

The
PALIMPSEST
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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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ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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Crossing the Mississippi

In the early movement of settlers to Iowa, the Mississippi River played a double rôle. To the emigrants from Virginia, Kentucky, and other States bordering on the Ohio and Mississippi, it served as an invaluable highway. To those who came overland from Chicago, Milwaukee, or any point in Illinois, on the other hand, it loomed up as an almost impassable barrier. Either as an aid or a hindrance to travel, it was a factor all early emigrants had to reckon with.

The difficulties to be encountered by travel in a white-topped emigrant wagon in those early days can hardly be over-emphasized. There were few roads and no bridges. Broken traces and mired wheels were the common happenings of a day's journey. Rivers proved to be an unfailing source of trouble. The small streams were crossed by fording; the larger ones by swimming the teams, wagons and all. But when the Father of Waters was reached, these methods were out of the question:

here apparently was an insurmountable obstacle. However, these eager home seekers were not willing to be deprived of the hard earned fruits of their trying journey — now lying within sight — by a mere river. And out of this situation came the ferry.

The earliest type of ferry to operate on the Mississippi River was the canoe. It served the Indians as a means of crossing long before the whites penetrated as far west as the Mississippi. When the white explorers finally reached the valley region, they also adopted the customary mode of crossing long followed by their red predecessors. At a still later period, the canoe answered the more frequent and pressing demands of the hunters and trappers on their way to and from the country then regarded as the far west. It even survived till the day when occasional homeseekers in their emigrant wagons found their way into that pioneer region.

Only the ordinary difficulties and risks of canoeing attended the crossing of the river by the Indians, white explorers, and trappers; but with the emigrants it was different. For as a pioneer account relates, "wagons had to be unloaded and taken to pieces, and both they and their loads shipped in small cargoes at a voyage, till all were over; then the teams had to be unharnessed or unyoked and made to swim, the horses being led by the halter at the side of the canoe, and the oxen by the horns." A still more hazardous undertaking was the crossing

in winter, and in the springtime when huge cakes of ice raced along on the swift current, ready to smash into splinters any luckless craft that might get in the way. But this was not always taken into account by travellers eager to reach their destination, and sometimes, in the face of imminent peril, they insisted on being ferried over.

An example of this is afforded by the story of a New Englander — a young college graduate wholly unfamiliar with the stern conditions of pioneer life. He arrived at a point on the Illinois shore opposite Burlington, in December, 1840. Being very anxious to get across the river that evening, he tried to engage the services of the ferryman, who, however, flatly refused to venture on the river in the dark, giving as his reason that the floating ice made it far too perilsome. Nothing daunted by the ferryman's dark and foreboding picture, the easterner still demanded to be taken over, but it proved futile. So instead of the hoped for conveniences of a Burlington hotel, he was forced to accept the more scant offerings of a one-roomed cabin, and submit to the discomfort of sleeping in the same room with thirty others — men, women, and children. But the next day when the canoe landed him safely on the Burlington side of the river after an hour's trying struggle among the floating cakes of ice, he probably felt less bitter toward the stubborn ferryman.

While the canoe met very satisfactorily the needs of the early explorers, stray travellers, and occa-

sional homeseekers, it proved wholly inadequate for the stream of emigrants which followed the opening of the Black Hawk Purchase. Imagine the situation when a group of twelve or more emigrant wagons lined up on the Illinois shore to be ferried over—the confusion, the frenzied haste to get the wagons unloaded and taken to pieces, the long disheartening wait while the total tonnage of the wagons was being taken over, bit by bit, when the hours dragged and even the best natured grew surly. Hence, to meet this situation brought about by the onrush of settlers to the Iowa country, regular public ferries equipped to carry whole wagonloads at a time came into use.

The regular public ferries passed through several well defined stages of evolution, easily distinguished by the type of motive power. Flat-boats and skiffs marked the initial stage. The craft generally spoken of as “flat-boats” were huge barge-like affairs, so constructed as to hold wagon, team, and other equipment. They were steered by huge sweeps, often as long as the boats themselves. By some these boats were designated as “mud scows”. The distinguishing characteristic of this type was that man supplied the motive power. Propelled in some cases by oars, in others by poles, in still others by huge sweeps, it was nevertheless human strength that furnished the moving force.

Although a marked improvement over the canoe, the flat-boat did not do away with the trials of

ferrying. A large element of risk still remained: the craft was always at the mercy of the current and was carried well down stream. After dark the hazards of crossing multiplied and ferrymen charged accordingly. And in many cases it still took an hour or more to cross the river.

