

PRAIRIE JUMBLES:-

1 BY JAMES BIRNEY DIBBLE
WRITTEN C. 1950

I belong to the Class who love the Prairie. Was born on Portage Prairie Wisconsin, with the exception of Two years lived in the Lumber Woods of Wisconsin, my entire life has been spent on the Grass, Covered rolling Prairies of Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois. I love them. So will take the Prairie for mine if you please. I love the feel of unhindered Sunlight and unhindered breezes.

Forest Dwelling proved a tragedy to me. The oldest of what was destined to become a numerous family. The great Pine Forests of Wisconsin were yielding their fine timber to civilization to be sawed into lumber for building. They paid good wages, My People had left Portage Prairie for the Pineries, where Father worked. The ~~important~~ important factors in that great transmutation was the sharp steel axe and strong, trained human Arm to wield it. Each year a stream of robust men came from the Prairies to the Forests to assist in whangin the great logs into sawed Lumber. My People were living in the Town of Chippewa-Falls while Father worked at the Lumber Camp.

I was a boy Six Years old. One day after dinner I passed out to our Neighbors Chopping Block where reposed an Axe and hand by a small dry Pine stick. Upon the impulse I placed one end of the stick upon the block, struck it with the axe, the stick broke, one Peice flew into my face, struck in my Left Eye, Totalling blinding me for Two years, when thro the skill of a good Doctor, The Vision of the right eye was restored, and thro that alone I have done my seeing from that time thro life until now at Ninety Years of age.

For some time Father continued his work, while good Dr. Berry continued in his treatments, which finally gave me vision.

When my People became homesick and decided to return to Portage Prairie my Birth Place. This was the old Family home, Father's People lived here. We continued to dwell here a few Years when my People moved to the great rich Prairie of N.E. Iowa, Howard County. We lived on the Iowa Prairies for some Years

-2-

until Financial conditions incited another move, This time to the vast untamed Prairies of Dakota. Where they built from the Prairie soil a new home. For many years we lived upon the Dakota Prairies.

I fell in love with them. From their rich Acres we saw spring into existence Beautiful, and rich farms, All sorts of Industries, Large, thrifty Cities, and little Homie vilages.

For some time Necessity has compelled me to live upon the broad rich Prairies of Illinois. - In all I feel that I was a child of the prairie and rejoiced in it. The Prairies have been very kind to me and I love them

I shall never forget those Two dark years.-Just as if Two full years had ~~be~~ been cut from my Childhood.-I quite remember the helplessness of those days.

Also,How the Gay,romping voices of my rightful companions at play,effected me.-I was alone in a Windowless room.Birney Dibble had faded out of Life's

activities.-But,All the time,Folks,My Parents and good Dr.Berry were working with me and for me.How vividly that all comes back,as if but Yesterday, How I listened to the Doctor's statements day by day.How attentive to his Professional instructions.-I am sure I learned to Pray in those dark days.-

In my childish way I plead with God to help me back to vision,and when sight returned I never doubted but that my Father in Heaven had done more toward its restoration than my devoted Parents and skilled Physician.-

I remember as if but last night when the First glimmer of vision came,just one ray of light.-We were at the Supper-table,in early Evening.I was seated at the left corner of the table between Father and Mother,I can see that First,flickering ray of light.Just a mere glimmer,but to me it spelled

Vision.-My Loved ones have told me that I screamed it "I See""Isee""ISee" How that Family,Eve.meal broke up.-Quickly Dr.Berry was Summoned.-He made some carefull tests.I remember he said that Feeble glimmer must be carefully guarded,and nourished,and encouraged into vigor and strength.-

He said the most carefull treatment must be exercised,probably for Months Lest too much light,and too violent strain might extinguish that feeble Ray.

As a matter of fact,my eyes were kept bandaged,mostly,for several Weeks. I was kept from to^ostrong light,while the one Eye,the other refused to yield to Dr.Berry's efficient treatment.-

Finally after Weeks of carefull treatment and nurture,it seemed that the strength of Two eyes came into One,until during my mature life I have been able to see as finely,-as much and as far as People with Two good eyes.

I have been able to read,and write and apply myself for long days.During ~~Active~~ Years I was never hindered because of defective Vision.-

Now at Eighty-Six my Vision,I think is normal for my age.-

This,I call my Tragedy of the Forest.

BACK TO THE PRAIRIE-

"Let it be E'er so Humble,
There's No Place like Home"

Out of the dense Forests, Back upon our Beloved Prairie.-Of the Half Century Period that my Parents were permitted to live together all but Two Years were lived upon the Prairies.-The Two lived in Chippewa-Falls.-Just long enough for the Forests to place their Tragic mark upon the Family.-

I came back with increas^sing Vision. I could see.-All the dre^dfull Darkness was dispelled and left in the dismal Woods.-

I Well remember the Steam-boat voyage down on the bosom of the "Father of Waters", and the gracious Wel^lcome accorded the Wanderers by GrandPa Dibbles Family and other Prairie Friends.-

The Cruel and Bloody Civil War had been fought.-In that Sanguinary conflict, Our Families had given most liberally.-Mother's Family, the VanArmins, who at that time lived upon Portage-Prairie, sent Three Sons, George, who gave his life at Vicksburg, Ike who came home unwounded, and John, Home safely and whole, entered Medical College, Later established his Office in the Nation's Capitol, Washington, where he spent a long life in the practice of his chosen Profession admin^sitering healing and help to sick and suffering People.

The Dibble Family gave to the Service the same number of Sons, Three. JAMES, My Father, Early in the Contest stricken with the deadly Typhoid, which so confined and reduced him, that he was dismissed from the Service and sent home.-It required a long time for him to recover. At First his own Mother did not recognize him.-Altho but a child I remember Father being brot home by Comrades delegated to the task.-he was accom^apanied by a medical Attendant.

For some time his life was despaired of. I have quite a Vivid memory of ~~these~~ those Anxious Weeks.--Then Father's brother, Charles Alphonso, "Uncle Fonnⁱie" to ~~the~~ Youngsters, in the same army as the Van Armin Boys, lost a leg at Vicksburg.-Came home, recovered his strength, Went to School in Portage, Fitted himself to Practice Law, went to the town of Chicago, on the Western shore of the great lake, Michigan, and there established his Law Practice, and made for himself a prominent legal career.

Later Uncle Fonnle married the wealthy, only daughter of Dr. Winters, of Iron-Ridge - Wisconsin. Dr. Winters made his wealth thro his invention of the Iron-Ridge Paint, from the clay of the hills adjacent, the red paint used upon ~~hills~~ barns and Out-buildings. - I have visited their beautiful home in Chicago several times. - Then Uncle Fay, Father's brother, the last of the Six soldier boys mentioned. - Was in the same Army as his older Bros. and also the Van-Armin Boys. Was in some of the most Sanguinary battles of the war, including Vicksburg, He had a Charmed life, went thro the entire war without sickness or wound. - I remember well, we were at Grandpa Dibbles, it was on a Sunday Morning when Uncle Fay came home and placed his Army musket in the corner of the Dining-Room. - Fay was a Jocular Fellow. He said "We are all home but Fonnle's Leg." - Of course Uncle Fonnle lived his life upon an artificial leg. - We Youngsters saw it many times when he visited our home, as he used to do, quite often. - Aunt Sarah, however, never came West to visit us. - But was kindly disposed toward us Westerners and Welcomed us to her home. -

Uncle Alphonso was very kind and devoted to our Family. - Some years later My Folks rented his farm in Howard County Iowa, and for several years we ~~live~~ lived upon it. He visited us about every year, and we greatly cherished his kindly visitations. - Once he came attended by a fine looking man, A prominent Chicago Oculist. Of course this was a long time now past, away back in the early Seventies. Uncle was interested in my defective eye, believed the sight might not be destroyed, and the Eye might be saved, and had brought this Dr. to examine and decide. - His examination was thorough and Scientific.

His conclusion was "The Sight had not been destroyed, but was covered with a Film that had grown over it. - This great Dr. said the Film could be removed ~~at~~ and sight restored, and he was ready to perform the operation, and leave me with Two eyes instead of one. But, He warned that in the operation there was one chance in 100 that the sight of the now Well eye might be destroyed. -

I remember the discussion. It was left for my Parents to decide. They feared the risk, deciding that one good eye was better than no eye. -

That was the last effort put forth relative to my Vision. - Uncle Fonnle would have taken the chance, which probably would have worked.

My Parents happy and hopeful in being back to their Beloved Prairie, bought "A FORTY", Few Miles West of Grandpa's near Doylestown, built a new house upon it and settled happily upon it.-We lived there several years.-

Going to Grandpa's was the greatest diversion possible for my Brother Charley and myself, ~~we~~ could easily walk from our home to theirs. Grandma Dibble was the Queen of Grandmas.-Charley and I wondered why we could never take Grandma unawares. She invariably saw us coming and always met us in the door with a slice of Bread-butter, sprinkled with sugar, in each hand.-

She was a very remarkable Woman.-Born and reared in Scotland she had the Scottish brogue, which when Grandma used it was highly interesting. She never called us "BOYS", in her language we were "BAIRNS".

We Bairns were interested in Grandpa's-Grandma's church arrangements. They were highly Religious, The Family Altar in that home was as regular as the Morning meal.-Dust never could collect upon their Family Bible.-

Every Sabbath Morning found them in church, but not always in the same church. Grandma, being Scotch, of course should have been Presbyterian, but she was not, she was a Hard-Shelled Baptist.-Grandpa was a Dyed-in-the-Wool Methodist. In that Christian home was perfect harmony.-Early in their Married life those good People had worked out a plan that worked with them.

One Sunday a Month He went with her to her church, Once a Month she went with him, the other Sundays he would leave her at her church and proceed to his.

I have gone to church many times with the Old People, and their arrangement puzzled me.-For nearly 100 Years that Blessed Couple ^{been} have worshipped God in the church of the First born, and together.-

II- THE FATHERS WEILD THE PADDLES- AND GRANDPA MAKES A PREDICTION.-

My Uncle Fred, Father's Youngest brother was just a few months older than I. Our First few years were spent very much together. We were just All-Boy, At least Fred was.-One hot Sunday Morning Fred and I went into the Pasture where Grandpa's flock of big, fat Woolly Sheep ~~were~~ ^{were}. We were finding pleasure in seeing those shaggy animals run. We chased them about until they began falling, over come with the excessive heat and exertion.-

Great sport until to ^Wstern looking men appeared.-These Men were our Fathers and looked very much in earnest.-They each had a paddle in his hand, and had evidently come for heroic Business. They ordered us boys into the Shelter Shed in the Center of the pasture.-There were not many questions, The ~~EXX~~ Crimes and Guilt were too apparent, to require investigation. Here were the Criminals caught in the act of Lawlessness, ~~L~~ Lying about with tongues protruding and panting for breath, were the suffering victims of the crime, the poor overheated Woolie sheep.- Grandpa and Fred took one end of the Shed, while Father and I occupied the other end.-Grandpa's sheep very dear to his heart to say nothing of the Financial interest involved, and as Grandpa was the older, and quite gifted with speech when under certain strain, he did the talking, and we Boys surely heard something that Sunday Morning that stayed with us longer than the Sunday Morning Sermon would if we had been where we should have been, in the church.- I would not care to repeat Grandpa's speech. However, it was very impressive, and very much to the Point.

