

Edward Eggleston

EFFA MORRISON DANNER

Edward Eggleston still lives and having survived the test of time, needs no eulogy in this, his centennial year.¹ As minister, editor, and author he climbed to fame over vicissitudes which would have appalled a less alert and determined man. From the earliest pioneer days, poets and story tellers of Indiana have woven their experiences into homespun tales, but Edward Eggleston was the first to catch the spirit of the spoken dialect of the people and crystalize it on the printed page. He did not then recognize that his works would become classics in literature.

He was a true writer of prefaces, for there he portrayed to his reader the urge of his creative idea in brief sentences, although he may have spent years in collecting the information.² The chronicles of Eggleston's early activities, which are rather obscure and widely scattered, and those of his family, particularly those connected with his boyhood, are still interesting to students of literature. He was born on December 10, 1837, in a Main Street house of Vevay, Indiana. His father, Joseph C. Eggleston, bought this house the year before his son's birth of Edward Patton while it was under construction and finished it himself. The house was then located in a square plot of ground planted to fruit trees and grape vines. The building, which still stands, is of colonial style, a two-story brick house with shutters and a little portico at the side. The Eggleston law office was a small brick building on the grounds a little way from the home.

Edward was a delicate child, afflicted from infancy with asthma, or a similar disease, which compelled him to give up active sports. He was a boy of the fireside who helped his mother with her household duties, knitted and embroidered book-marks, and later devoted most of his time to study under her instruction.

The constant return of the terrorizing paroxysms of his disease, usually at night in the candle-lighted room, the death of his grandmother Craig at their home in Vevay in 1840, the

¹ Edward Eggleston was born in Vevay, Indiana, on Dec. 10, 1837, and died on Sept. 1, 1902, at Joshua's Rock, New York. The present year is the centennial anniversary of his birth, which makes it a fitting time to present a sketch of his life to the readers of the *Indiana Magazine of History*.

² See especially the long "Preface" to the Library Edition of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, which was written twenty-one years after the first edition was published in 1871 (Chicago, 1892).

declining health of his father and the excitement of a pioneer religious revival in the Methodist Church across the street, where members shouted long and loud, no doubt contributed to the development of the religious and aesthetic ideals of the lad's early youth. It was in 1841, during the pastorates of James Jones and Daniel McIntire, assisted by Bishop Hasubbin, that Mr. and Mrs. Eggleston united with the Methodist Church and had their children, Edward and George Cary, baptized.³

Mrs. Eggleston having inherited her portion of the "Big Orchard Farm" on the Ohio in Craig Township, the family spent the summers there in the stone house, hoping the country life would improve Mr. Eggleston's health. Two younger children, Jane Lowry Eggleston and Joseph William Eggleston, were born there.⁴ This was a happy period for the family. It was on this farm in a big blockhouse on the hillside that Mary Jane Craig, who became the wife of Joseph C. Eggleston, was born. Her father, the Rev. George Craig who had entered two thousand acres of land in the rich Ohio River bottoms, became a very successful farmer. He served with distinction in the War of 1812, was elected to the Indiana Senate, 1822-1825, and, in 1833, was a candidate for a seat in the national House of Representatives in the fourth Indiana district. This included Switzerland, Dearborn, Franklin, Rush, Decatur and Ripley counties.⁵ Mr. Craig died suddenly on May 29, 1833, from an attack of Asiatic Cholera which was then prevalent.⁶

To the home of the Rev. George Craig there came after the death of their parents, three small daughters of Samuel and Elizabeth Johnson Lowry.⁷ There were now eleven children in the Craig home. It was into this country home that Jane, the bound-girl, was entrusted with the sole care of the little

³ Letter of Mrs. Jane Zimmerman, Mar. 17, 1932, in regard to baptism of Eggleston family. Mss., Historical Archives, Vevay, Indiana.

⁴ At the Big Orchard Farm. *Village Times* (Vevay), June 29, 1838.

⁵ *Switzerland Monitor* (Vevay), May 29, 1833.

⁶ *Ibid.*, June 26, 1833. Obituary notice.

⁷ The Rev. George Craig was twice married. His first wife was Eliza Horton. There were three children by this marriage: Morton Craig; Nancy Craig, who married Miles Mendenhall; and Sarah Craig, who married Edward Patton. The second wife was Jane Brown Lowry, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Johnson Lowry of Scott County, Kentucky. The children of this second marriage were: Eliza Lowry Craig, who married Thomas T. Wright; Mary Jane Craig, who married Joseph C. Eggleston; Marion Craig, who married Elizabeth Dow; Tabitha A. Craig, who married George H. Kyle; and DeKalb Craig who married Nellie Fraut. Mrs. Samuel (Elizabeth Johnson) Lowry died in 1814, and Samuel Lowry in 1818, leaving three small daughters, Mary, Eleanor, and Elizabeth. These young girls came to live with the Craig family, the Rev. George Craig's second wife being their older sister. They remained in this home until married. Mrs. Craig had a brother also, William Itti Lowry. He and the Rev. Craig acted as guardians for the three girls. *Switzerland County Probate Record*, Oct. 2, 1818.

boys, Edward, six, and George Cary, four years old, as they trudged a mile over the rough and rocky road to the old Bethel log schoolhouse where their mother had once been a pupil. Jane was thirteen years old according to the bond, yet she obeyed Edward's orders in accordance with her social position as a menial. This, the little boy of six fully understood "only time and God could help." No doubt Jane expressed her opinions of class distinctions more emphatically before the boys than before her mistress or master.⁸

