

# The PALIMPSEST

MAY 1926

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THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



### THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

### THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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## Tramping with Kelly through Iowa A Jack London Diary

Friday Apr. 6 [1894] Left Oakland Mole at 4:30 P. M. & arrived at Sacramento at 8 P. M. Went up to the Mississippi Kitchen & had supper. Learning that the Industrial Army had arrived at noon & departed for Ogden at 4. Went down & caught the 10 P. M. Overland bound East.

Saturday Apr. 7. We held her down all night till we arrived in Truckee at 7 A. M. As it was broad day light it was impossible to proceed further. Tho' they were forced to stop the train twice

[This diary, penciled by Jack London while he "bummed" his way over mountains and plains from San Francisco to Omaha and campaigned across Iowa with Kelly's Industrial Army in 1894, is here printed by special permission of Charmian London. Much of Chapter X in her *Book of Jack London*, published by the Century Company, is based upon her husband's "log" of that transcontinental tramp. The diary is fully protected by copyright and must not be reprinted without the consent of Mrs. London and the Century Company.—  
THE EDITOR]



before they succeeded in ditching us. Frank & I then decided to send our valises to Oakland by Wells Fargo. We traded the patent simple file for four square meals. We tried to take the 8 P. M. Overland east, but by a mistake Frank caught her & I was left. But we had agreed that in case of separation we would meet in Wadsworth [Nevada]. About eleven o'clock I caught a freight out, but slept so sound despite the cold that I was side tracked at Reno without waking up. Staid in Reno all day but did not hear of Frank. Woke up at 3:30 A. M. half froze to death.

Sunday Apr. 8. I climbed out & walked about till my circulation was restored when I sought shelter in the Restaurant. The deaf mute & the ladies edifying conversation. Morning ablutions by the banks of the Truckee River. Mourn the loss of the clothes brush and comb with Frank but still have the towel and soap. Went down the road and watched them load cattle and pigs. Met a Swede on the road and went off & got dinner with him. Watched the Indians gambling & listened to the salvation army & unemployed congregated on the corner. They are making up an army and expect to start east to morrow. All along the line from Oakland on, we have met hundreds chasing the first detachment of the industrial army. A great many lost it by the unexpected departure so early Friday morning. Took a freight in the evening and made Wadsworth but did not find Frank. I slept in an engine cab



down in the yards and was routed out about 4 in the morning when the wipers took possession.

Monday Apr. 9. Went down to the Post Office & received a postal from Frank who has gone on to Winnemucca. Gen. Kelly passed through on the morning overland. Met a Doctor who gave me unasked a dollar & invited me to breakfast. He said my face was familiar, but we could not scrape up any recollections. Am waiting to catch a train across the desert to Winnemucca, where if I arrive on time Frank & I will join the Reno detachment of the Industrial Army & then *On to Washington*.

All along this part of the road the wipers are Chinese & the section hands Italian. I saw the biggest Newfoundland in my life here today. He looks more like a bear than anything else. It is impossible to take a train out till night for all the crews are on to me. I could catch any of them & ride them to the next stop, but I want to catch one clean through. This is the last stop before entering the desert, & I don't wish to be ditched at some lone water tank where I may pass days waiting for a train to stop. I never saw such weather. The days are burning hot & the nights freezing cold. The sky is so clear & the atmosphere so thin that you can see objects at a long distance & are deceived into believing them very close. I thought my face was sea tanned, but it is nothing to this. The sun has peeled the skin off my face till I look as though I had fell into a fire.



All along I have met swarms of people going east & but one going west. I met the curiosity here this afternoon. He is walking all the way from Colorado to Frisco, where he is going to ship to sea. Then I met a Frenchman who has walked all the way from Minnesota to Sacramento & has walked this far back. Now his shoes have given out, & he proposes to ride the rest of the way. I took the 10:45 train out this evening & made her across the desert to Humbolt where I got ditched. No sooner had the Overland pulled out than an orange special pulled in. I took her out & she ran clear through to Winnemucca a distance of fifty miles without a stop. A spark caught fire in my overcoat & smouldering away suddenly burst into flames. The train was going about 40 miles an hour, and it was quite a job to put it out. My overcoat and coat are ruined. I rode the bumpers the rest of the way.

Tuesday Apr. 10. Arrived at four o'clock & waited till daylight in the European restaurant. Frank's postal said if not in sight to call at the La Fayette Hotel. Did so but no one [knew of] him. Then examined the postmark on the postal card & made it out San Francisco. It looks bad for some body. If I had not delayed at Wadsworth & here, I would have been almost to Ogden. About 9 o'clock went down to Post Office & wrote a letter home. As I was returning met Frank. Great rejoicing & congratulations. The Postmark inexplicable. Frank & I decided to wait this night out in the hopes of



joining the Reno detachment. But two trains came through. Sand storm.

Wednesday Apr. 11. It snowed last night. We have decided to let the Reno crowd rip and start on as fast as possible for Ogden. This afternoon Frank & I had an understanding. The road has no more charms for him. The romance & adventure is gone and nothing remains but the stern reality of the hardships to be endured. Though he has decided to turn West again I am sure the experience has done him good, broadened his thoughts, given a better understanding of the low strata of society & surely will have made him more charitable to the tramps he will meet hereafter when he is in better circumstances. He starts West & I start East tonight. He is safe to go through because he has money enough to tip the brakeman on the line at the rate of 50 cts. a division & have money left to eat on. Shook hands & said good bye 9 P. M. Caught a freight out. Am going to brake coal on the engine from here to Carlin 131 miles.

Thursday Apr. 12. Arrived in Carlin at 3:30 this morning. A little railroad town situated in the midst of the great American Desert, through which I am now traveling. Up to two o'clock no train has passed east except the Overland. I met a Chinaman here and played cards with him while he was waiting to register. There was not a game he did not understand. I took the Overland out about 7:30, riding the blind with two other fellows I picked up



with. We made a 45 mile run to Elko & a 23 mile run to Peko where they tried to ditch us. We went out ahead but the brakeman rode the blind out. We waited till the train had almost run by when two of us jumped the palace cars & decked them while the third went underneath on the rods. I climbed forward two cars to the other fellow & [invited him] to come on along the decks to the blind but he said it was too risky. I went forward about five cars & as the brakeman was on the platform I could proceed no further & escape observation. I waited & when the train stopped I climbed down & ran ahead to the blind. The brakeman again rode her out but I took the next one behind him, & when he jumped off to catch me I ran ahead & took the platform he had vacated. The fellow on the roof with me got ditched, but I made her into Wells, the end of the division where they put on a double header. The brakeman was after us like a blood hound, so I climbed on the engine & passed coal through to Terrace, the end of that division. I arrived at two o'clock, & as the snow was all round, I did not care to proceed further so I went to the round house & slept in the cab of an engine till morning.

Friday Apr. 13. At five this morning the wipers took possession of my bed room & I was obliged to vacate. While looking for another warm spot I found that two knights of the road, arriving during my sleep, had most obligingly built a roaring fire in one of the huge stoves. One of them had a



big handkerchief full of fresh buttered, home made biscuits. I sat down, ate a few of them & then slumbered peacefully till seven o'clock. The further I got east in Nevada the more miserable the towns are, & terrance [Terrace] is commencing to the upward scale I guess, for at last I am in Utah. At two this afternoon I got one of the west bound tourists to lock me in a car bound east. Just before the train started the door was thrown open & a brakeman asked me how much I could "shake up." "Fifteen cents" was my response. I had two dollars & fifteen cents on me and as the two dollars were unbroken I did not propose to give them to him. He said he would carry me down the road a ways but did not take the money. When we had traveled about 50 miles, according to my calculations, the door was again thrown open, & the conductor & brakeman both appeared. After a long consultation they took my gold ring & left me the fifteen cents. The ring was good gold with a fine cameo setting. I got it from Lizzie Connolly.

