

The PALIMPSEST

JANUARY 1937

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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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Aratus Kent

The spirit of federation was prevalent in America after the Revolutionary War. The common cause of independence had taught the value of cooperation. In politics this trend toward permanent alliance resulted first in the adoption of the Articles of Confederation and later in the formation of "a more perfect Union" under the federal constitution. The churches, too, saw the advantages of working together, particularly in the missionary field. In the same year that George Washington was inaugurated first President of the United States the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church formally expressed sympathy with the Congregational churches in extending religious influence to the frontier communities in the West.

The formation of the Missionary Society of Connecticut in June, 1798, was a landmark of cooperation between Congregationalists and Presbyterians for the development of American home

missions. "The object of this Society", declared one of the articles, "shall be to Christianize the heathen of North America, and to support and promote Christian knowledge in the new settlements within the United States." From that time the two denominations worked together in the selection of missionaries, and the plan of union soon spread.

The story of the progress of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism toward Iowa begins at the lead mining village of Galena on the Fever River in northern Illinois. To this western outpost came all sorts of fortune seekers. A Kentuckian brought many slaves to work his mines. Traders found new opportunities for profit. In 1824 the government placed Lieutenant Martin Thomas in charge of the lead mines. He and his assistants ruled the rapidly growing community until civil government was established. During those early years when settlers were flocking by scores into the Fever River district, few of the amenities of civilization were observed.

Not all the pioneers, however, were unprincipled ruffians. In a letter to the Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society in 1828, Christopher R. Robert described conditions and asked for help in establishing religious services. At that time the population of Galena was esti-

mated to be about 1200, and more were coming by every boat. The number of children was small in proportion to the population, probably not exceeding fifty. No school was provided. Neither was there any "public means of grace," though a Catholic priest had once resided there and a Methodist clergyman had preached to the miners in the summer of 1827. "But you can readily imagine what the situation of the people must be, in the moral and religious point of view," wrote Robert. "The Sabbath is not much regarded in the village, the miners do not generally work on that day — I fear, not out of regard to it."

There were, nevertheless, "some few pious persons in the place, and a number of others friendly to religion," who wanted a minister settled there, preferably of the Presbyterian denomination. A subscription list was being circulated to raise money for a clergyman. "Two names are down for \$125", and Robert thought enough would be subscribed "to support a man one year, at least."

One difficulty would be in "obtaining a proper place for meetings, as the houses are most of them built of logs and very small. But it is thought this difficulty may be overcome by erecting a temporary building, which could be done in a short time." The project of building a church had been agitated but nothing had been accomplished.

Aside from suggesting that the clergyman should be a "sensible, judicious" person, Robert was "diffident in expressing an opinion as to the requisite qualifications of the minister whom you may send to this field; but from your knowledge of the character of the people, you will doubtless think it desirable to send one of some age and experience in the ministry." Moreover, he would need to be prepared to "undergo much privation for a few years, or until the country becomes more settled. His fare must be plain, much of the time salt provisions, and few or none of the luxuries of life."

John Shackford, a resident of Saint Louis, felt moved in 1828 to appeal to the East in behalf of the cultural life of the upper Mississippi region. "A residence of near three months at Galena has convinced me of the great necessity there is for some one to lead the inhabitants in the ways of righteousness. They are, most of them, so bent on pleasure and business, that the thoughts of death and the judgment seem never to enter their minds. Funerals, excepting two or three instances recently, have been conducted in a manner that I hardly thought possible in any part of our land; — the corpse taken from the dwelling and carried to the grave by a few persons, and not a word said, either by way of consolation or admonition. There

are some it is true who disapprove of this uncere-
monious mode of burial, and have expressed a de-
sire that there might be some person to officiate, at
least on such occasions. The last time I heard
from the subscription there, for the support of a
clergyman, it amounted to \$400. I did hope that
ere this, some person authorized to preach the gos-
pel would have visited the place, and do not yet
despair of seeing one."