While it is very likely that the first flat-boat ferry to operate on the Mississippi within the borders of Iowa was one established at Keokuk to serve the early settlers in the Half Breed Tract, there appears to be no recorded evidence to show it. So far as can be gathered from available records, Clark's Ferry at Buffalo marks the opening of flat-boat ferrying in Iowa. The ferry was established by Captain Benjamin W. Clark in 1833 while he was still living at Andalusia, Illinois. For a number of years it held the distinction of being the most noted ferry between Burlington and Dubuque. Indeed, one writer went so far as to state that it was "the most convenient place to cross the Mississippi . . . anywhere between Balize and Prairie du Chien." And probably a major portion of the traffic passing from the direction of the Illinois River to the mining region west of the Mississippi, or toward the interior, crossed the river at this point.

However, this reputation was short lived, and later developments lead one to believe that it was based more on the conspicuous absence of other ferries than on any intrinsic qualities. In 1836, Antoine Le Claire established a ferry at Davenport — a few

miles below Buffalo — and he gradually drew away most of the travel that had heretofore passed over Clark's Ferry.

As the stream of emigrants heading for the Iowa country increased in volume, the process of carrying it over the Mississippi in man-propelled craft soon became inadequate. Probably some ingenious individual saw the absurdity in having humans sweat and toil away at the poles and oars while veritable reservoirs of power rested on the ferry boat, and struck upon the happy idea of making the horses furnish the power. At any rate, a transition did take place wherein the crude flat-boat gave way to the horse ferry, an affair moved by horse power rather than by man power. However, the transition was not a complete one; in many cases this stage was not present, the flat-boat being directly followed by the steam ferry.

In a newspaper published in Bloomington (Muscatine) in 1841 the following notice appears:

“A new boat, propelled by horse power, has lately been placed upon the river at this place, for the accommodation of the ferry; and, though hastily made, all of green oak, and clumsy in its exterior, it swims like a swan and will cross in eight minutes with ease and safety. We may flatter ourselves that a ferry is now permanently established.”

The third, and by far the most vital step, was the introduction of steam as a motive power. And while very little record is to be had of the actual results of

the change from human to horse strength, evidence as to the effects of the transition to steam is abundant. Whole streams of immigration were diverted from their customary avenues of travel to seek the conveniences offered by steam ferries. Nor is this to be wondered at. Regular trips were now made every hour, in some cases every fifteen minutes. Moreover, in sharp contrast to the time it took to cross in a flat-boat — sometimes several hours — the crossing could now be made in five minutes. This spurt in speed of crossing was closely paralleled by a tremendous leap in carrying capacity. For as a matter of fact, the crude flat-boat capable of carrying a single wagon had now grown to a gigantic affair which could carry eighteen or more teams at once, and even whole trains. As in other industries, the introduction of steam marked a new era in the ferry business.

The extent to which steam power revolutionized ferrying is also revealed in the following comment from a Dubuque newspaper: "Bogy's splendid new steam ferryboat is doing the most rushing business of the season. She is puffing and blowing all the time. She is a perfect Godsend to California emigrants. If the number of wagons that she brings across in a day had to abide the tardiness of the old-fashioned horse boat, they would not reach this side in a week."

Probably the first steam ferry to operate on the Mississippi within the borders of Iowa was estab-

lished by Captain John Wilson in 1852. It is said that he launched the steam ferry as early as 1843, but it was found to be too far in advance of the times and so was taken off the river until 1852. This ferry plied across the river at Davenport.

John Wilson was unusually energetic, enterprising, and capable, as a ferryman. In 1837 he purchased Antoine Le Claire's ferry business, and immediately began building new flat-boats. By 1841 he had a horse ferry boat in operation and his steam ferry was launched in 1843. Moreover, he made an arrangement with the Rock River ferry located at the mouth of the Green River, whereby one fare paid the way over both ferries.

A more novel contribution to ferrying at Davenport accredited to the enterprising Wilson was the ferry alarm. The conditions leading to the adoption of the alarm have been ably told by a contemporary writer as follows: "In primitive times in order to arouse the ferryman on the opposite shore the Stephensonites (now Rock Islanders) who had been over here in Davenport to attend evening services and overstayed their time, or zealous Davenporters who after dark had occasion to visit Stephenson in a missionary cause, had to raise the 'war-whoop'. In order to discourage relics of barbarism Mr. Wilson introduced the ferry triangle, an ungainly piece of triangular steel which, when vigorously pounded with a club, sent forth from its gallows tree a most wretched clanging noise. But it brought the skiff though it awakened the whole town."