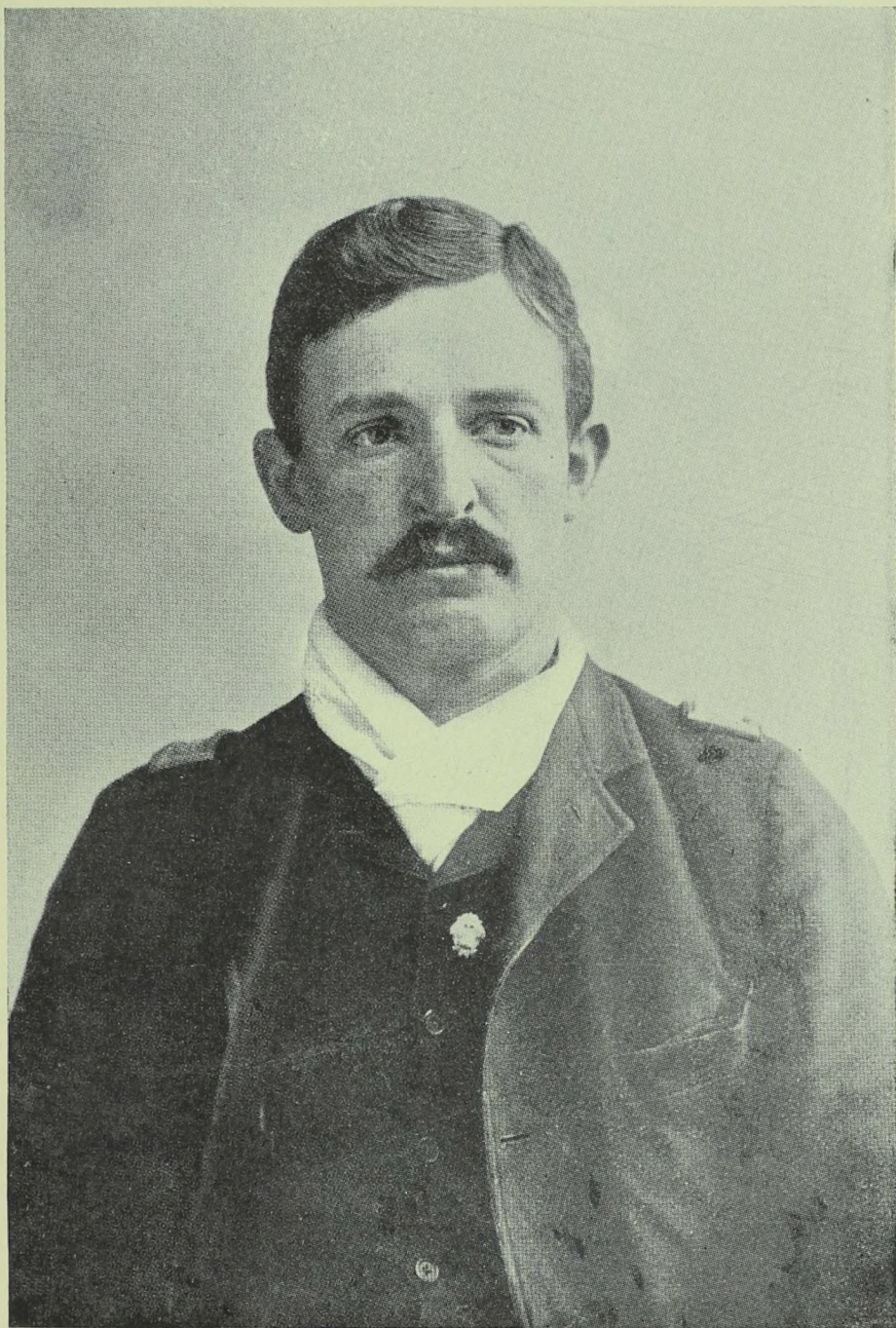
Saturday Apr. 14. Arrived here [Ogden] at 12:50 this morning. Took a stroll up town, & got supper, then another stroll & at half past two wandered into the Central Hotel where I took a stiff drink and sat, by the night clerk's permission, in a chair till daylight. Ogden is a pretty little town of 18000 inhabitants. It has all the latest improvements. Electric cars, & lights & bituminous rock. It is situated at a good elevation among the Rocky, or rather Wa-



satch Mts. which are outlining spurs or ranges of the Rockies. One surprising thing is the cheapness of everything. Strolling through the town I noticed several log houses which must have been built during the early days. Another peculiarity is that so many of the living houses or cottages are built of brick and stone. Perhaps it is because of the deep snows during the winter. It began snowing to day in the morning but cleared up in a few hours. I have given up my proposed trip to Salt Lake City & intend to start to night for Omaha on the Union Pacific. I received 3 letters. Two from home & one from Applegarth. I expected more & made arrangements with the Post Office to forward them to Omaha.

After spending a pleasant afternoon in the reading room I went down to the U. P. Depot & caught the blind baggage on the 8:15 Express. Just as she was pulling out I met an old friend. We first met in Reno when he & I spent the day together. He is a Swede. We next met in Winnemucca. He arriving just as I was leaving. And now, for the third time, we met while catching the blind baggage. We rode her 75 miles that night to Evanston, a pretty little town just across the line in Wyoming. After we had run a few miles he pushed coal on the engine. About this time the brakeman began to stir us up. There were quite a crowd on the blind. But gradually, station by station they began to drop off. However I made up my mind to hold her down & a pret-

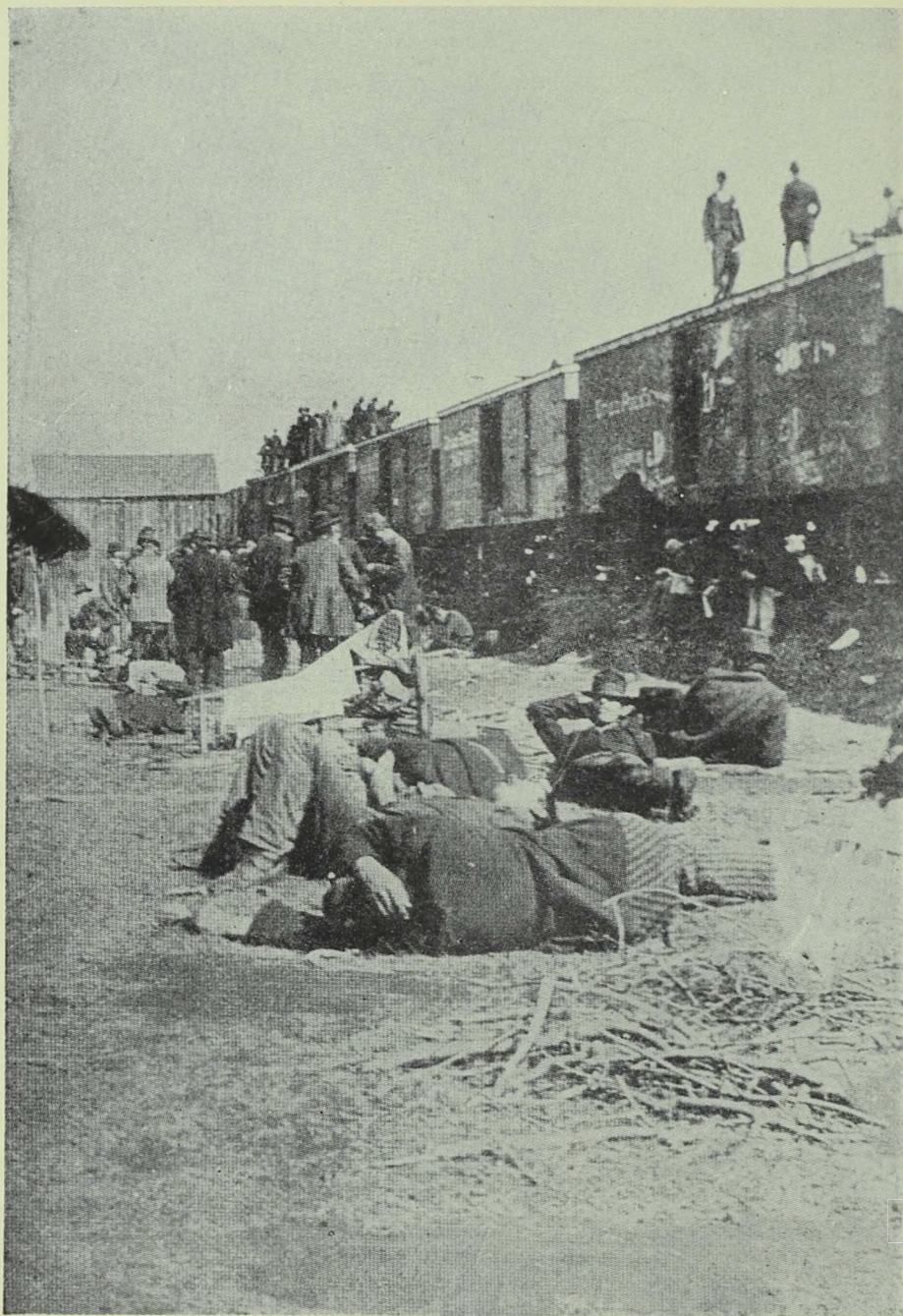




FROM VINCENT'S THE STORY OF THE COMMONWEAL

CHARLES T. KELLY





FROM VINCENT'S THE STORY OF THE COMMONWEAL

WAITING AT THE TRANSFER IN COUNCIL BLUFFS



ty time I had of it. I rode the blind, the tender of the engine, the cow catcher & pilots of the double header, the decks & even in an emergency once stood on the platform in the middle of the train. We arrived in Evanston at 12 P. M.