To such a place and into such conditions came
the Reverend Aratus Kent, graduate of Yale and
disciple of the great Timothy Dwight. He came
to the region when the settlers were not just sure
whether they were to be Congregationalists or
Presbyterians. The situation has been well sum-
marized in Clark's *Leavening the Nation*:

"Presbyterianism had never proved indigenous
to the soil east of the Hudson, and by an illogical
parity in reasoning, Congregationalism was as-
sumed to be equally foreign to soil west of that
river. Hence it was not uncommon for New Eng-
land pastors to advise their emigrating members
'to be loyal Presbyterians at the West'. Students
in the Seminary were taught that 'Congregational-
ism is a river rising in New England and emptying
itself South and West into Presbyterianism'. In
1829 the directors of the American Education So-
ciety recommended all young ministers going west

to unite with Presbyteries and 'not hold on upon Congregationalism;' and it was publicly acknowledged, at that time, that one half of the young men from Andover became Presbyterian ministers."

Aratus Kent was born in Suffield, Connecticut, on January 15, 1794. His boyhood was spent during Connecticut's most influential literary period. The year after Kent's birth Timothy Dwight, grandson of the great Jonathan Edwards, began his memorable presidency of Yale. He emulated his grandfather as a man of letters, religionist, and college president. Dwight, however, modified slightly the theological interpretation of Calvinism as given by his grandfather. Kent came under the influence of Dwight and entered Yale. There, in his freshman year, he listened to President Dwight lecture on the philosophy and psychology of religion. Under the spell of this theology, Kent was converted and united with the Congregational Church. He decided to follow his great teacher in the study of religion. In 1816 he received the baccalaureate degree from his teacher's hands. The next year Dwight's career ended in death, but a sturdy band of disciples proposed to carry his precepts to all parts of the country.

Nor was this an easy task. The first half of the nineteenth century saw two external forces working in American thought: French scepticism and

English deism. Then, too, the frontier, with its incessant struggle with the elements, turned men's thoughts from the supernatural to the natural. The result was an attitude toward the Bible, institutionalism, and politics quite unlike that from which the New England Congregationalists had come. With all this in mind, Dwight sent out men like Aratus Kent to battle with the new civilization.

Kent received his commission as a missionary to the "Northwest" in March, 1829. He reached Galena at the end of April, going by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Plunging at once into his work, he established the first Sunday school in northern Illinois. Kent's church in Galena was what would now be called a community church. The people preferred a Presbyterian clergyman, and the New Englanders believed Congregationalism became Presbyterianism as it approached the Mississippi. In the meantime Kent extended his work as far as possible, founding churches and schools. Some of these churches later became Presbyterian and others Congregational.

Meanwhile, other laborers came into the new field. In 1831, two years after Kent's arrival at Galena, the Reverend Asa Turner visited the mines. He and Kent discussed the problems of carrying the gospel to the pioneer communities on

the frontier. Both men were aware that the frontier was moving westward faster than the church was following. In a few years the Iowa country west of the Mississippi would be opened for settlement. Already men were impatient to begin working the Dubuque lead mines.

As soon as the Black Hawk Purchase was opened, Aratus Kent included the region around Dubuque in his missionary jurisdiction. In August, 1833, he preached in a cabin at Dubuque. This was the first public religious service in that community. Two years later the Reverend Cyrus L. Watson came as a regular Congregational minister. Meanwhile, Kent preached at other settlements in the Iowa country. Through his influence in those early years Congregationalism was introduced throughout the lead district. It was said that he bore "his labors with cheerfulness and a zeal that made him respected among all classes with whom he mingled, performing his duty like a true Christian".

Kent not only founded churches and schools but took a decisive stand against slavery. He believed that the teaching of Jesus could not be reconciled with slavery and forbade communion to slave holders. As a result the Southerners who had brought slaves to Galena formed their own church. He declared that the "holding and treat-

ing of human beings as chattels is a sin directly opposed to the gospel and to the Law and Prophets as interpreted by our Lord Jesus Christ". In this he was fully in accord with the Friends and the Congregationalists in Iowa who were conducting a very active underground railroad. His attitude coincided with the opinions of Emerson and Whittier who were much interested in the anti-slavery movement in the West. In 1852 Lincoln visited Galena and praised Kent and his work in behalf of freedom and in the cultural development of that region.

