

The
PALIMPSEST
MARCH 1932
CONTENTS

An Adventure in Faith 93
RUTH A. GALLAHER

A Prospect of Fort Dodge 106
CHARLES C. KEENEY

Comment 131
THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT IOWA CITY IOWA
UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

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

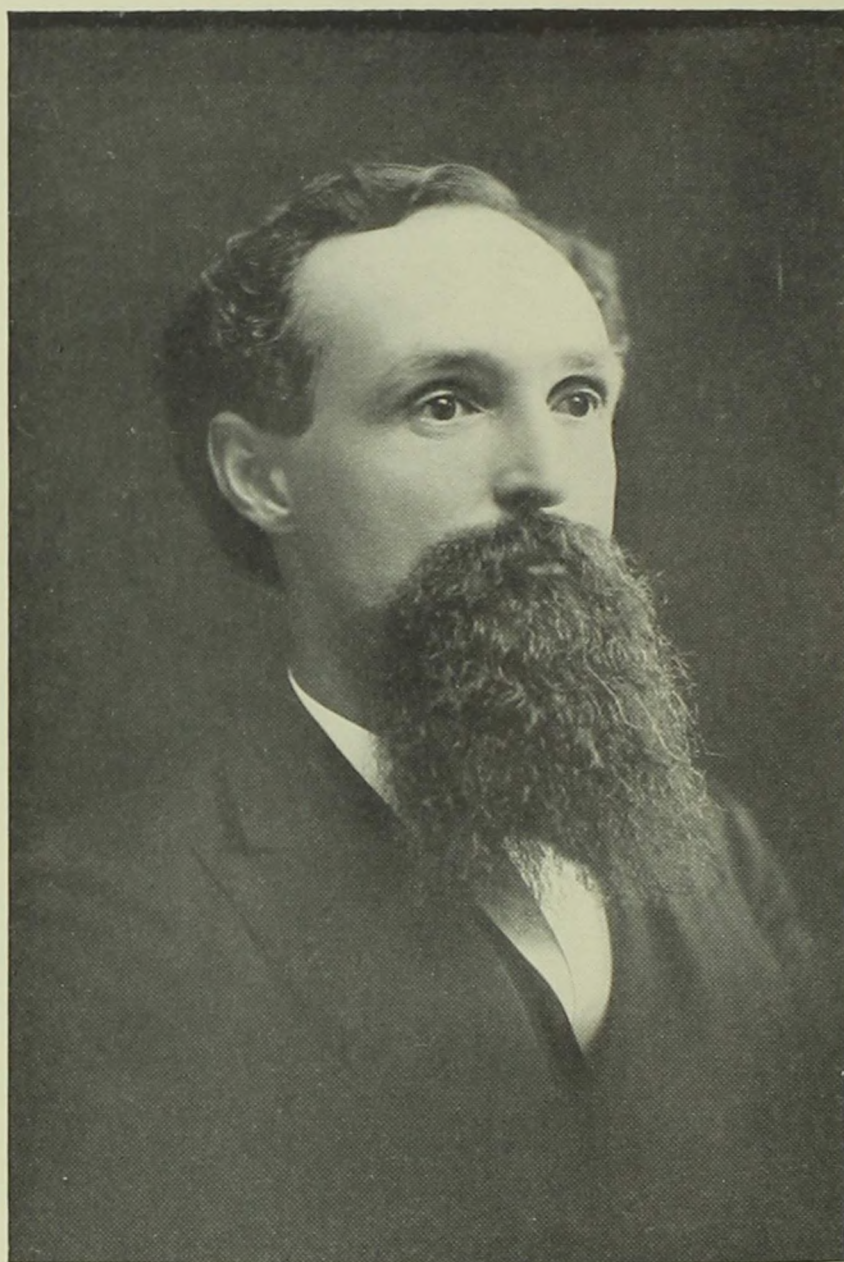
Superintendent

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.

PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa



COURTESY OF H. R. LEMEN

JOSEPH G. LEMEN

THE PALIMPSEST

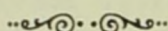
EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

VOL. XIII

ISSUED IN MARCH 1932

NO. 3

COPYRIGHT 1932 BY THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



An Adventure in Faith

One Sunday morning in December, 1882, Reverend Joseph G. Lemen, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Council Bluffs, Iowa, preached a sermon on temperance. To illustrate the evils growing out of the use of intoxicating liquor, the young minister told the story of the drunkard who had committed suicide in that city some months earlier, leaving his widow and six children destitute.

Although he had told the story to emphasize his temperance sermon, and not as an appeal for relief, Reverend Lemen felt a sudden impulse to ask for a collection to assist the widow, but this would have been unusual and irregular, and he put the idea aside. The service continued and the minister stood with his hand uplifted for the benediction, when he suddenly decided to obey the inner voice. He dropped his hand and announced that the congregation would be given an opportu-

nity to help the needy family. The response was so generous that Reverend Lemen had sufficient funds to provide for the most pressing needs of the widow's family and to help several other poor families as well.

As he was on his way home the next day from this mission of charity, Reverend Lemen met a reporter from the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* who wanted the story for his paper. After some discussion the newspaper man suggested that he put in the paper an announcement that the minister would be in his study each morning from ten to twelve to receive donations for the poor and hear pleas for assistance. The pastor demurred; the plan would interfere seriously with his sermons and his parish work. He finally agreed, however, and thus unintentionally and rather unwillingly began a work which has continued ever since.

