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**SCENE IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF IOWA.**  
**BY ELIPHALET PRICE.**  
**The Conquest of Sodom.**

Situated near the northern boundary of the county of Clayton, and within a mile of the village of Monona, may still be seen the ruins of the once populous and flourishing village of Sodom, whose foundation was inaugurated in the year of our Lord that witnessed the locating of the Indian agency upon the head waters of Turkey river—in 1810. Its contiguousness to the Indian lands, at that time, contributed not a little to the origin of a variety of opinions as to the future object and intent of the inhabitants. The more sagacious portion of the community, skilled in foretelling future events, declared that Sodom was designed as an extensive manufacturing town, which prophetic declaration was always accompanied with a careless jingling of whatever coin the pocket might contain; others held reverently to the position that it was to be the grand rallying point from which the ascending followers of Miller were to start upon their aerial flight to that unlocated bourn beyond the starry firmament; while the more prudent and cautious would shake their heads knowingly, and whisper that Sodom was to be no better than it should be. Notwithstanding the variety of opinions expressed, and the gossiping scandal circulated against the little village that might have perpetuated the name of its distinguished ancestor, still its march was onward. "The clink of hammers," and the resounding of the frontier axe, seemed to announce its progressive march, as house after house loomed up with log-cabin majesty, dignifying and expanding the area of the village. Besides, it was currently rumored that a temperance society was to be started in Sodom, under the fostering care of 'Squire Wanzer, while the fact still lives within the memory of many of our oldest and most respectable citizens, that the venerable and indulgent parson located upon our northern circuit, while exhorting a drowsy congregation at "Poverty Point," of a summer's afternoon, to awaken to a knowledge of the truth, closed his ineffectual efforts with the announcement that there would be preaching at Sodom on next Sabbath evening at early candle light. Many were the controversies between the inhabitants of Sodom and Monona, as to the fact of this announcement having been made; the latter always contending, with much warmth and zeal, that the story had its origin at Sodom, and was designed to give character to the place, and thereby injure its rival, whose pride it was to boast that they had already realized the benefits of two prayer meetings and a promise of a regular sermon. Notwithstanding the records of the town clerk of Sodom are silent upon the subject, still it was generally conceded, beyond the immediate vicinity of its rival, that Sodom had some good traits of character—and what town is there that has not some bad ones? No village in the county contributed so largely to the public coffers; its steady and increasing demand for grocery licenses almost extricated the county from its public indebtedness, when an evil hour approached, casting a gloom over the inhabitants of the little village, and threatening it with a fate as destructive as that which in distant years, and in other climes, had swept over the festive homes and gorgeous palaces of its ancient namesake.

The Indian agent upon Turkey river had dreamed that Sodom, with all its inhabitants, was occupying a portion 'of the Indian lands. O dreadful! monstrous dream! ungenerous offspring of the slumbering mind! No one believed that such a dream could have been matured upon the

couch of repose without the aid of some evil disposed person; and although the inhabitants living in the rival town of Monona were never directly charged with whispering in the slumbering ear of Indian authority, still it was a remarkable circumstance, that whenever after, the name of Sodom was mentioned in the sermons of the good parson of Monona, the congregation would rise to their feet, close up one eye, and, after bringing the end of the thumb in contact with the extremes" part of the nose, they would proceed to give utterance to a low whistle, accompanying the same with a slight agitation of the little finger attached to the uplifted hand.

The announcement of this dreadful dream to the inhabitants of Sodom, by the Indian agent, was accompanied with a demand to evacuate the town; but man naturally abandons with reluctance a lucrative business, and is at 'all times extremely tenacious of those castle rights secured to him by the sheltering roof of his own domicile. Accordingly, a positive refusal to comply with the demand was ordered to be entered upon the records of the town clerk. Thus matters stood until time had rolled around the month of August, which beheld Sodom still enthroned upon its high, rolling prairie, enjoying a commanding view of the surrounding country. It was early morn; not a breath of air was stirring; the golden streaks that skirted the eastern horizon announced the coming of the sultry orb of day; already the smoke had begun to rise in lofty columns from the little stick chimneys that peeped modestly over the tops of the village habitations; while the hum of life had begun to manifest itself by the sounding of the woodman's axe throughout the village, preparing fuel for the morning meal. Here and there might be seen an Indian reposing in undisturbed slumber upon the green carpet of the prairie, fondly embracing in his arms the endearing likeness of the illustrious Washington, as delineated upon the glass surface of an empty flask. The pearly dew-drops that lay upon the flowers and blades of grass, touched with the early rays of the rising sun, glittered and sparkled around him, leaving the dark gem of the forest reposing in silent grandeur amid the sparkling emeralds of the prairie.

