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FIDELITY NOT ESSENTIAL

A REMINISCENCE

How Judge Albion W. Tourgee Came To Mayville

One morning in the early spring of 1881, a gentleman then quite prominently before the public, in passing through Buffalo, enroute to Chicago from Philadelphia, bought the day's paper from an insistent newsboy, as he boarded the train for the west. After settling himself in the Pullman for an all day's ride, he opened the journal for a glance at the morning's news. His attention was at once attracted to an advertisement in the middle of the page, by the picture of an imposing looking house for sale at Mayville, on Chautauqua Lake. Being then in search of a summer home, he studied the description of the house and grounds with much interest, and all the day as he sped on to his destination, his mind would revert to the home he might have in this picturesque region. The "best seller," with which he had provided himself to while away the tedium of the trip, could not hold his attention, and by the time Chicago was reached, he had fully made up his mind to stop on his return and learn more about this property. Accordingly, a few days later he left the east-bound train at Westfield, and hiring a conveyance, was driven over the hills to Mayville. The prospect was not an encouraging one, the mud up to the hubs, and great swamps

banks were occasionally encountered on both sides of the road, and there were frequent evidences of the road meaninging off into the lake because of the drifts. But the morning was bright and clear, and just as the steeple of Mayville came into view the driver called attention to Lake Chautauqua dimpling in the sunshine before, then bade the gentleman look behind at the broad expanse of Lake Erie distinctly outlined against the horizon. This prospect was very pleasing, and as he was looking for a summer home, the evident severity of the winter in this region, did not dampen his ardor for farther investigation.

After a hasty dinner at the hotel, he sauntered out and soon came to the house, which was easily recognized from the picture he still carried in his mind, and he was fortunate in finding the caretaker within. Without giving his name, he was courteously shown over the mansion, which had just been redecorated in good taste and the latest style, and he was more than pleased with all he saw. He was ~~greatly~~ interested in the history of the house as then related to him, it having been built regardless of cost, during the Civil War by a man as a wedding present to his daughter. Evil times came and the property had long since passed from the builder's hands by mortgage, and was then for sale by Pascal P. Pratt, of Buffalo.

On reaching Philadelphia a letter was written, which was immediately answered by an agent of Mr. Pratt's coming on, with authority to make the sale. Before he left the city, a bargain was made for the purchase of this property followed within a week by the deed and abstract of title running back to the Holland Land Company.

Visitors at Chautauqua in going by trolley up the hill from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station at Mayville may note the sign, "Thorheim" on the right hand side of the road, before a rather stately house of the style of the early '60's. The name signifies "Fool's Home," and was given to this place by the owner, when he came to live here in June, 1881. It does not seem necessary to state who the gentleman was who bought the Buffalo paper, a couple of months before that date.

Judge Tourgee died at New York, N. Y., on August 10, 1906, and was buried in the Westwood cemetery at New York.