Sunday Apr. 15. The train stopped at Evanston for half an hour, then ran back to Ogden and came around by the Oregon Short Line. The cause was a bad wreck, 11 miles ahead. Coming round a bend through a cut the engine ran into a huge bolder [sic] which had fallen on the track. The engine jumped the track on the side killing the fireman & engineer. A tramp was riding the blind & he jumped off & was not even hurt. The baggage & mail cars fell on the opposite side. The rest of the train was pretty badly shaken up. About 1:30 an engine brought in the two bodies. The Swede & I went over to the electric light works, & going down into a fire room crawled up on top of the boilers & slept till morning, though the heat was intolerable. The snow covers the ground, walks & houses yet though it is rapidly melting. It took but a few hours to patch up the track & by ten o'clock the Swede & me (By a curious coincidence his name is also Frank) captured an Orange Special Through Freight. We rode her the best part of the day & when she stopped at Green River the end of the division, & 111 miles east of here we left the train for a few minutes to get a lunch. I returned with a loaf of bread & chunk of Bologna sausage, I made her out but Frank



did not arrive in time. They carried me but one station 15 miles, where I got ditched.

ROCK SPRINGS. It seems to be a mining town. I went up to a Saloon, got a glass of beer, & had a fine wash in warm water. I am writing this in the saloon. It seems to be the wild and wooly west with a vengeance. The soldiers, miners, & cowboys all seem to be on the rampage. At the present moment a couple of cowboys or rather cattle punchers are raising Cain generally. One is about 6 foot 4, while the other is a little shorty. I guess I will stay here tonight and tomorrow & take a look at the town & mines. This is the town where rock spring coal comes from.

Monday Apr. 16. I had the hardest job in the world this morning searching for the depot. There are thousands of cars laying on the side tracks waiting for coal, & trains run north, south, east and west of here. I saw a pretty sight here at school time this morning. All the girls going to school wore fascinators & knitted hoods. There was but one exception, & that little girl wore a white sunbonnet.

11 o'clock A. M. A heavy snow is now falling.

I waited all afternoon, but as the trains were late I did not get out till 5:30. I caught the flyer & held her down to the next division, where I got ditched at 9:40. I stayed in Rawling [Rawlins] till 12:30. It was blowing a blizzard by this time & freezing cold. The saloons were all full & poker, stud, horse, faro, craps & roulette were all in full blast. At 12:30



I caught an Oregon Special & climbed into the ice box of a refrigerator car, & you bet it was cold before morning. I arrived at Laramie the end of division at seven o'clock. It was so cold on the train that night that the brakeman did not care to bother me. I covered 257 miles that night.

Tuesday Apr. 17. Laramie. When I left the train at Laramie the snow was so thick that one could not see over a rod ahead. My feet were so cold that it took half an hour's brisk walking to restore the circulation. Had a good breakfast at the restaurant & at twelve o'clock, as the blizzard was at about its worst, I caught the blind of the flyer, intending to make through to Cheyenne & in the evening make on again. But when I reached Monument the highest point on this line, I overtook the Reno Detachment of the Industrial Army, 80 strong & camped in a refrigerator car, attached to a through freight. I climbed aboard & made myself at home. That night we crossed the line; but it was not till we were well into Nebraska that we ran clear of the blizzard.

Wednesday Apr. 18. Grand Is. Our fare for supper & breakfast was boneless ham, cheese, bologna sausage, bread and crackers. At Grand Island we were taken to the Restaurants & given a fine dinner, though we were guarded by the local police, so that none would escape. We traveled all afternoon & night & arrived at Omaha at 1 next morn.

Thursday, Apr. 19. Omaha, Council Bluffs, Camp Kelly, Weston. We arrived in Omaha at 1 A. M.,



and were met by a special platoon of policemen who guided us till we were shipped over the Missouri river into Council Bluffs & the state of Iowa. I made up my mind not to march five miles before daylight in the heavy rain out to Camp Kelly situated at Chautauqua park. When we left the cars I deserted in company with the Swede, who I had lost in Green River but picked up about 40 miles to the eastward of Grand Island. We went to sleep in a bar room which was being moved, while the army marched through the mud and storm 5 miles over the country road to Camp Kelly, where they arrived at 5 A. M. I arose at five, said good bye to the Swede, & catching a freight train was eating breakfast in Omaha at 6. I strolled about the town, watched the new post office in process of erection, and on attempting to cross the toll bridge was stopped & sent back. I met a sympathiser who raised a quarter for me & a ride all the way to camp, where I arrived at 10:30 & joined my company. At about 11 the Army was under way, & counter marching before General [Charles T.] Kelly proceeded to march 7 miles to Weston, a little town situated on the lines of the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul, & the Rock Island railroads. The first Regiment of the Reno Industrial Army is the combination I march in, and am in the last rank of the rear guard. The Army made quite an imposing array with flags & banners & Gen. Kelly at their head astride of a fine black horse, presented by an enthusiastic Council



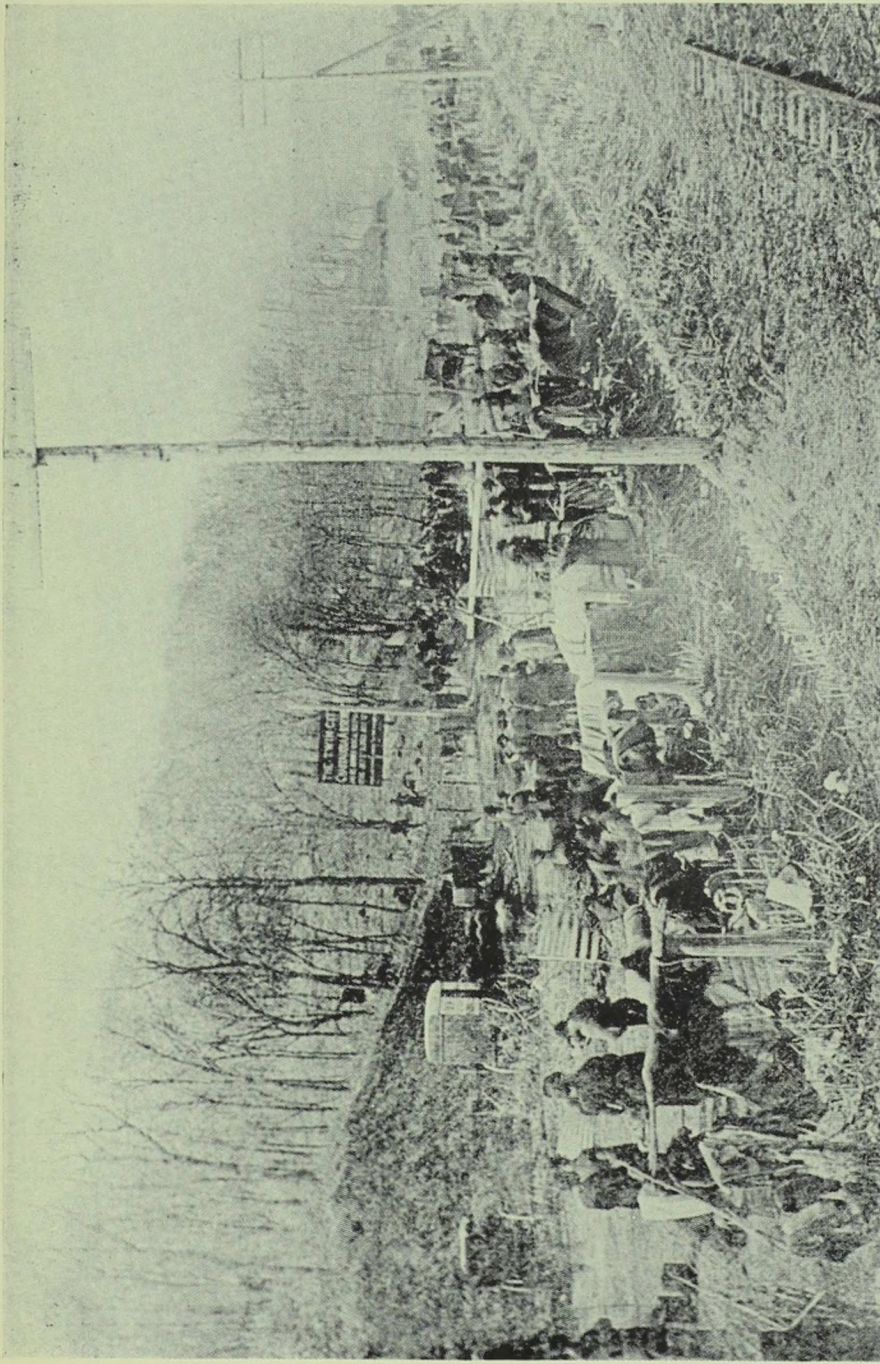
Bluffs citizen. After we had marched about a mile I dropt out & helped a sick man along. He had been in the hospital at Camp Kelly & being convalescent had overestimated his strength. I carried his blankets & assisted him over the trestles. The army took the road with about 12 wagons loaded with food and camp traps. We took the short cut by the R. R. track and he was so weak that he got down & nearly fell into every trestle we crossed. Leaving him seated in a comfortable place sheltered from the rain which was coming down in torrents, I went up to the only store, country store in the town. Never did the storekeeper do such a rushing business. In 10 minutes he was out of cheese, crackers, ginger snaps and all such eatables. In ten minutes after the army had arrived the camps were formed, fires built & dinner under way. Each companys lieutenant goes to the commissary & gets the rations. Though the rain sleet & hail was coming down in torrents, we made quite a meal on stew bread & coffee. As the night came on the wind increased & grew bitter cold, blowing from the north. The men soon scattered in search of lodgings. The owner of an elevator gave permission to occupy it & in less time than it takes to write it, was occupied by 300 men. I soon found a hay loft in a barn, and gradually the men began to straggle in till it was full. By that time Kelly & officers had been out rustling & lodgings were found sufficient for all, though they were quite surprised when they found