At the conclusion of the Intellectual part of the Program, the Physical began.-I can hear those Paddles beating time, and other things.-It was a very Feeling time.-Fred bellowed like a Calf. I do think, and always have that Grandpa put more power in his paddle than my father did. You see they were Grandpa's Sheep who were effected. Fred bellowed all thro the terrible ordeal, but they do say that all thro the operation every time the Paddle came down I Shouted "A.Men" "A.Men" to the top of my voice.-It looked and felt very much as if the final end had come, and the time for "AMEN" upon us.-

After the Fathers had completed their Paddle demonstration, They, As Overheated and breathless as the poor sheep, and Fred and I for all the World feeling as if we had sat down upon a Hornet's nest, ^(Grandfather) made some very relevant statements concerning Father's lack of real enthusiasm in the operation, and wound up by saying what subsequently came true "THAT YOUNG OUTLAW OF YOURS WILL BE A PREACHER SOME DAY"-Grand father was a devout Methodist Christian and surely would not cast any Contempt upon the Ministry.-Just the connection of my Act, and Grandpa's prediction I have never discovered.

Of course I did introduce the Religious element when I shouted "AMEN".

8

I think the sheep of Grandpa's Flock all recovered from their drastic experience, soon regained their former ^{normal} coolness, and helped themselves to the green-grass of Grandpa's rich Wisconsin Prairie pasture.

Fred, I have always believed the chief instigator of the crime, and myself soon recovered from our part of the punishment, and before long could sit on both sides at once.--I was fully convinced that chasing sheep upon a hot Lord' day was not a healthy act, especially Grandpa Dibble's sheep.

III

CHANGE OF PRAIRIES-

After some years of happy and quite profitable residence upon the Doylestown "40" we came to a Family decision to change location, and exchange our Beloved and Native "Portage-Prairie" for some other. To us that meant "Westward-Ho."

I remember distinctly how much we disliked leaving the old home. It meant ^{very much} to our Parents. From early childhood "Portage-Prairie" with the exception of the Two years in the Pineries had been their home.--They had married here, and here lived the most of their relatives and Friends.--This was so much home to them it was hard to leave it.--Grandpa Dibble's Folks felt badly over "Jammie's, as Grandma in her Scotch always called Father, decision to tear up and break loose from the old Scenes and Associations and go "Away Out West" to possibly lose their scalps to the knife of wild Indians.--

But, Uncle Alphonso and Father had their heads together, the negotiation was completed, the decision fully made.--Uncle Fannie would go into some new section of Iowa, buy a Quarter Section Farm, finance it, and my People would move upon it, Open it up, develop it, and "Work it on Shares", all of which was definitely settled and agreed to by both Parties.--

The new farm had been bought in the comparatively new County of Howard in extreme N.E. Iowa, Five Miles N.W. of the County Seat town or Cresco, Two Miles North of old "Howard Center", where the Parkhursts received and dispensed U.S. Mail, which became our P.O. for many years.--We were Four Miles S.E. of the little town of Lime-Springs.--The Chicago and Milwaukee R.R. passed thro our immediate Neighborhood.--The Farm was minus House, Barns, Fences and all Farm improvements.--There was not a tree nor a shrub upon the entire Quarter-Section.

I have tried to find the exact Date ² of our removal to Howard County, but have no means of ascertaining definitely. I do know we were living in our new home in the very ¹ early years of the Seventies. I was born in 1860, and must have been about Ten years old when this change was made. I would venture the guess that the change took place in 1869 or 1870. - Anyway That is quite Ancient history. -- Uncle Fannie was a good provider. He furnished the materials, paid the Bills, and my Parents did all the work of building and improvement. And, Oh, How that faithful Couple worked. Early and late they toiled, to make that Quarter-Section of raw prairie a real farm. - Father erected every building, every Yard of fence at a time when no restraining Stock law, People turned their stock upon the Highway to prowl at Will, endangering the growing crops and riner improvements. For years Stock must be fenced out. - At a time when much of the really restraining fencing of to day had not appeared. During each Summer day the roving herds would assemble and press upon the fences protecting the crops, and this constituted a major problem. - About the Eastern and Northern sides of our farm was open prairie where the herds would congregate. - From a low shed in the S.W. corner, the entire farm was visible, when the herds were gathering Father would take Shep, to Father the best cattle dog any where, upon the shed roof, point out the threatening herd and say "Shep After them" and Shep alone would cross the farm and drive the cattle away back, sometimes he would be gone for an Hour upon that task. I remember Father said "Shep is the most valuable animal upon the farm". -

A few years ago when I visited the old farm, and saw the broad fertile Acres covered with rich crops, and also the beautiful grove. with its variety of trees, all this now a real fertile farm, and remembered that the change. ~~from~~ from wild and native Prairie land had been produced, and every tree in that grove planted and ^r Nutured by my diligent Parents, I could not restrain Tears of hallowed Memory. - My Parents with their own hands actually hewed that rich beautiful Prairie farm out of the raw Sod. - To us that was always the "Uncle Fannie Place", and we Loved it. -

One Evening, as we sat in our home, from in front there came the crash of a dis. charged gun, and the howl of pain, Shep had been shot in his own Yard, Because of his fidelity in keeping the herds back from the farm.

During the First Two years of our residence upon Uncle Fonnies Place, Bro. Charley and I attended the Howard Center school, $1\frac{1}{2}$ Miles, as that was the closest school to our home. - But, Other families had moved in and the large District was divided and a new District formed, taking us in, and the new School-House built One Mile N.W. of our Place. - For Years increasingly there were Dribbles in that school. Ours was a rapidly increasing Family, and nearly every year for a number of years, a new Dibble name appeared upon the Record. BIRNEY-CHARLEY-WILL-ZELL-SARAH-HATTIE-IDA-I think the others-ORVILLE-LIZZIE did not attend here. - This was a large school, especially in Winter when the older Young People attended, there was no High-School outside of larger towns. With the most of Young People in that Community, all the School training obtained was within the walls of that Country School. - A quite advanced Group of Men comprised that School-Board during those days, and Superior and well trained Teachers followed each other, giving us superior training in a school of that type. These teachers were all trained and expert-LABAN HASSETT-CAPTAIN GEORGE WEBSTER-MRS. MAGGIE THAYER-FRANK CAMP-JENNIE AULD-and the last I remember most and the one we loved best, FANNIE MOON-Daughter of the County Treasurer. Came to us fresh from Teachers College, teaching for some years. We loved Fannie Moon. I shall not forget that sad day during the Summer vacation when the terrible News came, that Fannie Moon had fallen from her Pony, dragged, kicked and pounded to her death. - Just a big boy I went out behind the barn where no one saw me and wept out my sincere sorrow. There was weeping all over that Prairie District over the tragic and distressing news. - Even today when I think about that group of efficient, patient teachers who put the best they had into me, and other Young People's Mental and Moral Upbuilding, a sense of very deep appreciation, and affection attaches to my Memory. - Every one of those teachers was a scholar. My nearest approach to High School-Was the Private school held in his home and conducted by that Prince of teachers, Captain George Webster. I attended that school Two years, Majoring in Mathematics, pursuing Arithmetic and Algebra. - The Captain had a broad reputation as an instructor in those Branches. - He did me much good.

WE BUY THE EIGHTY-

-----Five-----

We had lived on Uncle Fonnies farm years. According to my computation, it was the year of 1875.-I was 15 years old.-Through the hard-work of my Parents the Place had become a real farm.-All under cultivation.-Fair improvements.

Quite secure fences.-To my Folks, these had been quite profitable Years.

Through their own diligence, Uncle Fonnies liberality, good crops and Prices my Parents had gotten a good, but modest Start.-We loved the farm, and had no thought of leaving it..I remember vividly the beautiful Spring Sunday Afternoon, We were just home, as usual, from Church at Howard-Center, when Two ~~strange~~ strange Men in a good Rig, drove to our Place and alighted, looked about in a very Snoopie manner, and finally asked Father for Uncle Fonnies City address.

One arrogant Man said "my name is Lester, James Lester, "Jim" for short, I'm about to buy this farm."-That had the shock of a discharged Cannon to my People.-Father said "That cannot be. The Place is not for sale. Have you seen, or heard from my Brother in the matter?"-"No but I am sure Money will buy it, and I have the money"-Then he told of spending days, canvassing the entire Community and said "This is the only farm about that I would buy, and I intend to buy this one"-All that was said in a most Confident, Arrogant and Insolent Spirit. My People protested in vain.-James Lester proved to be the Type of man to whom To desire an object, carried a determination to Possess it.-James Lester left us that day with the Assurance "I want this Place and fully intend to have it"--Which after Weeks of Badgering and Negotiation all came true.-Uncle Fonnies came.-And was kind. But, I remember one of his First Questions was, "Jamie, Why Don't you buy a home of your own. That would be better than spending your life fixing my property, and turning over to me each year the real profits of the farm"-A new thought to my People. Uncle assured them he would assist them to buy, if they needed help.-Joining Uncle Fonnies farm on the East full length, lay an open unbroken Eighty Acres, which could be bought reasonably. Now to cut the true story short, Uncle Fonnies prolonged his visit until Father had bought the Eighty and was sure of its possession, and he had Rounded up the sale, for an outstanding price, his Farm to James

Lester. No change was to be made until Father had harvested the growing crop.

To us a most fortunate season of the Year. Our crops on Uncle Fonnies farm were all planted and coming nicely, and Uncle had secured the Place to my Folks until after Harvest, and they had time to move.-

I shall not forget that busy, eventfull Summer.-I was old enough to catch the Hustling Spirit of it.-All of the Equipment, Teams, stock Machinery &c. on Uncle Fonnies Place belonged to my Folks.-They were fully equiped.-

It did not take long to remove their Affections and interests from the old Place to the Eighty.-It was raw Prairie.-At once Father rigged up a good Breaking team, Three good horses and a yoke of oxen.-I drove that outfit all thro that Breaking season.-We began on one side and plowed thro One-Half Mile.-We could not break the entire Eighty in one season, but we made a big start that season.-I remember Father said "Every root of that tract might be plowed and cultivated, but provision for Pasturage and Hay must be made. At odd times during the Summer a modest but sufficient house was built. A Well was digged.-Thro the entire season of Summer and Autumn, Sheds-Yards for the stock and Poultry, and hogs, &c. were prepared. Winter found us comfortably and happily settled in our own new house.-Just one bad feature. The move placed us One Half Mile from School.-But we Youngsters made the added distance.-

We lived on the "Eighty" Two years.-It has always been to us "The EIGHTY" Uncle Fonnies farm became and is today I think "The Lester Place".-

James Lester proved to be a good Square neighbor.-Mrs. Lester became lonely and Home-sick and took to my Mother, the older Woman. The Two Families became quite intimate.-They were good clean, Temperate, diligent People, highly respected by the entire Community.-

The next year we planted the land broken the year before, and finished breaking up all the new land they cared to cultivate. Planted trees and shrubbery. Mother was quite a Flower grower, and had that new yard glowing with color.-We greatly enjoyed the Eighty. It was our own, and for its size, very rich and fertile, but there developed a serious lack, It was too small, there was not room enough. I have said I was now Sixteen years old. Almost a man in Stature and strength.-I was the oldest, there ranged just below me,

One and a Half Years apart, Charley-Will and Zell, Four Husky Boys all able to do some work on the farm, The Eighty did not afford room enough for the

of their increasing strengtnand Manliness.-I know that was a growing problem with Father and Mother.-What shall we do with the Boys?-Or course according to the prevailing thought we boys would be at home.-Today,Four Years at College for boys of our age,But no College suggestion ever remotely consid-ered at that time.-It was assumed that of course we would all be farmers.

