

SPEECHES MADE ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT
OF THE PIONEER LAW MAKERS' ASSOCIATION
TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

BY REPRESENTATIVE BIXBY.

MR. SPEAKER, HONORED GUESTS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE—
I esteem it a privilege and honor, in behalf of this House, to extend to the Pioneer Law Makers of Iowa, a most sincere and cordial greeting. We honor the living, we revere the memory of the departed, and we applaud the noble deeds of all those whose lives now form a part of the history of our beloved commonwealth.

From time to time during this session we have passed resolutions of respect, as we have been informed of the passing away of a former member. In this all have united with a sincerity not to be mistaken. But, Mr. Speaker, as heartily as I approve of these acts, it gives me infinitely greater satisfaction today to look upon animate forms and speak to listening ears.

“ You'd better buy a cheap bouquet,
And give to your friend this very day,
Than purchase roses white and red,
To place on his grave when he is dead ! ”

Gentlemen, your duties differed from those which confront the legislator of today. The most delicate and difficult problems of a formative period were thrust upon you; primitive conditions surrounded you; the disaster of others appalled you; warring factions threatened you; while the menace of that unholy institution, human slavery, was ever present.

In your extremity you turned to that chart which warns nations as well as individuals of impending dangers. You read: “ No structure resting upon a foundation of sand can withstand the assaults of storm and flood.” With the warning sinking deep into your very souls, you turned again to the chart which directs as well as warns.

A gleam of revelation, and you clearly behold the granite foundation of universal freedom and eternal justice.

With more of wisdom than you were then aware, you built up these principles. The storms came.

The demand of exigencies which inspiration alone could have foretold, flooded and surged around and over all; the Nation itself was rent with civil strife, yet the work of your hands remained “ for it was founded upon a rock.”

As the foundations of the institutions of our beloved State were thus being wisely laid, distractions of a national character divided your attention. This afternoon, as we go back in fancy to those days, we see Whittier in his study, and listen to his songs of freedom; we see Mrs. Stowe educating with "Uncle Tom" in his cabin; we note Garrison forging thunderbolts in his Liberator; we find old Gamaliel Bailey with his National Era; we see Sumner fall by a bludgeon in the Senate; we hear the eloquent thunderings of Hale, and bluff old Ben Wade, and Giddings, and Julien, and Chase; we see Lovejoy fall by the hand of an assassin; we hear the guns of the patriotic John Brown as he began "marching on"; we see the opposing hosts marshaled for the contest which led up to the election of the Martyr President, and we behold the crowning victories which redeemed the greatest nation upon which the sun shines from the curse of human slavery. The little buttons I notice upon the breasts of many of your members, speak in the eloquence of their brazen silence of the part you had in that conflict. Other lands may produce private citizens of worth and character; other nations may have their statesmen of marked ability and be defended by brave soldiers, but in America alone is found the successful combination of the three in one, and nowhere in our own country, can better representatives of that illustrious type be found than among the Pioneer Law Makers of Iowa. It is not to correct errors that were committed by you that the General Assembly continues to meet biennially, but to provide for demands arising from ever-changing conditions. Vexing problems are presented for solution even in these days; we search history in vain for parallel requirements. In our perplexity we turn with confidence to the constitutional provisions with which you have endowed posterity, and which we religiously safeguard, and upon these basic principles we endeavor to enact wise and just legislation. While we greet you as lawgivers from the Sinai of the past, we do not forget your heroic acts as private citizens. You tactfully dealt with savages; successfully defended your rights from the attacks of unprincipled outlaws; beat back the wild beasts from the circle of your home-life, and with persistent effort subdued the wilderness. I count it my good fortune to have been born in pioneer Iowa. My parents left their Green Mountain home while this State was yet a territory. Coming by way of the canal and great lakes, they continued the journey across Wisconsin with a horse and buggy that had made the entire trip with them. I have not the time to tell; I do not need to relate to you their experiences. In my early memories I see by the side of my industrious, loyal, Christian father, my loving, patient, and devoted mother. And I do not detract from the honor that we gratefully and gladly lay at your feet, when I bring with it the tribute of esteem and love, that this generation cherishes for the memory of the motherhood of those trying times.

We welcome you, our honored guests, to the sacred precincts of this spacious tent. Others have welcomed you amid more pretentious surroundings. In the future you will be gladly received with the splendor of destroyed beauty fully restored.