The indenture was made in March 1840, between Jane Burnett, with the consent of her father, and Joseph C. Eggleston. One of the incomprehensible things of our free born Americans was the indenture of white children by their parents. Over such children, their masters acquired complete control. The language of Jane Burnett's bond speaks for itself in regard to the ease with which such an indenture could be abused.⁹

Edward Eggleston made himself famous with his heroine, "Hannah, the Bound-Girl," portraying her beauty of person and character in the *Hoosier School Master*. His brother, George Cary Eggleston, dealt with her in her own right by her name, "Jane", in the *First of the Hoosiers*.¹⁰ The brothers both leave questions in our minds. What became of Jane, the bound-girl? Was Edward's romance in the main part true? Did she go with the family to Decatur County? All these

⁸ George Cary Eggleston, *The First of the Hoosiers* (Philadelphia, 1903), 80, 87.

⁹ The text of the indenture from Switzerland County Deed Book, I, 24, is here reprinted:

"This indenture or bond made March 6, 1840, between Mary Jane Frances Burnett, a minor age 10 on 29th of April next, of one part, and with the consent of her father Mathew Burnett who evidences his consent by signing and sealing this indenture, and Joseph C. Eggleston of Switz Co., Ind., second part—

Witness that Mary Jane Frances Burnett, by & with the advise of said father has just placed & bound herself as an apprentice to said Joseph C. Eggleston to be taught the art or mystery of house wifery until she has arrived at the age of 18 years & said Mary Jane Frances doth covenant & agree with said Joseph C. Eggleston faithfully to serve as such apprentice until she has arrived at the age of 18 years from the date hereof, to dwell with him until such time, during which time to be faithful & obedient to the said Joseph C. Eggleston, to do him no damage, or suffer any to be done and in all things to conduct and demean herself as a good and faithful apprentice decorous and orderly; and the said Joseph C. Eggleston on his part covenants to provide said Mary Jane Frances Burnett with necessary wearing apparel, boarding, lodging and washing and to give her a common school education that is to say cause her to be instructed in reading, writing & arithmetic, as far as the double rule of three inclusive, & will provide her with a good suit of clothing at the expiration of said apprenticeship.

Witness, 6th day of March 1840

Presence

Eugene R. Morerod
Tabitha O. Craig

Mathew Burnett

Joseph C. Eggleston

her
Mary Jane X Frances Burnett
mark

¹⁰ George Cary Eggleston, *The First of the Hoosiers*.

things we do not know. Only the bond is left us and with it a very good story indeed.

"In 1843, Joseph C. Eggleston's library was very well stocked with poetry, history, and classic literature, besides his law books, but lacked all things religious", reports the Rev. Thomas A. Goodwin, who came to Vevay in that year as pastor of the Methodist Church. The Rev. Goodwin further states:

My first pastoral work in the family was to get Mr. Eggleston to subscribe for the *Western Christian Advocate*, my last was to induce him to stock up with some religious books. After a short talk he went to his desk and taking out two fifty dollar bank bills, he said, "take this and get me a hundred dollars worth of Methodist books. I leave the selection to you." The next day I took the mail boat for Cincinnati and was at the corner of Eighth and Main Street by the time the book concern was open for business. I selected Clark's Commentary, Wesley's Sermons, Watson's Institute, Fletcher's Appeal, Life of Cearvosso, Watson's Life of Wesley, and enough other books of this type, all bound in the good old "Methodist sheep" after the style of that period to fill the bill. Mr. Eggleston read the books with interest. When ten or fifteen years later I heard that Edward Eggleston had become a preacher I thought he would be of the solid variety from the solid food I had spread before him. How he became such a story teller I can not imagine. He never learned it from Clark, Watson, or Wesley.¹¹

Joseph C. Eggleston followed his cousin Judge Miles Eggleston from Virginia to Vevay and established himself in law there in 1834. He had previously graduated from William and Mary College in Virginia and taken a post-graduate course in law in Winchester, Virginia, under Judge Tucker. The young lawyer was popular and became a leader in Vevay and Switzerland County politics at once. He was elected a member of the Town Board of Vevay when the city was incorporated by special act of the Legislature on June 6, 1836. Mr. Eggleston, acting as secretary of the Board sent out neatly written notes calling meetings "by early candle light."¹²

At a town meeting on April 6, 1837, Mr. Eggleston, John Dumont, James M. Cotton, Pheneas Kent and James Rous were named as a committee to draw up resolutions to be presented to the state convention against the "reckless methods of the legislature on the subject of internal improvements." This was at the time when the Madison and Indianapolis

¹¹ Rev. Thomas Goodwin, "Edward Eggleston as a Boy". *Western Christian Advocate*, —, 1890. Clipping in possession of the writer (Mrs. Danner). The Eggleston library became one of the largest in Vevay and the family had access to it until the home was broken up in 1857.

¹² Ulysses P. Schenck Papers, Switzerland County Archives.

