

The **P**ALIMPSEST

MARCH 1931

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Ioway to Iowa

IRVING B. RICHMAN

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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Ioway to Iowa

James Bryce once suggested that the annals of Rhode Island offered a remarkable opportunity for a philosophical historian. In response to that idea, Irving B. Richman interpreted the history of the little New England Commonwealth as "a study in separatism". Impressed with the historical significance of the American States, he later wrote a volume on the Spanish and Mexican régime in California. And now, in *Ioway to Iowa: the Genesis of a Corn and Bible Commonwealth*, Mr. Richman tells the story of his native State. The history of Iowa, no less than the annals of Rhode Island and California, is entitled to literary treatment and philosophical interpretation.

In the history of every Commonwealth, some particular characteristics figure so prominently in the course of events that they seem to symbolize the temper of the people and the significance of the State. To find these keys with which to reveal the dominant influences in the growth of a community is the fascinat-

ing task of the historian. Mr. Richman, seeking an explanation of Iowa even in the formative times of Ioway, finds an open sesame in the prodigality of nature and the severely religious attitude of the people, in Production and Puritanism, in Corn and the Bible.

The title of his book, *Ioway to Iowa*, is as descriptive as it is intriguing, as indicative of the history of this State as it is characteristic of Mr. Richman's subtlety of expression. The Western Sea is the motif, pervading the pages like the theme of symphonic music. The whole book is as impressionistic as a motion picture, and equally vivid.

The State Historical Society of Iowa is pleased to present this newest and most distinctive volume in its family of publications. The book has a beauty of appearance, a charm of style, and a wealth of information that deserve a wide acquaintance. To that end certain portions are reprinted in this number of THE PALIMPSEST by way of introduction.

Moreover, *Ioway to Iowa* has been selected as the theme for Iowa History Week. It is hoped that this double-sized March PALIMPSEST (the April number will not be devoted to this topic as originally planned) will serve not merely as a kaleidoscopic view of characteristic Iowa scenes and people, but as an inducement to read the whole story of our "Corn and Bible Commonwealth".

J. E. B.

The Rising Sun

It is a glorious day, the seventeenth of June, 1673. Louis Jolliet and Father Marquette glide in their bark canoe out of the Wisconsin River on to the broad Mississippi. They are the first white men to see the land of Ioway.—The Editor.

“Here we are”, exclaims Father Marquette, “on this so renowned River”. . . Seven days drop by, and seven nights: seven days at the paddle (in the sun); seven nights with the owl (beneath a moon); seven days and nights of the unknown; when, lo! the eighth day and with it a consummation. If Iowa will not contrive for itself an entrance upon the stage, Jolliet and Marquette will contrive one for it. They will prompt the action.

Before them lies a path with the print of a human foot. They are startled, writes Parkman, by a sight often so fearful in the waste and the wilderness — the print of a human foot. They take the path and come upon a river. It is the Iowa (Lower or Cedar-Iowa) with a village (that of the Peouarea) on the bank. They shout aloud. Out from the cabins pour “wild men”. Four aged ones advance bearing tobacco pipes. Measuredly and in silence advance the men. “Who are you?” hails Father Marquette. “We are Illinois”,

they answer and invite the strangers to follow them. At the door of a cabin stands an aged one. Standing erect, and stark naked, with his hands extended and lifted toward the sun as if to protect himself from its rays, he exclaims, "How beautiful the sun is, O frenchman, when thou comest to visit us!" Braves and warriors fill the cabin. They "devour" the strangers "with their eyes". The pipe is passed.

Jolliet and Marquette proceed to a second village of the Peouarea. Again the pipe is passed. "We are journeying", says the Father, "peacefully to visit the nations dwelling on the River as far as the Sea". The Indians dance the Calumet — the Peace Dance

Ni-na ha-ni, ni-na ha-ni, ni-na ha-ni, na-ni, on-go

It is the end of June, about three o'clock in the afternoon, notes the Father, when "we take leave of our Illinois. . . . We embark in the sight of all the people".

Iowa — so evasive, so wary of the footlights — has come forward, has it not, nevermore quite to efface itself?

Iowaland

A country of mystery and beauty lay between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Zealous Frenchmen, "agonizing" toward the Western Sea, passed far to the north or, following the river, detoured southward. The region in between was little known, though the Indians bore them tales of sunny slopes and pleasant streams, of mighty herds and far horizons. A few bold traders ventured far in quest of beaver pelts, but a century or more elapsed before the soldiers and explorers defined the boundaries of Iowaland.—The Editor.

NEW YET OLD

Ioway in 1673 was new — new topographically — all but a fraction of an eighth of it. This fraction lay wholly in the northeast and was old: old by hundreds of thousands of years — pre-glacial in fact. So old was it that its face like many old faces was wrinkled and seamed, scarred and gashed. The gashes, some of them, drove deep — six or seven hundred feet. They broke the region into shapes fantastic and picturesque — escarpments, buttresses, columns, towers, castles.

Old as Ioway was in the northeast, in the west it was new again. Here the Missouri (Pekitanoui or

Muddy Water) writhed through a wide floodplain; and here Nature had reared structures in Beauty's counterfeit — "peaks and knobs of wind-drift".

But the glory of Ioway lay neither in its east nor in its west: it lay in the Great Between, in its Mesopotamia, its Prairies.

To the north, from basin and bowl, flamed lake and lakelet: Spirit Lake and the Okobojis; Clear Lake; Swan Lake; Twin Lakes; Silver Lake; Storm Lake; Wall Lake; what lake not? Deer stole to these lakes; and into them swept migrating fowl — wild swans, wild geese, wild ducks.

Then there were Ioway's three watersheds. Eastward into the Mississippi flowed the streams Des Moines, Skunk, Iowa, Wapsipinicon, Upper Iowa, and Turkey; while westward into the Missouri, or into the Big Sioux, flooded the Nishnabotna, Boyer River, the Little Sioux, Floyd River, and Rock River. As for the third watershed, it lay to the south and southwest, and gave rise to the rivers Chariton, Grand River, little Platte, and Nodaway.

A compelling feature of the new Ioway was grasses, flowers, and birds. Everywhere grasses! Everywhere flowers! Everywhere birds! Birds golden and in whirlwinds; or lone and in mid-air balanced; or unseen, yet making the welkin ring from up amid the sunshine. Midsummer stilled the birds, but the grasses and the flowers it flung in riot to the horizon's rim.

The prairies knew beauty. They knew also mystery and terror. The mirage they knew; and fire; and the whirlstorm; and the cold. Loneliness stalked upon them as it stalks upon the desert and the sea.

Of the streams of Ioway the chief were the Iowa and the Des Moines. Loitering for long stretches at the prairie level, they sought on a sudden canyon depths. Matted and tangled on their edges, their uplands were as open to the sunlight as a park — uplands that bore oaks lordly enough to have sheltered Robin Hood.

THE BISON

The prairies confessed a monarch — the Bison. Before him other wild life — deer, elk, bear, cat — cowered and withdrew. Bulk, shagginess, horns — these served the bison's state; these joined to render him redoubted.

