

LII. OLD TIME DOCTORS.

The doctors who came with the pioneers about the time of the organization of the county, and for a few years thereafter, poorly equipped as they were with medical supplies, had all they could do to attend to the calls that were made upon them for assistance. In 1838 five persons were engaged in the practice of medicine in Plymouth. These were Drs. Peter Crum, Lyman Griffin, Alvord, Jones and Jeroloman. The latter, however, who had been sent out from Logansport as doctor to the Indians, remained but a short time, as the Indians were all driven away in the fall of 1838,

and, as he was in the employ of the government, when they left his occupation was gone and he returned home. Dr. Griffin was a carpenter by trade, but had studied medicine and made himself useful in the early days both in building houses and curing the sick. Dr. Crum came in 1836, and had been practicing for some time prior to the date above named. During this time he had immortalized himself by the discovery of a "pill" that took his name and was warranted to kill or cure in twenty-four hours.

The summer and fall of 1838 will long be remembered by those still living as the first sickly season after the settlement of the county, and these doctors, poor and inexperienced as they were in the practice of medicine, had more than they could properly attend to. The spring of that year was very wet, cold and backward. About the first of June, when the marshes were filled with water, the weather became dry and oppressively hot. The swamps and marshes began to dry up, and the malaria that arose there from poisoned the air, and the whole population felt its effects more or less. Cases of sickness began to appear about the first of July, and the number of these increased as the season advanced. Entire families were prostrated. Not more than one person out of fifty was perfectly well, and many suffered for want of proper attention. The most common disease was fever and ague, but other and more violent forms of fever and malarial diseases were also prevalent. Almost everybody had the ague and they would chill and shake for an hour or two, then a burning fever would set in, and the patient would become so thirsty that he could hardly hold enough to quench it, and the water he got to drink at that time was surface water-from dug wells not more than twelve to twenty feet deep, and as the season progressed the seepings into the wells became less and less, and what little water there was to be had was full of malaria and only made matters worse.

The disease was a peculiar one. It was not considered fatal in any stage of it. It affected different people in different ways. Some would have it every day; some every other day; others every three days, every seven days, and so on. There was little quinine to be had at that time, and it was considered the only sure enough remedy then known that would kill it. This year the ague lasted until frost came and the weather became cool. There was typhoid fever mixed with the ague, and several deaths occurred from it, among whom were some of the prominent business men of Plymouth Oliver Rose, Julius Hutchinson, E. B. Hobson, Hugh Galbraith, Simeon Taylor, Jacob Shoemaker and several others. This sickness seriously retarded the growth of the town and county for many years, people being fearful that it would be an annual occurrence. Many already here became discouraged and left for other parts as soon as their health and circumstances would permit.

The Sickly Season of 1850.

The year 1850 takes its place in the history of the county as being "the sickly season." More deaths occurred within that year than during any year before or since that time on the basis of population. From the detailed census report made by George Pomeroy for that year we take a footnote made by him, as follows: "This year has been remarkable for the unusual number of deaths. A very fatal disease known here as the typhoid

fever has prevailed to an alarming extent in the center of the county, and spread from the county seat (Plymouth) in all directions, reaching some- times to the extreme parts of the county, although the disease was mostly confined within a few miles of Plymouth. The flux and scarlet fever have been prevalent mostly in the northeast parts of the county." There were 133 deaths during that year, and taking into consideration that there were not over 600 population in Plymouth, and that most of the deaths were from that place, it will be seen that the death rate was the largest in the history of the county up to the present time.

At that time the whole country was covered over to a greater or less extent with swamps and marshes and standing ponds, and when the dry season came round and evaporation took place the air was filled with the germs of malarial diseases; in addition to this, as the wells were filled with surface water and there was no pure water to drink or cook with, it is a wonder that the entire population was not swept away by death. The drainage of the wet lands and the discovery of driven wells, and thus the procuring of pure water, drove all malarial diseases out of the county, and for more than a quarter of a century only, in very rare instances has there been known such a thing as typhoid, or scarlet fever, ague, flux or malarial diseases of any kind. The Smallpox. In the spring and summer of 1858 Plymouth was afflicted with a severe siege of the smallpox. It was brought here by a young doctor who had been taking lectures at a medical college. On his way home he stopped at a farmhouse where there was a case of smallpox. A red flag was hung outside to indicate danger, but he said he was a physician and wished to see a genuine case of smallpox, and so he was permitted to enter the house. He returned home and without changing his clothes took his young child in his arms, and in due time it was taken sick. A neighboring woman Mrs., Elizabeth McDonald, wife of Thomas McDonald called to see it, as she had had much experience with sick children, and held it in her arms for a considerable time. In the course of a short time she was taken sick. Several doctors were called and they could not agree as to what the cause of her sickness was, some saying it was smallpox and others saying it was not. Physicians from LaPorte were sent for and they pronounced it smallpox, and later it became so general there was no doubt about it being the genuine smallpox. Mrs. McDonald died on the thirteenth of May, 1858, being the first victim to be stricken down with that dreadful disease. During the prevalence of the disease there were over forty cases and many deaths. The town was quarantined for over three months, and during that time business of all kinds was practically suspended.

The Principal Physicians that came to Plymouth after the old doctors above named were Drs. Harlow Hard, J. W. Bennett, Nehemiah Sherman, Rufus Brown, Samuel Higginbotham, Theodore A. Lemon, Dr. White, T. A. Borton, J. E. Brooke, J. J. Vinall and Thomas Logan, the latter settling in the Wolf creek neighborhood in 1836, and many others whose names cannot now be recalled. Since their time many physicians have settled here who failed to secure

And well he knew all geologic stones ;
 He knew how blood coursed swiftly through the veins,
 He knew the cause of summer drought and rains;
 He cured his patients of each threatening ill,
 And matched the parson in polemic skill ;
 In politics, philosophy and art,
 He never failed to take a ready part.
 The master of the village school,
 his power In argument acknowledged; and so, hour
 By hour, they sat in hot dispute; the crowd,
 Meanwhile, each disputant applauded loud.
 But these were byplays in the doctor's life,
 With other conflicts he was daily rife ;
 For fell disease and death rode on the air,
 And found their ready victims everywhere.
 Against these foes, there was no known defense
 Except the Doctor's wise omnipotence.
 And so, what 'er his patients might befall,
 He ready stood to answer every call.
 On ambling horse he rode the country o 'er,
 And carried hope and help from door to door.
 Wher 'er he went, to gentle babe or sire,
 Pain fled away, and fever cooled its fire.
 Of modern healing art he little knew,
 His work was plain, and what he had to do His trusting patients quietly endured,
 Though oft uncertain if he killed or cured. His lancet was his faithful right hand man ;
 For, at its touch, the crimson current ran,
 Till blood, like water, flowed on every side,
 And every cabin was in crimson dyed.

J{is massive saddle bags with drugs o 'er ran ;
 But calomel and jalap led the van.
 His dose the palate did not always please ;
 His pills were large, and bitter were his teas ;
 His drastic mixtures were no idle play,
 And his emetics brooked no long delay.
 In short, his victims, like some luckless craft,
 Were driven amain and swept afore and aft.
 And if at last they died, there was no one
 Dared say, They died from having nothing done.
 He promptly, bravely, took his part and place;
 And every station did his genius grace. Heroic man!
 He did his duty well ;
 He fought for others till at last he fell.
 Above his grave we need no column raise,
 He lives immortal in our love and praise!