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EARLY SOCIETY

IN

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

By ROBERT W. PATTERSON, D.D.

1837
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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

A LECTURE,

READ BEFORE THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, OCTOBER 19, 1880.

BY ROBERT W. PATTERSON, D.D.

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Early Society in Southern Illinois.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

At the risk of failing to contribute anything, not embraced in the documents and volumes already in the possession of this Association, I have ventured to promise a paper, on the Early Society of Southern Illinois. I now proceed to present to you some of my own recollections, and the results of some reading and inquiry in regard to this subject. Two valuable papers, recently read here, pertaining to the French population in Kaskaskia and its neighborhood, and the early political, and other public men of this State, have satisfactorily covered a part of the territory, which I might have traversed; and yet, I shall be pardoned, if I take a somewhat wide range, in treating of Society, as it was in the older section of this State, from forty to fifty or sixty years ago. And I trust, I shall be excused, if I refer somewhat frequently, to my own recollection of facts, running back to 1821 or 1822, my father having removed into this State, near the close of the year 1821. The period which I shall contemplate in the statements of this paper, may be considered as beginning with the year 1815, and extending forward fifteen or twenty years, although I shall have occasion to refer to social conditions, some of which are traceable to the first settlements of the Illinois Territory, and some of which still have many living illustrations in the southern portion of our yet comparatively new State.

The territory, which was chiefly occupied by the people of this State, down to the year 1830, if not longer, lies south of a line running east and west across the State, and touching the northern boundary of Sangamon County.

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The counties organized before 1820, were comparatively few, being, I think, in all only eighteen. Of these, the most populous in 1820, were St. Clair, formed in 1794, Randolph, next in age, Madison, organized in 1812, Gallatin, same age, Bond, organized in 1817, and Franklin and Union Counties formed in 1818. These may perhaps be regarded as the mother counties of the State, in respect to the earlier population. But another list of counties, either set off from the older ones, or organized on more northern territory, came into the sisterhood, and embraced a good proportion of our people, before the close of the year 1825. Among these may be named Fayette, Clinton, Greene, Marion, Montgomery, Pike, Sangamon, and Schuyler. But the Society of which I am to speak took its shaping before the year 1825, and was mainly located in the counties organized before 1820. The entire white population of the State in 1800, was a fraction over 2,000; in 1810, upwards of 12,000; in 1820, more than 55,000; in 1830, 161,000.

The earlier population of Southern Illinois (leaving altogether out of view the aborigines of the country), consisted almost entirely of French, Pennsylvania Dutch, and native Americans. For there were very few Irish, Scotch, or German people, in the State, until the more recent wave of immigration from Great Britain and the continent of Europe began to roll in upon us. The French, who were of the Canadian type, were partly mixed with Indian blood, and resembled very closely their descendants of to-day. They occupied the portions of Randolph and St. Clair Counties, in the neighborhood of Kaskaskia and the American Bottom, and extended north of the line of Madison County, between the Mississippi River and the east bluff. Many of them may still be found in that region. They have always been distinguished for their simple and primitive modes of life, dress, and manners, their illiteracy, their indifference to all kinds of improvement, and their unquestioning adherence to the customs and religion of their fathers. After the interesting accounts, which we have had in former papers, of the origin and history of the French Colony at Kaskaskia, I need not further speak of this peculiar class of the first settlers in Illinois.

Of the earlier population, there was one small colony of Germans, and there were some settlements of those Germans, usually called Pennsylvania Dutch. They were an industrious, though not enterprising people, usually farmers of moderate means, who lived comfortably, and kept their associations mainly among themselves. The chief elements of the population were Americans, who emigrated, within the first quarter of the present century, from the States of Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, with a small infusion of families from New Jersey, New York, and the New England States. The great majority of the earlier inhabitants were from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio. The immigrants from Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England States, have increased in relative proportions, after 1820, onward to the present time. The sectional feeling among the people, before 1825 or 1830, was, in many cases, intense, especially on the part of the natives of the Southern States, toward the emigrants from New York and New England. The term "Yankee," was, in many communities, one of reproach, and the unfortunate person who bore it, was watched with suspicion, and deemed hardly fit for association with those who thought themselves in some sort the rightful proprietors of the country. These prejudices were, however, less inveterate in the villages, where the people were from many different States, than in the rural districts, where the South-western element prevailed. And the New Englanders and New Yorkers, being generally enterprising, were usually settled in the thriving towns, and engaged in mechanical or mercantile pursuits. The families in the country, were generally of Southern origin, many of them having come originally from Virginia and the Carolinas to Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and thence to Illinois. These immigrants from the South and South-west, were generally influenced to move into the territory, afterwards the State, of Illinois, by two considerations—the first was, a desire to find a still newer country; for many of them were adventurers who had always lived in frontier regions; and, secondly, most of these people, being comparatively poor, and uncomfortable in communities where they had no real estate, and were compelled to labor alongside of slaves, were attracted by the prospect of becoming owners of fertile lands, and of escaping from the humiliation of being reckoned among the "white trash" of the slave-holding States. There were, however, a considerable number of what were deemed the better classes, who came to this State, either directly, from the South-west, or indirectly, through the State of Ohio. We see, at this point, the working of the ordinance of 1787, which caused a sifting of immigrants to Illinois, as well as other North-western States, both from the Southern and Middle States; from the Southern States, by keeping back those who owned slaves and defended the institution of Slavery, and from the Middle States, by introducing only those settlers who desired to improve their fortunes in a country where Slavery was forever forbidden by law. We shall have occasion to refer to this complexion of our early population in another connection.

We come now to notice the pursuits and modes of life that characterized the early inhabitants of Southern Illinois. I have already intimated, that there were two general classes of the first immigrants to our State, the one consisting of floating people, who always live in frontier settlements, and the other, which was much the larger, composed of those who came to be permanent residents.

As to pursuits, these two classes were widely different, but as to manners and style of living, they often resembled each other very closely. The floating class were mainly from the mountainous regions of the South-west, and depended chiefly upon hunting and fishing, for the means of living for themselves and their families. And, of course, as the country became more densely settled, they emigrated again to other frontier regions, further west. There was, however, a considerable proportion of the more stable population, who, at an early day, like the genuine frontiers-men, devoted themselves, a great part of the time, to the hunting of wild game, bee-hunting, trapping, and fishing. There were many inducements to this kind of life, when the country was very new. For deer, bears, turkeys, grouse or prairie chickens, and other fowl, were abundant in the woods and prairies, and, at first, even elk and buffaloes were numerous, and bees were found in all the forests. Bears were depended upon, by many in the less settled regions, for salt meat, instead of pork, until these animals, in a few years, disappeared from the country. Sometimes, a hunting company, of a few men, would kill as many as forty bears in a single expedition. This was especially true in the extreme southern part of the State. Deer and bees continued very plentiful for many years, a single gunner often killing eight or ten deer in a day, and a little band of skilful bee-hunters, going into an uninhabited section of woods, and finding, in a few days, in the autumn, bee-trees enough to supply their families with honey for the following year. Some amusing anecdotes were told of the early bee-hunters. I myself was acquainted with an illiterate minister, of a peculiar faith, of whom it was reported and believed, that after preaching on a certain Sabbath, he gave notice that he would preach there again the next Sunday, if it should not be a good bee-day; intimating, that if the weather on the next Sunday should be favorable for bee-hunting, he would be otherwise occupied, and could not preach. Fishing, and some kinds of hunting, are still, more or less profitable in many sections of the State; but wild bees, and the larger wild animals, have so far disappeared, that very few persons make the pursuit of them anything like a regular occupation. From the earliest settlement of the country, however, onward to 1830 or '35, there were many men, who did nothing else but hunt and fish, and many others, who cultivated a few acres of ground, for raising corn and potatoes, and after their products were secured in the fall, joined the regular hunters until the next spring. It was, therefore, very common to find the walls of the cabins of the early settlers hung around with the skins of animals, which were, afterwards, either dressed for family wear, or taken to the distant markets to be sold for furs. But the great majority of the people were industrious, plain farmers, small merchants, and unenterprising manufacturers, some of whom divided their time between two or three different occupations, such as cooperage, tanning, and shoemaking.

