

JOSEPH REDMAN WHO HAS WORKED LONG FOR OMAHA

Story of a Man Who Started Life on the Towpath of a Canal, but Came West in Time to Help Build a Great Commonwealth and Develop Its Metropolis from the Wilderness

JOSEPH REDMAN, pioneer of Omaha and active for fifty years in the city's upbuilding, began life, like President Garfield, on the tow-path of a canal, where he worked twelve hours a day for \$5 a month. But the ambition which is born of a pious, frugal, temperate life, urged him to something better, and before he had reached his majority he had penetrated in the van of civilization as far west as the Mississippi river. A few years later he located at Omaha, where he has now lived for half a century. He has been the city's staunch supporter in troublous times; has always been active in politics; always a wide-awake and useful citizen.

A tailor in a small town during the early part of the last century, with eight children to support, found the struggle for life a hard one. Such was the position of the father of Mr. Redman, when, on December 14, 1829, the latter was born in Hollidaysburg, Blair county, Pennsylvania. The children were early trained to put their shoulders to the wheel, and at the age of 13 years the young man went to work on the canal, which ran through the village. Twelve hours a day in all kinds of weather he followed the horses along the tow-path, receiving \$8 a month, which was turned into the family treasury. After two years on the canal he went to work on a farm.

Early Learns to Be Frugal

He had learned well the wholesome lessons that poverty teaches, and at the age of 20 years had saved out of his meager wages, and beside what he turned dutifully over to his parents, the sum of \$20. With this as capital he started out to seek his fortune. He reached Pittsburg "deadhead" on the boat of which he had been an employe. From there to St. Louis the "deck passage" was \$2.50 and from St. Louis to Dubuque, Ia., the fare was \$3. He saved \$40 in gold during the summer he worked in Dubuque, and felt that he was doing famously. In the fall he went back, like the successful man he was, to astonish the natives of his old town. Having fitted himself in Pittsburg with a new suit of clothes, which boasted a set of brass buttons, he attracted considerable attention in his native town. Particularly was this true in the case of a certain young woman named Mary Jane Fair, in whose eyes the young man cared to shine more than in any others. They were married a few months later, starting life under auspicious circumstances, for they were the possessors of \$65 in cash, besides a feather bed and other furniture. They were looked upon as well-to-do people of that time and place. The husband also had a position in the shops at Hollidaysburg. There they lived for five years, and it is still a matter of which Mr. Redman is proud that they saved \$500 during that time.

They were "doing well," but the call of the west came again and they decided to cast in their fortunes with the pioneers who were settling the territory of Nebraska. One morning in the spring of 1857 the family, then consisting of the parents and two children, bade farewell to their native town from the deck of a westward-bound canal boat. Thirty days later they arrived at the present site of Omaha. They had made the entire trip on the deck of the boats, cooking their own meals, using a dry goods box for a table and sleeping under the stars as the boat drifted down the Ohio and struggled up the Missouri. As companions of their adventures, they had a dog, eight hens and a rooster. These, in the words of Mr. Redman, "ate the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table," and in return for this good menu the hens laid a bountiful supply of eggs, which formed an important item on the bill of fare of the travelers.

Settlement at Omaha

The little family left the ship at Omaha on the morning of May 12, 1857. To a man who met them and offered to store their goods, Mr. Redman responded, with the cheerfulness that always characterized him, that he "only had a wife and two children to store." This was literally true, but he could not find a place to "store" even them. Eventually he was compelled to make use of a covered "prairie schooner" wagon which he had purchased from a man on the boat coming from St. Louis. In this wagon the little family lived for several days after the father had made sure that the Indians were friendly and would not attempt to scalp them while they slept. As soon as possible he purchased a yoke of oxen in Council Bluffs, and, hitching these to the wagon, started with his family toward the northwest, where he pre-empted a claim of eighty acres near the present town of Florence. He lacked money to make the payment and borrowed \$200 from a New York man at the rate of 80 per cent annual interest. He paid the debt in two years.

