

Old Settlers' Poem

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business and uncertainty in money matters adding to the difficulties of the situation. The county, however, was full of grain, and by economy and patience the winter was passed, and all who were willing to work were generally enabled to support themselves and families comfortably.

This year the order of the Patrons of Husbandry largely increased in the county. Granges were established in nearly all the townships, and by the end of the year the whole number reached forty. The membership was quite numerous and included many of the most intelligent and substantial farmers. On the 4th of December the anniversary of the order was celebrated in Council Bluffs. In spite of the bad weather, the attendance was quite large and addresses were delivered by Mr. Prindle, L. S. Axtell, J. Sterling Morton, and Miss Julia H. Garretson. Grange stores were established in Council Bluffs and Avoca, and also an elevator at the latter place. D. B. Clark, L. W. Babbitt, L. S. Axtel, J. M. Talbot, and J. C. Layton, were among the prominent members of the order.

OLD SETTLERS' POEM.

Written for and read before the Old Settlers of Van Buren County, at their Annual Meeting at Keosauqua, Iowa, August 19th, 1874.

BY KATE HARRINGTON.

KIND friends, 'twas something new for me to say
 I'd meet the dear Old Settlers here to-day.
 'Tis passing strange I should consent to come,
 To leave the privacy of hearth and home,
 And thus present a paradox to you—
 A maiden effort at full forty-two.

Yet 'tis appropriate—I mean the age—
For veteran soldier, nor yet gray-haired sage
E'er looks for fresh young Spring to re-appear
When Autumn strews the ground with leaflets sere.

Life's soft October, with its golden glow,
Brings back to us the vanished long ago.
The eyes that followed us—the hands we press'd,
The smile that thrilled us and the voice that blest.
From countless homes, Old Settlers have there passed
Lives all too beautiful and bright to last;
The dear ones, cherished in our bosom's core,
Who wait for us till life's brief dream is o'er.

This ground is hallowed. Though our mortal sight
May not behold the ladder from yon height,
Let softly down, that shining ones may stream
Along this path, as in the patriarch's dream,
Still do they come, their white robes gleaming there,
The sunlight shimmering through their golden hair,
All silently they join your waiting throng,
And, hushed and solemn, list to prayer and song.

Go with me first, to quiet Farmington.
From my old home my flight shall be begun.
And e'er my fancy takes its circling round
Kneel with her there, on consecrated ground.
With the low murmur of the near Des Moines
In solemn requiem let our voices join.
Our footfalls, too, must take a softer tread
Above the sacred sod that holds our dead.
'Tis most like home—that city on the hill,
Whose inmates sleep so peacefully and still.
'Tis there the oldest settler calmly rests,
With still hands folded on his pulseless breast.
Upon the marble gleaming pure and white
We read the names of Alfrey, Dickey, Wright,
Swazey and Kelley, Bolter, Good, and Shreeves,
From slumber roused not by the whispering leaves;

All undisturbed by the green boughs that moan
Their ceaseless miserere o'er each stone.

O! stout the hearts beyond the ocean's waves,
Who left, on England's shores, their father's graves,
Who came, Columbia's wilderness to tread
Without the sacred ashes of their dead ;
Who felt that never more might lips be pressed
To flowers that bloomed above a mother's breast.
Who left behind, mid throes of anguish wild
The consecrated mound that held a child.
'Twould matter little where my steps might rove
Did not this magnet draw—the *graves I love*.

In Farmingham, a score of years ago,
When times were easy—locomotion slow—
We used to be so quietly content,
We wondered what life's hurried action meant.
'Twas Smith and Barton through that peaceful calm—
But when the action came, 'twas Smith and Schramm, ✓
For, with the railroad came a change of work—
And pills and powder must give way to pork.
'There's many a sturdy farmer here to-day
Who took his "porkers" there with loud display,
And home returning with his merchandise,
Displayed to wife and daughter's wondering eyes,
The lovely dresses, they had oft been told
Would surely come the day the pork was sold.