Beyond dispute the bison or buffalo roamed Ioway. But was Ioway a land of the bison? "They are scattered about the prairie in herds", wrote Father Marquette. "I have seen one of 400". When attacked, "they catch a man on their Horns, if they can, toss Him in the air, and then throw him on the ground, after which they trample him underfoot, and kill him". Charlevoix writes that, "the river *Moingona* issues from the midst of an immense meadow, which swarms with Buffaloes and other wild beasts". Moreover, by

1728, or before, the Iowa River had come to bear the name *Rivière aux Boeufs* (Bison or Buffalo River). But aside from the foregoing nowhere seemingly is there to be found mention of the buffalo as in numbers exceeding a few score at any one time or place. In 1835 a leader of the United States Dragoons, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, crossed Ioway from the Des Moines River into southeastern Minnesota; but he saw buffalo only once, and of these his troopers killed but five or six.

In short, it was not uncommon in frontier Iowa to find elk; deer were well-nigh universal; bear, panther, and the lynx might be met; but nowhere were there to be found to any extent bison.

Why?

Ioway like Wisconsin and Illinois was a prairie land. Unlike western Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Nebraska, it was not a plains land. It differed from the latter in its grasses. The prime grass for the buffalo, the grass of the plains, was the "buffalo grass", which in some slight measure grew also in Iowa's northwest. This grass (*buchloe dactyloides*), when obtainable, formed "the *pièce de résistance* of the bison's bill of fare". It was "good all the year round". It was unexcelled for fat-producing, and "enabled the bison to exist in such absolutely countless numbers as characterized his occupancy of the great Plains".

But whatever in the way of resistance to cold may

have been true of the "buffalo grass" of Iowa's northwest (the little there was of it) the other and far more abundant grasses of that region could not endure frost: indeed, they became practically worthless upon its advent. "The grass", notes Captain Allen in September, 1844, when crossing what are now Lyon and Plymouth counties, "has been so much deadened by the many frosts, that it no longer gives the horses a good subsistence".

Buffalo on the plains? Buffalo by the tens of thousands! Buffalo in mad and charging armies! Buffalo in furious individual combats! Lusty bulls each at other, heads down, tails on high, pawing up the ground, and tossing it on their horns! All amid a bellowing, a roaring, that rocked the land!

But in Iowa?

Threading the tall green grass they go,
To and fro, to and fro.
And painted Indians in a row,
With arrow and bow, arrow and bow,
Truly they made a gallant show
Across the prairie's bright green flow,
Warriors painted indigo,
black buffalo

Long ago.

THE EMERGENCE OF IOWALAND

Between the years 1803 and 1833 Ioway, though yet a wilderness, felt stirrings toward white supremacy. West of the Mississippi in 1804 there was erected the District of Louisiana, and in 1805 this District became Louisiana Territory. Then in 1812 Louisiana Territory became the Territory of Missouri, from which in 1819 there fell away the Territory of Arkansas, leaving a truncated Missouri Territory whence in 1821 there fell away the State of Missouri, leaving instead a No-Man's Land fraught with Ioway.

In 1804 Lewis and Clark, mounting the Missouri in keel boats, passed the Iowa stream Nodaway and the Nishnabotna and by July 21st were at the mouth of the great river Platte. Opposite the mouth of the Platte lay Ioway, and on the 22nd the party (fifty in all) pitched in Ioway their camp. Here they raised the "American collours". They pitched in Ioway some ten or eleven successive camps, and took note among other things of the Little Sioux or Stone River which their guide ("Old Dorion") told them passed through a lake called D'Esprits — Lake of Spirits. Sergeant Floyd of the expedition died on August 20th and was buried at a spot now within the limits of Sioux City. At a bluff in Nebraska the explorers held a council with members of the Otoe tribe to make known to the Indians the "Change of Government" due to the purchase of Louisiana, and to express "the wishes

of our government to Cultivate friendship with them".

Following Lewis and Clark there came up the Missouri in 1811 the Astor expedition carrying two men of mark — John Bradbury, English naturalist, and Henry M. Brackenridge, American literateur. Major Stephen H. Long of the Topographical Engineers ascended the river in 1819. He was followed in 1825 by General Henry Atkinson, and in 1833 by Maximilian, Prince of Wied. These explorers, one and all, found the great Missouri Valley delightful. Bradbury pronounced the view over Ioway "magnificent".

While Lewis and Clark defined Ioway on the west, definition took place on the east.

Starting from St. Louis on August 9, 1805, Lieutenant Pike essayed the Mississippi in a keel boat with twenty men. Near the future Montrose he unfolded to the Sauks the news that "their great father, the president of the United States", in celebration of his acquisition of Louisiana, "had ordered the General [James H. Wilkinson] to send a number of his young warriors [the Pike party] in different directions, to take them by the hand". Stopping at the sites of Fort Madison and Burlington and at Grand Prairie (Muscatine Island), the expedition reached the site of Davenport on August 27th. Thereafter came Dubuque's lead mines, the heights of McGregor, and Yellow River with its "painted rocks".

It was Pike's principal errand to choose points on

the Mississippi suitable for military establishments, and he chose two — the hills of Burlington and the McGregor Heights. Neither was ever occupied.

Ioway on the south achieved definition in 1816 when the north boundary of what in 1821 resolved itself into the State of Missouri was established. But our present concern is with Ioway on the north. Here arose a situation fraught with the incalculable — a situation due to the St. Peter's River. In July, 1820, Captain Stephen W. Kearny left "the Council Bluff" (Nebraska) to discover a route across the country to the outlet of the St. Peter's. Passing by way of the Ioway streams Boyer, Soldier, Little Sioux, and Raccoon, the party reached a point southeast of Spirit Lake and thence passed to the Little Blue Earth River near what to-day is the Iowa-Minnesota line. Captain Kearny's expedition (and therein its point) tended to make the St. Peter's River the north boundary of Ioway. It was so regarded in the first constitution proposed in 1844 for the State of Iowa.

The Red Barrier

Between Quebec and the Great Valley beyond the lakes, between the civilization of Europe and the wilderness of Ioway, an Indian barrier lay. More dangerous than uncharted streams and winter storms, more unrelenting than voracious insects and chronic fever, were the red men of the West. During a century and a half of conflict, the Indians held back the white intruders. — The Editor.

THE MASCOUTINS

It was October. Down the Mississippi from Lake Pepin, between banks aglow with the reds of the bitten leaf; past a phantom McGregor, Dubuque, Clinton, and Davenport; past the island of Rock Island festooned with the wild grapevine; past the island of the Mascoutins, its tall grass blazing, its wild life terror stricken and in flight; past these Ioway scenes came, one day, three canoes with a party of Frenchmen bound for Canada by way of the Illinois River and Detroit. "Let us seize these French!" whisper the Mascoutins to the Kickapoo. In light floats they put out into the river and bring the French to shore.

The Indians have made a ten strike; the captives are

worth while. They are Father Michel Guignas, the merchants Jean Baptiste Boucher de Montbrun and François Boucher de Montbrun, and an officer, Pierre Boucher, Sieur de Boucherville. Will the captives be spared? They proffer gifts. But gifts, too, are proffered by the Foxes, enemies of the French and eager to make the captives their own.

Winter falls : first snow, then cold. Snow, white, soft, beguiling; cold, turning the Mississippi to rigor in a night. *Saison insupportable*, laments Boucher de Boucherville. By dint of the rigored river two of the captives (the merchants Montbrun) escape to Kaskaskia where, as allies of the French, the Illinois are quartered.

The Mascoutins and the Kickapoo, fearful now of French vengeance at the hands of the Illinois, dispatch Boucher himself to the Illinois to bespeak peace. In 1729 the ice left the Mississippi on March 1st. Promptly Boucher (back now from among the Illinois and attended by Father Guignas) took canoe for Kaskaskia.