After nineteen years of incredibly hard work, Kent resigned as pastor of the Galena church. The rest of his life was devoted to the founding of schools and churches. He was one of the leaders in the establishment of Beloit College, and he laid the cornerstone of Rockford College.

Some of his churches became Presbyterian and some became Congregational, for as time went on the Middle West became denomination conscious. His influence extended throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa. Aratus Kent died on November 8, 1869, and was buried in the town he had helped build. His enduring fame lies in the fact that he saw into the future and built as did the prophets before him.

CHARLES ARTHUR HAWLEY

Asa Turner and the Welsh

The father of Congregationalism in southeastern Iowa was Asa Turner. Like Aratus Kent he came from New England. Born at Templeton, Massachusetts, in 1799, he went to school at Amherst Academy, chose the ministry for his life work, got the baccalaureate degree from Yale, and graduated from the Yale Divinity School in 1830. At that time Yale was to a large extent under the influence of French scepticism and English deism, but a group of students thought their way through to a position of liberal Christianity which made the teaching of Jesus central in a system which by no means dispensed with a clear metaphysic.

Asa Turner was filled with missionary zeal. He helped form the Illinois Association of young preachers who came west to organize churches and colleges. They founded Illinois College at Jacksonville. When Turner arrived at Quincy, Illinois, in September, 1830, that frontier village had neither a church nor a school. By December he had gathered sufficient support to establish a Presbyterian church. He also preached in other communities and made trips back East for money to aid in building churches.

In 1834 Turner visited Iowa for the purpose of holding revival meetings and, if possible, forming churches. His interest in Iowa steadily increased. On one of his trips to the East he induced several New England families to migrate. They settled out on the prairie seven miles north of Fort Madison in 1836. At about the same time William P. Apthorp was sent to Fort Madison by the American Home Missionary Society. He often preached in the transplanted New England neighborhood which was called Denmark.

By the spring of 1838 these people were ready to organize a church and so they sent for Asa Turner. He came on the first of May. Within a distance of six or seven miles he "found about 30 sheep without a shepherd." These were gathered into a church. They told their "Christian experience, the ground of their hope, and their motives" in forming a church. "The examination was regarded as satisfactory." On May 5, 1838, they "assented to the Articles of Faith," and so the first Congregational church in southern Iowa was established. Asa Turner remained as pastor of the Denmark church for thirty years.

In 1839 Turner was appointed by the American Home Missionary Society as the first missionary agent for Iowa. In this capacity he explored those parts of the Territory not yet settled and, by let-

ters and visits, urged many New Englanders to settle in Iowa.

During his entire life, Asa Turner furthered education. As early as 1837 he began to talk about establishing a college at Denmark. An association was formed and on February 3, 1843, Denmark Academy was granted a charter by the Territorial legislature. Five years later Turner helped establish Iowa College which, in 1859, was moved from Davenport to Grinnell and ultimately became Grinnell College.

A Presbyterian church was organized at Burlington in 1838 by the Reverend James A. Clark of Connecticut. Clark was a graduate of Yale and Princeton and had the training necessary to meet the atheism and radicalism of the frontier. In 1840 he and Turner directed their attention to Abner Kneeland, who had come to Iowa in 1839 with the latest brand of infidelity which he forthwith proclaimed with great zeal. Kneeland, who had been a Universalist minister, passed from radicalism to radicalism until he left the church and wrote against it. Convicted in Boston of blasphemy, he served a jail sentence and then came with the First Society of Free Enquirers to a place which he named Salubria, near Farmington on the Des Moines River. He participated actively in politics, but his so-called "infidel ticket" was successfully

opposed by the Congregationalists. His colony, like so many of its kind, failed, but from it Kneeland preached until his death in 1844.

