

SOME BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE REV. SYLVESTER COCHRANE (THE FOUNDER OF "VERMONTVILLE COLONY"), AND OF HIS WIFE; WITH PERSONAL NOTES AND REMINISCENCES. BY HIS DAUGHTER, SARAH A. COCHRANE.

My father, Sylvester Cochrane, was born in Antrim, N. H., May 8, 1796; my mother, Hannah (Symonds) Cochrane, in Hancock, an adjoining town, Feb. 12, 1796. Both came from revolutionary stock, the paternal grandfather of each having served in the war, the one (Cochrane) as an officer and witness of the surrender of Burgoyne, the other (Symonds) as a private. Both belonged to large families and were reared on farms which, until quite recent years, have been occupied by direct descendants of their ancestral owners.

Whatever of education they acquired in early life was through ambition and persistent effort which met with little or no encouragement at home beyond bare toleration or indifferent assent. After having acquired competent learning (probably *before*) each taught school between their set terms of study. It was in my father's small country school that he first met my mother and their betrothal soon followed. Then came the college course at Dartmouth (Sophomore-Senior, 1820-23) which, as my father had already chosen the ministry as his profession, was seasoned with theological study under the direction of Rev. John M. Whiton of Antrim, a man of exalted character and rare scholarship, and to whose complete guidance my father submitted himself in his studies in theology after having completed his college requirements, and with whom he enjoyed occasional friendly and advisory correspondence through life. In the meanwhile, my mother was soberly and conscientiously preparing herself for her prospective station in life, their marriage taking place in 1824.

Their first conjugal home was established in rooms belonging to the old Cochrane homestead in which my father was born and where, on Aug. 6, 1825, his son, Lyman Cochrane, was born. Not long after his marriage he was licensed to preach, his ministerial labors for some time being scattered here and there as "pulpit supply." Rupert, Vt., was, for several months, his last station before he was "called" to the Congregational church of East Poulney, Vt., where, in 1827, or 8, he was fully ordained and installed as pastor. The Poulney pastorate, of about ten years, the first and longest during his entire ministry was a successful and a happy one. One is disposed to speculate upon "what might have been" in store for his family, if his ambition had not been diverted, in so large a degree, from his early consecration to the service of his chosen profession, for which, unquestionably, he had eminent qualifications. But when, after a few years, the prevailing "western fever" grew hot in his veins, and the spectre of change and adventure beckoned and entreated him to "hitch his wagon to the star" of westward emigration, the germ of discontent was planted and his aspirations were changed to what he devoutly flattered himself

would be a noble mission, a broader, grander field of service for the Master. The project of choosing and planting a colony of exemplary Vermonters in the far western "land of promise" became very alluring to him and was undertaken with boundless enthusiasm and superb faith.

My mother, in her innermost soul, was averse to the move. At the time, it seemed to her a hopeless isolation from much that was very dear to her. She was satisfied as she was, and dreaded the unknown. But acquiescence was an article in her wifely creed and she moved quietly along with her husband in making necessary preparations for the pilgrimage to the new home in the west. The date of the final "breaking up" was delayed by the sickness and death of her baby boy, and this, together with the recent death of her mother, and the parting from many beloved parish friends made the day of departure a soul harrowing event. This was past mid-summer.

Young travellers in these days of fine steam cars, automobiles, and "improved roads" cannot conceive the discomforts, privations and actual suffering which, 50 or 75 years ago, attended a journey "overland" by horses and wagon. Our wagon could carry only the barest necessities for prolonged travel through a country where we could not depend upon frequent replenishment. The route was through Canada, from Lewiston re-entering the U. S. at Detroit. (The present boom in prices of real estate here, has reminded me of an accredited story of how my father, while halting here in Detroit came near investing a few of his spare dollars in some "town lots" in the vicinity of our present Grand Circus Park. It is thrilling to contemplate the possibilities which *might* have grown out of such an act.)

It goes almost without saying that the roads on the route were simply appalling and "break downs" and consequent delays were frequent. For days, we walked more miles than we rode, my mother carrying me on her hip with one arm while with a long pole in the other hand, she tested the depth of the mud before each step. My father was often obliged to lead his team over "corduroy" roads where the logs floated and rolled in liquid mud. The poor horses frightened by the unstable footing, plunged and floundered, and at times sank one or more legs between the loose logs, their extrication proving to be a serious problem, if no fence rail or other means of leverage was at hand. We bipeds could sometimes leap the gaps or make more or less of a circuit through the adjacent field or forest.

Sometimes a "break-down" occurred in the heart of a forest and if the resources of the wagon could not furnish temporary repair, my father walked back, or forth, or rode one of the horses to the nearest point of relief. Was it strange that my poor mother, never infatuated with the scheme of emigration, and whose heart was sore under her recent bereavement of her mother and her baby boy, was it strange that in sheer weariness her bravery gave out, and dropping on a stone or log by the wayside, she would find relief in tears and sobs, while we children would pity, though we (especially I, so young) could not understand.