our barn full. Just as I was settled comfortably, the muffled crys of a cat aroused me & on digging in the hay beneath my head, found a cat with a litter of kittens. A big Irishmen & I pretty near had a fight. He wanted to throw them out in the storm, but I told him when he threw them out he threw me. The cat & kittens stayed. We passed a pretty comfortable night, though the Mick arose with the cold every two hours & woke me up in his efforts to get warm.

Friday Apr. 20. Weston. We had a breakfast of fish, beans, sour crout, coffee & bread. Then I went to the commissary to get a pair of shoes, but they had none. My feet are on the ground. One sole is entirely off & I am walking on my socks. A special train with R. R. officials came down yesterday, & again to day. The Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul commenced to send all of its rolling stock east & train after train of empties cabosses & extra engines flew past us, without stopping. A rig occupied by Mr. [Rev. J. G.] Lemon of some importance in the Christian Home, drove out and arrived covered with mud, & with steaming horses, telling us that the people of Omaha & Council Bluffs had risen en masse & were on their way to demand transportation for the army, of the railroad. Now and again mud covered vehicles would arrive with later news, till at last they came telling us we were to go out to night on a train obtained by the citizens & which was even then making up. Then when it was

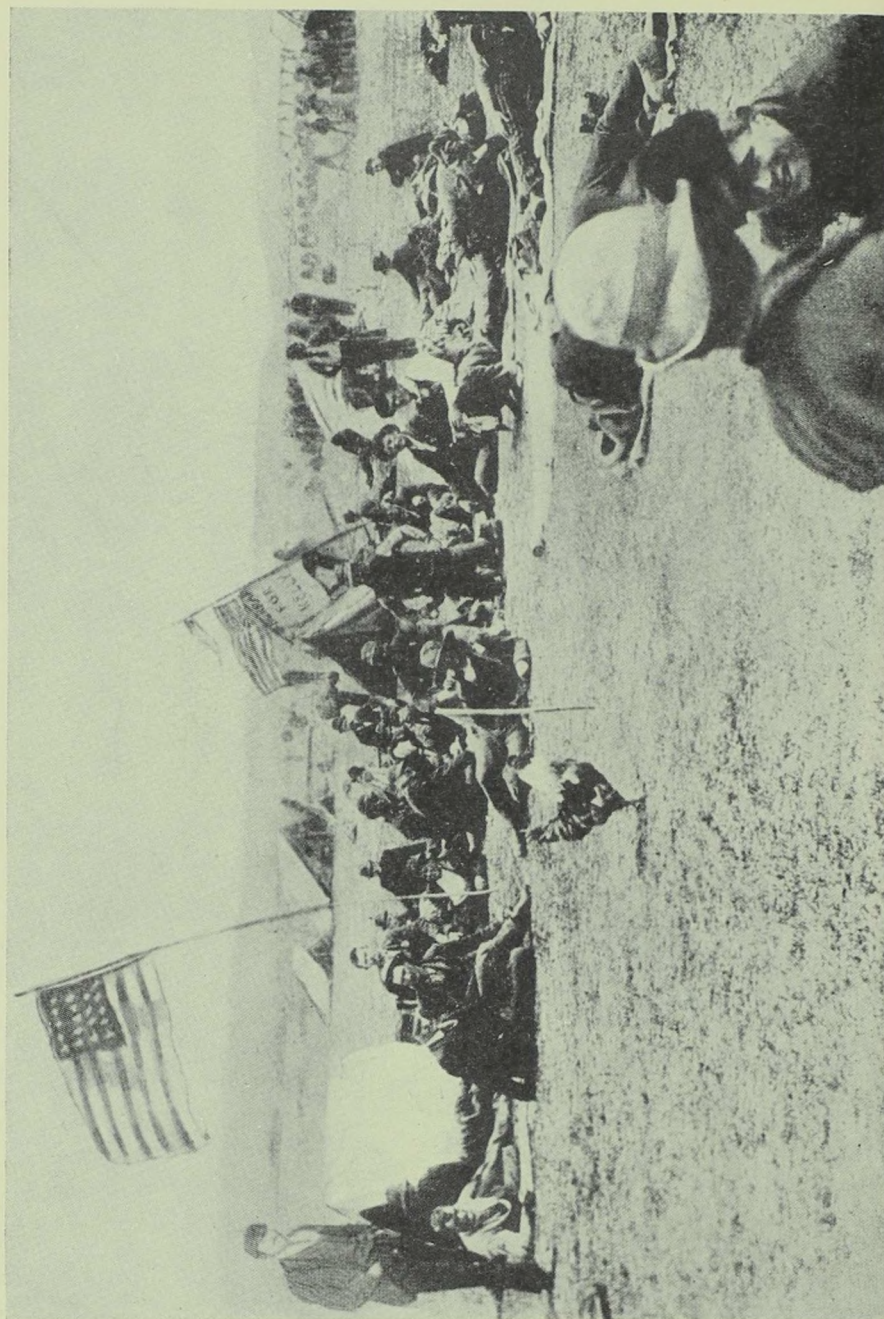




FROM VINCENT'S THE STORY OF THE COMMONWEAL

CAMP DESPAIR AT CHAUTAUQUA HILL NEAR COUNCIL BLUFFS





FROM CHARMIAN LONDON'S THE BOOK OF JACK LONDON

WAYFARERS — JACK LONDON IN THE CORNER

COURTESY OF MRS. LONDON AND THE CENTURY COMPANY



authentically affirmed the Army was ordered to obtain rations, make a hurried meal & be ready to take the train. We are the last to obtain rations as we were the last to join the army. At about 8 o'clock a headlight was seen coming down the C. M. & St. P. road. In an instant all the reserve fuel was stacked on the fires, & a grand shout of rejoicing went up to the heavens. About a mile from town the train stopped. The foreman of the section and one of his men were caught in the act of tearing up the track & the man was captured, then the train slowly proceeded into town with men in advance to see that the tracks were all right. The train had been stolen. Three young ladies, induced an engineer's son to take his father's engine. A train of box cars had been picked up & loaded with Omaha & Council Bluffs citizens. However it was too small to accommodate the army & after the citizens & Kelly held a consultation it was decided to march back early next day to Council Bluffs where the people would get us another train. The train stopped about an hour or two & several songs were sung by the girls & boys on the engine, Mr. Lemon, wife & ladies & the citizens & soldiers of the Industrial Army. With tootings of the engines whistle, & amid the shouts of the army the train pulled out, carrying our promise to meet them next day. A few of the boys tried to take the train in preference to walking, but were soon persuaded to rejoin their companies. I went up to the commissary where I spent the night. The



commissary ducks have a fat time of it, but of course they have to work pretty hard. I obtained a blanket and as there were no shoes and it was impossible for me to walk back I arranged so as to ride back on one of the commissary wagons. It was quite a comparison to my quarters of the night before in the hay loft.

Saturday April 21. Weston. At day break all were awake & up. The Lieutenants & men from the different companies were momentarily arriving to obtain their morning's rations. Coffee, sugar, bread, pork & jelly was served out & soon a hundred different fires were brightly burning and as many breakfasts in the different stages of completion. After breakfast a few men from the different companies started to walk back to Council Bluffs but they were overtaken and a detail placed to prevent the rest from following. After breakfast we had quite a commotion in our camp. The captain was no rustler for his men, & they took offence at a board he had had painted in which his name Captain Gorman was conspicuously displayed. After quite an united consultation everything was arranged satisfactorily, & the banner is to be destroyed. Then he took me up to the Commissary with 4 others & tried to get shoes but there were none. While there a private of Company B. San Francisco, was tried by a drum head court martial, & on being found guilty was drummed out of camp. He was supposed to be a railroad detective, reporter, or Pinkerton. The evi-



dence was strong & he was convicted by a vote of 9 to 4. In the afternoon we were visited by citizens of Neola & Underwood who begged us to march on to their town where we would receive a hearty welcome. After we had speaking & singing we were dismissed to our camps with orders to get the morning's rations at once. The cooks to be up & commence breakfast at four, & all hands to be ready at six for breakfast, & camp to be broke at seven o'clock sharp. The young ladies that stole the train were present & they could not escape without speaking. We had a pleasant time at our camp fire singing song after song & it was not till after eleven that we began to think of sleep.