The great question in those days was whether Omaha or Florence would be the city, and he decided to locate between the two, where he noted that the river offered exceptional advantages for building a bridge. He built a blacksmith shop at the present junction of Twenty-fourth street and Ames avenue. The title to the lots on which the shop was located proved to be clouded and the government canceled all claims. Then the family moved to the farm, where they lived while the financial panic of 1857 swept over the country, seemingly crushing the life out of all enterprise and growth in the new community. He recalls that at that time many had nothing to eat.

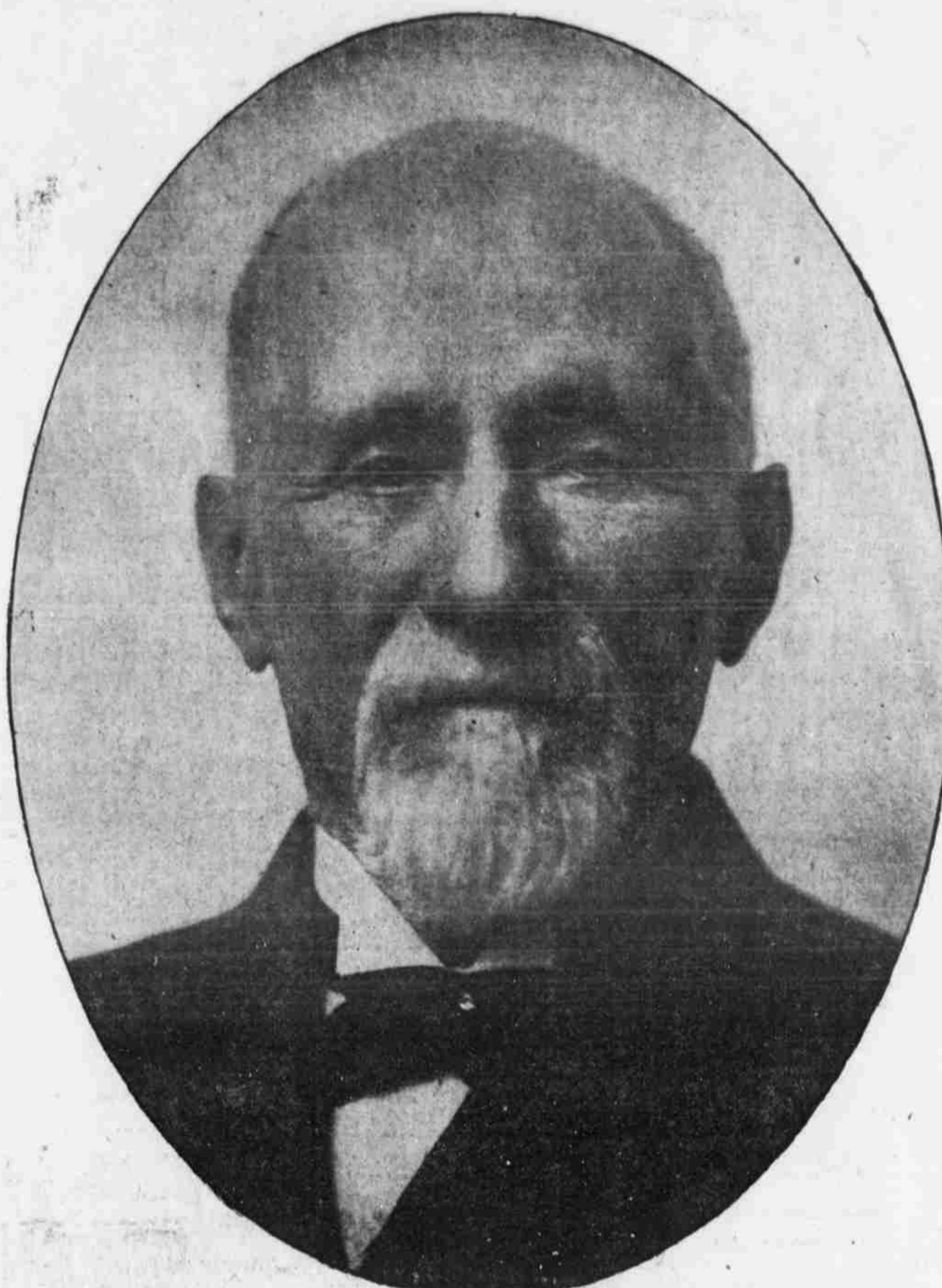
On the farm, industry and frugality brought prosperity in spite of the hard times. No hardships were too great to be endured. Mr. Redman made several trips overland, driving ox teams loaded with flour to Denver. He made his first trip in 1863, driving four yoke of oxen to a big prairie schooner laden with 3,000 pounds of flour ground in a Fort Calhoun mill from wheat which he had raised on his farm. The trip to Denver in those days took six weeks.