THE FOXES

The Foxes, or Meskwaki, (People of the Red Earth) stood the white man at bay. They would kill a Frenchman, it was said, because of his mere hairiness — his bearded condition. Hairiness meant outlander; and outlander, who was he but barbarian intruder!

The Foxes were against the French and against every

tribe; and the French and every tribe were against them — every tribe save the Mascoutins and the Kickapoo, and in part the Sauks. Yet in their isolation they were shrewd. They looked to their flanks. On the east they cultivated an understanding with the wild Iroquois, and on the west with the Ioways and the Sioux.

In 1736 Le Chat Blanc (great chief of the Sauks) told Father Guignas that "as for Him [self] and His people, they had Resolved to separate from that desperate nation [the Foxes]". Before 1739 the separation seems to have taken place; for in that year on October 12th the Governor General of New France, writing to Pierre Paul Sieur Marin at the Wapsipinicon (River of the Swan), spoke of the Fox chiefs as on the Ioway side of the Mississippi.

In Ioway the Foxes were in a measure safe from the French; but they were desperate. It was their decision to break up into several war parties, attack on all sides, and perish. This decision, under the counsels of Le Chat Blanc and Marin, was given over. Instead, they in part wandered back to Wisconsin. But now it was Ioway rather than Wisconsin that for the Foxes was the homeland. "The country toward the south", runs a Fox legend, "is too warm in summer. . . . The country at the north is better than that at the south. . . . But the winters are too cold. The land westward is too much prairie. . . . We have reason to be satisfied

with the place [Ioway] where we now dwell. . . . Winters are never too cold, and the summers are always pleasant. It is our wish to dwell here always".

And in Iowa they dwell to-day. "The Foxes", their chief Pemousa had said, "are immortal".

THE SAUKS

The Sauks (People of the Outlet, or People of the Yellow Earth) were less arrogant than the Foxes. More pliant, they were more amenable to authority. "The Sauk Indians", wrote Thomas Forsyth, Indian Agent in 1827 at Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, "pay great respect to their chiefs when assembled in council, but the Fox Indians are quite to the contrary, they pay no respect to their chiefs at any time, except necessity compels them".

The Sauks, after fleeing from Wisconsin in 1733 with the Foxes, were loath to return. "The soil", they said, "can no longer produce anything, being stained with French blood and with our own". In part, however, they did return, and built the village of Prairie du Sac. But in Illinois, meantime, they had founded a village on Rock River near the present Rock Island — the village Saukenuk which at the time of the Black Hawk War had become the chief settlement of their nation.

The Foxes and the Sauks were indeed "peoples of the sunset". Each day at the setting of the sun they,

with their videttes the Mascoutins (beyond whom no explorer save perhaps Radisson had ever fared), gazed into the Hereafter — the Hereafter of the red sky

And the sun falling through it.

THE IOWAYS

The Ioways were of enormous physique — fairly herculean — “deep-voiced and dark colored”. They were a close counterpart of the Yanktons, of whom Peter Pond observed: “They are faroshas [ferocious] and Rude in thare Maners Perhaps Oeing in Sum masher to thare Leadig an Obsger life in the Planes.”

The Ioways, so runs the account, “are never more delighted than when they are entertaining strangers”. They have “a very artless manner. . . . They are extremely courageous and good-hearted. . . . They are howlers; they eat meat raw, or only warm it over the fire”. To Perrot they fed morsels of buffalo tongue so bloody that he could but spit them forth.

On the Des Moines, in 1749, there befell the Ioways an experience which served to bring them to the notice both of the Governor General of New France and of the gallant, the illustrious Louis Marquis de Montcalm. “The Ioways”, wrote the French government in 1750, “were [last year] guilty of the murder of a Frenchman”. In 1755 they were thus guilty again; and in 1757 the Governor General wrote: “The commandant of La Baye [Green Bay] had occasion to see these

Ayooouois [Ioways]. He spoke to them in my name with such firmness that 10 savages of the same nation came to Montreal expressly to deliver the murderers to me". "They presented them [the two murderers] to me in the name of their nation", writes the Governor General, "with great submission and resignation that I might have their heads broken if such was my intention. They nevertheless earnestly begged me to pardon them and assured me that they themselves would avenge the death of the two Frenchmen and would compensate me for their loss by the blows they would strike against the English".

The capitol [at Montreal] was filled with Indians for the campaign to be waged against the English. Indians from the West — Winnebagoes, Foxes, Sauks, Ioways. And the Ioways bore the bell.

Awaiting the fate of their two "feather-pates" the Ioways danced. They danced "western style", and Montcalm and the ladies were "enchanted". Heads shaved, bodies painted and greased, drums beating, they bent their bodies forward, leaped up with both feet at once and stamped loudly, perspiring violently, singing hi, hi, hi — so danced the Ioways.

An American exhibitor had in 1845, with the consent of the United States government and of local powers, recruited in Nebraska a party of Ioways for the East, this time a Far East — London and Paris.

Fourteen in all, the visiting Ioways, escorted by George Catlin, had at their head Chief White Cloud. In both London and Paris the Ioways met notable members of the white race — Benjamin Disraeli, Baron von Humboldt, Victor Hugo, George Sand, King Louis Philippe. Of these, *facile princeps* was Disraeli. Disraeli was not European. He did not paint his face; but he did (and that obviously) grease his coal black hair. He wore no blanket; but he had been known to flout convention in a black velvet coat lined with satin, purple trousers with a golden band down the outside seam, a scarlet waistcoat, long lace ruffles falling to the tips of the fingers, and white gloves with the fingers encircled by rings.

Amongst the first invitations to the Ioways, writes Catlin, "was one from Mr. Disraeli, M. P., for the whole party to partake of breakfast at his house, in Park Lane".

The Park Lane visit was for the Ioways a departure. Into the presence of Montcalm, a warrior, they had come with satisfaction. But Park Lane? There they must meet ladies; sit with them at meat. Most perturbing! Contrary altogether to the etiquette of the Des Moines and the Iowa. One thing appealed to them. They might don their best attire. Of a particular warrior, dressing for Park Lane, Catlin notes that he held in his hand his "little looking glass, which was always suspended from his belt". By its aid he

arranged his beautiful feathers and contemplated his patches of red and yellow paint. Was he not going to meet the ladies?

Apart from Mr. Disraeli, the London sight which intrigued the Ioways most was the markets stocked with fresh meat. They lived by the chase. They thought, says Catlin, that in London there would be little doubt of their getting enough to eat. Utterly American, the Ioways abroad grew homesick. Their criteria were those of their native land. In Hyde Park the banks of the Serpentine reminded them of the prairies on the shores of the Skunk and the Cedar rivers. Some parts, they insisted, "were almost exactly the same".

As far back as 1820 an Ioway chief (Hard Heart) startled an Indian agent by asking whether it were true that the earth moved round the sun. The sphericity of the earth, thrust upon the Ioways while abroad, was to them a thing of infinite jest. So inherently absurd did they consider the idea, so deliciously and peculiarly a crotchet of the white mind, that one of their number, "Jim", proposed for the white man's totem a globe with an elephant (elephants had intrigued Jim at the London zoo) topside down on the nether curve.

The Star of Empire

Adventure, gold, the Christian faith, and new dominions lured the white men into Ioway. Pagan souls they found innumerable, and perils never ceased. But the gold they sought was in the form of fur, and their imperialistic claims were hotly challenged. Fur trade invited conquest, and the victor held his prize with forts and military roads. — The Editor.

