

The
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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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THE PALIMPSEST

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Underground Railroad in Iowa

The ever-increasing number of fugitive slaves who sought to cross Iowa on their way to freedom brought the Underground Railroad into existence. Needless to say, it was not a subterranean railroad with high-speed, well-equipped, electric trains. The term "underground" was applied to the railroad because of the secrecy of its operations and the mystery with which the whole system was shrouded. Its roadbed was the ordinary highway of traffic. Its rolling stock consisted of the buggies, oxcarts, wagons, and other vehicles at the command of early Iowa settlers. Occasionally it was possible to use the steam railroad as a means of conveyance, but more often passengers travelled from station to station on foot.

There were no well lighted and comfortably furnished depots at frequent intervals along the line, nor was there a corps of persons who gained their livelihood by promoting the road or by serving as

conductors and engineers on the trains. No fare was charged and the conductors, in many instances the most influential citizens, rendered their services whenever the occasion demanded, without thought of compensation. They also supplied the depots, which varied from a room in the conductor's home to a cave in his back yard.

The Underground Railroad in Iowa was only a part of a complete system with trunk lines and branches which extended through practically all of the northern States. The main line entered the State in its southwest corner near Tabor, passed through the towns of Lewis, Des Moines, Grinnell, Iowa City, West Liberty, Tipton, DeWitt, and Low Moor, and crossed the Mississippi River at Clinton to connect with a route in Illinois.

Most of the fugitives who came from Nebraska and Missouri and entered Iowa in the southwestern part of the State first boarded the Underground Railroad at or near the town of Civil Bend (now Percival), about five miles east of the Missouri River and twenty-five miles north of the northern boundary of Missouri. From this point fugitives were conveyed to Tabor. This was a very important station because here the entire population was in sympathy with escaping slaves and practically every family was ready to do anything to help the fugitives. Sometimes the slaves were escorted to the next station on foot, sometimes they were driven in buggies or oxcarts or wagons.

In the western part of the State the problem was a comparatively simple one. The population was still quite sparse and the chances of detection correspondingly small. But it must be remembered that every person aiding a slave to escape was a violator of the fugitive slave law and as such rendered himself liable to fine and imprisonment. So even here the promoters were compelled to exercise continual vigilance lest they and their passengers be apprehended. It was necessary to have agents promptly at their posts so that no time would be lost in forwarding the passengers. Notices must be sent ahead telling of coming passengers, warnings of approaching danger must be given, and necessary funds had to be provided. The responsibility for carrying out these matters devolved upon the conductors of the road.

All along the route of the Underground Railroad were families willing to make their home a station for the refuge and forwarding of runaway slaves. It was not always possible to dispatch the passengers to the next station immediately and in such cases they were concealed in the homes of promoters, in their garrets or cellars, sometimes in caves on or near the premises, and quite frequently in outbuildings until a favorable opportunity for a "fitting" presented itself. Most of the trains were dispatched at night and indeed the darkest and stormiest nights were preferred for the operations. Sometimes passengers remained at a station for days at a time

until an opportunity for sending them on should present itself or be created by the conductor.

In this manner fugitives passed through the various towns — from Percival to Tabor, through Lewis and Des Moines to Grinnell. Here it was almost certain that the well known J. B. Grinnell would take care of the fugitives. He had a room in his home which was very appropriately called the "liberty room" and was devoted to the harboring of passengers on the Underground Railroad. No doubt this made a very comfortable station. When John Brown came to Grinnell with his band of fugitives from Missouri on that cold night in the winter of 1858-1859, it was in this room that the fugitives were cheered and given an opportunity to rest. Thus with rests at frequent intervals the fugitives continued their journey from town to town. After Grinnell came Iowa City, then West Liberty, Tipton, Low Moor, and finally Clinton.

In the eastern part of the State, Underground Railroading required great care and precaution in order to avoid detection, but the promoters were equal to the occasion and resorted to various means for forwarding the passengers. On one occasion John Brown was able to secure railroad passage for his band of fugitives. Through the good offices of William Penn Clarke, of Iowa City, and J. B. Grinnell, a box car was obtained and held in readiness at West Liberty. The fugitives were then dispatched to this place from Springdale and, after spending

the night in Keith's Mill (an old grist mill near the station), were loaded into the empty freight car. The car was then attached to a train bound for Chicago on the Rock Island Railroad. At Chicago the famous detective, Allen Pinkerton, took the party in charge and dispatched it to Detroit.

