

The Bible

Believing that "religion, morality, and knowledge" are "necessary to good government", the people of Iowa have always gone to church, supported righteousness, and provided the means of education. The ideals of circuit-riding days still prevail in the days of the Y. M. C. A. Faith, virtue, and truth — these three are esteemed above all. The prayer of the pioneer is the prayer of tomorrow. — The Editor.

CREEDS AND SECTS

Wherever the Yankees had gone they had gone if possible in groups, church groups, groups carrying Congregationalism — Congregational academy, college, and town. Progress for the Yankee in Iowa was not rapid. In 1833 Julius A. Reed, a Mayflower descendant, and Aratus Kent of Yale preached at the Dubuque Mines. In 1836 Asa Turner, of Massachusetts and Yale, preached at Fort Madison. In 1838 Reuben Gaylord, of Connecticut and Yale, wrote regarding the future State of Iowa: "Our object will be twofold — to preach the gospel, and to open a school at the outset, which can soon be elevated to the rank of a college".

In 1843 there were in Iowa at least three hundred

straight-out Congregationalists, among them the "Iowa Band", eleven strong, with Father Alden B. Robbins, Iowa's Puritan priest, and William Salter, Iowa's Puritan historian. Iowa was not the place the Puritan had thought to find. He had thought, writes one of the Iowa Band, to find a country with "recollections of Christian homes fresh in their memories all eager to hear the gospel". What was it that the Puritan did find?

Freedom — a freedom so large that it left him gasping. We found, said our brother of the Iowa Band, "a people starting homes, institutions, usages, laws, customs, in a new territory; gathered from all parts of the country and the world; coming together with different tastes, prejudices, ideas and plans; and representing all shades of belief and disbelief."

Though "Congregationalism did not find congenial soil and atmosphere in early Iowa", there was a religious body that was more than welcome — the Methodists. Aided by "friendly sinners" this body built in Ioway at Dubuque in 1834 the first Protestant meeting house, true though it be that in 1833 preaching in private dwellings at Dubuque had been inaugurated by the aggressive Presbyterian, Aratus Kent.

Of religionists in early Iowa who were native Americans, the Methodists and the Baptists led. They gave to the Commonwealth the "camp meeting" and the "revival". "Upon the right bank of the Des Moines

river . . . above the mouth of Chequest creek", says a pioneer of 1837, "there was selected our 'first temple', since known as 'The old church tree' . . . This first service was . . . widely heralded and largely attended. There were perhaps a hundred people, including many Indians" — the latter on the edges of the crowd with blankets over their shoulders. "I seldom pass that elm tree to this day", observes our pioneer, "but that I unconsciously look at its roots as I did that day at Mr. Hill's [the preacher's] direction when he screamed: 'Oh sinner, Look! Look! (bending with hands nearly to the ground) while I take off the hatch of HELL!' . . . He did this after so arranging matters that I was sure young people in general, and I, in particular, were but a few inches above the rotten ridge pole of the burning pit. What a relief when he quit".

Among the foreigners who came into Iowa (largely in Biblical groups) during the late forties and early fifties were many Hollanders — rebels against Ecclesiasticism. The men were "broad-shouldered" and "in velvet jackets"; the women "fair-faced" and "in caps". Pella was their destination.

In 1849-1850 Iowa welcomed from Hungary, under Count Ujházy, a small group of the followers of Louis Kossuth. They founded New Buda in Decatur County. Kossuth himself was to have come, but did not.

Then there was Étienne Cabet of France, enthusiast for democracy, the equality whereof must, he insisted,

extend to property. Was not Jesus himself an Equalitarian? At Nauvoo, Cabet purchased of the Mormons their recently vacated lands and buildings. His colony, called "Icaria", was a Utopia, a Plato's Republic. Purity of morals, sweetness in philosophy, sublimity in faith — such were the outlines. "We are Christians", announced Cabet, "the Gospel is our law". Life was to palpitate with joy. There was to be music by instrument and voice, the theatre, dancing, and public games.

A book by Cabet, *The Voyage and Adventures of Lord Causdal in Icaria*, reached a group of Biblical Germans — "The Community of True Inspiration" — and to find Icaria they set forth in 1842. They came to New York, and later (1855) to Iowa. There in Iowa County they bought land — 18,000 acres. They laid out a village — an Icaria — not gay; not a place of music, of dancing, of the theatre; but a place of Teutonic austerity. Amana they called it — "Keep the Faith".

The followers of Kossuth quitted Iowa as the followers of Cabet entered it; but the French under Cabet had themselves been forestalled by other Frenchmen. Already there had settled near Dubuque a band of monks from an ancient Norman foundation — La Trappe. *Their* devoirs were three: Abstinence, Silence, Labor.

Driven from France by illiberality, the brotherhood

in 1848 sought America. In 1849 Bishop Loras of Dubuque offered them land near that city. A building of medieval Gothic — white stone walls, arched windows, buttresses and spires — crowning a hill backed by trees and green fields. Such to-day is the Iowa monastery of La Trappe.

Amana and La Trappe! La Trappe at Dubuque permits to its voiceless votaries the inspiration of the eye : "cloistered avenues", gardens aflame with salvia, roses, and peonies. Amana permits to votaries a German garden: old-fashioned four o'clocks, lady slippers, marigolds, and geraniums.