THE LURE OF PELTS

The skins (peltries) which the trader sought were beaver, otter, marten, mink, muskrat, raccoon, and cat; and he sought also skins of the bear and the deer. His choice, however, was beaver, for beaver was currency; it was cash.

By 1671 beaver, hitherto abundant throughout New France, began sensibly to decline, owing to the ravaging by hunters of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa rivers. It was with the beaver as it soon was to be with the bison. Recession had set in : from the Sagueney to the St. Maurice; from the St. Maurice to the Ottawa; from the Ottawa to Lake Huron; from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan; and from Lake Michigan to the land, remote and almost fabled, of the Sioux.

The good start of the French in collecting furs was interrupted by the wars with the Foxes; so, quitting the Mississippi and the St. Peter's, they tried the Missouri and the Big Sioux. In short, having been excluded from Ioway at the front door, the French pressed for admission at the back. As early as 1696 or 1697 the Trading Company Rouen-La Rochelle was dealing with the Prairie Sioux along the lower Missouri, and by 1704-1705 Frenchmen were on the Missouri higher up. Posts were established in the present Missouri and Nebraska, and by 1757 packages of skins of deer, bear, and beaver were being brought in.

Under Montcalm the French in America suffered overthrow, and in 1762 Ioway passed by cession under the aegis of Spain. St. Louis was founded in 1764 and Ioway lay open to Spain's outstretched hand. But the British were already in Ioway. They had entered the land by the mouth of the St. Peter's and by the Des Moines. "Nothing will stop them", wrote Governor Carondelet in 1794, but forts on both rivers.

All at once and for the first time Ioway had become a place of moment. By the Mississippi and the Missouri (the Des Moines interlinking) it could exert a strangle hold upon the fur trade.

Lured by British trade came British adventurers: Jonathan Carver in 1766; Peter Pond in 1773. Carver sought the wealth of China; Pond sought gains more immediate. "I descended", says Pond, "into the

Masseiphey and Cros that River [into Ioway] and Incampt."

British traders on the Des Moines between 1777 and 1814 included two men of mark — Jean Baptiste Faribault and Thomas G. Anderson. Faribault in 1799 established a post (Redwood) "two hundred miles" up stream; and prior to 1796 he, or others, established three or four posts down stream — "forts" Crawford, Gillespie, and Lewis. More and more into Ioway came the British. They inundated it — not by their numbers, but by their wares.

But the Don (the Spaniard) in Ioway, what meantime of him? Not so ill. His two proposed establishments, one on the St. Peter's and the other on the Des Moines, he is never to get; but his hand over Ioway is not altogether impotent. He spreads aloft on the Des Moines the emblem of Charles V — flag of the Cross of Burgundy. Never for an instant prior to 1803 was Iowaland anything by heritage but Spanish — Spanish or French. It was the Spanish connection, indeed, that gave to Iowa a part not negligible in the first war of the United States — that of the American Revolution.

BY FORCE OF ARMS

With the winning of America from France by Great Britain (trans-Allegheny America to the Mississippi) there had come word that the British were to segregate

the region and make of it a huge park or game preserve for the sake of the furs. America was roused. What Americans coveted was not primarily furs, but land — land for homes, land for exploitation. When, therefore, there dawned for America the day of '76, the day of revolution, the situation in the West was this. At Niagara, at Detroit, at Kaskaskia there were British soldiery to guard the game preserve; while on the Ohio and even the Mississippi there were American seekers after land.

What the men of the "Western Waters" (1777-1779) required against the British was powder and ball. New Orleans, Spain's American financial center, furnished the powder. The Ioway lead mines, controlled by the Foxes, set flowing a stream of lead. With gaze upon Detroit, George Rogers Clark (man of the Western Waters *par excellence*) seized Kaskaskia and Vincennes. At Vincennes his success was dazzling. He captured there the British commander of the entire Northwest — Henry Hamilton. The British sought to avert triumph on the part of the Americans by enlisting the aid of the Sioux and by an attack on St. Louis in 1780. The attack proved a failure, and the counterstroke was Clark's.

Iowaland, acquired from France and Spain by the United States in 1803-1804, was first made the scene of an act of possession by America in 1808-1809. There, in the years named, the government was build-

ing a fort (and factory) on the Mississippi. Fort Madison was a five-sided stockade, the pickets being of white oak, from twelve to eighteen inches in diameter and fourteen feet in length. Within, on the side farthest from the river, were the factory buildings and a block house. There were two other block houses, one at each corner on the side of the fort nearest the river. The garrison comprised some fifty or sixty men under Lieutenant Alpha Kingsley and on April 19, 1809, the Lieutenant wrote to the Secretary of War that he was "making the best preparations for the safety and defense of this establishment".

The attack foreseen by the Lieutenant was not long in developing. While the Fort was in course of erection, keen eyes (eyes black, beady, and darting) had marked each step. They were the eyes of Black Hawk the Sauk. In 1812 on September 5th, some two hundred Winnebagoes and a party of Sauks under Black Hawk laid siege to Fort Madison, but they withdrew on the 8th.

Further Indian attacks on the Fort were brought off in 1813. One of these, on July 16th (not by Black Hawk for he was now absent with the British), forced the abandonment of the post. The garrison of a hundred men crept on their hands and knees along a trench and entered boats. An order was given to apply the torch. Soon the Fort was in flames and the boats far out on the Great River. So perished Fort Madison.

The Rock River-Mississippi junction was a center for Indians who were pro-British — Sauks, now, and Foxes, no less than Ioways. This center (nest of a thousand stings) General Howard at St. Louis resolved to break up. In August, 1814, he despatched up the Mississippi three hundred and thirty-four men in eight boats under command of Major Zachary Taylor, and on September 4th, toward evening, the flotilla, long of line and white of sail, came opposite the mouth of Rock River.

But they had been forestalled. From Prairie du Chien the British had sent down the Mississippi a light battery under Lieutenant Duncan Graham; and this battery, catching Taylor's flotilla at McManus Island where it had been halted by a shift of wind, so harassed and riddled the boats that to escape destruction or capture they fled. Taylor's loss was eleven men badly wounded — three mortally. The flotilla dropped to the site of Fort Madison; and there, on September 6th, Major Taylor wrote to General Howard an official report of the fiasco.

Amid the struggle for Iowaland there dawned the year of the Treaty of Ghent. The British had more than held their own in the West. Mackinac they had won, and Prairie du Chien. It was, they said, the time to realize in the West the old plan — the plan for a game park, a neutral belt, an Indian buffer realm into and beyond which the American land shark might not

pass. Yet in 1815 at Ghent the Americans were left to reoccupy the Northwest — Mackinac, Prairie du Chien, and the upper Mississippi.

POSSESSION FORTIFIED

In the territory wrested from the British, including Iowaland, the Americans now sought to promote trade in furs. The initial step was the erection of forts on or near the Mississippi. In 1816 forts Howard and Crawford were established — the one not far from the mouth of the Fox River (Wisconsin) and the other at Prairie du Chien. In 1817 Fort Armstrong was completed on the island of Rock Island, and in 1822 Fort Snelling at the mouth of the St. Peter's River. These establishments carried into effect ideas of long standing — ideas of the French, the British, and the Spanish for control of the northern route to the Western Sea, once followed for gold but now for beaver.