All passengers, however, were not as fortunate as this band. Most of them had to go from station to station by the slower methods of horse-drawn conveyance or on foot. At Iowa City William Penn Clarke and Dr. Jesse Bowen were always ready to aid the cause. It was in the latter's home, situated on Iowa Avenue between Governor and Summit streets, that John Brown was concealed during his last night in Iowa City when he was hard pressed by a band of men bent on capturing him because of his "nigger stealing".

After a "stop-over" in Iowa City passengers might be ticketed to one of several stations. Perhaps they could be taken to Springdale to partake of the hospitality of the Quakers, and from there to West Liberty. Perhaps conditions were favorable for making a longer run and the train might go directly to West Liberty. At this place the old grist mill which harbored John Brown's band of fugitives would probably serve as a waiting room.

The next stop was generally Tipton. For reasons known to the operators the railroad did not run into the town. As is sometimes the case with the steam railroads of to-day the depot was on the outskirts of

the village. The Humphrey home situated about two and one-half miles south of Tipton was an important station on the Underground Railroad. A member of the family has related that it was not unusual for whole families of colored folk to remain at their home over night. The next day it was Grandfather's task to carry them farther on their way. Daylight did not prevent the operations of this conductor. He would load the human freight into his wagon and cover them with blankets, thus disguising them as bags of grain.

Once more the train was in motion. On the long lonely stretches of the road between the Humphrey home and Posten's Grove — a distance of about fifteen miles — curly heads and black faces often popped out from among the "grain sacks" to survey the country through which the train was passing. When strangers appeared the command was to "duck". Needless to say the order was promptly obeyed and the passengers became part of the load of bags of grain which, to all appearances, Grandfather was hauling to the grist mill. When Posten's Grove was reached this venerable old conductor had completed his "run". He transferred his passengers to the care of other conductors who in turn relayed them to DeWitt, next to Low Moor and finally to Clinton — the last Iowa station on the Underground Railroad.

The final stages of the trip through Iowa were the most difficult and perhaps therefore the most inter-

esting. In the eastern part of the State population was more dense and hence a greater number of persons were opposed to the Underground Railroad. This necessitated greater vigilance and more detailed and complete organization. The number of persons engaged in the work was also greater in proportion to the work to be done. Some of the prominent agents in DeWitt were Captain Burdette, Judge Graham, and Mrs. J. D. Stillman. These people could be trusted to take care of the fugitives and to send them on to Low Moor when they thought conditions favorable. In this latter town were G. W. Weston, Abel B. Gleason, B. R. Palmer, J. B. Jones, Lawrence Mix, Nelson Olin, and others who were anxious to tender their services.

The guiding spirit and chief promoter of the Underground Railroad at this place seems to have been G. W. Weston. It devolved upon him especially to see that agents and stations were in readiness, to provide the necessary funds, to give warnings of approaching danger, and to advise the master of the next station about coming passengers. On one occasion G. W. Weston sent the following letter to C. B. Campbell at Clinton:

Low Moor, May 6, 1859.

Mr. C. B. C.:

DEAR SIR—By tomorrow evening's mail, you will receive two volumes of the "Irrepressible Conflict" bound in *black*. After perusal, please forward, and oblige

Yours truly,

G. W. W.

This is typical of the correspondence carried on between stations. Such were the train dispatches. They served the purpose of telling the agent at the next station of the coming of fugitives, together with a pretty accurate idea of the number; and the peculiar wording in which the information was couched often told of the age, complexion, and sex of the comers.

When the fugitives arrived in Clinton it was usually C. B. Campbell who sought a place for them to stay. Quite frequently he would secrete them in the attic of his home, a small frame building near the corner of Sixth Avenue and Second Street. On other occasions fugitives were kept in a cave, used as a cellar, in a garden belonging to J. R. and A. Bather, or in the garret of their home until the next train was ready to start. It happened at one time that two fugitive slaves — a man and his wife — were being concealed in this garret when a message was received from DeWitt that slave catchers were in hot pursuit. This place of concealment was thought to be too much suspected and it was deemed best to have a "fitting" as soon as possible.