In 1843 the Burlington church, under the influence of its neighbors, became Congregational. This year was made memorable by the coming of Horace Hutchinson, one of the famous Iowa Band from Andover. Hutchinson died in the spring of 1846 and William Salter, another member of the Band, came to take his place. In this capacity he worked for sixty-four memorable years. He cooperated during this time with the Salem Quakers in the underground railroad; he worked for the cause of abolition by pen and lecture; he wrote books in the fields of religion, history, and *belles lettres*. Altogether William Salter had a tremendous influence on the cultural life of the State.

Meanwhile the Congregationalists from Dubuque in the north and from Burlington in the south met at Davenport. This town had been founded by Antoine Le Claire, whose French father and Indian mother symbolized the civilization of the earlier frontier. It was to Le Claire that Asa Turner went in 1848 for help in founding a college. Le Claire gave him a site for the building.

The First Congregational Church in Davenport was organized on July 30, 1839, by the Reverend Albert Hale, who was sent by the American Home

Missionary Society. The church had difficult days. A large element in the population inclined toward "free thinking". They might have been happy in Salubria. Against such doctrine the Reverend A. B. Hitchcock made some progress. He was a Yale graduate and, trained in the tradition of Timothy Dwight, had a philosophy of religion that could stand up against the "free thinkers". Here Dwight's *Theology Defined and Defended* found justification for its title. Ephraim Adams, one of the Iowa Band, came to the church in 1844 and remained eleven years. He was followed by G. F. Magoun who later served for many years as president of Iowa College.

The next important center of Congregationalism in Iowa was Iowa City. As the capital of the Territory, this town sprang up by the magic of political destiny. The capital commissioners, wishing to encourage the development of an ideal city, set aside certain plots for the various religious groups. Any denomination could claim half of a block, provided it put up a church building by July 1, 1843. But the Congregationalists were not strong enough to obtain a grant.

About five miles southwest of Iowa City, a Welsh settlement was established along Old Man's Creek. Most of the early church records of this community seem to have been lost. The

following account was supplied chiefly by T. D. ("Uncle Tom") Davis, shortly before his death in February, 1935. "Uncle Tom" Davis was one of the early pioneers in this region, having come to Iowa at the age of two and one-half years, in 1842. Edward T. Williams, Oliver Thomas, Henry Clement, Thomas Jones, Richard Tudor, David H. Jones, and David T. Davis were others of the early settlers. The Welsh took to the rolling country southwest of Iowa City, not only because they and their forebears had been used to it in the old country, but because of the fine oak timber that was available there for use in building their log houses.

"Meetings" were held from house to house before a church society was organized by the Reverend David Knowles, a missionary preacher, in 1846. The first church was built about 1856, when Morris Jones was minister. Hugh Tudor, known to the pioneers as a "good neighbor", donated an acre of land for the church and churchyard. The old church building has long since been moved to the David Hughes farm, where it is now used as a farm building.

The seats in the first church were simple oak slabs, out of Seehorn's sawmill, which was located just up the creek from the Elmer Williams farm, where part of the old dam may still be seen. These

benches were placed in two rows, with the aisle running down the middle between them, to accommodate the men on one side and the women and children on the other. Those were the days, so "Uncle Tom" Davis said, when they "got at the roots of Christianity". They knelt to pray, and when the minister spoke, he walked back and forth continually on the platform, so great was his fervor. There was no instrument of music for some time, even after the second church was built, but a church filled with Welshmen singing the old native hymns hardly needed such aid.

Families came to church with ox teams and wagons twice on Sundays, although the Thursday evening "preparatory meeting", which they had known back in Pennsylvania, was abandoned because of farm duties. Before a regular minister was located at Old Man's Creek, prayer meeting was held at ten o'clock on Sunday mornings, and Sunday school in the afternoon. After the minister came, preaching was held at ten in the morning and again in the evening, with Sunday school still in the afternoon. Mr. Davis recalled how they used to have to hurry home with the ox team to do chores in order to get back for evening preaching on time. Yet the church was always full, especially in the sixties, when settlers were becoming numerous in that region.