On the Missouri, too, the American set forts. Between the various forts there was projected a system of military roads. A road was to connect Fort Snelling with a post at the head of the St. Peter's, and this with the Mandan towns. Thus would British traders be headed off. Then a road was to connect posts on the Arkansas with those on the Missouri River; and this road would give pause to the Spanish. Iowaland was to be an area not only picketed but contained.

But just how by the picketing forts and the contain-

ing roads was the fur trade to be developed? The answer is that each fort was to have a factory or trading house where the Indian, shielded from the private trader (British, Spanish, American), might receive supplies at cost from the United States government, and in exchange turn over to that government his peltries. The weakness of the factory system, which by 1822 had spent itself, lay with its beneficiary, the Indian. Three things the Indian could in no wise forego — credits, gratuities, whiskey; and these the factory system could in no wise allow him. In brief, it was not a governmental system that was to give to America trade in furs : it was the individual trader, or rather the private trading company.

Of private companies there arose between the years 1808 and 1823 three : the American Fur Company, the Missouri Fur Company, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. At the head of the American Company was John Jacob Astor; and at the head of the Missouri Company was Manuel Lisa.

Between these two intrepid captains, the rivalry was keen. Astor was of German blood while Lisa was a Spaniard, though both were none the less Americans. Astor sent his agents out, while Lisa went himself.

Early in 1811, Wilson Price Hunt, representative of John Jacob Astor, set forth in keel boats up the Missouri for the Pacific. The same spring, Manuel Lisa set forth by the same stream to bring down for

his company the season's pack. On the river, Hunt had the start of Lisa by some nineteen days or two hundred and forty miles; yet Lisa — now at the helm, now trimming the sail, now chiding the crew, now plying them with grog, now striking up a boat song, now rending the solitude with shouts — Lisa, a tornado of will, overtook Hunt, won the race, vindicated himself, and did the Missouri honor.

“ ‘Manuel gets so much rich fur!’ ” “ ‘Manuel must cheat the government, and Manuel must cheat the Indians’ Bon! I will explain. . . . I put into my operations great activity. . . . I impose upon myself great privations”. Thus in 1817 spoke Manuel Lisa by letter to Governor William Clark.

The White Tide

Long before the Indian title to Iowaland had been extinguished, traders, miners, and shop keepers had crossed the river and built their homes at vantage points — Dubuque, Keokuk, and other places in between. By 1838, when Ioway became Iowa, these frontier towns were flourishing communities. And yet, the tide of settlement was only then beginning. — The Editor.

Up to 1840 there had entered Iowa by ferryboat and other Mississippi River craft, but by ferryboat chiefly, some 43,000 people. Of these, 10,531 had come as early as 1836. In that year the influx was called a "tide". Iowa's earliest newspaper, the Dubuque Visitor, declared in its first number, on May 11th, that "the tide of emigration is pouring in upon us an immense number of families this spring". On the 9th of March, 1837, an immigrant writes that we "arrived [opposite] Fort Madison. A number of families were there . . . all having waited over night to be ferried across. . . . Our wagon was driven on to a flat boat. . . . Each family would be numbered and when that number was called would be put aboard as quickly as possible. . . . Each man who crossed helped to row. . . . At

last we were over. 'Gwine to the Ioway settlement?' we would be asked".

Between 1837 and 1840-1841 the onset grew. Public prints now proclaimed the white tide a "torrent". Said John Plumbe of Dubuque in 1839, quoting a Burlington correspondent, "the unparalleled rapidity with which the torrent of immigration has since [June 1, 1833] poured into this Western Paradise, may be inferred from the official returns of the census taken in May, 1838; according to which . . . the population has increased, within less than five years from nothing, to 22,859". And again: "The floodgates of emigration seem to have but recently been let loose, and population is pouring in upon us like a torrent."

But the 43,000 settlers who by 1840 had entered Iowa — just why had they come? What had impelled them? An immigrant of the eighteen thirties divides the pioneers of Iowa into three classes : men with families seeking to ameliorate fortune; men with families seeking to retrieve fortune; and young men tempting fortune.

Of these settlers, those who had come by steamboat had very generally settled in the towns — some 4500 souls. At this time Mississippi River boats above Keokuk were rather meagrely equipped. One, *The Warrior*, was "without cabin" but "towed a barge for the accommodation of travelers". In general, the cabin, if one there were, was described as on the main deck

at the stern. When the first upper-cabin steamers were built they were advertised as the "splendid upper cabin steamers". "The ladies' cabin", writes an old boatman, was "in the hold of the boat . . . the gentlemen occupied a cabin overhead, located nearer forward, — state-rooms were not thought of".

Immigrants who by 1840 had come to Iowa by wagon rather than by steamboat numbered about 38,000; and they were farmers. The purpose of the farmer was to acquire land; and to do this two things were essential — occupancy and a living. The living he could in no wise defer. He must have it at once. He must break, plant, and cultivate; and to break, plant, and cultivate he must use animals — oxen. Oxen, or even horses or mules, he could not as a rule afford to bring by boat. He must bring them the cheapest way, that is, he must drive them. To do this he must hitch them to his wain, his wagon; make them, in a Taurian sense, his "star".

The vehicle by which the farmer pioneer did gain Iowa varied. Any vehicle, so long as it was a wagon, and covered, and not too absolutely a Conestoga, served. It might be — perhaps usually was — straight, long-coupled, low-boxed, and provided with a seat from which the driver, often a woman or a girl, guided an ox team.

The farmer did not fall upon Iowa with shouting and with tumult. He was neither Magyar nor Scyth-

ian. His steeds were oxen, mild-eyed, soft-toed, and slow; and with him were his women and children. With him, too, were his flocks (for he not seldom brought sheep); his herds (for he brought cows and sometimes horses); his droves (for he brought hogs); and his pets (for attending him were his dogs, and curled up in his children's laps were his cats).

His journey was to be long — weeks and weeks long. He brought chairs (cane-seated rocker); a table upside down on the feed box; the family books (if any); and even pictures. "Women, guns, rifles, babies, and other nicknacks" are named in *Niles' Register* as the ordinary contents of the mover's wagon, with "numerous pots and kettles" dangling beneath. If a New Englander or an up-country Southerner, the mover might be counted on to have brought with him a family Bible.

The white tide, the torrent inundating Ioway in 1836, was heavily overland. At a "single ferry on the Mississippi river, it was found that from the 1st of April to the 1st of October, 1837, more than 1,800 families [some nine thousand souls] had been carried over".

Whence did the farmer torrent come? From beneath just what horizons? Horizons much the same as those of the urbanites and farmers who had come by steamboat: southern Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, western Virginia, Missouri, southern Indiana, Ohio, and southwestern Pennsylvania. The

tide came both from above and from below the Ohio, and, filling the National Road in Indiana and Illinois, branched toward the Mississippi. There the Iowa part of it sought the up-river ferries — the ferry for Keokuk, for Burlington, for Fort Madison, for Buffalo, for Davenport.

Convergent indeed upon Iowa was the chariot tide. Soft-footed under the constellation Taurus, and soft-wheeled under the constellation Charles Wain — so it came.

The Prairie

Out of the shadow of the crowding forest emerged the pioneer upon the boundless prairie. He blinked his eyes, and stretched his arms, and took a full deep breath. Before him lay the challenge of a new domain. Beautiful beyond description, Iowa would inspire his noblest motives; untamed and formidable, defying plow and dwelling place, terrible in storm and flame, it would test his highest courage; yet fertile of soil and genial in climate, it would yield to him abundantly; and more than all, it would expand his vision. — The Editor.