Andrew Bather undertook to convey the fugitives out of the town. He procured for the occasion a covered family carriage which belonged to H. P. Stanley. In this he transported them to Lyons to which place C. B. Campbell had gone to hire a skiff to convey them across the river. The river was full of ice and it was only after paying a high price that

the owner of the skiff agreed to make the crossing. During this trip the woman, whose complexion was so fair as to give her the appearance of a white woman, represented herself as the owner of her husband.

Not all of the fugitives passed through the stations which we have mentioned. Many never reached any of them. There were at least three parallel lines of the Underground Railroad branching from Tabor and running eastward to the Mississippi. Besides these main lines there were innumerable branch lines and "spurs" which connected with the main lines. The presence of so many routes was due to the fact that not all of the escaping negroes entered Iowa in its southwest corner. They came into the State at various points along the southern border wherever the opportunity existed. In fact the great majority of the slaves effected their escape alone, and completed the first and in many respects the most difficult part of their journey towards freedom unaided.

Negroes talked among themselves of the land of freedom off to the north and told each other of the Underground Railroad. They knew there were hosts of friends who would help them on to ultimate freedom if they could only be reached. With this knowledge many slaves took their lives in their hands and escaped from their masters, hiding in the woods or caves by day and progressing slowly and cautiously at night trusting that somewhere they

would reach this Underground Railroad of which they had heard.

Along the southern border of Iowa were many negroes—some of them slaves and some of them free—who made it their business to aid their escaping brethren. Very often they did little more than ferry them across a stream or direct them to the home of some abolitionist friend. A negro could render such services with comparatively little risk to himself. Having once obtained the exact location of the first Underground Railroad station the traveller need only exercise precaution against being seen by his enemies. He need not fear a lack of welcome, regardless of the hour at which he might present himself to the station master. The timid and uncertain knocking at the door would invariably be recognized by the family as the signal of the arrival of a new passenger.

In the southwestern part of the State there were several short routes with initial stations at Croton, Bloomfield, Lancaster, and Cincinnati, all of which no doubt connected with some main line and had their Iowa terminals along the Mississippi. Farther east was the Quaker village of Salem, conveniently surrounded by numerous woods and streams, which made hiding in this vicinity quite easy for the negroes. At night they could proceed to almost any of the Quaker homes, for practically without exception the Quaker families were known to be friends of the escaping slaves. Through the village of Denmark,

about seventeen miles from Burlington, connection with the Underground Railroad's trunk line could also be conveniently made. Here was the home of Dr. George Shedd, a rather bold and independent operator. Practicing medicine was his chosen profession but on the side he talked abolition quite openly and privately worked slaves northward to Canada.

Not all the slaves who set out to seek their freedom attained their object. Negroes represented a considerable sum of wealth and naturally southern slave-owners were very reluctant to see their property disappear. It is small wonder then that those who suffered loss of slaves should term the Underground Railroad directors "nigger-stealers" and exert every effort to recover their property. In doing so they very often resorted to methods which put them in unpleasant positions. The story is told of Mr. Nuckolls of Nebraska City, Nebraska, who lost two girl slaves in December of the year 1858. He correctly guessed that they had escaped into Iowa and promptly began the hunt for them at Tabor.

First, he took precautions to guard the crossings on Silver Creek and Nishnabotna River over which his slaves would be required to pass on their way east. Then he began his search, but a train had promptly been fitted out and the passengers dispatched before Mr. Nuckolls arrived at Tabor so his quest availed him nothing. Knowing Tabor to be an

abolitionist center he decided to make a more thorough search believing that his slaves were hidden in one of the many stations in the town. With perhaps twenty men to aid him he began a systematic investigation of the Tabor homes — often gaining entrance only by force and violence. At one home he met with more than ordinary rebuff so he struck the remonstrating person over the head, inflicting permanent injury. The result of the search was that Mr. Nuckolls did not recover the girls, and he had several thousands of dollars worth of damages to pay besides.

The monotony of the life in the Quaker village of Salem was at one time somewhat relieved by the attempted recovery of nine escaped slaves belonging to Ruel Daggs from Clark County, Missouri. In the beginning of June of the year 1848 this band of slaves was successful in evading the patrols which Missourians maintained on the roads to the Quaker village, until they were about a mile from the town. At this point, while hiding in the bushes, they were discovered by Messrs. Slaughter and McClure, two slave catchers. Without losing any time these two men proceeded to lead their "catch" back to Missouri. They had scarcely started on their way when they met Elihu Frazier, Thomas Clarkson Frazier, and William Johnson, three stalwart Quakers from Salem. One of this party demanded that the slaves be taken back to Salem where the captors would be given the opportunity to press their claims before

the Justice of the Peace. Naturally this did not meet with the approval of Slaughter and McClure but the Quakers persisted. One of them stood his ground to the extent of putting aside his proverbial Quaker passiveness, and declared that he would "wade in Missouri blood before the negroes should be taken." Before such determination the Missourians agreed to stake the outcome on "due process of law", and the party repaired to the village.