Road Ready for Man's Uses

"God Almighty made that road, foreseeing that we would need it to travel to Denver," says Mr. Redman. "It was a perfect, natural road along the Platte river nearly all the way and it was so level that there was hardly need for a single bridge. On the one side was plenty of good water and on the other plenty of good grass. When we unyoked the oxen in the evening they would go to the left hand and drink their fill and then graze all night on the grassy plains." Indian massacres of wagon trains were common in that day, but Mr. Redman escaped, though at one time his party came upon the smoking ruins where twenty wagons had been burned and the drivers murdered by Indians. Flour in Denver brought all the way from \$6.75 to \$14 per 100 pounds, the price depending largely on the state of mind of the savages, who intervened between the producer in the east and the consumer in the west. Payment was made in gold dust.

Mr. Redman early became known as "Uncle Joe" among his friends. This was due to his interest in everything going on and his sympathy with everybody in all circumstances. After eight years on the farm in the northern part of the city, "Uncle Joe" moved to the city to afford his children better educational advantages. He went into the general merchandise business with T. B. Ellingwood at the southwest corner of Sixteenth and Izard streets, and claims to be the first man who sold dry goods on Sixteenth street.

The city was growing rapidly and politics began to "get warm." It was evident that a great city was to grow here and questions of municipal improvements assumed large proportions. "Uncle Joe" had always been an ardent politician. He knew what he wanted and was a convincing talker among the voters and legislators on many occasions. At this critical time he was thrown into the vortex of affairs by being elected to the city council from the Sixth ward in 1878. It was the year when the great Holly waterworks question came up. The Hollies wanted to install their direct pressure system into the city, and strong interests were at work to defeat them. "Uncle Joe" took his stand with the Hollies and the strongest pressure could not move him. Threats were made, even upon his life, and more than once he went with an armed body guard from his home at Sixteenth and Izard streets to the city hall, then located at



JOSEPH REDMAN.

Sixteenth and Farnam streets. In this great struggle it happened that he had the deciding vote and he cast it for the Holly interests, in consequence of which action he was dubbed "Holly Job Joe."

Among his fellow members on that historic city council were George R. Lintner, Barney Shannon, "Denny" Cunningham and Isaac Haskell. It was a council that had big things to do. It constructed the first large sewer in the city, running from Fourteenth to Eighth street, on Jackson street. As chairman of the committee on gas, he had the first street gas lamps placed in the city, on Sixteenth street, from Farnam north. There would probably be no Sherman avenue in Omaha had it not been for "Uncle Joe." He introduced the resolution into the council to have the name of Sixteenth street, from the "Red bridge" north, changed to "Sherman avenue," in honor of General Sherman. The resolution carried and he immediately advertised the fact by causing a large canvas sign to be erected at the Red bridge, inscribed "Entrance to Sherman Avenue." The Red bridge was located at Sixteenth and Nicholas streets, where it spanned North Omaha creek.