Republicans! if for a man you seek
To prove your doctrine, take old Dr. Meek! ✓
I heard him at the opening of the war,
When every word he uttered left a scar.
You see, just then, we didn't quite agree,
And so he made his opening charge on me.
Am I disloyal? Wait and hear me through,
And then pass sentence, ye who donned the blue.

The upward growth of Farmington was planned,
When Charley Gleckler left the fatherland ;

For her it were indeed a sad affair
 Had he not settled permanently there,
 And with him all such men as Tuttle, Bower,
 Perry and Whitlock, Anderson and Tower,
 Cooley and French, with Campbell, Browning, Rice,
 Stoddard and Miller, Thompson, Ringer, Price,
 Manning and Bateman, Church and Kings the twain,
 Goodin and Davidson, Flood, Willis, Hayne,
 And dear old Deacon Smith, whose blindness here
 Will make Heaven's cloudless radiance dawn more clear.

If Henry Benson ever moves away
 'Twill be for Farmington a sorry day.
 This much I prophesy—and more than that—
 'Twill be a blow to every Democrat.
 The party, too, would feel a heavy shock
 Were they compelled to lose the old man Brock.
 George Whittall would be apt to miss him most,
 But, crowded with the duties of a host,
 He might not grieve, as men of leisure do,
 But, rushed with business, *work* his sorrow through.

Hail to inventor,—Dibble is the man
 With hand to fashion and with brain to plan,
 Like old Goliath, tallest of the braves,
 Van Buren cries, “Comest thou to me with staves?”
 And Dibble answers, with triumphant shout,
 “I come; just see how fast I turn them out.
 My last improvement you have not yet seen,
 It crowns mine as the Model Stave Machine.”

A passing glance is all my space allows
 Of Jimmy Thomas, driving home his cows.
 And dear old Aunty, weak and pale to-day,
 Straining the milk and bearing it away
 To cellar cool, where cream would shortly rise
 As golden as our glorious sunset skies.

And Frederick Rueckmeyer's kindly hand appears;
 I've watched it oft, through bitter, blinding tears;

For when, each time, the coffin's sable lid
Closed o'er and a white face in darkness hid,
That sympathising hand would tremble so,
I knew one pitying heart could feel my wo.

If, upon Seth H. Craig you wish to call
You'll have to venture near a prison wall.
Ah! Good Samaritan, your kind heart grieves,
Perchance, for him who fell among the thieves.
Yet spare your sympathy, or else divide
With Pharisee, who seeks the other side.
He's only warden of the thieving clan—
An honest, upright, generous-hearted man.
Who puts their deeds of infamy to shame,
By pointing to his own untarnished name.

Come, Harvey Adams, make the closing prayer,
And then dismiss the group assembled there.
The Reaper has not passed his golden grain,
Some ripened shocks, though scattered, yet remain;
They, with the aged Sower, waiting stand
For their ingathering to the better land.

Never be Lawrence by the brave forgot
While she can claim as hers O. H. P. Scott!
Like ancient kinsman, when the pibroch rung,
With sword in belt—carbine from shoulder flung,
Calling young Strawn—the eldest of his clan,
He went as captain—every inch a man!
He fought as heroes fight, while near him stood
The son, whose valor showed his father's blood.
He rose to Colonel's rank, nor asked release,
Furlough nor rest, until the dawn of peace.

But ah! I know who suffered most—'twas she,
The wife and mother, who so silently
Waited and watched in her deserted home,
With bursting heart and lips all white and dumb,

Fearing, when battle's roar had died away,
 To read their names coupled with "Killed To-Day."
 I watched her through those years of dread suspense,
 And when, at last, there came a recompense—
 The glad return of husband and of son,
 I felt her share of victory had been won,
 Her faith been tried by sacrifice as grand
 As Heaven required at the old patriarch's hand.

And her's but one of twice ten thousand hearts,
 Wounded and tortured by those barbed darts,
 The arrows of suspense, that rankled there,
 The spears of doubts—the wounds of black despair.
 O! mothers! daughters! wives! your country's weal
 Was purchased not alone by shot and steel.