No small excitement was created by their approach. Every citizen joined in the procession towards Justice Gibbs's office in the home of Henderson Lewelling. The room proving too small, the court adjourned to the meeting-house. After a hearing the case was dismissed because the plaintiffs were unable to show warrants for the arrest of their captives. For a moment every one seemed at a loss to know what to do next. Suddenly Paul Way called out: "If anybody wants to foller me, let him foller." Two of the negroes evidently did want "to foller" and seized the opportunity. In a few moments they were on horseback and on their way to freedom. The remaining negroes in the party were taken in charge by friends. Slaughter and McClure left the village in great anger promising to return to wreak vengeance.

A few days later a large number of well-armed Missourians paid Salem a visit. They veritably besieged the town and sent searching parties to every "nigger-stealing house". Thomas Frazier's home

was the first to be singled out for detailed investigation. As a matter of fact there were slaves hidden here, but in strict accordance with Underground Railroading methods, he was warned of the coming visit. Before the party came he "side tracked" his passengers to some nearby timber. The station master and his family were quietly eating dinner when the Missourians arrived and with curses and threats announced their purpose of searching his home. In true Quaker fashion they were quietly told to do so. The search was fruitless. Other homes were visited with as little regard to the rights and feelings of the owners and with similar results.

It is possible to tell only a part of the story of the Underground Railroad in Iowa. All the methods used in the transportation of fugitive slaves have not been described, nor have all the stations and their agents been named. To do so would be an impossible task. It must be remembered that this was an Underground Railroad. Its operations were secret. The stories that have come down to us constitute but a fragmentary record. Generally the train masters kept no dispatch books or records of train schedules or of passengers, for should such records fall into the hands of those who tried to enforce the fugitive slave law they would constitute most incriminating evidence. Enough of its story is known, however, to show that as an institution the Underground Railroad has played its part in the history of the State. Not only did it bridge the gap

between slavery and freedom for thousands of fugitives, but the hazards and adventures of the traffic served to lend fascination to the frontier life; and the story of the operation of the system gives a picture of the ideals, the character, the resourcefulness and the fearlessness of the early settlers of the State.

JACOB VAN EK

Big Game Hunting in Iowa

[The following account of a hunting trip in 1835 in northeastern Iowa was written by the Englishman, Charles Augustus Murray, who wandered widely in America in 1834-1836 and described his adventures in a two-volume work entitled *Travels in North America*. The extract here printed is from pages 110-129 of the second volume.—
THE EDITOR.]

I found that two or three of the officers were planning a hunting expedition towards the head waters of Turkey River (which runs from north-west to south-east and falls into the Mississippi some miles below Prairie du Chien), where we were told that pheasants, deer, elk, and other game were in the greatest abundance. I requested permission to join the party, as my object was to see the country; and I could get no steam-boat, or other opportunity of visiting St. Peter's and the Falls of St. Anthony.

We accordingly set out in a large boat, containing about twenty men, a light cart, a pony, plenty of provisions, and a due supply of ammunition. Being obliged to ascend the Mississippi about ten miles, our progress was extremely slow; for the stream was strong, the head wind blowing pretty fresh (accompanied by an icy chilling sleet); and the boat could only be propelled by being pushed up with long poles along the shores of the various islands, where the current was the least formidable. However, as it was a "party of pleasure," the men were in the highest spirits, forgot the wet and the cold, and the boat

echoed with jokes and laughter. A cap was blown overboard, and a fellow plunged head over heels into the stream after it; he went some feet under water, rose, swam in pursuit, recovered the cap, bore it in triumph to land, and running up along the bank, was taken again on board.