IOWA AS LIGHT AND LIFE

On the west bank of the Mississippi, what in reality was it that the pioneer saw? Was it what from the accounts of explorers he had been given to expect? Not in the least. He saw — and this practically for the first time — *Light*. “Born and bred amid the forests of Kentucky, Ohio, and the seaboard, his horizon had extended no farther than the tops of the trees which bounded his plantation. . . . Upwards he had seen the sun, sky, and stars; but around him an eternal forest from which he could never fully emerge”. A Westerner on a first visit to the East is said to have

remarked that the Easterner possessed a good country — if only it were not almost completely hid from view by a strange growth called trees.

It was on the prairie that the pioneer awoke to gayety. The prairie *was* gay. "The gayety of the prairie, its embellishments, and the absence of the gloom and savage wildness of the forest, all contribute to dispel the feeling of lonesomeness, which usually creeps over the mind of the solitary traveler in the wilderness". By light it was that the prairie was gay. Gay over the prairie romped the dawn; gay above it rode the noon; gay from it flared away the sunset. I remember Iowa at Muscatine "for its summer sunsets", wrote Mark Twain. "I have never seen any, on either side of the ocean, that equaled them. They used the broad, smooth river as a canvas, and painted on it every imaginable dream of color".

The prairie was *Light* and it was also *Space*. It was grove and garden; it was avenue and park; it was sward and stream. The grove was giant oaks; the garden was bending grasses, the avenue marched between copses; the sward sloped to the stream. The park? One saw the deer; heard the bobwhite and the whip-poorwill. "We could hardly persuade ourselves, many times", notes Caleb Atwater in 1829, "when we first saw any of these beautiful spots, that all the art that man possessed, and wealth could employ, had not been used to fit the place, for some gentleman's country

seat; and every moment, as we passed along one expected to see some princely mansion, erected on the rising ground".

"I apprehend", says a traveler, writing in 1838, "that the intense astonishment, with which the American pioneers first beheld a prairie . . . is the result of association. . . . Our immediate ancestors came from lands covered with wood". So it was under the forest tradition that "suddenly the glories of the prairie burst upon their enraptured gaze. . . . Europeans are often reminded of the resemblance of this scenery to that of the extensive parks of noblemen. . . . The lawn, the avenue, the grove, the copse, which are there produced by art, are here prepared by nature".

Amid Light, amid Space — the sense of Life, how inescapable!

THE BLIZZARD

The blizzard was stealth. "It had been bright all day", writes a pioneer. "There were no clouds of any kind to be seen. Everything was still . . . but there was something in the air that made one look at the sky".

The blizzard was snow. "Young people of to-day", says our pioneer, "never saw a real snowstorm. . . . There came unexpectedly a heavy snow. About ten inches fell. All the next day the snow lay still; there was no wind blowing. It was not cold. . . . Late in the

afternoon a light wind sprang up. . . . The weeds on the prairie were as big as a man's arm with snow. Many of the branches on the trees were broken short off by the weight of the snow. The next morning about six o'clock it was blowing almost a hurricane. Loose snow was blown so hard and fast that when I put my hand up a foot from my face I could not see it. . . . The morning after when I woke I found an inch of snow on the bed clothes. Shivering I struggled into my cold and clammy clothes. I had to wallow through six inches of snow to the head of the stairs. The stairs looked like a long white drift. . . . I found things worse in the kitchen below. . . . The wind had been so furious it had driven snow through under the door and the kitchen was about knee deep. . . . I found a shovel, opened a window, and shoveled the snow out".

And the blizzard was cold. A Dubuque County settler says : "The snow drifted in through the cracks and covered everything. Mornings the thermometer registered between thirty and forty below".

PRAIRIE FIRES

Just how terrible in Iowa was the prairie fire? Some Iowa pioneers (not many) never saw a prairie fire. Others saw fires season after season, but, though harassed by them, did not find them terrible. Still others found them so terrible as to be themselves almost set ablaze in trying to describe them.

The prairie fire came logically in the autumn, but it might come in the spring. In the autumn the grasses and the weeds, crisped by Iowa summer heat, were dry to the point of jubilant explosion. "Back over the prairie sprang up a round cloud, and fire rose out of the heart of the grass. The reds and yellows of the flowers exploded into flame. . . . Winds charged the fire, lashing it with long thongs . . . and the fire screamed and danced and blew blood whistles. . . . Animals ran — ran — ran — and were overtaken, shaken grass glittered up with a roar and spilled its birds like burnt paper into the red air. . . . The people in the village ran — ran — and the fire shot them down with its red and gold arrows and whirled on, crumpling the tepees so that the skins of them popped like corn". Does this paint the burning of an Iowa prairie?

Infernal geysers gushed and sudden streams
Of rainbow flux went roaring up the skies

There broke a scarlet hurricane of light
Inverted seas of color rolled and broke

The valley was a-flood with elk and deer
And buffalo and wolves and antelope

They heard the burning breakers boom and beat
Their gaping mouths pressed hard against the clay
They fought for very breath.

Does this paint any better the burning of an Iowa prairie? Why antelope? Why buffalo?

In 1873 a Hollander wrote : "I fancy that anyone who has read a brilliantly poetical account of a prairie fire and seen it likened to 'a rolling sea of fire, miles in extent, sweeping forward on its destructive course, driving before it whole herds of wild buffaloes, deer, and antelopes, dashing along helter-skelter in desperate terror,' shall feel disappointed when he gets to see nothing more than low-lying flames, advancing slowly. . . . The sight does not impress one much, at least near by, and I am not surprised that a certain traveler avenged the disenchantment of his high-strained expectations with the disdainful exclamation : 'A spectacle to be hissed at!'"

In early Iowa there were, it is evident, prairie fires and prairie fires. To the east and south, where the timber was greatest and the prairie least, the fires were commonly of the order sketched by the Hollander. They progressed leisurely and might be checked or diverted by turning up ground, or by back firing (burning away the surrounding grass).

But prairie fires at times had to be met head on. Then came into play the gunny sack, the mop, the broom. "Old sacks or pieces of clothing plunged in water and wielded by the brawny arm" helped greatly, it is said, in "averting serious loss".

One of the least inflated descriptions of a *great* prairie fire comes from the pen of a Methodist circuit rider who traversed northwestern Illinois and north-

eastern Iowa in October, 1835. "The last 12 miles", he writes, "we travelled after sundown, & by fire light over Prairie, it being on fire. This was the grandest scene I ever saw, the wind blew a gale all day, the grass was dry . . . some men were kindling fire to burn it *away* from their fences & then let it run — no odds who it burnt up. As the dark came on, the fire shone more brilliant. A cloud of smoke arose on which the fire below shone, & the reflection could be seen for miles — in some instances 40. . . . We had in view at one time from one to 5 miles of fire in a streak, burning from 2 to 6 feet high. In *high* grass it sometimes burns 30 feet high, if driven by fierce winds. By the light of this fire we could read fine print for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile or more. And the light reflected from the cloud of smoke, enlightened our road for miles after the blaze of the fire was out of sight".

Iowa sunsets often gave the effect of prairie fires, and prairie fires the effect of sunsets. "Because of the burning prairies", says the *Muscatine Journal* in 1855, "the horizon circling the view from Muscatine has in every direction for the last few nights presented all the dazzling splendors of an Italian sunset". The aptness of this may be realized before certain of the canvases of George Inness. The canvases are sunsets, yet no less are they prairie fires — prairie fire sunsets, seen of Mark Twain.

