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March 21, 2012

THIS WEEK:

QUICK WORK AT CARLISLE (From the *Indianola Tribune*, December 20, 1877)

BACKGROUND:

Lewis Todhunter

Lewis Todhunter was born in Fayette County, Ohio, April 6, 1817. He was admitted to the bar in Highland County, Ohio, in 1848. Todhunter came to Iowa in 1850, settling along the Des Moines River in Polk County, where he was engaged in farming and selling goods. In 1854, he moved to Indianola and began the practice of law, continuing in that profession for more than a quarter of a century. He served as prosecuting attorney, county auditor, treasurer, and mayor of the city. He was a member of the third constitutional convention, which met at Iowa City in 1857, representing Warren, Madison, Adair, and Cass counties in that body and had the honor of assisting in making the first laws of the state.

Todhunter served in the army during the Civil War from 1863-1865 as assistant quartermaster with rank of Captain. He is perhaps widest known, however, as a temperance leader and earnest worker. He joined in the Washingtonian movement in 1840 and was active in temperance reformation for the rest of his life.

QUICK WORK AT CARLISLE

A night long to be remembered—a temperance meeting and its results—the saloon-keeper signs the pledge after which the citizens buy him out and spill the beer.

Word was given out that there would be a temperance lecture at the Baptist Church by the Hon. Lewis Todhunter, of Indianola, and Dr. Drew, of Illinois. The citizens of the town turned out enmasse, men, women, and children. It will be remembered that there has been a beer saloon in this place for some weeks past and not infrequently has the “nights” here in our once quiet little city been made hideous by the Bacchanalian (drunken revelry) shouts of the inebriate. But thanks to the All-wise Giver, He stirred up the hearts of the people and they concluded that something must be done to rid the place of a nuisance that was being carried on in their midst, and for that purpose was this meeting at the church, last night, the success of which we will now try to describe.

The speakers were men well calculated for the work before them. One of them went in person to the saloon keeper and invited him up to the church and by hard coaxing succeeded in bringing him hither, whereupon he signed the pledge, after which, the citizens, by subscription, raised in the space of ten minutes money enough to pay the ex-saloon keeper for his investment in the saloon, he delivering up the key and all the beer on hand. Then came the march from the church to the saloon, Mr. Todhunter taking the lead and calling upon all to fall in.

They marched to the saloon, carried all the beer into the street and poured it out—then it was three cheers, long loud and deafening went up from the assembled throng for the cause of temperance and the happy thought of having removed from their midst one of the worst of evils that could be imposed on any community.

Today everything is quiet and everyone seems happy. The saloonkeeper is happy if one may judge from the smile he wears and the way in which he expresses himself. He said he is heartily sick of saloon keeping, will never engage in the business again,

etc. As the people marched from the church to the saloon, they sang "Hold the Fort for I Am Coming," but the demons fort had already surrendered and the inmates in the shape of black bottles, beer kegs and the like fallen easy prey to the advancing throng.—The kegs were preserved but the bottles were demolished. The crowd then dispersed, going to their homes and were soon in the arms of Morpheus (mythology god of dreams), happy in the thought that their noble work was completed. Thus endeth the life of the Carlisle beer saloon. It is now a thing of the past.



Lewis Todhunter
(State Historical Society of Iowa)
(b. April 6, 1817 – d. February 1, 1902)