Sunday Apr. 22. Weston, Underwood, Neola. As soon as breakfast was over I was up to the commissary but could not obtain shoes. Everything was in an orderly confusion. The town was turning out to see us off. Companies were marching here & there to gain their positions, teamsters and wagons were on the go; the commissary officers all life & motion; aide flying in all directions, while the wires were working and on all sides stragglers hurrying to rejoin their companies. As usual we were last in line. 6 or 7 men deserted from Company A. San Francisco, & remained around their fire. Col. [William] Baker led us back on Gen. Kelly's big black horse & we took their blankets away. We had hardly got underway when I threw away my shoes & walked barefooted into Underwood 6 miles



distant, where after a dinner presented by the citizens, I got a pair from the commissary. All along the route enthusiastic crowds on foot, on horses & in double rigs turned out to meet us. After a couple of hours stop we proceeded to Neola the county seat. They sent the militia out to meet us, and it was an apt comparison with the Ogden & Council Bluffs militia. A troop of little children & ladies. We marched through the town with hundreds of citizens joining in our rear to march. It was more like Fourth of July than a peaceful Sunday in a quiet little country town. We marched through the town & down a steep bluff to a picturesque spot alongside of the railroad known as Butler's Woods, where we pitched our camp. Before we broke ranks there was speaking & a welcome by the mayor of the city. We were assured of transportation by 150 farmers wagons on the next morning. As we broke ranks there was a grand scramble up the steep bluffs to a pile of wood, & in less time than it takes to write it every cord had vanished. All afternoon the ladies & gentlemen of the town thronged the camp, mingling with the boys, & in the evening there was a general rejoicing. In all the camps singing & speaking was going on, the ladies mingling their sweet voices with those of the boys all hoarse from the cold weather & sleeping out nights. The ladies of Omaha & Council Bluffs were still with us with their escorts. In one portion of the camp church was held & a local minister officiated. In another, about a score



of germans sent their old country songs echoing throughout the camp. We had our own little time, the principal feature of which was songs & dances by the cooks. At 10 o'clock we started to march to a stable in the town which our second lieutenant had procured for us. We were stopped by the pickets, but Col. Baker came along with quite a jag and a woman on his arm & passed us through. He will most likely be court martialed to morrow.

Monday Apr. 23. Neola, Minden, Avoca. We had an early breakfast, but were prevented from making an early departure by an attempt to break up the army by Col. Baker. He was ignominiously cast out. About half of us took wagons & the other half walked. Of course our company walked. My feet were so tender I could not walk. They tried to get me into a wagon but it was no go. When Kelly came along I spoke to him. But he, not realizing my condition, and thinking I was trying to shirk, told me a wagon would take my shoes for me. As I could not walk I lay down & the Army pulled through without me. By & by the city Marshall came along & tried to send me on but I told him I was going to stay in town till my feet got well. Then he hurried on to overtake the Army. In a few minutes he returned with a couple of officers of the army who proceeded to bundle me into a passing wagon, & I was on my way to overtake the surgeon's wagon. Just as I climbed aboard about 30 citizens headed by the Marshall braced Baker & told him



to take the track & head out. I rode in the doctor's wagon 8 miles to where dinner was served. We passed at 5 miles through the pretty town of Minden. All along the line it resembled a rout or retreat. The S. F. [San Francisco companies] were riding in advance & all along the line the men were scattered in companies, squads, groups, pairs & singles. Our company had no coffee for dinner. That afternoon we arrived in Avoca where we were taken just beyond the town to our camp. Though we looked and were tired when a cottontail was scared up hundreds joined in the chase. The rabbit had no show & was soon captured. Another & another & still another was scared out & captured. None escaped the boys. That night we slept in a barn, where the whole company was treated to a stiff drink of whiskey before retiring.

Tuesday Apr. 24. Avoca, Walnut, Marne, Atlantic. We were up early & underway by 9 o'clock. As usual our company was walking while the S. F.'s rode. I walked 6 miles to the town of Walnut enduring the severest of tortures & I arrived in a most horrible condition. I resolved to go no further on foot. As usual our company had no coffee for dinner. Then Col. [George H. ] Speed & Kelly had a row & for awhile it looked as though there would be a general fight. But it was all peaceably settled. Col. Baker withdrawing with about 150 men, but when they marched out both crowds were together. As usual our company walked. We had just had a



row & elected as Captain our second lieutenant in preference to Gorman. I dropt out & with about ten others lay in wait to catch the first train. But the marshall getting alarmed raised the necessary wagons & bundled us into them. They carried us 8 miles to Marne the next town. All along the line it resembled a grand retreat. Pots, kettles, frying pans, coats, clothes, blankets, broken down men, & in the town a commissary wagon was stopped & the cook & doctor were unable to proceed with it till the town raised \$2 for the driver. They then provided another team, but about 20 were left. At last after dark 7 of them started to walk, & as the trains went through at full speed, we still stayed. Finally an old soldier provided us with supper & teams to go on to Atlantic, 8 miles distant. We arrived between 9 & 10, & were taken to the commissary where we had supper again. I rejoined my company and went off to bed.

Wednesday Apr. 25. Atlantic. We are to spend the day here. We are all camped in the fair grounds near the race track. Kelly has gone on to Desmoines. No, he did not go. The camp was thronged with citizens all day, & in the afternoon the little troubles were all made up and Baker & Speed rejoined the army. Mr. Lemon was the prime factor in causing this reconciliation. Speed, Baker, Lemon, Goodspeed, the Associated Press & other reporters & a noted lawyer addressed the army. A Game of base ball was also in progress between the Army & Town Boys. The Atlantic boys won with a score of 16 to



12. But the Army boys were not in condition. In the evening I ran the pickets & strolled around town. Just after I returned a brass band marched down & the camp was soon listening to addresses by camp orators & townspeople. Every body expresses a good opinion of the army & a great many were surprised at the gentlemanly bearing & honest appearance of the boys.

Thursday, April 26. Atlantic, Wyota [Wiota], Anita, Adair. We had a slight delay in breakfast by the want of bread but that was soon supplied & by ten o'clock we were under way. Pretty near all our company rode, & I did all day. At 7 miles we passed the town of Wyota, at 14 Anita where we had a dinner furnished by the townspeople & at 22 arrived at Adair where we camped. All the trains are running, with a force of Pinkertons on & the railroad has issued circulars against seizing of trains. As usual, I ran the Pickets and in company with one Lee saw the town & visited the hobby horses. When we returned we had quite a job to enter. All citizens had been requested to leave the camp & if any were to remain they would be arrested & sent to headquarters. If any Pinkertons or detectives are caught it will go hard with them.