Railroad and other works were being built under the law of 1836.¹³

The elder Eggleston was a talented orator and made the Fourth of July address in Vevay for several years. He was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives in 1837 and to the Indiana Senate in 1840-1841. He ran for Congress in 1844 but was defeated by Thomas Smith. During this canvas he was unjustly denounced from the stump by a lawyer named Tabbatts of Covington, Kentucky, who came into Indiana to campaign for Smith. Eggleston was a gentleman of the old school among whom the duel was not completely proscribed. He promptly challenged Tabbatts, naming Scott Carter, who was studying law in his office, as his second. The challenge was presented in Covington. The challenged party named his second and the details of the duel were discussed. At this point Tabbatts expressed regret for his offensive remark and presented his apology in the form and language stipulated by the code. Mr. Eggleston accepted the apology and withdrew his challenge and so passed into history Vevay's only chance to have a duel.¹⁴ While in the state Senate, he bought a newspaper, *The Statesman*, through which to express his Whig opinions.¹⁵

During the summer of 1846, Mr. Eggleston made a lecture tour of the county, speaking at Center Square when he was not able to stand to deliver his address. The lecture was on "Geology," a new subject in the Middle West at that time. He died on October 21, 1846, at the age of thirty-four years. He was buried in the family cemetery on the "Big Orchard Farm", five miles below Vevay.¹⁶

The death of his brilliant young father was the greatest tragedy of Edward Eggleston's life. It deprived him of his father's example, his teaching, the influence of his culture, and his protection. The widowed mother was hard pressed to obtain a living for herself and four small children from their meager estate.¹⁷

¹³ Vevay Times, Apr. 6, 1837.

¹⁴ John Percy Carter, "Pioneer Lawyers and Famous Cases in the Switzerland County Court". Paper read before the Switzerland County Historical Society. See *Switzerland Democrat* (Vevay), Apr. 21, 1927.

¹⁵ Perret Dufour, *Swiss Settlement of Switzerland County*, 476.

¹⁶ This home is located on what is now State Highway 56.

¹⁷ The Eggleston family record is as follows:

Joseph C. Eggleston—b. May 12, 1812; m. Mary Jane Craig, May 2, 1836, in Switzerland County, Indiana; d. Oct. 21, 1846.
Mary Jane Craig—b. —, 1818 m. (1) Joseph C. Eggleston and (2) William-son Terrell, Dec. 25, 1850; d. June 15, 1857.

The will of Joseph C. Eggleston shows his implicit confidence in his wife and her business judgment. He made her his sole executrix without bond or security and left her his entire estate as long as she should remain a widow, "except my silver watch which I will to my son, Edward Eggleston". The will further declared: "In case of the marriage of Mary Jane Eggleston after my demise (which I do not expect) then all of my legacy should be divided among my four children, and she should take in lieu thereof lots 110-111 in the town of Vevay in fee simple." These lots are those where the Main Street home is located—the home in which Edward and George Cary were born.¹⁸

It was during the next four years that the children attended school at the red-brick schoolhouse, which later became known as the "Eggleston Schoolhouse". The school was taught by Julia L. Dumont.¹⁹ The elementary curriculum at this time consisted of reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, and geography. Tuition was \$4.00 per quarter. High School studies were algebra, physiology, mental philosophy, rhetoric and bookkeeping. Tuition was \$5.00. Tuition for Latin and French was \$6.00.²⁰

Edward worked during summers for some of the neighboring farmers. He spent one summer with "Uncle Amie Morerod", a Frenchman, who said of him: "Ed could learn to speak French without an effort but he could not master the art of planting corn. Sometimes he put one grain and sometimes a dozen grains to the hill."²¹

One summer Edward lived with the McCallums on Long Run and in the winter went to school at Spring Branch Ridge. In the spring he taught a few weeks in that old, log schoolhouse. In 1850, Mrs. Eggleston and the children went to De-

Edward Eggleston—b. Dec. 10, 1837; m. (1) Lizzie Snider, Mar. 18, 1858, and (2) Frances Goode, Sept. 15, 1891; d. Sept. 1, 1902.

George Cary Eggleston—b. Nov. 26, 1839; d. Apr. 14, 1911.

Jane Lowry Eggleston—b. Mar. 14, 1842; living Dec., 1937.

Joseph William Eggleston—b. Aug. 12, 1844; d. Dec. 1, 1927.

¹⁸ Switzerland Co. Record Book L, 443.

¹⁹ Mrs. Dumont's son, Edgar, a bright, handsome boy of great promise, while swimming with the Eggleston boys at the foot of Washington Street, one Sunday morning, was accidentally drowned. This tragedy was made doubly distressing by the Rev. A. Bussay who chose to condemn this twelve year old boy to eternal perdition for having desecrated the Holy Sabbath by getting himself drowned. "It was decreed by the Almighty as a just punishment of his sin." This illtimed and illogical sermon had a distracting effect upon the boy's playmates and its effect upon the grief-stricken mother was never effaced. George Cary Eggleston, *The First of the Hoosiers*, 123; Amanda R. Dufour to Mrs. S. O. N. Pleasant, Feb. 11, 1895. In collection of the writer.

²⁰ *Reveille*, Sept. 28, 1853. Mrs. Dumont's "School Notice".

²¹ *Twice a Week* (Vevay), Nov. 25, 1893. Editorial headed, "Fifty Years as Husband and Wife, Uncle Amie and Aunt Clara Morerod".

catur County to visit her uncle, William Itti Lowry,²² and also the family of her Aunt Lucy Welsh.

Mr. Lowry had already entered land in Decatur County and had built his cabin on Clifty Creek, the only house there with a window in it. He had prospered and improved his home, and had large orchards and sugar camps, but he lived in the simple pioneer manner surrounded by his seven children. To him, hospitality was regarded as a supreme virtue, next to courage in the pioneer practical relations of life. Col. Merit G. Welsh, a cousin, was the sheriff of Decatur County, and Orville T. Welsh, another cousin, is claimed by Greensburg writers to have been the original of "Shocky" in the *Hoosier School Master*.