The first church was used until 1878. By that time the community had prospered, and the people felt that they should build a better meeting place. The Reverend C. D. Jones was minister at that time.

The church at Old Man's Creek shared the *Cymanfa* festival of the early days with the Long Creek, Flint Creek, and Williamsburg churches. The word itself is of Welsh derivation. It was the great festival of the year. Sometime during the beautiful prairie Indian summer, when the moon was beginning to get full, each of the four Welsh settlements was host to the other three for two or three days, the large group migrating to each of the four churches during a two weeks' period of religious inspiration and neighborly good fellowship. A few, of course, remained behind at each settlement to care for the stock, but everybody else got into their wagons and moved on to enjoy the mass hospitality at the next church.

The time was passed in preaching and singing. Services were held at ten and at two, and again in the evening. Presbyterians and Methodists frequently joined the Welshmen at these *Cymanfas*. Ministers of renown were often called in to preach the sermons, and "Uncle Tom" recalled somewhat wistfully those tremendous moonlight gatherings, the hearty though sometimes plaintive singing of

the Welsh, and the powerful preaching that again sounded the strength of Timothy Dwight in such men as Davis Waterville and R. G. Jones.

The Williamsburg community was also originally Welsh. The first settlers came to this village in 1844, buying land from the government for \$1.25 per acre. Not until 1856 was a congregation definitely formed. In that year the Reverend Jonathan Thomas, a circuit rider, came to the new settlement. His congregation of thirteen members met in the various homes to hold services.

Two years later, in 1858, the Reverend Evan J. Evans from Racine, Wisconsin, became the first resident pastor of the Williamsburg church. The new minister at once began to urge the people to build a church. The families, though few in number, "had a will to work". They hauled material from Muscatine and Iowa City. The church building cost \$1000, which to the pioneers was an exceedingly large sum. The pastor had taken land and supported himself by farming. In order that he might have a church, he mortgaged his farm and put the money into the common cause. Richard Williams, for whom the village was named, donated the site upon which the church was built. Owen M. Edwards, a contractor from Welsh Prairie ten miles east of Williamsburg, built the church.

The Williamsburg Congregational Church grew rapidly, becoming the social and cultural center of the new community. By 1871 the building was found to be too small, and an addition costing \$800 was added. The original building was put up with care and still stands, being used now as a dwelling house. The second church was built in 1890, and the present brick church was erected in 1916.

From the beginning until 1897, the entire service at the Williamsburg church was conducted in the Welsh language. The first pastor able to preach in both Welsh and English was the Reverend Abram Jones. In 1897 the younger generation began to desire an English service. They had become "too American" to appreciate any other language, and so an English service for the young people was held on Sunday evenings. From 1897 until 1911 the services continued to be carried on both in Welsh and in English. Since 1911 English only has been used. Few of the people can now speak the mother language.

CHARLES ARTHUR HAWLEY

Congregationalism in Iowa City

The "forty-niners" on their western trek were augmented by restless Iowans. This probably accounts in some instances for the slow growth of churches, for the emigration took place in all communities. The Quaker colony at Salem, for example, lost to California many of its leading citizens, including its educational leader, Reuben Dorland. Bayard Taylor's *Eldorado* fascinated and inspired other Iowans to seek their fortunes in the Far West.

This emigration closed, however, about 1855 and a great wave of immigration began. On January 1, 1856, the Rock Island Railroad reached Iowa City. This gave an added impetus to the growth of the capital city. With the increasing population a growing denominationalism was sensed. The American Home Missionary Society had separated into Presbyterian and Congregational groups and this divergence had been felt in the pioneer settlements. The new ministers, unlike Aratus Kent who had founded union, or community, churches, came as delegates of various ecclesiastical bodies.

