



CLARK DUNHAM.

Editor of *The Burlington Hawk-Eye* during the Civil War.

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SOMETIME EDITOR OF THE BURLINGTON HAWK-EYE.

BY GEORGE FRAZEE.

An honorable ancestry is a rich possession. Though it is true that the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children to the third and fourth generation, it is equally true that their virtues influence their descendants to generations quite as remote. If "the evil that men do lives after them" their good deeds, though apparently "buried with their bones" never intermit their potency; though the doers may have been forgotten. The leaven of liberty and independence which the May Flower transported to the wild and inhospitable New England coast, has quickened the whole civilized world. Many hundreds of millions of people have since been elevated from serfdom into conditions of absolute or comparative freedom. This continent has been made republican, and is teaching the kings of Europe that sovereignty belongs to the people of whom they are the mere ministerial servants.

This Puritan leaven is still doing its proper work. The far East is beginning to feel its influence. It is awakening from its many centuries of slumber, and is already striving to array itself in the garb of true manhood. Yes,—the leaven still works, and its influence is now world wide. Good has overcome evil, and the tendency of humanity everywhere is now onward and upward.

If these ideas are true, as they seem to be, he who in our day is descended from those who planted the regenerative seed, or assisted in protecting the plant before it had become completely rooted, certainly has an ancestry in whom he may feel a reasonable pride, and in whose example he may find a stimulus for good.

Clark Dunham was more fortunate in his ancestry than most men of his generation. On one side he was a direct descendant of Elder Brewster, one of the leaders of the May

Flower Puritans. Some of that Puritan blood ran in his veins, and it will appear that some of the Puritan characteristics were pretty fully developed in his life. Their independence, their self-reliance, their courage, their persistence, were his also. The quiet but unfaltering and unalterable determination of his ancestors manifested itself in the descendant. Neither paraded their conduct or purposes. They left their doings to speak for themselves. Both were satisfied with having done well the work before them. They were not eager to secure the praise of others. The consciousness of right doing was reward enough for them.

Coming farther down, he had as good reason to feel a quiet satisfaction. His great-grandfather, Nathaniel Wales, was ensign of a company of the third regiment of Connecticut troops during the revolution, and in that capacity served under Colonel, afterwards General Israel Putnam. Subsequently he was appointed Captain in the regiment commanded by Colonel Ward, and his son, Elial, grandfather of Clark Dunham served as aide. It then appears that the love of liberty and independence, and the resolve to support and defend them came to Clark Dunham by direct descent, and were not likely to be found wanting in one who had such memories and examples to stimulate him.

Asahel Dunham, the father of Clark, was married to Susan Wales, at Norwich, Conn., October 30, 1814, and their son, Clark, was born at New Haven, Addison County, Vermont, January 21, 1816. About two years thereafter the family left Vermont for Ohio, and located itself at Hartford, in Licking County, where its members sought to enjoy themselves, as conditions permitted, in the most commodious house the place then contained. This was a log-cabin which boasted of two rooms and looked down with becoming dignity upon the neighboring one room structures. It must be remembered that in 1818 Ohio was a western border state, and that a log-cabin, though of only one room, was deemed a very comfortable abode by many exceedingly worthy people. The

Ohio pioneers had much hard work before them. The whole state was a woodland, and clearing the land was necessarily preliminary to cultivation. They were not as anxious for more house-room, as they were for more space for the plow. So they bided their time for house structure until with sturdy arms they had made themselves sure of a plentiful supply of the necessaries of life. Here the Clark family resided until 1826 when it removed to Newark, in the same county.

In this place the father established a brick-yard and engaged in the business of brick making. Clark was then about ten years old. How much schooling he had obtained in his earlier abode and what schools he may have attended in Newark, is not precisely known. He was undoubtedly a sturdy boy and his Connecticut parents were not likely to have allowed his early education to be neglected. He seems to have manifested a special desire to learn, and this must have been encouraged by his father, who compensated him for his labor about the brickyard and thus enabled him to pay his way through the College, at Granville, only six miles from Newark, where he was graduated at the early age of nineteen years.

