

II

A PIONEER POET

THE father of Nathan Sites was a genius. He was homely in wit and naïve in manner, eminently practical and with a knack of succeeding. He was also, in his own quaint way, a poet. His poetry was of the accidental quality, without malice prepense. In his journal he would often begin recording his reflections in prose, then, as the thought warmed his heart, the words would drop into rhyme. Bear with him a moment while, at three score years and ten, he recounts the story of his life's highest joy and deepest loss:

*On the twenty-Eighth day of February,
In the year of our Lord Seventeen hundred
Ninety-nine, a lovely Child was Born.
She was so innocent, so fair, so sweet,
And as in age she grew,
She grew in favor with all she knew,
In Eighteen Hundred and Eighteen,
She was by the Spirit born again,
In eighteen-hundred and twenty seven,
To Me Her Sweet right hand and heart were given,
In Eighteen Hundred and Seventy,
It pleased the Lord to take Her from Me.*

*Half of Myself, the Lord has taken,
And yet I feel I am not forsaken,*