

The  
**PALIMPSEST**

AUGUST 1924

**CONTENTS**

**GEORGE D. PERKINS**

**A Journalist of Purpose 273**

**E. P. HEIZER**

**The Man He Was 292**

**FRED DAVIS**

**Two Lay Sermons 305**

**GEORGE D. PERKINS**

**Comment 318**

**THE EDITOR**

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## 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

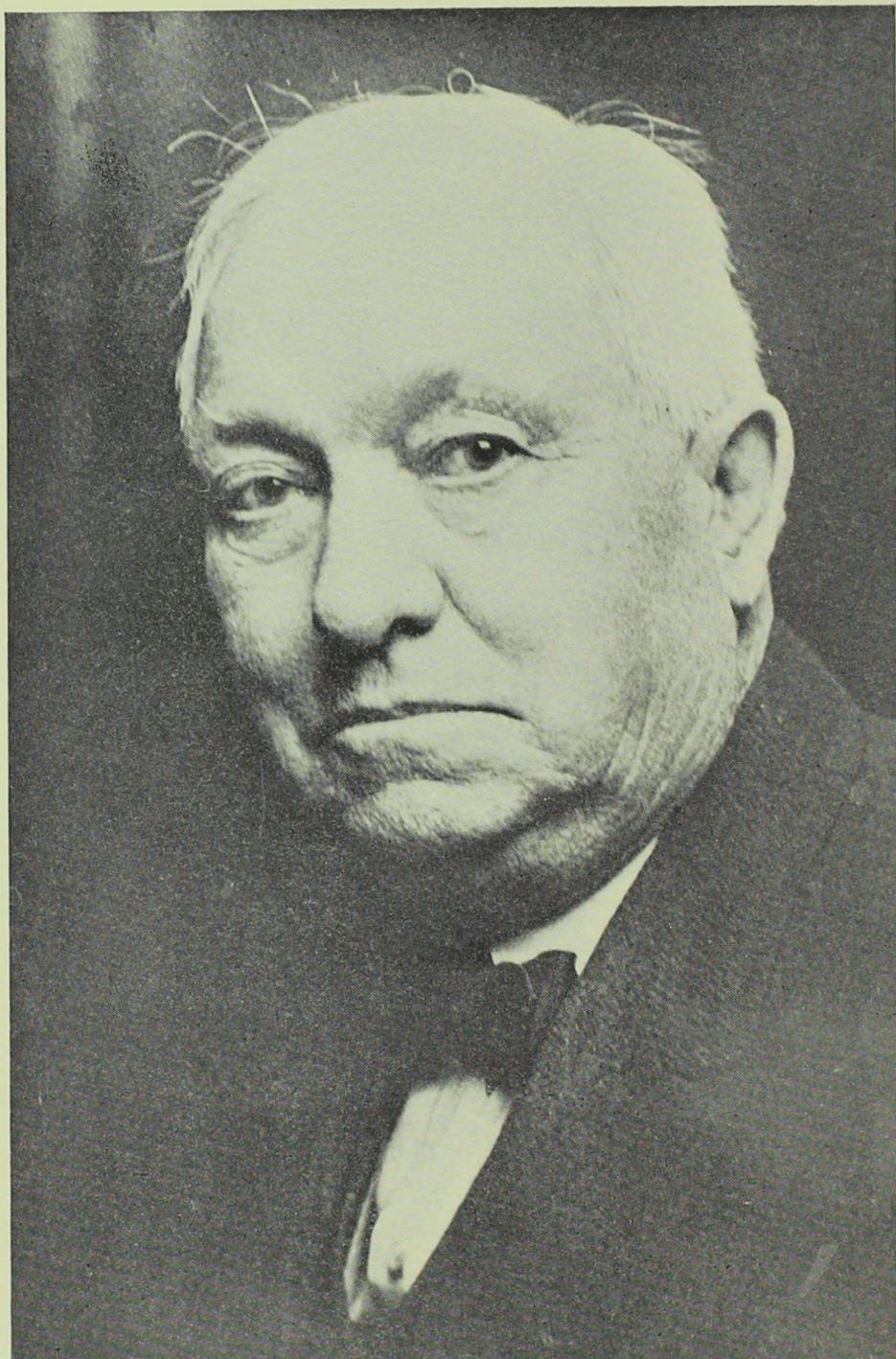
*Superintendent*

## 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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GEORGE D. PERKINS

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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## A Journalist of Purpose

George Douglas Perkins was born at Holley, New York, February 29, 1840, and died at Sioux City, Iowa, February 3, 1914. Forty-five years before the later date he had founded the daily Sioux City *Journal* of which to the day of his death he was the soul and directing mind as owner, editor, and publisher. From the outset of his career as editor of the *Journal* he took his place as a marked man, to be heeded in his city, in his State, and in the Northwest. His newspaper, reflecting the genuine quality of leadership, was recognized as representative of the spirit and activities of the people who were taking possession of the Upper Missouri Valley. His death was the occasion of a demonstration of public appreciation remarkable for its unanimity and sincerity. In Iowa and in the States bordering the Missouri River west and north he occupies an honorable place among the elect of our public men

the memory of whose personalities and careers will long be cherished.

George D. Perkins was the youngest of four children of John Douglas Perkins of Rochester, New York, and Lucy Forsyth Perkins whose family resided at Albany. The father was a man of strictest moral principles and recognized ability as a lawyer: the mother was a woman of remarkable character. The Perkinses, the Forsyths, and the Douglasses, originally residents of Massachusetts and Connecticut, were of the genuine stock that made New England and had so potent an influence in fixing the type of westward moving civilization. They were of the sort who came to the fore in their communities. They had joined the movement into eastern New York following the Revolution, and in the early part of the last century they were prominent there in business, society, and the professions — substantial people. As population was hurrying to the richer lands of central and western New York, it was natural for the father, still a young man, to move on and establish himself in the neighborhood of Buffalo. His health failing he moved farther west in search of a better climate, first for a year at Indianapolis and then to Baraboo, Wisconsin, where he died prematurely in 1852.

Besides George, who was then twelve years of age, there was an older brother, still in apprenticeship to the printer's trade, and two sisters. As the family then faced the future the sum of its material

possessions, depleted by the father's long illness, consisted of a little home in a frontier county seat town and less than five dollars in ready money. But there was limitless spiritual resource. The mother was resolved to keep the family together and to see them fitted for good lives. With what heroic effort and sacrifice she struggled with the problem and won triumphantly would in detail make an appealing story which can only be cited here, but with all its implications it explains the kind of man her son became. His real education began at home.