Epic of the Towns

Farmers came to Iowa singly and in caravans, by scores and even colonies. Meanwhile business flourished: villages outgrew themselves, the river cities thrived on keen commercial rivalry, and steamboats served the ports on great and lesser streams. Mansions fit for noblemen were built, wherein the culture of the East gained currency. And then the railroad came to raise a brood of inland towns. — The Editor.

LITTLE CAPITALS

The eighteen fifties saw Iowa's settlements on the Mississippi become towns — "little capitals". In 1840 these towns ranked in population in this order: Keokuk, about 150; Montrose, 200; Fort Madison, 700; Burlington, 1300; Bloomington (Muscatine), 600; Iowa City, 700; Davenport, 817; and Dubuque, 1300. By the mid-fifties the count differed. Keokuk had advanced to 5044; Fort Madison, to 1500 or more; Burlington, to 7310; Muscatine, to 3693; Iowa City, to 2570; Davenport, to 5203; Dubuque, to 6634. Then, too, on the Mississippi, there had risen Lyons with 163 souls; Bellevue was flourishing; while north of Dubuque there were stirrings at McGregor. As for

the Missouri (bare of towns in 1840) it, in 1855, could boast of Council Bluffs with a population of nearly a thousand, and of Sioux City with a population of perhaps five hundred.

Of Dubuque, *Harper's Magazine* wrote in 1853: "It is charmingly situated", an opinion echoed in 1856 by the *Des Moines Valley Whig*. "The bluffs", said the *Whig*, "are the most magnificent we have observed. Dubuque bluff [burial spot of Julien Dubuque] is very high, perhaps 300 feet or more". Charm, too, attached to Davenport. "There are more fine mansions and beautiful grounds upon the Davenport bluffs", said a visitor of 1856, "than I have yet observed anywhere West". With regard to Burlington, Fort Madison, and Keokuk — they mirrored the South.

But Keokuk! Keokuk!

"Away off west", the *Rochester Daily Democrat* (New York) wrote in 1856, "where the twinkling of the Star of Empire can be seen by any far-reaching eye, perched upon the farther bluff of the graceful Mississippi two hundred miles above St. Louis, is one of the most attractive and progressive little cities this wonderful age has reared. . . . The levee with twelve steamers at the same time loading or unloading; wharf literally piled with freight of all descriptions — wheat, corn, oats, potatoes; and intermediate spaces crowded with steam engines, boilers, plows, threshing machines. . . . Scores of drays and wagons; streets in front of

business houses lined with wagons in still greater number than on Main Street, loading out pork and produce and loading in groceries, salt, iron, etc, etc."

Business and gayety! Yea, and cholera!

Houses! houses! was the cry. A plan of a house "to cost \$275, ready made in Cincinnati", was exhibited, which "could be shipped in one week and put up in a few days".

Meanwhile Burlington, with a population of about 6000, led Keokuk by 2000. "Figures", said the *Burlington Gazette*, "can't lie". "If", retorted Keokuk, "figures can't lie, the editor of the *Gazette* can". Burlington — ex-capital of Wisconsin Territory; ex-capital of Iowa Territory; home of the Dodge Dynasty (Governor Henry Dodge and his son, Augustus Caesar Dodge) — Burlington, crowned with apple blooms, garnished with the rose, was undeniably smug. "Ere Keokuk was, I am", said Burlington.

And Davenport! The town in Iowa, which by 1856 was the town of the future, was Davenport. Its population was 5203. The populations of Burlington and Dubuque were greater; but by 1860 Burlington had fallen behind Davenport and so had clamorous Keokuk. Davenport was confident. It stood squarely between the East and the setting sun, and knew the fact. "Davenport", it said of itself in 1855, "being directly in the line of the great backbone railroad of America connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific, and at the

only point where for many years the Mississippi will be spanned, greater inducements are held out by Davenport than by any city in the State".

Grimacing, each at other, the towns of Iowa fell a-laughing. "Burlington", laughed the *Hawk-Eye*, "is the greatest city in ancient or modern times — it will be the geographical center of the world. Strangers who buy lots are warranted to double their money every thirty days or no sale. It is very probable that the National Capital will be removed here by the next Congress". "Muscatine", laughed the *Journal*, "is a much greater city than Burlington and, of course, eclipses New York, London, or Davenport. It is situated on the Great Trunk Railroad reaching from San Francisco round the world both ways. The tunnelling of the Atlantic and the Pacific has already been contracted. [Meantime] from the Pacific coast our manufactures will be towed across the oceans by vessels of peculiar construction and with amazing velocity by whales in harness and returning will bring to our market the rich products of India".

A HOUSE OF USHER

"A man from Maine" wrote of Muscatine in 1853: "There is a surplus of two things here which you find in most places — dry goods and lawyers". Among the lawyers was "General" John C. B. Warde. Warde was "tall, of good form, well educated and well

dressed". Withal he was "singular"; "the most singular man", says a pioneer, "that ever visited our city". The "General" bought Muscatine town lots, two of which topped a headland overlooking the Mississippi — a site, Warde said, "mete for a mansion".

The mansion grew. Skilled masons and carpenters (western towns in the fifties abounded in them) laid the solid walls, wrought the shapely windows, shaped the stately chambers. The mistress of such a house (was there to be a mistress?) would be, could but be, *noblesse*. She would put up guests, hold assemblies, give balls. Down the first floor extended a hall and on the right there opened a reception room and a dining room. But the great room was on the left — a drawing room (it could be cleared for dancing) nearly forty feet long and over eighteen feet wide.

The house had features that were special. The roof was surmounted by a cupola whence might be scanned not only the Mississippi River but Muscatine Island flat and far lying, proving ground for prairie fires. And there was a portico. The front door gave upon a porch reached by flowing steps, and above this rose four tall columns, columns crowned by voluptuous capitals and supporting a brow-like pediment.

Just as the house was finished so as to be under roof, its builder and owner, the "General", disappeared. He had incurred debt. Whither he was gone, no one knew — no one unless it were his partner Woodward; and

Woodward did not tell. To this day in Muscatine it is asked what befell the man who built the mansion on the hill. And who was to have been mistress there?

Perchance a moneyed widow?

Perchance a moneyed maid?

Mistress of the true House of Usher was the Lady Madeline. Would the mistress of the Warde mansion have been a Lady Madeline? Years fled. The mansion had as master a worthy man ("General", too, by the way), but for mistress no Lady Madeline. Then the eighteen seventies! Weary of waiting the "House" asserted itself. To it there came its Lady Madeline. And the Lady having come to the House, the House came to the Lady. The basement stirred; the dining room flashed; the long drawing room gave audience. Audience to votaries: votaries of the voice; of the romance tongues; of the bow and strings; of the pipe; of the footlights. Audience, too, the room gave to public characters: elderly barons of predaceous wealth; governors of western States; deputies to European capitals; authors (Iowan) who did valiantly their own stuff: *Girdle Round the Earth*; *The Bishop's Vagabond*; *Sherman's March to the Sea*.

Muscatiners there have been (votaries of the Occult) bold to say that the Madeline of the seventies was in truth none other than the Madeline of the fifties — the Lady Warde reincarnate to possess her own.

