succession of thrilling scenes, the character of a gentle, noble and gifted woman, suffering from the evils with which a corrupt social system, and an unwise and unjust proscription have surrounded her."

Nevertheless, the book was not received with unanimous approval. "We have read this book", wrote a critic in the *Cincinnati Times*, "and while we pronounce the plot an excellent one, and the style of the authoress charming in many respects, we must say she has failed to fulfill the intended mission of the book. In the selection of her characters and the language she gives them, she exhibits all the prejudice and fanaticism of that class of politicians she attempts to defend, and it is evident that her knowledge of political life, of political movements, and of political sentiments among her countrymen is far short of what is required in the construction of a stirring, effective political romance.

Nevertheless, 'Emma Bartlett' has its merits, and will no doubt have a large sale."

This reply to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is unknown to the present generation. Few copies are available, even in the large libraries of the country. Yet some people, particularly in southeastern Iowa, not only knew Rebecca Smith Pollard, even as Kate Harrington, but also cherish recollections of her novel. Three children of Mrs. Pollard remember well the "American Lady", who died but recently, on May 29, 1917, at the home of her son in Fort Madison, Iowa. She was a woman who presented observations "with an air of naiveté, impregnated with knowledge and worldly shrewdness, while, womanlike, she looked kindly upon the errors and wickedness of mankind — trying with a pleasing singleness of heart to palliate the very faults she exposed."

MARIE HAEFNER

La Follette Wins

On Wednesday evening, May 7, 1879, the Interstate Oratorical Contest was held at Iowa City. While the University of Iowa was the official host, the whole town was agog with interest. The exigencies of the occasion were met in a "liberal and gracious spirit." Women threw open their spare bedrooms to the visitors, and cooked savory dinners which were calculated to tempt even a nervous orator's frail appetite. Seats were reserved at the bank on Friday morning, and the men bought tickets until there was "standing room only" in the Opera House. A local florist shop advertised that it was "the floral magazine whence will come the bouquet ammunition used at the oratorical contest on Wednesday night, and those who want bouquets on that occasion must order them early."

There was a reason for all this activity. The Intercollegiate Oratorical Association consisted of ten thousand students in fifty colleges of the Middle West. Numerous orators had been eliminated in the preliminary contests until only six remained to compete for the final honors, representing the States of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Hence Iowa City was prepared for a burst of "silver-tongued" oratory which would satisfy the audience "that the

rare gift of human eloquence has not been denied to the present age."

Iowa City was full of people on Wednesday evening. There were visitors from the four corners of the State, from outside the State, and from the neighboring towns. Large groups came from Iowa Wesleyan at Mount Pleasant, Grinnell, and Mount Vernon. The Cornell delegation arrived in buggies and one long wagon. During the evening the "four-in-hand of the Cornell boys got tired of gnawing hoop iron, wrought nails and hitching posts, and before they left had a little run down College, Dubuque, and Burlington streets, but being strangers lost their way and were captured" in time for the return trip.

The Opera House looked its prettiest for the occasion. Aisles, stairs, and lobbies had been newly carpeted, and additional scenery and many other improvements added. "The stage presented a strikingly beautiful scene, rich in color and perfect in arrangement, a fitting surrounding for this feast of mind, voice and gesture." A capacity audience had "come to see the intellectual struggle."

At the appointed moment the buzz of conversation died down, and Reverend W. B. Craig rose to pronounce the invocation. A male quartette then sang "Who will o'er the Downs", and following this President J. L. Pickard gave a short speech of welcome in behalf of the University. "Inspired by the young

hearts about him, he assumed the right of a boy and said 'we are right glad to see you'."

After a response by Albion N. Fellows who was President of the Association, the first speaker, B. C. Cory, of Cornell College, was introduced. His oration was entitled "Science not the Soul's Teacher", and was "delivered in a manner something akin to that of Wendling, with considerable force and an easy and graceful style of gesture." The subject was one which was beginning to bother the minds of men, and the orator handled it in a way which seemed to please most of his auditors.

"The study of science," he said, "or the origin and laws of existing phenomena, is the ruling intellectual passion of this age. And false to humanity's best interests is he who would seek to check the impulse of that passion in its proper course. Grand, indeed, are the true ends of Science; for she is laying bare the foot of the statue of eternal Truth, which Sphinx-like, has lain hid from men throughout the ages. But let her votaries remember that this marvelous statue towers above the reach of spade, of chisel, and of crucible, up into the realms of mystery, yet of undimmed fact, above us, unmeasured by, and unmeasurable to our sense-bound faculties."