I always felt I must Preach,but that was never taken seriously,rather a joke.-But,Anyway,whatever,No thought of College.-With Father-Mother the Problem "What to do withe boys,found its answer in,Provide plenty of work for them.Keep them busy on the farm".-But,In our home too much energy and power to find room and exercise on one Lone Eighty Acres.Father was young Strong and energetic,he could do all the work of the Eighty alone.

We boys were not questioned as to any choice.-The Neighborhood Young People didnt attend college.With no other training they just fell back upon the farms,or what was quite customary,went West,where there were vast Territorys of Vacant Government land that could be had for the mere taking.Some of the

richest and most fertile sections of the entire country waiting for settlema

Young People married and went West.-But we boys were too young.-We must be provided for at home,and how?-I have heard my Parents during those day talk about,and try to solve that problem.-The only answer they knew was to find something at home to keep us busy.-Go out and rent a larger Place,but that didnt appeal.-Buy a larger Farm.But,How and where?-

I remember the day when Father came home,the Problem was Solved.-

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SELL THE EIGHTY TO JIM LESTER-BUY THE HASSET FARM.-

Father came home that day Lightfooted and full of Action,he had found a solution of the Family Problem.-Circumstances were working for them.

Jim Lester wanted more land,our Eighty fitted right on to his Place.He had money and would pay a good price.-That,Our day of Good-Fortune,Father had met and had a serious talk with Cary Hassett,who owned one of the finest and best farms in the County.For the time good buildings,Well fenced,with pastures,Hayland &c.-Just a short Mile -Half from the Eighty,Just One-Half Mile on a main Highway,South of our District School-House.-It had other

advantages.-Mr.Hassett was selling and moving to another Community.Was anxious to hasten the sale and make his move,and if Father would buy the Farm he might have it for so much,an astonishingly low Figure.It would involve them in some debt,of course the Eighty would not buy this Farm,but would make a good,substantial start toward it.-Father was sure Uncle Fonnle would loan them enough to make the difference,and take a Mortgage upon the farm.

Sooner than one would think possible that was all worked out,and my ~~own~~ Folks owned that fine farm,with just a moderate Debt to Uncle Fonnle upon it I have always considered that the best move Father ever made,excepting Perhaps the one from the Wisconsin Forests back to "Portage Prairie".

This new Farm held for my Folks the real opportunity of their Lives,but ~~very~~ very unfortunately they did not see the real chance involved,and missed it.

This Place was endowed with all the natural qualities of a Stock Farm. Running clear through its very Center North and South,was the little stream of "Turkey-Creek",following a line about as straight as if laid out by a Surveyors line.Just an ambling little stream that never went dry,but could be stepped over any where except during the Spring Freshets for a few Hours,or days.Following this creek for Yards on each side,the high,and dry rich Pasture land.-Here we found and maintained the Pasture.We never were compelled to provide water for the stock.Wⁿter and Summer the Creek provided clean,pure fresh water,-That situation alone would ^{be} worth about the entire Price of the Farm.The N.W.Twenty acres as fine native Hay-land.- The entire Eastern One Half of the farm,East of the Pasture,for a full One-Half Mile North to the School-House,was fine,rich Arable land,under cultivation,in one fine field, with no break,but the Farm buildings situated at the extreme Southern end.-

Then across the Southern end,West of the Pasture,and South of the Hayland lay another large,compact Arable Field of many Acres and under Cultivation.

It had been proven that the Place would grow great Timothy and Red-Clover. Here in his hands Father held one of the finest Stock Farm opportunities.- But Father was not a Stockman,but a Grain-grower.They always kept a few cows.Father would not milk.-He would plow,Harrow,-Sow-plant,harvest and thresh,but the new farm was on its last legs with that type of farming. At about the time My Folks went upon that older farm the crops began failing.

I am thinking we moved upon the Hassett farm in about 1875, I know we left there in the Fall of 1879, after harvest. - Father was not permitted to harvest one full crop on the farm. - The crops would start with promise but were not permitted to ripen and mature normally. - Just as the new grain was in a soft, doughie state, torrential rains would come, with torrid hot weather, which burned the grain down, stopped its ripening, and left a shrivelled and shrunken harvest. - Then the fields so soaked almost impossible to move the harvesters upon ^{them}. Some days mire down and require digging out of the mud. -

The time for a change of Agricultural methods had come to Howard County Iowa. - Many enterprising Farmers, saw the condition, and adjusted themselves and saved the situation for themselves. Many became wealthy and Well-to-do upon those worn out farms. - They switched from grain raising to Stock. Milk and Cream found a ready and profitable market. Feeding for the market was encouraged. That inspired corn growing, which saved the Grain exhausted Soil.

All of this involved a radical change in Population. - Just then, 1878-1879 came the exodus to Dakota Territory. - During those Years, especially, a constant stream of Canvass covered wagons made their way to the great open, Prairies of that great Territory. - The land about as rich and fertile as the soil of Iowa, could be taken from the Government for the mere taking, and the meeting of certain very reasonable conditions. - There were Three Types of Entry open for that land. - 1. The HOMESTEAD Method. For those wishing to establish homes, as the majority of those coming Immigrants did. - File upon the chosen 160 Acre Claim. - Make a Boni-Fide home upon it, Reside upon it Five years, Prove ^{Up} Claim, and "Prove-Up", Uncle Sam would give a "Patent" or deed to the Place. - Millions of Homesteads were taken. (2) - Then the PREEMPTION right.

For those ^Q not caring to make a permanent home, Choose and File on the desired 160 Acre Tract, within Two years Pay \$200. and the Government would issue a Patent, or Deed, and the Place belonged to the Preemptor. - The preemption involved a Two Year residence upon the Tract. - Many so arranged it ~~as~~ as to avail themselves of both Homestead and Preemption. -

(3) - The Third The TREE-CLAIM right - 160 Acres - Required the planting and growing of Ten Acres of living Trees. The law specified how many living trees were

were required to give right to Claime and Patent.As I remember Five years were given as the time for the planting and growth of the trees.-

As residence upon a Tree Claime was not required ,it could be had at same time of either or both other Claimes.-I knew many Land Hungry People who succeeded in securing all Three Claimes, or 480 Acres,of as good land as the best of Iowa.-As beautiful homes can be builded in Dakota as in any other Section of the Country.-There lay the Temptation to the poor Wheat Failing Farmers of the East,especially those of Iowa.-Probably One Third,or One-Half of all the Farmers in Howard County Iowa,lost or sold their farms and emmigrated to the Dakota Prairies.-Several Families from our immediate Community

John B.Jones,to Lake Madison-Dakota.Their Family became prominent in the new and thriving City of Madison.Charley helped his People build a beautiful home on their new Farm.-John L.was for many years a prominent Banker,Saida became a very Popular teacher in the City Schools,while Ida,the youngest worked for years with her brother Johnie in the Bank as an expert Book-Keep^r

The Henry K,Stewar^ts,one of our closest and most Intimate Neighbors,obeyed the call,and settled upon a Claime,8 Miles West of Flandreau-Moody County Territory of Dakota.-The Stewarts made of their Dakota Claime a Rich and Beauty Farm,and spent their declining Years happily and comfortably there.

Many,Many others of the Iowa People found their way in the Exodus to the new Promise-Land.- It became evident that Wheat growing as a Major Industry had worn out its day in Northern Iowa,just as it had in other Sections in the East.--Wheat growing is a nice clean Vocation,and with the modern equipment for its Cultivation makes a desirable type of Farming.-With the Modern,Power machinery,the drudgery has been removed,and the Vocation has become clean and attractive.-It is not surprising that many farmers prefer that type of farming.-The work is more appealing and congenial.-But,It is an Agricultural fact that constant Wheat growing impoverishes the soil,taking out many eliments of production without replacing any of value.-

In nearly all Prairie Regions it is Proverbial that the Wheat grower is the Pioneer,he brings the raw sod into subjection,and upon its newly broken Soil Wheat finds its most desirable eliments and produces favorably until

Father was a good, orderly Farmer, and Farm-builder. - Cary Hassett was not, He was careless and slovenly. When my Folks took over the farm, it was bedraggled and unkept. - Weeds infested the corners, and along the fences and the lines.

Buildings needed repairs, fences fixed, a general Cleaning up was needed. I have not forgotten how my Father and Mother, just passing out of their Prime applied themselves to the task of cleaning the Place up, and bringing order out of disorder. - And may I say right here, without boasting, That diligent Couple really transformed the appearance of that farm during the few years they owned it. - We brought to the farm Two Spans of horses, The big team, Ned -Jockey, Giant horses, Young and strong. - They were dedicated to the hard work, Plowing and the work of the Fields. -

Then there were "THE COLTS". - a smaller and Young team, dedicated to the lighter work, the driving, Town going-to Church, or whatever, to the jobbing about on the farm. "The Colts" had a very busy and important Place on the farm. - They were everybody's, on the farm, convenience and servants. -

Ned-Jockey fitted into the Farm's heavier work. - For the work they did so faithfully and efficiently, the present day farmer has his Gas Tractor, but that Modern convenience was not even Dreamed of in those days.

As a Grain-raiser, Father Fall plowed, all those broad Acres must be turned ~~over~~ over each Autumn, between Harvest and Freeze-up. About 100 Acres of Tillable land. - I do remember that 80 Acres were set apart for Small grain growing, All of that must be Fall-Plowed, according to Father's planning, the rest of the arable land was reserved for corn, and the Truck crops, and would be plowed in the Spring, at the time of planting. -

To the job of Plowing that Eighty Acres, during the Autumn, with a 16 Inch Furrow Plow, Ned-Jockey were dedicated. - As I was the oldest of the Boys, and now was old enough for the task, I was constituted Family Plow-Boy. I really remember the day when Father reminded me of that plan. I was to be free of all other work and Chores excepting the Daily care of Ned-Jockey. - That was one of the most Welcome assignments I ever received, I loved to Plow, all other drudgery, Corn husking, Potatoe digging, Garden harvesting, Manure hauling, and other - and other sacred movements for the Hoes and Diggers. -

Any-way, most happily to me, because of my age, I was constituted the Plow-Boy of the farm. I loved plowing. In those days the plow must be held with Human hand. All day long, during Six days in the Week, I must follow Ned-Jockey, hold in Place, and follow day after day, in the furrow, my good John-Deere plow. Round and round during the days of Autumn, until those brown Stubble Fields had become blackened Furrows. To rest thro the Iowa winter and receive the golden seed during the new Spring. -And I loved every bit of that work.

We always finished our "Fall-Plowing" just in time for the Fall Freeze-up. Thro the diligent activities of the other members of the family and the "Coits", the Seasons Farm work was done. -Now, Winter and chores at home, But school for those of that age. -I remember that for several Winters our Teacher hired me to build the Fires and clean the School-House. For that I received a moderate Wage, but it gave me some Money for my Private use.

But, As I have intimated, Things were not coming well upon the farm, the crops were failing each year. -Still we plowed, planted, hoped, but gathered very diminished crops. -Always inspired with the Blief that next year will be better, but the new years did not better than the former, It finally became evident that there was no hope for improvement for their type of farming. -My People worked hard enough, but the day for their type of farming was gone. -But still we remained and tried. -We all worked, but hope faded. -Father was not the only Farmer in Howard County who clung to the old system, Plowed, Sowed and harvested great crops of disappointment and failure. -As I have already said, they failed to see their great opportunity, but when the Jones, the Stewarts, and others were running away from these conditions. [-The "Prairie-Schooners" were passing, almost every Hour. -Each one gave a Tug to the desire of my Parents to get away from their present conditions. -Fabulous Tales of the wonderfull new Dakota land filled the air, and my People's ears nd a thought. Until the ~~great~~ great Exodus of 1878-1879-spread over our immediate Country. -It seemed as if every-body was going to Dakota, and in fact Thousands were during those years, My People were caught in the great Dakota Swirl.]