The earliest actions of the boy disclose those mental faculties which see things as they are, and that moral quality which responds to duty. At twelve years of age he rented a plot of ground and cultivated vegetables which, outside of school hours, he peddled about town. His first ambition was to be a farmer. When fourteen years old he worked six months on a farm at \$10 a month; and at the end "he had \$60 coming to him", every dollar of which he turned into the family purse. In the meantime he had been granted two half holidays which he employed in work for his widowed mother in her garden. Not one minute did he waste, then or ever. A year later he seized the chance for apprenticeship to the printer's trade in the office of the *Baraboo Republic*, a weekly paper on which his brother was then employed and later became a partner. His pay was one dollar a week, without lodging or board. In due time he became a competent compositor and

four years later qualified as a journeyman printer, working in the same office at one dollar a day, the ruling wage then paid.

Except for the time he worked on a farm, George regularly attended the town schools until he was sixteen. As a school boy he was acquisitive, incessantly laborious, and serious far beyond the average. He continued his studies in the essential branches taught in the academies and small colleges of that day during the whole period of his apprenticeship. Especially thorough was his study of English literature and drill in English composition. History, particularly that of our own country, he explored with great zest and success. It is noteworthy that during these years he systematically disciplined himself in the principles of formal logic in the light of every available authority, persistently and rigidly applying them in practice and criticism. It is no wonder therefore that the old-time printing office became for him, as it did for Benjamin Franklin, Horace Greeley, and so many others of our celebrities, an incomparable means for the development of mental faculties, of culture, and of insight into the world of actions and ideas. He had not been long in apprenticeship before he resolved to make journalism his life work. This course of preparation which he pursued with such systematic thoroughness and relentless purpose is revelatory of the character of the boy who was so truly father to the man.

Nor can his education be justly estimated without including the cultural influence of home — of such a home as the mother of George D. Perkins made for him. She was a woman of culture, of polite manners, and high mental endowment — one of those mothers who rule by divine right from the throne of the home. The exterior of that home might not be imposing, but within there was true living and thinking; pure Queen Anne's English was spoken, good literature read, the amenities of a high social plane observed, worthy citizens and real gentlemen and ladies produced. In the intricate artificiality of our present State educational system we are forgetting the solid cultural potency of such a home as blessed the fortune of George D. Perkins. The elder brother, Henry A., with whom he was associated as partner nearly continuously until the death of the latter in 1884, was also a man of unusual ability and an accomplished editor and business man. One sister — the other died in young womanhood — Mrs. Elizabeth H. Boehmler, became a leading teacher in the Sioux City public schools and for a quarter of a century was in charge of one of the most popular departments of the *Journal*.

Becoming thus a thoroughly competent printer, coming up through the public schools with earned progressive benefit, inspired by the ideals of a heroic mother's home — with all this severe and persistent discipline, though so largely self-directed, George D. Perkins was at the threshold of inde-

pendent life an educated man, if preparedness of head and hand and right spirit for life's realities be education. He at once entered upon his newspaper career. When just twenty years of age he came to Iowa and in conjunction with his brother founded the Cedar Falls *Gazette*. For six years they made it a model among Iowa newspapers for typographical excellence, literary style, completeness of news, and business success, but in 1866 they sold this property and went to Chicago, where George D. became for three years an agent of the Northwestern Associated Press (later merged in the Associated Press), his duty being to cover the local news field of Chicago — an invaluable experience. At the same time he and his brother operated a specialty printing office of their own. Chicago was only just entering upon its marvellous destiny, but strong-willed men had already forged to the front and become famous in journalism. Contact with these men in the thick of things meant much.

It was in the spring of 1869, however, when he came to Sioux City and purchased the *Sioux City Journal*, that the wide field opened in which he was to run his notable career. True, the *Journal* was only a small four-page weekly paper issued from an old Washington hand press. Sioux City had scarcely three thousand inhabitants and the first railroad had reached the town only a year before. Within a fortnight after George D. Perkins became editor of the *Journal* the last rail was laid on the

transcontinental railroad, joining the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific lines which for five years had been building west from Omaha and east from Sacramento. Between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean lay a vast expanse of wilderness in which there were only a few mining camps, army posts, the Mormon community in Utah, and the motley settlements of those who had made the arduous trek overland to Oregon and California. Even the major part of western Iowa was virgin prairie, much of it still open under the homestead law.

But Sioux City occupied a strategic point at the confluence of the Missouri and Big Sioux rivers where the boundaries of Iowa, Nebraska, and the Dakotas met. Thence transport of supplies for soldier and Indian, for settler, trader, and fur trapper proceeded by steamboat up the Missouri River. Farmers in the rich converging valleys came there to trade. During the ensuing two decades the prodigious rush of settlers was to be carried into the Northwest by railroads built in feverish haste along those converging valleys, making Sioux City a railroad center, a market and supply depot of increasing importance as those highways were carried farther and farther west.

This expansion of our race through the Upper Missouri Valley and across the mountains was merely a continuation of the epochal movement from the eastern seaboard into the Northwest Territory acquired from Great Britain after the Revolution.

We know the kind of men and women who made that historic conquest. The authentic document transcribing upon paper what was deepest in their minds and hearts as they thrust the frontier three thousand miles westward across the continent is the immortal Ordinance of 1787 — in brief, ordaining these things: virgin but rich land for the individual's very own almost for the taking; equal division of the property of intestates; freedom of worship; the writ of habeas corpus; bail, trial by jury, and moderate fines and punishments; proportionate representation; freedom of speech; public education; inviolability of property and private contracts; most significantly, slavery forever prohibited; and finally, the right to organize speedily into commonwealths, self-governing on republican fundamentals.

George D. Perkins belonged to these people. He knew their temper. His blood was of their blood, for his own family had marched with their movement from the day it started westward. The same spirit which dominated them all the way brought him to Sioux City in his young manhood. It filled his mind when he promised in his initial utterance in the *Journal* "faithful and impartial labor in the local interests of Sioux City and that large portion of the Northwest tributary thereto."

He had to be a strong man, strong in brain and balance of judgment, devoted to his task, of perdurable energy, of courage and integrity, and competent by special skill in his profession, to grow

apace with a people who so rapidly occupied and developed their new realm and to seize and hold the place of acknowledged leadership in the all-important function of their journalism. Those were the qualities which gave form and meaning to the *Journal* from its first issue as a daily newspaper, April 19, 1870. Within a twelvemonth from his arrival in Sioux City, Mr. Perkins had assembled the machinery and organized the news service — including a substantial telegraphic report which was a formidable undertaking under the circumstances — necessary to transform a petty weekly into an ambitious daily. The unflagging industry with which he collected the news of his territory, utilizing every resource to the uttermost, immediately attracted attention. It was a herculean labor, for there were few of the facilities of to-day. Equally notable was the neatness of typography and the discrimination in arrangement and display of matter — characteristics which made the *Journal* individual and conspicuous among western newspapers and fixed it as a model.