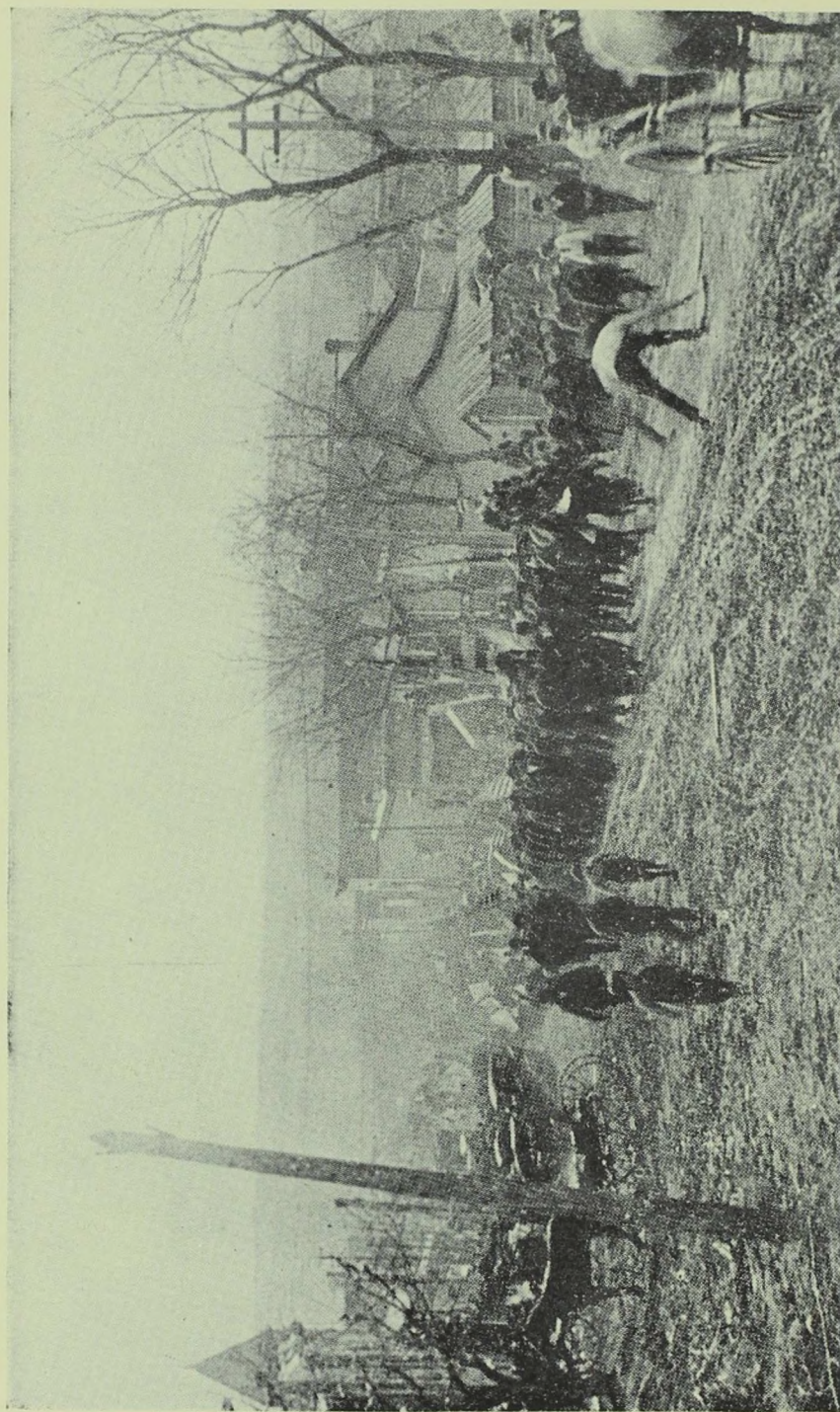
Friday Apr. 27. Adair, Casey, Stuart. We were under way bright & early, & capturing two wagons started out ahead of the whole gang. We had a fine rustler driving our team. The old farmer ——— the food, sacks of potatoes, & chickens. "You'd





FROM VINCENT'S THE STORY OF THE COMMONWEAL  
A HALT FOR LUNCH NEAR SHELBY





FROM VINCENT'S THE STORY OF THE COMMONWEAL

KELLY ENTERING AVOCA AT THE HEAD OF HIS ARMY



better ask the wimmen folks. Here they be." We were left by both wagons in Casey, & after quite a wait succeeded in capturing 1 wagon for luggage. Into which a great many of us also piled. We raised some coffee on the road & cooked a dinner in preference to driving a couple of miles out of our way to Menlow [Menlo] where a dinner was prepared by the townspeople. With a great deal of joking & fun we arrived at Stuart having covered a distance of 23 miles. We rested outside the town waiting for the stragglers to come in before we marched through the town. Then marched through the town to camp. A double line of pickets are on duty to night. We expect to make a forced march of 40 miles to Des Moines to morrow. As usual the camp is thronged with visitors from the town. A great many ladies are present & a few have brought baby buggies.

Saturday Apr. 28. Stuart, Dexter, Earlham, De Soto, Van Meter. Were under way bright & early. Walked 11 miles through the town of Dexter to Earlham, where we had dinner. My feet are in such bad condition that I am not going on any further, unless I can ride. I will go to jail first. It was impossible to get a ride & I went down to the station. A train left at three o'clock, & playing on the sympathies of the people I raised a ticket & was soon in Van Meter, three miles beyond De Soto. The Army is straggling in but it will be hours before the last arrives. Gen. Kelly intends to push on to Des Moines, twenty miles distant. At nine o'clock in the midst of driving rain,



thunder & lightning the Army received orders to march. About half started out in the pitchy darkness. We stormed the pickets stationed on the bridge & gained the town. Three of our company and about a dozen others slept in the Mayor's office.

Sunday Apr. 29. Van Meter, Booneville. At four o'clock we were awakened by a deputy sheriff. All the rest including my three companions walked out the railroad track. I have 8 blisters on my feet & more a coming so I could not walk. I went down to the Coon River, washed and then went to camp where I found three more of our company. About 400 were assembled & as their appetites increased they proceeded to the commissary. They had no order to issue rations, but when we all came up in a body they saw no show & we all soon had a good breakfast underway. As I can't walk I intend to stay here till transportation is furnished. Ate dinner with the Commissary Cook, & afterwards went down to the river & took a swim. At supper there were about ten of us left besides the Commissary. We were given sausage & coffee but no bread. I was sent up town to raise the bread. I went to the Committee of Safety who were going to give it to me, when two of the head commissary fellows came along. They began to growl at me & I hauled them over the coals in great shape. We got bread. After supper I walked 4 miles to Coonville [Booneville] the next town where I slept.

Monday Apr. 30. Booneville, Commerce, Val.



June., Des Moines. I walked 15 miles into Des Moines, arriving in camp in time for supper. The Army is encamped at the stove works situated about a mile & a half east of the state capital. In Val. Junction I met a detective belonging to my society. Also a fine lady. We all slept inside of the works. A great many intended to sleep by the fire but a fierce thunder storm arose & there was a grand scramble for shelter.

Tuesday May 1. Des Moines. Stayed in camp at the stove works, though the mayor has ordered us to move on. A perfect throng of visitors fill the camp, while there are quite a lot of policemen on duty. In the afternoon the Salvation Army held services on the ground floor. Kelly, Baker, Speed & citizens spoke outside while the Des Moines boys & soldier lads played ball. The Army won with a score of 27 to 19. We spent the evening round the fire singing & joking till 11 when we went to bed. It was awful cold.

Wednesday. Was spent in camp. No transportation.

Thursday. The Des Moines Stars defeated the army's nine in a game of baseball with a score of 7 to 5.

Friday. They were defeated by the Army boys with a score of 5 to 4.

Saturday. Morning we had two court martials. In the afternoon it was decided by the vote of the Army that we build flatboats, 150 in number, to be



45 [10] feet long & 6 wide. With these we are to go on down the Des Moines river to the Mississippi then on down to Cairo where we start up the Ohio to Wheeling W. Va. within 300 miles of our ultimate destination.

Sunday May 6. Part of the Army went down to the Junction of the Coon & Des Moines River where by night fall 75 boats were near finished.

Monday. We worked all day & at night till 12.

Tuesday. The stove works were abandoned & a camp established at the ship yards.

Wednesday May 9. We got under way, & ran down past & over a dam 2 miles to a bridge where we waited for orders, till 4:30, by which time over a hundred boats had passed us bound God knows where. Then, as no body appeared we got under way & by seven that night passed every boat & were the first to arrive at Runnels, where about twenty of the foremost camped in the midst of a driving rain. We raised a few provisions & by 10:30 next morning after drying ourselves we got under way. We passed a few boats which had run by us & camped at Red Rock for the night. We are living without the commissary.

Friday May 11. Had an early breakfast & were soon passing boats. There were two 8 hours ahead which were impossible to overtake. Living fine. At 6 o'clock when 3 miles from Harvey where Col. Speed is stationed to stop bad boats, we were overtaken by a rain.



Saturday, May 12 (1894). After getting under way we soon found we were too lazy to paddle so we drifted. As we reached Harvey the fleet overtook us, but bending to the paddles we soon left them tangled up & trying to run a dam. After which we went in swimming & when the boats overtook us we pulled in to the bridge where provisions were to meet us. But by some mistake they were still at Oskaloosa, a town of 16,000 people 7 miles distant. Hundreds of teams were waiting to see us & I guess on Sunday they went up into the thousands.

From Des Moines and all along the banks have been lined with the natives & we would have to go for miles to find a secluded spot in which to bathe or make our toilet. The boat containing our Captain would not recognize us. And late that night when provisions arrived & the first meal for the majority of the boats was about to be cooked, we found we were not in it. The Lieutenant with his boat took our part & we cooked a pretty good meal out of our private commissary. We are going to hold an election tomorrow & as we are the majority we will oust the Captain.