I beleive with some very easy changes in their farming activities, my Folks could have staid upon the "Hassett Place" Their Debt was to Uncle Fonnies, He would be patient and not distress them, but they shook off the distress.

I remember my Parents were very deliberate in their consideration and decision concerning so radical a change as that from N.E.Iowa to the untamed plains of Dakota Territory.-But in the Autumn of 1878,when it seemed that everybody had either already gone to Dakota,or was preparing to go. At that time they fully decided upon the change.-We boys Wellcomed the change.

Charley and I were just arrived at the Gun Age.-Father that Past Spring had assigned us a corner nook of about Two Acres on the bank of the Creek, and helped us to the seed and in planting our tract to beans.-That Summer proved a good Bean season,and found ourselves with money enough in the Fall to buy Two cheap guns.-But where use them? Practically no Wild game in Howard County Iowa.-But a move to Dakota would solve that problem.In that great new country there must be much that needed shooting,Wild Geese,Ducks, Prairie-Chickens,-Grouse,Jack-Rabbits,- Coyotes-Perhaps Buffalo-Antelopes-Might be some Indian -Buck who should be shot,So the Dakota Idea struck just in time for us.-I remember that winter of 1878-79-we lived Dakota.Dakota for breakfast,Dakota for Dinner,-Dakota for Supper,-Dakota for an all Eve lunch, In other Words,All Winter we feasted on Dakota.-

At that time Dakota was undivided,as it is now,That whole vast region of what is now North-South Dakota was then the Territory of Dakota,and continued as such until 1888,when it was divided thro its middle East-West,and organized into Two great States,as today-North and South Dakota.-

For nearly Ten years my People lived in the Southern Half of the Territory But always in South Dakota.-The Ox age had not quite passed at that time. Today,we would walk up town to see a real "YOKE OF OXEN"-Many of the Prairie Schooners passing our place were Ox drawn.-My Father was an Ox-Man.-He usually had one or more Ox teams upon his farm,but not at that time,and I remember one of the First considerations in relation to the change was that of power.Today that would be no problem,get a Tractor,but that not available at that time,Horses,Mules or Oxen,Father was wise enough to choose oxen.-Of course slower of movement,but tough and enduring,more so than horses,not as subject to hard conditions as horses,and ox was seldom sick,never knew one to die voluntarily,Horses required better attention.-Then horses must

have a Grain Diet, could not survive and work on just grass and hay, as Oxen could and did.-That Summer of 1879 our Oxen would draw the Breaking-Plow during the Fore-noon, at noon unhook their chain, remove their yokes, go to our dinners leave the oxen to eat the rich Prairie grass about the plow for ~~that~~ their dinner, in an Hour they would be full and ready for the Afternoon work, at night, just put them on their Picket-line in the grass and leave them for the night. The next Morning at the First Ray of the new day, the oxen were at their breakfast, and were ready for work when we were. That was all care we ~~we~~ gave them during the work season, but one could not treat horses that easily and cheaply.-They must have proper care.-All that Father knew and he would ~~take~~ horses to that new country, but where and how can he get Two yoke of ~~an~~ Oxen?-In Minnesota, 20 Miles North of our home was a Wooded Section settled most ^{ly} by German People.-These People had what ~~were~~ ^{are} called Grub land. Land covered with small Young timber. In the Winter would clear off for the Summers Breaking a few Acres of this timber, by cutting it off and making Fire wood of it, as soon as Spring was opened they would out, or often tear up with strong Plows and teams, the young stumps, and pile up for Winter wood. One of the German Family was the Grebbins, Large family with several big boys. For several Winters Father had been driving up to the Grebbins Farm, and buying big loads of those Young, but dry "GRUBS" for fuel. They made the finest kind of good, clean Fuel.-During this Winter of 1878-.79-he made that trip, driving the Colts, Billie -Flora. This trip took longer.-The Grebbins had many oxen, When father finally reached home with a larger load of Grubs, instead of the Colts, Two fine, husky yoke of Oxen. Father and the Grebbins had been Horse and Oxen trading, and Pioneer problem of Power was decided.-We still owned Ned ~~and~~ and Jockey.-Father had rented the farm of Uncle Fonnle for that year, but the big Oxen fitted right in the Springs work, drawing the 72 tooth harrow was just play for them, while Ned-Jockey provided power for the seeder, and running about work.-My Folks were as rull plans for the new life, as the Proverb-ial Tick is of straw.-Their plans were all formulated.-As soon as seeding was done, with the Two Yoke of Oxen attached to the Canvass covered wagon, Father, Birney, Charley and Shap, the faithfull dog, with breaking Plow, and needed things of utility would start for Huron Dakota Ter.-

-Here We Go, James-Birney-Charley-Shep,
Purpose Firm, and Tingling with Pep.-

Spring of 1879-Crops planted-Will, man of the home for the Summer-Left with Mother and the Girls-We thought until our return from the great new Prairies There was left for their use, Ned-Jockey.-Father had not tried to dispose of the Stock or Things, Mother, who was a shrewd Business Woman would do that during the Summer.-She and Father had planned all of that.-They had several cows, would take but one to Dakota, they selected the one to be taken, all others for sale.-All machinery except that needed for harvest to be sold.- Father planted no corn that Spring as its later harvest would delay in the Fall.-Later they would dispose of Ned-Jockey.-

I will say right here that all of that was well realized. Mother even had a buyer for Ned-Jockey, retaining their use until they were thro with them. Directly after the "Seeding"-I forget exact date, Probably middle or late April, one beautifull Morning with Wagon loaded with Breaking Plow, Tools, and our Living Utensils, Summer Work Clothes, and a few Odds-Ends, we as above started on our 300 Mile Trek to our last great, new Prairie, the Plains of the Dakotas.-Of the Topography of the country we were quite familiar as we had studied it for about a year.-It was a radical change from the Thickly settled Civilization of Howard County Iowa, to the Treeless Plains of Dakota Territory.-Charley, Shep, -and I entered with high Zest into the move.-Hour by Hour, day by day, and even Weeks, about Two , slowly passed, but each night saw us a few Miles nearer to our Dreamland.-It was a beautifull trip, a real pleasure Diversion. Not one bad thing happened Enroute.-During the day Charley Shep and I trudged by the side of the wagon with loaded Guns, but Charley and I found no game. I think the same Powder and Shot, were in our guns that we had placed there back at home.-But, Shep could have boasted of his acheive-ments.-It would be interesting to know how many Gophers he slew by the Road-side across Minnesota, it was Spring, Gopher Season, and Shep missed no chance to snatch up a little Yellow Jacket.-

The trip was a Routine. To make time travelling with Oxen long days are essential. Previous experience had taught Father that. Several Years before he

~~as~~ he had moved the Family ^{at} from Wisconsin to Iowa 300 Miles with Oxen. We arose just ^{at} Day-break each Morning, Stop at Noon for dinner, and late Afternoon for night. The Oxen must not be hurried or over driven. -I suspect My good old Father, was about as good an Ox Traveller as ever was. -On the trip he kept his attention on the Oxen. If for any reason the day was especially hard he gave the teams more rest. -May I say right here that he drove that Two Team, Slow gaited Oxen over the 300 Mile trip, and not one bit of sickness with any of them. When we reached our destination not one sore foot, nor Shoulder Gall. -How Father watched those shoulders, each night bathing them with fresh, cool water, rubbing them dry, and applying an application of St. Jacobs Oil. -Of course they could not Graze on the way, and father ~~knew~~ just best food for working oxen, had come prepared and in the sacks in the Wagon was enough grain that Father had, had prepared during the Winter to feed the hungry Cattle clear thro the trip, and then some. -At night he would buy a bundle of hay for the oxen to munch upon during the night and early Morning. At night they were tied one yoke on either side to the wagon, and over the Outfit good old Shep kept Sleepless Vigil. We retired in our Wagon bunks at the regular hour, Slept restfully without fear.

I would recommend a trip like that to any one suffering from overwork or Rundown, you will find rest and recuperation, and pleasure. -Buzzing along at 600 or 700 Miles a day in your Cadillac or Buick will not secure you such restfulness. -You might need my Father to Chauffeur the Outfit. -He loved it. And so did Charley, Shep and I. -

Father set no Daily goal, We trudged thro-out the day, at the quitting Hour we stopped, and called it a day. -Father was well pleased with Twenty, or a little better for the day. -Father had a theory born of experience, When an ox chews his Cud regularly he is all right. He watched for that in each Ox. -We would retire at night with confidence if the Oxen were all chewing their Cuds, which they did each night of that trip. -

From the maps and decriptive Literature. Father had settled upon Huron as the Dakota Goal. -We were heading for that Point. -

Tracy Minnesota was at that time the terminal of the C.Nw-R.R. but it was being rapily extending West, and expected to reach Huron that season.

At Tracy we met Three Young Men on their way to Brookings County Dak.Ter.

These Young Men had been College Chums and had graduated from College Two years before.--Had become interested in securing Claimes for themselves, and during the Summer before, 1878, had come into Brookings County, just over the line into Dakota Ter. and secured each a Claime, had gone back for the Winter, now were on their way to their Claimes to build homes.--It happened that they had just our type of Outfit, Two Yoke of Oxen, and Wagon load of equipment, and this much we found out, each of those fine Fellows had a Girl Friend at the old home, pledged to come out and become their Wives and Home builders, I know that all that took Place in the not long distance in time.

I will say here all of those boys made homes on their Claimes. Raised Families and became Active, respected Citizens of the section.--We used to see their names in the County Papers, as Active Citizens.--

Well, We drove with those Boys for a number of days until we reached their Claimes, when we proceeded on West. We were now ahead of the R.R. that was pushing West.--Our way toward Huron lay directly thro Medary, then quite a Country Village, on a beautifull Plaine. on the Eastern bank of the Big-Sioux river.

It was an ambitious little Town, at that time filled with Land-Seekers &C. Every one was deeply interested in the new R.R. headed their way. The one great question is it coming thro Medary?--When they found we had come from Tracy, the First question "Did you see anything of a R.R. Headed this Way"?

We had just seen the R.R. and it was surely headed in that direction.--Every possible Wire was pulled, and every possible bit of influence used to bring it thro their little town, but all in vain, within a few months the new Road passed by them Six Miles North and on to Huron.--Leaving little Pioneer Medary out in the cold.--That thing happened to many Dakota Towns.--

I will say here, that directly North of Medary, a new town was established and called Brookings, which quickly ^(became) a fine Business Center.--Early in its career the "Dakota Agricultural College " The "D.A.C"--was established in Brookings, and for years has been the largest and most popular Educational Institution in the State.--Just this, Eventually the entire Pioneer town of Medary moved to Brookings, until there was left just one Farm home, The Stear s--Now, there stand upon the site of Ancient Medary a Monument

Memorializing good, Old MEDARY.--Well, What had all that to do with Father, Birney-Charley-Shep-on their way to Huron for a Claime ?-Not much just then but all of that has been vital to us since.-

Our Three Friends had urged upon Father not to go to Huron if he could secure something closer.-At Medary the People urged the same way "Don't go to Huron, settle here" They gave good reasons which have been greatly proven and emphasised since.-But where here, Every thing taken here"-Jim Nateska , the Town's leading merchant told Father that Afternoon. "Burdine Omodt" over in Moody County Four Miles South, holds a Relinquishment upon a Claime in his Neighborhood, taken last Year but not wanted by the Claimant, it can be bought cheap, settle all about it with fine People. You will have good Neighbors at once.-All To Good to be thought possible, But Father said we will go and see Mr. Omodt anyway.-Friends, that was probably the most fortunate Father ever made. We arrived at Mr. Omodt's fine home that Evening. It was all true, the Claime in question was just One Half ^{mile} West of the Omodt Claime and the Relinquishment could be bought for \$100.-We walked to the Claime that Eve. It was a beautiful Place, Father was charmed with it, and what was a little \$100. when a rich farm and a good home were involved.-As much as they could Father closed the deal with Mr. Omodt.-But Father just had the release, now he must go thro the regular legal Proceedings, which he started at once.