No account of ferries in Iowa would be complete without some mention at least of tolls, and cost of franchises. As a matter of fact, these are but special phases of the general subject, and they illuminate it materially. In the early days when the Mississippi was crossed in ferries, money was not so plentiful as it is to-day. Hence, ferry fees were often paid with goods. The circumstances under which Clark collected his first ferriage afford an instance, and they also show something of the man's temper. A company of French traders on their way from the Iowa River to the Trading Post on Rock Island encamped one evening at Buffalo. The information that Clark intended to establish a ferry across the river at this point, they received as a huge joke, ridiculing the whole enterprise. Nevertheless, they called loudly for the ferry-boat to carry their drove of cattle across, little dreaming that it would appear. Nor is it very likely that they realized the type of man they were dealing with.

Captain Clark, his flat-boat completed and ready for service, gathered enough men and boys to operate the boat, and in no pleasant frame of mind set out into the dark to offer his services to the noisy Frenchmen. When the traders noticed the flat-boat approaching, however, they burst into uproarious laughter, aiming to turn the whole matter off as a joke; and they told the Captain they had nothing to ferry and that he might return. But he was not so easily disposed of, for his temper was now thor-

oughly aroused. He landed his boat, marched into the camp of the Frenchmen with his small crew, and angrily demanded ten dollars as his ferriage fee. The whole affair speedily lost its comical aspects, and the traders saw that the infuriated Captain would brook no further trifling. But to their great embarrassment, they had not ten dollars in money among them. So they offered him two bolts of calico which he accepted.

Another incident arising out of the scarcity of money is related of Antoine Le Claire who established his ferry at Davenport in 1836. As his fee for ferrying a number of sheep over the river, he accepted their fleeces, the owner having had them sheared prior to the crossing. This wool he kept for a while, but failing to find any particular use for it, he finally burned it to get rid of it.

But it must not be understood that it was the daily occurrence for a party to pay its way over the river in calico or in raw wool. These were the unusual and striking incidents. Ordinarily, of course, fares were paid in money. The County Commissioner's Court at Rockingham in May, 1838, fixed the following ferriage rates for the Mississippi River:

Footmen	\$.18 $\frac{3}{4}$
Man and horse	.50
One vehicle and driver	.75
Two horses, vehicle and driver	1.00
Each additional horse or mule	.18 $\frac{3}{4}$

Meat cattle, per head	.12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sheep or hogs	.05
Freight per hundred	.06 $\frac{1}{4}$

From sunset to sunrise, double rates were allowed.

The puzzling feature of this table stands out in the apparent difficulty of making change in $\frac{1}{2}$ cents and $\frac{1}{4}$ cents. And for both explanation and solution one must go back to a day when money was nearly non-existent. Says a writer of that early day, "During all this time there was no money of any description. Talk about scarcity now a days! Then the only change aside from barter consisted of bits and picayunes — the former a piece of the eighth part of a Spanish milled dollar, cut with a chisel into eight equal parts when the operation was fairly and honestly done, but the skilful and designing often made nine bits and even ten out of one dollar piece. The picayune in like manner was a Spanish quarter cut into four equal parts, hence the origin of these two terms bits and picayunes."

The table then, was based on the actual circulation of the crude bits of chiseled coin which survived a day when money was very scarce. Not infrequently, however, one party or the other had to surrender the half or fourth cent in making change.

While the ferries of early days rendered practically the same public service that the bridges of to-day do, they were, for the most part, established for private profit. And when one considers the striking similarity between crossing the Mississippi

in a ferry-boat and crossing it over a bridge, it seems odd that a toll should have to be paid in the one case and not in the other. Nevertheless, free ferries were as conspicuously absent then as free bridges are prevalent to-day.

On the other hand, the idea of a free public ferry was not altogether unheard of. By legislative act the commissioners of Louisa County were authorized to establish and keep a ferry across the Iowa River which was to render its services free to all the citizens of the county. And at the extra session of the First General Assembly the Mayor and Aldermen of Ft. Madison were authorized to provide for "the free carriage across the Mississippi river for one year, of all persons with their property coming to Ft. Madison for the purpose of trading with its inhabitants, and bringing marketing and produce to the place". Moreover, there was considerable agitation for the free ferry in a number of the larger towns.