Times were hard in the winter of 1882 and high water had driven many poor families from their homes. In a short time the pastor's relief work came to be a major industry. The chapel of the First Baptist Church was soon open from seven o'clock in the morning until ten at night. One day a partially intoxicated man walked into the room and insisted that Reverend Lemen take charge of his three young daughters. The mother was dead, he said, and he was too much addicted

to drink to be a fit guardian for his own children. The minister explained that he had no facilities for caring for children although the church could and would render assistance, but the man declared that this would not do. If the minister and the church would not take the children, they must go to the poorhouse.

Unwilling to turn the children away, Reverend Lemen agreed to take the little girls who were motherless and almost worse than fatherless, although he had at the time no idea as to what provision he could make for them. For a time they were cared for in the Lemen home. Later Reverend Lemen rented a small house, on his own responsibility, and installed the children there with a matron to take care of them. Soon other destitute children were brought in and almost before they realized what had happened the minister and his wife had an orphanage on their hands.

Before we tell the story of this children's home, let us introduce the founders. Both Reverend and Mrs. Lemen were born in Salem, Illinois, in the year 1848, and were therefore just past thirty-four years of age. Mrs. Lemen had been Florence Hagee, the daughter of wealthy and cultured parents. Later the family moved away from Salem, and it was upon the occasion of a visit to the home town that Florence, then a black-haired,

blue-eyed young woman, met Joseph G. Lemen, who had just graduated from the Harvard Law School and was beginning the practice of law. It was not surprising that the two became attracted to each other, and in 1871 they were married.

The future seemed to promise ease and distinction. For a time Joseph Lemen continued his law practice and also edited a newspaper, but the religious background of the Lemen family made him increasingly dissatisfied with his profession. After debating the question for some time, and discussing it with his wife, the young lawyer suddenly announced that he was discontinuing his law practice. He attended a theological seminary, known as Shurtleff College, and upon graduation entered the Baptist ministry. Mrs. Lemen joined in the new life cheerfully, although it meant privations and hardships instead of the ease to which she had been accustomed. In 1881, the Lemens came to the Council Bluffs Baptist Church, bringing with them their three children, one child having died in infancy. The future again looked promising, for Reverend Lemen was known as a good preacher and a successful pastor. But again the hand of fate pointed to another path.

On March 16, 1883, the "Council Bluffs Home of the Friendless Association" was incorporated under the laws of Iowa. Its purpose was the sup-

port of the children's home already begun by Reverend Lemen. According to the articles of incorporation, the property of the Association must always be used as a home for orphan and destitute children, irrespective of church affiliations or State lines. Such property could neither be mortgaged nor sold. Eleven years later, on January 13, 1894, the articles of incorporation were renewed. This time the name was given as the "Christian Home Association of Council Bluffs, Iowa". The institution is frequently referred to as the Christian Home Orphanage.

The Christian Home was founded on the faith of Reverend and Mrs. Lemen that God would provide for its needs. Its motto has always been "Endowed with His Promises". It has never received any support from public funds nor is it officially connected with any particular church, lodge, or society. It has only one trust fund and no revenue-producing property. During the nearly fifty years of its existence, the Home has depended solely upon the contributions sent in by individuals, churches, clubs, Sunday school classes, and groups of various kinds. To maintain an institution of this kind with an average daily enrollment of some two hundred inmates by means of casual contributions received from day to day is indeed a test of faith.

At first Reverend Lemen, busy pastor as he was, made trips to surrounding towns to solicit aid for the orphanage. To aid him in getting the needs of the Home before the public, he began the publication of a small paper, the *Christian Home*. The first issue was dated October 2, 1884, and since that time it has appeared regularly semi-monthly. This paper is the mouthpiece of the Home. It contains information concerning the Home, appeals for assistance, and long lists of contributors, sometimes including the letters which accompany the donations.

Aside from this paper, the *Christian Home* does little soliciting for funds. It sends out no financial agents and has, therefore, little overhead expense in the matter of obtaining funds. Friends are relied upon to make known the needs of the orphanage.

During the first two years of the Home's existence, Reverend Lemen retained his pastorate and the care of the orphanage was entrusted to persons employed for that purpose. This plan was not satisfactory, however, and in 1885, Reverend Lemen resigned his pastorate and the Lemens moved to the site of the orphanage, building for themselves a frame house with their own funds and partly by their own labor. This house was later deeded to the institution.

For almost twenty years this couple devoted themselves to the care of the needy. Mrs. Lemen washed and scrubbed, baked and sewed, for the children in the Home as well as for her own children. At one time typhoid developed in the institution and Mrs. Lemen assumed the responsibility for the care of seventeen of the sick children in addition to that of her own daughter who also contracted the disease. During the same years, Reverend Lemen carried the financial burdens of the growing and always needy institution. It was, indeed, a strenuous life and it is not surprising that these two people, whose faith, courage, and sacrifice made up the foundations of the Christian Home, died at a comparatively early age, Mrs. Lemen on September 10, 1902, and Reverend Lemen two years later.

The site of the Christian Home Orphanage occupies about three city blocks in the heart of Council Bluffs. As the years have passed various buildings have been added, until at present the plant is valued at some \$300,000. The chapel and schoolhouse, a small frame building, formerly belonged to the Berean Baptist Church of Council Bluffs. When the congregation of this church disbanded, the building was moved to the site of the orphanage.

The first brick building was completed in 1903.

It was a two-story structure, sixty by one hundred and twenty-eight feet, and contains the main dining room and the dormitory for the larger girls. The dining room will seat two hundred and fifty persons. This building was made possible by a donation from a prominent citizen of Iowa who has refused to permit his name to be made public. On its cornerstone are the words, GIFT OF LOVE FROM A FRIEND, "IN HIS NAME". A Memorial Building, which houses the babies and the small boys, was erected in 1905 in honor of Reverend and Mrs. J. G. Lemen, the founders of the Home. Funds were donated by friends of the institution.