As I remember, within Three days after coming to Dakota Ter. we were at work upon our Claime.-There was a regular delay, but as long as we were living and working upon the Place it could not be disturbed.-

Father had told Mr. Frank Pettigrew, of Flandreau, their Attorney, that he must return to the Old Iowa home, in time for harvest, but would move directly back with the Family in time for Winter. Mr. Pettigrew said he felt sure the Papers would be there in time.-How We Three worked that early Summer!-Shep made himself right at home. But his Game supply was not as great, not many Gophers in that new country, nothing for them to eat.-

During that season as I remember we Broke about Thirty Acres.-We dug a never failing Well.-Father bought a good sized Claime Shanty that had done service for Mrs. Dr. Flavel, from our Cresco, Iowa town, who were Proving up and returning to their old home. Father bought the building cheap.

We tore it down in Sections, moved it home, and rehabilitated it until it was as good as new.-That made a large Sitting and living room for the family.

We already had a big Sod house laid up.-Ample provision in room was made for the family, To Cook, to Sleep and to live. That combined structure constituted their home for Two Years.-

The Summer of 1879 was rapidly passing and Father had not heard from his Filing Papers which had not yet come. He was becoming Anxious. The time was approaching when we must start back to Iowa, for harvest, straighten up the Business and get the rest of the Family.-Father got in touch with Attorney Frank Pettigrew. Mr. Pettigrew was a Smart, and honest man.-Told us he still beleived the papers would be there on time.-But, He emphasised with Father th that he must not take chances. The Claimes were all being watched, the First instant after any lapse in the requirements, They were "Jumped". That was occuring every day in Moody County.-"What would make the Claime Sure-Safe"? Constant Residence upon it"-Father was determined to save the Claime.-

I remember how that problem required serious consideration and Discussion. Finally Charley had agreed to this solution.-Have Mother come, bring Lizzie and Orville, the Youngest.-Father would meet her in Canby, Fifty Miles, Which all was done. Father took one yoked of Oxen, was gone a Week, brought back not only the Folks, but some needed things for the home, some lumber for completing the house.-Charley would remain with Mother and the little, children while Father and I would return for the harvest, and come back as quickly as possible--Father and I remained until the last day possible.-When we took one Oxteam for our trip and left the other for Charley to job about the Place with.-Much to be done before Winter-The buildings must be completed. And hay must be secured. That was an important item-Hay must be secured to feed Four Oxen and a cow, and for Fuel-They would depend upon the haystack for fuel with which to heat the home during the long cold Dakota Winter.-

Charley was Competent and energetic.-There was Slough hay on the Sioux River Bottoms, as high as a Man's head, Great course stuff, which made fine fuel.

That could be had for the taking, and Charley took it. And finer for the Stock.-He had worked some as a Carpenter and was quite Competent with Tools

He and Mother worked upon the Place all Summer.-They never saw the old home again and didnot seem to care.This was now their home and they loved it.
Father and I took the Younger team and started for the old home.-

Just when we started there were great rain-falls.-Water every where.Every little ravine or Draw was a freshet,Rivers every-where.-The Second day out we came to a flood,rods wide,and deep,and wildy rushing.-On its banks between Sioux-Falls and Dell-Rapids,were a great Cavilcade of Outfits and many People stranded.The rushing stream was to great to admit of Fording.-No one considered driving through it.-It was nearly night when we got there,it looked like rain again.-Those stranded People discussed the matter,and ~~decide~~ decided to wait until Morning and be governed by conditions.-Father and I were prepared for Ten days camping.Our wagon was as secure as any house.-

During the night another big rain.,But the Morning bright and Fair,all hoped the end of the rains had come,which subsequently proved to be true.

But there was no letup of this swirling river.But Men said"We must get ~~across~~ across and on our Way" Two or Three venturesome Young Fellows said we can swim it.The water was warm.-To make the narrative short that group of Competent ^{men} agreed to this plan.-Tow the teams to the other side.-All had lariats,

There were Men there who waded and swam that swirling stream a dozen times that day.-a lariat was fastened to a team,a man swam across and led the teams,one after another across.Of course the horses and the Oxen attended to their own swimming.-Every team in a comparative short while was towed across.-But the Wagons,a little different proposition,but those men were competent,They did this,each wagon box and Gear was tied to the Running Gear,Rope rastened to pole,carried a cross by swimmer,a long larial to the upside of the stream,to which Men could hold and prevent the Wagon from upsetting or washing away.-There were several Women and children in the group,these were towed across in their own wagons.-It took some Hours to make the complete passage across Our "Red-Sea",During the day others came and they were helped across.-By the Middle of the After-noon,the last Team, Wagon and person had safely made the passage.-The great success of the day had come largely through the skill of the Swimmers.-The People hurried on

To Their destinations.-Father and I started at once upon our delayed Journey Those Young,Nimble footed Oxen entered into the Spirit of it,and we reached Luverne Minn.before camping that Afternoon.-We drove East along the Southern boundary of Minnesota,through such prominent Cities as WORTHINGTON-BLUE*EARTH ALBERT-LEE-and AUSTIN,where we veered S.E.into Iowa toward our home,not far.

For some days an Idea had been Festering in my mind,but I had not screwed up courage enough to speak to Father about it.-I had decided I didnot care a return to Dakota in the Fall.-Ever since I have firmly believed that a Providential inspiration had come to me.There were Nine of us children at home, for Father-Mother to feed and clothe,and care for,approaching Young-Manhood and Womanhood.Our Claime in Dakota was Twelve Miles from any town,that a meo Prairie Village at that time.There would be no pay work for any of us.-Spend the long Winter helping Four or Five big,husky boys care for Four Oxen and one cow,and Twist hay for fuel,the biggest chore of all,I was 19 Years old, the oldest of the numerous children.I should be earning something to help the Felks,and not be depending upon them.-Then there was no school accesible to us in Dakota,I wanted more Schooling.The old home would give Pay work and School.-Let me stay in Howard County,get a job for pay during the Work season,work for my board ,attend school during the Winter.-

As we jogged along the High-way,I told that to Father one day,he gave it a little consideration,and I was surprised how quickly he fell into the Idea, and Acquiesced.-That became our agreed plan.-Later Father said"I will give you Your TIME,Advertize you,and you will,legally,attain at once to your own Authority,and be able todo Business for yourself"-All this was done soon.-To make the story shorter,-Adjoining our old farm was that of the Woodcock Bros.Rich People,one a General Sewing Machine man in St.Louis,the other C.and Mil.waukee R.R.Station Agent in Cresco-Iowa.-This,one of the finest farms in the County was under the management of W.O.Symonds,Nephew of the Woodcock Bros.-Father Lovingly arranged my future,and his arrangement brought me Two of the finest and most beautifull years of my life.The Symonds People were finely Cultured People direct from Atholl Mass.-Fine Christian Family.

No other People have ever done me as good in framing my character and deciding my future as those fine People.They refused to consider me a

"Hired-Man"-I was Birney Dibble, now their Charge, living as an accepted member of their home.-During those Blessed Two years in that Christian home I not once became Home-sick or discouraged.-All thro my Mature and Active life the hallowed instructions and Loving admonitions of that Saintly Woman, have come to me.-If all Young-Men could start Active life under conditions like these there would be fewer broken characters in the World.-

According to the agreement I was to live in the home of the Symonds, Three Winter Months do chores for my Board, the Summer 9 months work upon the farm with stipulated wages.-Father and I agreed to this, One-Half of my cash wages until I was 21 should be sent to them.-We adhered to the arrangement, I did not miss once sending the Folks their Stipend, and I had an abundance left to supply my needs.-For Two years I lived with and carried on in that Hallowed home.-As a respected member of it.-I never felt like a Hired-Man.-

On Oct. 8: 1881, I celebrated my Twenty-First Birth-day. A few days later, occurred the National Election -Day, and I had the privilege of casting my ~~my~~ First vote for JAMES .A. GARFIELD-for the Presidency, as all know he was elected later Assassinated,-I had seen none of my People for Two years, and had decided to go to them.-There was now Summer work in Dakota. Much building was going on.-During that period Hundreds of home were established upon those broad prairies.-Young men had come out taken their Claimes, started their ~~new~~ homes, gone East and Married their Sweet-Hearts, and brought them back with them and Thousands of the finest of South Dakotans today are the fruit of those Pioneer days.-The entire State was Pulsating with life.-Every building was waiting to be erected.-Rail-Roads were building. Plenty of work now, with good pay. I was no longer a boy, I had Twice been made a man, once thro the kindly offices of my Father, and again thro the offices of Old Man Time.-

I was ready to TAKE THE WORLD.-I was to spend the First Winter at home, and find work in the Spring. In the meantime Charley had got into an Egan Family by the name of Buck, and worked for them.- A Neighborhood school had been founded, and my Younger Bros. and Sisters, were receiving Six Months Schooling Per year. Father was Preaching as a Methodist Local Minister.-He was the

First Pastor in several what have become strong churches.-FLANDREAU-EGAN-BROOKINGS-ARLINGTON-and others. Every Sat. P.M. he would ride his black Pony to

his Sunday appointment.--During the Year of 1881-82-I beleive he was Pastore at Egan and some adjacent Country Points.--Egan was Twenty Miles S.E.--Father went there each Week, [There was no Church building yet.Father compelled to Hustle his own Preaching Place.--In Egan no place Fit.Old Mr.Taylor,a wicked, Profane ,blatant Man,owned and operated the quite large City Hotel,and its large,capacious Dining room attracted Father's attention.--Mr.Taylor knew him well.--Father contacted the old Tiger and said to him"Mr.Taylor your Dining-room is empty by 2.30 P.M.on Sunday is it not?--"Yes-sir"--"Will you please have it arranged,we will hold our services in there,until some other Place can be found".Mr.Taylor's First surprized Acclimation was"THE H-LL YOU WILL".

When suddenly there came a change over that Wicked man-He said"you may Mr.Dibble,and the room will be ready for you at 2 P.M." and for some Months the Room was prepared,the tables pushed back the chairs arranged,A small table placed for a Pulpit.Mr.Taylor closed the adjoining doors,and so far as he could kept order and quiet while the services were on.--Mrs.Taylor her daughters,and hired help attended the services each Sunday,during the months that the Hotel was used.Father was very Respectfull to this Old Sinner,called him"Mr.Taylor"-There was developped on Mr.Taylor's part toward Father a very respectful attitude.--He never used Profane language in Father's presene

It was remaked that many of the Taylorisms were polished off.--A few years later when Mr.Taylor Passed away ,the Funeral was held in the Dining-room and Father was the Preacher.--Father possessed the Special gift of getting along with the "Old Man TAYLORS"-Some way they saw in Father "A MAN"-Respected him.