License fees kept pace with the rapid development of the ferries in general — the increase in carrying capacity, the substitution of steam in the place of horse or man power, and the increase in volume of business. Beginning with the humble figure of \$2.00 per year or less, the cost of franchises leaped, in the course of time, to the striking figure of \$1000 annually. Before the formal granting of ferry franchises through legislative action, licenses were not required. There appears to be no written evidence

that either Captain Clark or Antoine Le Claire or Captain John Wilson paid license fees. But with the establishing of ferries through legal processes, charges were made for the right to carry on the business.

The County Commissioner's Court which met at Rockingham in May, 1838, fixed the following schedules for licenses on the Mississippi: Davenport, \$20.00; Buffalo, \$10.00; Rockingham, \$8.00; and all others \$5.00. How long these schedules remained in force we are not told; very likely it was not many years. Gregoire's ferry established at Dubuque was required to pay \$100.00 annually. And the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company was charged \$1000 annually for the right to operate on the Missouri at Council Bluffs.

In the course of time the steamboat replaced the steam ferry, and this marked the last stage of water transportation. Then came the bridges and wherever they appeared the ferries became an insignificant factor in crossing the Mississippi. In 1855 the first bridge across the Mississippi at Davenport was completed; eighteen years later a second bridge followed. The Illinois shore was linked to the Iowa shore at Clinton in 1864. Four years later work was in full sway on a bridge at Dubuque. And in 1891 the so called "high bridge" was opened at Muscatine.

It is needless to further catalogue these Mississippi crossings. Suffice it to say that since the nine-

ties all the important river towns have built bridges. And although water crossings still exist and doubtless always will, it is apparent that the spanning of the Mississippi with mighty bridges sounded the death knell of the once prosperous trade of ferrying.

WILLIAM S. JOHNSON

Clint Parkhurst

Henry Clinton Parkhurst, a man of brilliant mind, a prolific author of fine prose and poetry productions, has in consequence of a tangle of circumstances, almost sunk into oblivion, yet the memory of him is fresh in the minds of a few of his former acquaintances who have made unavailing efforts to learn his recent whereabouts.

It was a happy incident that *THE PALIMPSEST* published in a recent number a few of Parkhurst's *Martial Memories*, in which the private of the Sixteenth Iowa Infantry tells the graphic details — spiced with humor and some self-mockery — of the terrific Battle of Shiloh where he received his first and lasting impressions of war, for by that publication the interest in the author has been revived.

Where Clinton Parkhurst is living — at an age of 76 or 77 — the present writer does not know. Neither has he much knowledge of his doings after he left the Iowa Soldiers' Home at Marshalltown, of which he is reported to have been an inmate since 1895. As a matter of fact he probably spent comparatively few years at the Home for during that period he was for a longer or shorter time in various parts of the country — East, West, and South. But of the earlier years much can be told and the following account is an attempt to contribute some of the missing fragments of the "biographical mosaic".

The village of Parkhurst in Scott County, where Clint was born in 1844, and the neighboring village of LeClaire, which in 1855 were consolidated under the name of LeClaire, have been centers of intellectual life from their earliest days, and Mr. and Mrs. Lemuel Parkhurst, the parents of Clinton, were prominent in that society. His mother early recognized the bright qualities of her son and granted him every advantage for their cultivation. In later years he wrote of his mother:

Ignore the common goal, she said,
Leave fools to gather rubbish vile;
Lift thou thine eyes to heights o'erhead,
And seek to bask in Glory's smile.
The sluggard perishes in shame,
The Shylock's pomps with him expire.
The hero leaves a deathless name
For countless ages to admire.
Strong be thy will — as iron strong,
To cleave a path to grand renown,
And, peerless in the fields of song,
To millions shall thy name go down.
Let proud ambition sway thy mind, —
To live, that when thy race is o'er,
Resplendent tracks shall glow behind.

Clint had his early training in a select school in LeClaire, taught by a Mrs. Mary Marks, a highly educated English lady, the wife of an Episcopal minister. In Davenport he first attended the public

school, then Iowa College, and after its removal to Grinnell, the Griswold College. He is said — and probably truthfully — to have been full of harmless pranks. He had a peculiar way of translating phonetically some silly Latin sentences: for instance, “Pastor ridebit” he would give in English “Pastor, ride a bit”, and for “Puer juraverat” he would say “The poor jury ’ve a rat”. This sort of linguistic sport, however, was not always appreciated by the teacher. From early youth he evinced a remarkable gift for beautiful prose writing and also for versification which augured a great future.