To the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth General Assembly alone is accorded the privilege of extending to you the hospitality of our canvas home. With the pride of the Bedouin of the Orient we jealously guard

our right to this distinction. And why not? We have been saved from the humility of sackcloth and ashes, and the expanse above and around us, mercifully veils from sight the blackened evidence of frightful disaster. Gentlemen, I again assure you of the most cordial welcome of each member of this House.

BY REPRESENTATIVE COLCLO.

MR. PRESIDENT—It is with feelings of profound respect that I attempt to address so honorable a body of men as the Pioneer Law Makers of the State of Iowa. Many of those who were associated with you during the pioneer days in the State have passed away, and how well they did their part to solve the great problem of life must be answered by the God who gave it in their hands for keeping, for he alone can know.

The length of life at best is but a span, yet there are those living in this State to whom this span has been lengthened out until in their memory they bind the early history of our State with the present—those who have seen the camping grounds of the red man converted into great centers of industrial activity—those who have seen the warpath and the Indian trail give way to the great arteries of commerce that cross and recross our State. During the few brief years that are allotted to man those changes have taken place, for it is less than three score years and ten since first you consecrated Iowa as free soil to the upbuilding of an empire in the heart of a vast wilderness.

Standing as we do today in the presence of our distinguished guests and looking down the vista of these few years we see a steady procession passing before us. Into the new empire of the West the order states have poured a constant stream of humanity. As this restless tide passes before us we see plain, practical men and women coming to our borders to build homes for themselves and for future generations. They were the immediate descendants of an aristocracy whose blood has consecrated every foot of our free soil, baptized every battlefield of the revolution and sent a thrill of liberty pulsating round the world. They were men of brains and brawn and nerve, who faltered at no undertaking but left the imprint of their individuality and independence in the Constitution and the laws you have handed down to us as an inheritance.

You who laid deep and strong the foundations of our State for future greatness did well to mould into life your keen regard for the individual rights of man. The blighting influence of sumptuary laws and class legislation have never laid their palsied hand upon the material development of our State, or fanned into life the smouldering flames of anarchy or rebellion. Here capital has found a safe and sure investment, and honest labor its reward. We feel justly proud of the record of our State, whether in peace or war, of our soldiers and our generals, of our statesmen and our orators, but above all, of the brain and brawn of our people that has developed our agricultural resources, our mines and our industrial interests, until in many respects the name of Iowa leads all the rest. The busy hum of their contented industry allays our fears and leads us on to greater activity, creating conditions whereby it is possible for millions to live in comfort and hope, where thousands dwelt in poverty and despair.

When we look for the source from whence came these ideals and these aspirations, we must not be unmindful of those women who so nobly did their part during the pioneer days in the West.

Gentlemen, permit me to say that I know of no way in which I can better express my regard for you today than by departing from the time-honored custom and paying a passing tribute to those women who were your guiding star and led you on to higher and nobler deeds—to those wives who shared in your sorrows and rejoiced in your triumphs—to those mothers who pillowed on their bosoms so noble a race of men I have sometimes found myself thinking and believing that those good old pioneer women were the best mothers the sun ever shone upon. It is the mother's influence that lingers last and longest in our hearts and comes to us o'er and o'er in memory's dream; that "knits up the raveled sleeve of care" and builds God's noblest temple here on earth—the home.

"The mothers of our Western land,
Stout-hearted dames were they,
With nerve to wield the battle brand
And join the border fray.
In all our rough land there were no braver,
In those days of blood and strife,
Aye, ready for severest toil,
Aye, free to peril life."

"The mothers of our Western land,
On Iowa's free soil,
How shared they with each dauntless band
War's tempest and life's toil.
They shrank not from the foeman,
They quailed not in the strife,
They cheered their husbands through the day
And soothed them through the night."

"The mothers of our Western land,
Their bosoms pillowed men,
And proud were they by such to stand
In hammock, fort or glen
To load the sure old rifle,
And mould the leaden ball,
And watch the fighting husband's place
And fill it should he fall."

"The mothers of our Western land,
Such were their daily deeds,
Their monument—where does it stand?
Their epitaph—who reads?
No nobler dames had Sparta,
No nobler matrons Rome,
But in our hearts we'll cherish them
Since God has called them home."