The farmers, at first, took possession of lands and made improvements, without any title to the places which they occupied, and were hence called "squatters." Afterwards, the pre-emption of lands by the first actual settlers upon them was provided for by law, which gave the occupants a prior claim over others, and enabled them to procure small farms, on easy terms, when the lands came into market. Later, all purchasers could obtain lands at Congress price, *i. e.*, one dollar and a-quarter per acre.

Villages were founded at this early day, by single owners of eligible tracts of land on principal roads, which were divided up into lots and sold, as is now done by owners on our railroads and elsewhere. Serious difficulties frequently occurred between "squatters" on lands, who made no efforts to buy, when the lands came into market, and actual purchasers, who were obliged to resort to legal measures to gain possession of their property. The squatters, in such cases, almost invariably had the sympathies of their neighbors, and could not be dispossessed by the purchasers, without risk of incurring personal violence, unless, after paying well for the poor improvements that had been made.

The fences were made of rails, split from the trunks of trees, and laid up, in what was called the "worm" or "Virginia" style, *i. e.*, in alternating diagonal panels. For many years, such a thing as a straight board fence was seldom seen in Southern Illinois.

Houses, especially in the country, were usually built of logs, either hewn or unhewn, notched together at the corners, the crevices between the logs being filled with clay-mortar, which was, more or less, smoothed off by the hands, or by a paddle or a trowel, and sometimes covered on the outside with lime-mortar. In many cases, the projecting ends of the logs were left at the corners, in their original ragged condition. The roofs were often composed of split boards, held together by halves of split poles laid upon them.

Many houses had no second stories, but the attics were formed by clap-boards laid upon rough joists, and were sometimes high enough to be occupied by beds for the younger members of the family. These attics were reached by ladders, from the inside or the outside of the house. The doors were frequently constructed of rough boards, nailed or pinned together, and hung on rude wooden hinges. The windows, if there were any, were often either left entirely open, or closed with white or printed paper, instead of glass, and saturated with oil, so as to admit a portion of the light from without.

The floors were usually made of slab-like portions of trees, hewn on one side, and laid together on sills, without any nails or pins to fasten them down. These floors, after a while, became quite smooth from use, being hardly ever covered with carpets.

It was rare to find, in these primitive cabins, more than two rooms, except where the houses consisted of two parts, divided by a covered but open passage-way between them. In very many cabins there was but a single apartment, which served the manifold purposes of parlor, dining-room, kitchen, and bed-rooms, for a large family.

Of course, there were, here and there, houses of frame, and in the villages many respectable residences of wood and brick. But the earlier settlers, in the rural districts, for the most part, occupied such cabins as I have described.

The kindly feelings of neighbors toward one another, were habitually shown in what were called house-raisings, which brought together as many men, as could work to good advantage, who usually put up the walls of a log-house in a single day, which was frequently occupied by the family the same night. A similar interchange of friendly offices was customary in log-rollings, corn-huskings, etc., the latter of which were commonly held in turn, through a whole neighborhood, on successive evenings, and were always followed by a well-prepared and abundant supper.

The personal property of the citizens ordinarily consisted of horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, domestic fowls, wagons, often constructed entirely of wood, and extremely noisy when in motion, a few farming implements, and the plainest kind of household furniture, embracing tables made of boards, often put together with wooden pins, tin and pewter table-ware, and two or three cooking utensils.

Many of the farmers raised large numbers of cattle, hogs, and horses, which, in Southern Illinois, it was necessary to feed only during the winter months. And for feeding the stock, provision was made by the abundant crops of corn that were easily produced on the farms, and by hay obtained from the prairie grass, which was cut and cured in the summer or fall. Sheep were not kept in large numbers, because of the wolves, which destroyed them if they were not closely watched in the daytime, and protected under cover at night.

There were no such inducements in the first quarter of the century, as there have been since, for multiplying stock and making butter and cheese for the markets, for the reason that there were no good markets accessible until after 1820 to 1825.

The villages were generally very small, numbering not more than from 20 or 30 to 100 or 200 people, and the roads to St. Louis, which was the largest town within reach, were so nearly impassable, that but little traffic with that place was attempted. No steam-boat ever visited St. Louis before 1817, and, consequently, the commerce of that town was carried on overland with Sante Fé, or by flat-boats with New Orleans, both of which were tedious, expensive, and comparatively unprofitable. Goods of domestic manufacture were first imported into Illinois in 1818, from which fact it will readily be seen that prior to that time there could have been but small sales for the productions of the country, and very little money among the people.

It is true that, after the close of the war with England in 1814, there was for a few years a considerably-increased prosperity, even among the people of the frontier settlements; but after the wretched banking policy that followed the war had brought about its natural fruits in 1819–21, there was hardly such a thing as money to be found in Illinois. Many a family lived a whole year without the possession or use of fifty dollars in cash. Personal property, therefore, during many years, consisted almost exclusively of the products of the farm and of articles manufactured by the citizens at their own homes. The farms, in those days, were worked chiefly by the use of oxen, horses being employed mainly for riding, and for ploughing after the corn came up in the spring. Even wagons and carts were generally drawn by oxen, not only for the hauling of corn, hay, wood, rails, etc., but for church-going and traveling. The productions of the farms were very few, such as a little fall or spring wheat, oats, Indian corn, cotton, flax, in some cases castor-beans, and as to fruits, scarcely anything but apples and some peaches. But wild plums and grapes, of good quality, were produced in large quantities in the timbered districts, especially at the edges of the prairies. There was no machinery used on the farms before 1835 or 1840. There were no corn-planters, no reaping or threshing machines, or fanning-mills. Corn was planted by hand, wheat, oats, and grass were cut with sickles or scythes by hand, cotton was gathered and picked by hand, flax was broken and scutched by hand, cotton and wool were carded into rolls by hand, and spinning and weaving were done by hand. Grain was trodden out by horses or beaten out with flails, and winnowed by the breezes or with sheets used like so many great fans. The only articles employed by the farmers that could properly be called machines, were flax-breaks, hackles, looms, hand-mills, and possibly an occasional cider-mill. There were, however, at intervals of ten or twenty miles, water-mills and horse-mills for grinding corn, wheat, rye, and barley; and from the earliest settlement of the country there were not wanting distilleries for the manufacture of whiskey, to minister to the cravings of the thirsty people, who claimed that they could not keep warm in winter or cool in summer, or perform their hard work without fainting, unless they could be assisted by the free use of the "good creature." But there were no breweries to be found, unless among the few Germans.