Stand forth, ye braves! speak out each dauntless soul!
 Answer, if present, as I call the roll.
 Are Wilkins, Johnson, and brave Cutler here.
 Do Cy. and Tillman Langford re-appear,
 As, after fourteen days of travel sore
 They stood within the Union lines once more?
 If he be absent, soldiers, search the prairie,
 And bring old rusty, Major John McCrary!
 He flinched not 'neath the rain of shot and shell,
 Had more engagements than a modern belle,
 Fulfilled them all, yet never once was stung
 By questions of his faith in Brigham Young.

Captain Leroy S. Elbert answers not,
 Yet never be his bravery forgot.
 Entwined with laural and embalmed with bay,
 Our memories fold it tenderly away.

If Hoskins and the Messrs. Brown are here
 Let them arise; and brave Lieutenant Muir,
 Receive your share of glory with the rest,—
 You, who with Sherman to Atlanta pressed.

And Thacher, too, who joined that living wall
Built of the bravest hearts the North could call.

A little east of old Van Buren's heart
You strike against a rib—a bony-part (Bonaparte);
And there, old settlers, you may fondly dwell
Upon the memory of Van Caldwell.
The Old Dominion gave his great heart birth,
Van Buren cherished his exalted worth,
And Iowa, to consecrate her trust,
Unveiled her bosom to receive his dust.

With pride and pleasure do we turn to view
What persevering energy will do.
The Meek are blessed, and for their quiet worth,
Says prophesy, "they shall inherit earth,"
Their factory, with loom and flying wheel,
Attests their industry, while years reveal
What patient unremitted toil may claim,
The title to an honest, upright name.

Good Dr. Cressap rises at my call;
His dapple gray, old saddle bags, and all,
His finger on the pulse—his solemn guise,
For which you all pronounce him wondrous wise.

Josiah Clifton, with the brothers Scott,
The Keiths and Reeds can never be forgot,
And Wrigglesworth, and Singleton, and Lee,
With Warner, Smith, Ray, Richardsons the three,
And Doans, Ellis, Langford, Boston, Stotts
(To save the time, I give them thus in lots),
And Reynolds, Bower, Claffin, Enerick,
Johnson and Stewart (Christian name was Dick),
And Judd and Welch, who near old Jordan stand
To test the riches of their promised land;
While Slaughter, Nelson, Cave, propose to show,
How red men fled and left their Jericho;

How valient to the core, and brave of heart,
The "pale-face" met and called it Bonaparte.✓

Would see a specimen—a matchless job
Of nature's handiwork—take Harvey Robb;✓
His generous nature—unassuming worth
Can scarcely claim a counterpart on earth.
You'll find more wisdom—he makes no pretense
To erudition—but for common sense,
Plain go-ahead-a-tive-ness, bring your man
And prove you have excelled him, *if you can.*

✓Benton, I stood in cool Bellfountaine's shade,
And saw thy grave, before thy form was laid
Beneath the mould, and said, with tearful eye,
" 'Twill hold as much of greatness as could die."
Yet there I erred—'twas but the feeble frame
They hid that day—thy glory and thy fame
Live after thee—e'en from yon distant hill,
We hear thy honored name re-echoed still.

'Twas not Seth✓Richards (this you know, of course),
Proposed to give his kingdom for a horse.
He's earned it all and knows its value well,
And therefore is not keen to trade or sell.

It took some people of the queerest sort
In early days to settle✓Bentonsport.
The name of Green, for instance, brings to view
Actions and manners of a kindred hue.
We never deem its bearers sharp or tough,
But verdant, innocent, "not up to snuff;"
Yet does our neighboring paper mill proclaim,
Its builders were not green, except in name,
But men, whose judgment ripe, and honor rare,
Made friends throughout the country everywhere.

And then the man who boasted least was found
To be one✓Bragg—called so the country round,

While Brown was whiter than his neighbor Snow,
 Moore, long enough, and Long extremely low.

Sanford and Sullivan and Ross can tell
 How much it cost to keep a good hotel
 In early days, when men, without pretense,
 Lived by their labor and plain common sense.