Living upon the hill One Mile West of Egan was the Farm-home of Allen Oaks Mr.Oaks was a painter,at that time working for the Chi.-Mil.R.R.--The R.R.People were extending their Lines West and in other directions and erecting many new buildings.Depots-&c.--Allen Oaks went along the Lines and did the painting.The farm management was left,to his very efficient Wife,who went into the Field and worked with the Hired-Man.--Thro Father I secured the job of Hired-Man on the farm for the Summer of 1882.--I began my work early in the Spring and continued until late Fall.Day after day I worked with Mrs.

Oaks,agreeably.She proved a Woman could do that and maintain her Self Respec That was to me a very Pleasant Summer.Mostly Mr.Oak's work was

close enough to permit him to spend the Week-ends at home, but not always. Thro-out all the Years I have ⁱⁿ maintained an intimate, ^(friendship) with the Oaks People.

Egan has continued to be their home. He was taken away some time ago, but Mrs. Oak, some years younger, has lived with her family in Egan during all these Years. I met her not so long since. - Their good home is still in evidence upon the Egan-Hill. - I worked for those Good People Eight Months that Summer, and for the entire season drew but \$5.-- for my Personal use.

So it was quite a Sum they paid me when I quit. -

Charley's season at Mr. Bucks closed at the same time, and we made our way home, Twenty-Miles, with our pockets well lined. -

We found the Folks with a burning desire. - They had just emerged clearly away from the old Sod adjunct to home. - They were securing a house piece - ^{by} piece, room by room. - Adjoining the Kitchen on the West, was a vacant place, about Twelve feet Square, Two sides, N.-E. already built. The old Folks had their Heart set upon building up that vacant corner. Had some money toward it, and were planning to wait until Spring for the job. - When the First Morning we were home, we asked Mother to turn the Plates over at the Breakfast table, and we placed a good, quite substantial roll of Bank-Bills under Father's plate. I shall never forget the look of extreme pleasure that lighted up his face when he saw the Bills. His First exclamation was "Oh, Ma now we can have the Addition" - People have received large Sums, real Fortunes, with less joy than our good Parents accepted the price of their desire for the home that day. Before that Morning meal was cleared away, the new ADD. was fully planned, and before the Lights were extinguished in the Dibble home that night, the material for the new Add. was on the ground ready for use. We all hopped to the task, and within a very days had passed, the Folks were using the new Addition. - That is one way things came in those remote Pioneer Days, One at a time. - I Think that right here I would love to devote One chapter Commemora-

ting the Usefull and helpfull lives my Father - Mother lived in that Community for years to come. In portraying these things I promise to keep within the range of exact truth. - Please, it is the kindly helpfull acts of my own Father and Mother that I Record. -

"IN*AS*MUCH"-

"Verily I Say Unto You, Inasmuch as Ye have done it Unto One of the
Least of These my Brethren, Ye have done it Unto Me."
MATT. 25:40-

Christ speaking to Common, Every day People. - He Assures them that Casual kindnesses, and Benefit rendered to Needy Persons in his name, go upon the Records of Heaven as Service rendered to him.

We think of People with great Means, and special Talents, as the great Benefactors, - But that there is in the work of Helping others a chance for the Humblest, God, in his Word, Emphasises Over and over.

Get this fixed, Our Pioneer Home was quite remote, Twelve Miles to the closest Towns, having Resident Physicians. - It was strictly "Horse-Buggy" Period. Years before Mr. Chrysler, and Henry Ford began to "Dream Dreams" Even "Horseless Cars" were unheard of. Many years before the Auto-Mobile came into Popular use. - The Telephone had not yet appeared. - At the present Time if out on some Farm 12 Miles from the Dr. there is sickness, Dr. needed, Step to Phone, ~~Call~~ call him, he steps into his high geared car, turns a button, and within a few Minutes is at the Place of Call. - That reminds, Perhaps no other Profession as greatly benefited by the Twin Blessings. Phone-Auto, as the Medical. And Also to People living at remote Points. -

But, During the Pioneer Days of which I write none of this was true. No Phone if the Remote Dweller needed a Dr. he would mount a horse, perhaps at Midnight MidWinter, - Ride to home of the Physician, arouse him, Perhaps go to the barn help Dr. hitch-up, and blanket up, and started on his One or Two Hour trips, Just wheel track roads, Perhaps this dark night filled with Water and Mud, or buried under Feet of snow, Getting the Dr was an act of Heroism and Courage, and People did-not undertake it unless in Dire Need, where Life-Death are at stake. - My Parents, especially Mother, saved that Community, Scores of such efforts as I have pictured. - [Probably One-Half of all the Claimes of Gov. Land taken in Moody Co. Dakota Ter. were taken by Young Unmarried Men, practically all of these Young Fellows Married their "BACK-HOME SWEETHEARTS" with Two Years of their settlement in the County. - In the case of many the

The Young man returned to the old home for his Bride, and they Married there, but, In the case of Many, -Many others the Young man did-not return, but the Girl came to him. -She came as close as she could by rail, in many early cases 50 ^{miles} or father from the destination. They were not acquainted with Ministers in the Towns, and shrunk away from them. -

My Father was an Ordained Methodist Local Minister with full right to perform the Marriage ceremony. And really, Perhaps more as a Personal convenience to themselves, He became Popular as a "MARRYING PARSON" - The Young Couple on the way from the the train could stop at our home and in Thirty Minutes the sacred ceremony performed and they on their way again, unless Mother kept them for lunch or dinner., as she often did. - This Tale has a true Historic Fact, it actually occurred in Scores of Cases. - Father's Record for marrying Young Homesteaders ran high. - For that he never made a Charge, but there was a standard amount those Young Fellows voluntarily made, All the same - A FIVE-DOLLAR-Bill. - Of course that fitted into the home Purse nicely. -

If Father was a Convenient and Popular Marryer, He was even more so as a Buryer, with this exception There were more ^{or} Mariages than Funerals. - With the Exception of Catholics, Father Buried People all over that great Community. -

I know Father's Funeral work was very fine. - I have watched with admiration my Father engaged in the Solemn task of Laying some neighbor away to rest.

He could adjust himself, and did to each case. - This was especially Well- come to the Afflicted ones. - Father would respond to any call for a funeral.

They came for him from quite remote distances. He never refused to go.

For this Multitudinous Work he never made a charge - Some times the Friends would make a Small offering, but it was not expected. -

Now Mother, I have spoken of the effort of securing Medical attention.

I have also spoken of the many, many newly Wedded Couples coming into the Community. - And it so happened that after a proper time Babies began coming to those Prairie Homes. - Every Case required skilled attention.

May I say no Woman ^{in day} would take the risk those Young Mothers took in those days. - Now nearly all Babies are born in the Hospital, under the Skilled care of Trained Drs. and Nurses. - But, back there no Professional Dr. or Nurse,

But, very fortunately there was a Qualified "MID*WIFE"-My mother, Mrs. J.W. Dibble.-Had recognized skill in this important direction, where over and over Two lives were involved.-I will not dwell upon this at length, Suffice to say that for some years my mother was called upon for this type of work.

The Stork had the fashion of coming at his own convenience, and Folks had to accept his calls.-Practically all at night, they came for Mother at any time. And, Like Father she never refused. They came for her with all sort of Rigs.- Luke Doyle, and Irish Catholic came for Mother one night, in the interest of Maggie, who had a call from the Stork, But Luke Doyle did a bad thing that night, we hardly forgave him. He owned several Span of horses, was a leading Farmer, But those fine big Bays, were invertebrate Run-a-Ways.-They ranaway with Luke just whenever they Pleased, and Luke brought them for Mother, just a Mile from the Doyle home, Luke was nervous and careless, The Bays took advantage just after Mother was settled in the rig, they struck out, became unmanageable Mother was thrown from the rig, striking upon her extended hands, and both wrists were dislocated, and never got fully over the accident. Always lumps, and weakened Wrists.-This had happened, at least the last of it in the Doyle Yard. Mother gathered herself up, and as the Stork was impatient and would not wait, Mother proceeded to care for Maggie and Wellcome the little Doyle.-I have said Mother never recovered fully from the accident.

When Father reproved Lukie for bringing the Bays, Doyle said they had not shown any vicious inclinations for some time, he thought he had them converted.

Father said "When your next Baby comes, do not bring the Bays after my Wife".

Well, For all this and many Scores more Mother said She never lost a Case Mother or Baby. And never made a charge. Mostly she ~~never~~ received nothing, for which the Drs. charged \$35.--as the regular Fee.-The most of these people ~~paid~~ paid Mother nothing. Some would whisk her a gift of Calico Cloth enough for a dress at Five Cents a Yard.-For quite an extended period if Mother had charged \$10. or even \$5. a case it would have supported our Family. May I repeat she never ^h charged, nor lost a Baby.-

You would need to study the whole condition involved, to see what Mother meant to the Community.-There was born then under Mother's Competent Care Practically an entire Generation, many who now live there.

This will end my true Story of my Competent Parents in that Community, which they loved most sincerely, and were highly Beloved and respected by the Community People.--Scarcely a home for Miles about that had not felt the benign touch and influence of those People.--Their activities in that Place continued for a number of Years.--It has always been a quite Isolated Place. The Dibble Claime was in a line, Twelve Miles straight South of Brookings, on the G.-NW.-R.R.--Twelve Miles straight North of COLEMAN, on the C.M.StP.- R.R.- Sixteen Miles N.W. of Flandreau, the Moody County Seat on the C.M.*St.P.R.R.- From the Stand-Point of Rail-Roads and Towns are concerned that Isolated condition has never changed. The Family Claime is just as isolated now as it was in their early experience.--

Our Family relations to this Community will be shown in a future Chapter.

This bit of Intimate Family History I call one of the PRAIRIE-NUGGETS-

-- VII --

WHEN WE MEASURE LIFE BY PASSING TIME,
THE HUMBLEST TASKS BECOME SUBLIME.

"B FORWARD-MARCH"

South Dakota was settled with an Intelligent and Thrifty Class of People. It did-not offer the inducements for Idleness, Dissipation-and Crime, that the great Cities did.--Our People were not all Saints if measured by the ~~strictest~~ strictest Standards of Theology, but they were decent, and sympathetic, and have always given sympathetic support to the higher things of life.

All over the Territory the First Institutions planted were the School and the church. My People moved upon their Claime in the Fall of 1879, the children missed the First Winter from school, but after the year of 1880 there was never a lack of good Schools.--Institutions of Higher Learning, Colleges and Universities came almost at once.--At the very First day almost ahead of Settlement came the churches.--Scarcely no Community within the State has missed a Sabbath because of lack of accessible Religious Service. The ~~Exhib~~ Catholic and Lutheran People were on the First day providing Religious Privileges for their People.--All Evangelical churches were here from the First providing for their Followers.--

Father came to Dakota an Ordained Methodist Minister. Within a few Months

after their Settlement Father had regular Ministerial work in the new Community

During First number of Years on their Claime Father did Ministerial Work in the surrounding towns. The work on the farm was done by the boys, with Oxen, Will now the oldest at home, a steady, earnest Hard-working, Young Man. Father rode his pony to his Appointment on Saturday. Always had Two or more Preaching places for Sunday. Early in the Week he would return home, but in his time between then and returning, Superintending and working upon the Farm. One Mile from our Claime North came the Winneger School-House. This fine Country-School Building, was so Centrally located, so Commodious, and in the ^every Front Yard of those fine New-England Bred People, and Public Spirited as well, as to make it from the First, and thro- out all the Years a Place of Public Resort. The Winneger School-House was always Available for Religious and Refining Services.