Such was the morning appearance of Sodom, when the distant notes of a bugle swept over the yet slumbering town, arousing the inhabitants into the street to gaze upon the approach of a company of dragoons from Fort Atkinson, who were descending one of the distant hills of the prairie, headed by the threatening and dreaming agent of the Winnebago Indians.

The alarm was spread throughout the village. What was to be done ~ Not a gun in town, with the exception of an old musket, the stock of which had been lost at the battle of the Bad Axe, while the lock had long been rusting in the smith shop of Charlie Guy, at Monona, who, it was whispered, had been prevailed upon by the inhabitants of that place not to repair the ticklish thing.

"If so be we could bring them to a halt," said 'Squire Wanzer, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets up to his elbows, and straightening himself up with an air of official dignity, "I would speak to them as the mayor of this town, if so be they would give me a hearing."

"Is it bring them to a halt ye's want, 'Squire? Faith, d'yer be laving that to me," said Looney Orim. Now, Mr. Orim was not only a native of the Emerald Isle, but the owner of a yoke of cattle, a truck cart, and a whisky barrel, which enabled him to supply the inhabitants of Sodom, for purposes of ablution, the refreshing beverage that gushed from the far-famed prairie spring. Besides, Looney had distinguished himself upon the field of Waterloo, as an artilleryman, as well as in several other European battles, the names of which he had forgotten. The hopes of the inhabitants of Sodom were at once concentrated upon the military genius of Looney, who had already mounted the old musket alluded to, upon his truck, and, with a fire-brand in one hand,

was sallying forth to meet the enemy, who advanced at a smart trot until within a few yards of the battery of Mr. Orim, who stood swinging his fire-brand in the air, and occasionally blowing it to keep it alive.

"Will ye's be stopping there a bit, it ye please," he exclaimed; "and the civil take the foremost if ever a peg farther he shows his ugly face. D 'ye's mind Uncle Sam. there, b'ys," pointing to his musket barrel, "loaded up to his face with powther and blue balls, bad luck to ye's all whin he spakes; an' it's the 'Squere that 'll be down in a gif an' teach ye's teether manners than to be killing decent people in time of peace."

Now, Lieutenant Jenkins, who had the fitting command of the dragoons, was a humane as well as a sagacious officer—not that he was afraid, for well he knew that a charge from his dragoons would be attended with the spiking of Looney's gun, and consequent surrender of Sodom; but then there stood Looney, waving his fire-brand over the touch-hole, and should he apply it to the priming, he knew that the contents of the old musket would sweep down many of his men, while the humble waterman was but a poor offering to sacrifice upon the tombs of his departed sons of Mars. Accordingly, the Lieutenant, considering prudence the better part of valor, ordered a halt.

In the meantime, a deputation had arrived from the village with a long, written protest, declaring, among other things, "that Sodom was not upon the Indian land, and that they had yet to learn that the Indian agent was lineally descended from the wife of Cesar."

The Lieutenant was not to be thrown off his guard by this thrust of raillery, but promptly ordered the line to be run that separated the Indian lands from the public domain. This was speedily accomplished, when lo! it was discovered that only one solitary habitation of Sodom stood daringly out upon the Indian land. No sooner was it known, than the bugle sounded for the troops to mount. Looney attempted to shift his position by a flank movement, so as to protect the trespassing habitation of his friend, Taffey Jones; but the keen military eye of the Lieutenant at once detected the design of the enemy, and instantly ordered a charge. In a moment the tramping of the heavy dragoon horse resounded through the halls of Mr. Jones's castle, surrounding it, and summoning him to surrender; but Hr. Jones, like his friend Looney, had seen much military service in his day, particularly of that kind which had drawn largely upon his diplomatic genius and skill. Accordingly, when the fortunes of war seemed to warrant the conducting of an advantageous surrender, securing the door of his domicile, and thrusting his bead through the window sash, from which a solitary light had disappeared, he proposed to capitulate upon terms that secured to himself his liberty and moveable property. To this proposition the Lieutenant, with that magnanimity that has ever characterized the American soldier towards a fallen foe, at once conceded, when Mr. Jones proceeded to roll out his stock in trade.

In the meantime Looney had arrived, and succeeded in planting his battery in the rear of the enemy. "Arrah, Taffey, dear," said he, "do ye's be givin' it to the spalpeens in front, an' it's meself that'll be cutting off their rebate," when bang went Mr. Orim's battery—the balls whistling in the air far above the heads of the dragoons, while the gun had leaped from its trappings with a retrograde movement, wounding and alarming the oxen, who dashed away into the prairie, with Mr. Orim closing gradually upon them. Mr. Jones having, in due time, removed his goods from the forbidden ground, the building was committed to the flames, by order of the commanding officer, when the bugle sounded a retreat, and in a moment more the U. S. dragoons were spurring across the prairie in the direction of Fort Atkinson, flushed with the conquest of Sodom.