But that which stood out most distinctly and impressively was the intellectual and moral quality of his editorship. The journalist of this age can not be a mere annalist. He deals at closest quarters with the verities of every day life — with all interests, moral and intellectual as well as material. So the *Journal* under Mr. Perkins came to be looked to trustfully, not merely as a chronicle of events, but

also for conscience and sure judgment in their interpretation. The people of the surrounding region of sixty thousand square miles and more, in northwestern Iowa, northern Nebraska, and South Dakota, found it identified with them in interest, in hope, in purpose. Those of South Dakota and northern Nebraska felt its editor to be as much their loyal and intelligent champion as those of northwest Iowa. State lines were erased by the value of his service and the catholicity of his spirit. There was need of such service. These were young and growing communities, struggling with the difficulties of pioneer life and confronted with all the questions which rise up confusedly when governmental and institutional arrangements must be forthwith improvised and adjusted.

Illustration must perforce be limited here to two instances — Mr. Perkins's advocacy of sound money and government control of railroads, on both of which questions grave political agitations arose in various successive phases through three decades in the West. The rush for cheap land had of course been impulsive and precipitous. Tens of thousands had swarmed upon the land ill provided for the emergencies inevitable in pioneer conditions. The Civil War had left the country with a depreciated currency and other abnormal conditions, leavening all business with the poison of speculation. The unescapable reaction gripped western settlers with special severity. They had to borrow, often at high

rates, for part of the land price, for improvements thereon, and sometimes for maintenance. Prices fell, crops would fail, and the people demanded more paper money. Popular discontent in such distress always cries out for relief by legislative nostrum — for quick relief where quick relief by any means is inherently impossible.

Against all of the passionate demonstrations Mr. Perkins in his editorial point of vantage stood immovably for sound financial policy. The series of editorial discussions, logical, thorough in elucidation of basic economic principle, instinct with sincerity, and calm in tone as all his utterances were, would if collected make a library of interesting and instructive matter. To him more than to any other one man was due the restraint which prevented incalculable damage. This salutary agency was universally recognized at home. It commanded attention and respect throughout the country, giving the *Journal* a distinctive national reputation, no less for the moral courage than for the mental force behind it.

It is not easy for us to-day to sense the seriousness of the threat embodied in those formidable popular movements culminating at length in the crusade led by William Jennings Bryan in 1896. In the decade after 1875 the victims of hard times, under the energetic leadership of James B. Weaver, threatened to carry even Iowa off its feet. A large part of the Democratic party, yielding to tempta-

tion, federated with the discontented elements. Timorous and demagogic counsels beguiled the Republican party into enactment of vicious monetary laws, and the utter financial and industrial collapse of the country was in fact ultimately prevented largely by the manhood and patriotism of President Grover Cleveland in bringing the long fought question to direct issue and summary settlement. A grave danger of the situation lurked in the circumstance that the West and the Northwest so nearly held the balance of power. From beginning to end Mr. Perkins, both through his great newspaper and through his personal influence in his party, was conspicuous and effective in advocacy of sound principles.

Perhaps even more potent was his leadership for public control of the railroads at a time when the chief newspapers of Iowa were in opposition. Mr. Perkins had joined the movement in the early seventies which eventuated in the famous "Granger laws" to regulate railroad rates. The struggle came to a climax during the administration of Governor William Larrabee. Correspondence covering several years is extant in which the Governor reiterates the strongest expressions of gratitude for the loyalty and efficacy of the support of the *Journal* throughout. The Granger movement by reason of its radicalism was abortive, so far as its immediate concrete aims were concerned, in spite of enlightened efforts to guide it into a practicable course.

But the principle of rate regulation was sound and Mr. Perkins went straight forward with undiminished zeal and force in the great effort to abolish, by State and national control, rebates, excessive and unjustly discriminatory rates, and like abuses of transportation corporation absolutism — an all-important reform which it took twenty years of strenuous struggle to achieve.

Throughout that period his paper stood apart as the one great Iowa daily to champion this cause and its influence was contemporaneously far-reaching on public opinion in the younger States to the west. It was noted to his honor that he maintained his convictions of public duty in the face of the adverse sentiment of his own home community. The business of Sioux City as a jobbing and distributing center was adjusted to the rebate system. Its commercial classes saw their own interest in more, not in less, rebate favoritism in competition with rival cities. But the powerful forces identified with the existing system failed with all this leverage to move him from the line marked out by his honest conviction and progressive spirit. It is one of the ironies of politics, one however which is not rare, that after the main battle had been won so many public men who, while the battle was on, fought him inch by inch, in the open or by stealth, should appear, their eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, their voices sonorous, as the "progressive" champions of the rights of the common people.

These instances are typical of his attitude toward all public and political concerns. The editor was the honest man, the dutiful citizen, to whom life had a real and serious, not a merely academic meaning, to whom government was business and not "a game". It has been seen how in his case, and inevitably in his epoch, journalism overlapped the field of politics. This was not because of any personal hankering for political preferment, for his life, by preference and set purpose, was devoted to journalism as his paramount work. In those unofficial services which in democracies as in all other forms of government constitute its most important though not its most obtrusive part, his prestige as a great editor, his sure judgment and constructive faculty made him pervasively influential. It was no accident that he early in his career came to be so relied upon for the enlightening suggestion, for the solving plan, for the conclusive summing up in all those common concerns on which men confer and coalesce. He was punctual to meet all such requirements in his own community, where nothing of importance was decided without consulting him. For a full third of a century he was chosen regularly a delegate to the State conventions of his party and was invariably called to serve in important places, many times on the resolutions committee in which capacity he often drafted the platform or its most important planks. He was among those few of approved discretion whose counsel was taken in the

preliminaries to important decisions. He was five times a delegate to Republican national conventions — in 1876, 1880, 1888, 1896, and 1912. His part in all these and like functions was not merely formal; he was among those, and heeded by them, to whom it falls to make the final analysis of situations and bring decision to the right point. In the Chicago convention of 1888, when William B. Allison missed the Presidency by a fraction of a hair's breadth, Mr. Perkins was a confidential medium of conference.

The public character that as an ideal inspired his whole career in journalism and politics was Abraham Lincoln. And that ideal was not the product of the mischievous mythology which later grew up around that great man. It was espoused in youth and young manhood during the time when the real Lincoln was actually winning leadership, and later when he had to pass painfully through the supreme tests which that leadership brought to him in a great national crisis, when he was calumniated as no other President has been, by abolition radicalism on one hand and by pro-slavery radicalism on the other, both reckless of national unity. It was the sagacity and high moral purpose of Lincoln, his honesty, patience, modesty, and tenacity in the main point that commanded the homage of the young editor — Lincoln, the perfect conservative, with strength and will and skill to blend the heritage of good with progressive betterment. The influence of this ideal,

cherished through life, is apparent in every detail of the editor's career. It must indeed be allowed that he lacked the aptitudes that made Lincoln one of the most skillful politicians in our history, but that Lincoln ideal unifies the activities of Mr. Perkins in journalism and in politics. It bares the secret of the power that lifted him to eminence and during a long lifetime so widely affected men's minds and actions.