The building for large boys, the office building, and the heating plant and laundry were made possible by a bequest from Mrs. Mary E. Robinson of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The boys' building, completed in 1907, contains, in addition to the dormitory for the larger boys, departments for aged women and crippled and deformed children, a gymnasium, and a carpenter shop. The latest of the brick buildings, the Nurses' Home, was erected in 1913 with money raised by a system of group pledges. About \$10,000 of the amount was raised in Council Bluffs. This building also houses some of the adult inmates.

The Christian Home is, at present, administered by a board of seven trustees, which fills its own

vacancies. Mr. H. R. Lemen, one of the sons of the founder of the Home, acts as general manager, secretary, and treasurer. Another son, D. P. Lemen, is a member of the board of trustees. The superintendent is Mrs. Walter Stephan, a woman of unusual ability in handling children, the only mother many of these children have known. She has charge of all the inmates — children, old people, and afflicted persons — and supervises the reception and placing of children.

The Christian Home, like all institutions for the care and placing of children, is under the supervision of the State Board of Control and makes monthly reports to the Board concerning the children received in the Home, those who have died, and those placed in homes. The placing of children in private homes outside of Iowa and the reception of children from other States must be approved by the Iowa Superintendent of Child Welfare.

Children are received from any part of the United States, but about seventy-five per cent are from Iowa. Occasionally, dependent or neglected children are committed to the Home by juvenile courts, usually after a conference between representatives of the Home, the judge, and the guardian of the child. The institution, however, is in no sense a reform school. In its earlier years the Home cared for many physically and

mentally handicapped children, but since more institutions have been provided for such children, the officers of the Home prefer to receive only those who are fitted to attend the regular grade school maintained on the grounds. Approximately 25,000 children have been cared for at the Home since its founding.

During the year 1931, 238 children and 14 destitute mothers and grandmothers were received in the institution and homes were found for 139 children and five women. There have been no deaths in the Home during the past ten years, although many of the children are sick or undernourished when received. Four children from the Home graduated from the Council Bluffs High School in 1931 and two from college.

A few afflicted persons received as children are still inmates of the Home. Years ago a blind boy was admitted. Later he was sent to Vinton where he was taught rug weaving. For some years he was able to maintain himself, but hard times lessened his earnings, and he now finds a refuge in the only home he has ever known.

The institution does not, however, plan to keep children indefinitely. About 60 per cent of those received are returned to parents or relatives, 15 per cent are placed in foster homes for adoption, one per cent, chiefly older children, are placed in

homes on agreement, and only the remaining 24 per cent are kept longer than a year. Unlike most child-placing homes, however, the Christian Home Orphanage does not separate brothers and sisters. If the family is too large to find a foster home, an effort is made to place the children in homes where the people are related or so closely associated that the adopted children will have an opportunity to grow up together. If this can not be done, the entire family is kept in the Home.

The secretary of the Home writes as follows of this problem: "It is not difficult to provide for the children who are released to us for adoption. We always have some very excellent homes on our waiting list, so it is always possible for us to place children, who are for adoption, in excellent homes. This is especially true of the children under seven years of age, whether they have red hair and freckles, or not. We have many applications for two children, or for twins. Now, more than ever before, childless couples are making an effort to complete their homes, and fill their lives by taking a little child, or children, into their homes. This is true of people in all walks of life — professional people, teachers, lawyers, writers, retired farmers, unmarried women; and we received a most unusual application from a prominent writer — an unmarried man. He wanted to give a bright boy

the educational opportunity he wanted to have and for which he had to work, after he was grown."

Many children, on the other hand, are left in the home by parents or relatives who are perhaps temporarily unable to care for them, yet are unwilling to give them up for adoption. In some cases a mother is received in the home with her family of small children. Occasionally a grandmother is admitted with her dependent grandchildren. A number of elderly women who are without other means of support are also cared for at the Home.

The letters from families asking aid are often pathetic. What tragedies they reveal — stories of fathers and mothers who are dead, sick, in prison, out of work, or too subnormal to be able to support their families. Wherever possible, such families are admitted temporarily and an effort is made to reestablish their home. Sometimes the father or some relative can be located and compelled or persuaded to provide for the children. In time, the children get old enough to assist the mother in supporting the family.

To care for this assortment of dependents requires a well-organized institution and a considerable outlay of money. The Christian Home now maintains its own laundry, hospital, school, and

church, in addition to housing and feeding its inmates. There is also a band. Expenditures must be governed by the donations which come in. If the funds are low children seeking admission must be turned away.

For the year 1931 the total expenditures of the Christian Home Association were listed at slightly more than \$131,800. Food cost some \$14,000, heat and light \$9600, and clothing \$1350. The comparatively small expenditures for food and clothing are explained by the long lists of donations of such articles published in each issue of the Home paper.

Gifts to the orphanage during 1931 totalled \$105,954. These gifts came not from Iowa alone but from many parts of the United States. The deficit is due to the fact that in times of depression receipts of institutions dependent on private charity tend to fall off, while demands for assistance, of course, increase. It has so far been paid by using a surplus fund invested in securities and certificates, but this has been almost exhausted. Those in charge of the Home peer anxiously at the meal and the oil, and now, as in other times, they scrape the bottom, but the adventure in faith goes on.

RUTH A. GALLAHER

A Prospect of Fort Dodge

Two years after a military post was established near the Lizard Fork on the Des Moines River to protect settlers and government surveyors, Assistant Surgeon Charles C. Keeney reported his observations on the "Medical Topography and Diseases of Fort Dodge". Although some of his ideas are erroneous, the description of frontier conditions in northwest Iowa in 1852 is as enlightening as it is unique. The document is here reprinted from the "Statistical Report of the Sickness and Mortality in the Army of the United States", Senate Executive Document, No. 96, pp. 50-57, 34th Congress, 1st Session, 1856. — THE EDITOR.

