

"A few years ago," said Colonel Kane, "ascending the Upper Mississippi, in the autumn, when its waters were low, I was compelled to travel by land past the region of the Rapids. My road lay through the Half-breed Tract, a fine section of Iowa, which the unsettled state of its land titles had appropriated as a sanctuary for coiners, horse thieves, and other outlaws. I had left my steamer at Keokuk, at the foot of the Lower Fall, to hire a carriage, and to contend for some fragments of a dirty meal with the swarming flies, the only scavengers of the locality.

"From this place to where the deep water of the river returns, my eye wearied to see everywhere sordid, vagabond, and idle settlers, and a country marred, without being improved, by their careless hands. I was descending the last hillside upon my journey, when a landscape in delightful contrast broke upon my view. Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun; its bright new dwellings, set in cool green gardens, ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond it, in the background, there rolled off a fair country, chequered by the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise, and educated wealth everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty. It was a natural impulse to visit this inviting region. I procured a skiff, and rowing across the river, landed at the chief wharf of the city. No one met me there. I looked, and saw no one. I could hear no one move, though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz, and the water-

ripples break against the shallow of the beach. I walked through the solitary street. The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it, for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways; rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps.

"Yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, rope-walks and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle; the carpenter had gone from his workbench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casing. Fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and the fresh chopped light-wood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith's shop was cold; but his coal heap and lading pool, and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone off for a holiday. No work-people anywhere looked to know my errand.

"If I went into the gardens, clinking the wicket-latch loudly after me, to pull the marigolds, heartsease, and lady-slippers, and draw a drink with the water-sodden well-bucket and its noisy chain; or, knocking off with my stick the tall, heavy-headed dahlias and sunflowers, hunted over the beds for cucumbers and love-apples—no one called out to me from any opened window, or dog sprang forward to bark an alarm.

"I could have supposed the people hidden in the houses, but the doors were unfastened; and when at last I timidly entered them, I found dead ashes white upon the hearths, and had to tread a tip-toe, as if walking down the aisle of a country church, to avoid rousing irreverent echoes from the naked floors. On the outskirts of the town was the city graveyard; but there was no record of plague there, nor did it in anywise differ much from other Protestant American