

# 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.