The clothing of the people, especially in the first settlement of the country, consisted almost wholly of materials prepared by the several families for themselves. The most frequent exception to this remark was found in the leather used for shoes, which was often tanned and dressed by some one man in a neighborhood, who gave a part of his time to a small tannery, of which he was the proprietor. But many were at once tanners, shoe-makers, and farmers; and their wives and daughters manufactured the flax and cotton, raised by them, into garments for the family. For during the first quarter of the century, cotton as well as flax was produced on many farms, and spinning-wheels were manufactured in almost every neighborhood for the use of the families, which were purchased from the makers by an exchange of various productions from the farms around. As lately as eleven or twelve years ago, I found, on visiting Bond County, an old wheel-wright still devoted to his former work, making spinning-wheels, both large and small, not to sell as curiosities, but to supply an actual demand from families that yet preferred to manufacture their own clothes as in former times. Not only were the materials and the cloth prepared, but the dyeing was done in the family; the bark of trees, especially of the butter-nut, and indigo raised on the farm, being used for this purpose. And then the mother made up the clothing for the household. In many cases, deer-skins were dressed by the men, and made into hunting-shirts, pantaloons, and moccasons by the women, all in the same family. The hunting-shirts were frequently ornamented with a fringe on the lower edge of the cape and at the bottom of the garment, which presented a not unpleasing appearance. Shoes were often confined, except in cold weather, to the adult females; the men and children going barefoot in spring, summer, and fall, unless they had occasion to appear in a public assembly. I have many a time seen even young women carry their shoes in their hands until they came near to church, and then put them on before coming to the door and entering. The men's hats for the summer were commonly made of wheat straw, rudely platted and sewed together by the women. Winter hats, usually of wool, were, of necessity, purchased from a manufacturer, who could almost always be found in some village not far distant. The clothes of the women, like those of the men, were almost entirely of home manufacture, except in the older villages. Their bonnets were occasionally purchased from the stores, but more commonly they were of the simple Virginia style, made of domestic materials, and kept in place either by pasteboard or wooden ribs.

From the villages, however, the use of imported materials for women's wear, gradually, extended into the country, and young ladies especially, before 1825, began to appear in calicoes or richer goods imported from the distant markets. But for many years, most of the men continued to wear only home-made clothing, except in case of marriage or travel into older sections of the country. I remember well an old gentleman, an officer in the church, who used to appear on special occasions in a broadcloth coat, which he had purchased forty years before at his first marriage. This was one of the few cloth coats to be seen in the community during its earlier history. Of course, the like condition of things did not exist in the villages after they grew in population to the number of one or two hundred. But even in the smaller villages, families were accustomed to live in very simple style, until commercial intercourse with the older communities of the land was made easy by the opening of roads and the increase of other facilities of travel and exchange.

The food of the people was of the simplest kind, though usually abundant. For a long time, wheat-bread was a rarity in the rural districts, corn-bread or mush being the staple, meal being often prepared, in the early fall, by grating the green corn on rude graters made of tin, perforated by driving a nail through it in numerous places, and fastened to a smooth board. The meats were venison, squirrels, rabbits, wild turkeys, prairie chickens, quails, domestic fowls, beef, pork and bacon, which were cooked in a skillet or frying-pan in cool weather, at the same fire around which the waiting family were sitting. Coffee and imported tea were for years hard to be obtained, and, instead of them, teas were often made from garden herbs, spice-wood, sassafras-roots, or other shrubs, taken from the thickets. Milk and butter were, of course, at hand, and were freely used; and vegetables and fruits, such as potatoes, turnips, and apples were seldom wanting. In many families, table-cloths were spread on the tables only on special occasions. But, in spite of their plain living, the people were generally happy and contented, except in those cases, not very infrequent, where families newly come into the country were, for a time, scarcely able to command the necessaries of life; and, in such cases, there were almost always kind neighbors, who cheerfully and delicately sent the articles of food that were most needed.

At the risk of seeming tedious, I have thought it well to go a little into these details, which may be in themselves uninteresting, that it may be seen how primitive was the daily life of our early citizens, among whom there were, of course, here and there, notable exceptions. But before referring to the more strictly social and the broader general characteristics of the first settlers in our State, let me allude for a moment to their peculiar circumstances during most of the years from 1800 to 1820. They were not only scattered occupants of homes in a wilderness, but they were exposed to incursions from the Indians, of whom there were in the State, as late as 1814, not less, probably, than 30,000 or 40,000, and a large number down to 1820 or 1825. The early settlers were several times attacked by these savages, and therefore found it necessary to be prepared to repel their assaults. Hence, the men usually carried their guns with them when they went from home, and the practice of military drill was maintained with regularity as late as 1830 or 1835. It is not strange that in such a condition of things there was a feeling of bitter hostility toward the Indians, and that a somewhat warlike spirit was kept alive, at least till 1820 or 1825, or even later; and this spirit was greatly quickened and strengthened by events connected with the

War of 1812–'14. The tendency of all this was to make the citizens more resolute in the assertion and defence of what they deemed their individual rights than they might otherwise have been; while, on the other hand, they were compelled to regard all their neighbors, far and near, as bound together by the ties of a common interest for self-protection in the presence of common dangers.

We are now prepared to notice, in the next place, the characteristic hospitality of our people in the early years of the State. The families from the Southern States gave character to the social habits of the people, and Southern communities have always been noted for their hospitality. Anything savoring of narrowness or meanness in this direction was frowned upon among our early citizens. It was not uncommon for entire strangers to find entertainment in families for a night, or even for whole weeks, without charge. Hence traveling through the new settlements was usually attended with but little expense, for charges when made were hardly more than merely nominal. If, however, a wayfaring man was suspected of being a speculator, he was not so kindly treated, though never misused, unless guilty of reprehensible conduct. From 1820, or earlier, to 1830, the country was traversed by clock-pedlers, who sometimes resorted to ingenious devices to induce families to purchase their clocks. They were accustomed to set up their clocks in houses, and leave them there, with the request that they should be kept running until they should call for them, which was often two or three or four weeks afterward. On the return of the pedler, the family having become accustomed to the use of the timepiece, felt hardly willing to spare it, and could be induced to pay a high price for it rather than let it go. Hence, it frequently occurred that a note was given for $25 or $30, payable two or three or even six months after date, for a clock the original cost of which was probably less than $10. But it should be said that those wooden-clocks were exceedingly durable, some of them lasting twenty or thirty years. The pedler himself seldom called for the collection of his notes, but commonly sent some one else for the purpose, who never knew anything about any partial promises made by the original seller, and did not fail to enforce payment at the time specified in the paper. It is not strange that these clock-pedlers became extremely unpopular, and that, being generally from New England, they contributed largely to the prejudice of the people against Yankees. But another and more potent cause of this prejudice consisted in the different habits of the Eastern people from those of the South and West in regard to what was deemed the cardinal virtue of hospitality. It was, unfortunately, true that some New-England families, scattered here and there through the country, created the impression of penuriousness and heartlessness in their treatment of neighbors and strangers, while in fact they were upright and benevolent in heart and conduct, but were more reserved than their neighbors in respect to the free and open-handed reception of all comers on whatever occasion.