He is the fearless man who, with a squad of axmen, executed the decree of the city council that the beautiful shade trees in front of the residence of H. H. Fisher at Sixteenth and Davenport streets should be removed. They were regarded as an obstacle to the

proper development of Sixteenth street as a business thoroughfare. It was easy for the council to pass the ordinance, but the execution was difficult. "Uncle Joe," ever ready to carry out projects which he believed to be for the good of the city, volunteered for the service and moved his forces upon the trees in broad daylight. He still finds much amusement in recalling the opposition he encountered from angry women, armed with brooms and other domestic weapons.

He is the only living charter member of the first Lutheran church in Omaha, which was organized in 1858 by Rev. Henry W. Kuhns. Among the other members were Augustus Kountze, Uriah Brunner, Dr. Roder, Daniel Redman and F. A. Snyder. The congregation erected its first church, a little brick structure, at Thirtieth and Douglas streets, on the site now occupied by the Millard hotel. When that property was sold a building was erected at Sixteenth and Harney streets, which stood until a few years ago, when it was sold and the present handsome edifice at Twenty-sixth and Farnam streets was erected. In all these transactions Mr. Redman took a leading part.

In his 77th year, still a hale, hearty and up-to-date man, "Uncle Joe" lives in his comfortable home at Seventeenth and Corby streets. The household consists now of only himself and Mrs. Redman. His first wife died and he married Mrs. Ira Haskell on November 12,

1882. A man without an ache or pain and without a care, seemingly, is "Uncle Joe." He possesses that fortunate temperament which enables him to throw off care and to enjoy life to the utmost. He has tasted the pleasure of having money. Upon leaving for a visit to Pennsylvania in 1886 he insisted upon making a will and found that he was a wealthy man. The goddess of fortune frowned, however, and now he has only a comfortable home and a little other property. This is quite sufficient, according to his healthful philosophy, especially when it is remembered that he has twelve children, twenty grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. And, in the words of the Roman matron, Cornelia, when asked about his riches, he points proudly to his children and replies: "These are my riches." His children are his great pride.

"My family doesn't believe in this race suicide," he says with a laugh, as he gleefully shows the visitor the dozens of photographs of his descendants. And the records bear this statement out. These are the names of his children: George L. Redman, Mrs. A. L. Root, James P. Redman, Sherman Redman, all of Omaha; Mrs. Harry Keeline of Council Bluffs, B. F. Redman, Joseph Redman, Jr., and Mrs. Clara Bailey of Salt Lake City, Utah; Samuel Redman of Oray, Colo.; William S. Redman of Phoenix, Ariz., and Mrs. Clarence Engle of Chicago. One son, David C. Redman of Harper's Ferry, Ia., died recently.

Still Hearty and Vigorous

Although he has nearly reached four score of years, "Uncle Joe" is still a vigorous man. This fact he attributes to taking care of himself and having no vices. In the last few years he has given over all kinds of business and lives at home or visits his children in various parts of the country. Though he has borne so active a part in the events of past years, he does not live in the past. His attention is taken up with present day affairs and his deepest interest lies in the upbuilding of Omaha. He is loyal to the men of his own time, however, and believes that the present age is corrupted to a greater degree than the days of old.

"Why, when I was in the city council we only got \$16 a month," he says, with a vigorous gesture of his hands. "Now they are paying the councilmen \$125 a month. Just think of that! I don't know what they want to do it for unless it is to give them so much that they won't care to steal any more in addition."