Does Dr. Bailey feel content—repaid—
 For building such a home in Vernon's shade?
 It must be satisfying thus to dwell
 With friends he's known so long, and proved so well.

I tell you what—there's not a bit of sham
 In the school founded up at Birmingham.
 It does the County credit, and you'll see
 How wonderful its future growth will be.
 Descendants of such men as Cameron,
 Rutledge and Norris (I mean Dr. John),
 Of Miller, Plaskett, Bryant, Christy, Crumb,
 Will prove by this their ancestors were "*some* ;"
 A western phrase you doubtless comprehend,
 At least you do, Old Settlers of this Bend.

Hill, Holcomb, Johnson and the Tollmans two
 Belong to Portland—where Jo Dickey grew
 Into a merchant, a successful one,
 And then moved down and sold at Farmington.
 Whitten and Walker, Moreton, Belknap, Dowd,
 Remained behind, at Portland with the crowd.

If ever Milton's citizens feel sick
 They straightway send for Dr. Gilfillan quick!
 So at Mt. Sterling, when they feel the need
 Of counsel in their town affairs, with speed
 They seek James Alcorn, who, by prompt advice
 Settles dispute and discord in a trice

Mechanics, you have reason to rejoice,
 For lo! a Carpenter, the people's choice,

Stands at your head ; and right before you here,
 A Mason, whom you honor and revere.
 Judge Hendershott should not be far away
 When to the honored we our tribute pay ;
 And not our County only, but our State,
 Enrolls Charles Negus with her truly great.

Though the machinery of sister States
 By party friction weakens till it breaks,
 Your running Gear though lately set aside,
 Will serve in future, for 'tis strong and tried.
 Our Miller's strength we, surely, too, should know,
 Because he served in Congress years ago ;
 You take no risks though, for McCrary's known,
 And Palmer's latent force may yet be shown.

The welcoming shouts will scarce have died away
 From this fair valley where you meet to-day.
 Until there rises jubilant and free
 An answering chorus from the plains of Lee.
 Then unto you will flash, as from afar,
 E'en as the golden beams of star to star ;
 The light of Intellect—of Genius true
 That warns, electrifies, and thrills you through.

You know that Lee has heroes of her own ;
 Old Settlers some—some ripe in wisdom grown
 Though not in years—for Craig, McCrary, Browne,
 Rice, Howell, Gillmore, have achieved renown.
 And Hornish, Lomax, Anderson can claim
 The foremost ranks upon the roll of fame.
 Then Marshall, Gibbons, Lowry, Sprague are found,
 High up the ladder on the topmost round,
 While Cochran, Ballinger and Edwards stand,
 With Hagerman and Collier on each hand,
 Each weaving in the galaxy of fame
 The glorious sheen of an immortal name.

At Keokuk no stranger needs to wait,
 If he would enter, open is her "Gait;"
 Its keeper ne'er extortions extra toll;
 He even "dead-heads" those who wish to stroll,
 When he discovers that his favored man
 Is a staunch out-and-out Republican.

Another editor (Old Settler, too),
 Asserts his health has proved this statement true,
 That fearless, bold attacks on party wrong,
 Have made his *Weekly Constitution* strong.

With the Old Settlers' early hopes and fears
 Came thoughts of John F. Sanford's former years,
 And with these thoughts, the labor he has done,
 The wide spread reputation he has won.
 And wondering what experience and skill
 Might yet, in future, lead him to fulfill,
 My ear was startled when the words were said:
 "His work is finished—Sanford's soul has fled."
 And can it be? Has science lost so soon
 The life that had but reached its brilliant noon?
 Have the hands fallen, pulseless, at his side
 Whose matchless skill was tested far and wide?
 Van Buren, 'tis a loss *you* may deplore,
 Where will you turn since Sanford is no more?

'Twas D. F. Miller, friends, who bade me say
 His heart and prayers were with you here to-day;
 When first he came your state was new and wild,
 She claims him as her own adopted child.
 He linked his fate with hers, and near and far
 Is justly called the Nestor of her Bar.