Journalism was his real vocation. To hold political office was incidental — how incidental few of his contemporaries fully realized. The daily *Journal* was only fairly established when in 1873 he was, without himself lifting a hand, elected a member of the State Senate. He was not an applicant when he was appointed State Commissioner of Immigration by Governor John H. Gear in 1880, nor when President Chester A. Arthur appointed him United States Marshal for the Northern Judicial District of Iowa. He was chosen because it was deemed desirable to select a man other than the actual contestants for the office.

The nomination of Mr. Perkins for Congress in 1890 was wholly unexpected. He had not been a candidate and had reluctantly consented at the last moment to permit his name to go before the convention at the urgency of friends — an unwise insistence on their part and ill advised yielding on his part, from the standpoint of his personal political interest. The real conditions in and back of the

convention rendered almost certain the renomination of Isaac S. Struble of LeMars, then serving his fourth term as Representative of the Eleventh Congressional District. With Perkins not a candidate, Struble's nomination would have been a foregone conclusion. How far the thought of being a candidate had been from Mr. Perkins's mind is shown by the fact that he had been a member of the committee, the other members all being his intimate friends, which selected the Woodbury County delegates to the Congressional convention, and four of the delegates so selected actually were holding office by Mr. Struble's appointment. Three of them voted steadily for their patron, and one never could be persuaded to vote for Mr. Perkins, even in the crisis of the contest. At last, after the struggle had consumed a whole day, an agreement among the delegates opposed to Mr. Struble was reached which was effective to give Mr. Perkins one vote more than the forty-nine required to nominate. The powerful element of Struble's following, however, remained in a large part unreconciled and was the main cause of Mr. Perkins's defeat at the end of his fourth term.

The service of Representative Perkins in Congress, as in the State Senate, during a period altogether of twelve years, was notable for the same characteristics of sincerity and ability that distinguished him as an editor. One sample only of his work in the State Senate need be cited here — the

feat of securing a special act authorizing the bonding of the heavy floating debt of a number of northwestern counties. Perkins accomplished this by sheer power of logic, by persistent urgency of the truth and necessity of the case in the face of an overwhelming original adverse majority in both houses led by Senator Larrabee, then and long justly the most influential man in the legislature. In the end he won the assent of Senator Larrabee himself and a sufficient majority to pass the measure which proved to be of great importance in the progress of northwestern Iowa. At Washington he was the same man merely transferred to the national Congress, adequate to its responsibilities, indefatigable, thorough, and so acquitting himself as to be relied upon there also for support and counsel.

He was an effective public speaker. His spoken, like his written word, was the purest English, terse, pregnant. As his own conclusions were reached by deliberation, so he addressed himself to the reason of his hearers and readers. Not a stentorian orator, he spoke in good voice with power of emphasis. His discussions were luminous and logical, pointed by a ready wit, always impressive by sincerity and solidity of substance. He was averse to the theatrical and the sensational. It is impossible to imagine him laboriously confectioning metaphors and polishing epigrams for mere rhetorical display in a legislative hall or other forum where men were met for real business. Reason and conscience were the lights

which guided him, and his way in private and in public was to hold up those lights to other men.

The power of George D. Perkins was the power of character, the influence of the strong-minded, true-hearted man of whom other men know that he will never do or say a thing unless he believes it to be true. He had the vision to see and the force within him to open the door of opportunity in a wide theater of the Northwest during an era of unrivalled human interest. In journalism he rose to a high place of leadership in his own State and in the West. There and in a still broader field he won his way by worth to permanent public approval and confidence in the not overcrowded ranks of those strong men who by right and by necessity always have constituted, and always will constitute, the power behind the throne greater than the throne itself.

E. P. HEIZER

## The Man He Was

The public knows the greatness of George D. Perkins, but his intimate associates had better opportunity to know to the full his goodness. It was my privilege to know him intimately for twenty years, during which period, except for a few months, I was a member of the editorial staff of *The Sioux City Journal*. It was impossible to come into close contact with him, whether in the work of carrying on his great newspaper or in any common concern, without being impressed, not only by his great ability, but also by his kindly impulses, by the good heart of him. This side of him had much influence in making him so trusted by all who had to do with him.

Mr. Perkins was not a man who in common parlance is called a "mixer": he was too honest and sincere for that. He never would rush to throw his arms about one's neck and exclaim: "My dear fellow, isn't there something I can do for you?" Some, who did not know him or knew him only casually, called him "cold". But there was in him that which made him respond with sympathy, with loyalty, with kindly helpfulness to all who were engaged in worthy effort, especially to young men striving to get on by good work, but above all, to any one in distress or difficulty. All his life he was

most likely to be encountered where some substantial thing was to be considered or done. Those who met him in his own business or in committee, convention, or conference on any public concern — to all of which he gave unstintingly of his time and labor — could not fail to feel the kindness of his disposition toward all others likewise engaged. They came to depend on him, to turn to him in perplexity or when important decisions were to be made — sure of his warm friendliness as well as of his sound judgment.

So he was regarded even from young manhood by the leading men of his own community and of his State — by big men everywhere. His modesty made him only the more highly appreciated by such men. He was no attitudinizer, he never sought the spotlight. His sole aim was to be helpful to those who, with him, were trying to do the real and needful thing. He was careless only as to who might get the credit in rumor and public report.

When he entered Congress in 1891, Mr. Perkins did not come as a stranger to his Iowa colleagues or to the leading men at Washington. He already had a reputation reaching far beyond the West. Indeed, he was regarded almost as much a representative of South Dakota and Nebraska as of Iowa, and he was such in fact. He at once was received with confidence. Iowa then was represented by a delegation of remarkable brilliance, ability, and influence. Its Senators were William B. Allison and James F.

Wilson, while among the members of the House during Perkins's four terms were John H. Gear, George M. Curtis, Samuel M. Clarke, David B. Henderson, Robert J. Cousins, John F. Lacey, John A. T. Hull, William P. Hepburn, and Jonathan P. Dolliver. Other leading Republicans were "Uncle Joe" Cannon, John Dalzell, Nelson Dingley, and Charles A. Boutelle, while on the Democratic side were Champ Clark, Charles F. Crisp, Richard P. Bland, and William Jennings Bryan. When Thomas B. Reed became Speaker in 1895 he recognized the marked ability of Mr. Perkins even more by the confidence with which he was accustomed to advise with him than in the formal organization of the House. He was made chairman of the Committee on Printing, and was practically the whole committee, watching the vast business of the government printing as competently and conscientiously as that of his own at home. It was he who caused the installation of typesetting machines and introduced many other important reforms in the government printing office.