While describing the geographical position of this post, it will be necessary to say, that in consequence of not being able to procure the necessary astronomical instruments for determining the true latitude and longitude, I had to calculate them from maps; consequently, my calculations may not be without a slight error — deviating a few minutes, either way, from the true meridian.

According to my calculations, we are in latitude

42° 28' north, and longitude 17° 1' west from Washington, which places us rather in the northwest corner of Iowa, on the Des Moines river, and near the junction of the Lizard forks.

The Des Moines is a large and rapid stream, taking its rise from numerous small lakes in the northwestern part of this State and Minnesota. Its average width is from one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards, with a rapid current, a limestone bottom, and tolerably clear water. The river is very tortuous in its course; but its general bearings are from northwest to southeast, running through the whole course of the State, and emptying into the Mississippi a few miles below Keokuk. It is considered navigable for light-draught steamers up to Fort Des Moines, and probably is up to this fort in high water. The river at this point forms a crescent, which bounds two sides of the fort, while a rolling prairie and a deep ravine, supporting a grove of timber, cover the remaining sides.

The physical aspect of the country about the post is beautiful and picturesque in the extreme. At two points of the compass, east and west, to the utmost extent of vision, a vast undulating prairie, supporting a luxuriant growth of flowers and grass, is in view; while nearly from the north to the south the majestic Des Moines is seen

meandering through the boundless prairie, flanked on either side with high bluffs and ledges of rocks, supporting in many places a dense growth of timber of the choicest kind.

The general physical appearance of this vicinity and the country adjacent is of such a nature as to lead one to suppose that this prairie country has once been the bottom of a vast sheet of water, and at a period long subsequent to the Mosaic deluge. The deep ravines, embosoming small rivulets; the gentle undulations of the prairie uplands; the peculiar geological formations of the bluffs; the fossiliferous depositions on the broad prairie, and particularly of the plutonic and volcanic boulders (granite and trap) that are frequently to be seen on the open prairie, probably hundreds of miles from their parent formations, are almost conclusive evidences that the country, at no very great distant period back, was submerged. Some of these boulders are so large that they may be seen for miles, standing out in bold relief on the prairie. Their general surface is rough and uneven, with few signs of having been worn by rolling, which goes to show that they were transported (probably on icebergs) to their distant and isolated abodes. The uplands, with their *lacustrine*-like appearance, and the bluffs of the rivers, with their apparently modern sedimentary formations, also,

are so many living witnesses to testify to the fact that at least this immediate vicinity was once a vast lake. Numerous physical and geological facts might be brought forward in corroboration of this assertion; but, as the limits of this paper will not permit of more than a general sketch of the physical aspect of the post, and as it is foreign to my subject, I will proceed to give a brief description of the geological formations.

From the above remarks on the physical characters of this vicinity, it will be inferred that no subterranean convulsions, no upheavals, or any other volcanic actions, have visited and raised up the present formations in this part of Iowa; but, on the other hand, it can more easily be imagined that, when the waters covered the surface, the strata of the various rocks were gradually deposited, one upon the other, by the same process as is now daily going on before our eyes in the same formations.

The chief formation in this immediate vicinity is the aqueous, or sedimentary rock, including nearly all its varieties — the calcareous, the gypsum (sulphate of lime), silicious, and argillaceous rocks. The calcareous rock is the chief, and it may truly be said forms the backbone of all the other sedimentary and fossiliferous bodies of this class of rocks. It lies in detached pieces and in

solid masses all along the shores of the Des Moines and its tributaries, forming the bulk of the bluffs and cliffs, and also the beds of the rivers.

Carbonate of lime seems to predominate over all the varieties of this rock. At many points, particularly on the small tributaries of the Des Moines, the form of stratification varies materially. At one point, a series of strata of carbonate of lime forms high bluffs; while, at another point, a stratum of carbonate of lime alternates with one of argillaceous rock; then, again, argillaceous and arenaceous strata are superimposed on layers of carbonate of lime. In many places on the Des Moines are seen beds of shale alternating with beds of lime strata. Not far from this post, and on the river, is an extensive bed of shale combined with argillaceous and calcareous matter. This rock has forced itself out of the banks of the river, at an angle of 50° . The great dip this stratification presents, I am led to believe, from the physical as well as the geological features, was brought about by the sliding of the earth, caused by the action of water. I am further led to this belief from the fact, that the stratification all around this district is nearly horizontal; and, also, from there being no marks or signs of internal commotions having occurred, no dislocation and distortion of strata. This bed of shale bears strongly the physical fea-

tures of coal. Its stratification is well defined, and between many of its laminae are enclosed organic remains, many of which have strong impressions of various plants. These beds of shale (bituminous, I think) are quite numerous on the banks of the Des Moines, and are not unfrequently taken for rich beds of coal. I view them only as so many indications of an inferior quality of coal hidden in the banks.

On one of the small rivulets that empties into the Des Moines is a bed of gypsum (sulphate of lime), a soft, white and yellowish rock, with the stratification (as usual) nearly horizontal, and, like the other rocks, bearing N. W. and S. E. It appears to be free from the other varieties of rock.

In some of the bluffs are deep fissures and rents, and appearances of dykes, that would lead the superficial observer to suppose they were produced by subterranean convulsions and upheavals. A bird's-eye view of their geographical features will show that land-slides and the action of water were their origin.

The only palaeontological evidences observed in these rocks were the fossiliferous plants, and impressions in the shale deposits already spoken of. These fossiliferous remains were so indistinct as to render it impossible either to determine their class, order, or species.

