

LET THE SHANGHAI CROW!
Yours, in haste,

by Raymond A. Smith, Jr.

LET THE "HAWK EYE" GROAN.

Letter from our Special Correspondent,
W. H. KINSMAN, ESQ.,
Alias "BOB MARLINSPIKE."

The Gold of Pike's Peak no
Longer a Myth.

OUR FONDEST HOPE'S REALIZED.

GRAND ILLUMINATION.

REJOICING OF THE PEOPLE.

TRUTH VINDICATED. JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT

Letter from W. H. Kinsman.

We print below the first letter received from our correspondent, Mr. KINSMAN since his arrival in the mining regions. He left here, our readers will remember, in April, and made the entire journey to the mines on foot. After arriving at Cherry Creek, he immediately set out on an expedition into the mountain mining regions and in this letter he tells us what he there saw and heard. To the many who know Mr. KINSMAN while

... a single word need

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W. H. Kinsman

William H. Kinsman, born in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, in 1834, probably arrived in Council Bluffs, Iowa, sometime in the spring of 1858. He was killed in May 1863 at the Battle of Black River Bridge in the general vicinity of Vicksburg, Mississippi. But in the five years which he spent in Iowa or in the Fourth Iowa Infantry or the Twenty-third Iowa Infantry, William H. Kinsman made a mark on the history of the state which has not been effaced. He had gone to sea at the age of fifteen. At nineteen, he had settled first in New York and then begun a slow westward movement which found him moving first to Cleveland, Ohio, and eventually to Council Bluffs. By May 1858 he was variously engaged in studying law in the offices of Clinton and Baldwin, writing copy for William W. Maynard of the *Council Bluffs Weekly Nonpareil*, and making friends with properly placed individuals in the town.

In 1859 he was engaged as a special correspondent of the *Nonpareil* and sent west to the Pike's Peak region where a gold rush of sizable proportion was in progress. Kinsman made a remarkable trip on foot to the gold regions of Colorado, established to his own satisfaction the richness of the finds, and returned to Council Bluffs to answer the many naysayers who claimed the gold rush was the creation of outfitters and others along the banks of the Missouri River.

Kinsman's value as a correspondent was recognized by Maynard, and when the young man went to Washington City in 1859 he continued to file long despatches with the *Nonpareil* about life and politics in the nation's capital until well into April 1860 when he returned to his adopted home town. Kinsman's interest in politics had become apparent during the

gubernatorial campaign of 1859 and, in 1860, he was deeply involved in the Republican cause. Beyond becoming involved in the organization of the local Lincoln Club, he frequently spoke for the Republican cause.

Kinsman was already a Black Republican, and with the coming of the Civil War, he found a cause which was much to his liking. Following the organization of Company B of the Fourth Iowa Infantry, Kinsman was elected a second lieutenant in the outfit and was soon off to "war" — or something approximating it — in Missouri. Much of 1861 and early 1862 was spent by Kinsman and members of the Fourth Iowa in simply *waiting* but, finally, they found their first action at the Battle of Pea Ridge, in Arkansas, in March 1862.

That action was not immediately followed by others and Kinsman left the Fourth Iowa in late summer of 1862 to take a position as lieutenant colonel and second-in-command of the Twenty-third Iowa Infantry which was put together in Des Moines at that time. His commanding officer, Colonel Dewey, died of typhoid fever in December 1862, and thus Kinsman became a colonel and commanding officer of the Twenty-third Iowa in December 1862. Again it was a time of waiting for Kinsman and his men. Yet, when the regiment finally saw action, at Port Gibson in early May 1863, Kinsman was absent from his post. He had been court-martialed in the spring of 1863 for failing to obey an order from General Davidson, commander of the Army of South East Missouri. Found guilty, Kinsman had been removed from command of his regiment for a month. He returned to it only a few days before the engagement at Black River Bridge, where he would fall, mortally wounded, on the field of battle.

The battle at Black River Bridge brought to

an end a period of five hurried years in the life of William H. Kinsman. From 1858 to 1863 he was a man in haste, a man going somewhere, and a man whose goals and ambitions can only be faintly discerned at this point in history.

* * *

William H. Kinsman was a man of many talents. He was a skillful writer and narrator of tales. He had the ability to engage in a wide variety of activities almost simultaneously and do them equally well. He was a man of enormous ambitions at a time when the possession of almost-overweening ambitions was not looked upon negatively. To see this, one must only note Kinsman's letter to Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood of 3 January 1863 in which he requested that he be given an "Iowa Brigade of five regiments and four batteries to act independently in this southwestern region." He had been in command of the Twenty-third Iowa for barely a month at the time this letter was penned. Kinsman was a man who knew how to use influential friends and his rise from second lieutenant to colonel in just two years was the product of not only his own talents but the fortuitous help of a few key people. Kinsman seemed to be a man of many friends. Indeed, his sociability can be seen throughout the five years of his life amongst Iowans.

William H. Kinsman seemed to get involved in almost everything. He was everybody's secretary. When the Pottawattamie County Agricultural Society needed a secretary, he was there. When the Lincoln Club of Council Bluffs was first organized, Kinsman was its secretary. When the Teacher's Institute met in Council Bluffs, he was duly elected secretary. In addition to his connections with Clinton and Baldwin or Dexter C. Bloomer in the field of law, and his reportorial association with William W. Maynard and the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, he was equally prepared to deliver a Fourth of July oration, as he did at Honey

Creek in 1860, or collect accounts for his friend, Editor Maynard. He was fortunate in his choice of friends and associates. Perhaps this was nowhere more apparent than in his relationship with Grenville M. Dodge.

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Shortly after his arrival in Council Bluffs, William H. Kinsman launched himself on a journalistic career with the *Weekly Nonpareil*. William W. Maynard, editor of the newspaper, found a lot of space for Kinsman's prose in late 1858 and early 1859. Not only did Kinsman write so-called "Desultory Paragraphs," in which he commented on news of local moment, he also contributed several series of articles. In his earliest pieces, Kinsman wrote in almost patterned form of the sea, of the greatness of Iowa, of the needless suffering of a friend who had been thrown over by a woman, and, finally, of the failure of Council Bluffs to properly celebrate the Fourth of July for two years running. On the subjects of Iowa and the fickleness of women, Kinsman cast his prose in the comic epistolary form which had been a part of American journalism since the days of Benjamin Franklin and his Silence Do-Good.

But it was in his "Letters from Ravendale" that Kinsman hit his literary stride. In these eight letters, published between mid-July and mid-September 1858, Kinsman paid a kind of bucolic tribute in mythic form to the beauties of the land and people of southwestern Iowa. What he offered in this series of exhortations to his editor was a place to visit, a place in which to relax, a place in which to enjoy. Nowhere did he express it with greater clarity than in the first letter:

I don't intend any disparagement of your city, Mr. Editor. On the contrary, publishing the fact that a rural paradise lies nestling in the hills so near its precincts,

will operate like magic in drawing to the "Bluffs," multitudes who are seeking to combine business with pleasure. For what can be more grateful to a mind, harrassed [sic] and careworn with the struggles for wealth and fame, than to emerge at frequent intervals from the dust and turmoil of the city, and, entirely shut out from its sights and sounds, to revel for an hour among rustic scenes? Where the dark green groves, the winding river, and the waving grain spread out a panorama which laughs at the daubs of art? And the song of ten thousand birds, the hum of insect life, and the rustling of the coy maize, as the wandering zephyrs stoop to kiss it, sweep with a gentle lulling music across the chords of our "heart of hearts."

His Ravendale was indeed a rural paradise, complete with Sabbath school, a day school (taught by one William H. Kinsman), dances, picnics, frolicking equestrians and pedestrians, quiltings, and good harvests. Moreover, it was without much in the way of heavy drinking, and completely free of "orators," "haughty dames," and "gouty, grumbling wretches."

Kinsman's second series, "Sketches of the Sea," appeared in the *Nonpareil* between 25 December 1858 and 29 January 1859. In earlier pieces he had introduced his Council Bluffs readers to such things as burials at sea and a dance on board an emigrant ship. Now he described the catching of a whale, the detestable jobs on board a whaling ship, the savage destruction of storms at sea, going to church in the Bahamas, and the mistaking of an old log for a whale.

Kinsman could be whimsical and humorous, as he was in his Ravendale sketches, and he could be dramatic or even melodramatic, as he was in his sea stories. Yet Kinsman also inserted strong indicators of his political and social views into his journalistic work. Kinsman was a patriot and perhaps more. As he wrote in July

1858:

This annual jubilee is not merely a source of present gratification, but a necessity of our life. — The history of the world shows, that when a nation forgets the important eras in its existence — when it loses the landmarks by which it has advanced to greatness — its greatness has culminated and it is toppling to ruin. We are too young to die. We have yet a mighty work to perform. Then let us keep the life-blood bounding, and as each natal day rolls round give it a greeting that shall echo down the ages a thousand years to come.