Can I refer to David, Jesse's son.
 Without a word of praise for Jonathan?
 Can Damon's constancy through memory pass
 Without a thought of faithful Pythias?

✓Miller and ✓Viele! Death will not divide
 Their friendship—on the golden Other Side
 Beyond the darksome river they will meet,
 And through Eternal Day hold converse sweet.

What sister State, from Oregon to Maine,
 Can fairer record than our own sustain?
 Explore the continent! Its crowded mart
 Yields not, for our *own* ✓Dean, his counterpart.
 What brighter history can you wish to boast
 Than "✓Delazon" has left Pacific's coast?
 Look north and south, with persevering ken
 And show (if you can find them) nobler men.
 Go back through all the years, and search in vain
 For minister that graced the court of Spain,
 Whose native dignity and courtly mien
 Entranced the eyes of an admiring Queen
 As did our own, who with his modest ways
 Would ✓Dodge, could he escape, a word of praise.

Then on to Washington (not Richmond now),
 Count, when you reach it, each familiar brow,
 Looming ahead, like a resplendent star,
 Behold our Secretary, first, of War,
 See Williams, Miller, and McCrary there,
 Of honors reaping an abundant share.
 Then back returned, perhaps within your sight
 Search out the man you know is always ✓Wright. ✓
 Each thistle of your prairie he has trod,
 His intellect expanded on your sod,
 Be true to him, your champion and guide,
 Even though politics your views divide.

Many the vessels wrecked upon Life's sea,
 But squadron like your own can never be;
 'Twill steer aloof of breakers and the shore
 With matchless ✓Baldwin for its Commodore.
 Was ship e'er known to sink or yet to strand

When she a Bonny Captain could command?
 What dauntless courage, vigilance and skill
 Are there to ward off every coming ill.
 When, with a Pilot's ever watchful eye,
 Goddard the far-off danger can espy,
 The old "Van Buren," weathering each gale,
 Safe into port, at last, will proudly sail;
 Safe into port with all her gallant crew
 Gathered on deck to catch the passing view.
 Manning's grand convoy foremost in the van,
 Marlow its captain—Brown its leading man;
 While other ships hold Kinnersly and Moore,
 Parker and Pittman, Millers three or four;
 Morris and Christy, Ober, Barton, Gaines,
 Mills and St. John (both good Old Settler names);
 Smith, Hall, and Wood, with Jackson, too, appear,
 And Young George Wright (whose starting point was
 here),
 Cowles, Moss, and Rankin (once a favorite beau),
 The D'Orsay of this region long ago;
 And last, because the eldest of the crew,
 "Pap" Shepherd's kindly face is held to view.

It often takes a superhuman rap
 To wake a man from a continuous nap (Knapp),
 But when aroused his full, expanded soul,
 Longing for action, will not brook control.
 I had a friend, ('twas in those earlier days),
 Whose giant efforts won him highest praise;
 He shone in magitude the first, a star,
 Illumined with brightness Keosauqua's bar.
 And yet he shines—and yet his radiance gleams,
 In meteor flashes, yet with purer beams;
 For in one rapturous, pentecostal hour,
 The Holy Spirit came with might and power,
 And thus renewed he dares not pause and shrink,
 But cries to all that thirst, "Ho! come and drink."
 Israel was ruled by Judges, till her call—

“ A king! a king! (her trouble came with Saul);
And they who judged found succor ever nigh,
Because they trusted in the Lord Most High.

The age repeats itself; in its advance,
Weak, timid woman clamors for a chance,
And man looks on and thinks it wondrous strange
That she should dare demand a *little change*.
Yet years ago, here, ere the “ move ” began,
The nurse (Nurse) you called and trusted—*was a man*;
And wondrous to relate, whenever tried
Success attended—all were satisfied.

Clark, Lane, and Jewett, names that we revere,
Good Shepherds, are your flocks now gathered here?
The fields beyond the blue are fresh and green,
The waters cool that gently flow between.
Not long your sheep o'er earthly steps will roam,
But to the Fold above, will hasten home.