Mr. Perkins, as has been said, stood high in the confidence and esteem of Thomas B. Reed, Speaker of the House. I recall that one day early in the first administration of President McKinley I had occasion to go to Mr. Perkins's committee room, accompanied by Mr. E. P. Heizer, who had charge of the *Journal* when Mr. Perkins was in Washington. We were informed in the anteroom that Mr. Perkins

was engaged in a conference: the House had not yet convened. I made an excuse to go into Mr. Perkins's room, and this was the conference—four men sitting around in easy chairs, smoking and chatting. But who were the men? One was the Speaker of the House, and the other two were subsequent Speakers, Colonel Dave Henderson and "Uncle Joe" Cannon. That was the kind of men with whom Mr. Perkins kept company. And not for mere entertainment or pastime; for at that moment, as I later learned, a matter of large importance had just been decided. On the floor of the House much oratorical sound and fury were expended on it, much printed in the newspapers, but the real decision had been reached that morning at the informal meeting in Mr. Perkins's committee room.

My work as a writer of political news for the *Journal* took me to political conventions, conferences, caucuses, rallies, and "gatherings" of both the Republican and Democratic parties, not only in Iowa, but also in our neighboring States of Nebraska and South Dakota to which Sioux City is a gateway. Mr. Perkins was intensely interested in all things of a political nature. Every time I returned from these meetings it was my unvarying custom to go directly to his office—the little front room in the *Journal* building—and give him a first hand account of the occurrences, tell him what happened on the inside, and picture all the moves and countermoves of the pre-convention hours. It was

at times like these that my chief was at his best. He enjoyed the narratives and his comments hit center, like the "SNAP SHOTS" he wrote for the Sunday edition. He was a master of wit and satire, and his sarcasm was of the withering brand.

But he was a man of kind heart and he could be tender, too, and gentle. The oft repeated statement that he never spoke a word of praise for the work of any of the writers on his staff is not true. I have seen him put his finger on some inconspicuous story in the *Journal*, as he scanned his own particular copy of the paper in the morning — and he proof-read it through every day, from the head of column one, front page, down through the want ads — and heard him say: "That's good writing"; or, "That's well written"; or, "That's a fine piece of reporting." To be sure, he was critical, but that was because the *Journal* was his very life and it was his nature to be careful and painstaking. He actually would grieve over mistakes in the *Journal* which the ordinary layman never would see, or would regard as of no consequence. But it was this trait that made the *Journal* a model for other newspapers and caused the *Washington Post*, so long ago as 1894, to refer to it as presenting the finest typographical appearance of any newspaper in the United States published in a city of less than a hundred thousand population. It was also these high standards of the editor which made the *Journal* a training school for so great a number who chose journalism for their

life work, not a few of whom have achieved fame and wide influence, and not one of whom ever failed to realize and acknowledge with gratitude his debt to Mr. Perkins for invaluable training and help. And he always followed their careers with the solicitous interest of a father for sons who have gone out to new fields.

Newspaper men at a distance wondered from the very first that a newspaper of the high standard of the *Journal* in typography, news service, and all round excellence — far superior to those published in cities of many times the population of Sioux City — could be produced in so small a town. The explanation was Mr. Perkins himself — his industry and capacity. In the early days he did the work of half a dozen men. His brother, Henry A., who had immediate charge of the business office, was a good writer and thorough newspaper man, and helped greatly in the daily news work. Their sister, Mrs. Boehmler, who taught in the public schools, was also a talented writer, and regularly contributed to the news, besides conducting the society department. The whole family helped. In those days, when the staff was limited in number, every member had to multiply himself, and the hours were long. All naturally followed the inspiring example of the chief, feeling that he knew and appreciated good work, and took pride in their tasks.

I must recur to the gentle, lovable side of the character of Mr. Perkins, as all must do who really

knew the man. I would dwell upon his love for his mother and his tender care for her in her old age — to that grand, good mother to whom he owed so much. She was an example of all that is best in womanhood, and was cared for with unceasing devotion by the son whose inspiration she still was in his manhood as she had been in his boyhood and youth.

One episode in the life of Mr. Perkins, eloquent of the man's real nature, ought not to be omitted, though it was one of which he rarely spoke and of which the circumstances mainly had to be gathered from others — his experience as a soldier in the Civil War. He enlisted as a private on August 12, 1862. Only a year and a half before, he and his elder brother, by means of their small joint savings, had founded the *Cedar Falls Gazette*, a weekly paper. The older brother had married. There was the mother and the infant newspaper to maintain. George felt it was his duty to answer the call of Lincoln for men to save the country. Three months later, at Helena, Arkansas, after a long week of grilling military duty, he stood guard one night in a downpour of cold rain, though ill and burning with fever, refusing to ask to be excused. He stood guard until regularly relieved. Then, overcome with exhaustion and pain, he fell to the ground. He was borne away, desperately ill, and when the regiment moved on, he had to be transferred to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. His brother found him in a hospital there, unable to speak above a whisper,

emaciated to a skeleton, and his bones visible through the skin. The army doctors said that to try to move him meant death and that his case was hopeless. However, he was discharged on January 12, 1863. By a miracle, they finally succeeded in getting him home alive and, after lying between life and death for a long year, he slowly began to mend. Then, for another long year, when unable to sit in a chair for more than half an hour at a time, he would write or do something tending to help his brother with their newspaper. George D. Perkins, although entitled under the law to a pension, never applied for one and never received a dollar of pension money. In a writing not intended for publication, never published until his death, he said with characteristic modesty: "The only satisfaction I have been able to extract from my army experience, aside from contemplation of my good intentions, has been the fact that I really did serve, though not at all gloriously, the better part of three years, and that I was more than once in hazard of my life without losing it; for I was painfully slow with the recovery of my health."

Unlike most men who are trained writers, Mr. Perkins was a public speaker of great force. His voice was strong and carried far, but he never tore a passion to tatters. The editorial process, with him, had become instinctive; that is, in speaking as in writing, he edited and criticized as he proceeded, choosing the right word, the pertinent phrase, the

correct sentence, without the hesitation or the repetition which are such common and distressing faults of so many public speakers. He was the reverse of the adjectival and adverbial orator. This does not mean that his addresses were devoid of ornament, but that they never were marred by excess of ornament. By nature he was full of sentiment, but his good judgment and his earnestness for the main point, which was a conviction, were restraints always efficient.