Mrs. Eggleston taught school at Milford or Clifty, and Edward clerked in Merit C. Welsh's grocery store, where Henry B. Smalley, M.D., traded and loafed and was the most prominent citizen of the village. It was at Milford that Edward and George Cary attended Singing School, their only musical training. The tuning-fork master, a Mr. Higgins, used numerical music, which was a new musical invention much in vogue at this period. In this style of music, numerals were used for notes and commas to denote the time on a two-line staff. It was the only music ever written for the exclusive use of the tuning-fork master. The school sang without any other instrument.²³

There had been very little schooling in this section of the state and for several years a rough element had made use of its hills to cover their robberies. There was a mixture of many strains from many localities, and there, Edward learned a new language. There, he found his first real Hoosiers. He was old enough to appreciate the backwoods dialect and his photographic mind registered the oddities in the people he met. He had a rich Irish strain of blood from the Lowry family, and in spite of his aesthetic and religious views, he noted the humorous side of life. At Vevay he lived among the French Swiss and the English, or so called blue-blooded Virginians of which he was one, so his experiences in Decatur County registered all the more vivid pictures on his mind.

²² Will I. Lowry married his cousin Olivia Connelly. Both were from Scott County, Kentucky. When the love affair developed, the parents of Olivia objected to a marriage because of the relationship, but, in the company of a brother of the young woman, the couple eloped and were married in Vevay on Oct. 3, 1822. Frank Dalmazzo, compiler, Johnson County Genalogy. Mass. collection of Mrs. Edna Mead of Vevay.

²³ *Christian Psalmist* (1844). Hymn-book, containing 841 hymns, set to numerical music, with a "Manual of Instructions" in the back of the book.

In December, 1850, Edward's mother married the Rev. Williamson Terrell, and they moved their united families to New Albany where the Rev. Terrell was pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Eggleston and Terrell children were not congenial, which marred Edward's happiness. The return to the Ohio, furthermore, brought back his asthmatic affliction, and again, he gave up schooling and was confined to the house.

The Rev. Terrell was sent by the Conference to Madison, Indiana, in 1853, where Edward was able to attend school. He won a literary contest with an essay entitled, "Beautiful," and received a book as a prize which was the beginning of his library that grew to 4000 volumes.

On July 31, 1853, the *Indiana Reveille* of Vevay carried this rather startling news item: "In July Dr. Henry B. Smalley, M.D., a member of the M. E. Church, a Son of Temperance and an Exemplary man, with a student Harrison and 20 others were arrested with a gang of robbers at Greensburg." The shock of this news is said to have made Edward so ill that he was forced to go to bed, when he realized the deception of those friends in whom he had placed confidence. Dr. Smalley was the original of "Dr Small," a character in *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*.

The next year the Rev. Terrell was appointed agent for the American Bible Society by the Conference, and as he had to travel continuously, the family returned to the Eggleston Main Street home in Vevay. The boys had their father's red-brick law office fitted up as their domain—bedroom, library and reception hall, all in one—and there, at sixteen, Edward organized a boys' debating society. Many of the books used were from Eggleston's library, the richest in Vevay, except Mrs. Dumont's, to which they also had access. Guilford Eggleston of Madison sent them books, and, at one time, he came up to Vevay and delivered a lecture to the club. He was a great favorite with his young cousins and understood boy life. A local paper reported that Mrs. Dumont had established a Lyceum in connection with her school and held the sessions in her school room, every Friday night, at her residence. The programs consisted of debates, compositions and readings. An evening was often given to the study of Shakespeare in which she showed her best work in the characteriza-

tion of those world famous men and women of the bard's creation.²⁴

The Eggleston boys also attended the academy in the Presbyterian Church, conducted by the Rev. Hiram Wason, which is so accurately described in *Roxy*. The minister taught the usual subjects in the curriculum of the time with the addition of astronomy. He held night sessions to observe the constellations of the sky. The class-book used was the *Geography of the Heavens*, accompanied by a *Celestial Atlas* prepared by Elijah H. Burrett, A.M., in 1833.²⁵ The Rev. Wason had a genial personality that was much admired by his pupils. He became a character in three of Eggleston's stories: "Reverend Whitecar" in *Roxy*, "Hiram Mason" in *The Graysons*, and "Reverend Brown" in "The Bound Boy" of *Queer Stories*.

Edward and his sister Jane were sent to visit an uncle in Virginia, who lived at the family seat at Egglestetton. It had been the home of Major Joseph Eggleston, who had received his command from Light Horse Harry Lee during the Revolutionary War. The youth experienced here a new life, an easy going, restful southern type of existence, with the constant attendance of slaves and contact with self-poised aristocratic gentlemen who were conscious of their superiority. All this ease and opulence could have been Edward Eggleston's as his uncle wished to adopt him and send him to be educated in the University of Virginia and then to a great German University. What a tempting offer to one who thirsted for knowledge, but the youth believed in a life of endeavor and action and was opposed to slavery. It is held that he declined his uncle's offer because it would make him a sharer in the profits of slavery. He had lived all his life on the border of a free state where runaway slaves were sometimes captured and returned to slavery. Possibly he had observed this phase of slavery at first hand.