In February, 1862, at a little over seventeen years of age, he enlisted in Co. C of the Sixteenth Iowa Infantry and on March 20th was sent with his regiment to St. Louis. There the raw recruit was equipped with a glittering rifle and other paraphernalia and was sent a few days later to war, the horrors of which he immediately experienced in the bloody Battle of Shiloh. Never shirking from duty, or avoiding the perils of battle, he participated in all the important events of the various campaigns up to the battles around Atlanta, when he with the greater portion of the gallant regiment was captured and held a prisoner by the Confederates.

From the beginning of his military service he kept a daily record of all he saw and participated in, continuing it till the war ended, not ceasing to write secretly in the deadly stockades of Andersonville, Millen, and Florence. Thus he accumulated much

highly valuable material which was later elaborated in a large number of war sketches and also furnished a delicate coloring for his different epical works.

Parkhurst was mustered out of service in July, 1865, and became a reporter on the *Davenport Democrat*, but soon shifted to a paper in Le Claire, thence to Rock Island, Moline, Muscatine, Des Moines, and other places. In one or two of these papers he had even acquired a pecuniary interest. He never stayed long in one position, nowhere finding an opportunity that would suit his particular ideals of journalism, and he quit. He turned to writing magazine articles and other forms of literary work. For, as he says of himself:

From his very boyhood days
Fame had been his constant dream.

It is difficult, almost to the verge of impossibility, to follow Clint Parkhurst's much twisted meanderings. One month he might be in Chicago or New York, and the next in San Francisco, St. Louis, or Tacoma, doing for a short time some editorial or other literary work, or he would spend weeks and months in the Sierras to gather new inspirations. In 1874 and 1875 he was in Mexico and Nicaragua, and the fruit of this jaunt was an extensive epos entitled "Sun Worship Shores". In 1876 he came from California back to Davenport, where in De-

ember of that year he was admitted to the bar of Scott County.

The subjects of his writings were almost exclusively historical — biblical or secular. Numerous sketches from the Civil War have been published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago News*, the *Davenport Democrat*, the *Davenport Times*, the *Davenport Leader*, the *Omaha Bee*, the *Galveston News*, the *Boston Investigator*, the *Marshalltown Register*, etc., either over his real name or the nom de plume "Free Lance". Several of the above named papers printed also large extracts from his epics, "Shot and Shell", "Judith", "Voyage of Columbus", "In Custer's Honor", "Pauline", "Sun Worship Shores", "Death Speech of Robert Emmett", and others. As a sample of his mode of treatment of biblical themes the following paraphrase, entitled "Solomon's Lament", may find a place:

O Shulamite return, return —
My heart is lone, no joys can cheer;
The very stars have ceased to burn
With wonted rays, and chill and drear
The breezes come from mountains bare
To moan to me in low despair.
They miss thee as the stars have done,
Thy roses swoon beneath the sun;
All nature sighs, all fair things yearn
For thee — O Shulamite return.

Return, return, O Shulamite —
I cannot stay my grief with wine;
I cannot through the day or night
These wasting thoughts of thee resign;
No more my wonted joys delight,
No more I bow at Pleasure's shrine,
Nor bask in halls of glory bright —
How long, O sweet, must I repine?

A kindred one I cannot meet
'Mong all Judea's joyous throng;
O whither stray thy joyous feet,
Thou princess of my mournful song?
O peerless idol of my mind,
Thou sweeter than the breath of dawn;
O fairest of all womankind —
Queen of my heart, where hast thou gone?
Hath love yet lore thou hast not taught,
Or lore I have not deigned to learn?
Then be all lore save thine forgot —
O Shulamite return, return.

Several times Parkhurst lost large parts of his manuscripts, in two instances a whole book. Portions of them he resurrected from newspaper files, and in filling the gaps he also improved these works. In the winter of 1904, in his old home city, and with many of his literary notes and treasures around him, he again prepared his writings, including a new epos of about 1200 lines entitled "Tamerlane Victorious or the World's Desolation", for a book. When com-

pleted, it went up with other matter in flame and smoke.

Newspapers generally are not inclined to print much rhyme, or long poetry. They view original verse with disfavor. But they were generous to Clint Parkhurst, giving much space to extensive extracts from his works, and these, at least, could be lifted out of their graves.