He was a local patriot, which is another way of saying that he was a booster for both Iowa and Council Bluffs. Finally, Kinsman was a ladies' man. He wrote of "pretty girls," of "lovely bunches of femininity," and sometimes he fairly got carried away:

The blues never trouble me when I have such company. Women who can talk fluently of trifles, change their subject often, and clothe their thoughts in graceful diction, remind me of beautiful birds hopping from bough to bough, disporting their plumage in the sunlight, and showing to admiring beholders, a new and dazzling hue at every move. And then I remember, that those same birds can sit for hours upon a branch and thrill the very soul with the rich wild melody of their deeper natures.

The above-mentioned attributes were apparent in Kinsman's "Sketches of Council Bluffs," which appeared in the *Nonpareil* between 19 February and 19 March 1859. His first sketch offered a sort of hymn of praise for the physical charms of the town. He suggested that the average tourist, if asked what he

thought of Council Bluffs, would reply "good living, fast horses, and pretty women, but as for the town, I really can't say, as I haven't had time to look around!" Kinsman first described the surroundings of the town and then launched into one of his typically romantic puffs:

The city we have left lies nestling in the glens, sheltered from the blast of the tempest, and, like a blushing girl striving in vain to hide its charms; below it and beyond the mouth of the Mosquitoe valley, the sugar-loaf bluffs assume a thousand fanciful shapes, and he who loves nature in her fantastic moods can study them everyday and always find in them something new and pleasing. Above it the wood-crowned hills tower up from the margin of the lake, and bid a frowning defiance to the further encroachments of the river when it shall have burst through to their bases, and the sparkling fountains gushing from their sides, give the Bass and Pickerel below, a plentiful supply of pure cool water, which can easily be brought in pipes to the city to make a fish pond, and jet in the Public Square, and bubble up in our kitchens to the infinite delight of our tidy housekeepers.

It was characteristic of Kinsman the writer, however, that the final four of the five "Sketches of Council Bluffs" should be devoted not to the physical setting but to the people of the town. In curious fashion he gave one column each to the married men, the married women, the young men, and "OUR GIRLS." Of the married men he was quick to point out the diversity of origin of the male population. He compared Council Bluffs with its marked individualism to older towns of the East where a similarity of origin and experience had led to a sameness in thought and habits which bordered upon the dull. The benedicts of Council

Bluffs, on the other hand, had much to offer to the eastern investor and the local girls as well.

As for the married women, Kinsman suggested that Council Bluffs had furnished an ample share of those "noble mothers" who not only instill into their children the patriotic virtues so necessary in a proper republic, but also "perform their multifarious domestic duties," and finally, carry out numerous worthy acts of charity through their "benevolent association." His highly-charged prose at the conclusion of his column reached perfervid heights:

I have said that American mothers are the hope of the world! I repeat it, and add, that the mothers of Council Bluffs are among the noblest of that glorious band, whose mission it is silently and gradually, but no less surely to revolutionize the earth.

For the young men of the town, Kinsman reserved some of his rare barbs. Some of the young men were a bit too fond of whiskey, others lacked "intensity of purpose," while still others "seem to have no purpose at all." Kinsman, the inexorable worker, had little patience with the last group:

The present appears to engross their whole attention; and, if they ever dream of future wealth or distinction, no thought of patient plodding troubles their fancy, but they reach the objects of desire, at a single bound. Old age will find them still dreaming, and the dreams of their youth still unrealized. If they wish to build up a fortune, and carve a name in the Great West, they must work. It may be up hill business for years, but success will eventually follow, as sure as effect follows cause.

In a general conclusion, Kinsman admitted the young men of Council Bluffs were probably as

good as one could find anywhere with only a few follies to be corrected before they would become good husbands and good citizens.

Kinsman's views on women were never so plainly put forth as in his "Sketches of Council Bluffs — No. 5." Women, for Kinsman, were ever the dominant civilizing force. It was plain, moreover, that in his eyes, women stood more to lose than to gain by any sort of women's rights movement. Thus he began his piece as follows:

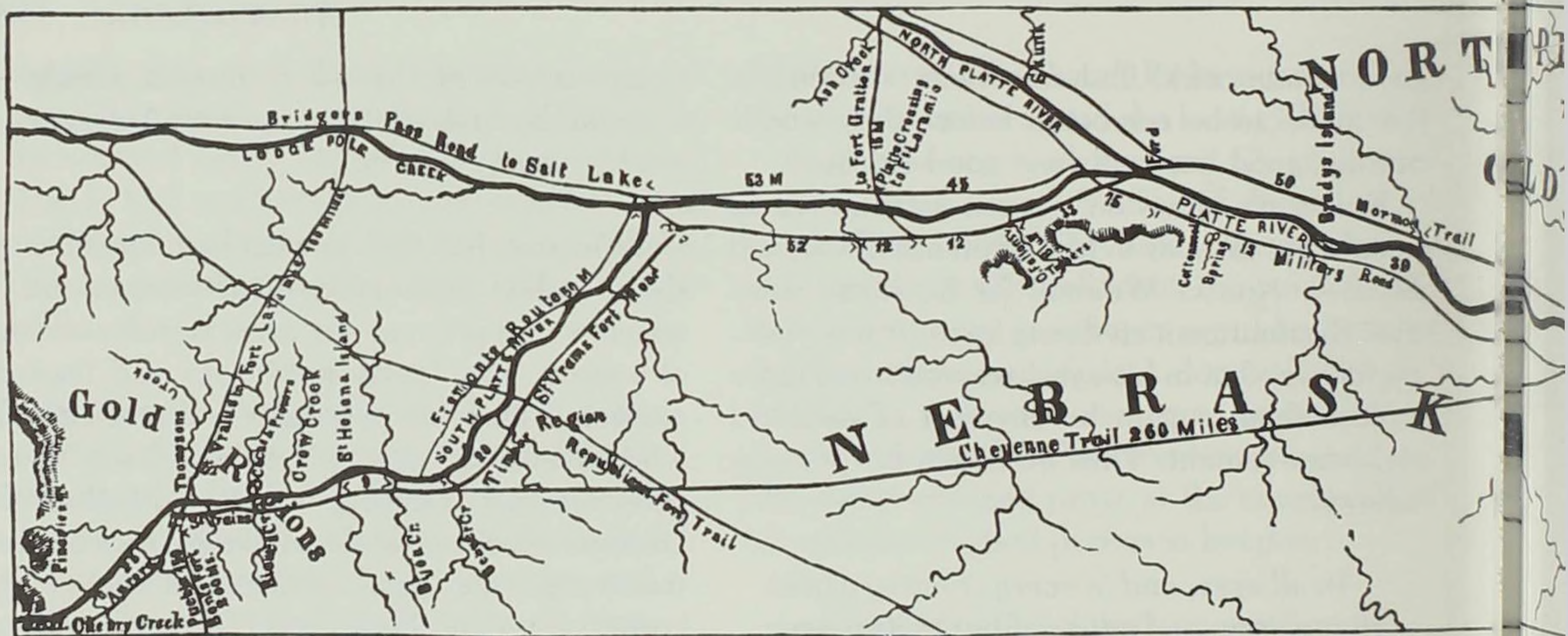
In all ages, and in every country where the customs and edicts of barbarism have not checked and chained down the natural impulses of the human heart, WOMAN has been regarded with a devotion approaching idolatry. From the first blush of maidenly loveliness, through all the successive stages of development — ripe womanhood and gentle decline, as sweetheart, wife and mother — she is the pole-star of hope, the centre of life and love, around which cluster the deepest and holiest affections of man. The autocrat of the world, she wears the diadem with the grace of an angel; and, while her power is gentle as the breath of morning, it is almost resistless as the will of Deity. — Talk of woman's rights! Why, she has been queen of hearts for six thousand years, and her enchanted banner floats over the lords of Creation to-day as proudly as when first she flung it to the breeze. Her government is absolute — man knows it; and, while she molds his destiny at her will, he reverences the power that elevates and ennobles him. Should she throw off her queenly dignity — should she lower that time-honored flag — the potent spell which binds his willing heart would be broken; the glory would depart from the house of Eve forever; society would dissolve into chaos, and the noble bark freighted with the hopes and

aspirations of the whole human family would be dashed to atoms on the breakers of "woman's rights."

But Kinsman had faith in what he referred to as the "modest conservatism of womankind," which would prevent any great transformation of women into "gassy politicians and booted warriors." He knew of no girls in Council Bluffs who advocated "woman's rights." They were busy enough "beating back the heathenish customs which settle down like harpies on the unwary pioneer, and wearing off the rough corners from the characters of fathers, brothers and lovers." Thus they were not giddy, quasi-frenchified, torturers of the piano, nor given over to the bustle and cosmetics. On the contrary, they were looking forward to the good times which Kinsman seemed to associate with the coming of the railroad, the instantaneous communication which electricity would provide, and more bountiful harvests of fruit. Kinsman's pictures of women tend, at times, to be somewhat confusing.