There was a sand bar in the Ohio River, near the Old Orchard Farm, where it was easy to swim across to Indiana. Many a black man tried it and made the wooded hills and was then away to the Ripley County Station of the Underground Railway, but many another slave was not so fortunate. Some families made good money catching and returning runaways who were then apt to be more severely treated. Once a master

²⁴ Mrs. S. O. N. Pleasant, "Mrs. Julia L. Dumont", *Reveille*, —, 1913.

²⁵ A set of these text books was recently donated to the Switzerland County Historical Society.

found his slave asleep in a thicket and shot him as he lay on the hills. This tragedy is accurately described in the *Hoosier School Boy*. Eggleston knew, by experience, the effects of slavery, both for black and white. George Cary Eggleston dressed slavery with good words and covered its ugly side. Edward said very little about it, but, after thirteen months of entertainment in his wealthy uncle's home, he refused an education from the profits of slavery and returned to sickness, to poverty and to work.

In Virginia, he had attended the Amelia Academy and, under the tutelage of a William H. Harrison, advanced rapidly in his studies. While Edward was visiting in Virginia, his mother sold the Main Street home in Vevay and the family again went to Madison.²⁸

Edward now spent a delightful summer at home. He coached his brother, George Cary, in Latin, George having decided to attend Asbury (now DePauw) by using a scholarship that his father had bought. The brothers tramped the hills around Clifty Falls and studied geology, but they met a stormy opposition from the Methodist preachers and presiding elders who made every effort to stop the study of that "agnostic" science. The boys "hiked" to Mammouth Cave and back—quite a journey then.

In May, 1856, Edward became ill. Threatened with tuberculosis, he and his mother took a boat trip to St. Louis for his health. They met others, afflicted as he was, going to Minnesota, a new land of promise. He persuaded his mother to allow him to go there. She could only furnish sufficient money for his boat passage up the river, but he went, sick, alone, and without funds, into a new country—*Traverse des Sioux*.

He soon found work as a chain carrier for a surveying party. Then he drove three yoke of oxen hitched to a prairie plow. He opened a photograph gallery. In fact, he worked at anything he could find to do, in order to live. Then he became homesick. He wrote home for thirty dollars from his share of the estate, but did not wait for it to arrive. Starting to walk to Madison, Indiana, he traversed prairies and unclaimed lands, going almost without food or water and sleeping under the stars. He walked three hundred sixty miles to a railroad station, and there borrowed two dollars from a

²⁸ Deed for Lot 110, Apr. 26, 1855, Switzerland County Deed Book R, 682.

stranger, which, added to what he had, enabled him to buy a railroad ticket to Lafayette, Indiana, where his step-brother lived.²⁷

He had always had a deeply religious nature and hardships intensified his sense of obligation to his God and to his fellowmen. Now he determined to preach the Gospel and obtained a license to preach as a Methodist circuit rider. He probably received his exhortor's license from one of the Madison churches but no record of it has been found. In the fall of 1856, he was appointed by the Southeastern Indiana Conference as a junior preacher to Bellview Circuit, Dearborn County, with the Rev. Rozin Monroe Barns, Senior preacher, in charge. The two men had ten appointments in a rough hill country, with many creeks to ford, and it was a big job to fill their pulpits and do their pastoral work. Eggleston found that he had no place or time to study at his lodgings, so he bought a slow horse and read as he rode on horseback from charge to charge. He continued until April, 1857, when he fell ill and resigned.²⁸

The church records of Eggleston's pastorate are treasured relics of Dearborn County, and they are especially valuable because his name is not in the Conference minutes due to their custom of not listing student preachers or exhortors. At this time he began writing for denominational papers, and his articles were well received.

Edward's mother, Mrs. Mary Jane Eggleston, sickened and died on June 15, 1857, at the age of only thirty-eight, leaving too small Terrell children. Loving his mother dearly, this was a heavy grief to Edward and the calamity broke up the home and scattered the family. George Cary, Jane, and Joseph William, went to their relatives in Virginia, but Edward returned to Traverse, Minnesota, in search of health. He was now twenty years old, without funds, far from his Indiana home, and bereft of a sympathetic mother. Mails were slow and letter postage expensive, so in this far country, he could not expect to hear from his brothers and sister very often.

He seems to have begun preaching while he waited for the Minnesota Conference to convene. He traveled on foot, living out of doors almost continuously, as his congregations were

²⁷ G. C. Eggleston, *First of the Hoosiers*, 268.

²⁸ Eggleston Papers, Joshua's Rock, N. Y.

scattered over a wide scope of country and were composed almost equally of Indians, white settlers, hunters, trappers, and half-boiled *voyageurs* on the Minnesota river. His church was often simply the one room of a farmer's log cabin where he missed the pulpit upon which to pound to emphasize the points of his sermon in the good orthodox style of the exhorter.

His first convert relates:

He came to our home near Cleveland [Minnesota] to preach, and that day he strongly felt the need of a pulpit. "Why can't you make me a pupit?" he asked my father after the sermon. "I can and I will before you come again," father replied. Father went to work and from the trunk of a tree he hewed out a round pulpit. The young preacher exhorted with so much fervor from his new pulpit that I was the first convert of the man who afterwards became famous.