In spite of wind and sleet, we were soon obliged to resume our slow ascent of the river, and in due course of time arrived at Painted Rock, the place of our debarkation. We pitched our tent in a low marshy hollow, which would be an admirable situation for a temple to the goddess of fever and ague. On the following morning we commenced our march into the interior: the whole party (consisting of three officers, four soldiers, myself, and servant) was on foot, and a stout pony drew our baggage in a sort of springless vehicle, resembling a small English tax-cart. After a tedious march over a high, barren, and uninteresting prairie, for three days, at the rate of twenty or twenty-five miles a day, we arrived at the point on Turkey River at which our grand hunt was to commence.

On the third day, in the forenoon, an Indian came galloping down with a loose rein towards us. On a nearer approach he proved to be a Winnebago, who had left his band (which was distant two or three miles) to reconnoitre our party. We soon came up with their main body, which was encamped by the side of a wooded hill, and presented a wild and picturesque appearance. They had just struck their

lodges, and were loading the horses to recommence their march, when we came up with them. Two or three of the chiefs, and the principal men, were sitting, as usual, and smoking, while the women gathered the bundles and packs, and the boys ran or galloped about, catching the more wild and refractory beasts of burthen. The officer of our party knew the chief, who had been down frequently to Fort Crawford, and we accordingly sat down and smoked the pipe of peace and recognition.

The conversation between white men and Winnebagoes is almost always carried on in Saukie, Menomenee, or some other dialect of the Chippeway, as their own language can scarcely be acquired or pronounced by any but their own tribe: it is dreadfully harsh and guttural; the lips, tongue, and palate, seem to have resigned their office to the uvula in the throat, or to some yet more remote ministers of sound. In all the Upper Mississippi I only heard of one white man who could speak and understand it tolerably; but their best interpreter is a half-breed named Pokette, who is equally popular with his white and red brethren; the latter of whom have granted him several fine tracts of land in the Wisconsin territory, where he resides. I am told that he keeps thirty or forty horses, and has made a fortune of above one hundred thousand dollars.

I fell in with him at Galena, and had half an hour's conversation with him, only for the pleasure of looking at him and scanning his magnificent and Hercu-

lean frame. I think he is the finest (though by no means the largest) mould of a man that ever I saw: he is about six feet four inches in height, and as perfectly proportioned as painter or statuary could desire. Perhaps his arms and legs are too muscular for perfect beauty of form; still, that is a defect easily pardoned. His countenance is open, manly, and intelligent; and his ruddy brown complexion, attesting the mingled blood of two distinct races, seems to bid defiance to cold, heat, or disease. He is proverbially good-natured, and is universally considered the strongest man in the Upper Mississippi.

He is said never to have struck any person in anger except one fellow, a very powerful and well-known boxer, from one of the towns on the river, who had heard of Pokette's strength, and went to see him with the determination of thrashing (or, in American phrase, whipping) him. Accordingly he took an opportunity of giving a wanton and cruel blow to a favourite dog belonging to Pokette; and, on the latter remonstrating with him on his conduct, he attempted to treat the master as he had treated the dog. On offering this insolent outrage, he received a blow from the hand of Pokette which broke the bridge of his nose, closed up both his eyes, and broke or bruised some of the bones of the forehead so severely as to leave his recovery doubtful for several weeks.

To return to the Winnebago encampment. As the Indians were also upon a hunting expedition on

Turkey River, we all started together, and went a few miles in the same direction; but we soon divided, and they proceeded to the south-west, while our party kept a north-west course; consequently, on reaching the river, they were camped about six or eight miles below us. I little thought that these rascals would so pertinaciously and successfully endeavour to spoil our sport; but I suppose they considered us intruders, and determined to punish us accordingly. We had, in the mean time, killed nothing but a few pheasants and grouse; but our object in coming to Turkey River was to find deer, elks, and bears, all of which we had been taught to expect in abundance. We pitched our camp in a well-wooded valley (called here "a bottom") formed by the river; our wigwam was constructed, after the Menomenee fashion, of mats made from a kind of reed, and bound firmly in a semicircular form to a frame-work of willow, or other elastic wood, fastened by strings formed from the bark of the elm. The soldiers cut an abundance of firewood, and we were well provided with flour, biscuit, coffee, and pork; so that we had little to fear from cold or hunger.