* * *

In April 1859 William H. Kinsman made a long and arduous trek from Council Bluffs to the gold regions of Colorado. The cry of "Gold!" had emanated from the Pike's Peak region in the summer of 1858 and that cry had a manifold impact on the citizens of Council Bluffs. Some individuals felt the tug and the lure of instant wealth and, forgetful of their experiences — or others' experiences — in California in 1849 and the early 1850s, hurried west to the gold fields. Others, realizing that more wealth might be made off the miners than in mining, sought to establish Council Bluffs as the primary outfitting center for gold-seekers headed west. Kinsman, writing under the pseudonym "Bob Marlinspike," penned a long letter to the *Nonpareil* editor on 11 December 1858 in which he threw himself firmly into both



camps.

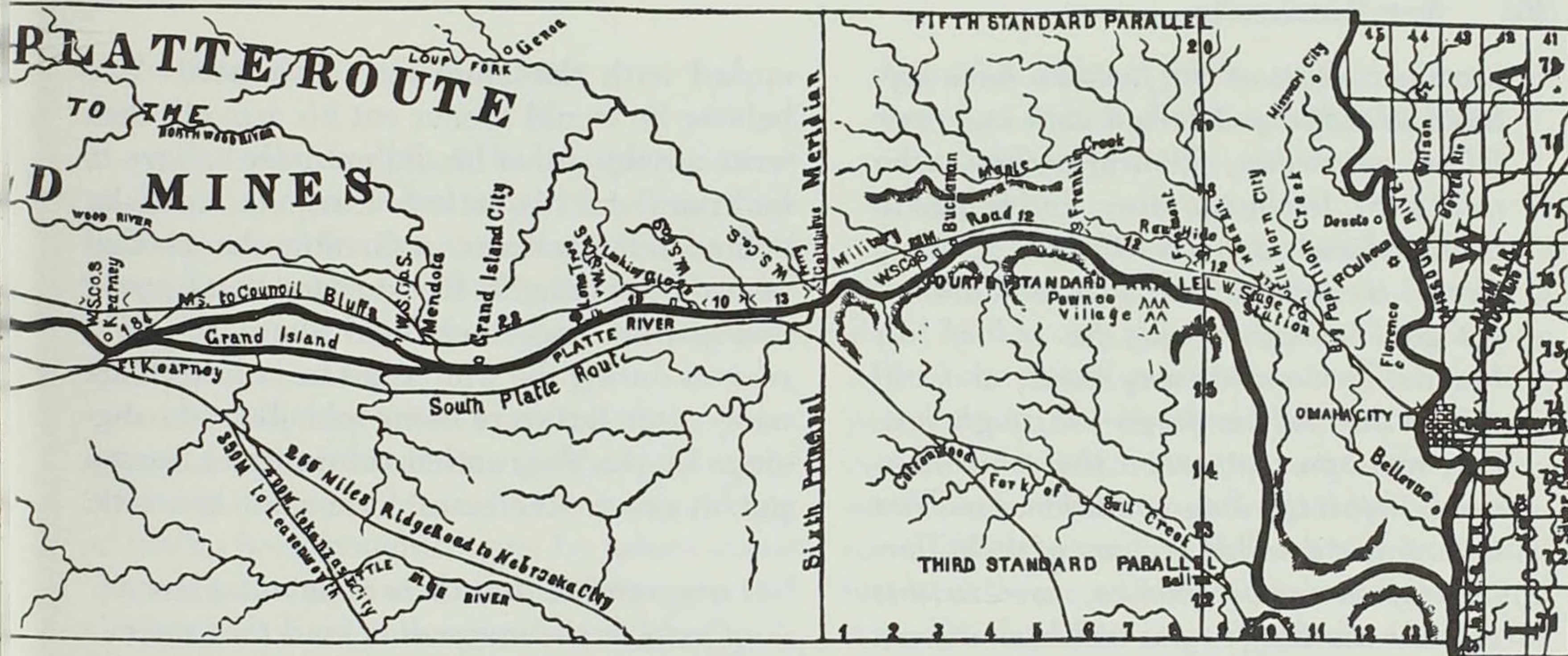
He described all the individuals who might be struck by gold fever: the millionaire, the sentimental youth, the bold heart, the children of poverty and disappointment, as well as the villain, the seducer, the assassin, and the renegade. But Kinsman was more interested in the effect that the gold rush would have upon the West generally. There would be new states, a further push of civilization — most particularly by the extension of the railroad to the “sands of the Pacific,” and finally, a vast extension of American power into what we refer to today as the countries of the Pacific rim. He had virtually talked himself into believing the most optimistic of the tales from Auraria, and he ended his letter by saying he intended to venture west in the spring: “Already I feel the spell of the magician, and when the ice-king relaxes his grip on the prairie, I intend to follow the star of empire.”

In early 1859, however, there may well have been other reasons for Kinsman's venture westward to the Pike's Peak region. Council Bluffs was struggling with a bevy of other Missouri River Valley towns to become the primary outfitting town for the hundreds of prospectors who would be “waiting for the ice-king to relax his grip.” As early as 6 January 1859, Baldwin and Dodge, eminent entrepreneurs in

Council Bluffs, had had a long letter published in the *Chicago Daily Press and Tribune* in which they minutely described the route to the gold regions from Council Bluffs. It was the shortest route, they claimed, preferable to any route through Kansas City, Leavenworth, or St. Joseph, and prospectors could purchase provisions in Council Bluffs or in certain adjacent counties at prices comparable to any found in towns on the Mississippi River.

There was at least one more consideration that may have influenced Kinsman's decision to go west. In the spring of 1859 there was an increasingly large return migration of individuals who loudly proclaimed that the whole gold rush was a sham, a delusion, and a trick played upon the unsuspecting by individuals who could thereby turn a profit. Needless to say, if Council Bluffs was going to benefit from its position on the Platte route, it was necessary to scotch all such rumors, if rumors they were. What better way for Baldwin and Dodge and others involved in the economic well-being of Council Bluffs to put such damaging rumors to rest than to send to the gold regions a man whose honesty was unquestioned and whose regular correspondence with the *Nonpareil* would provide a proper vehicle for bringing out the truth of the whole matter?

Perhaps there was a bit of the prospector in



The Council Bluffs Weekly Nonpareil published this map to the gold region on 13 March 1859, along with a table of distances and descriptions of the route from Council Bluffs to the Cherry Creek gold mines, 540 miles distant.

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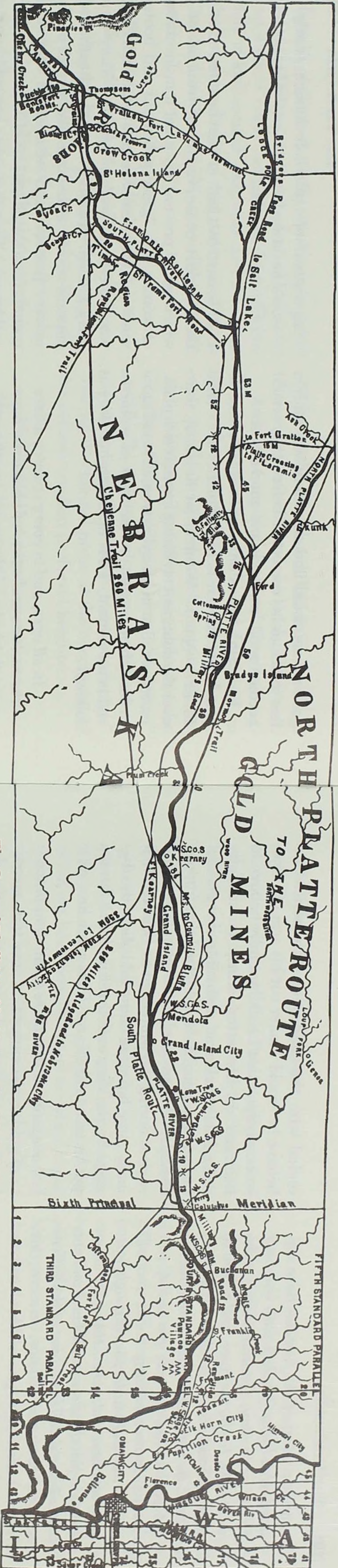
Kinsman wrote three letters while on his way to the gold regions: one from Loupe Fork Ferry, one from Lone Tree Station, and one from Fort Kearney. In those letters, he wrote of the difficulties that he and others faced on the trek west. His own partner, one Duvall, blistered his feet at an early stage of the trip, became increasingly lame, and finally gave up the venture at Fort Kearney. Kinsman was particularly graphic in describing the tribulations of the poor fellows who attempted the trip with handcarts. He admitted at one point that if he had it to do over again, he would have packed much less in the way of "grub," and would have taken a light shotgun along instead in order to take advantage of the abundant game in the Platte valley.