In the fall of that same year [1857] the annual Methodist Conference was held at Winona and Mr. Eggleston prepared to go. My father asked him if he were going to the Conference: "Yes, I am going," was the reply. Father knew money was scarce and that Mr. Eggleston's preaching and soap making, which occupation he engaged in through the week, yielded him little revenue, so he went to one of the brethren, a certain Mr. Arter, who had recently come from the east, bringing gold coin, and told him of Mr. Eggleston's desire to go to Winona. Mr. Arter was interested and offered Mr. Eggleston five dollars to help defray the expense of his trip, but was met with a polite but firm refusal. "I shall not need money," said Mr. Eggleston. "I can walk part of the way, some one will give me a lift now and then and the brethren will give me food and lodging when I require it." However, Mr. Arter insisted that he should take the gold, and he finally prevailed, but Mr. Eggleston started on foot for the Conference, a distance of a hundred miles. Upon his return he gave the gold to its original owner, for with sturdy pioneer independence, he had traveled the entire distance to Winona on foot, except for an occasional lift from some traveler, driving a slow ox team.²⁹

When Mr. Eggleston appeared at the Conference as a candidate for admission, he expected to find there the necessary recommendations and credentials from the Church and Conference in Indiana, but they had not come and without them the Minnesota Conference could not receive him. Fortunately Bishop Edward A. Ames³⁰ was presiding at the Conference. He was from Indiana, had preached in Decatur County, and was acquainted with the Egglestons, so he

²⁹ *Old Rail Fence Corners*, published by D.A.R. of St. Peter, Minn. The young woman who was the first convert married a Mr. Bean, and her statement is signed Mrs. Bean.

³⁰ Bishop Ames was Superintendent of Indian Missions, and traveled between Texas and Lake Superior. He was lovingly spoken of by those who knew him as "the joy of the frontier". A. B. Hyde, D.D., *The Story of Methodism*, 367.

vouched for the young preacher at the quarterly meeting held at Central Church, Winona, and they having examined him as to his educational qualifications, recommended him to the annual Conference which admitted him on trial.

Rev. William McKinley, D.D., a member of the Minnesota Conference, who was present when Mr. Eggleston was admitted, describes him as he then appeared:

He was twenty years old, tall and gaunt, with long hair, unshorn locks and unshaven face. Unclerical manners and unclerical clothes all of which he had out grown, made him an unpromising candidate for clerical honors, but it soon became apparent that he was a genius amply able to take care of himself and not to be measured by conventional standards.⁸¹

His first appointment was at Traverse in the St. Peter district on the Minnesota River. This circuit seems to have covered the larger part of Nicollet, Lesueur and Winona Counties, which Eggleston described as the "frontier of the frontier". At one time while making his circuit on foot across the prairie he was lost in a snow storm. In despair, he roused himself for one more effort and reached the house he had left, having traveled in a circle. Exposure, lack of proper clothing, improper food and cold, depleted his system and he became very ill. Only through expert nursing was his life saved. He married the young woman who nursed him back to health, Lizzie Snider, on March 18, 1857, at Saint Peter, Minnesota.⁸²

In 1858, Eggleston was appointed General Agent for Minnesota for the American Bible Society, but it was necessary for him to do any work his hands found to do to help his meager salary cover expenses. He speaks of his work as "always honest but sometimes undignified", and in *Queer Stories* describes the disagreeable contacts and odors of soap making.⁸³

He established a home in St. Peter which was significant of an awakening to the appreciation of conventionalities and consideration for the world's judgment of a man's ability by his personal appearance and manner of living. One of the now prized relics of this period of his pastorate is his first parlor furniture of the conventional rose-carved, mohair upholstered design. Some of the pieces bear the name, Edward Eggle-

⁸¹ Rev. William McKinley, "Edward Eggleston", *Western Christian Advocate*, Nov. —, 1902. Clipping in collection of writer.

⁸² Eggleston Papers, Joshua's Rock, N. Y. Four children were born to this union: Elizabeth, Allegra, Blanche, and Edward Jr. The son died in infancy.

⁸³ "The Young Soap-boiler", *Queer Stories*, 164.

ton, painted in black at the time of shipment. When he left St. Peter, this furniture was sold by Eggleston to a druggist named Jones, from whom it was purchased by F. E. Lange, an early jeweler. It is now owned by Mr. Lange's daughter, Mrs. Charles Blanding, who has removed the furniture to Harvey, North Dakota.³⁴

At the fourth quarterly conference, held June 27, 1857, Bartley Blain, Theophilus Drew, Edward Eggleston and W. B. Polling were recommended to the Winona Annual Conference and all but the last named were received on trial by the Conference.³⁵

Edward Eggleston's first regular appointment was at Traverse in the St. Peter district on the Minnesota River, in 1857-58. The following year he acted as agent of the American Bible Society. In 1859, he was ordained an Elder and received an appointment to the Market Street Church in St. Paul. He became active in the Conference and served on committees.

He was at Stillwater during the year 1860-61, and then was returned to St. Paul to serve at Jackson Street Church. In 1864, he was appointed to Winona, where he remained two years. In 1866, this statement appears in the minutes: "The character of E. Eggleston was passed and he was, at his own request, granted a supernumerary relation and left without an appointment." His name remained on the Conference list as a temporary supernumerary until 1873. The last statement about him is in the minutes of the Conference of September, 1875: "E. Eggleston was passed in character and changed to the Supernumerary list."³⁶

While in St. Paul, Mr. Eggleston gave lectures and helped to organize and promote the St. Paul Library Association. In 1863, he was elected corresponding secretary and librarian of this association.

"At the Annual Conference held in St. Paul, Sept. 7-12, 1864, Bishop Kingsley presiding, Edward Eggleston was appointed to this Winona Station," says Matthew G. Norton, who adds:

At the Conference held in Fairbault, Sept. 21-21, 1865, Bishop Thompson presiding, Brother Eggleston was returned to Winona. In

³⁴ *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 2, 1888.