An illustration of this came to my knowledge in the county where many of my early years were spent. A neighbor happened one day at the house of an old gentleman, called a "Yankee," just as the family were sitting down to dinner. The old gentleman said to the neighbor that he would be glad to ask him to partake with them, but they had not made preparation for more than the members of their own household. A little while after this, the "Yankee" called at the house of the neighbor, and although it was not nearly dinner-time, he was urged beyond measure to remain and dine with him. The old gentleman took the hint, and apologized for his own apparent discourtesy. This incident was noised abroad all over the county, to the disparagement of the "Yankees." But the gentleman who was so severely censured for his want of hospitality was in after years acknowledged to be deserving of the highest regard, both as a good and kind neighbor and a trustworthy citizen. By degrees, the Eastern people became more frank and open in their manners, and the Western people somewhat more reserved in their intercourse with comparative strangers. The influx of miscellaneous immigration into any community, on the one hand gradually wears out the extreme hospitality that may have abounded at first, and, on the other hand, moderates the excessive reserve that may have been maintained on the part of those who have come from long and thickly-settled districts of the country.

The social habits of the early inhabitants of our State were in some respects peculiar. It is not strange that, in settlements where there was little general culture among the people, there should have been but few tokens of what we regard as refinement of manners. It would be deemed extreme rudeness in our cities for gentlemen to appear in the presence of ladies or at table without coat, vest, or cravat, whereas nothing was more common in the early society of the West. And yet, under all this roughness of exterior, there was a native politeness and considerateness of others of every class, that would put to shame the unreasonable exclusiveness of many aristocratic ladies and gentlemen of our refined social circles. Especially was this manifested in the real though unrefined courtesy of gentlemen and ladies towards each other. It is true there was a freedom of manners in the relations of men and women that would be deemed among us unsuitable, if not intolerable; but with all this disregard of what are established conventionalities in cultivated society, there was nothing apparent that argued the absence of true refinement of feeling; and any intentional breach of what was deemed social propriety was as severely censured as in the most elevated circles of our older communities. Of course, there might have been found here and there a neighborhood where the plainest rules of decorum were often violated without much rebuke. But the mass of the people observed assiduously a set of conventionalities that were based on true ideas of social fitness and that enforced the laws of social morality with inexorable authority.

After what has been said, it will be inferred that there was but little of ceremony among the early settlers of the West. Even marriages were celebrated in the simplest manner, a justice of the peace frequently performing the ceremony in the fewest words in the presence of the friends and neighbors of the parties united. Funerals were almost always attended by large numbers of the acquaintances of the deceased; and religious services were seldom omitted on such occasions, although in many cases no minister could be obtained to officiate, and, of course, the services were conducted by laymen. The cemeteries, which were usually near places of public worship, were commonly enclosed with palings, but overgrown with weeds and grass; and the graves were, except in a few cases, marked only by wooden boards or stakes, without names or letters to indicate the humble occupants. It has thus occurred that the burial-places of many persons of considerable distinction have been lost beyond recovery, after the removal of their friends from the neighborhood in which they died. But it ought to be said that, notwithstanding such tokens of neglect, it would be difficult to find more of social sympathy and genuine kindness to the afflicted in any communities than was habitually manifested among the early settlers of Southern Illinois; and, I may add, that the occasions for such sympathetic attentions were greatly multiplied by the prevailing sickness and frequent deaths that occurred among the first settlers of the country.

The moral character and principles of the people in those days, differed widely, of course, in different communities. In some villages and neighborhoods, where education and religion were more advanced than in other places, the moral ideas of individuals, and of society in general, were not far behind those of the present time. In the portions of the country where the writer spent most of the years of his childhood and youth, it was exceptional to meet with a profane swearer, a drunkard, or a notoriously false or dishonest man; and breaches of social purity were seldom known. Occasional examples of such vices appeared, but they were frowned upon by all respectable citizens. These were communities in which strong religious influences prevailed, and where, as it now seems to me, vices and crimes of every kind were even more rare than they are at this day in the most elevated and refined communities of the land. This I attribute to the fact that society in Southern Illinois was, in large measure, locally assorted into classes for many years after the first settlement of the country. While there were quite a number of such neighborhoods as I have spoken of, there were others, perhaps equally numerous, in which there were no churches, and intemperance, Sabbath breaking, dishonesty, and profanity abounded; and here and there a settlement might have been found, in which fidelity to the marriage-vow and social purity were sadly disregarded. In almost every county, there were settlements that embraced emigrants of the lower class from the Southern States, who were notorious for fighting, drinking, swearing, and dissolute conduct. But the worst of these families, at an early day, moved further west, having for generations lived on the outskirts of civilization. Many of the same class are now residing in Southern Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, some of them having fled from justice, and more, from the growth of a moral sentiment in general society, which they could not endure.

I have now in mind one community, that might have been styled a nest of immoralities, which was entered, we may say invaded, by a zealous minister of the Presbyterian Church, now living. After a year or two of his faithful and telling labors, a large number of the people were converted, and the whole neighborhood was revolutionized, becoming, in the main, as free from prevailing vices as it had before been distinguished for social and civil offences. In other places, like reformations were wrought through the instrumentality of Christian evangelists, temperance workers, and Sabbath-Schools, before the years 1830-35. It has been a common impression, that the illiterate and imperfect ministrations of the early preachers in Illinois could not have produced much effect upon the morals of the citizens. But this is a great mistake. Wherever there were churches, or preaching stations, in those times, the moral conduct of the people was sensibly improved, showing clearly that the religion of the early settlers was something better than mere fanaticism. Even among the French Catholics of Kaskaskia, and the American Bottom, as Gov. Reynolds tells us, honesty and chastity were distinguishing virtues; and the same was true, as many living witnesses can attest, where the least-educated preachers of Protestant denominations gathered churches, and inculcated the teachings of the New Testament. The moral sentiments of the people, in the early years of our State, were conflicting, very much as they are now. On the subject of temperance, the progress was in the wrong direction until after the year 1825. Intoxicating liquors were freely used, not only in families, but in the harvest-fields, and at house-raisings, and corn-huskings. And it must be admitted, that the nearest approaches to drunkenness were witnessed on some of these occasions.

When the doctrine of total abstinence was first broached in Bond County, where a temperance society was founded in 1826 or '28, it was earnestly opposed by many of the most exemplary Christians. And, for many years, the endeavors of such noble men as John M. Peck, of Rock-Spring, to advance the temperance reformation on the principle of total abstinence, were vigorously resisted, even by some of their fellow-ministers. But when this doctrine was once accepted by the leading men in the churches, a surprising change was wrought almost in a year. throughout the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and those of the Baptist denomination, that favored an educated ministry. Within a very short period, the ordinary use of intoxicating drinks disappeared from almost all Christian families, and was banished from the social and neighborhood gatherings almost as widely, as the people professed to be governed by conscience and the rules of moral obligation.