The day after our arrival we all set off in different directions in search of game. Some of the party contented themselves with shooting ducks and pheasants; I and two or three others went in pursuit of the quadruped game. I confess I expected to kill one or two elk, perhaps a bear, and common deer *ad libitum*; however, after a walk of six or eight hours,

during which I forded the river twice, and went over many miles of ground, I returned without having seen a single deer. This surprised me the more, as I saw numberless beds and paths made by them, but no track of either elk or bear. My brother sportsmen were equally unfortunate, and no venison graced our board. I had, however, heard a great many shots, some of which were fired before daylight, and we soon perceived that our Indian neighbours had laid a plan to drive all the deer from the vicinity of our encampment.

We continued to while away some hours very agreeably in bee-hunting, at which sport two or three of the soldiers were very expert. Of the bee-trees which we cut down, one was very rich in honey; the flavour was delicious, and I ate it in quantities which would have nauseated me had it been made from garden plants, instead of being collected from the sweet wild flowers of the prairie. Our life was most luxurious in respect of bed and board, for we had plenty of provisions, besides the pheasants, grouse, &c. that we shot; and at night the soldiers made such a bonfire of heavy logs as to defy the annoyances of wet and cold.

The second day's sport was as fruitless as the first; but the same firing continued all around us, for which we vented many maledictions on our Indian tormentors. On the third day I contented myself with sauntering along the banks of the river and shooting a few pheasants: evening was closing in,

the weather was oppressively warm, and I lay down at the foot of a great tree to rest and cool myself by the breath of a gentle breeze, which crept with a low whisper through its leaves, when I distinctly heard a plashing noise in the water at the distance of a hundred yards. I rolled myself, silently and stealthily as a snake, towards the spot — the plashing still continued, and I thought it must be an Indian, either performing his ablutions, or walking up the bed of the stream, in order to conceal his footprints. At length I reached the unwieldy stump of a fallen tree, from which I could command a view of the water; and raising my head cautiously, saw a magnificent stag bathing and refreshing himself, unconscious of the glittering tube which was pointed straight at his heart.

I never saw a more noble or graceful animal; he tossed his great antlers in the air, then dipped his nose in the water and snorted aloud; then he stamped with his feet, and splashed till the spray fell over his sleek and dappled sides. Here a sportsman would interrupt me, saying, "A truce to your description,— did you shoot him through the brain or through the heart?" And a fair querist might ask, "Had you the heart to shoot so beautiful a creature?" Alas! alas! my answer would satisfy neither! I had left my rifle at home, and had only my fowling-piece, loaded with partridge shot; I was sixty yards from the stag, and could not possibly creep, undiscovered, a step nearer, and I had not the

heart to wound the poor animal, when there was little or no chance of killing him. I therefore saw him conclude his bath; and then clearing, at one bound, the willow bushes which fringed the opposite bank, he disappeared in a thicket. I marked well the place; and resolving to take an early opportunity of renewing my visit under more favourable circumstances, returned home.

On the following day, I sallied forth with my trusty double-rifle, carefully loaded, each barrel carrying a ball weighing an ounce. I chose the middle of the day; because the deer, after feeding all the morning, generally go down to the streams to drink previously to their lying down during the warm hours of noon-tide. I crept noiselessly to my stump, gathered a few scattered branches to complete the shelter of my hiding-place, and lay down with that mingled feeling (so well known to every hunter) which unites the impatience of a lover with the patience of a Job! I suppose I had been there nearly two hours, when I thought I heard a rustling on the opposite side; it was only a squirrel hopping from bough to bough. Again I was startled by a saucy pheasant, who seemed conscious of the security which he now gained from his insignificance, and strutted, and scraped, and crowed within a few paces of the muzzle of my rifle. At length, I distinctly heard a noise among the willows, on which my anxious look was rivetted; it grew louder and louder, and then I heard a step in the water, but could not

yet see my victim, as the bank made a small bend, and he was concealed by the projecting bushes.

I held my breath, examined the copper caps; and as I saw the willows waving in the very same place in which he had crossed the day before, I cocked and pointed my rifle at the spot where he must emerge: the willows on the very edge of the bank move,— my finger is on the trigger, when, NOT my noble stag, but an Indian carrying on his shoulder a hind-quarter of venison, jumps down upon the smooth sand of the beach! I was so mad with anger and disappointment, that I could scarcely take the sight of the rifle from the fellow's breast! I remained motionless, but watching all his movements. He put down his rifle and his venison; and shading his eyes with his hands, made a long and deliberate examination of the bank on which I was concealed; but my faithful stump was too much even for his practised eyes, and I remained unobserved. He then examined, carefully, every deer track and foot-print on the sand whereon he stood; after which, resuming his rifle and meat, he tried the river at several places in order to find the shallowest ford.