Sunday, May 13. Held an election & the Lieutenant was made Captain. Then our two boats pulled across the river where we washed them out. Our old Captain went to Kelly & raised a roar & soon Kelly, Speed & Baker came across & told us they were going to take our boat away & divide us into different companies, for our going ahead. We told them we

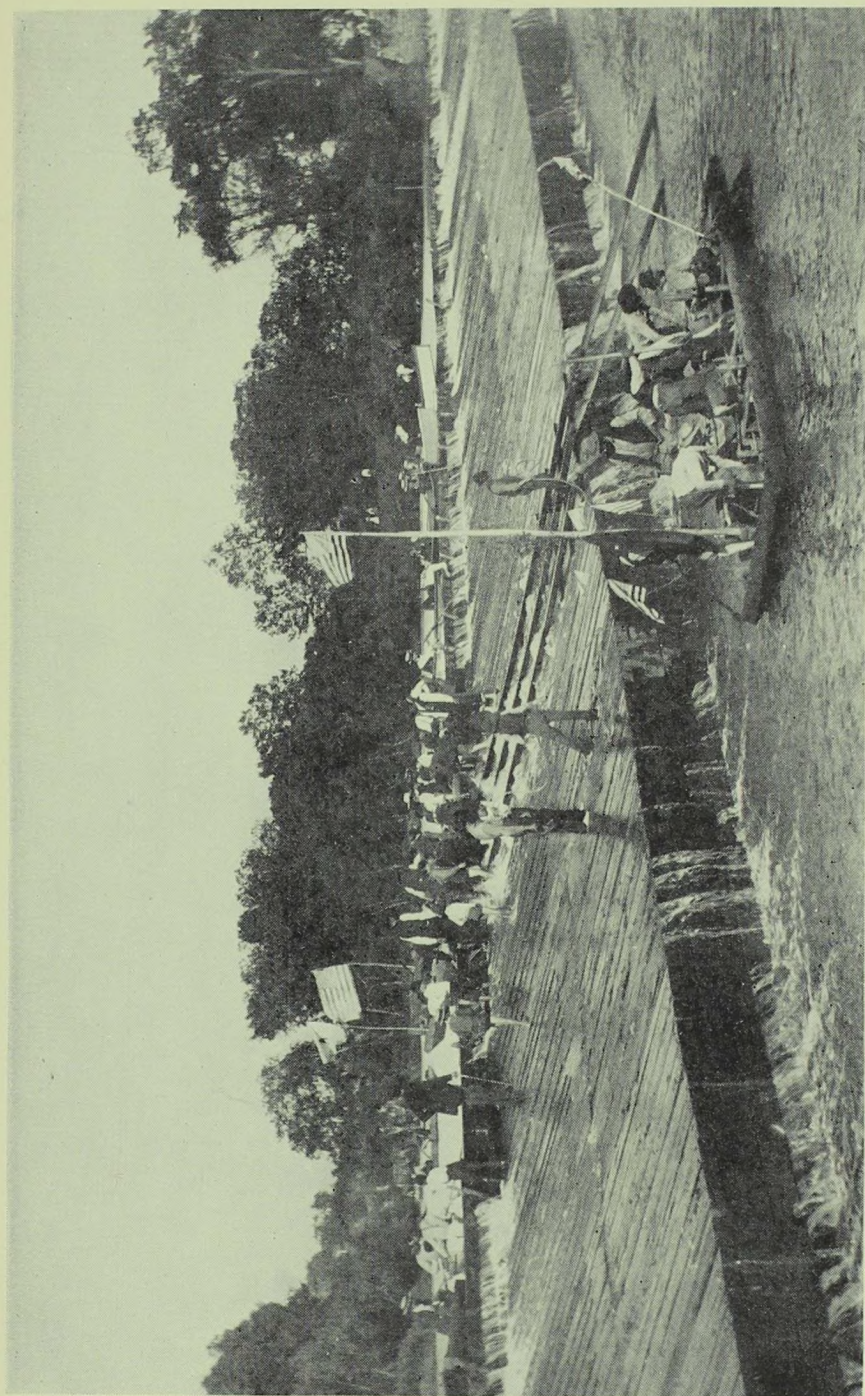


would leave in a body & as all stood firm after a talk we were forgiven. So its all O. K. At 1 P. M. we got under way and by evening arrived first boat at Eddyville. We held a vote and instead of sailing all night waited till morning when we pulled on empty stomachs. The rest of the boats have averaged one meal a day since leaving Des Moines & went one stretch of 48 hours.

Monday, May 14. As usual with our two boats lashed together we arrived first at Ottumwa & went over the dam on an improvised chute. We were taken a couple of miles below the town which numbers 18,000 to camp. That night the different boats started an opposition ferry & the ways of their rustlers reminded me of other days. We charged nothing, for payment was optional on their part.

Tuesday May 15. We were under way at 12 o'clock when the bugle sounded with three police boats & about 50 others ahead of us. We soon passed them all but were stopped by the police boats & ordered astern. In a few minutes as we struck the bad part of the river, which extends for 30 or forty miles, the police boats ran aground, one after the other. We ran past, scraping the bars, shoving big rocks round which the water boiled and foamed, over others with such force as to almost stove us in till we were way ahead of the fleet which was tangled up & stranded in an astounding manner. We ran this 25 miles & then about two more below the town of Eldon to camp. The rest of the

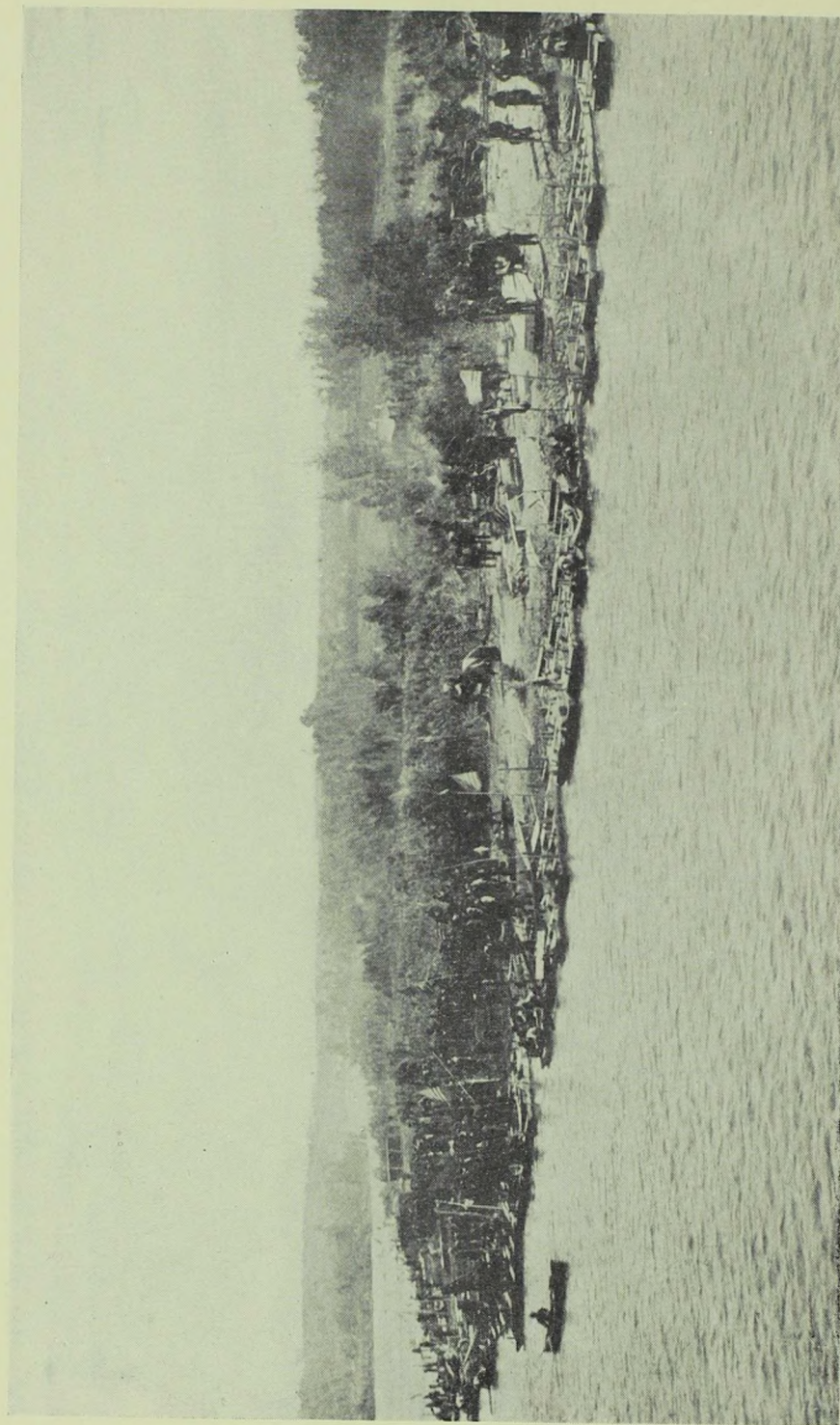




COURTESY OF MRS. F. B. THRALL

OVER THE DAM AT OTTUMWA





COURTESY OF JASPER BLINES

KELLY'S NAVY AT THE MOUTH OF THE DES MOINES RIVER



boats soon began to string in, but by sun down they stopped arriving & soon the news came that a couple of men had been hurt by Pinkertons at the bridge and the boats were stopping. Two of the detectives were arrested but the R. R. officials instantly bailed them out. By nine o'clock the boats came in all in a lump & they were all greatly excited. If any Pinkertons are captured Woe unto them for the men are getting desperate.