On the trip to Fort Kearney Kinsman experienced the usual rigors of a plains summer. There were several thunderstorms complete with hailstones, which he described as varying in size from "buckshot to pigeon eggs." But the trip was not at all bad, in Kinsman's terms. The

road varied from good to excellent, bridging was sufficient, and for those who wished to know, there was plenty of water and wood, and, eventually, there would be plenty of grass.

By the time he reached Fort Kearney, Kinsman was pessimistic about the prospects of finding much gold in the Pike's Peak region. He had met too many of the returning prospectors and heard too many of their stories to be anything other than doubtful about what lay ahead. He summed up his feelings in a letter dated 9 May 1859:

I am satisfied that there is not enough gold at Cherry Creek or any other creek in that region to pay for digging, and that a great many falsehoods have been circulated, concerning the richness of the diggings there. It remains yet to be seen, whether there are any deposits in the mountains that will pay. Hundreds of teams and a great number of footmen are going back — perfectly satisfied that they have been hoaxed. Many of them swear vengeance against the men who have been most active in spreading the glowing



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accounts. Most of the footmen have suffered dreadfully. I talked with one poor fellow yesterday, from Michigan, who went to St. Joe by the river, and helped to draw a hand-cart from there to Cherry Creek. He staid twenty days, and did not get gold enough to pay for a loaf [of] bread. He is on his way home, and will stop in the Bluffs as he goes through; but, why mention one, when there are hundreds in just the same condition. I will not enter into a detailed account of the sufferings of the poor fellows, as, ere this reaches the Bluffs, you will hear it from their own mouths.

But however pessimistic he may have been, Kinsman was not about to give up. After a short description of the military post at Fort Kearney, he concluded his letter with the short postscript: "I start off afoot and alone, for Denver City, as soon as this is mailed."

Kinsman's letter from Fort Kearney was published in the *Nonpareil* on 21 May 1859. More than a month passed before his next letter appeared, but the lapse of time was more than compensated for by the welcome news he had for the citizenry of Council Bluffs. The letter was introduced by a set of flamboyant headlines:

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Then followed an editorial comment about the correspondent's essential honesty, which

ended with the moderate statement: "we believe he would sooner cut his arm off, than write anything that he did not fully believe to be true." In his letter, Kinsman carefully defended himself against possible charges that he had been bought. He admitted that frontier newspapers had likely lied about the gold regions during the winter but he believed that many more lies were being told about the diggings by the disgruntled returnees. Kinsman put his case in its clearest form when he wrote:

I am satisfied that there is an abundance of gold in the mountains, and that some men are already making fortunes there very rapidly, although the diggings have been opened only a few days. The "Gregory diggings" on Kendall's fork of Clear Creek, are paying best at present; but I have no doubt that other diggings will be discovered in a very short time, that will pay as well as them. Remember, Mr. Editor, that I am writing my own impressions, from what I saw and heard, and as human nature is fallible, it is possible that the result will not confirm these statements, but I believe it will. It is possible that men are carrying on a gigantic swindle, by means of "salting" their claims in order to catch greenhorns. It is possible that hundreds of "iron men," who have braved the sneers and taunts of the returning emigration, and gone up into the mountains, are all being fooled on "salted" claims, but sir, it is not probable. I honestly believe, and I think hundreds of other men believe with me, that more than four dollars to the single pan, has been taken out at the Gregory diggings — that more than FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS has been taken from one sluice, the product of one day's labor by four men, and that two hundred and twenty-five dollars were taken from another sluice, last Wednesday, at noon, the product of one

half day's labor by four men.

Kinsman observed that the inexperience of many miners precluded much chance of their ultimate success. But he noted that he had found some pretty satisfied inhabitants of the gold regions, including a few from Council Bluffs and its environs.

In the following week's edition of the *Nonpareil*, another letter was published. Again Kinsman defended himself against the charge of having been bought. Again he talked about the vast population of miners in the region and the few who were making a success out of their labors. Finally, in this letter, Kinsman offered a detailed description of Horace Greeley's visit to the mining camps of Pike's Peak. Greeley spoke to a rather large gathering of miners, exhorting them to beware of gamblers and whiskey, pointing out to them the possibility of new states in the region, and of a Pacific railroad someday. There were four or five other speakers at the meeting and Kinsman felt obliged to comment on "the order, the manliness, [and] the intelligence that pervaded the multitude."

By early June Kinsman was talking of staying in Colorado for awhile. He hinted at the possibility of opening a law office at the diggings, and of returning to Council Bluffs only long enough to pick up some books and some other "chicken fixins" for his shanty. But the wanderer still dominated in W. H. Kinsman. He was glad he had come west; it was a furthering of his education which seemed to go on in marvelously endless fashion. As he wrote:

But, to say no more of gold, a ramble among these mountains is well worth a trip across the plains, even if you go afoot. I am glad I came. I have seen something new every day, and learned more of the nature of the country than I could have learned from ransacking a whole library of books. When I start back, I

intend to take a great number of specimens of rock and of the vegetable products of the mountains.

Kinsman arrived back in Council Bluffs on 23 July 1859, having made the trip from Denver in about twenty-one days. In a public lecture on 27 July, he talked positively about the mining prospects in the Rocky Mountains and indicated that he would be returning to the mining camps soon. However, after publishing a couple of "Sketches of Travel," in which he related his experiences with Indians in the West and then developed in most rhapsodic fashion his own romantic notions of the High Country, Kinsman seemed to turn away from the gold rush. He was back in his adopted home once more and in his irregular newspaper column, entitled "Desultory Paragraphs," he wrote increasingly about the Council Bluffs scene. Kinsman noted happily in his absence that the City Fathers had planted trees in the city square, that progress had been made on the turnpike from the city to the river, that the gamblers had left the city and moved west, and that there was lots of building going on as the citizens of Council Bluffs looked forward to an extension of trade in the coming year. He was less happy about other things, however. There were a number of vacant lots in Council Bluffs on which the weeds needed to be cut. More importantly, there was a dog poisoner in the city whose careless casting out of poisoned food had almost cost the life of a six-year-old boy.

But politics was heating up in Iowa in the late summer of 1859, and W. H. Kinsman, alias Bob Marlinspike, was not immune to the excitement which came first, with the visit of Abraham Lincoln to Council Bluffs, and later, with the gubernatorial campaign of 1859 which saw Samuel J. Kirkwood do political battle with the eminent Augustus Caesar Dodge. Lincoln was in the city on 13 August 1859 and the *Nonpareil* carried the news in the following

way:

HON. ABE LINCOLN, and the Secretary of State for Illinois, Hon. O. M. HATCH, arrived in our city last evening, and are stopping at the Pacific House. The distinguished "Sucker," has yielded to the earnest importunities of our citizens — with out distinction of party — and will speak upon the political issues of the day, at Concert Hall, this evening. The celebrity of the speaker will most certainly insure him a full house. Go and hear "old Abe."

Kirkwood and Dodge followed the "distinguished Sucker" seven days later and debated in the Concert Hall. They had been working their way across southern Iowa in a series of debates and were to head for northwestern Iowa after their Council Bluffs appearance. With them when they left the Bluffs was Bob Marlinspike, now a fearless political reporter for a most Republican paper, Maynard's *Nonpareil*. On 27 August the first report of the duo's campaigning in western Iowa appeared and in the following issue of the paper a long and not very objective account, albeit a humorous one, of stump politics on the eve of the Civil War was published. Kinsman's introduction of the Democratic candidates for governor and lieutenant governor seems hardly fair:

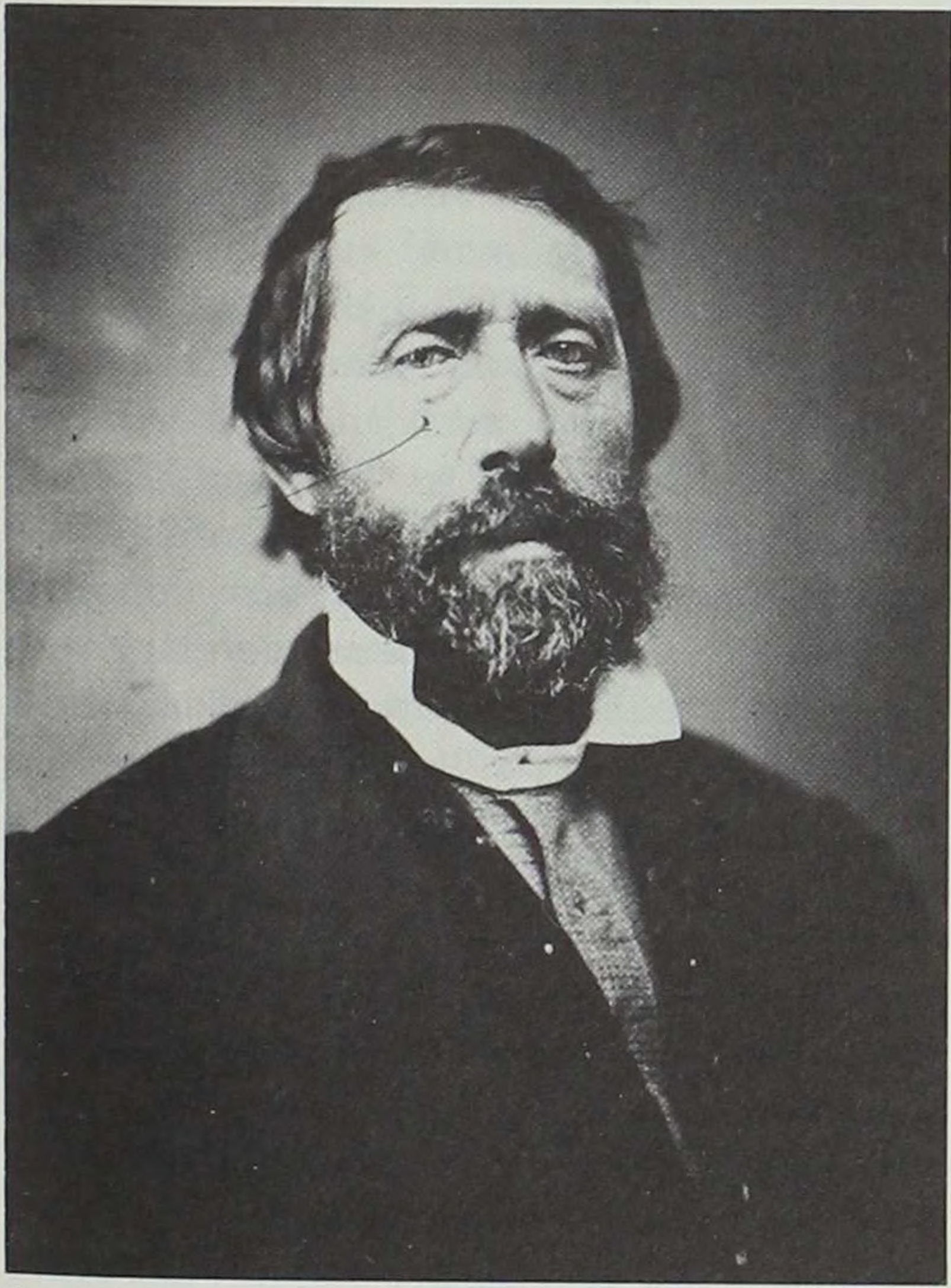
It certainly speaks highly for the far-seeing wisdom of the Iowa Democracy, that when they had so much better timber in their party, they should have foisted these indifferent sticks upon the aforesaid letter writers and editors, to be manufactured by them into state officers, and still blinder were they, when they permitted General AUGUSTUS CAESAR DODGE, and Col. LYSANDER W. BABBITT, to stump the State and exhibit themselves to the peo-

ple. One of these gentlemen, at least, had a high reputation for statemanship, and it would have been better for him and for his party, had he staid at home till after election, and amused himself with an occasional game of ten pins, or any other innocent diversion. . . .

As for his redoubtable Lieutenant, or would-be Lieutenant, I am not aware that he ever had any reputation for statemanship to lose. He has never been to Congress; never been to Spain; never been over this moral vineyard anywhere very extensively, and I presume, from his lack of general intelligence, that he has never taken much pains to post himself about anything, except the unprecedented extravagances of the Black Republican party.

Kinsman's descriptions of the debates were hardly less partisan than his descriptions of the candidates themselves. The belligerent nature of mid-century politics was Kinsman's delight as he wrote:

It is doubtless true that the General had hoped to shake off at the Bluffs, that ugly fellow, who from the East to the West, had agian [sic] and again met him on the stump, and had as often torn to pieces the finely spun political webs he had woven, and held up the shapeless fragments to the gaze of a discriminating people. Our gallant standard bearer, had, at every meeting, laid on the lash of logic, till his victim writhed in torture. At Oskaloosa, by his conduct, he virtually acknowledged that brains were at a discount, and that he would fall back upon his muscle, and at Glenwood, he repeated that acknowledgement in terms that could not be misunderstood. It is an old adage, "that actions speak louder than words," and General DODGE's actions at Glen-



Samuel J. Kirkwood, one of Kinsman's many influential friends, in 1865. Kirkwood characterized Kinsman as "impulsive, hasty, and somewhat erratic but he is earnest, [and] energetic." (SHSI; photograph by Isaac Wetherby)

wood, said to KIRKWOOD, "I am not a match for you intellectually, but I can thrash you with my fists" — an awful mistake of his, however, owing, probably, to the flattery of the Queen, for he would, doubtless, have soon discovered that the machine used for pressing the hands of titled señoritas, was a miserable weapon of defence against the bunch of bones with which KIRKWOOD would have knocked him into a "cocked hat," in less than half a minute.

Kinsman followed the candidates from Council Bluffs to Magnolia, then to Onawa and Sioux City, back to Magnolia, and finally to Harlan

and Lewis. The Kirkwood party, which seemed to consist of Kirkwood and Kinsman, was "piloted" over the prairie by a Doctor Ballard who was traveling with his niece, Mary Ballard. Kinsman's description of how the four of them spent one night gives clear indication of how the political times have changed.

As it was, however, we reached one of the Doctor's tenant houses, a little after dark. The people were gone off somewhere on a visit, but we got in at the window, unbarricaded the door, and took possession. The Doctor and I being used to roughing it, didn't care "whether school kept or not," and it didn't trouble Mr. KIRKWOOD; but to the Doctor's niece [sic] Miss MARY BALLARD, the prospect for a comfortable night's rest, after riding fifty miles that day, was decidedly squally. She was not easily scared, though, and with genuine Hawkeye go-ahead-ativeness, she established herself as mistress of the cabin, and while KIRKWOOD built a fire in the huge old-fashioned fireplace, she rattled round among the dishes and cooking utensils, found a tea kettle and set him to boiling it. This was no easy task — there was no crane, or any other fixin' to hang the kettle on, so he had to lay up stones, and he succeeded admirably, for he upset the kettle two or three times before he got the water boiled. In the meantime, Doc. and I had gone to the "tater patch," to get some spuds for supper, and, though it was "dark as a blind man's pocket," we succeeded in clawing out a handful with our fingers. We boiled them in the tea kettle. Miss MARY prepared some tea and set the table. (by-the-by, she superintended the boiling of the spuds, also.) and we supped sumptuously on "taters" and salt, washed down with an excellent infusion of the China plant. Miss MARY occupied the marital couch of the absent

pair, and KIRKWOOD, Doc. and I bunked down "three in a bed," on the floor. At daylight we hitched up and drove three miles, to MEREDITH'S, where we got breakfast.

Shortly thereafter the candidates returned to eastern Iowa to finish up the last month of the campaign and Kinsman returned to his "Desultory Paragraphs" and to whatever excitement could be found in Council Bluffs in the autumn of 1859.

Kinsman's duties as secretary of the Pottawattamie County Agricultural Society kept him busy, and he was much involved in the second annual county fair, held in mid-October. It was Kinsman who canvassed both Council Bluffs and the surrounding countryside selling memberships in the society (which were in reality tickets to the fair). It was Kinsman who published the premium list, who compiled the list of awards, and, finally, who pronounced the whole affair "a decided success." Only the farmers seemed a bit apathetic, as Kinsman noted in the following:

The weather was fine on both days, and there was a large turn out of the people, although not half as many were in from the country as should have been; in fact, there seemed to be a general lack of interest in the fair, among our farming population. — This is all wrong, and our county will never take its proper rank for wealth and intelligence, until our farmers shake off their indifference and enter with spirit into generous competition [sic] with each other for the honors and emoluments of successful husbandry. There are many noble exceptions to this general apathy, and I hope such men will give their careless neighbors no peace until they promise to do better next year than they did this.

But in the autumn of 1859, W. H. Kinsman

found time to write about much more than the fair. He wrote of his Bible class, of a graping expedition which he went on with a local lawyer and three fair damsels, of attending a "raising" of the "largest frame" ever put up in the county, of the coming of fall, of a new bakery, of Council Bluffs bands, and other things as well. And then, without much apparent warning, the wanderlust seemed to strike and Kinsman headed off on yet another adventure. The quondam seaman, lawyer, teacher, reporter, prospector, and many times secretary suddenly departed for the nation's capital, where he hoped to find a "position." But he was still a reporter, as the *Nonpareil* noted in its story about his departure:

If successful in pursuit of "position" in Washington, the readers of the Nonpareil, will, during the present session of Congress, have the pleasure of perusing weekly, a letter from his pen. We wish him success, not only because he deserves it, but for the reason that we should be pleased to have his services at the Capitol, in the manner indicated.