Iowa City Congregationalism had its beginning

with Presbyterianism. The two denominations often worked together even after 1837. It mattered not to the pioneers whether they were of one body or the other. Presbyterian as well as Congregational traces appeared in the early settlements. The Presbyterian Church, however, was itself divided into the Old School, with its first Presbytery founded at Bloomington, now Muscatine, on November 6, 1840, and the New School, founded first at Yellow Springs, now Kossuth, on April 12, 1842. Both groups were represented in Iowa City. The New School group did its work under the direction of the American Home Missionary Society, and to all intents and purposes sympathized with the New England Congregationalism of the Timothy Dwight school. The Congregationalists in Iowa City therefore associated themselves at first with the New School Presbyterians.

In 1870 the New School and Old School Presbyterian synods in Iowa united. The Congregational and Presbyterian churches have usually held fast to the older traditions and remained separate. When in 1932 an attempt was made to unite the two churches in Iowa City, the movement was voted down by the Presbyterians, although, in the early stages of discussion at least, the Congregationalists favored such a union. The

attempt, however, was finally so firmly rejected that it is not likely to be revived until some new spirit of coöperation becomes nationally popular.

Like the Congregational churches in the Welsh communities of Old Man's Creek and at Williamsburg, the Iowa City church grew out of a series of prayer meetings held in the homes of the people. These unattached worshippers consciously imitated the New England parish and in 1856 formed a Congregational church. During that same year twenty other Congregational churches were organized in Iowa, each with the same New England background.

The first settled Congregational pastor in Iowa City was the Reverend Thomas Morong of Andover Theological Seminary. He was installed on November 26, 1856, on the very day the church was organized. The Congregationalists, having no church building, were guests of the Universalist Church for the examination, and the installation service the following day was held in the Baptist Church. The Iowa pioneers took the matter of examination seriously, using one day for the procedure instead of a few hours as is now the case. The installation made November 27th a day long to be remembered. The Reverend Jonathan Blanchard, president of Knox College, journeyed from Galesburg, Illinois, to deliver the sermon.

Dr. William Salter of the Burlington church also assisted in the service.

While the Congregationalists had no church building, the Baptists invited them to use the Baptist Church, which was done, the Congregational service being held on Sunday afternoons. Prayer meetings were regularly held on Thursday evening, in the "ancient languages" class room of Professor Henry S. Welton in the University. Early in 1857 the Congregationalists rented the newly built Athenaeum Hall on Clinton Street. It seated 700 people, and served the congregation very well. The church began to grow numerically, having at the end of the year forty members. Then came the depression of 1857.

This financial panic broke upon the region with a paralyzing effect. The banks failed. "Money was of the wildcat variety, which might be good in the morning and worthless at night." The financial crisis seems to have heightened interest in religion. The Congregationalists defied hard times and planned a church building. In 1857 the capital was moved from Iowa City to Des Moines. The University closed for lack of funds and all seemed in a state of discouragement.

Then came the long-remembered revival. This great moral movement swept the whole country, and in 1859 crossed the Atlantic to Ireland and

the British Isles. Many new members joined the Congregational Church in Iowa City. But, in the meantime, Mr. Morong had been east trying to raise money. Unsuccessful in his efforts, he resigned in January, 1859. The congregation was without a pastor until the following December, when the Reverend John C. Hutchinson was installed as the second pastor of the homeless congregation.

The pastorate of Mr. Hutchinson lasted only six months, when he resigned, because the financial burden seemed too great for the meager resources of the pioneer group. The congregation, however, never faltered, believing the future had a place for the continuance of the Puritan tradition.

The next minister to accept a call was the Reverend W. W. Allen. His story reflects the strict dogmatism of the time. He had been pastor of a Baptist church in Keokuk but, having declared against close communion, he had communed with the Presbyterians and for this offence the Baptist church excommunicated him. Allen felt he was in line with John Bunyan and Roger Williams, but the Iowa Baptists could not appreciate such behavior. Only recently have the Baptist churches in Iowa begun to abandon close communion. Allen stayed with the Iowa City Congregational

Church until 1863, when the situation became so discouraging that all Congregational services were abandoned for a period of three years.