The First Summer arter coming to Dakota arter the above building was erected and dedicated to the Public Uplift and Good, My Mother with a Two or Three other Women established a Sunday school which carried on in the School-House for Years. For some Years my mother Superintended it. Every Sunday Afternoon, while Father was absent with his work, The Oxen were Yoked to the Farm wagon, the children all loaded and driven to the Sunday-School. The School was Interdenominational. My Folks were Methodists, the Winnegers were Episcopal, nearly every Denomination was represented there, including many Lutherans. That Cosmopolitan Spirit has Characterized that fine Community for ove^r Half a Century. ~~At least Three quite Prominent Min-~~ At least Three quite Prominent Ministers came out of ^{that} S.S. As well as other Christian Workers.

We shall have something more to say about the Winneger S.H. later.

-----That-School-House-----as a Community Center is worthy to Classify as

--:A PRAIRIE-NUGGET:--
: : : : : : : : : : :

--VIII--

BIRNEY and CHARLEY, BLUNDER INTO A SERIOUS MISTAKE.-

This will be a "Nugget" of little darker Hue. Charley and I had each reached the age of Personal responsibility, Were both of age. Like every Young-Fellow of our age we were anxious to get a start in life for ourselves. But got off

on the wrong Foot.-Father had a Friend, Charley Mills, a Bach, owning Three Quarter Sections under cultivation, in a Fine farm Mid-way between Our home and Egan. In passing back and forth from his home to his Ministerial work Father would ~~never~~ ^{often} stop with Charley Mills, some time for dinner, some times for over night.-Mr. Mills was a Native of New-England.-He had some Domestic plans for himself.-He wished to spend a time at his Old-~~home~~ ^{home}, in New. Eng. And wished to rent his big farm.-He did not care to dispose of his Farm equipments, Teams, Span of horses and One Yoke of Oxen, and his entire equipment of machinery and tools.-He would also furnish Seed grain.-

He offered the farm to us for rent.-We finally agreed with Mr. Mills that we would buy the oxen and the horses, Mills taking a Mortgage upon the Outfit, and Our share of the crops. There was our serious mistake, a Mortgage upon our crop, which left us nothing. With the crop Mortgaged we could sell nothing and could pay nothing.-We found that true later.-We had Mortgaged away our only resources, the crop.-But, We were inexperienced.-

Charley and I worked like Drivers that entire Summer.-Our Farm work was ~~not~~ well done in season.-But, All crops were short that year.-Mills permitted us to sell grain enough to Pay him One-Half of what we owed him, and the expense of raising the crop. We had to hire a man and team for harvest, the Oxen would not draw the Binder.-Mill's old binder bothered us, and we were delayed. Our harvest was very expensive, Then threshing and drawing the grain. Charley was uneasy, did not wish to work the farm another year. We had made nothing, much, that year.-Paid the equivalent of the value of the Oxen.

Mills wished us to remain upon the farm another year.-Charley was offered a good chance to drive a Rural Mail Route between Flandreau and Brookings. He must have a team.-We divided the meager Profits of that year. With his share Charley was able to buy a span of horses by running in debt for part. He fitted himself with the necessary rig, and took the Rural Contract.-

According to our contract to Mills, we should plow that big farm, work for the rest of the season.-Now, What should I do?-I had our Horse team to use upon the farm but could not take it away because of Mill's Mortgage. He had been wise enough to look after that.-Well, Finally decided to try the farm another Year. Did the plowing during the Fall. Planted the crops next Spring.

and watched them grow.- 37-- I donot care to rewrite what has gone before.-Suffice to saythis year on the farm was about a reduplication of the Year before.-If any strong Young Man ever put Two Years work in one,I did that year.And that dear old team.Practically we were in the Field when the Sun came up each Morning,and there when it went down at night.-Men working for others have regularHours.Well,I had from Daylight to dark.-

For harvest Charley took a vacation from his route and worked for me with his team.-I had bought a new Walter A.Wood Twine Binder,which did its part with delightfull despatch.-The threshing and Grain Marketing with haste came quickly.-I had decided that it was foolish for me to rent the farm for next year.-But according to our contract I must leave the farm plowed for next Years crop.-That took me all the Fall,with my characteristic long days.

I spoke of Mr.Mills returning to New Eangland.These he induced a fine Yankee Woman to cast in her lot with him and come back to be his Wife and Home-maker.-During the year he had,had a new house built on the West Quarter for himself and Wife.-Directly when I had the plowing done and was about to quit, one of those good horses was taken sick and died.-Mills had a Mortgage upon them,it was my plan to finish the plowing,which was all his benefit,and turn the team over to him.-Now,I turned the horse over to him and told him I was through.-He was not satisfied.-For Two years I had worked hard for Charley Mills and with Wages.He got the whole thing after I had raised the crop and paid the cost of it.-I learned Two or Three good lessons during those Two profitless years.-No man can make a profit on his share of the crop on a Dakota farm.If I could not,with no one depending upon me a man with a family could not.-Renters live not alone from a Share of grain,but from Stock,Cows Butter and Cream-Poultry-Hogs-&c.And the best of them are always in debt and Mortgaged up.-When I think of that type of life I shiver.-But Hundreds of Families live that type of life,moving from Place to Place.

I remember the reeling of relief that came over me the day I climbed into Father's Wagon for home.I felt like Out of Prison.-

One feature of it has gratified me,I went through that Ordeal free from debt.-I had not made a Dollar,had put a few Dollars in it,but came out clear I settled satisfactorily with Mr.Mills.-I was again free to do something for myself.

--:SOME SMALLER NUGGETS:- (THE MILL AT ISINORE*)

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Three Months of every Dakota ~~Winter~~ Year is Winter.-Dakota Winters donot offer work to the Jobless.-I came from Mill's with a great desire for Wage earning work.-With nothing to do at home I decided to go to N.E.Iowa at our old Howard County home and visit some of the old Friends.-As my good Uncle Orville, and his kindly Wife, Julia, were living in Albert-Lee -Minnesota, and I would pass thro Albert-Lee, I would stop and spend a few days with Uncles' Folks. I was on a still hunt for Work.-As quickly as I reached Uncles' good news met me.-Aunt Julia's Brother had the contract for the dismantling of a large Flouring Mill in Isinore, S.E. Minnesota, and the shipping of the Machinery and Equipment to a new Mill that had been erected for it at Big-Stone Lake-Dakota Ter.-Uncle knew I would find a Winter's job with his Brother-in-law.-With his kindly introduction in my pocket I went tp Isinore at once, and found the situation as Uncle had described.-Went to work at once, Received real pay, and worked until Late Winter. It proved to be a real Providential opening.-Good inside work.-We dismantled and loaded the Equipment upOn cars for the Dakota Prairies.-I have wished I might see the mill in operation, but have never happened to be at just the point where it was located. But have no doubt but that Thousands of Bushells of "No I-Hard Wheat" have been transformed into rich Flour, with that machinery I had helped to take down and Load and ship.-I was invited to go with it and help unload and Place it in its new Quarters, but had made other Plans.-However that had been a delightful Winter.-I am glad to inscribe this bit of history as a "NUGGET"-

2. ANOTHER LITTL NUGGET-

For nearly Five years My Brother Will had been the man of arrairs upon the farm, but he had come to the timewhen he was old enough to begin working ror himself, and turn the work of the Home Farm over to Zell, the next in order, which was done.-Will was keenly alive to make something.-North Dakota was in the Limelight at just that time and had attracted our attention. We going 40 and mor Bushells Per Acre. Men on the Wheat Farms receiving from \$20. to \$40. a month, with all expenses paid, &c.-Will and I had decided to go up in the

Great Wheat Belt of North Dakota for the next Summer.-I went from Isinore home to my People-As I remember in the last of March Will and I struck out

for the North.--Our selected destination was Jamestown North-Dakota, about ,as I remember, Thirty Miles North of Ellendale at the extreme Northern boundary of South-Dakota.--We took the C.N.W.R.R.at Brookings for Aberdeen, where we caught a C.-M. ST.Paul train to Ellendale, Thirty Miles North, from there to Jamestown, Thirty Miles, afoot and carried our Suit-Cases.--By the Way, when we returned home in the Fall, the Gap between Jamestown and Ellendale R.R.had been completed and we rode down upon the First Passenger train over the line.

We went to a Jamestown Hotel and secured a room.--We were told there that the Farmers wanting help would come to the Hotels looking for Men.--So we settled down and waited, but not for long. Just a few days later, One day, a nice looking, quite old, Gentleman, appeared hunting for Two Men for the Summer Will and I had hoped we might find work at the same place, but that was much to hope for.--This Man's name was Sanford, He had been a College Prof.and School teacher all his mature life, until Two Years before he and his Wife had resigned from the School, and had come to Stutsman County-N.D.-gone up Thirty Miles N.E.of Jamestown to Daisy-N.D.and bought Three-Quarter Sections of Wheatland, nearly all under cultivation, and settled down to farming,--Their Place was plain, Shackie, Pioneer.--Of course these old People were finely cultured and educated.--We found the characteristic reserve of People of that type.--Will and I looked good to the Prof.--And before long we were both hired by the Old Gentleman for Twenty-Five Dollars a Month, with Board and Washing. Mr.Sanford's Farm Power consisted of Two Three Mule outfits.Mr.Sanford gave us each one of those Long-eared Out-fits, and for Eight Months we lived with Cared for, and worked these teams.--For the Summer Our work was all on the Fields,--Seeding, Harrowing, During the Breaking season Breaking new soil, with, our Mules and Sulky-Breaker.--We had a bed in the old granary, separated from the house.--There was an Elderly Woman who had lived with them in Ann Arbor Mich.and a Ten Year old girl, that had come to them from some relative.

Mr.and Mrs.Sanford were sincere Christian People, Members of the Congregational Church.--He Superintended a Country Sunday-School Sunday Afternoons. They had a single Family horse and buggy, into which Mr.S.and his Women Folks crowded on Sunday for the S.S.--Will and I were never invited to attend,

the Sunday School, of course there-- 40-- was no conveyance for us if we had desired to go.--I think there was not a Preaching Service available any where in that community while we were there, Yet the Prairies were quite well covered with Settlers.--A few Miles to Daisy, which probably had churches.--The only use the Sanfords made of Daisy as a town was a market for his Wheat. It was about Forty Miles to Jamestown, they did their Household trading there Will and I did-not get to town all Summer until Fall when we drew the Wheat to Daisy.--No Church services.--Mr. Sanford was very strict.--They observed Family Worship after breakfast regularly.--They observed the Sabbath Religiously demanding quiet upon the farm.--When Mr. Sanford hired us, he stipulated he ~~was~~ would permit no Profanity, nor abuse of the teams.--All that was proper.--

Will and I did-not find the Old Gentlemen's "Blue-Laws" Irksome.--

We were told, However, that he had, had trouble with hired Men who protested some of his restrictions. Men insisted that Sunday was their day in which to do or go as they Pleased.--Will and I did not Chafe, our Father at home was preaching Two or Three times every Sunday, and conducting funerals and Marrying People nearly every day,--Our Mother Superintended the Winneger S.S. every Sunday, and our Younger Bros.--Sisters were in S.S. each Sabbath. Why should we not observe the day in Religious respect.--

But it hurt us to find that the Sanfords could not trust us, we must be ~~watched~~ watched. We were "Hired-Men and likely to break-out into some Mis-de-meanor".--

That very thing made the Summer more unpleasant to us than any other thing. There was not one bit of real Fellowship for us all Summer, we were just hired-men, I think the Sanfords would have been surprised to find that we had Souls.--But that we were from a Strictly Christian Home, Both of us Religiously inclined, Each of us at that very time resisting the call to preach, to which we each yielded not much later, and spent many years each in.