* * *

William H. Kinsman arrived in Washington on 13 December 1859. It was a time of high passion and great excitement. As Kinsman noted in his first despatch to the *Nonpareil*, some nine days after his arrival, the aftermath of the John Brown raid, the impact of Hinton Rowan Helper's book, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It*, and the inability of members of the House of Representatives to elect a Speaker were only a few of the items which made life interesting in Washington in that fateful winter. One could add the army of office seekers which had descended on the nation's capital, the contested seats in the House, and the general excitement generated by upcoming conventions in Charleston and

Chicago, and the list would still be incomplete.

If Kinsman headed to Washington as an office seeker, it did not show in his letters to his friend, Maynard. He seemed to be playing the dutiful reporter throughout the period between December 1859 and April 1860. He attended sessions of both the House and Senate. He followed the fortunes of members of the Iowa congressional contingent. He commented on the lighter side of the Washington scene, including both gossip and descriptions of the social scene. Finally, being W. H. Kinsman, he followed the ladies hither and thither with comments about everyone from Miss Harriet Lane, who "ran" the White House for her uncle, James Buchanan, to "the poor, painted butterflies, whom misery has marked for her own."

But the passions of political debate drew Kinsman's greatest attention and comment. Those passions oftentimes led to near riotous behavior in early 1860, not only outside Congress but in those hallowed halls as well. Kinsman described how Congressman Cobb, from Alabama, took a big cane into the Reporters' Gallery to avenge himself on a *New York Times* reporter. Later, Kinsman described Congressman Haskin's drawing of a pistol on the floor of the House and the celerity with which Curtis, of Iowa, came between the angry factions and tried to quiet things down. Finally, he described a possible duel between another congressman and a newsman in such fashion that one must wonder how Kinsman himself stayed out of trouble:

Roger A. Pryor of Va., the girl Congressman the other day characterized Bennett, of the N.Y. Herald, as one of the lowest, foulest, and most villainous of mankind, and it is said here that Bennett's son intends to challenge Pryor. The latter, although so girlish in appearance, is a fighting man, and has already been engaged as a principal in several duels,

and a second in a great many.

There were several other challenges issued during this particular session of Congress as the rhetoric heated up and the three factions — Republican, Democratic (Southern Democrats), and Americans (Northern Democrats) — lashed into one another almost continuously. One of Kinsman's descriptive passages will suffice to illustrate the terms of the time:

Gartrell, of Georgia, made a ranting fire-eating speech, and although he is a smart fellow, he carried his bombast to such a pitch that it made him ridiculous. . . . In the course of his speech he adverted to what Hickman had said on the floor of the House of the relative population and resources of the North and South, and what the North would do in case the South should attempt to secede. Hickman, who was pacing the floor in front of the Clerk's desk, asked leave to state what he did say on the occasion referred to by the gentleman from Georgia; and in a clear and forcible manner he recapitulated what he had said in unmistakable terms. Gartrell replied in a sneering tone. When Hickman told him that the North could make more arms in 90 days than the whole South could buy. At this Gartrell retorted that a single cotton crop of Georgia would buy the whole State of Pennsylvania. To such a Munchausen statement of course Hickman made no reply, and allowed Gartrell to proceed with his highflown rhetoric and more astonishing mathematics.

Kinsman's politics, however, which coincided with those of Senators Harlan and Grimes as well as Editor Maynard, led him to insert occasional rhetorical flourishes of his own. In a 19 January 1860 letter, he wrote in exuberant fashion:

Steadily, in solid phalanx the Republicans are moving on to certain victory. It may be delayed, it may not eventually come in the form of the Speakership, but come it will — just as sure as the spirit of liberty and progression is growing stronger and stronger in the hearts of the American people. The men who are determined to rule or ruin this country, will compass earth and Hell if it were possible to secure a democratic successor to the weak spined Buchanan; but the gathering portents of a storm which will sweep them from power like chaff from the threshing floor, are already begining [sic] to darken the political sky. The fiat has gone forth — truth and justice will triumph — and, the sheet anchor which the down trodden of the world are looking to for safety, will hold fast amid the howling storms of disunion, and when these storms shall subside, the glorious old ship of State will sail on again in all the strength and buoyancy of years gone by.

But amidst all of the excitement engendered by impassioned men anticipating the conventions in Charleston and Chicago, W. H. Kinsman was still able to convey to his readers some indication of the social scene in Washington. He occasionally threw into his letters bits of gossip about notorious Washingtonians, such as John A. Washington or Beau Hickman, and sometimes he wrote long accounts of his own social activities. New Year's Day, for example, found Kinsman making the usual set of "calls," first on the president at the White House and then on two cabinet members, Secretary of State Cass and Secretary of the Treasury Cobb. In describing the events of New Year's Day, Kinsman was quick to point out that he saw few people who were so drunk that they couldn't "navigate." He added then a defense of congressmen which he repeated at

various other times in that spring of 1860:

I believe Congressmen are generally slandered; they are no more in the habit of getting tight than jolly, good fellows in general, but it must be confessed that now and then one of them does go on a bender, to his own disgrace, and none to the benefit of his constituents, although in the present state of affairs in the House, perhaps as long as they are sober enough to vote, they get along as well as any way.

During his stay in Washington, Kinsman visited all of the worthy sights then in existence, including the Congressional Library, the Smithsonian, the National Conservatory, the Navy Yard, and, most interesting for him, the Patent Office. As he said, "Probably, nowhere else can be found so large a collection of the products of man's cultivated ingenuity." He commented at length on the 265 models of sewing machines, on the firearms, on the agricultural implements, and even on an iceboat.

Kinsman had puffs for the Iowa delegations, their wives, and their families. He acknowledged visitors from Iowa, who included E. H. Talbott, editor of the *Winterset Madisonian*, and Samuel S. Bayliss, of Council Bluffs. And finally, he described the ladies, lovely and otherwise, whose paths crossed his in the capital city. As the political scene grew more heated in early 1860, the women became even more entrancing for Kinsman. Toward the end of March, he wrote:

Who will be the nominee of the Charleston and Chicago Conventions? is a question asked here a thousand times a day, in every circle and by every body old enough to talk politics. Stately matrons whose heads are flecked with silver anxiously ask it, and laughing girls yet in their teens who usually care more for a lover than twenty presidents, are deeply

interested, and laud their respective champions with all the zeal of old politicians, and with all honor to women, be it said, that whenever she talks politics, she does it with an honesty and earnestness worthy the study and imitation of the other sex.

As spring settled fairly upon Washington in 1860, the excitement waned, interest became more clearly focused on the upcoming conventions, and congressmen drifted off to their homes. Kinsman departed Washington as well and arrived back in Council Bluffs on 25 April 1860. He had hinted in one or more of his Washington letters that he might go back to the gold regions of Colorado. His arrival in Council Bluffs was noted in the 28 April *Nonpareil* but even the editor admitted that he was not sure of Kinsman's future plans. He wrote of the peripatetic journalist:

Though he appeared highly gratified to meet his old friends and acquaintances in this city, we do not know that he purposes remaining with them long. He is of such a nomadic turn of mind, that we do not know but what we shall next week announce his departure for the mines.
Nous verrons.

Kinsman's "nomadic turn of mind" seemed curiously quieted during the remainder of 1860, however. In part, this was undoubtedly due to his entering into partnership with the eminent local attorney, land agent, and insurance man, D. C. Bloomer. It was a busy time and Kinsman did not venture out of the Council Bluffs area on any extended trips. He delivered a patriotic oration in Fourth of July ceremonies at Crescent. He became deeply involved in the activities of the local Lincoln Club, and served as its secretary. He busied himself in the 1860 presidential campaign by delivering speeches for the Republican party in

various towns in southwest Iowa. When his friend, William W. Maynard, put all his books in order in the fall, he put all the accounts into Kinsman's hands for "settlement and collection." As secretary of a Teachers' Institute which was held in Council Bluffs in late December, Kinsman delivered a lecture and later drew up the final report for the session.

Then, in early 1861, it became apparent that Kinsman had broken with the *Nonpareil* after an association of almost three years to become associate editor of the *Council Bluffs Telegraph*. It was not a break involving much animosity since the *Nonpareil* editor wrote:

We congratulate our friend upon his accession to the tripod, and bespeak for him a success in his editorial career, commensurate to his deserts, and worthy of the enterprise in which he has enlisted.