His speeches in political campaigns were never written out in full, though they were prepared with great care, study, and research. He collected all available information and data, analyzed it, absorbed it, classified it, and always was ready on occasion to vary both the matter and the manner of his addresses. Even when he wrote out an address, he rarely read or referred to the writing. In such cases there always were wide variations from the written form in language, imagery, and illustration, and generally with betterment, so quick and consecutive were his mental operations.

He was in great demand as an orator for special occasions, particularly in his later years. Some of these addresses were widely published and read. Among these may be mentioned the "Eulogy of David B. Henderson" at the funeral in Dubuque on February 25, 1906; the address on "Newspapers and the Law" before the Iowa Pioneer Lawmakers' Association in Des Moines on March 21, 1906; the

address at the dedication of the Carnegie Library at Cedar Falls on September 24, 1903; the address on "Shortcomings of Modern Education" before the Iowa State Teachers' Association at Council Bluffs on October 24, 1903; the address on "Education as Related to Life" at the Iowa State University commencement on June 15, 1904; and the address on "Abraham Lincoln" at the centennial anniversary in Sioux City on February 12, 1909. The last cited was a discourse of remarkable power and discrimination, for all his life Lincoln had been his beau ideal of a man, and a statesman whose character he had studied with loving enthusiasm.

The development of Mr. Perkins, during his later years, into one of the most adept and acceptable after-dinner speakers in the West was a surprise to many who did not know him well. During all his life he had been a busy man, intensely occupied with serious affairs. But latterly came more leisure and opportunity for those contacts with his fellow men for which he always yearned. What so delighted them then always had been in the man — his good fellowship, quick wit, humor, culture, his genuine kindness of feeling — only these qualities had not had free course. The men about him in this work and those who had to do with him in other concerns knew well what was in his soul, and they always loved him for it as later all the world came to have affection for him when they knew him as he was.

In stature Mr. Perkins was barely up to medium

height, and naturally rather spare. As he grew older, he became somewhat stocky, though never burdensomely corpulent. The face was massive, the features strong but expressive. The most impressive feature, beneath a spacious forehead, was the eye, large, keen, and deep, which met you with absolute directness. The impression of the whole was that of strength, of firmness, of sincerity, of honesty — but not more of strength than of kindness. And this impression was true to the man.

These are only glimpses of the man. The place of George D. Perkins as a public character is and long has been fixed and will stand long after the generation in which he lived has passed away. But that which those who were closely associated with him and knew him best will remember longest and most tenderly cherish was his affectionate impulses and the goodness of his soul. I can best illustrate these impulses and this goodness by quoting from a letter which Mr. Perkins wrote me in December, 1904. At that time I had worked on the *Journal* a little more than ten years. I thought I saw an opportunity to get into a paying business, so I had a talk with Mr. Perkins and told him of my plans. He was exceedingly kind to me, and when we shook hands and said good-bye, his attitude toward me was as near that of a father as I had ever known. The following day was Christmas. That morning I found lying upon my typewriter a letter from the chief. It began with a line saying he wanted to

repeat in writing what he had said the day before in conversation. And then he added:

“I am sorry on my own account and for The Journal to have you go away. I hope good luck may keep you company, and that the good fortune which may come to you will not estrange you from the place you have so long filled in The Journal office. You have not only been a faithful, competent and intelligent worker, but you also have been a good friend. You will be missed from your accustomed round by a wide circle of friends, and it will seem to them all, I am sure, as if The Journal had lost a strong arm; but among these friends, I desire to say that I want to be remembered among the best. You have done me many kindnesses, personal to myself, and you have served The Journal as if it were your own. The many friends you have made here you have made the friends of The Journal, and that not only proves your goodness but it is proof also of your tact and good judgment. It is a pleasure to me to recall that in all the years you have been here there has never been complaint between us, and for whatever credit there is in this I give more to you than I claim for myself. If I have some good sides and have been able to reveal them to you I shall have something to remember you for with gratitude while I live. Your success in the place you have so long filled in The Journal office has come of your love of the work and what you said of your relations here will abide with me as a delight.

I shall always be glad to hear of your good fortune and of anything coming your way to add to the pleasure of living."

In a private letter, not intended for publication, summarizing his life work as editor of *The Sioux City Journal*, Mr. Perkins said: "I have always been fortunate in having the assistance of faithful and competent men, to whom, in much of the service, I have, by reason of their better qualifications, been subordinate."

FRED DAVIS

## Two Lay Sermons

No feature of *The Sioux City Journal* was more characteristic of the editorship of George D. Perkins than the sermon which appeared as the leading editorial every Sunday morning. In these sermons his whimsical humor, his masterful use of idioms, and his religious convictions were given free expression. The familiar stories of the Bible were explained in the light of modern conditions and Biblical characters were invested with lifelike reality. Thousands of people read the sermons regularly, and some never went nearer to church than that. As William S. Kenyon wrote after the death of Mr. Perkins, the "vision of 'Uncle George' in his little office, working away at his own typewriter with an open bible on the table, is one familiar to many of his friends, and no minister from the pulpit could reach the heart as 'Uncle George' did in those Sunday sermons." Their influence can scarcely be overestimated.

It was in the year 1899, when Mr. Perkins retired from Congress, that he made the sermons a regular feature of the *Sunday Journal*, although previous to that time he had often written editorials of similar character. Only once during the next fifteen years was the editor's extensive congregation deprived of the weekly sermon. On Easter Sunday in 1912

there appeared this quaint announcement in place of the usual religious editorial:

EASTER GREETINGS

The Preacher who has occupied this Pulpit is setting forth on a long Vacation. He has not failed to appear of a Sunday morning for many years — through heat of summer and cold of winter; rain or shine. The Record is chiefly meritorious for its Continuity and the Long Suffering of a Patient People. The usual annual Vacation of the Cloth is to be taken in Bulk. The Flock is dismissed with a Blessing, and with —

Easter Greetings.

The flock, however, raised such a general and insistent objection to the proposed vacation that on the following Sunday Mr. Perkins stated in the *Journal* that, “The Preacher had no more than started upon his Vacation when he was Intercepted. He was Questioned and had no Answers that were deemed Adequate. A Silver Cord was put upon him, and he was Conducted Home. He was led to the old Den, seated in the Old Chair and asked to Pray for Forgiveness for the Sin that was in his Heart. A Bible, quickly recognized as His Own, was placed in his hands, and a Presiding Angel opened the Book and Pointed to the Words: ‘For consider him that endured such contradiction of Sinners against Himself, lest ye be Wearied and Faint in your Minds.’ Whereupon the Book was

opened to the second chapter of Revelations, and the finger of the Angel rested on the tenth verse. There was a Voice, declaring itself to be the Voice of the Congregation, speaking with the accent of Love, yet in the tone of Command, saying, Write! And the Preacher was left Alone to reflect upon the Evil of his Ways."

