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A marked characteristic of the pioneers was conservatism, industry, frugality, integrity, and helpfulness. They came hither to make and build homes. A religious element also largely permeated the different settlements, which induced early movement to establish the church and school. A typical representative of this element was Solomon Bales. He was born in Guilford County, North Carolina, February Twenty-eighth, 1807. His father, Dilman Bales, whose sister married Aaron Burr, was a Virginian, of Welsh and English descent. He was a soldier in the War of 1812, and so noted as a sharpshooter as to gain the soubriquet of "Sure Shot Dill." Solomon's mother was of Scotch-Irish parentage.

While the father was away in the army, Solomon, then five years old, with his mother, in the blockhouse, could hear the roaring of the cannon. He often told his children how his mother wept, and exclaimed: "O, that wicked war!" she being a Quakeress. Solomon amused himself carrying water for the wives of the officers, and in that way earned his first shilling.

Soon after the close of the war, Solomon and his mother, in a small wagon, his father walking with gun in hand, crossed the Cumberland Mountains to Kentucky, where they remained for a short time, and then removed to Tippecanoe County, Indiana. There the father located a large tract of land, and Solomon passed his boyhood days in helping to improve it. On reaching his majority, he engaged in farming and raising, buying and selling livestock. He was very successful, and accumulated considerable wealth. He built the first large brick house west of La Fayette, in 1834, also two large barns, and had one of the finest homes in the county.

In 1838-1839, he became surety on bonds for some of his business

friends, who failed to meet their obligations, and he was obliged to make good their failure, which took nearly all his property, with nothing to show for it.

He came to Polk County in February, 1846, and purchased a claim for several hundred acres of land in what was known as the Saylor Settlement. The county had not then been surveyed, and there was no title to land except that of a claim-holder, which was held inviolable by the squatters and early settlers. A person who had pre-empted a claim in good faith, could sell his interest and claim rights therein for what he could get. Solomon's claim lay along the east side of Des Moines River, west of Saylor Grove. It was densely covered with timber, consisting of Walnut, Hickory, Black Cherry, Wild Locust, Cottonwood, Linn, and several kinds of Oak. There were about two hundred Rock Maple trees, from which many barrels of sugar and syrup were made.

The first work done after his arrival was to cut away trees, dig out the stumps and brush, roll up the logs and brush, and burn them over a space sufficient to put a cabin, surrounded with a yard and garden, near an ever-flowing spring of sparkling water, saving enough Linn and Cottonwood trees from which to cut the clapboards and puncheon floor for the unhewed log cabin, 10 x 12 feet, with two six-light windows, and one door. The garden was early planted for Summer vegetables.

After getting his oldest daughter, Susannah, and her husband, Eli. Keeler, comfortably settled in that cozy cottage, he returned to Indiana, and, gathering together what was left of his once valuable holdings, in September, with a family of fourteen, started for his new Western home. The incidents of the journey are related under the title, "The Saylor's," Volume II, page Two Hundred and Fifty-five.

Soon after his arrival, Solomon built a large, comfortable cabin and made extensive improvement. He also built the first saw mill in the county, on Des Moines River, and furnished lumber for many of the first frame buildings at The Fort.

One day, he came to the shop of Conrad D. Reinking, the first cabinet maker in Des Moines, and said to him: "If thee will make a table and cupboard from Cherry lumber for my daughter, I will give thee what boards thee wants for thy work." The work was done, and the gift was duly appreciated by the daughter.

Solomon had been strictly taught the religion of the Quakers, and during his early life attended regularly meetings of the congregation on First Day, and often the Fourth Day of each week. He was all his life a devoted Christian man. There being but few Quakers in his vicinity, and no organized Society of Friends, he took great interest in promoting churches and schools of all denominations. His generous, kindly nature embraced all human kind. His isolation from people of his faith was a sore grievance to him, and he frequently went to Oskaloosa to attend the Yearly Meeting of the church.

In 1869, he decided to dispose of his holding and go to Kansas, where land was cheaper, and settle his younger children. After locating and helping to improve three farms there, in 1886, he purchased a fine home in Lawrence, and there passed the remainder of his days in ease, comfort and enjoyment of the privileges of his church, until 1887, when he was laid to rest in the Friends' Cemetery.

Politically, he was a Henry Clay Whig until the Republican party was organized, when he joined that, but he took little part in partisan politics, and never held a public office.

Socially, he was of genial, generous, kindly temperament. He was a Friend in all that term implies, and for which he paid a costly price, in one instance, over forty thousand dollars.

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