Of course, liquors were still sold in all the villages, and were extensively used among certain classes of society; but they were no longer an everywhere present temptation to the young, as they had been in former years.

There were not then, as now, many large towns, and there were few foreigners, and no great cities, to withstand the growth of temperance principles, as in these days, when so large a pecuniary interest is enlisted on the side of intemperance, and of the appliances by which it is still supported, and holds its leading place among the great destroyers of social and public peace. Hence it may be justly said that there was probably less drinking in this State, in proportion to the population, in 1835, than there is to-day.

In regard to the rights of man, the sentiments of the early settlers were greatly divided, as they have been ever since, at least down to the close of the late rebellion. As already intimated, the immigrants from the New England and Middle States, and from Ohio, and the Scotch and Scotch-Irish families from the South, were generally opposed to Slavery, on principle. But the most influential families from the Southern States, and many of the poorer immigrants from Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, were hostile to anti-Slavery doctrines, although some of them were averse to the introduction of Slavery into this State.

The politicians, being mostly Southern, were very zealous for the Convention, proposed to be called in 1824, for the formation of a new Constitution, providing for the normal existence of Slavery in Illinois. Hence two-thirds of the Legislature, by which this measure was brought forward and submitted to the people, were induced to vote for it, notwithstanding the perpetual exclusion of Slavery from this Territory by the ordinance of 1787. But, fortunately, the final decision of this momentous question was to be made by the people, who, by a decisive vote, placed the final veto of the State upon this artfully devised scheme, which, had it been successful, might have hastened our terrible war, and have determined the issues against the cause of liberty and the unity of the nation.

The names of the men who figured most conspicuously, in this great struggle between the forces of freedom and slavery, deserve to be specially mentioned in this connection. The leading advocates of a Convention for the introduction of Slavery were, Governor Bond, A. P. Field, Kane, McLean, Joseph A. Beard, Judge Phillips, Robison, T. W. Smith, Kenney, West, R. M. Young, and Gov. Reynolds. The leaders on the Anti-Slavery side were, Gov. Coles, Daniel P. Cook, Samuel D. Lockwood, Rev. J. M. Peck, Thos. Lippincott, Judge Pope, Gov. Edwards, David Blackwell, the late Wm. H. Brown, of our City, then of Vandalia, Hooper Warren, George Forquar, George Churchhill, Henry Eddy, and others.

The two-thirds vote of the Legislature, for the calling of a Convention, was obtained by excluding a member of the House who had been previously admitted, but was found to be opposed to Slavery, and was therefore unseated to make room for a Pro-Slavery man, who had, at first, contested the seat of his competitor, and been rejected; an act not unlike some events in legislative bodies of more recent date. The canvas was conducted with unprecedented zeal on both sides.

Three weekly papers were enlisted against the Convention, one at Shawneetown, one at Edwardsville, and the third at Vandalia, where our former fellow-citizen, Wm. H. Brown, then resided, and performed efficient service for the Anti-Slavery cause. Two papers were conducted by Convention men, one at Edwardsville, and the other at Kaskaskia.

The conflict was both political and moral. The hard times had something to do with it, for it was observed that many emigrants from Virginia and Kentucky passed through Illinois and settled in Missouri, because they could not retain their slaves in this State. This fact was urged by the advocates of Slavery, as a reason for introducing the institution into Illinois. Besides, the immigrants from the South felt that the exclusion of Slavery from the State, implied a reflection upon the communities in which they had been born and educated; and this feeling grew bitter, when it appeared that the hated "Yankees" were almost universally against the institution. On the other hand, the moral sentiment of the Christian people was, for the most part, Anti-Slavery. Many churches combined together to resist the political movement for the establishment of Slavery.

Under the lead of the Rev. Dr. Peck, an Anti-Slavery organization was founded in St. Clair County, with which fourteen other societies in as many different counties became affiliated; and these societies exerted a powerful influence against the proposed Convention.

Many ministers preached against the movement. And Dr. Peck, who was at that time, an agent of the American Bible Society, in Illinois, took advantage of his extended travel and acquaintance for the dissemination of Anti-Slavery documents and principles, and thus probably exerted a more powerful influence than any other five men, against the Pro-Slavery project.

The controversy raged with intense passion on both sides, until the vote was taken in 1824, and it was found that the party of freedom had a majority of about 1800 in the State, which settled the general character of this mighty Commonwealth, and threw its immense weight into the scale of liberty and progress, for all coming time.

It is worthy of mention here, that when the question was under consideration in regard to the northern boundary of our State, which at first ran as far south as the northern point of Indiana, Judge Pope earnestly advocated the removal of the line northward, so as to include the site of Chicago in Illinois, and this on the ground that a great city would one day grow up here, and it was exceedingly desirable that this large northern population should be made to counterbalance the southern and more Pro-Slavery portion of the State, in case of a general conflict between the Northern and Southern States. How wise this policy and forecast of Judge Pope's really was, appeared most conspicuously in the history of our State, in its relations to the late rebellion, in which, but for the northern tiers of counties, Illinois might have been carried out of the Union, and with it Kentucky and Missouri.

Returning for a moment to the early strife between Anti-Slavery and pro-slavery parties in this State, it may be added that for years after the Convention question was settled, and before the later Abolition excitement arose, there were many bitter controversies, especially in St. Clair, Madison, and Bond Counties, over the cases of fugitive slaves, who were even then, aided by humane families, in their efforts to elude the grasp of their pursuing masters; so inevitable was it, that the moral sense of many good men and women would rebel against the requirements of the Fugitive-Slave Laws, which were deemed contrary to the laws of God. In Bond County, neighborhoods were divided into fiercely contending parties in relation to this question, long before Wm. Lloyd Garrison was heard of. On the one side, were the old supporters of Slavery, and on the other side, the enemies of oppression, and the conscientious defenders of man's natural rights. Before leaving this subject, I venture to make record, I believe for the first time, of an amusing incident that was related to me by the Rev. Dr. Peck, not long before his death.

During the conflict, before the vote on the proposed Convention in 1824, Dr. Peck fell in company with a young lawyer just from Kentucky, in the village of Carmi. The lawyer finding that he had traveled extensively in the State, though not aware of his calling, asked him what he thought as to the prospects of the vote on the proposed Convention. Dr. Peck replied that he believed the majority would be against the Convention. The lawyer, in a very pretentious and overbearing manner, demanded on what ground he based his opinion. He answered that the moral sentiment of the people was opposed to Slavery, and he did not believe they would consent to have the State cursed by its introduction. The lawyer proceeded, in a very positive style, to recite arguments, that have often been repeated since, in defence of the right of every citizen to carry his property whereever he chose in the common territory of the United States. Dr. Peck, perceiving that his friend was not very well posted in law, retorted upon him by professing to quote from Justinian, Coke, and Blackstone, the most overwhelming declarations against the doctrines advanced by the lawyer, manufacturing his quotations as he went. The lawyer was utterly confounded, and confessed that he had not fully studied those authorities in relation to this question. A few months later, Dr. Peck, one day stepped into a lawyer's office in Edwardsville, where he found his Carmi friend, and was introduced to him as the Rev. Mr. Peck. The young lawyer seemed astonished, for he had not before heard his name, and asked him if he had not previously seen him at Carmi, a few months since. Mr. Peck said very likely he had. The young lawyer then stepped out, when the lawyers in the office burst out in a loud laugh, and apologized to Dr. Peck, telling him that their friend, who had just left, had informed them of having fallen in at Carmi, with the most astonishing lawyer he had ever encountered in his life—a man who had every authority in ancient and modern law at his tongue's end, and was perfectly at home on every legal question that could be suggested.