As may be supposed, from the above formations, the metalliferous and other mineral indications are exceedingly few. The great requisites for the metalliferous productions, as trap, conglomerate, basalt, porphyry, and other crystalline rocks, are wanting. The only mineral this formation can produce (as far as my superficial explorations have gone) is coal; and this in such poor qualities, that an attempt to work a mine for profit would be of doubtful expediency.

From the above remarks on the geological structure, it is to be supposed that the general surface of the country supports a good soil. In the bottom lands, bordering the rivers, and where the land has been frequently inundated from the frequent swellings of the streams, the soil is exceedingly rich and productive. It is, for the most part, composed of alluvial deposit lying on a bed of limestone; and superimposed upon this deposit is a thick covering of vegetable mould. The soil of the uplands differs somewhat from this. It consists of a black earth, composed of sand and clay intermixed with calcareous matter. It holds in composition less organic matter than that of the bottom land. But this soil, composed as it is of loam, marl, and here and there of infusorial earth, and having for a base a thick bed of calcareous matter, is capable of producing rich crops of corn,

wheat, oats, &c., year after year, without any material drain on its fertilizing powers.

Next to the physical features of a country, and not second to it in point of health and prosperity, is climatology. I believe it is conceded by all, that a rich and productive soil, with an unequable and treacherous climate, is more pernicious to health, and less to be coveted by the agriculturist, than a less fertilizing soil with a good climate. Such, truly, ought to be so; for while the soil is amendable through the medium of the arts, climate, on the other hand, is beyond the reach of art and science.

Before speaking of the climatic characteristics of this post, it will be as well to premise my remarks by saying that this post is not quite two years old, and only part of this time have meteorological observations been taken; consequently, I can only speak of the climatic peculiarities of one year, which peculiarities may not be in accordance with a series of years of the past or to come. But still, from a careful study of climatology, and with the physical features of a country before the eye, one is enabled, in a great measure, to form a tolerably correct opinion of the general character of the climate of a country.

By reference to the Meteorological Register, it is found that the past winter was rigorous and

changeable in the extreme; not rigorous from the low degree to which the mercury would at times fall, but from the constant hurricane-like winds that rushed from the north, and swept over the prairie, chilling the innermost blood, both of man and beast. The same register shows that this last month (June) was subject to great thermometric changes. During the month of January, 1852, the mercury fell to the lowest graduated degree of our thermometers — namely, 28° below zero; and had the graduation been still lower, (or the thermometer longer, as some are wont to have it,) the mercury would, in all probability, have fallen to 30° or 35° below zero. Last month, as the table shows, the mercury rose to 97° in the shade. During the summer months, the wind almost incessantly blows a gale from the south, which has its salutary effects, as will be seen when we come to speak of disease, &c.

It is needless to remark, that these great atmospheric changes are attributable, in the main, to the following physical causes: At the north, south, east, and west, all is one vast stretch of prairie, and nowhere is there a great body of water to modify and mollify the temperature by evaporation and condensation. Even during the greater part of the summer months, there are no clouds in the sky to parry off the piercing rays of the sun.

The springs are also exceedingly changeable and uncertain. The agriculturist will experience many reverses in his fields, arising from the great atmospheric vicissitudes. He may retire to his bed with his heart light from the growing and thrifty appearance of his crops, and in the morning he will go out and return with his heart saddened and chilled by the frosts of May and June. But there is one redeeming feature in this treacherous climate, which, in despite of the great and sudden changes, renders it quite salubrious. It is this: the atmosphere is exceedingly dry at all times. The salutary influence this hygrometric feature has, will be referred to when we come to speak of disease, &c.

As soil and climate are the fountains from which disease, in its general sense, takes its rise, it will not be out of place here to speak briefly of the nature and causes of the various maladies that occur at this post.

The register of sick shows remittent and intermittent to be the prevailing fevers at this post, and diseases of the respiratory organs to predominate over all others. As regards remittents and intermittents being the prevailing fevers at this place, the fact not only holds good here, but has generally been so at all the various stations at which I have been, particularly at those posts where the

cultivation of the soil has been one of the duties of the command. The secret may be this: trees are felled, the soil is turned up, and a greater surface exposed for the direct rays of the sun to promote decomposition of the tree-tops, the turf, and other vegetable matter brought to light. As a general rule, at all new military posts (and I think the same will hold good in all new agricultural districts) the people are more exempt from miasmatic fevers the first year than the second and third. This exemption may be owing to the cause of the malarious influence brought to light by art (if I may so speak) not having had sufficient time to become thoroughly developed by the action of the sun, and other causes, to make its impressions on the nervous and sanguiferous systems. But not so at posts and in old agricultural districts where there are already natural and living sources for the generation of miasmatic poison. Here the subject immediately imbibes and experiences the effect of the poison in a few weeks, or even in a few days. Adopting the old notions of vegetable decomposition in its various forms as the "*fons et origo*" of bilious remittents and intermittents; and while discarding the cryptogamous and other fanciful theories of the present day, I am prepared to state that all the remittents and intermittents that have occurred at this post were caused by the im-

bibition and absorption of miasmatic poison generated by the vegetable decomposition in the bottom lands, where gardening and farming have been carried on. Nearly all the men who have been the subjects of these fevers were the ablest bodied men of the command, and, when on other duty in the uplands, enjoyed perfect immunity from those fevers; but no sooner would they be detailed for horticultural duty, than they would report sick with one of these fevers. I am aware that some late writers are endeavoring to prove that miasmatic poison is not the source from whence these fevers arise; and, as irrefutable arguments, they cite instances of armies that have been decimated by these forms of fevers, in those places where there was not the slightest evidence of vegetable decomposition, and other sources for the generation of miasmata. But they seem to forget, or at least leave out the important fact, that these same armies, during their long and rapid marches, have encamped one or more nights in miasmatic districts, where the body has taken in the malarious seeds; and after two months, or two weeks' fatigue and exposure to a scorching sun, these seeds have grown up, the fruits of which were a congestive remittent and intermittent fever.