During his school and college days or immediately thereafter, he made himself acquainted with the printer's art for which he seems to have taken a liking. His father appears to have approved his choice for about a year after his graduation he purchased for him, and Clark thereafter published and edited *The Newark Weekly Gazette*, and a tri-weekly called *The Farmer's Journal*. He continued these publications until 1850, a period of about fourteen years. During this period he acquired his knowledge of men and his editorial experience was ripened into sound judgment and sagacity. Fourteen years of editorial labor, in a city like Newark could not fail to round out the character of such a man and make him well acquainted with political events and the general drift and current of the times. They probably also made him familiar with many public men both of Ohio and other states.

It appears that in 1850 he sold his newspaper property at Newark and was afterwards engaged for some time in the construction of the Sandusky & Newark railroad, which has since become the property of the Baltimore & Ohio Railway Company. The reasons for this change of occupation cannot now be stated with certainty. It may have been because he found newspaper publishing less profitable than he desired, and his expectation that his new employment would more nearly satisfy his wishes. He may have become weary of his unceasing work, and eager for any change which would give him rest. Or possibly his sagacity foresaw the troublous times which were impending, and he deemed it wise to sell before the storm, which would certainly affect newspaper property, should culminate. For some or all of these reasons, he, for the time, relinquished his connection with the Press and sought other pursuits. The railroad construction engagement does not appear to have proved very satisfactory. He must have realized something from the sale of his newspaper, but this seems to have been exhausted during his later occupation, for, when he came to Burlington, in 1854, he brought with him as his son humorously remarks, "his wife, five children and nine dollars."

*The Hawk-Eye* at that date was issued three times a week. It had not as yet attained the dignity of a daily. It was moreover in a somewhat dilapidated condition. It was a Whig paper as it had always been, but the Whig party was in a measure undergoing dissolution. The Compromise laws of 1850 had caused a great division of opinion in its ranks, and the newspapers, especially those of such cities as Burlington, were very seriously affected. Under the control of its then proprietor and editor, it had failed to conform to the drift of the larger part of the party, or to recognize the change which was in rapid progress. It had become unacceptable to very many of its former patrons. It was losing money and its owner was ready and anxious to get rid of what had become too heavy a burden for him to carry.

So Mr. Dunham in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Mr. John L. Brown, became the purchasers at the price of twenty-five hundred dollars. Mr. Brown was entirely ignorant of newspaper business and conduct but he had means and credit. Mr. Dunham had experience and ability and the two published the paper under the name of Dunham & Brown. Mr. Dunham acted as sole editor, and he at once put the paper in line with the general drift of Whig opinions, which of course was in opposition to those who were then striving to seduce all the western territories to pro-slavery domination.

Millard Fillmore, who had become President upon the death of General Taylor, had approved the compromise measures of 1850, and had been succeeded by Franklin Pierce, "a northern man with southern principles." The Kansas troubles were brewing and both the old political parties were in a tumultuous condition. In the north some former Whigs went over to the Democracy, but a much larger number of Democrats deserted their party. The result of these changes was the union of all who were opposed to the pro-slavery pretensions, and the final disappearance of the Whig and the organization of the Republican party, which made its first presidential nomination in 1856, when it selected Fremont who was defeated by Buchanan.

Mr. Dunham had a difficult work before him when he took charge of *The Hawk-Eye*. To build up the paper was a necessity and to do this he must, while advocating his own and the Republican opinion, take care not to give mortal offense to those of his patrons who entertained different views. In this he succeeded. He was capable of hard work, and during his first year, with none to assist, he did an enormous amount of very severe labor, and so judiciously as to gratify his party supporters and excite no animosity in others. The paper soon began to prosper. That this improvement was marked and rapid is made evident by the fact that about two years subsequent to his assumption of its control,

he was able to purchase the interest of his brother-in-law, Mr. Brown, and thenceforth, his own name appeared as sole owner and editor.