Passing now from morals to education, I must travel more rapidly, if the remaining ground is to be traversed within reasonable limits. It is inevitable in every new country that the educational advantages will be comparatively few and very insufficient. But it is difficult for those who have spent their lives in communities, where public schools have been long in operation, to imagine the low state of mental culture, and the absence of means for the instruction of the young and of the people at large, where there have never been any legal provisions for the establishment and support of educational institutions.

During the early history of Illinois, schools were almost unknown in some neighborhoods, and in the most favored districts they were kept up solely by subscription, and only in the winter season, each subscriber agreeing to pay for one or more scholar, or stipulating to pay for his children *pro rata* for the number of days they should be in attendance. The teacher usually drew up articles of agreement, which stipulated that the school should commence when a specified number of scholars should be subscribed, at the rate of $2, $2.50, or $3 per scholar for the quarter. In these written articles he bound himself to teach spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic, as far as the double rule of three. Occasionally a teacher would venture to include English grammar. But in the earlier years of my youth, I knew of no teacher who attempted to give instruction in grammar or geography. And such branches as history, natural philosophy, or astronomy, were not thought of. Many parents were unwilling that their children should study arithmetic, contending that it was quite unnecessary for farmers. And what was the use of grammar to a person who could talk so as to be understood by everybody? I studied English grammar, and all the latter rules of arithmetic, when about twelve years old, without the aid of a teacher, and geography at a later age, after I had begun to prepare for college.

The mode of conducting schools was peculiar. All the pupils studied their lessons, by spelling or reading aloud simultaneously, while the teacher usually heard each scholar recite alone; although, in the opening of the school, a chapter of the Bible was read by the older scholars by verses, in turn, and at the close in the evening, the whole school, except the beginners, stood up and spelled words in turn, as given out by the master.

I have heard the practice of reading in school defended, as necessary to prepare the scholars for studying in the midst of noise and confusion, for example, in a saw-mill, or where they might be surrounded by persons engaged in conversation. For a long time I had not been in what was called a loud or noisy school, until I went into one conducted on this method, among the Arabs in Jerusalem, some thirteen years ago. The practice there, seemed quite fitting. It is singular that it obtained for so many years in the pioneer communities of the West.

After these statements, it will not be surprising that many teachers were quite illiterate, one I remember, pronouncing "panegyric," "paneguric," and Niagara, Niagāra. The only persons of respectable education in the villages, were physicians, lawyers, ministers, and teachers. And the ministers were often unable to read the Bible without making gross blunders. Many of the anti-mission Baptist ministers could not speak three sentences together, without violating the most familiar rules of grammar. Even the most popular politicians were in some cases scarcely able to read intelligibly. One Lieut.-Governor was taught to read by his wife.

In those times, it was customary for candidates for office to circulate handbills before election, by way of presenting their respective claims, or exposing the shortcomings of their opponents. For not many newspapers were in circulation, and the number of people who read the papers was very small. Hence the great majority, were dependant for their political information on the handbills and stump-speeches of the candidates.

It was a notorious fact that one politician used always to write and print the first person singular, with a small dotted *i*. On one occasion, so it was said, Gov. Reynolds rallied him about the use of the dotted "i," to which he cleverly responded that Reynolds had used up all the large I's, and only the small ones were left for him.

It is related, as has, I think, been mentioned here before, that when the capitol of the State was about to be moved from Kaskaskia to Vandalia, a Committee of the Legislature was appointed to report upon a name for the new capitol, and that a waggish man, of considerable knowledge, whom the Committee consulted, advised them to borrow a name from an extinct tribe of Indians, who, as he told them, were called Vandals. Accordingly they recommended the name Vandalia, which the Legislature adopted.

It was stated by my teacher in geography, in the preparatory department of Illinois College, as a proof of the value of geographical knowledge, that a distinguished representative to Congress, from Southern Illinois, set out for Washington by a wrong route, which took him across the Okaw river, entirely out of the proper course, and that the stream being high at the time, he came near losing life in attempting to ford it on horseback.

In those days, it was rare to find more than five to ten books in one family. But those few books, it should be said, were very thoroughly read, and others were borrowed from neighbors, by persons fond of reading. Among the school-books most used were Webster's spelling book, the English reader, and Pike's or Dabold's arithmetic.

In the year 1829, the lands, donated by the State for school purposes, began to be sold, and the avails used for the establishment of public schools. But the taxation of the citizens for the support of schools was earnestly opposed for a long time, even by comparatively intelligent people, on the grounds, (1.) that many citizens had already paid for the schooling of their own children, and it was unjust to tax them solely for the benefit of other families; and (2.) that there were men of property who had no children, and therefore ought not to pay for the instruction of other people's children. It was difficult to convince such objectors, that every citizen was so much interested in the general welfare of society and the State, which popular education was designed and adapted to promote, as to warrant the taxing of his property for this purpose.

It was amusing to persons of education to listen to the pretentious but erroneous use of language, that was sometimes indulged in by men who were ambitious of being thought more learned than their neighbors.

One gentleman, in speaking of a young man who had gone from his neighborhood to a college lately opened further north, remarked that he could not judge how well the young man might succeed as a speaker, but there could be no doubt that he would make a "superficial" scholar.

It was remarkable that the people of all our early communities were extremely sensitive in regard to any slighting remarks that might be made by the more intelligent citizens, respecting the ignorance of their neighbors, or of western society in general. It was deemed an unpardonable sin to publish anything derogatory to the character of the people in point of intelligence; and for an imprudence of this kind, some of the early missionaries were severely denounced as proud and self-sufficient pretenders, who regarded their neighbors as no better than heathen. It was very common to hear men speak of their settlement, as one of uncommon intelligence, even in the most benighted districts.

I may as well refer here as anywhere, to the ignorant prejudice of many, in regard to the proposed construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This question was earnestly discussed at an early day, and the opening of the canal was opposed on two grounds, (1.) because it would be the means of flooding the State with Yankees, who would be introduced by thousands, through this line of communication; and (2.) because there was danger that by the pressure of the lake, when once the canal was dug, the channel would be enlarged more and more, so as at last to sweep away the State.

But in spite of the prejudices and illiteracy of many of our early citizens, they were by no means an unthinking people, their minds were stimulated by the necessity of invention imposed upon them by their peculiar circumstances; by the political discussions in which they became interested from one election to another; by the moral questions that were debated among them; and, above all, by the religious discourses to which they often listened, and the controversies between the adherents of different sects, in which almost everybody sympathized with one party or another. It was surprising to find men and women of little or no reading, ready to defend their opinions on almost every subject, with plausible, and sometimes exceedingly forcible, reasons. Women, especially, were even more accustomed then than now to discuss grave questions which required thought and provoked earnest reflection. Often a woman of unpromising appearance and manners would prove more than a match for a well-educated man in a religious dispute. In one sense the people were intelligent, while they had little of such knowledge as readers usually derive from books. Their intelligence consisted mainly in the results of reflection, and conversations one with another, and in varied information derived from their ancestors by tradition. In respect to knowledge of human nature and judgments upon the characters of men, they were far in advance of many who were learned in literature, science, art, and history; and, accordingly, many men of inferior education in those days competed successfully with rivals who had enjoyed the best early advantages. This was often witnessed in the political conflicts of the times, and in the ministerial, legal, and medical professions.