As it happened, he chose the point exactly opposite to me; so that when he came up the bank, he was within a few feet of me. He passed close by my stump without noticing me, and I then gave a sudden and loud Pawnee yell. He certainly did jump at this unexpected apparition of a man armed with a rifle; but I hastened to dispel any feelings of uneasiness

by friendly signs, because I do not conceive such a trial to be any fair test of a man's courage, and I have no doubt that if he had given me a similar surprise, I should have been more startled than he was. He smiled when I showed him my hiding-place, and explained to him my object in selecting it. I took him home to our wigwam; and as my companions had met with no success, we bought his meat for some bread and a drink of whisky.

On the following day I determined to get a deer, and accordingly started with two soldiers to a large grove or bottom, where they had seen several the evening before. The weather was dry; and as our footsteps on the dead leaves were thus audible at a great distance, the difficulty of approaching so watchful an enemy was much increased. As the Indians had driven off the greater part of the game from our immediate neighbourhood, we walked ten or eleven miles up the river before we began to hunt; we then followed its winding descent, and saw three or four does, but could not get near enough to shoot; at length one started near me, and galloped off through the thick brushwood. I fired and wounded it very severely; it staggered, and turned round two or three times; still it got off through the thicket before I could get another sight of it. At the same time, I heard another shot fired by a soldier, a quarter of a mile on our right. I looked in vain for blood, by which to track my wounded deer, and gave it up in despair when, just as I was making towards

the river, to rejoin my companion, I came upon some fresh blood-tracks: after following them a hundred yards, I found a doe quite dead, but still warm; I thought it was the one which I had just shot, and halloosed to the soldier, who returned to assist me in skinning and hanging it up out of reach of the wolves. On examining the wound, the doe proved to be the one which he had shot, as the ball had entered on the right side, and I had fired from the left; he thought he had missed her.

We found no more game this day, and returned to the camp. The other sportsmen had met with no success. The Indians now set fire to the prairies and woods all around us, and the chance of good sport daily diminished. These malicious neighbours were determined to drive us from the district; they evidently watched our every motion; and whenever we entered a wood or grove to hunt, they were sure to set the dry grass on fire. Half a mile to the windward they pursued this plan so effectually, as not only to spoil our hunting, but on two occasions to oblige me to provide hastily for my personal safety: on the first of these, they set fire to a wood where I was passing, and compelled me to cross a creek for fear of being overtaken by the flames; on the second, having watched me as I crossed a large dry prairie, beyond which was some timber that I wished to try for deer, they set fire to the grass in two or three places to the windward; and as it was blowing fresh at the time, I saw that I should not have time to

escape by flight; so I resorted to the simple expedient, in which lies the only chance of safety on such occasions: I set the prairie on fire where I myself was walking, and then placed myself in the middle of the black barren space which I thus created, and which covered many acres before the advancing flames reached its border; when they did so they naturally expired for want of fuel, but they continued their leaping, smoking, and crackling way on each side of me to the right and to the left. It was altogether a disagreeable sensation, and I was half choked with hot dust and smoke.

On the following afternoon, I went out again in a direction that we had not tried, where the prairie was not yet burnt. I could find no deer, and the shades of night began to close round me, when, on the opposite hills to those on which I stood, I observed two or three slender pillars of curling smoke arising out of the wood, which was evidently now fired on purpose by the Indians. I sat down to watch the effect; for, although I had seen many prairie fires, I had never enjoyed so good an opportunity as the present; for the ground rose in a kind of amphitheatre, of which I had a full and commanding view. Now the flames crept slowly along the ground, then, as the wind rose, they burst forth with increasing might, fed by the dry and decayed elders of the forest, which crackled, tottered, and fell beneath their burning power; they now rose aloft in a thousand fantastic and picturesque forms, lighting up the whole landscape to a

lurid hue; while the dense clouds of smoke which rolled gloomily over the hills, mixed with the crash of the falling timber, gave a dreadful splendour to the scene. I sat for some time enjoying it; and when I rose to pursue my course towards home, I had much difficulty in finding it. The night relapsed into its natural darkness; the prairie at my feet was black, burnt, and trackless, and I could see neither stream nor outline of hill by which to direct my steps.