A little later in 1857 he bought the *Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, which had been published for about eight years under the editorial control of Gen. James M. Morgan, and for a short time the paper was entitled "*The Hawk-Eye and Telegraph*." But the title was soon dropped and the original one resumed and ever afterward retained. These results were produced by his industry, his judicious estimate and selection of matter that would interest his readers, and his editorial prudence and sagacity. During this early period his editorial columns were never burdened with superfluous or useless matter. He never wrote unless he had something to say, and that he put down with brevity and force. Above most editors he understood the value of silence; and allowed all matters to pass unnoticed unless he was certain that what he might be able to say would be productive of good. He was never anxious about the quantity of editorial matter his papers contained, and sometimes very little would appear. But he was choice in his selections from other papers and when he found an article treating of current political topics in a manner to suit his judgment he was sure to give it further effect by transferring it to his own columns.

He soon made himself more or less acquainted with prominent public men of all parties in the State. He was a close observer, and soon ascertained the weak and strong points in the characters of those with whom he came in contact. But he was in no haste to proclaim his opinions and never did so until he deemed it necessary. And he very soon secured the confidence of leading Republicans of the State who found his knowledge useful and his judgment sound. He warmly supported Governor Grimes while he was chief executive and throughout his senatorial career.

Down to the opening of the Rebellion in 1861, Mr. Dunham conducted his paper with continued success as a busi-

ness venture, and a growing power on the side of patriotism and humanity. He was honest and in earnest. The times were portentous of evil and danger. But he was courageous and bold. He foresaw the peril but he was not afraid to meet it. His thoughts were close to the popular sentiment of the North, and his nature would not permit him to "despair of the republic." He was modest and unpretentious, there was nothing of the braggart in his disposition or character, but there was indomitable will and unutterable resolution. He could not avoid being intensely patriotic. The blood in his veins would have revolted had he exhibited less love of his country or any fear of those who might venture to spoil it. He had confidence in the people and entertained no doubt of their ability and determination to maintain their institutions against either internal or external assault.

Among the prominent candidates for the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1860, he seemed to lean most in favor of Seward, and was somewhat disappointed when the choice at last settled upon Lincoln. He was not alone in this, for only a comparatively few people were acquainted with Lincoln's wonderful character and ability. But *The Hawk-Eye* adopted Lincoln's nomination with alacrity and gave him a very earnest and effective support. And this support grew in favor and intensity until the assassin's bullet put an end to the life of him whose wisdom, sagacity, courage and persistence were mainly the means of averting national dissolution.

Throughout the war which followed *The Hawk-Eye* grew more and more earnest and its patriotic utterances more and more effective. Its circulation increased largely. It sympathized with the patriotic volunteers who so nobly suffered or died for their country's salvation. Above all, it never flinched during the contest, but constantly insisted that the conflict could not cease until the rebellion was utterly suppressed. The people throughout the region west of Burling-

ton were hungry for news, and anxious for wise advice. *The Hawk-Eye*, more than any other state newspaper, satisfied both desires. It prospered because it deserved and honestly earned all that came to it. *The Hawk-Eye* was probably the first journal to announce its belief that war was inevitable, and that it would most probably be a long and desperate one, as General Matthies of Burlington was the first man in the country to tender his services in its defense.