On July 31, 1866, the Iowa City Congregational Church was reorganized and the Reverend G. D. A. Hebard became pastor. The congregation realized by this time that it must either build a church or disband. So they built a church. On June 9, 1868, the cornerstone of the present building was laid amid general rejoicing. The reorganized church was composed of the New School Presbyterians and the Congregational remnant. The church was thus a new example of the old association of American Home Missionary Society in which both Presbyterians and Congregationalists coöperated. From this time on the Congregational Church in Iowa City prospered.

The Congregational Church of Iowa City began to attract attention in the sixties as a church atune to the conditions of the educational center in which it was located. It emphasized the cultural side of religion, invited eminent lecturers to its pulpit, and tried to harmonize its teachings with the rapidly changing beliefs of the period. The Reverend G. D. A. Hebard encouraged all this. Born and bred in Vermont, educated at Dartmouth and at Union Theological Seminary, he was pastor of the New School Presbyterian Church until he

brought about the Iowa City merger in 1866. He carried through the building of the present edifice, and on December 19, 1869, it was dedicated. Just previous to the dedication, however, Hebard accepted a call to the church at Oskaloosa. He was succeeded by the Reverend Rufus Sawyer, who stayed from October, 1869, to the spring of 1871, when he accepted a call to the church at Anamosa. Sawyer was succeeded by the Reverend W. E. Ijams who, like Hebard, proved to be exceedingly popular. It was during Ijams's pastorate that Iowa City was visited by Amos Bronson Alcott.

An entry in Louisa Alcott's *Journal* for November, 1872, speaks of her getting "Father off for the West". On this trip he first lectured in Dubuque. On Sunday, November 24th, he addressed the Sunday school at the First Universalist Church. He was everywhere popular with the children. On Monday evening he talked to the adult Sunday school class at the home of the teacher. On his birthday, November 29th, his admirers in Dubuque presented a gold-headed cane to him. He wrote about the gift to Louisa and she recorded the event in her *Journal*. On the first Sunday in December, Alcott preached at the Universalist Church on "The Religious Tendencies of the Times".

He next visited Fort Dodge, where he spoke on

Sunday, December 8th; then he went to Grinnell, from which place he proceeded to Iowa City, where he arrived on December 23rd and put up at the St. James Hotel.

According to Alcott's *Journal*, accessible through the kindness of Frederick W. Pratt and Odell Shepard, he went the next morning to call on the Reverend Samuel Judd, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church. Alcott had met Judd two years before in Dubuque. On Christmas day, Alcott attended "Episcopalian Services", and afterward called on various Iowa City people, including President George Thacher and Professor Amos N. Currier. He also held one of his famous "conversations" at the home of Professor James B. Edmonds.

Alcott was pleased with Iowa City and the struggling University. The people he met had read his writings, they were interested in his lecture, and they were all fond of Louisa, especially of her famous book, *Little Women*, which was a "best seller" in Iowa. On December 26th, Alcott called on Miss Augusta Chapin, the Universalist minister in Iowa City. He had a remarkable interest in the churches, and expressed a desire to know about the religious life of the West. He also made the acquaintance of John P. Irish, the editor of the Iowa City *Daily Press*. The Edmonds

family gave Alcott a reception on Saturday evening, December 28th, for faculty and students of the University.

The person, however, whom Alcott desired most to meet was the Reverend William Edwin Ijams. The Congregational minister's experience in practical philanthropy and in translating the gospel into institutional patterns interested Alcott. Ijams had established in Iowa City in 1854 an institution for the care and instruction of the deaf and dumb, and he had served as its first principal. This function was later assumed by the State and finally the school was removed to Council Bluffs.

