

LETTER FROM E. H. COALE.

For the YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW :

While on a visit to relatives in Webster City, Iowa, I embraced the opportunity (while within a reasonable distance) of attending Prairie Grove Quarterly Meeting, held, this time of year, near Marietta, a little village nearly sixty miles from this place, and formerly the county seat of Marshall County, but Marshalltown gaining, in some way, that distinction some years ago, Marietta dwindled until now a few straggling houses are all that is left to claim the name. On the afternoon of the first of this month my son and his wife and myself took the cars for this little place, and were met at the depot by a friend, in his capacious "bobsled," in which, seated on the straw, and covered with ample wraps, we paid no heed to the rapidly falling snow, and were soon at our destination. When seated around their brightly burning coal fires, and partaking of their plentiful repast, it mattered little to us what was the state of the weather outside. Next morning, still snowing, we went to the Meeting, which was very small, owing to sickness and stormy weather, and the death, the previous afternoon, of an elderly woman living near, held in high respect by all who knew her. A few visitors were present, adding encouragement to the few members assembled.

The Meeting on First-day was some larger, the snow having ceased falling, leaving a covering of six or eight inches on the ground, and, although cold, no wind was blowing, and people were more willing to venture out. Our friends, B. F. Nichols and wife, Lauretta, were there this day, a slight indisposition on his part, the day before, rendering it imprudent to venture so far in the face of such a snow storm, living miles distant. The F. D. S. Quarterly conference convened after meeting, and lunch was provided there, giving all who wished, the opportunity of attending the funeral of the person

whose death was noted. (She was not a Friend.)

Second-day morning I went to State Center (my children returning to their home in Webster City), where B. F. N. and family reside, with whom I passed a very pleasant day. His aged mother, living near by, with her daughter, is prevented by age and failing health from attending meeting at such a distance, but she delights in the company of her friends.

The air of culture and refinement manifest in these little towns and country neighborhoods, together with the general information and intelligence so prevalent, showed clearly that their daily papers, the *Intelligencer* and *Journal*, 'THE YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW', *Union Signal*, and such magazines as *The Arena*, *Cosmopolitan*, *The Outlook*, *The Century*, *Harper's*, *Scattered Seeds*, etc., and books by standard authors, were not on their tables for show only, but indicated the intention of their possessors to keep abreast of the times in which they live, despite the assertion which appeared in a paper prepared for the Library Congress held in Chicago in sixth month last, that the residents of country towns and neighborhoods were ignorant and destitute of literature, save, perhaps, "an agricultural paper, and the school-master's Fourth of July oration," and were fit subjects for the "quack and his nostrums," and whose "vision was bound by their own country horizon."

Some of the residents at Marietta have been living there thirty years and more, and some of their early experiences are worth listening to, illustrating a force and nobility of character that enabled them to persevere through difficulties and privations, and make for themselves a home, under circumstances of great discouragement frequently; and to establish and continue a Meeting amid surroundings equal in difficulty, in some cases, to those of some of our predecessors, whose example is so often held up to us of later generations, as worthy of emulation,