I sat down again for a few minutes to rest myself, and to recollect, as well as I might be able, any or all the circumstances which should guide me in the direction which I ought to take. While I remained in this position a band of prairie wolves, on an opposite hill, began their wild and shrill concert; and I was somewhat startled at hearing it answered by the long loud howl of a single wolf, of the large black species, that stood and grinned at me, only a few yards from the spot where I was seated. I did not approve of so close a neighbourhood to this animal, and I called to him to be off, thinking that the sound of my voice would scare him away; but as he still remained I thought it better to prepare my rifle, in case he should come still nearer, but determined not to fire until the muzzle touched his body, as it was too dark to make a sure shot at any distance beyond a few feet. However, he soon slunk away, and left me alone.

Fortunately I remembered the relative bearings of our camp, and of the point whence the wind came,

and after scrambling through a few thickets, and breaking my shins over more than one log of fallen wood, I reached home without accident or adventure. The whole country around us was now so completely burnt up and devastated, that nothing remained for us but to resume our march towards the fort.

Comment by the Editor

OLD AGE

There are many kinds of old people. There are those who sit on quiet porches or potter about gardens in the early morning. Occasionally with feeble steps they venture upon the street. They are beings apart — lingerers from yesterday's throng. Perhaps they see but dimly now the landmarks they have known so long, and there is a deepening hush for them in the street which yesterday rang with tumult. Those who pass them by see only the ashes of burnt-out years — forgetting that there must be the embers of fires kindled in the far-off days of youth. They are waiting now for the time when the glow of the spirit shall fade utterly and they shall slip away from a company that is strange to them and join their own generation.

There are others whose spirit and flesh seem to disregard the years. They say goodbye to the friends of their own time and yet they make themselves a part of the newer order. They go down the years, wide awake but serene; full of the dignity of experience, and enjoying to the utmost "the last of life for which the first was made".

The minds of the old are deep pools of memory — sometimes opaque, sometimes murky, often clear as crystal. And the tales that old people tell vary

accordingly. Sometimes they are mere water, poured out endlessly; often they have a rich flavor of old times and strange ways, but are turbid and confused; sometimes they transport us, clear-visioned and unprejudiced, into the heart of yesterday.

In spite of weakness of flesh and memory, these men and women heavy with years are the living ties that bind us to the past. It is a foolish generation that neglects the lingering visitors from another day, or refuses to listen to the tales they have to tell.

MRS. JANE CLARK KIRKWOOD

An oil painting hangs upon the wall at a point which I pass a dozen times a day. It is the picture of an old woman with white hair surmounted by a lace cap. She is sitting by a window reading a book and smiling, and outside the window are hollyhocks in bloom. A few days ago — in her hundredth year — she quietly closed her book and left the hollyhock window to join her own generation.

She was not a native Iowan. When she was born, in 1821, there were no white residents in Iowa. She grew up in Richland County, Ohio, and was doubtless — at nineteen — somewhat interested in the stirring campaign of 1840 when the favorite son of her State, William Henry Harrison, was elected President. She hardly expected then to live to see his grandson, nearly half a century later, chosen to the same position, and to live on until that same grandson had become a part of a bygone generation.

She married, in 1843, a young lawyer — Samuel J. Kirkwood — and came out with him to Iowa a decade later. She faced with him the difficulties of the war governorship; she lived at Washington, D. C., while he was in the United States Senate and while he was Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes. In 1883 they took a trip to California and the Northwest; then they settled down quietly in the house they had built in 1864 on the edge of Iowa City. Governor Kirkwood died in 1894, but Mrs. Kirkwood continued to occupy the old home for more than a quarter of a century more.

Ninety-nine years is a long time to live; it is an unusually long time for one to keep an interest in living. Mrs. Kirkwood was a mature woman when the Mexican War was fought. It is not too much to say that she took part in the Civil War. She observed with interest the Spanish-American War, and when the World War was in progress she knit dozens of articles for the soldiers. She heard the fanfare and tumult of the log cabin and hard cider presidential campaign of 1840. Eighty years later, in November, 1920, she went proudly to the polls herself and cast her vote for President.

The years were kind to her and spared her faculties, and she looked with sympathetic and intelligent eyes upon the world. Such are the characters that dignify old age, that make life seem worth while, and that give to history a sequence and a meaning.

J. C. P.

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