IOWA GOES TO MARKET

By 1840 there was beginning to be a food surplus in Iowa. Of corn that year the total product was 1,406,000 bushels; of wheat, 154,700 bushels; of cattle, the total was about 38,000 head; and of swine, about 105,000 head. "Numerous covered flat boats", the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* announced, "are going down stream daily laden with all kinds of produce. About one hundred . . . from Iowa alone have already passed here. Several have been built, laden, and sent off from Burlington".

Hogs were winning mention by 1840, and by 1856 it was observed that "Iowa would bear the palm for hogs". The roads were alive with them on their way to market. In fact, there was "one universal squeal all along the Mississippi". Wheat to be profitable required mills; corn required merely hogs. What, anyway, was a hog but "fifteen or twenty bushels of corn on four legs"?

How much of corn and wheat and hogs was "surplus" we do not know, but it was this surplus that paid for the goods from St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans. "Satins, cassimeres, canton flannels, pink-plaid gingham, fancy prints, French and English merinos, tambered Swiss capes and pelerines, bombazetts, Fairmount ticking and cotton carpeting, Mackinaw colored blankets, gray 'bang-up' coats, cloth, hunting frocks, blue and brown dress coats,

brown, blue and satinette striped pantaloons, buckskin pantaloons, brown and green cloth vests, men's camblet coats, fancy stocks and shirt collars, fur capes and caps, besides steel, brass and polished snuffers, brass and iron candlesticks, Britania tea and coffee pots, straw-knives, spades, shovels and pot metals".

By the end of the forties the corn crop was 8,600,000 bushels, and hogs had mounted to 323,000 head. Wheat, it may be noted, had (quantitatively) fallen distinctly below corn, reaching but 1,500,000 bushels. Wheat none the less was important. But why dwell on wheat? Corn was king! Corn in terms of hogs! And such luscious hogs! A survey of the whole United States was said to show only three towns ahead of Keokuk as Porkopolis.

St. Louis swayed an empire. This empire in growing measure was Iowa, and the *entrée* was by Keokuk and the Des Moines River. On the Des Moines, throughout the eighteen fifties, there were in operation to the advantage of Keokuk and St. Louis not less than forty steamboats. These boats were sternwheelers, mostly of light draft.

Tiny as the Des Moines steamers were, they bore much freight. In the late thirties they carried to Iowa's interior flour (\$18 a bushel), pork (\$18 to \$20 a hundred), corn meal (\$2 a bushel), besides groceries, dry goods, and whiskey. From Iowa they took corn and pork. The market was St. Louis.

At the end of May, 1855, there was in Iowa "not a mile of railroad in operation, scarcely a rail laid". But April 21, 1856, and with it the cry: "We're over! We've crossed the Mississippi in a railroad car!" Cars from Chicago had crossed from Illinois into Iowa at Davenport. The contest between St. Louis and Chicago — a contest between river and rail — was over. The railroad had won.

The epic of the Iowa towns celebrates not all the towns; only those of the Great River. When by reason of railroads the river lost its primacy, a group of inland towns gained prominence — communities which, flanking the river towns, did business eastward (with Chicago) over their heads and behind their backs.

Corn

Corn in early Iowa was both mystical and practical. To the Indian, maize was manna of the gods. A symbol of blood was the red corn, whereby the seed was fertilized. But to both the Indian and the white man, corn was also practical. Iowa's coat-of-arms might be a well-filled ear of corn. — The Editor.

Green corn harvest was charmingly idyllic. "Roasting ear time" it was called. "From all directions came squaws staggering under masses of fagots and leading ponies likewise laden down. With the fagots huge fires were built. Then from out the corn patches poured children bearing unhusked ears. The fires were allowed to sink to red-hot embers and on the embers were thrown the ears in the husks. The atmosphere was everywhere saturated with the appetizing odor of roasting corn".

The way of the pioneer with green corn was that of the Indian. "Julys, Augusts, and Septembers of the first few years", writes a Des Moines Valley settler, "found the grain supply very low. . . . So at the maturing of that first crop of corn I shall never forget with what satisfaction father was met when he came in

with the first arm load of 'roasting ears'. . . . The milky ears were stripped out of their husks, these tied back, and the silks removed, and all strung on the jerk-stick over the fire: hot, crisp, and brown we munched it off without stopping for seasoning".

When the Indian made corn into meal, he did so by pounding the kernels in a wooden mortar or by breaking them between two stones. The pioneer took his ripened corn to mill. But if the season were winter he would perhaps be forced to grind on his own account. He might own a hand mill, like the mills of Judea of old: two circular stones with a staff let into the upper stone, the top of the staff pivoting in a joist or board overhead.

But in Iowa the more usual home contrivance for grinding was the common coffee mill. "The grinding of the flinty corn in the coffee mill", says a settler, "was a slow process and hard work". The mill had to be set so as to grind coarsely the first time, and when set closer the grist was run through a second time before it was fine enough to use. The time required to grind a one-meal grist for a family of four was three-quarters of an hour, and the head of the family was glad the family wasn't larger. In default of a mill an inverted carpenter's plane could be made to serve as a grater; or there might be pressed into service a perforated tin pan.

Corn bread and corn mush! Corn mush and corn

bread! Corn bread and corn mush! Morning, noon, and night — corn bread and corn mush! Day in and day out, week in and week out, corn bread and corn mush!

“Be still, my Muse”, exclaims the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* in the late eighteen thirties, “be still and hush, Apollo tunes his lyre to Mush!” Wheat bread was a luxury; the flour, costing seven, eight, or ten dollars a sack, was indulged in only when the preacher or some other company came. “It was longed for by the children”. And not only so. The Indians themselves longed for it, sometimes refusing to accept in its stead the all prevailing corn meal or corn bread.

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!

Comment by the Editor

HISTORICAL STYLES

History is a continuous process. The daily course of events, the affairs of potentates and common folks that transpire before our very eyes, compose the fabric of history. Out of the doings of the present some future chronicler will weave the story of the past. History is always being made. Inexorably the wheels of time revolve, the world with all that's in it spins a web of life, and the pattern, ever changing, is composed of silk and shoddy threads that have no end. In the process of creation, history is an eternal now.

And who knows better what is happening than he who shares the exploits of his day? The witness of events is capable of bearing worthy testimony. No one else, indeed, has quite as vivid knowledge of the times, albeit those who see the same events may differ in their recollections. Thus reminiscence has a special value in the records of the past.

As one generation recedes and another takes its place, the activities of the preceding period lose something of their reality but gain perspective. And so it becomes the purpose of historical research to segregate essential facts and reconstruct the outlines of the for-

mer ages. Monographic history is the counterpart of scientific experimentation.

But after old soldiers have described their favorite battles and statesmen have recounted their glorious achievements, after contemporary newspapers and other dusty records have yielded all their resources, still further work is necessary to vitalize the past. Treatises and recollections need to be interpreted and synthesized. With keen discernment and literary skill, the artist of history gives unity, significance, and life to miscellaneous reports.

Reminiscence, research, interpretation — each holds a worthy place in the literature of history. As an agency for the dissemination of the true story of our Commonwealth, the State Historical Society of Iowa has published all of these varieties. In the first series of the *Annals of Iowa* following the Civil War, men wrote informally about their friends and neighborhoods. The *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* is devoted to the products of thorough research. And now, in *Ioway to Iowa*, Irving B. Richman has selected significant phases of Iowa history and presented a brilliant panorama in a delightful literary manner. The book is a splendid example of the ultimate style of historical writing.

J. E. B.

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