He still casts a shrewd, judicious and wide-awake eye over the city of Omaha and sees places where it could be improved. He talks to people in his vigorous way about these things. He believes, for example, that it would be for the good of Omaha if the name of Sixteenth street were changed to "Broadway," of some other dignified appellation. The principal business street of the city, he considers, should be given a name and not be known by a number. Long acquaintance has made him the close friend of the Kountzes, the Creightons, the Rosewaters and other families which took a leading part in the development of the city. And he is the admirer of all these men. He has no spark of envy for those who amassed greater fortunes than himself or for those who secured higher political preferment, nor has he any hatred for those who opposed him politically. Even into politics his genial, easy-tempered nature has extended, and a smile wreathes his face and a chuckle is in his voice as he tells of the political struggles in the council in the early days. He has particular admiration for the late Herman Kountze and also for Augustus Kountze.

Admiration for the Kountze Brothers

"Augustus Kountze was the only man who actually lived on his claim and got it legally from the government," he declares. "It makes me mad when I hear some of these people telling about how those men got their land by anything but fair means. They got it by honest means and that's the reason why they have it yet. Herman Kountze was the man who saved us all many a time. He never lost his coolness. You couldn't excite him, and he had a mighty big heart. Dozens of men went to him in the hard times and confessed that they would have to give up, and some just wanted to hand him the deeds on their property. He used to tell them to go home and do their best and it would all come out right."

Another of his projects for beautifying the city is to have Count Creighton present the city with Cut-Off lake on condition that funds be appropriated for improving the place and making it a big pleasure resort. He has never permitted any political party to choose the men he supports for office. Though originally a democrat, he voted for Lincoln after the war and supported General Thayer for the United States senate. He was also a strong supporter of Edward Rosewater for United States senator. He believes Roosevelt to be "the greatest man on earth," and Bryan, he thinks, is "the greatest man without a record."

Industry, sobriety and thrift, "Uncle Joe" says, will make any man successful, and to the young men of today he says: "Practice a little hardship while you are young that you may have a good home and comforts for old age, which is sure to overtake you. When I was married, fifty-five years ago, I received \$1 for a hard day's work at blacksmithing. We saved \$500 the first five years of our married life, and I wonder now how it is that boys getting \$2, \$3, \$5 and upwards are struggling without a home."

Robert Weidensall on Daily Life in St. Petersburg

WHILST I made my visit to Finland without molestation on the part of anyone, but rather with the most cordial reception and the kindest of treatment by all, it was not so certain that I would have the same experience in Russia proper. Notwithstanding that some parties in Finland shook their heads in more or less doubt about the advisability of my going to Russia, I made up my mind to go. While it was possible for me to go by railroad and by boat, I chose the latter and provided myself with a ticket for the steamer, as it was to arrive early in the evening, at 6 o'clock, and sail for St. Petersburg at 10 o'clock p. m., and thus I would be sure of a good night's rest. On the contrary, I had a very unpleasant experience, since the hotel folks said they could get no word from the steamer until quite late, so that I was unable to get aboard before 11 o'clock p. m., and the vessel did not sail until 4 o'clock the next morning. The sea was quite rough, but I did not suffer sickness. We were far behind time and there was little to be seen. We reached Kronstadt, a fortified town near the entrance of the river about forty miles below St. Petersburg. We entered the river and made good progress, arriving at St. Petersburg at 10 o'clock p. m. It was reported that we would have to stay on the steamer all night, but the custom house officers came on board immediately, examined our baggage promptly and we soon left the boat for the hotels. I was conveyed to the Grand hotel, a good one and reasonable in charges. The chief porter, a German, was a walking encyclopaedia on St. Petersburg affairs. He spoke English very fluently and was as ready to serve the guests of the hotel as he was intelligent.