Wednesday May 16. Early in the morning one of our boats crossed the river but 25 Pinkertons refused them landing. In an instant every boat was full of excited men crossing the river while others disdaining such slow traveling were wading the ford, never stopping to even pull off their shoes and socks or roll up their pants. When the P's saw this wild array approaching they all took to their heels but two who maintained their ground. But they were surrounded, & the jam saved them to a great extent though they were still severely punished & their pistols taken away. By that time Kelly gained control of his men, & they returned to camp for breakfast while they gave the P's a good talking to. We left at 12 with Col. Speed aboard & passing every boat were soon in the lead. Baker overtook us in a buggy & came aboard. The Omaha Bee, & 9 others of Co. K's boats together gave us a hard pull but strength and endurance won the day & when we camped alongside the bridge at Pittsburg they were



out of sight. The army could not overtake & but 5 boats camped with us.

Thursday May 17. We started early but the army had already passed. By the time we passed Keosochawa [Keosauqua] we had overtaken them & running the rapids with safety found half a dozen stove in & on the beach getting repaired while the pop-corn man lost five hundred cigars & swamped his boat with wife child & entire outfit on board. We received our morning rations & with a fair wind soon passed the fleet. They are getting tired, but once in a while some crack crew gives us a spin to their disgust & our delight. We were the first to go over the dam on a chute prepared by the citizens of Bonaparte. We then went into camp.

Friday May 18. We passed a miserable day on the water with a chilling wind & driving rain. In the afternoon we camped in Missouri where we passed a miserable night.



## Comment by the Editor

### AN IMPULSIVE YOUTH

One morning just as Jack London shot a hard-folded newspaper into the hallway of a squalid Oakland tenement the fragrant odor of coffee drifted out to the hungry boy. Without a moment's hesitation he traced the appetizing aroma along the narrow passage to the kitchen at the rear. But his friendly greeting, as he followed his nose through the doorway, produced a startling response. The slatternly woman who stood by the stove seized a butcher knife and jumped at the unsuspecting lad. Up an uninviting flight of stairs raced Jack with the woman at his heels. Bursting into a bedroom, he snatched the covers off an abruptly awakened elderly couple just in time to throw the smother of blankets over the head of his angry pursuer and escape.

Boy and man, Jack London ever acted on impulse. Let a notion enter his head and at once he proceeded with the project. There were times, to be sure, when duty held him to irksome tasks, when the business of earning a living repressed his natural inclinations; but the course of his career, the leading events of his kaleidoscopic life, were determined by the whim of the moment. Thirsting for adventure, he spent his allotted forty years experiencing the



romance that most people are content to read about. He enjoyed "living in the concrete" so intensely that ever and anon he thrust distasteful duty behind him and put to sea with the salt spray in his face and the golden light of the western sun in his eyes.

Perhaps the questing spirit was innate in his nature. John London, his father, had started railroading in Pennsylvania, married the daughter of an officer of the road, moved to Wisconsin, then to Illinois, and thence to Missouri where he enlisted in the Union army. He returned from the war broken in health to find a home at Moscow, Iowa, where he superintended the construction of a bridge over the Cedar River and tried his hand at farming. For a season or two he gypsied over the prairies in a covered wagon vainly hoping that his wife's health would improve. After she died he moved westward until the ocean stopped his migration at San Francisco. There he married again, and there Jack was born in January, 1876. The years which followed, during the boyhood and youth of Jack London, were filled with hard work, mismanagement, and poverty.

The boy began to learn the worst of life too young. Before he was eight years old he had been made drunk by some Irish and Italian neighbors at a holy-week party. At ten he was selling papers on the streets of Oakland early in the morning and long after dark at night, catching furtive glimpses of the lurid underworld. He thought of home as the place



where he slept. His few hours of leisure were spent in a tiny sailboat on the bay. Perched high on the windward rail of his skiff, with the free west wind in his lungs, he fled from sordid existence ashore and yearned to go to sea.

Having finished school at thirteen, he went to work in a cannery; but the long hours of unrelaxing, mechanical labor were unendurable. Down to the bay he went one day in an insurrectionary mood when he was fifteen, bought a sloop with some borrowed money, and joined the oyster pirates of San Francisco Bay. There was no dull routine aboard the *Razzle Dazzle*, but the traffic she engaged in was a crime and the winds of adventure carried her master far into the realm of human debauchery. Never content in a static condition and disillusioned of romantic glamour by the crude brutality of pirate life, he turned to the dangerous service of the fish patrol—sworn enemy of his former companions. Meanwhile the lure of the open sea grew irresistible. On the day he was seventeen he signed as able seaman on a sealing schooner bound for Japan and Bering Sea.

Back from the voyage, he was persuaded to "settle down" at hum-drum, ill-paid toil in a jute mill. He even took pride in his work for a time. Winter came, and he found a job shoveling coal for better wages, but when he learned that he was doing two men's work he quit, resenting the merciless exploitation of his strength. Besides cheapening the price



of labor, he had been depriving two men of the opportunity to earn a living. Sickened by his orgy of overwork, his revulsion for steady employment returned and he decided to enlist in Kelly's army of weary rebels like himself.

#### ADVENTURING ON THE ROAD

The vagrant thought was parent to the deed. Youth, zest for experience, and surcease from tedious routine combined to prompt his lark of loafing across the continent. Being a tramp appealed to him as a "delightful whimsicality". So off he went on the Overland Limited in pursuit of Kelly's army of the unemployed.

The diary he kept on his odyssey is a vivid portrayal of the famous "campaign" from the viewpoint of a rear-rank private. He would have thoroughly enjoyed the march from Council Bluffs to Des Moines if his feet had not been so sore. "The hospitable Iowa farmer folk!" he exclaimed thirteen years later in his story of "The March of Kelly's Army". "They turned out with their wagons and carried our baggage and gave us hot lunches at noon by the wayside; mayors of comfortable little towns made speeches of welcome and hastened us on our way; deputations of little girls and maidens came out to meet us, and the good citizens turned out by hundreds, locked arms, and marched with us down their main streets. It was circus day when we came to town, and every day was circus day for us, for



there were many towns." But for "Sailor Jack" the fun began when the army started on its "colossal picnic" down the Des Moines River in flatboats which were "made by the mile and sawed off" ten feet long.

At Hannibal, Missouri, he deserted and went to Chicago to see the World's Fair. After visiting an aunt in Michigan he hopped a freight train and continued "on the bum". At Niagara Falls he was "pinched" for vagrancy and summarily sentenced to thirty days of hard labor in the Erie County prison. Free again, he "beat his way" to Washington, thence to New York, and from there to Boston where cool weather sent him, tramp-royal that he was, "hustling" homeward through Canada, bent upon going to college.

The story of Jack London's ten-thousand-mile tour on blind baggage cars, in side-door Pullmans, and underneath on the rods is told in *The Road*. His character was scarred and his judgment warped by what he saw of social injustice; but he cherished the experience of vagabondage, never ashamed of the alms he asked. He paid for his food with entertainment. "My coming to sit at their table", he said of two pink and white maiden ladies who fed him toast and demi-tasse, "was their adventure, and adventure is beyond price, anyway."

Perhaps he acquired his rare gift for "spinning a yarn" while "throwing his feet" for "set-downs" and "hand-outs"—for the success of a beggar de-



pendes much upon his ability to tell a good story. "In the instant that he is sizing up the victim he must begin his story. Not a minute is allowed for preparation. As in a lightning flash he must divine the nature of the victim and conceive a tale that will hit home. The successful hobo must be an artist. He must create spontaneously and instantaneously—and not upon a theme selected from the plentitude of his own imagination, but upon the theme he reads in the face of the person who opens the door, be it man, woman, or child, sweet or crabbed, generous or miserly, good-natured or cantankerous, Jew or Gentile, black or white, race-prejudiced or brotherly, provincial or universal, or whatever else it may be." In order to live Jack London was compelled to tell tales that rang true. "Out of inexorable necessity," he developed the technique of the short story—one vivid, unforgettable episode; one slice of life, clear and convincing. It made him a realistic romancer, for "realism constitutes the only goods one can exchange at the kitchen-door for grub."

J. E. B.



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