From that time until three weeks before he died the sermons were continued without interruption. The preparation of the sermon entitled "The Strength of Joseph", which was published on January 11, 1914, was the last work that Mr. Perkins did. Although he was ill, he held himself to this weekly task. But he felt that it was not up to his usual standard and sent word for the office boy to tear it up and write another. Members of his "flock", however, regarded this last sermon as one of the best — rich with the wisdom of years and suggestive of the creed of the author. The sermon on "Bearing the Yoke", published on August 6, 1905, is typical of the character and style of the whole series.

#### THE STRENGTH OF JOSEPH

"And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?"

Joseph had been without news from home for a long time, and the visit of his brethren gave him opportunity to ask questions very near his heart.

He knew of the famine, and had answered the needs of his brethren. They supposed they had bought corn of a stranger, but when they came to the inn and opened their sacks every man's money was in the mouth of his sack; and so they returned to say they did not know how the money came to be in the mouth of their sacks, and to offer it again. And the steward said, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money."

It was stranger still to the brethren when they were taken into Joseph's house, and were entertained there; for were they not Hebrews, and were they not with the Egyptians? "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" It was hard for Joseph to ask the question, for he feared ill news. "And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads and made obeisance." They spoke of "our father," and they did not know they also spoke of Joseph's father. And Joseph lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son."

Joseph was overcome by his emotions, and he slipped away to his chamber, and wept there; "and he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread."

The story of Joseph's meeting with his brethren,

under such vastly different circumstances than those in which he parted from them, is a human interest story well worth the knowing. It is worth while to preserve such stories, for they speak of God in man, and of the holiness of brotherly love.

By inquiring after their father Joseph had report from his own. The peace of his father's God came into his heart, and he fain would have taken his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, in his arms. It was a time of compensation for Joseph.

It was hardly to be expected that Joseph would hear that his father was in good health — that he was yet alive. Jacob was old: his life had been beset by trouble. At the time he was in desperate straits by reason of the famine prevailing in his country; he had sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. The weight of years was upon him, and his house leaned upon him. He was in responsibility, and he was brave; and he was brave because his trust was in God. "And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive."

There is no measurement of life according to the trouble of it, or the burden. Otherwise the report from Jacob might have been that long years before he had been gathered to his fathers. But he was still in the body, doing a man's part.

Possibly not so many die of a broken heart as some people feel it to be their duty to believe. Jacob never had much time for idleness. He never saw the time when it was in order for him to retire.

The sorrows of his life might have overwhelmed him but for the saving power of work.

There is nothing better for people in trouble than work. Work is essential to mind cure, and wholesomeness of mind is of invigorating influence upon the body. It is easy to nurse the ills of the flesh, and the ills of the flesh are quick to respond with increase of power for evil; and that being true of the flesh, it is more abundantly true of the mind.

The disposition of people runs to the use of remedies that are agreeable; and the fact accounts for much of the use of alcohol as medicine. People are easily tempted to keep company with appetite and with their own selfishness. They need the exercise that will take them away from themselves. It may be a shame, and commonly is a shame, that people are such poor company to themselves. They want encouragement in doing the things they ought not to do. They like to apply that sort of a test to friendship; and so they are like children, afraid of the dark. If they cannot have their own way they weep about it; and they say the world is very cruel, and they doubt if it pays to live. They want to serve themselves, and they are so unworthy of service that they fail in their chief desire. They do not know how to serve themselves, and not being qualified to serve themselves they have little adaptability for the service of others. They drag themselves along their narrow way as if broken by the infirmities of age.

Selfishness is really a very hard taskmaster. It drags men down, and it never lifts them up to give them vision of the glories of the coming of the sun. Inspirational life, such as touched David and which laid firm hold upon Paul, is the life that quickens the heart, which opens the eyes, which keeps open the ears, and which consolidates with the human life the eternal life of God.

Men who only look in upon themselves spoil their sight; they become as men looking into a dark cave; they make out nothing for sure, and certainly nothing of beauty. They grope their way; they hear strange noises, and they are frightened by every shadow. The splendor of living is in the open. Every life is challenged to a great campaign; and every great campaign is fought in numbers with the good of one the good of all. The one in battle who sneaks and runs away bears on his forehead the stamp of coward. He may have saved his life, but the life saved was not worth saving.

When Joseph's brethren, representing their father, came to him he was brought face to face with one of the large opportunities of his strange life. His experience in Egypt had not spoiled him. He had come into great power; but his heart was gentle toward his father. He met that opportunity in a way that has immortalized his name.

It is safe to say that Joseph never did anything in his life that gave him as much real pleasure as to fill the sacks of his brethren and place every man's

money in the mouth of his sack; for with that, of itself good, he had the news from his father that he was in good health and alive. The text suggests that one may be in good health and not very much alive. "Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive." Old man Jacob was still holding down the job whereunto he was appointed of his Father.

No one knows just what it is to enjoy life in its fullness until in some way he is brought into touch with eternal life. There was the touch of eternal life in what Joseph did for the relief of his father and his brethren. The greatness of what he did was in the spirit of his doing; and all greatness is of the spirit. His tears were not of weakness; they were the proof of his sincerity. But Joseph was a man of such strength that he very much preferred not to be caught crying in the presence of his brethren and his attendants; and so he slipped away to his own chamber and had it out there, and then he reappeared and excited no suspicion of weakness.

If Joseph had only thought of himself he would have found it easy to weep for himself; but he was a man of large affairs, and he was pressed for time. He did not have time to think of himself; he must serve Pharaoh, and he must serve his father's house.

To be sure, Joseph always has had credit for thinking so intelligently of himself that he thought a good deal as to how he might establish himself in the confidence of those engaging his service. That

was good business for Joseph; and it is agreed by common consent that Joseph made a great record as a business man. It is well to take note of that.

The truth of scripture is that men who would exalt themselves must exalt service. They must be saviors of men. There are none so humble as to be shut out of opportunity to do good in the world. There are none who may not, with lifting up of hands, find touch with the love of God.

“And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?”

#### BEARING THE YOKE

“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”

Jeremiah began his work as a prophet of Israel more than 600 years before the dawn of the Christian era. In all this long reach of time it would seem human nature had made little advance. Men are about the same and boys are about the same.

The ox that is broken to the yoke can be beckoned to his place with the bow thereof, and the man who is contented under the yoke must have been broken to it in his youth.