³⁵ Minutes of the Minnesota Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1857.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1875.

February, 1866, Brother Eggleston, on account of failing health requested to be relieved from the charge. This church had long desired Brother Eggleston as its pastor and we were made happy when he came to us. He was a brother dearly beloved and it was a source of great grief and sorrow when the condition of his health made it impossible for him to remain longer with us. The Winona church has always been thankful that so much of his life was given to it, and even in his going we did not withhold our love from him.³⁷

Mr. Arrin F. Smith, of the Winona Central Church, gives his boyhood impressions of Edward Eggleston:

I was only a boy of ten when Mr. Eggleston came to Winona but as my mother was one of several relatives, that were Methodists and it was at that time customary to have the minister among them, when a bit of company was present, I often had the pleasure of hearing Brother Eggleston tell of his travels in and about the country. As I remember he traveled and gave lectures which he illustrated with stereoptican pictures. He was an accomplished raconteur and we of the "second table guests" used to hang around the dining room doors to hear the stories he told. He had a command of language that gave a rhythmic flow of words—a genial personality and an admirable talker with an eye for the picturesque and a sense of humor, a charming character.³⁸

He gradually outgrew his feeling that his urge to write and his intellectual development were inspired by evil and began contributing stories to a juvenile paper, *The Little Corporal*. So great was his success that he was invited to become its associate editor in 1866. He accepted the offer and removed to Evanston, Illinois. He edited the *National Sunday School Teacher* for a period and wrote for the *New York Independent* under the name "Penholder". In 1870 he became editor of the *Independent* and felt that he had reached the height of his ambition, but, after six months, he had a political difference with the owner and resigned.

He then edited *Hearth and Home*, and first published the story, "The Hoosier School Master", in it as a serial to increase the circulation of the magazine. The owners objected to fiction but subscribers increased in number so rapidly that their objections were overcome. Eggleston's record novel, *The End of the World*, soon followed. It was very popular. *The Mystery of Metropolisville* and the *Circuit Rider* were novels based on his nine years as an itinerant minister in Minnesota.

³⁷ Statement of Matthew G. Norton, 1905. Mss. collection of Central Church, Winona, Minn.

³⁸ Arrin F. Smith to the writer.

In this period, the Methodist Church severely criticised members who indulged in reading fiction, so a preacher who wrote and published novels could not expect to escape criticism. One clergyman advised Mr. Eggleston to "Throw away ambition, for a literary life is tempting you to destruction."³⁹ Another one threatened a heresy prosecution on account of a remark of one of his characters.

After the publication of *The End of the World*, Mr. Eggleston resigned as editor of *Hearth and Home*, and his brother, George Cary, succeeded him. Now, he devoted all his time to literary work. He was invited to take charge of the Lee Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, New York, in 1874, to prove that religion should be an expression of service to humanity without creed, and accepted. He spent all of his salary on charity and provided for his family out of royalties from his copyrighted books. The name that he coined for his charge, "Church of Christian Endeavor", is perpetuated in the young people's societies of several denominations. He served this creedless Church for five years, it being the only church of any kind that he served after leaving Minnesota.⁴⁰

He intended to base his literary reputation on a series of United States histories, and to obtain information he toured Europe in 1879-1880, devoted his time to historical research in regard to the beginnings of American history. After his return, he and his brother built beautiful homes on the shore of Lake George at Joshua's Rock, N. Y. Edward Eggleston's residence and his library, a separate building, are structures of artistic beauty, built of native traprock of beautiful and varied colors. He called his home "Owls' Nest", and George Cary Eggleston's home near by was named "Culross". In regard to this location, Mr. Eggleston wrote:

Joshua's Rock is five miles from Caldwell. We live remote from everybody, only the mountain farmers are our neighbors and our only society is that of the wood fire. We like our life here among the woods and trees and flowers very much, but we are never sure how our friends will like such a lonely place.⁴¹

His three daughters developed into accomplished women. Mrs. Elizabeth (Eggleston) Seeley assisted her father in writ-

³⁹ G. C. Eggleston, *First of the Hoosiers*, 307-8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 318. While in Brooklyn Edward Eggleston lived at 311 Adelphi Street.

⁴¹ Edward Eggleston letters, *Indianapolis Star*, June 17, 1931.

ing his Indian biography, a new style of literature in which he had no competitor. The second daughter Allegra, was the artist who illustrated *The Graysons* and numerous articles published in the *Century Magazine* in the nineties. Her art signature is Æ. The wife and mother died in 1889 and is buried in a private cemetery on their estate at Joshua's Rock.

When a man becomes famous his life is no longer private and free, and he seeks the quiet place away from the throng to continue his line of work. At *Owl's Nest*, Mr. Eggleston collected a library comprising 4000 volumes, besides many old prints, casts, manuscripts, autographs of famous people, curios and antiquated wood blocks for illustrating his histories of the United States.⁴² Here he wrote *The Beginners of a Nation*, *The Transit of Civilization*, and several of his school histories. When funds ran short for historical research, he laid it aside and wrote something that would bring immediate returns. This was the real reason that he wrote *The Faith Doctor*. Twenty years he devoted to study to produce his histories of the United States. They show careful research and talent, but are now largely forgotten while his fiction is still widely read.