The sick report shows but few cases of rheumatism. Considering the great range which the

thermometer has here in all the four seasons, it might be supposed that rheumatism would form a conspicuous part in the catalogue of diseases. But, on the contrary, it is quite rare here, owing, in all probability, to the hygrometric feature of the atmosphere. At all seasons of the year, and during the greatest thermometric changes, the atmosphere is exceedingly free from moisture.

Most of the diseases of the respiratory system were of the mildest nature, and in the majority of the cases were unaccompanied with febrile action. The only diseases of the chest, involving the substance of the lungs and pleura, were imported cases. The mildest of the diseases of the thoracic organs may also be attributed to the general dryness of the atmosphere during the great thermometric changes.

Dysentery and diarrhœa, in chronic forms, are not known here; and dysentery, in its acute form, is rare.

To sum up, the health of the command is exceedingly good at all times. The following may be the causes why it is so: First, the peculiar hygrometric feature of the atmosphere, being free from moisture at all times; secondly, the pure and limpid waters, both of the running streams, and particularly of the numerous springs that gush out of the bluffs, and from the bottom lands, some of

which are slightly impregnated with the salts of iron and sulphur; thirdly, to the constant winds that carry off all effluvia, as fast as generated, to distant parts; and also to the constant employment of the men in their various duties; to their wholesome diet (salt and fresh meat, combined with a due proportion of vegetable matter); and particularly to *thoroughly baked bread, and no whisky.*

As far as my experience has gone at military posts, I have found bread badly baked, and an undue quantity of alcoholic drinks, to be the chief originators of the diseases of the digestive organs. Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of having bread thoroughly baked. I have not unfrequently seen two-thirds of a command at a time afflicted with diseases of the digestive organs, arising from one single batch of badly baked bread. The company baker and bake-house should be daily inspected; and as the art of making bread is a chemical process, none are so competent to make this inspection as the medical officer of the post. Stringent orders should be issued, enjoining on the commanding officer of the post to see this important inspection daily made.

As a full development of the FLORA does not take place before the latter part of July and August, only a general outline of the botanical characters can be expected here. The botanical

characters that merit special notice, are the following: The wild rose and strawberry, in this vicinity, seem to be twin brothers, as they are found together, growing in great profusion around the borders of the prairie and timber. The fleur-de-lis (*iris*) is found growing in marshy ground, and flowers in June. The blue violet (*viola caerulea*), the blazing star, and several other species of the liatris, with their long spikes of purple flowers, the calla palustris, the wild turnip (*arum*), the petalostemons, with their luxuriant heads of violets, the cone-flowers (*rudbeckia*), the wild sun-flower (*helianthus*), the golden rod (*solidago*), the eye-bright (*euphorbia corollata*), &c., are found growing in the uplands and bottom lands, and add lustre to the spring and summer dress of the prairie. The wild ginger (*asarum Canadense*) grows in the ravines, and flowers in May and June. There is one plant, everywhere to be found on the prairie, that at all times attracts the attention of the traveller, not only from its height and brightness of flowers, but because its leaves are endowed with peculiar qualities. It is the compass, or polar plant (*silphium laciniatum*). It is a plant that grows from one to five feet high, rather coarse in its general aspect, and with a ferny leaf. The flower is like that of the sun-flower. This plant is celebrated for the peculiar

property of its leaves, pointing due north and south. Some have said the leaves do not always point north and south, but go with the wind. From many and careful observations on this plant, I can say that its polarity can be as much relied on as the magnetic needle; and were I to travel a long distance over the prairie, I would sooner trust to the polarity of this plant than to the magnetic needle, as the former is not influenced by local attraction, while the latter is. As for the leaves being influenced by the winds, I have often seen the stock bent near to the ground by the force of the winds, while the leaves were still pointing north and south. The cause of this peculiar property of the leaves is inexplicable. The magnet reveals none of its secrets, nor does dissection. But still, I am inclined to think that its polarity is dependent on magnetism, influenced by the action of light on its leaves.

Among the shrubs may be mentioned the wafer-ash (*ptelea trifoliata*), being an ingredient in the celebrated Indian tobacco. The red bud (*cercis Canadensis*) puts forth its flowers before its leaves. The burning bush (*euonymus atro-purpureus*), and the coffee-tree (*gymnocladus Canadensis*), also, are found in the timber. In addition to the above, there are in this vicinity the gooseberry (*ribes Missouriensis*), the crab-apple (*py-*

rus coronaria), the wild plum (*prunus Americana*), the black walnut (*juglans nigra*), the butternut (*juglans cinerea*); the two last adorn the forest with their rich and luxuriant foliage.

The beautiful groves of timber that skirt the prairie and rivers are composed chiefly of the following trees: With the addition of the black and white walnut, are the black oak (*quercus nigra*), the sugar maple (*acer saccharinum*), the bass-wood (*tilia*), the white poplar (the American aspen), the white elm (*ulmus Americana*).