Before me gathered, Keosauqua, here
The members of thy far famed Bar appear;
Here thy physicians—men of judgment sound;
Thy ministers to hallowed labors bound;—
Soldier or citizen, whiche'er you be,
Each seems alike a cherished friend to me.
Were I a priestess, 'neath this vaulted dome,
I'd pray that Israel's tribes be gathered home;—
And when each solemn rite was softly said,
Would breathe my benediction on thy head.
Yet, after that, 'neath the Shekinah's glow
I'd kneel alone and there in whispers low
Would plead, that most of all kind heaven would bless,
For auld lang syne, the *heroes of thy Press*.

As some lone pilgrim, weary, faint, and worn
Musing on what may never more return,
Sees, suddenly, the vanished years come back,

And finds herself returned to childhood's track,
 So I, with faithful heart and hand have come
 To pay this tribute to my early home;
 To kneel, as at a sainted mother's knee,
 And breathe my prayer, ^VKeosauqua, to thee.

There's something hallowed in the dewy sod—
 The winding paths our loved and lost have trod.
 This balmy air to me holds whispers yet
 So fond and true my heart can ne'er forget;—
 The very flowers look up in glad surprise,
 And smile upon me with their gentle eyes;
 Yon winding river, every rock and tree,
 Calls up some tender memory to me.
 Along the foot path—down the sloping hill
 My glance, unconscious turns, expectant still;
 Or yet, again forgetful, I rejoice
 At the soft prattle of my baby's voice.

O man! there is an Order here below
 Whose secret raptures you may never know;
 No triple tie proclaims its rights divine—
 It holds for you no mystic countersign;—
 Yet pure, ennobling, elevating, good,
 Is the grand *Order of our Motherhood*.
 Would that each soul were stainless—free from sin,
 That takes the sacred vows, and enters in;
 Who counts that day her brightest and her best
 That drops a white soul on her yearning breast;—
 Who says her holiest, most ecstatic bliss
 Awakened when she felt her first-born's kiss;
 And, even though, like mine, her arms are pres'd—
 Her *empty* arms, upon an aching breast,
 She feels, and with the thought a rapturous thrill,
Her soul is mother of an angel still;
 And, when released, her spirit shall arise
 To join the loved—Old Settlers of the skies—
 When, first to greet her in the golden street,
 Comes the soft patter of those tender feet,

She'll comprehend how rougher paths, instead,
Into Life's thorny, shadowed vale had led,
How years and care had weighed the fair head down,
That, through perennial youth, shall wear a fadeless
crown.

Van Buren, one Old Settler proudly stands
Pledged unto thee with loyal heart and hands,
And, by these furrowed cheeks, these locks of gray,
Through which the loyal winds now fondly play,
She feels that unto thee, through woe and weal
Are pledged, till death, ten thousand hearts of steel.
Our banner, foremost in the ranks of war,
With shattered staff and many a veteran scar,
Snatched from the thickest of the deadly fray,
Is seen within our Capitol to-day.

'Twas old Van Buren sent that banner out,
With many a jubilant, triumphant shout;—
'Twas old Van Buren sent the young Voltaire,
Who held the colors firmly, proudly there;—
'Twas old Van Buren sent the Colonel, too,
Who led to victory the boys in blue.

The boys in blue! O! mothers, most of all
Be yours the praise whose heroes went—to fall;—
Who, after weary waiting, prayers, and tears,
Felt blight and desolation crown your years;
But yet remember, 'twas your country's call
You bravely answered when you gave your all;
And ask no brighter, more enduring fame
Than what, through them, still glorifies *your* name.

Old Settlers, when the final debt is paid,
Here, in Van Buren's arms, may you be laid;—
Be this our Mecca—santified this sod
By the sweet thought you mounted hence to God.
And O! if seraphs in that loftier sphere
May guard and guide the feet still lingering here,
When *we* return to take each vacant chair,
May you, unseen, be waiting, hovering there.

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