The famous author delivered eight lectures on history at Columbia College and wrote thirteen articles for the *Century* after November, 1882, while he was compiling his histories and beginning his historical career. However, his fame rests chiefly upon his first dialect novel, the *Hoosier School Master*, which after sixty-five years still sells. The book has proved itself to be a sort of *Nicholas Nickelby* to America through the portrayal of the life of "Hanna, the bound-girl."

On September 15, 1891, Edward Eggleston married Frances Goode of Madison, Indiana. Miss Goode, the second wife of the famous author, was the grand-daughter of Judge Miles Eggleston, who came to Indiana in advance of Joseph C. Eggleston to make his home at Madison. He was famous for his decisions in a number of Indiana's pioneer trials. Mr. Eggleston and his wife spent their summers at "Owl's Nest", Joshua's Rock, New York, where the writer continued to produce books. He also lectured at Chatauqua, New York, at Philadelphia and other places. On May 3, 1893, he lectured in his native little city, Vevay, on "How They Live in Ireland". The winters were spent in New York City, Washington, D. C., and Madison, Indiana.

⁴² This collection of books, etc., was given by the heirs of Edward Eggleston to the State Library at Albany, N. Y.

In this period, George Cary Eggleston was living at "Culross", his home at Joshua's Rock. He was busy writing *Evelyn Byrd* and other works of fiction. The brothers were always genial companions, and these years that they spent together were precious to both. After the death of Edward in 1902, George Cary Eggleston completed and revised *The New Century History of the United States*, which was inscribed: "In memory of Edward Eggleston." At "Culross" George Cary also wrote *The First of the Hoosiers*, which appeared in 1903. This is the story of the closely interwoven lives of the brother authors. The book was fittingly dedicated: "To those who loved Edward Eggleston—not to any one of them, but to all—I dedicate this tribute to his memory.—George Cary Eggleston."

"The Eggleston Library of Vevay" was named in honor of Edward Eggleston in 1877. The author was particularly pleased that his birthplace was the first to honor him for his literary achievements. His response shows his affection for the home of his boyhood. To the members of the Library Committee, he wrote:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your flattering and gratifying letter of the 29th inst. with information in regard to the New Library Association in the City of Vevay which you have done me the honor to name for me. There are no more honors after that. If there is anything in the world a far wandering adventurous man desires it is to be remembered by those whose fortune kept them in their old home. To me Vevay is home in a sense that no other place in the world is home. As the years go on, the love of the lovely old town grows to be a passion in me. I keep fresh the memory of all the haunts of my boyhood, the wild grape vines that I plundered, the hickory trees where I filled my basket, the thicket in Tardy's field where I gathered wild flowers for the girls. Sometimes the old sights and sounds come back so vividly as to give me a touch of home sickness, such that I think of cutting all cords that tie me to the life in the great city and coming back one day to live again where I went to school, played town ball, three old cat, bull pen and marbles. This naming of the library association for me is like a love message from home to a home sick school boy. I am not quite forgotten in the dear old town!

I wish you all success. I have to thank the directors and the association for the great honor they have conferred upon me and for the flattering terms of the resolutions which I am sure I do not deserve.⁴³

The "Eggleston Library" did not prosper, but the "Eggleston Club" perpetuates Edward's name in the town where

⁴³ Eggleston to Messrs. F. M. Griffith, George S. Pleasant, and J. W. Baxter, Jr. (Library Committee), Brooklyn, N. Y., Sept. 29, 1897. The letter was published in *Reveille* after its receipt by the Committee.

he was born. In 1908, when the Upper Seminary School of Madison, Indiana, where Edward Eggleston had once been a pupil and teacher, was replaced by a handsome, modern school building, it was re-christened the "Eggleston School" in honor of the memory of the novelist.⁴⁴

It is very probable that the Methodist minister who engaged in literary efforts on the side was influenced somewhat to turn to a literary career because of the criticism that he received from churchmen. It seems probable, too, that his sincere attachment to religious activities made him feel the criticism so keenly that he turned from historical romance to historical research and the writing of history. In the field of history, the competition of trained and experienced writers was severe, which made it necessary for Eggleston to spend years in preparation. In the field of the realistic novel he was alone when he wrote his frontier romances. Had it not been for the harsh criticism that was meted out to him as a novel-writing clergyman, his fame as a writer of fiction might be greater than it is. Even so, it is as a writer of novels, not as a writer of history, that he is remembered today and will continue to be remembered.

Edward Eggleston remains the first and one of the few great American writers who have succeeded in giving to their work the genuine savor of the soil, homespun and native.⁴⁵ In 1873, in his "Preface" to *The Mystery of Metropolisville*, this early exponent of realistic fiction made a noble defense of his departure from orthodox writing:

A novel should be the truest of books. It partakes in a certain sense of the nature of both history and art. It needs to be true to human nature in its permanent and essential qualities, and it should truthfully represent some specific and temporary manifestation of human nature. It has been objected that I have copied life too closely, but it seems to me that the work to be done just now, is to represent the forms and spirit of our own life, and thus free ourselves from habitual imitation of that which is foreign. I have wished to make my stories valuable as a contribution to the history of civilization in America. If it be urged that this is not the highest function, I reply that it is just now the most necessary function of this kind of literature. Of the value of these stories as works of art, others must judge; but I shall have at least rendered one substantial though humble service to our literature, if I have portrayed correctly certain forms of American life and manners.

⁴⁴ Madison (Indiana) *Courier*, Apr. 28, 1937.

⁴⁵ For an excellent, short sketch of Edward Eggleston's life and work, see the article by Dr. Ralph R. Rusk, formerly on the faculty of Indiana University, in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.