The literature of our Commonwealth, it will have been already inferred, was very limited, and, for the most part, deficient in polish, until the higher institutions of learning began to be planted, of which the earliest were McKendre College, at Lebanon (Methodist); Rock Spring Seminary, and Shurtleff College, Alton (Baptist); Illinois College (Presbyterian and Congregational). But, as has been intimated, there were five or six weekly newspapers established before 1825, and several men of respectable attainments became known as authors. Among these, the earliest was Morris Birbeck, who explored the country and wrote sketches of it in 1815 to 1817 or 1818. His articles were published in the journals of the times. Next was Dr. Lewis P. Beck, of St. Louis, who wrote a gazetteer of Missouri and Illinois, which was published in 1823; in 1819 or 1820, James Hall, of Shawneetown, afterward of Vandalia; the late Judge Sidney Breeze, of

Carlisle; Prof. John Russell, of Bluffdale, Greene County, and the Rev. John M. Peck, of Rock Spring, St. Clair County, came into the State. All these men were soon known in the literary departments, Judge Hall as the editor of a newspaper and of the *Western Monthly Magazine;* Judge Breeze, as the editor of different journals; Professor Russell, as a fine classical scholar and a writer, some of whose articles have been republished and widely circulated in Europe; and Dr. Peck, as the author of the "Emigrants' Guide," the "Gazetteer of Illinois," and other works of note. Of these writers, Judge Hall was, perhaps, the most accomplished in general literature, and Dr. Peck was by far the most telling and widely influential. He was not a classical scholar; but he was a man of keen observation, a careful reader, a bold and independent thinker, amazingly industrious and enterprising, and a pioneer in the advocacy of liberty, temperance, education, Sunday-schools, and evangelical Christianity. Our State probably owes more to him than to any other one man.

It remained that I should add a few paragraphs in regard to the religious characteristics of the early citizens of Illinois. Soon after the first settlement of the country by white people, churches were organized in connection with the Roman Catholic, the Methodist, the Baptist, and the Presbyterian denominations; and, before 1825, the Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Cumberland Presbyterians established themselves in several counties. A little later, the Campbellites, or Disciples, and the Universalists, began to be known in several communities. But before 1830, few, if any, Unitarian, and no Congregational churches, were organized; and families of other faiths that are now strongly represented in the State were seldom heard of. The Methodists and Baptists were prosperous in nearly all the counties, and the Presbyterians formed influential societies in many parts of the country, but especially in St. Clair, Madison, Bond, and Fayette counties. The ministers, in those early days, of the Methodist and Baptist denominations, were generally illiterate, the Presbyterian Church alone among the Protestant sects requiring that its ministers should be classically educated. The Cumberland Presbyterians agreed with the Methodists and Baptists in admitting men to the sacred office who were very deficient in point of general learning. Of course, the Lutherans and Episcopalians of a later time maintained an educated ministry. I remember hearing a preacher of respectable natural talents discuss in one of his sermons the importance of "and" as a copulative conjunction, while many of his hearers evidently set him down as a man of great learning. A minister in one of our Southern counties was said to have preached for months from a few leaves of an old Bible which he had gotten hold of. Some person afterward gave him a whole Bible. One minister, who was fond of controversy, being unable to read correctly, requested the writer to read his proof-texts for him, and followed the reading with his comments and arguments, which proved a somewhat tedious process to both parties. Another minister preached on one occasion from the text in Revelation respecting the man "who had a pair of *balances* in, his hand," and read it, "the man who had a pair of '*bellowses* in his hand," with which he said the wicked would finally be blown into perdition. Of course, such grotesque exhibitions in the pulpit have long since disappeared, and the religious denominations that once most violently opposed "college-bred" ministers are now the zealous friends of education, excepting he few remaining churches of what are styled the "iron-side" or "hard-shell" Baptists.

In regard to calls to the ministry, the most singular fancies used to be sometimes put forward. In one case, as was reported to me at the time by creditable witnesses, a minister stated to his congregation that he knew he was called to the ministry, from the fact that on a certain occasion he dreamed that he had swallowed a wagon, and the tongue projected out of his mouth, which he took as an indication that he was to use his tongue in preaching the Gospel. This story, in substance, was published a few years ago in *Harper's Magazine.*

The style of preaching on the part of uneducated ministers was remarkable. Their voices were raised to the highest pitch, and often a monotonous sing-song was kept up from the beginning to the end of the discourse. But many of these pioneer preachers were men of sound sense, and were very effective speakers. Some of them were at times highly eloquent, and nearly all of them commanded the respect and confidence of the people as men of earnest and exemplary piety. The few educated ministers were all missionaries; for many years not a settled pastor of this class was known in Illinois, for a long time after the first churches were organized. The quiet manner of the educated preachers exposed them to the ridicule of many illiterate people, who could not believe that a speaker was in earnest unless he declaimed before his hearers in the most violent manner. Gradually, however, a great change took place in respect to this whole subject. In public and social worship, singing was a powerful auxiliary in all the early religious assemblies, as it is now. But the character of the music and hymns was often ludicrous. Most of the tunes were in the minor key, and many of the hymns were extremely repetitious, and had a singular refrain at the close of each verse, and sometimes after each line. Thus the words, "Glory, Hallelujah," or some like interjection, would occur twenty or thirty times in one singing. The music of those days, with only a few exceptions, now only lingers in the memories of a few elderly persons. Teachers of music came in and changed the tastes of the people. But for many years, only what were called square or patent notes were used in the tune-books. In camp-meetings and other devotional gatherings, it was customary for all the Christian people to pray audibly together, in the loudest tones possible. Sometimes the noise of a whole congregation thus screaming at the top of their voices was heard at the distance of three or four miles. I remember once a friend of mine and a man of some intelligence, said to me at a camp-meeting while some were singing, others exhorting, and others praying aloud, "I suppose this seems to you like confusion, but to me it seems the height of order."