This country has so long been the abode of the red man, and his incursions have been so frequent over the prairie, and in the forests, in pursuit of the buffalo, the elk, the deer, &c., that nearly all of these animals have forsaken this ground, and gone farther west and north; and the few that are occasionally seen here, are so wild that it is with the greatest difficulty they can be brought within reach of the rifle-ball. The buffalo is sometimes met with on the open prairie, a few miles west of this post. They appear to be the stragglers of the buffalo army, and wander off, into, or near by, the settlements. The elk is seen in herds of two and three hundred, about the head waters of the Lizard river, some thirty miles from here. Hunting parties frequently pass by our post in pursuit of their young. The parties drive with them cows,

and, when the young elk are taken, the cows suckle and protect them as if their own offspring. They are then driven into the settlements, and, when grown up, are trained to the harness. The deer is frequently seen bounding over the prairie from one grove of timber to another. The prairie is their summer's retreat, while in winter they seek the more comfortable and secluded habitations of the forest. The black bear is now and then met with, prowling about the outskirts of the post. The prairie wolf is a frequent visitor during the fall and winter. He is the most stupid of all animals, and is harmless to everything except to the henroost and sheep-fold. During the spring and fall, the rivers and sloughs swarm with the wild goose, the brant, and numerous species of ducks. They make their appearance in the spring, as soon as the ice is out of the river, sport about for two or three weeks, and then proceed north — following the course of the rivers, where they lay and hatch. On the first intimations of cold weather, they return back to these waters, where they again remain for one or two weeks, and then proceed to a warmer and more genial climate.

The wild turkey — the king of the feathered tribe — makes his appearance in these forests in the fall, and is so wild that none but the best of shots take him.

The streams seem to be only moderately supplied with the finny tribe. The pickerel, the pike, the cat, and the bass, are the principal, if not the only fish that swim in these waters.

On the tributaries of the Des Moines are numerous beaver-dams, where large numbers of these most sagacious of all animals make their winter-quarters. In the immediate neighborhood of these dams, acres are cleared, and trees, from one to eight inches in diameter, are felled by the teeth of these animals. No animal is more sagacious and ingenious than the beaver. The architectural and engineering tact displayed in the construction of these dams would reflect credit on a genus of animals much higher on the scale of existence than they.

But few varieties of reptiles are seen here. The prairie rattle-snake presents the same physical characters as the common rattle-snake everywhere in the United States. The moccasin, a venomous snake, is also found on the prairie, in common with the striped snake. The above two are the only venomous reptiles found in this district. The bull-snake (*boa Americana*) is common on the prairie and in the timber. He grows to an enormous size, and is frequently found to be ten feet in length. This reptile is harmless to man, but is a deadly enemy to the rattle-snake when-

ever they come in contact. This snake is held in great esteem by the Indian, and killing it would, by him, be considered more than sacrilege. Well might it be so esteemed by the white man, as they are so great a scourge to that most venomous of all reptiles — the dread of the prairie.

The country, as yet, is new and very sparsely settled. There are scarcely twenty persons in as many miles of the post. The few who have settled in this district are chiefly from Missouri and Indiana. Before the establishment of this post (in the summer of 1850), there were not half a dozen settlers this side of Fort Des Moines. The few who have located here are engaged in the cultivation of the soil. They are of the poorest class of settlers from the above States; and, judging from the general aspect of their farms, from their lean, lank, and half-fed cattle, their squalid and hungry-looking children — huddled in the same room in common with pigs, chickens, &c. — one would be apt to infer they were more indolent than enterprising, and more filthy than cleanly.

The red man has long since deserted these his old hunting-grounds, and gone to seek abodes farther west, where the buffalo, the elk, and the deer roam in greater numbers and with less fear of the rifle. A few scattering bands, however, principally of the Sioux and Chippewa tribes, are still

hanging on the outskirts of this State. During the winter season, small parties of these scattered tribes come into the neighborhood of this post for the purpose of hunting, trapping, and trading. The same bands not unfrequently make incursions into the settlements, carry off cattle, horses, &c., and commit other like depredations on the defenceless inhabitants. In their nature, they are treacherous and predatory; and even the small parties who visit us, and who receive many hospitalities, are not wanting in the above characteristic traits; and were it not for fear of the bayonet, they would, undoubtedly, practise some of their barbarous cruelties on those from whom they receive hospitalities. When driven to extreme hunger, there are no bounds to their inhumanity; they become cannibals in the strictest sense of the word. The following facts, which I have from undoubted authority, and almost from an eyewitness, go to show that even those on the borders of the States are capable of practising the most sickening and inhuman customs. During the winter of 1850-'51, a band of this tribe (Sioux) were wintering in the forests in the northwestern part of this State. There being no snow to track the footsteps of the deer, they were in consequence driven to the very verge of starvation. In one family of this band were a father, mother, and three children. The

mother doted on her youngest child, a boy of three years. On him rested her fondest hopes, and on him were lavished her dearest affections. Being driven to despair by the torturing pangs of hunger, she caressed him, folded him in her arms, and put him into a sleep. No sooner was the mother's darling boy in a sweet sleep, when the concealed knife was taken from her bosom and drawn across his throat — severing all to the very bone. She quenched her thirst by sipping his warm blood, and satisfied her hunger by feeding on his quivering flesh. In the course of ten or twelve days, the pangs of hunger returned. Her second boy, a youth of ten years, like the first, was made the food of her morbid appetite. After the lapse of two weeks, the pangs of hunger returned again, but with redoubled vigor. She resolved on destroying her third son, a boy of sixteen years of age, the firstborn and the father's favorite. By her caresses, he also was put to sleep, and, while asleep, she poured molten lead into his ear. This more novel way of extinguishing life proved fatal to her. The pangs soon awakened the boy, and caused him to scream aloud. The father, although frantic with hunger, was nevertheless attracted by the cries of his beloved boy. The deed was still fresh before him. His eyes were then opened to the fate of his lost children. He

clenched his tomahawk and felled the mother to the ground. His knife soon finished the stroke, by taking her scalp from her head. He, in turn, feasted on her carcass.