During this period much of the editorial writing was done by others, but it was done with his approval or suggestion, and was not allowed to express any opinions which did not tend to encourage patriotic devotion and endeavor. *The Hawk-Eye* never faltered from beginning to end of the rebellion, in its urgent appeals for the preservation of the Union, and the support and encouragement of those who had gallantly volunteered in its defense and were undergoing the hardships and perils of a soldier's life at the front. Perhaps it is not too much to say that to *The Hawk-Eye*, under the patriotic and sagacious control of Mr. Dunham, and to the other papers of the State which imitated his example, Iowa is indebted for its prompt response to all the calls for troops. The Union men of Iowa were in earnest and proved that they were patriotic by their willingness to make any sacrifice required by the exigencies of the war. The war ceased in the spring of 1865 and before the year ended Mr. Dunham sold his paper to Edwards & Beardsley, for a sum which he doubtless deemed satisfactory, and then abandoned the editorial chair he had so long and so honorably occupied, never again to resume it. Probably he sold the more readily because the war anxiety for news being over, the extra demand for *The Hawk-Eye* ceased and its continued profitable publication without diminution of expenses had become a matter of doubt. Besides, his health and vigor were impaired. He obtained full value and was wise when he accepted it and retired for a season of rest.

As before stated, during his publication of *The Hawk-Eye*

Mr. Dunham had acquired an extensive and desirable acquaintance throughout the State. He had become the intimate friend and to some extent the counsellor of Senator Grimes, Representative James F. Wilson and Governor Kirkwood, as well as many other prominent public men. And the intimacy did not terminate with his editorial career. From a letter written by Mr. Wilson in April, 1868—when there had been some intimation that the gentleman would decline a re-election as representative—it appears that Mr. Dunham had urgently advised him to continue in the field, which advice seems to have been followed and probably led to the subsequent senatorial career of Mr. Wilson. Governor Kirkwood attained senatorial honors and also became Secretary of the Interior. The friendship of such men indicates the character and worth of the man on whom it was bestowed. And we glean something of his wisdom from a letter to his son, who was just merging into manhood, dated June, 1866. It exhibits great interest in the son's future, and advises him to deliberate well before choosing his life pursuit, and having made his choice, to enter upon it at once, and thereafter to adhere to it, regardless of immediate reward, firmly and persistently. He tells him to be self-reliant, not to lean upon others, and to do whatever he should undertake well and faithfully, as this course would be certain to secure for him proper and sufficient reward.

For a time Mr. Dunham rested, engaging in no business or particular pursuit. His health was not good or he would probably have found some employment, for he was a natural enemy of idleness. Probably for this reason about two years after, in 1867, he accepted the position of postmaster at Burlington, and continued to occupy that post until his death on April 12, 1871, being then a little over fifty-four years old. The immediate cause of his early decease was an abscess of his right lung, the result of a severe cold, which after running its wasting course for nine months proved incurable and ended fatally.

Mr. Dunham was about five feet, ten inches in height, and probably weighed one hundred and seventy pounds. In his maturity he possessed unusual strength, and was always vigorous and energetic in his movements. His habits were those of an industrious, temperate, modest, honest and good-tempered citizen, of intelligence and self-respect. Had he been engaged in other business he would have earned the regard and confidence of all with whom he became acquainted. His probity was always unquestioned and unquestionable.

As editor his unusual qualifications have already been sufficiently indicated. What gave them force and made them effective was the fact that in his secret thoughts and desires, he recognized the wishes and purposes of the great mass of his fellow men, and when he proclaimed his own sincere thought it was certain to prove acceptable to others. He occupied the broad plane of our common humanity and had no desire to rise above it. He was a man of the people, not of a class.

Clark Dunham was married to Lucretia Adams Williams in Newark, O., January 21, 1841. At his decease he was survived by his wife and four children, Frank Reese Dunham, Mrs. Charles B. Clapp, Mrs. Edwin H. Carpenter of Burlington, and Mrs. Harry Ball, of Columbus, Ohio.

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PRODUCTS OF IOWA.—No better evidence of the prosperity of this Territory can be given than is seen in the numerous covered flat-boats that are daily going down stream, laden with all kinds of produce, both animal and vegetable. Upwards of one hundred boats of this description from Iowa alone, have already passed this place. Several have been built, laden and sent off from Burlington.—*Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot*, Nov. 19, 1840.

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