Frequently, in times of revival, not only at camp-meetings, but in churches and at weekly prayer meetings, many persons would be seized with paroxysms of jerking, and women would spring up and dance, till at last they would fall exhausted and seem to be in a sort of swoon for several minutes. This bodily exercise, which occurred among Presbyterians as well as Methodists and Baptists, was usually attributed to the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, and to express a doubt of its supernatural origin was deemed a mark of infidelity, or at least of singular depravity, as the writer sometimes found to his cost. Sudden thoughts or impressions in the minds of persons at such times were regarded as the work of the spirit, and hence men and women were exercised to do the most absurd things; on some occasions, to get married, which it was a sin for either party to resist. This last extravagance, however, though it frequently occurred in Tennessee, never, so far as I know, took place in Illinois. In the examination of persons for admission as members of churches, strange experiences were sometimes related. The writer once heard a woman state as an evidence of her conversion, that she dreamed she was going up a steep hill, and became very tired and thirsty, and that when she reached the top of the hill, a man presented her with a cup of water, which she drank, and she thought it was the best water she had ever tasted. On awaking, she concluded the man who gave her the water was Jesus Christ, and that she had received from Him the water of life. She was at once voted into the church by the brethren and sisters present. This, however, was an unusual case. Church members were then as exemplary as they are now, and this notwithstanding the fact that many churches had no preaching for months together, and depended largely for their public religious privileges upon prayer meetings, class-meetings, and the exhortations of laymen, or the reading of sermons by laymen on the Sabbath. It was stated by Dr. Peck, in his "Gazetteer, or Emigrants' Guide," that the number of church members, as early as 1835, was equal to one-seventh or one-eighth of the citizens, a proportion about as large as that in the older States at the same time. Before 1825, but few congregations owned houses of worship, their public services being held in barns or private residences. This condition of things, and the small size of the church edifices after they were more generally erected, afforded a good reason for the institution and continuance of camp-meetings, which were annually held by almost all denominations, and which drew together the people of a wide district of the surrounding country, and were a means of greatly extending religious influences where there were no churches.

This is, perhaps, as fit a place as any other for a reference to the eccentric but celebrated Lorenzo Dow, whom it was my fortune to see and hear at a camp-meeting in the year 1826 or 1827. He regarded it as his personal duty to preach the Gospel, as far as possible, to every creature; and, hence, he traveled in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, preaching everywhere as he went. He made his appointment to be in the southern part of

Montgomery Co., on the Sunday when I heard him, seven years before, which he fulfilled to the letter. His sermon was a rambling talk, but abounded in happy hits and impressive anecdotes. After the close of the service, he retired to a tent to take dinner, when several young men, attracted by curiosity, came in. He asked them if they had come to see him. They replied that they had. "Well, then," he said, "you've seen me, so you can go." In those days, the name of Lorenzo Dow was known throughout the entire United States. He published several peculiar works, which may still be found in many families.

Between 1825 and 1830, a number of churches in Southern Illinois were aroused to earnest interest in the education of their young men for the Gospel ministry. This was especially true in Bond County, where the writer resided. In that county, one single country church, beginning with about the year 1828, have raised up fifteen or sixteen ministers, nearly all of whom took a full collegiate and theological course of preparation. As has been intimated already, there were no settled pastors in the earlier history of the State. But from 1830 onward, a great change in this respect took place in most of the older denominations; and, as in New England, the school and the settled pastor began to be twin institutions of the religious communities.

I ought not to dismiss our general subject without the mention of several names that deserve honor in the history of the moral and religious development of society in Fayette, Bond, Montgomery, and Madison counties, within the circle of my own acquaintance. In Fayette County were such men as David Blackwell, Joseph T. Eccles, and W. H. Brown, at a later period a citizen of Chicago. Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Brown have been referred to as active in opposition to the introduction of Slavery into the State. Mr. Eccles was associated with the other two gentlemen in efforts to promote the social and moral welfare of the people in many directions, and he and Mr. Brown were pillars in the Presbyterian Church of Vandalia. In Montgomery County, at Hillsborough, the county-seat, John Tillson, Jr., was a leading friend and patron of religious and educational institutions from 1820 to 1844, when he removed to Quincy. Among the other prominent men of the county were Thomas Sturtevant, of Hillsborough, and the Sewards, who were energetic farmers residing north of Hillsborough. Madison County, as I have already said, was the home of many useful and distinguished men, such as Benjamin Godfrey, of Alton, the founder of Monticello Female Seminary; Thomas Lippincott, Winthrop S. Gilman, Dr. B. F. Edwards, and Cyrus Edwards, Rev. John Barber, Patten McKee, Hail Mason, and Joseph Gillespie, who recently read an interesting paper before this Society. Rev. Mr. Lippincott was for many years the editor of a weekly paper at Edwardsville, and exerted a wide influence as the friend of education, temperance, liberty, and religion.

In Bond County, where my knowledge of the citizens was more intimate and special, among the earlier men of character and influence were the Waits, the Blanchards, Drs. Perrine, Foster, afterwards of this City, and Newhall, later of Galena, John Russell, a pure-minded politician of the Whig party, the Donnels, Hugh McReynolds, the Laughlins, and the Stewarts, and the McCords, Dixons, Davises, and Douglasses. Some of them were men of not much culture or education, but they were men of thought and principle, and were uniformly found on the right side of every social and moral question. I venture to name particularly Robert McCord, Sr., from Tennessee, who was for many years a sort of lay-pastor in his church, and whose religious efforts were signally successful. He would now be called illiterate. Certainly he was not scientific, for he long resisted the doctrine that the earth revolves on its axis once in twenty-four hours, on the ground that if this were so, we should all fall off it, and go nobody knows where. But in spite of his early prejudices, he favored education, and was a champion of good morals, and especially of human liberty. To many such pioneers in our State, unknown to fame, we owe the right decision of the vital questions that were so earnestly debated, and were determined when Illinois, now the great giant of the West, was in its childhood. To no one, however, are we so much indebted, as to Dr. Peck, of St. Clair County, the Baptist minister, of whose wonderful efficiency in the advocacy of every good cause, I have already repeatedly spoken.

A great improvement has been wrought in the condition and habits of the people of Southern Illinois since 1829, when the school funds began to be used for the furtherance of popular education. Three causes have united in hastening this comprehensive result: public schools, railroads, and the influx of enlightened and cultivated Eastern emigrants. The germs of progress were already present in the early population itself, which embraced many excellent families, and thousands of enterprising men from all sections of the Union. But social advancement must have been slow for half a century, at least, without the three quickening elements to which I have referred. As it *is*, there are still portions of Southern Illinois in which few tokens of social progress have appeared, down to the present hour. There are places where the traveler may see the old style of houses and living, and encounter the same prejudices against Northern people, that were so rife almost everywhere before 1825. But the limits of such neighborhoods are growing narrower year by year, as education and thrift advance; and the infusion of immigrants from the Northern States continually leavens the most backward settlements, and tends to make our whole people homogeneous, and conscious of social, moral, and religious unity.

Our State has advanced from a population of about 55,000 in 1820, to more than 3,000,000 in 1880. Our system of public schools is hardly surpassed in any State of the Union. Our colleges and professional schools are, perhaps, too numerous. Our humane institutions are ample. Our churches are equal to the wants of the population, except in a few communities. Our State Government is well administered. The wealth and general culture of our people are unsurpassed by those of any other State so lately organized. Our villages and smaller cities compare well with those of the older Commonwealths of New York and Pennsylvania, while our great City is already fourth in the Union in the point of population and commerce, and bids fair, at no very distant day, to equal the first in everything, save the items of wealth and the heavier foreign trade. In this wonderful development of our State, the Northern portion has clearly taken the lead. But the Southern portion is following on with increasing life and energy; and it remains to be seen, whether ours is not to be, ere many decades have elapsed, the most powerful and influential Commonwealth among the great sisterhood of States that are to constitute ours by far the grandest NATION under the sun.