When Alcott came to Iowa City in December, 1872, the University was much aroused by the conflict of religion and science as a result of the lecture tour of John Tyndall who, by his scientific theories, had challenged institutional religion and especially the orthodox conception of prayer. Although Tyndall had confined his lecturing to the cities on the Atlantic coast, his ideas had penetrated to the trans-Mississippi region, and had encountered in Iowa City one who was qualified to meet the issue so keenly felt in the churches and colleges. Ijams preached to a crowded church as the students and faculty came to hear religion's side of the question. He also wrote reviews and articles on Tyndall and Huxley, some of which

were partially reprinted in the student publication. Alcott was curious to know what orthodox Congregationalism in the prairie State had to say to Tyndall. He wanted to compare the reaction of Iowa with that which followed Tyndall's lectures in Boston. Ijams was the man to inform him.

On Saturday December 28th Alcott met Ijams at the home of Professor Edmonds, who was at that time teaching in the College of Law and interested in the current religious questions which Ijams fearlessly discussed in his sermons. Alcott approved of Ijams at once, and Ijams, like all of Iowa City, capitulated immediately to the charm of the aged philosopher. After a few minutes conversation Ijams asked Alcott to preach for him the next forenoon. Alcott consented "gladly".

The next forenoon the Congregational Church was crowded while Alcott read "a chapter and a hymn," and preached the sermon. He enjoyed preaching in the West and especially that December Sunday in the Congregational Church at Iowa City. There he found a kind of religion which, while Puritan and to the pioneers orthodox, was yet as liberal as New England Unitarianism. The subject of his sermon was reported to be "The Ideal Religion". Evidently the sermon dealt with religion and institutionalism, and embodied most likely the discussion he had had the day before

with Ijams about the influence of Huxley and Tyn-dall on American thought.

On Sunday evening Alcott again attended the Congregational Church, this time sitting in the minister's pew, and heard Ijams deliver "an excellent discourse". On Monday, December 30th, Alcott left Iowa City, full of praise for the New England Congregationalism which had developed in the "New West", as his neighbor, Emerson, called the prairie country.

This visit to Iowa City did something to both Alcott and Iowa City Congregationalism. The latter was strengthened in its determination to hold high the cultural side of religion, to show religion's ability to cope with the perplexing questions facing America. But to Alcott himself it did even more. He suddenly found himself at peace with Puritanism in its western development. It helped him clarify his own position. After all, Alcott remained a Puritan — and he was confirmed in it on the prairies of the New West.

CHARLES ARTHUR HAWLEY

Comment by the Editor

FOR EACH, A CHURCH; BY ALL, A COLLEGE

Ideas are the engines that move the world. Against the mass of habit they exert the energy of hope. In ethics, politics, religion, and every other field of human conduct the great generalizations that are produced by the instinct, reason, or experience of the race control the actions of mankind. The Golden Rule, for example, conceived in the quest for justice, is a sign of civilization. That the government derives its power from the people it governs is the principle upon which political liberty is founded. Confidence in the immortality of the soul has enabled millions to live nobly and die bravely. History is chiefly concerned with deeds inspired by dynamic ideas.

When a group of Andover theological students decided to answer the call to carry the gospel beyond the Mississippi, they pledged allegiance to a high ideal of Christian service. "If each one of us can only plant one good permanent church," proposed one of the twelve, "and all together build a college, what a work that would be!"

Churches they did establish in the pioneer towns of Iowa, and the college they founded is now

called Grinnell. In spite of hardship and discouragement, they persisted in their purpose, and the good they did immeasurably affected the spiritual character of the Commonwealth. To education they gave a new impetus, "to citizenship a new meaning, and to manhood a new dignity."

Other men — teachers, farmers, merchants, statesmen — impelled toward significant achievements by the force of their ideas, have made valuable contributions to the intellectual and material welfare of Iowa. There is scarcely a field of endeavor which has not yielded some evidence of enlightened progress. And yet with all our reputation for leadership in producing tall corn and fat hogs, Iowa is more distinguished for the literacy and piety of its citizens. It was not in vain that the Iowa Band of Congregational ministers, and others equally consecrated to the glorious task of promulgating religion, morality, and learning, labored among the pioneers. Their zeal left an indelible mark.

J. E. B.

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