

Having determined to settle at Fox Lake, Mr. Smith "bethought him of the girl he left behind," who had, years before, won his heart in Michigan. She was a clergyman's daughter, thoroughly accomplished. Having entered into the bonds of matrimony with the choice of his youth, Mr. Smith set at work in good earnest in building up a business for his store at Fox Lake. In this he was, if possible, more successful than in any previous effort. His store soon became the most popular resort for general supplies, by the people in the county, for many miles surrounding. And in this prosperity his peculiar, straightforward, upright manner of doing business contributed much. The whole people, with one consent, gave him their confidence and support; and the measure of his success was limited only by the measure of his ambition.

In these pioneer days, 1850-51, there was no church at Fox Lake. The little congregation gathered at the schoolhouse; Mr. Smith occasionally kindling the fires, and supplying candles from his store. In 1852 he commenced a movement for the building of a church. Subscriptions were circulated, contracts let, money advanced, and the building pushed to completion. This little church, erected largely through the efforts and by the means advanced by Mr. Smith, was opened to all denominations, as was also Mr. Smith's house, which soon became the home of all wayfaring bishops and preachers. We might, with propriety, notice in this connection, that while Mr. Smith has always been foremost in the community in which he has lived, as, also, in the whole State, in works of education and benevolence and Christianity, he is wholly unsectarian, giving his support alike freely to promote every good word and work.

Through the efforts of Mr. Smith and others, an academy was started in Fox Lake in 1853; but this was soon after appropriately incorporated into the public school. But he was not content with public schools, however, but, soon after, set himself actively at work, organizing a young ladies' seminary at that place. Nor was he long in accomplishing the desired result. The institution was opened in 1855, and has grown to be an efficient school. It is now the only exclusive ladies' seminary in the State, outside of Milwaukee. This institution of learning may be looked

upon as the first of a long list of successful efforts for the educational growth of Wisconsin, which Mr. Smith has put forth, with other gentlemen; and it was a good effort. It would not be an easy matter to describe the good results that have grown out of this seminary in the way of preparing young ladies for the duties of mothers and wives. Mr. Smith was also active in establishing a lyceum or debating-club at Fox Lake,—an institution which he has always regarded with favor, as calculated to give employment to the minds of young men, influence their habits for good, wean them from vice, and lift them into a higher and purer atmosphere of thought and ambition.

The bank of Fox Lake was also a pioneer institution, and was one of the very few in the State that weathered all financial storms, and retained the confidence of the people. Mr. Smith was president of this bank from 1859 to 1865, when he was called to a larger field. Unlike most men who have been elected to numerous important public offices, Mr. Smith's political and commercial experiences go hand in hand. His political life begins with the organization of the State government of Wisconsin. He was elected to the assembly almost the first year he settled in Fox Lake, and has served the State in some important trust ever since, and always with singular ability and unimpeachable honesty. His first speech in the State legislature was made on the subject of capital punishment. His second speech was in favor of submitting the "Bank Question" to the people. In these efforts, which were worthy the great interests involved in the debate, Mr. Smith thoroughly impressed the citizens of Wisconsin that he was no ordinary speaker. His style is pleasing, his power of reason strong and clear, and his command of language and illustration forcible.

In 1851 Mr. Smith was nominated to the same position by acclamation, but declined to be a candidate. The failure of the wheat-crop that year, and the consequent danger to business, and the interests of his creditors, decided him to stand at the post of duty and danger, instead of yielding to the allurements of office.

In 1854 he took part in the organization, in Wisconsin, of the Republican party. In 1857 he was elected to the State senate, and assigned to