In poetic language the speaker went on to draw the bounds beyond which science could not pass, and slowly worked up to his conclusion. "Science may amaze.

Philosophy may astonish. Art and music may enchant. But religion alone awakens purity, fills the bosom with hope, and springs over life the halo of immortality."

The second speaker was Robert M. La Follette, of the University of Wisconsin. He spoke on "Iago", that satanic character in Shakespeare's *Othello*. From the first sound of his voice he held the undivided attention of the audience. He was "a young man rather below the ordinary height, of slight stature." His voice was "wonderfully flexible and his gesture and facial expression faultless. His analysis of the great conception of Shakespeare was grand, displaying at times the finished actor, in fact almost personifying this human type of the Devil. The audience breathlessly followed his *frappant* similes and deductions and he retired amid a storm of applause."

The subject of Iago was a daring one, for it had intrigued and baffled Shakespeare critics for years. The youthful orator gave a splendid analysis of the man's character, and clothed a very workable argument in words which were apt to the theme and sometimes touched with fire. He wasted no time in announcing his theme. "Shakespeare's Iago personifies two constituents of mind — *intellect* and *will*. These alone are the springs of his action, the source of his power. What he lacks in emotion he has gained in intellectual acuteness, but the result is deformity."

With this idea as a key, La Follette proceeded to

explore the nature of Iago's character. "The emotions are the native soil of moral life. From the feelings are grown great ethical truths, one by one, forming at last the grand body of the moral law. But Iago is emotionally a cipher, and his poverty of sentiment and wealth of intellect render him doubly dangerous. Here we have the key to his character — he is possessed of an inflexible will, of an intellect, pungent, subtle, super-sensual. He not only knows more than he feels, he knows everything, feels nothing." The speaker elaborated and illustrated these tenets with incidents from *Othello* and comparisons with *Richard III*.

He grasped the significance of Shakespeare's vague allusion to Iago's coming punishment, saying: "Iago is just beyond the reach of death and we can fancy him disappearing in the darkness of which he is a part." To have conceived "a being so super-physical, so positively devilish, so intensely infernal, that his death would be pathos — this is genius."

The conclusion was delivered with a dramatic rhythm of voice and gesture which emphasized the literary quality of his words. "And this Iago. The polished, affable, attendant; the boon companion; the supple sophist, the nimble logician; the philosopher, the moralist — the scoffing demon; the goblin whose smile is a stab and whose laugh is an infernal sneer; who has sworn eternal vengeance on virtue everywhere; who would turn cosmos into chaos. This compound of

wickedness and reason, this incarnation of intellect, this tartarean basilisk is the logical conclusion in a syllogism whose premises are 'Hell and Night'. He is a criminal climax: endow him with a single supernatural quality and he stands among the devils of fiction supreme."

The Light Guard Band struck up a lively piece, and when the audience had quieted down Miss Emma C. Bulkley, of Shurtleff College, Illinois, was announced as the next speaker. "Unsolved Problems" was the title of her oration, and "gracefully and forcibly, without fright nor fear, she soon won the rapt attention of the audience." Her premise was that "in the whole range of influences awakening human interest and affecting human welfare, none plays a more important part than the unknown. However vital and absorbing the positive elements of life and thought, they can not exclude the no less powerful impressions received from the occult and negative."

"Indeed," she concluded, "the conception of a Newton, deeming all the vast accumulations of knowledge hitherto attained as a mere handful of pebbles, gathered from a boundless shore, is far more just, more true to the relations of man with his surroundings, than that of an Alexander, sighing for other worlds to conquer."

N. B. Anderson, of Wabash College, Indiana, then spoke on "The Decay of Institutions". It was reported that he had a "capital voice and an earnest, convincing style of speaking." He held that the decay of institu-

tions was but a part of the natural progress of man. "Institutions," he said, "must conform to the growth of the people — peaceable, if possible; forcibly, if necessary. The landmarks of human progress are the bloody fields on which were fought the unnatural battles between the progressive and the conservative forces and on which the progressive always triumphed. Yet, in defiance of these facts, this interminable conflict is still kept up. There are those to-day in this enlightened age, when every impulse in man is toward progress, who are the slaves of a stupid and unreasonable conservatism."