* * *

Kinsman's private involvements in late 1860 and early 1861, however, were most insignificant compared to the events which were taking the nation almost inexorably to war: Abraham Lincoln's election, the secession of South Carolina, the formation of the Confederate States of America, the Lincoln inaugural, and the fall of Fort Sumter. From the outset of the war, William H. Kinsman, the adventurer and the man of ambition, was anxious to be involved in the fighting. He had obviously been in contact with Governor Kirkwood at a very early moment about raising troops in southwestern Iowa. The governor, in a letter dated 24 April 1861, wrote to Kinsman:

You may have as many Companies organized as you see fit but minimize any expenses. Have sent some muskets to Council Bluffs. Senator Grimes has gone to Washington to see about arms. As soon as I get arms, I will send them.

Kirkwood sent Kinsman to eastern Iowa in late May to acquire arms for the volunteer companies which were being raised in southwestern Iowa. He returned with, among other items, "a six-pound bronze field piece." D. C. Bloomer wrote of Kinsman's arrival back in Council Bluffs with cannon, sabers, and other supplies, claiming that Kinsman reached town about midnight, dressed his cannon on the main street, and then blew off a charge which not only woke the citizenry but blew out a number of windows as well. Shortly thereafter Grenville M. Dodge was given permission to raise the Fourth Iowa, and Dodge, in turn, authorized the organization of Company B in Council Bluffs. The company elected its own officers on 2 July 1861, and it might be suggested that William H. Kinsman's formal military career began at that time for he was elected second lieutenant of Company B of the Fourth Regiment of Iowa Volunteers.

Kinsman's military career did not put an end to his journalistic efforts because he became a regular correspondent for the *Nonpareil* when the Fourth Iowa departed for Missouri in August 1861. His letters appeared in the *Nonpareil* almost weekly throughout his service with the Fourth. Thus from August 1861 to June 1862 the readers of the *Nonpareil* were able to follow the local lads of Company B as they and others sought the elusive Sterling Price in Missouri and Arkansas. It was a campaign of seeming unimportance compared with others of the time, but Kinsman chronicled the terms and tempo of war at the company level in a backwater area.

As the Fourth Iowa moved from Council Bluffs to St. Joe, then to Jefferson Barracks and, finally, to Camp Lyon in the vicinity of Rolla, Kinsman described the training, the drills, the target shooting, and the sickness. He occasionally offered descriptions of the countryside and the people of Missouri, and sprinkled his letters with personal comments about the course of the war at home and in the field.

He passionately denounced copperheads and others on the home front who were giving less than their full support to the troops in the field. In a letter dated 26 August 1861, he wrote:

Would to God the cowardly traitors at home who are hoping and praying for our defeat were compelled to take up arms down here and share the fortune of their brother traitors. How soon they would wish themselves back in Iowa again, under the shelter of the old flag that is now protecting them, but they have not even the merit of bravery to offset their prating treason.

In mid-December 1861, Kinsman delivered a peroration in his column which struck at the war profiteers as well as the plain traitors:

Give us the falcons and the eagles, and let the peacocks and the birds of paradise stay at home. And there is another class of birds, who, not content with fattening on the garbage they can find, are drinking the very life-blood of the nation, I mean the buzzards. If I had to legislate, or issue general orders for these creatures, I would make all their offences against the comfort or efficiency of the soldiers punishable with death! It is sheer madness to talk of suppressing their nefarious practices by gentle means. Shoot them down, as you would dogs, and "shoddy" clothing and drunken soldiers will soon be known only in memory.

We are rapidly becoming a military nation. Americans take to arms as readily as a duck to water. We have limitless resources, and a country big enough to spread in till we become the most powerful people on the earth. The peace men, I mean the traitors to their country, the traitors to free government, will continue to croak, and frighten dyspeptics and



Colonel William H. Kinsman.

fidgetty old maids, but they cannot stop the onward march of the nation, no more than puny frogs in their little side puddles can stop the rush of the mighty river as it sweeps on to the sea.

And then Kinsman warmed to his subject in words suitable to almost any moment of

national emergency:

But we need reform — not a cowardly backing-out of this war to save expense — God forbid — nor yet a running “close to the wind,” by a niggardly expenditure, and barely keeping the sails of the great ship full. No! no! spend the people’s money free as water, in equipping armies and navies, but don’t waste it; that’s all. It is all coming right, now.

When the war broke out, a host of scoundrels, who would be willing to live without a flag, or a nationality, provided they could live so in ease and luxury, looked about them for the “best chance,” and, with the adroitness of professional blacklegs, some of them got their hands into the pile. In the haste with which our six hundred thousand volunteers took the field, this could not be avoided; but, thank God, there is honesty enough in the Chair and Cabinet, to carry out the honest intentions of the people, and the healthful, vigorous “straitening up,” now going on in our armies, is a sure precursor not only of our complete success in crushing out the rebellion, but of the still greater triumph of demonstrating to the world that we are capable of self-government, in war as well as in peace.

Above everything else in the late summer and autumn of 1861, Kinsman wrote of the horrid dimensions of inactivity. His own military philosophy was summed up at the conclusion of his letter to the *Nonpareil* on 22 December 1861:

I confess to the weakness of admiring the military genius of the first Napoleon, who when he got ready, struck blow after blow, . . . We are ready. Now let the blows fall thick and fast, till treason is dead and the cry of Secession hushed forever.

It was the same philosophy which he enunciated in his letter to Governor Kirkwood of 3 January 1863 in which he described his request to President Lincoln that he be given an Iowa brigade: "I would run them down with my Iowa greyhounds and gobble them up. When one fight was over and one squad whipped, I would start off after another." For Kinsman, inactivity meant dullness, disease, and the disappointments attendant upon actions missed.

As in previous Kinsman correspondence, the young officer always had a word or two about the ladies. He noted a visit to Camp Lyon by Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer: "She seems to be as smart as a 'steel-trap' — generally posted, and a first rate hand to look after the health and comfort of the Iowa boys." He was quick to assure his female readers that the boys had certainly not grown independent and the Iowa women need not fear any competition from the beauties of Missouri or Arkansas: "Our boys will be as true to their sweethearts as they are to their flag." He had some black comments to make about England's involvement in the American difficulties. He reiterated his old position that "if slavery must be protected, farewell to liberty." And finally, he was able to describe some action, and later, a battle. The action took place just over the Arkansas border in mid-February and was one which the boys of Company B saw but did not participate in. The Battle of Pea Ridge (6-8 March 1862) was really the first test for Company B and Kinsman in the Civil War and was the only major action he would participate in before he was mortally wounded at Black River Bridge in May 1863.

The Battle of Pea Ridge made a sizable impression on the young Kinsman. He had performed valiantly on the field of battle. Company B of the Fourth Iowa had held their position throughout the heavy fighting on 7 March. But the three days of fighting had caused heavy casualties in the Fourth Iowa; initial reports indicated that Colonel Dodge had some 74

men killed, 265 wounded, and 77 men missing at the conclusion of the action. Dodge himself was one of the wounded. Kinsman was particularly exercised about the lack of care for the wounded in the aftermath of the battle. In a stinging castigation of Iowans who had "flocked to Fort Donelson," he wrote that "there is no surer way to dampen [the Army of the Southwest's] ardor, and shake its faith in the sympathy of its friends at home, than this neglect of its wounded in battle." He concluded:

You think I am gloomy, and draw too dark a picture. Come to Cassville, pass through the wards and see your wounded soldiers dying by inches; go to the burial ground, and see the needless graves yawning each day for fresh victims of neglect, and you will paint your own picture, and make it so dark as to startle your readers, too. Perhaps I have said enough — the subject demands plain language, and I have used it.

Kinsman was too pessimistic, and only four days later he was forced to apologetically describe the arrival of three Iowa doctors in Cassville. But if the boys were getting better medical attention they were still suffering from a lack of news: "we are only 170 miles from 'America,' and an *abundance* of papers might just as well be sent to us as not." And later he would offer similar comments on the lack of mail.

And always there was the implied hope that Pea Ridge was the beginning of the end, that the war would soon be over, that perhaps the boys would all be home by the Fourth of July. In the late spring of 1862 Kinsman even began to talk of what the postwar world might be like. In a letter written from Batesville, Arkansas, on 11 May 1862, he wrote:

There is not a shadow of doubt but the people of the North and the South will,

after this war, understand each other better, and be more closely connected by the ties that should bind them together than ever before.