There are not many boys who take to the yoke kindly. They kick. They tell their dear mothers what other boys are permitted to do, and there are mothers who take in washing to enable their boys to do as other boys do. They are willing to bear the

yoke themselves to save the necks of the boys; and if the time comes when the necks of the boys are not saved it seems very strange to them. There are mothers who say they cannot understand the Lord's ways. They cry out that through years and years they saved themselves no labor; they toiled far into the night. They prayed with earnestness; many times their tears blinded them. They clasp their hands when the storm surges within them, and they cry out pityingly for the love of God. What more can they do? Are they not always thinking of the boys? The beds are made ready, the clothes are washed and mended, it is seen to that the table is always ready, admonition is not spared. What more can they do? There is one thing more they might do. They might put the yoke on the young scalawags and put the key in the bow so that they cannot slip it. And why not? Sooner or later, it is urged, they will know what trouble is; let them have happiness in their youth. The yoke does not gall the neck of their mates, taking the word of the boys for it; they want the freedom of the town, and they plead so earnestly that the mothers say it may be so for the day and for the night. So it is with the poor, and so it is with the rich, and the yoke waits.

The self sacrifice of mothers is a strange mixture of love and pride. Among the lowly as among those reckoned of better estate there is ceaseless desire to stand as servants at the door of opportunity for the boys. Every mother's boys are as good as any-

body, and the presumption is that they are always right if an issue arise between them and a neighbor's. Love binds up their bruises and shakes an angry finger across the street; and pride is the strength of determination that the boys shall have chance to hold up their heads in the circle of acquaintance. If money is scarce it is saved for the purpose, and if money be plenty generosity is permitted to set the figure. These dear mothers look without, and not within; and the boys grow as the weeds. They are little dears in tidy clothes; they are barefooted and quickly ready for the swimming hole. They lounge into lubberhood, and drift and drift. They shun the yoke.

It is not an easy thing for human love to use a slipper or a stick as a means of introduction to the yoke. The boys do not want to go to bed at night or get up betimes in the morning. They look upon school as an invention of cruelty. They early learn to juggle with the truth when they have in mind the fear that the yoke may land. Boys become adepts in giving color to their words, and they are encouraged by the prejudices of love in their behalf. They are excused from school because of headache and join another fellow whose two fingers have appeared in silent eloquence at a place agreed upon over the back fence. As the boys grow they have increasing confidence in their wits. They say they will live by them when they are men.

Boys who take to the yoke naturally in the great

aggregate of boys are not many. Those who do are the salt of the earth. They constitute the nucleus for doing things; they pull true. They are the rallying point for an army of boys who have in some way been broken to the yoke. The majority of boys who get into the bow do so because they have to; and so it is that the average boy is fortunate if he is so situated that he is made the object of discipline and upon whose back the whip of correction comes down at proper intervals with sufficient force to develop his blood.

Those who bear the yoke to advantage are for the most part broken to it in their youth. There is something very admirable in the trained man who makes the yoke easy, who does not fret under it, and who puts his strength to it as an ox. Younger men look on and say he finds his pleasure in his work; it is second nature to him, and he knows how to do things with the least inconvenience and with the least hardship. And so it seems, and so it is. It is a part of life, and it is that part of life which lightens the burdens, smooths the way, brings results and gives to it sweetness.

There is much desire in our time for what are called the accomplishments. The desire for a creditable place among men is not new, as the desire for power is not new. Yet there is the old longing for results without sacrifice and without the devotion of time and constancy of purpose. But no way has been discovered, and no way will be discovered, to

garner the best fruits of living without steadfastness, without steady pulling, without bearing the yoke. That is the lesson of all experience. That is the lesson to which all men are held by the love of God.

The yoke may not be taken on willingly, but in time it comes to be recognized as a friend. It looks good after the field is plowed and after the harvest has been gathered. The heat of days is converted to the cool of evening, and the strain in the yoke over the rough places becomes a treasured memory.

The pride of men in review lodges with their strength, and their comfort is in what they did under the yoke.

“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”

## Comment by the Editor

### THE NATURE OF OPINION

Opinion is a working hypothesis applicable to any object of thought or feeling, a provisional interpretation with a definite bias to be held as a conviction until it is overthrown by the discovery of new facts or new conditions. All opinion should be tentative. Opinion is good in proportion to the extent that it is founded upon facts and reason: it is less valuable if prejudice and passion enter materially into its composition. But sound opinion, which is flexible and critical, is to be distinguished from dogma which is rigid — a sort of petrified emotion.

Public opinion is the general thought of a group of people in relation to a particular set of facts or events: it is a composite view of the ideas of various individuals on any given subject. It may be a transient impression or it may be an abiding conviction: it may affect a mere handful of people or its scope may reach to the ends of the earth. Opinion varies according to the interests and character of the public. Among uncivilized peoples the law of custom is founded upon public opinion, and public opinion is likewise the controlling force in the most elaborate systems of jurisprudence. As old as the association of mankind, it is as new as direct legislation. Since it is based upon a mixture of sense,

sentiment, and prejudice, it may be responsible alike for hysterical movements or unreasoning conservatism.

#### NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLIC OPINION

There is no more potent factor in the formation of public opinion than the newspapers. Before the advent of the telegraph, the Associated Press, and publicity agents, editors deliberately undertook to guide public opinion. Editorial comment occupied the most prominent place in the paper — even the news was tinged with the editor's viewpoint. The scarcity of news does not fully explain the failure to separate statements of fact from opinion. Indeed, the popularity and success of a paper depended chiefly upon its editorial policy. And, judging from the prevalent usage, prejudice, partisanship, and vituperation were commonly mistaken for decision, loyalty, and vigor — qualities of character which the people in those days esteemed as highly in journalists as in statesmen.

The standards of journalism have changed since the "fabulous forties". James Bryce observed nearly thirty-six years ago that American newspapers partook more of the nature of weathercocks than of guide-posts. They have become mainly the chronicles of current events and the mirrors of coeval ideas, while only rarely or incidentally do they advocate anything. Editorials have become mere vestigial appurtenances. There are few jour-

nalists of the old school, like George D. Perkins, who, on account of their reputation for sound judgment, keen insight, absolute integrity, and able exposition, exert a profound influence upon public opinion through their editorial comment. The public is left very much to its own conclusions in regard to the events reported. The press is now primarily a vehicle of information.

Is journalism, like the professions of law and medicine, affected with a public interest? Has a newspaper any obligation of service to society in the way of guiding opinion? There is little evidence that any such function is acknowledged by the press, and yet democracy expects to operate on the meager, propagandist information that the press provides. Perhaps it is not the fault of the newspapers. They are equipped to supply only glimpses of incidents, like the news pictures at the cinema, when the whole drama of human conduct and institutions is needed. The principal defect of democracy is the failure of society to organize the machinery of knowledge so that people may transcend their own casual experience and prejudice and govern themselves understandingly. But it is doubtful whether the avid news-reading American public would pay for the dull but illuminating truth if the cost were not concealed like the tariff in the price of clothing and food — the wares of the advertisers.

J. E. B.

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