St. Petersburg, Russia, is too well known because of the prominence it has held in the public mind for the last few years for me to say very much about it. It is a very large city with about 1,800,000 inhabitants. The city makes a good impression upon the visitor at first sight, which is not lost by more intimate acquaintance. Its streets, avenues, boulevards, squares and parks are well plotted and maintained. There is a general high grade of buildings on the main streets, public and private. There are too many fine buildings for special mention. I will name only a few of the most interesting. The St. Isaac's Russian church stands out above all others. It was told that it cost 20,000,000 roubles, or \$10,000,000; a model of it in the church, much of it gold, cost 1,000,000 roubles, or \$500,000. The base of the church is 500 yards in circuit and for six feet above the ground is of polished red granite. The wide porticoes on each side of the great church and the stairways leading up to them are of the same polished granite. Then the immense columns on the porticoes, from five to seven feet in diameter and eighty feet high, are polished red granite monoliths, rivalling the stupendous columns of the great Egyptian and Baalbek temples. In every other way its magnificence compares favorably with what I have mentioned. It is a close second to St. Peter's church, at Rome, as a whole, and its superior in some respects. The St. Peter's and St. Paul's cathedral, in which Peter the Great and his two wives are buried, is a wonderful church, particularly in the tombs and monuments it contains. It has perhaps the most beautiful church spire in the world. The spire of the Admiralty building, however, while not so elaborate as the one just mentioned, shows to better advantage, because of its appearance above the beautiful park before it. The river front, with its charming park, the fine equestrian statue of Peter the Great, all tend to afford a fine display both in the daytime and the evening when they are lighted artificially. The multitudes

seen to enjoy these public places, for they are thronged, particularly in the afternoon and evening, until the parks are closed by their keepers. Near the church where Peter the Great is buried is his own original little house in which he spent much time planning and executing many of the things that made him especially peculiar and remarkable. The little house is under the cover of another building constructed over it. Visitors are allowed to enter parts of the building. Other parts are closed. St. Petersburg seems to be gay. Business appears brisk. There are no outward signs of a troubled condition, unless it be the presence of many soldiers, also the many watchmen that are stationed at the gateways and doors of all large public or private buildings. Probably this is a regular and not a special condition in St. Petersburg. There is, however, a sort of unexpressed fear that serious outbreaks or occurrences may take place at any time. I went all through the city at all hours up to 1 o'clock in the night and saw no trouble anywhere. The social evil in St. Petersburg is very serious. In the parks from the early evenings until they are closed, and in the boulevards and large streets, until after midnight a large number of women and girls boldly approach men as solicitors in their evil lives. Apparently a majority of the women on the streets at late hours without male attendants are approachable by men for the same evil purposes. Finely dressed men, men in uniform dress, official or otherwise, and the more commonly dressed men, did not seem averse to these solicitations, but many of these men boldly solicited the more apparently modest women and girls as they paraded the streets, particularly the great thoroughfares. There did not seem to be any effort of the authorities to stop it; on the other hand, I saw no

one section of the city wholly given over to or licensed for the social evil like in many other large cities of the world.

During my whole stay in St. Petersburg I did not hear any unkind words spoken of the Japanese, but in several instances praise and admiration.

I arrived in St. Petersburg, Russia, late Saturday night, September 15; I attended the St. Isaac's Russian church Sunday morning. The display was unique, the singing and chanting fine and the interest seemed intense, judging from the facial expressions of the worshipping throng and their constant bowing and utterances.

In the evening I called at the Evangelical Young Men's Christian association rooms. They were mostly Germans and none could talk English. By their help, however, I found the home address of Mr. Franklin Gaylord, the American representative of the Young Men's Christian association in St. Petersburg, who is in charge of the work among the orthodox Greek young men. I went with him to his association building. The building was full of interested young men who were benefited in many ways by the work carried on under the superintendence of Mr. Gaylord. I made the acquaintance of his assistants and other workers. I made frequent visits to this building and saw much of its workings. It is called the Light House. I fully agree with Mr. Gaylord that to make this very popular work result in what it should and become permanent will require the addition of a true Christian man, thorough in his Christian and association knowledge and able to speak the Russian language fluently, to enter into this popular movement and develop in the minds and hearts of an inside band of young men a clear knowledge of true Christian and association principles and work, as well as deliver popular

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