The Quartette Club next gave the audience "musical aid to intellectual digestion". Following this, Miss Ida M. Miller, of Drury College, Missouri, spoke on "Unlimited Culture". One who was present said that "a graceful brunette bowed to the audience and delivered an earnest plea on behalf of her sex. Her voice is good and well modulated, and at times she fairly thrilled the audience with her brilliant climaxes, and the explosion of gorgeous rockets of rhetoric." Her impassioned declamation ended with these triumphant words: "The shadowy clouds that for ages have hung threateningly over us, enveloping us in their dismal, chilling folds, are lifting; and through the riftings of their murky masses, see! The Star of Promise. That Star — Unlimited Culture — Bright Star of Promise! Harbinger of our deliverance! Universal education! We hail thee!"

The last speaker was J. A. Barber, of Oberlin College, Ohio, whose topic was "Mahometanism and its Enemies". The young man "rushed impetuously through and made a strenuous effort to command that general attention given the others." He contended that Mahometanism had exerted a beneficial influence upon mankind. After mentioning numerous examples, he made an effective plea for religious tolerance. "Although we may not understand why the Saracen sword glittered in the once fairest portion of our earth; although we may not understand, why the blazoned banners of the Moslems waved over the birth-place of the Christian religion, why the columns of Mahometan Mosques now cast their shadows over so large a section of the world; — yet, after all, would it not be better to conclude, with Richelieu, the old white-haired cardinal of France:

Come, let us own it; there is One above
Who sways the harmonious mysteries of the world."

While he was speaking, the audience was trying to decide upon the winning orator. During the interval while the markings of the judges were being computed, the band played and the audience anxiously awaited the verdict. At last President Fellows stepped forward, the murmuring ceased, and he announced that the gold medal was awarded to Robert M. La Follette, of the State University of Wisconsin. This statement was received with spontaneous and hearty applause. J. A. Barber, of Oberlin College, Ohio, won the silver medal.

The judges, Wm. T. Harris, C. W. Slagle, Wm. H. Gibson, and Geo. J. Boal, marked the orations on thought, composition, and delivery. On the composite score, Robert M. La Follette, of Wisconsin, ranked first; J. A. Barber, of Ohio, second; A. B. Anderson, of Indiana, third; Ida M. Miller, of Missouri, fourth; B. C. Cory, of Iowa, fifth; and Emma Bulkley, of Illinois, sixth. Thus in a moment was written the result of weeks of preparation, practice, and anxiety. The Interstate Oratorical Contest was over.

On the following morning a convention of the delegates was held and new officers of the association were elected. It was decided that the next contest should be at Oberlin, Ohio, in 1880, on the first Wednesday in May. The Iowa City contest was reported to be "a success, intellectually and financially". Over \$400 was taken in, and after "all expenses were paid, the sum of \$150.00 remained; enough to purchase the "medals" for this year and last."

Reverend F. L. Kenyon of the Congregational Church delivered a timely sermon on the oratorical contest. Commending the effort he said, "It speaks of an awakening desire for excellency in the art of oratory. It looks to greater care and more assiduous attention to the manner as well as the matter of speech." Of La Follette particularly he spoke with approbation. "He who by the verdict of all took the first prize was the most natural in action and therefore the most ef-

fective. His words fitted his thought and his thought filled his words, so that they came to the auditor not harsh and piercing, but round and full. The image of Iago was so in his soul, the truth concerning Iago was so in his mind, that he was able to present to the hearer the truth and the image in such a way as to make them appear living realities."

It proved to be a happy circumstance that young La Follette won the coveted medal. Years later in an autobiography he wrote: "When I returned to Madison, university feeling ran to so high a pitch that the students met me at the train and drew the carriage up the hill to the university where I was formally welcomed; and that evening I was given a reception in the State-house at which there were speeches by William F. Vidas, the foremost citizen of Wisconsin and afterward United States Senator, by members of the university faculty, and others."