The Sanfords did not help us Spiritually that entire Summer.--When we were at work some distance from the house the Prof. would stand upon an old shed and watch us thro his Spy-Glass.--We were watched constantly all Summer.-- Will said it made him feel like doing some mean thing.--When we meet in Heaven I hope Prof. Sanford and I will be located in different sections of the Glory Land. and as I was just a "Hired-Man" we probably shall be.--

Summers have a habit of doing this one passed away. ---
oyed our work. The Mules and we took many steps.--
le worked for the Sanfords just Eight Months at \$25. a Month, and had no ex-
ense.--Except in Grain drawing we were not in town during the Eight Months.
uring the Summer we drew \$8 together \$5.--We sent by Sanford to Jamestown for a
few little things, I remember a Straw hat for each he paid Ten Cents. A joke
out good enough for "Hired-Men"--The time came for us to quit and return home
home.--It had grown so cold we had come in from the old rickety ~~KIX~~ Granary
to a bunk on the Kitchen Floor.--Forty Miles to Jamestown, Mr. Sanford did not
offer to take us there. He paid us our good "Wads" we might find our own
conveyance. Just one way, WALK, We were so happy to be on our way home and to
Civilization that we anticipated that little Forty Mile Jaunt.--We planned to
arise from our bunk at Midnight and start on our tramp, which we did. The
good old Lady did not offer us a lunch, but Will managed to make a little
sneak on the Cupboard and get a loaf of bread, which we took for our break-
fast.--At Midnight we passed quietly on our way.--Down the road we happened to
look back and the lantern was glimmery about the barn. The Old People's Mis-
trust continued, they were out counting the Mules, to see if we had ridden
any away.--Well, We were Two happy Lads on their way to where they would be
loved and Trusted--HOME and Loved ones.

May I say in the conclusion of this Nugget, that while the Sanfords paid us
all they had promised to, Their Spirit of indifference toward us, and their
Mistrust of us led to just one actual Mis-de-meanor, during the Summer, the
Pilfering of a loaf of the Old Lady's bread.--The stress of the prospect of
walking Forty Miles with no breakfast led us to that Criminal act, which I
suspect the Old Tight Wads never recovered from.--

3--Still Another little NUGGET--
IDRIVE A STAM ROUTE--

Thro Correspondence I had secured work for Winter.--The "MIDWAY P.O." was a
mile and a Half S.E. of our home. It was kept in the home of MR. TAYLOR, a fine
old man not able to do Manual work, but a keen Business man.--For some time
they had kept this Country P.O.--Now, To them was falling from our Brother ~~SM~~
Charley, the Mail-Route between Flandreau and Brookings. Charley was quitting

the Route just when I came-home.-It was all arranged he should. And I take the Route for Mr. Taylor.-Taylor made ~~me~~ ^{had} me this Proposition, they a Couple span of horses, Two or Three Cows and some minor chores to do, For driving the Route I would receive Twenty Dollars a Month.-That the Gov. paid. Then, If I would live with the Taylors and do the chores Morning and Eve, They would ~~give~~ give me my Board and washing during the Winter. Going to the Taylors to live was about like going home, I knew them so well, and they were such fine old People.- The Mail must be driven Six trips a Week, MONDAY to Flandreau, TUESDAY, to BROOKINGS, -the other trips alternating in that way.-The MIDWAY P.O. was sonamed-MIDWAY between those Two towns, to be exact each trip 13 Miles each way Six days each Week.-Quite a steady job and quite Routine.

I left Midway about 8 A.M. for Flandreau and One intervening Office, Returned by this Office during the P.M. reaching home 5 O'Clock.

Next day leave Midway at 8 A.M. Stop at Intervening P.O. GALA, in the home of Mr. Francis, Brookings Noon, Home same way P.M.

Much mail passed thro the Mid-way Post-Office. It was at the Center of a quite thickly settled community, and handled all the mail, in and out, Letters, Papers Magazines, Parcel-Posts, and whatever passed thro the Mails.-

They received One Mail each day. One day from Flandreau, the next from Brookings.-We aimed to have the mail ready for Delivery at Five P.M.-The crowd ~~was~~ sure to be there at that time. A foot, Wagon but mostly Horse-Back.-I had nothing to do with the Delivery. I placed the Sacks inside, and Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, with sometimes Annie's help, attended to the distribution.-While they were at that task I hurried thro my chores.-We were always ready for our dinner at Six or Six Thirty P.M.-As I remember the Evenings of that Winter were delightfull at the Taylor house.-Warm, Cozy, Lots to read, people stepping in ~~for~~ for their mail.-Always much life there.-Then the mail was put up to be ready for me to throw into my rig in the Morning and start upon my trip.-

I have always looked back upon that Winter at Taylors as one of the most pleasant of all my Young-Man-hood.-The chores were just a few Minutes exercise. The Driving was steady and confining, but not much real labor. I greatly enjoyed the Family relations. The quite Maiden Daughter of the Family, Annie, was home. She was jolly, and she and I had a good time, Chafing each other:

I was home nearly every day, just One Mile away, directly across the Omodt
Claim. In a few Minutes after dinner I could run home for the long Evenings.
On Sundays I was free between A.M. and Eve Chores.--After Breakfast, Home, if
church in the Winneger S.H. attend with the Folks.
Proper to say that before this Father had exchanged Oxen for horses for their
Farm work.--Father still preached.--Zell was manager of the Farm Activities.--
The Younger children in School.--

Charley, Will and I, had formed a combination that brought us deep interest at
all that Winter.--We Three older Brothers had decided to go West, only it
proved to our disappointment to be North, in the Spring and take Claims,
Will is old enough now.--Charley would buy a new Lumber Wagon, Will and I each
furnish a Yoke of Oxen. We decided to buy steers and break them.--Charley
and Will were spending the Winter at home.--We had picked up the Steers for
our team, and the boys spent the Winter breaking them to drive, and getting
our Out-fit together.--But, I will leave that for the next Nugget--
That fine Winter passed too quickly. I might have continued with the Taylors
but My plans with my Brothers prevented.--
Thus ended one of my most shine NUGGETS.

LITTLE NUGGET NUMBER 4--

"Whoa, Haw, Gee BUCK,
HERE WE TRY OUR LUCK".

About April 1st. 1886, We boys with our fine selected and well broken Oxen,
and Charley's fine, brand new, shine Studebaker Wagon,--Break Plow, a complete
Camp equipment, all of which stirred our Youthful Pride, started for LOGAN-
N.D.--where we had decided to locate.--All went fine on the trip, The Oxen w
travelled fine.--Shep snatched up the Gophers along the way.--We all kept
well and enjoyed the trip. It was a real Lark.--Upon reaching our chosen des-
tination we found no Government Land open for Homesteading it had all been
taken.--And we were forced into a decision. What shall we do?--Upon enquiry we
found that just over this little intervening range of Coteaus, in Stutsman
County Lots of Government land, so we elected to go thro. the hills to Stuts-
man County which we did. There was no road thro the Coteaus, but that had all
been Surveyed, and for some days we picked our way along with the Survey

Mounds.-It was a rough drive thro the Hills but we enjoyed the Novelty and Romance.-When we finally emerged much like coming from a dark room.- However we found what we sought, Gov. Land.-Just across the Corner N.E. was Jamestown N.D.-We were about 8 Miles South of the Main line of the GREAT NORTHERN R.R. East and West thro the State and on East to the Twin Cities. To the Casual Observer that was a beautiful cuntry.-Seemed to hold out great promise to the Home seeker, but the more carefull observer found some very serious faults.-IF WAS TOO HIGH AND DRY.-Not far enough away from the Coteaus.-Too many rock.-But we wanted land, this looked good, to our untrained eyes. And, think Just a few Miles from the growing, Hustling County-Seat, Jamestown.-Anyway, We enthusiastically accepted it. There was no Residents very close, but we didnot care for that. To get Government Land One must Isolate himself.-We selected each a Claime, and went to the Land-Office and Filed up on them.-At Jamestown we bought lumber with which to roof our CLaim-Shacks, which we must build , on each Claime.-We must start a few improvements, but we had until next Year to begin operations upon the Claimes.-We did not plan to remain there permanently.-We dug a few stone, -Tried to break a little, which proved almost impossible the ground was so Dry and hard.-But we decided to build a Centrall Shack at that time and have it ready to come to the next Summer. Which we did from sod.-To make a show of effort we piled up a Sod shack on each of the other Claimes. We worked hard on the Three Claimes for some Weeks, until time to return home for harvest.--The final day came at last. We had done all we could at that time to secure our Claimes.

I shall not ever forget the Morning we started for home. There came to me a very definite and positive feeling that I should never return to or see this Claime again.-Some new feelings were beginning to arise in my thought. Something was definitely saying "Donot Come-Back, There is a finer life for you".

I had made some very defnite decisions during the past few days. I would not waste my life on that North-Dakota Stone Pile.-I saw that we Boys should not have been up there.-If we really wanted farms, the best place to secure them was right about our home in good Moody County.-That Country was in its infancy.-Many People who had come from the East and taken Claimes were tiring of them, and they could be bought cheaply. That our best opportunity.

It was a Depressed trip home-Very fine in its actual movements, but serious in thought. I had not said a word to the boys concerning my decisions, but I must

One Afternoon as we ambled dreamily along, Charley sitting in front driving the teams, Will and I were walking silently behind the wagon, something was said about going back in the Spring, and impulsively I said "I am not going back"- "Not going back" "No, you Boys may have my Stone pile, if you want it".

Will asked what I intended to do, I answered "I'm going to school and fit myself to be somebody" He said that is just as I have been thinking. I'm not going back".-That Afternoon, trudging along in the dust behind the oxen, Will and I talked the matter through. We did not know how Charley would feel about it. That was in some ways the supreme decision of our lives. It was not the final decision but this opened the way later for the Supreme decision.

Charley, at first was Grieved. He said we had betrayed him, let him down, that we had agreed together upon the plan and we were obligated to go through with it. I insisted kindly that I had my individual life to make, and could not permit myself to be forced back on that claim which had become repulsive to me. Will felt the same way. Some way a new life had sprung up in me and was asserting itself.-We talked it through with Charley. He insisted our quitting destroyed the Project and ruined him.-What would he do?-We told him we would give him the Oxen and the equipment, to make it possible for him to complete his claim.-Charley still owned his Horse team. As I have said the new Wagon was his.-And later it all came right.-He became resigned to our quitting, but would not surrender his claim. He would drive his horses back in the Spring, and open his claim with them. He would accept all the loose equipment of the trip and camp.-It happened that the Central Shack had been built on Charley's claim.

I will now finish Charley's story.-In the Spring he drove out to the claim. He tried hard to make something of it but could not.-He became acquainted and fascinated with a Widow, whose first name was TOLLIE, married her. They became discouraged trying to make something out of his claim.

Right across the corner N.W. of Father's Place was the "Leonard Quarter", just now for sale cheap. Father bought it for Charley, who came home as quickly as he could. He and Tollie worked hard and were getting a good start when Charley