Among Catholic institutions near Dubuque, aside from La Trappe, St. Donatus greets us — chapel and seminary. Long has it rested in the little valley of Têtes des Morts. Thirteen priests it has supplied to the Catholic Church, and sixty-three sisters for the veil. It treasures a relic from the skeleton of good Donatus himself (dead over a thousand years). From the chapel there ascends to a Golgotha a winding way marked by altar stations of the Cross.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Education in early Iowa was the higher education: it was of "Bible" inception and built from the top down. It was rather markedly Congregational, and as such long lived. The oldest academy of this denomination was Denmark Academy established in 1843, opened

in 1845; and the oldest college was Iowa College, opened in 1848 at Davenport and afterwards transferred to Grinnell, there to expand under President George F. Magoun.

Not that in Iowa the Congregationalists monopolized higher education. The Methodists began early to establish academies and colleges (1842-1894): Iowa Wesleyan University, Iowa City College, Cornell College, Upper Iowa University, Simpson College, Morningside College. Colleges, too, were established by the Presbyterians, by the Baptists, by the Disciples of Christ, by the United Brethren, by the Friends, by the Lutherans, and by the Catholics.

These academies and colleges, these institutions generated at the top, did they serve their end? They were instruments of culture, and owing to them, or to colleges like them outside Iowa, there was a surprising culture in pioneer Iowa towns. Iowa's first Governor, Robert Lucas, said after a tour of the Territory in 1838: "I had supposed her population was the same as generally found in frontier settlements — hospitable, yet rude; but in this I am most agreeably disappointed". It is the conclusion of James Bryce that "the multiplication of small institutions in the West with uncontrolled freedom of teaching has done a work which a few state-regulated Universities might have failed to do".

Meanwhile the conditions of education in Iowa at

the bottom (the conditions of secular education) were far from good. In 1843 Governor John Chambers expressed chagrin at the "little interest the important subject of education excites among us". In 1847 James W. Grimes noted with disgust that no provision had been made by the First General Assembly of the State for building schoolhouses by law, nor for the support of primary education by taxes.

Then (1856-1858), with Grimes as Governor, and Horace Mann as mentor, improvement set in. Yet, as late as 1902 the president of the State Teachers' Association felt warranted in saying in his inaugural: "I believe that three-fourths of the teaching of the rural schools of Iowa is absolutely worthless. . . . it is the experience of every man and woman here". This, despite the fact that in 1870 Iowa showed the least illiteracy of any of the States.

The first Iowa school for ends distinctively secular was one conducted in 1830 on the Half-Breed Tract. This was the first school in Iowa. It was housed in a room supplied by Isaac Galland and was taught by Berryman Jennings of Warsaw, Illinois. By 1840 there were in Iowa 63 primary and common schools with 1500 pupils.

But as late as 1868, nearly one-third of Iowa's 373,000 school population was not registered in any public institution. In 1868 Iowa had at least ninety-four private and denominational schools with 5800

students working largely "from the top down" — to say nothing of fifty-five "academies and colleges". As Clarence R. Aurner reminds us, the public school was distrusted on its "moral" side. In the public mind as late as the seventies, and even later, morality was closely associated with religion, with the Bible. This, despite the contention by the board of education in Dubuque that "the Free Public School can be governed and pervaded by moral ennobling influences". In 1858 Judge Charles Mason, Iowa's veteran jurist (then a member of the State Board of Education), was in favor of making the Bible "a standing text-book in every school", and to this the Board so far assented as to forbid the exclusion of the Bible from the schools. The next year, however, the State Teachers' Association declared that "the Bible should be read daily in the public schools".

Biblical at the outset, education in Iowa continues in a degree still Biblical. To-day the Catholic, the Quaker, the Hollander, the Lutheran, seeks to keep the training of youth under denominational control; and this, in the case of the Hollander and the Lutheran, to the extent of fostering the use of the Dutch and German tongues.

Shrines in early Iowa were denominational. But one there was that was undenominational — Amity College in Page County. Here early Iowa had one altar to the Unknown God.

AN IOWA PRAYER

July Fourth, 1888, on the occasion of the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Creation of the Territory of Iowa and of the One Hundred and Twelfth Anniversary of the Independence of the United States:

OUR FATHER, OUR SAVIOR, OUR HELPER! WE THANK THEE, AS WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE OUR EARLY SETTLEMENT AND ALSO THE BIRTHDAY OF OUR NATIONAL EXISTENCE, THAT THOU ART THE GOD OF ALL THE NATIONS ON THIS BROAD EARTH. WE THANK THEE FOR THE OPEN BIBLE. WE THANK THEE FOR OUR COUNTRY, FOR THE FLAG OF OUR COUNTRY, THE ONE FLAG OF A UNITED NATION. WE THANK THEE FOR OUR COMMON SCHOOLS AND CHRISTIAN COLLEGES. WE THANK THEE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE DISGRACE AND CURSE OF SLAVERY. WE THANK THEE FOR OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME — RIVER AND FOREST AND PRAIRIE. WE THANK THEE THAT THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS AND DEFENDERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE OUR GOD; THAT ALL CHRISTIAN AND MORAL, PATRIOTIC AND DECENT MEN MAY BE UNITED AGAINST THE ONE GREAT REMAINING FOE TO OUR LAND, AND EVEN THE WORLD — THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC AND HABIT. MAY THE GOD WHO CAN TURN THE HEARTS OF MEN, EVEN AS THE RIVERS OF WATER ARE TURNED, INCLINE US TO LIVE TO HIS HONOR AND PRAISE!