All this was reported in the papers, and a few years later the notoriety thus gained helped La Follette, then a penniless law-graduate, to win his fight for the office of District Attorney of Dane County, Wisconsin. The triumph in the Interstate Oratorical Contest at Iowa City had given him "something of a claim to recognition" on his "own account". It had started the political ball rolling which culminated in his leadership of the Progressive faction in the United States Senate and his candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

PAULINE GRAHAME

Old Flower Gardens

In early autumn, 1846, a lowly covered wagon left Strykersville, New York. That wagon contained my grandfather, grandmother, and mother to be in future years. Besides the little family and their household goods, the capacious wagon carried a variety of shrubs, such as lilacs, spirea, flowering cloves, and snowballs, roots of blush roses, bulbs of tiger and corn lilies, catalpa pods, and other seeds. It was sentiment methinks that mothered the desire to make the new home like the old.

First in Indiana and later in Iowa (1850), these shrubs and vines took root and flourished. Joseph Lawrence and his son Alpheus were remarkably successful in leaving with their homesteads a heritage of sentiment and beauty for their descendants. The catalpa seed multiplied in abundance. The lilies spread, the roses grew luxuriantly, and the lilacs developed into huge bushes. From the old farm in Bennington Township, Black Hawk County, roots and bulbs have been transplanted in the gardens of many friends, not only in that community but as far and wide as former neighbors have gone to dwell. Back in Strykersville, to this day, the old lilac bush and white and yellow roses still live on the Lawrence family homestead. Only last September they gave promise of surviving many more years.

From the very first, floriculture was a part of the active work of civilizing Iowa, but it was not until the period of greater stress was over that the flower garden became an integral part of the average homestead. Gradually through the years our mothers and grandmothers added to their collections of old fashioned flowers until round about the house and in the yard a riot of color prevailed all through the summer. Zinnias, marigolds, larkspur, fever-few, strawflowers, hollyhocks, lady's-slippers, snowballs, bachelor's-buttons, spirea, and lilies — corn lilies, tiger lilies, spider lilies — not to mention the morning glories and the "California rose" that bloomed so freshly and peacefully at the kitchen windows. Each flourished in its own way, lending color and fragrance to the neighborhood.

But when this informal beauty had attained its finest expression, evil times fell upon the land. About 1900, in both town and country, a period of wholesale eradication of vines, shrubs, and bushes began. Lawns must be continuous in town. No longer the dividing line of "this is mine" and "that is yours". Down came the lattice and picket fences, out came the hedgerows. "Let the sunshine in" seemed to be the slogan of the hour, and merciless was the slaughter.

And why? The little towns were growing into modern cities. No longer obstreperous cows on their way to pasture or fractious steers being driven to the

slaughter house chopped up the lawns. From the rear of residence lots no longer came the grunt of the pig which ate the garbage and would next winter fill the family larder. No longer were the vines and shrubs needed to screen the "horse lot", where Dobbin was wont to kick up his heels after a day's work. Alas, Bidy and her companion, Chanticleer, seem to be the sole survivors of those days before the decay of home production for home consumption which once existed on every village street. But now a reaction against unplanted yards is gaining popularity.

Probably the elimination of live stock has even contributed to this result. And the automobile which has brought the whole country within the range of everybody's vision, is another potent factor. What person who sees a beauty spot beside the highway does not wish to emulate or reproduce some special phase of that beauty? It is the power of suggestion.

"Flowers" was always a topic of conversation, summer or winter, among the pioneer women. To every corner of Iowa they brought flowering plants from the South, from New England, and from Europe. These they cherished, and to their own familiar stock they added others that their neighbors brought.

The bay, or bow, window was a conspicuous part of the house. That window, with its shelves of plants, was the pride not only of the women but of every member of the family. Especially were these flowers a

pleasure to the women on the farms. When the family went visiting on Sunday, or when the housewife slipped away on a summer day through the back pasture to see her neighbor, she carried home not a score card and bridge prize, but a few "slips" carefully wrapped in a bit of moist cloth and newspaper. If perchance she brought a geranium slip, she sometimes slit the stem of the plant when she "set it out" and inserted a grain of wheat or an oat, to better insure growth. To exchange slips or flowers was to establish a bond of friendship, and the proud possessor delighted in telling who gave this or that.

In the immediate vicinity of my childhood home there were five distinct types of flower gardens. Each was typical of the nationality of the owner. One grew true to old Holland. Tulips, hyacinths, and those charming little Johnny-jump-ups grew, not in a separate garden, but in beds in the vegetable garden.