There being so few Indians about here, it will be impossible to collect any vital statistical knowledge worthy of note. As far as I am informed, the numerous Indian tribes west and north of us are fast becoming extinct by cholera and smallpox — by the latter disease in particular. As far as my observations have gone with the Indian tribes heretofore, I have generally observed that when disease, particularly a fever, takes hold of the Indian, (if he is at all sick,) he succumbs to the fever in spite of the "medicine man." Their mode of living, habits, and customs, are all conducive to staving off disease — particularly in its chronic form. Their articles of diet alone, could they only be introduced into civilized circles, would banish dyspepsia in all its protein forms; the name itself would soon be forgotten.

There is a common article of diet, principally used by the half-breeds employed in the Hudson Bay and American Fur Companies on their long marches, and who also subsist on it at their permanent winter-quarters. It supplies both the place of bread and meat, and, for its remarkably nutritious qualities, ease of digestion, and for the great

facilities of transportation which the compactness and small bulk of this article afford, make it well worthy the notice of the Department. It is called *pemican*. Lieutenant Corley, U. S. A., who has subsisted on it for some time, and to whom I am chiefly indebted for the information of this invaluable article of diet, says it is composed of buffalo meat and buffalo tallow. The process for preparing it is this: the buffalo meat is first thoroughly dried in the sun, and then pounded until it is about the consistence of meal; the tallow is melted, and freed from all impurities, and is then poured on the meat and well stirred. The proportions should be about equal, or, if any difference, there is a little more tallow than meat. The mixture, being well stirred, is then poured into sacks made of untanned buffalo hide, and allowed to cool; no salt is used — probably to prevent thirst. The sacks contain from twenty to forty pounds, for convenience of transportation. The mixture being poured in the sacks while in a liquid state, it, of course, packs itself into a small space. It keeps well without salt, and, when properly made, will be perfectly good at the expiration of a year. This article is used almost entirely by the fur-traders of the Hudson Bay and American Fur Companies as their only food when travelling. Lieutenant Corley also says he was informed by the traders of

the fur companies, that they know of no articles of food that could supply its place in convenience of transportation, in cheapness, and in nutritious qualities. It is also highly palatable.

Some estimate can be made of the quantity of this article it would take to sustain a healthy working man, from the quantity it takes to sustain the train-dogs the fur-traders use. The dogs they use for drawing their sledges and carrying their packs, are of a large breed, and travel fifty miles a day; they give to the dogs one pound of pemican a day; this is as much as they can eat, and it not only keeps up their strength, but keeps them fat.

Knowing that one pound is sufficient to sustain a dog of the above description, and while traveling with a heavy burden fifty miles a day, it might be supposed that fifteen pounds would be an ample allowance for a soldier on twenty days' march, carrying with him, at the same time, his musket, his knapsack, and his pemican.

I can conceive no other article of diet to be so invaluable to the soldier as the above, where transportation is limited, and difficult marches are to be made, as inevitably will be the case hereafter, with our whole army, on the great prairies east and west of the Rocky Mountains.

CHARLES C. KEENEY

Comment by the Editor

FAITH

It is a precious possession, to have faith.

An eloquent young lawyer abandoned a life of convenience to enter the ministry of the church. The work was hard and much of the compensation was in the form of spiritual satisfaction. He preached of virtue and divinity, he went about doing good, he lived according to the teachings of Jesus. Times were hard. To widows and orphans he was as a savior indeed, for his solicitude brought them food and shelter. Presently he established a home for needy children, depending upon the benevolence of friends to maintain it. Many years passed — years of labor, discouragement, and steadfast hope. The minister died in the midst of his work, but the institution he started survived, for his faith was well founded.

In the history of Iowa the story of Reverend Lemen has many parallels. The farmer who staked his hope on the prairie soil and never lost his faith through drought and lower prices, the teacher who sacrificed a fortune for the sake of education, the editor who advocated a righteous cause against the opposition of myopic contemporaries — men of vision in every occupation have

dared to face the challenge of their own ideals. To blaze a new trail in thought or action takes more than courage. Leadership requires ambition, confidence, persistence, and loyalty, which are the materials of faith.

A pioneer has the faculty of seeing rainbows in the clouds. That is because, to him, the storm is over; the best is yet to come. As he gazes into the radiant future, fascinated by the glorious prospect, a surge of optimism swells his breast, all doubt is thrust aside, he strides straight forward, confident and strong. Trouble belongs to the past; let the timid and gloomy look behind. Who cares if the sun is setting? It will rise again tomorrow, earlier than it did to-day. Prepare for the world as it will be.

The buoyant philosophy of the pioneer is founded on faith. His guide is intuition and his motive power is hope. He does not ask for proof nor wait for demonstration: he believes in inspiration and puts his trust in common sense. Accomplishment is his purpose and his work is the fruit of his faith. Self-reliance, devotion to friends, belief in ideals, and steadfast conviction — these are alike the elements of faith and factors of stable society. When faith is lost, banks fail, governments are overthrown, and men fall into cynicism. Faith is the ballast that gives equilibrium to reason.

J. E. B.

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Established by the Pioneers in 1857
Located at Iowa City Iowa

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY

The Quarterly Journal of History
The Palimpsest—A monthly magazine
The Public Archives Series
The Iowa Biographical Series
The Iowa Economic History Series
The Iowa Social History Series
The Iowa Applied History Series
The Iowa Chronicles of the World War
The Miscellaneous Publications
The Bulletins of Information

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the State Historical Society may be secured through election by the Board of Curators. The annual dues are \$3.00. Members may be enrolled as Life Members upon the payment of \$50.00.

Address all Communications to

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Iowa City Iowa