

“ A POLITICIAN OF THE PRIMARY DAYS.”

EDITOR OF THE ANNALS OF IOWA:—By the politeness of our mutual friend, Prof. T. S. Parvin, my attention was called to an article by Hon. Hawkins Taylor, in the October number of the ANNALS, page 708, which reflects discredit on the character of Hon. S. C. Hastings. The article contains some errors which I might correct, but the object of this communication is chiefly to call in question the propriety of Mr. Taylor, or our ANNALS, in publishing such disrespectful pieces, reflecting severely upon the character of our eminent men and pioneer settlers.

That Judge Hastings took a very conspicuous part in politics in the early history of the territory, or state, is true; and that he drank whisky, and used profane language, is also true. Is Mr. Taylor and the ANNALS correcting all these evils? If so, you have a great undertaking.

He is charged by Mr. Taylor with being a lawyer for the criminals. What of it? What criminal is without a lawyer? or what lawyer declines to serve in that capacity? Hastings got bail for the criminals, and Mr. Taylor says: “Hastings, the bail, and the two horse thieves left on the next steamboat, and neither the thieves, bail, nor attorney had been heard of in Dubuque thereafter, until he met Hastings as a member of the legislature.” That legislature met in Burlington. “Expressionless countenance!” No man ever walked our fair state with a more expressive countenance, or a nobler looking specimen of a man, than the subject of our remark. As a political leader of the Democratic party in this county, and in the territory and state, very few men acted with better judgment and profound statesmanlike wisdom. I well remember that Hon. Edw. Johnson, of Fort Madison, told me when I, as a Whig, was trying to berate some of Hastings’s acts: “I underrated the talent and influence of our representative,—that no man in our legislature

had more influence or talent than Mr. Hastings." Nor has Mr. Taylor pointed out a single dishonest act in Judge Hastings. He has left in Muscatine county an unblemished character for truth, veracity, and honesty. In proof of the estimation and confidence the people put in him, in the twelve years he lived here he was twice elected to the house in our legislature, once speaker of the house, once to the state senate, once to congress, appointed by the governor a judge on the supreme bench. In all these offices of trust he discharged his official duties with ability and fidelity. Nor should he who seeks professional practice, gold, and lands in California, in all of which Judge Hastings was eminently successful, be considered less patriotic than he who seeks a clerkship in Washington.

SUEL FOSTER.

MONETAH.---A Legend of Spirit Lake.

BY SAMUEL B. EVANS, OTTUMWA, IOWA.

THE cool, fresh wind, from the prairies,
 Was ruffling the bosom of the crystal lake;
 The early frost had kissed the oak leaves,
 And they blushed the hue of an Indian maid;
 The smoke of the camp fires of hunters
 Doomed to wander forever on the earth,
 Was clouding, in misty covering,
 The hill-tops and the timber by the brook.

A war tribe of the chief, Multnomah,
 Has gathered by the lake side a moon ago,
 And THEIR camp fires were burning brightly.
 And old men had told of the latest wonder,
 The story which had come from the east,

How that where the Sun comes out of the Water,
Big canoes with their white wings outspread,
Had come to the shore with white men and fire that talks.
Those were stories for old men and boys,
When the chase was over with and big shadows fell,
When the buffalo hump was eaten,
And the juicy antelope broiled on the coals;
But stories were told in the shadows,
Far sweeter to hear in the ears of a maid.

A tall young Sioux, who had slipped the sentry,
Was telling his tale to Multnomah's child;
She had loved him since early summer,
When he came with the hawk-skin bearing a bribe,
Offering the bear grounds on the river
For this beautiful land on the Lake of the Deer—;
Multnomah had scorned bribe and bearer,
He hated the Sioux from pappoose up to the chief.

The night dark — not a moonbeam dancing
Over the wavelets on that marvelous lake;
The lovers wandered near its border,
Talking softly and low, scarce breathing their joy,
When a leaf rustled behind them;
The Sioux turned — too late! the tomahawk fell!
'Twas buried in the crest of the lover:
Multnomah stood over him! — Monetah fled!

They saw her no more on the border,
But the legend is still heard in the camp,
That often as yet in the autumn,
When the shadows are thickest and the moon is hid,
A voice is heard out in the water
Of this beautiful, marvelous, crystal lake,
And the smoke from mystic camp fires
Wreathes above it in wonderful forms at night.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.