Nathan B. Choate, of Canadian culture, had a very different idea of planting. The lawn proper contained a long, somewhat narrow, piece of ground. Sweeping up in a semicircle on either side were rows of blue spruce. This left a large open space where the young people played croquet or dancing games at summer parties. The house was entirely hidden from the roadway. Curiosity to know "who was passing by" certainly was not a prominent trait of this family. Behind the screen of trees at the low front stone doorstep,

white lilacs, spirea, and yellow roses grew. At the back of the house, in the yard, Jacob's-coat, live-for-ever, and striped grass were planted in round beds around the trees. There bloomed the shasta daisies, poppies, and pansies — pansies, yellow and purple, with faces "as large as saucers". If guests were invited to tea during the summer there was a frosted "real blue glass" slipper filled with pansies for the centerpiece of the tea table.

The garden of Joseph Schenk, our German friend, was one most frequently enjoyed. In shape it was round, and inclosed by a picket fence. It was not placed in the lawn or yard proper, but in a spot between the house and barns. The "nigger head" smoke house and vegetable garden were near by. In this garden, the family was wont to gather, in truly German style. There was a small table and several benches. Here were read the letters that came from over the sea. These letters, no matter what the hour of their arrival, were never opened until the entire family was assembled. This was a puzzling ceremony. If guests were present the letters were read and translated for ears unfamiliar with the language. In the middle of the garden was a round bed of perennial moss roses, with a towering centerpiece of cypress. The intricate web of string which supported the red star-covered vine fascinated us children. Humming-birds sipped nectar from petunias and four-o'clocks.

The English garden of William Palmer was perhaps the most unique. It was a replica of an English estate. The grounds were spacious and inclosed by a hedge row, with latticed archways over the entrance gates. Around the house were vines that grew on racks and trellises. The Osage hedge was most attractive with its large green balls which grew where the hedge was untrimmed. Amid the strawflowers, cockscomb, and honeysuckles was, wonder of wonders, a fountain. This was, I believe, the first fountain in Black Hawk County. The water came from a storage tank high up on the tower of a windmill near by. Proud peacocks strutted about this beauty spot and rent the air for more than a mile with their shrill screams. They were weather forecasters. The neighbors planned their work according to Palmer's peacocks. On the opposite side of the house was a grove wherein deer and antelope were kept.

But our own garden was naturally the most familiar. Here mingled the old South and the Yankee East. The entire grounds occupied several acres of land. In profusion grew groves and ornamental trees and bushes, with stone flower beds, or "rock gardens", scattered here and there. At the front gate stood grandfather's famous catalpa tree. What fun to sit beneath it in June amid a shower of fragrant blossoms. A long pathway lined with shrubs and flowers led from the front door of the large house on the knoll to the white gate with its heavy boxed posts. On either side grew sweet-

briar roses and purple and white lilacs. Down that long path grew corn lilies, spider lilies, tiger lilies, spirea — all brought from York State in the covered wagon — day lilies, pink lilies, lilies of the valley, snowballs, bouncing-betsey, fireball, and the French lilac bush.

Scattered about the lawn were blush roses, cinnamon roses, flowering almonds, flowering currants, and the yellow clove bush. Here the Seven Sisters and Prairie Queen graced their trellis, there the climbing red rose and white rose, while yellow and white tea roses and the moss rose with its thorns were everywhere. A huge trellis bore a trumpet vine brought from the ancestral Wilson home in Mount Nebo, North Carolina, and fire-cracker flowers grew beside clematis, both purple and white. The Black Knight and American Beauty rubbed petals with the bleeding heart and phlox.

Half way down the path were two lilac bushes which formed the gateway to the flower garden. No tongue can tell of the riot of flowers that grew in beds, row after row. The paths between were carefully swept. The old-fashioned New England flowers — hollyhocks, touch-me-nots, tube roses, begonias, nasturtiums, sweet elysium, sweet peas, bachelor's-buttons, four-o'clocks, geraniums, acacias, cactus (old hen and chickens, of course) — grew beside the flowering maple, elephant ear, fairy roses, and beds of tea roses and gladioli.

The gladioli were of five kinds — "large improved varieties", they were called. The colors were salmon,

pink, red, white, and a deep rich cream with lavender markings. To-day, blended into a harmonious unity those gladioli are one — one beautiful, glorious, red, glad gladiolus. It is known as "Wilson-Schmidt" and may be seen in dozens of yards, as well as in the gardens of Iowa State College. What a beautiful inheritance that flower has been. The original bulbs were purchased forty-two years ago.