And again on 12 June 1862, Kinsman wrote:

No doubt many of your readers who are looking anxiously for a final and triumphant cessation of hostilities have very vague ideas of how this war will be closed up. — Perhaps they think that when all the great battles have been fought — the great rivers and sea-ports opened — and all the strong-holds of rebellion are in our possession, that the mighty Army of the Union will be mustered out and go home, but they must be patient. They must remember that when secession engulfed the South, the wheels of civil government which had for eighty years rolled so smoothly, were all broken, and that we find only a wreck remaining. They must remember that the evil spirits which exist in all human societies, were turned loose and suffered to pursue the natural bent of their depraved and devilish natures. That these out-laws, these renegades, that always were villians [sic], must be made to come again under the strong arm of the civil law in the several States. The broken machinery must be repaired and set in motion, and all this requires time and the almighty bayonet. It will all be accomplished, but it may be that a quarter of a million men will be needed to remain in arms for a year yet. Don't shudder, you tax payers, you can stand it. The country is saved, and you have a heritage to leave your children. You had better pay one-half of all your income for the next twenty years, than have your Government go down. Don't be frightened at a thousand millions. It is a lighter load by far for the nation than the knapsack the soldier has

carried while tramping through mud and storm, to crush the nation's foes. I pity the poor, craven, soulless wretch who grudges to pay a tithe of his earnings for the blessings of a stable Government, and free and solid institutions. Let them go and sin no more.

The above quotation was taken from Kinsman's last letter to the *Nonpareil*. In the aftermath of the Battle of Pea Ridge, Dodge left the Fourth Iowa and would have taken Kinsman with him but Kinsman refused. By August 1862 Kinsman had returned to Iowa. After stopping momentarily in Council Bluffs, he headed east and in September Governor Kirkwood appointed him as a field officer in the Twenty-third Iowa Infantry with the rank of lieutenant colonel. The commanding officer of the Twenty-third, Colonel William Dewey, died on 29 November 1862, and Kinsman shortly thereafter was promoted to colonel and succeeded to command of the regiment.

His days as a correspondent were almost over. His ties with friend Maynard and the *Nonpareil* were broken. The Twenty-third Iowa had been raised in the general vicinity of Polk County and western Iowans would have had little interest in its activities save for the experiences of its commander. Kinsman might for a time have considered writing to the *Iowa State Register* on a more or less regular basis. On 11 November 1862 he had written a newsy letter to the *Register* about the soldiers' vote in the Twenty-third and concluded with his usual philosophical call to action: "Lying in camp, is decay, disintegration, *death*. Marching is health, vigor, victory. He who wants to go into winter quarters, whether Major General or private, is wanting in common sense or patriotism." This was written only shortly before his request for an Iowa brigade with which he could prove his Napoleonic points. The news from the Twenty-third Iowa

was furnished the *Register* on a quasi-regular basis by one who signed himself VOLUNTEER and who was actually a young lieutenant by the name of Brown.

Thus Kinsman's journalistic days came to an end in late 1862 and his time as commanding officer of the Twenty-third Iowa was taken up by military matters. A good portion of February, March, and some of April was consumed by a most lamentable court-martial in which Colonel Kinsman was accused of disobeying the direct orders of General Davidson, his immediate superior. Kinsman had little defense since he freely admitted that he had refused to obey the order on the basis of its illegality. He evidently needed as much help as he could obtain, however, to insure that whatever sentence he received was minimal. When Governor Kirkwood heard of Kinsman's difficulties he wrote a very suggestive letter to General Samuel Curtis, then commander of the Department of Missouri. Kirkwood's plea for the colonel was a clear one:

Col. Kinsman of the 23d Iowa is under arrest. I regret this very much. I know him well. He is impulsive, hasty, and somewhat erratic but he is earnest, energetic, and has the unbounded confidence of his regiment. From all I can learn his hasty temper had led to some trouble with his commander and when he was ordered to go on detached duty with two companies of his regiment he thought it was an intended slight to him and refused to obey.

The rules of the service probably require some punishment but I should regard his dismissal from the service as a serious loss to his regiment and the service.

The governor, however, wrote to Colonel Kinsman as well, and indicated his displeasure at the way the incident seemed to have been

blown up. In an almost fatherly tone, he wrote:

I very sincerely sympathize with you in your troubles. I heard of your arrest from Dr. East, and am satisfied there is much of petty spite at the bottom of it. I am not prepared to say whether by military law you are justified in disobeying the order to move with two of your companies on an expedition for the rest of the regiment. It looks to me as it does to you as if it were an intentional slight. But Colonel, I regret you did not obey the order even if it was an improper one technically. My experience in life shows me it is better to treat these small annoyances with the contempt they deserve and not to magnify them into matters of importance by opposition to them. Your regiment is suffering and must continue to suffer by reason of your arrest. I sincerely trust your arrest will be . . . of short duration and that you will soon again be at the head of your regiment to aid your country in this her time of greatest need.

While the colonel's court-martial was in preparation, the Twenty-third was moving toward Vicksburg. Kinsman's nemesis, General Davidson, had been replaced by General Carr. Volunteer, in his letters to the *Daily State Register*, suggested that the change was for the better. His summary statement about Davidson was a bitter one: "Like the Lion hunter in the fable, he was always brave while looking for the tracks of the enemy, but whenever he heard of the 'critter,' his hair took an erect [*sic*] position, and his march was at once turned to a crab's advance."

The results of Kinsman's court-martial were predictable. He was given as light a sentence as possible, which meant he was suspended from his command for a month, lost his pay for half that period, and received a reprimand from General Curtis. The *Register* headlined its

story of the findings: "ACQUITTAL OF COL. KINSMAN!" For Kinsman, however, the important matter at the moment was the possibility of the regiment seeing action in the very near future. His suspension cost him his command at the unit's first major action, the Battle of Fort Gibson, where his second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel S. S. Glasgow, performed with sufficient brilliance that he was mentioned in despatches. That battle occurred on 1 May 1863. Shortly thereafter Colonel Kinsman rejoined his outfit and then, at Black River Bridge, on 17 May 1863, he fell mortally wounded.

Kinsman's death on the field of battle ended five fast and glorious years for the man. In 1858 he had wandered into Council Bluffs with some intention of reading for the law, teaching school, and seeking out opportunities with which to satisfy his restless ambition. He obviously sought out and impressed the right people in the town — the Dodges, the Baldwins, W. W. Maynard, D. C. Bloomer, and others. He found himself at ease in the company of the land developers, the town developers, the bankers, and the lawyers. In short, he found himself at ease with all those whose ambitions equaled his own. And he prospered or seemed to prosper while having a most exciting time.

He made his way (with some help) to the gold regions of Colorado, to Washington City at a time when the country was sliding toward division and civil war, and, finally, to war, perhaps the ultimate place for men of such ambition. Through all of his Council Bluffs years, William H. Kinsman wrote and wrote and wrote. He wrote of his previous experiences at sea, of the region, of politics, of the gold rush of 1859, and, finally, of the war. In his early pieces one finds all the marks of an exuberant and youthful romantic. The exuberance carried over into his political writings as his passionate belief in the Republican cause led to

a kind of partisan carelessness not uncommon at the time. But his eye got a little better, and his pen a bit more controlled — in short, his prose improved over the years. His wartime letters to the *Nonpareil*, describing his experiences and those of the Fourth Iowa generally, offer evidence of such improvement. Occasionally, in his wartime pieces, his fervent patriotism forced him back into the prose excesses of the past.

Colonel Kinsman's talents and ambitions had carried him a great distance in a very short period of time. It was clear that he had literary ambitions, political ambitions, and, at the end, military ambitions. It is very unclear where any or all of those would have taken him. Perhaps it is safest to conclude with the words of E. H. Talbott, former editor of the *Winterset Madisonian*, and a close friend of William H. Kinsman in the last three years of his life:

It can truly be said of him "he knew no such word as full." Young ambitious, temperate, and ever guided by a high sense of honor and right, he had before him a future full of promise. □

Note on Sources

Kinsman's articles in the *Council Bluffs Weekly Nonpareil*, published between late 1858 and mid-1862, provided the source base for this article. For an early study of Pottawattamie County, D.C. Bloomer's "Notes on the Early History of Pottawattamie County," *Annals of Iowa* 9, 10 (April, October 1871, July 1872):523-533, 666-683, 175-194, was helpful. For background about the period of Kinsman's trip to the gold regions of Colorado, several items were consulted: Henry Villard, *The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions* (1860; reprint ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932); George F. Willison, *Here They Dug the Gold* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972); and Marshall Sprague, *Colorado: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976). The *Iowa State Register* (Des Moines) was valuable for the period between mid-1862 and mid-1863. Additionally, Samuel J. Kirkwood's letter books at the Iowa State Historical Department, Iowa City, offered a view of the circumstances of Kinsman's court-martial. Dan Elbert Clark's *Samuel Jordan Kirkwood* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1917) was also helpful. Grenville M. Dodge's sketch of Kinsman, "Colonel William H. Kinsman," *Annals of Iowa*, 3d series, 5 (January 1902):241-250, provided a good overview of Kinsman's varied career as remembered by a friend.