But the love of flowers was not confined to cultivated kinds. My father, William Alexander Wilson, was particularly partial to native plants. The wild rose dared to venture through the fence into his garden, and a plot of prairie sod has been kept undisturbed "that the hand of man shall never mar this beauty nature gave". But, alas, this sanctuary of prairie flowers may soon be doomed, for the highway builders have surveyed a sweeping curve that will substitute cement and speed for grass and beauty.

One day in 1893 a shot-wounded crane was found on the farm. That incident confirmed my father in his belief that some place would have to be provided to shelter the birds and game driven from their native haunts by hunters. And so a wild life refuge was set aside on the Wilson family homestead of four hundred acres, originally purchased from the government. It is a great white pine grove, in the opinion of a United States forestry expert "the finest planted pine grove in the Mississippi Valley".

A few weeks ago dozens of birds were singing and nesting happily, safe from the hunter, in this white pine grove. The oriole was swinging in her nest, while the blue herons were cramming the gapping mouths of their young. Red squirrels, flying squirrels, woodchucks, and rabbits scurried beneath the trees. Berries abound and a black cherry grove planted more than forty years ago with the thought of food for the birds, as well as wood for the kitchen stove, keeps the birds from being destructive to crops. Woe to a hunter if he be found within this sacred confine. The world passes by this natural paradise, but to those who know and understand it is an unproclaimed memorial.

G. PERLE SCHMIDT

Comment by the Editor

THE PARADOX OF NAMES AND DATES

Reduce the most significant event to final terms, omit the misery and the glory, ignore the causes and effects, and all that then remains are the simple facts of someone, somewhere, sometime. King John at Runnymede in 1215 put his seal upon the Magna Charta. As matter consists of molecules, as music is sound, and sculpture form, so human deeds may be described in elemental terms. Delve into the mines of past achievement, smelt up the ore of circumstance, skim off the superficial dross, and only the gold of personality is left. People, time, and place are the fundamental elements of history.

In certain realms the truth is more or less apparent. Let one fact be known, like the force of gravity, and an explanation of the universe can be deduced with logical precision. The mathematician may verify his answer by simply reversing the process. According to the universal rules of sentence structure, it is inherently right that the number of the predicate should depend upon the subject. No further test is necessary. The simple axiom contains the proof of its own validity.

But when the historian goes in search of truth, he

must be aware of other evidence than the simple facts of person, time, and place. Guided by nothing but the fundamental elements of history, he can not be sure the facts are right. Places like Red Bud or Rome have no natural significance. Other facts must be adduced to give them meaning.

A date alone might indicate the time when innumerable events transpired. To the question, "What happened on the Fourth of July in 1826?" a multitude of answers might be right. The day of the week was Tuesday; John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and many other people died that day; no doubt some more were born; and Liberty Bell was tolled in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the nation's independence. The number of the day and year itself is meaningless.

The same thing may be said concerning people. In the records of the past, Napoleon is nothing but a name. Sam Hill, John Brown, Dan Webster, and Erasmus Whifflestilt might all be famous men or unknown dolts for all their names imply. Only in relation to time and place could they have any personality, and even then their actuality might not be entirely certain. Chicago and 1859 do not identify John Brown beyond a doubt, though he was there that year.

When Irving B. Richman was describing anti-slavery sentiment in *Ioway to Iowa*, he discovered that a novel, *Emma Bartlett*, was written in 1856 by an Iowa woman. Contemporary advertisements indicated that "Kate

Harrington" was the author's name and that she lived in Keokuk. There were all of the elements — name and place and date.

But how could he be sure that they were accurate? Perhaps the book itself would supply an explanation. Though the title page was noncommittal, the notice of copyright verified the date but gave protection to R. H. Smith instead of the reputed author.

Moreover, the confusion was further complicated by an assertion that Josephine Pollard wrote the book. There was an author of that name. Apparently "Kate Harrington" was a pseudonym and R. H. Smith might have been a friend or relative. Persistent inquiry revealed nothing to contradict the authorship of Josephine Pollard, and so to her the book was credited by Mr. Richman. From all the facts available it was entirely reasonable; yet in two essentials the statement was erroneous. *Emma Bartlett* was actually written by Rebecca Harrington Smith, later the wife of James Pollard, and in 1856 she lived in Farmington instead of Keokuk.

What paradox is this? The very essence of history consists of names and dates, but isolate them from their associations and their whole significance is lost.

J. E. B.

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