With book publishers he was much less successful. Byron once gave his publisher a splendidly bound Bible, and the recipient was proud of it until he happened to discover that his friend donor had altered the last verse of the 18th chapter of St. John (Now Barrabas was a robber) so as to read: "Now Barrabas was a *publisher*."

Parkhurst came to the conclusion that most of the American publishers were Barrabases. He has named many a publishing house of prominence which has injured him. He has also publicly pilloried several distinguished authors who have appropriated, literally or with slight changes, large portions of his manuscripts when temporarily in their possession. In this respect he fared worse than the poor devils of young Frenchmen who wrote good stories for the great Dumas, who put his name upon their front pages. But they were paid, however miserably, for their slave-work. Clint did not get a cent for the productions stolen from him, but was treated with abuse when he remonstrated.

In newspapers may often be seen advertisements

like this: "Cash paid for bright ideas." When a writer without a name subjects such ideas to the advertiser they are kept for awhile and then courteously declined, but after some little time they appear, somewhat masked, in a book, perhaps, under some famous person's name. Clint once replied to an advertisement in a New York paper offering literary employment, and was invited to an interview, in the course of which a bulky manuscript was produced, which he was only permitted to glance at for a few minutes. He could only gather that it was a maritime narrative. The advertiser said: "The material is good, but the book doesn't suit us exactly. We want it reproduced in a little better style. What can you do the job for?" Clint was very poor and needed a little money badly; but he declined to "do the job"; he did not want to assist a leech to suck another poor fellow's heartblood.

In 1896, in his temporary Tusculum, the Soldiers' Home of Virginia, he wrote an historical romance concerning the Black Hawk War, entitled "A Military Belle". It was a book of love and adventure, and inwoven was the story of the proverbial unlucky man, for whom the author himself was the model. Under disadvantages and persecuted by the management of the Home, who attributed to him certain derogatory newspaper letters which he never wrote, the manuscript was finished after about a year. A publisher was found in New York, and the outlook was fine. Because of some one's blunders several

letters of the publisher did not reach the author who never saw a proof, and the publication was long delayed. Parkhurst finally went to New York, where he learned that the book had already been stereotyped. But it abounded in grievous errors, and numerous plates had to be cut and cast over. At last, in 1899, the Military Belle made her bow, and an encouragingly large number of books were sold. But the publisher failed, and Clint got only about \$9 from the debacle.

The last and probably the greatest of his many literary misfortunes was blended with the one of the city of San Francisco. In Davenport he had gathered from many newspaper columns a large portion of his poetical writings, which he re-arranged, carefully improved, and incorporated in a manuscript ready for the printer. This manuscript he sent in 1905 to his daughter Mabel in San Francisco — as usual without keeping a duplicate. On the 18th day of April, 1906, that beautiful city was visited by earthquake and conflagration. His daughter did well enough to save her life, but all her belongings and the manuscript of her father were destroyed.

Parkhurst outlived this shock as he had many previous minor ones. In January, 1908, a Davenport friend received from him a hopeful letter out of the Missouri mountains. He wrote that he had taken up the life of a literary hermit. "I came to the wilds of the Ozarks last summer," he wrote, "and the venture has been a success. I own an acre

of ground, have a good house on it, have a library of fifty choice volumes, and several dozen magazines and daily papers, and have every want supplied. My pension has been increased to \$12 per month." He was enthused over the "glorious sceneries" and the "incomparable climate." His health was good; for "anybody's health is good here." But the solitude there could not suit him for any great length of time. He returned to the Iowa Soldiers' Home, where he was in company with his old commander, Col. Add. H. Sanders. From that place he disappeared in August, 1913, after having spent there, off and on, periods of various duration. Nothing has of late been heard of any more literary work of his.

AUG. P. RICHTER

Comment by the Editor

CLINTON PARKHURST

Somewhere on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, Clinton Parkhurst is apparently still living. Since the publication of the October PALIMPSEST we have had many letters about the writer of *A Few Martial Memories*. Some of these letters were from readers who did not know Parkhurst but whose interest was aroused by his graphic descriptive powers. Others have come from men and women who have known Clinton Parkhurst at different times in his career --- and they have supplied many of the missing fragments of the mosaic.

We have heard from friends of Clinton Parkhurst in his schoolboy days, from neighbors, from his fellow journalists, from his brother, and from his daughter. We can now definitely connect him with the early Parkhursts of the town of that name. His father, Lemuel Parkhurst, was the son of Sterling Parkhurst and a nephew of Eleazer Parkhurst, the founder of the town. Here he was born in 1844, in the same township where two years later "Buffalo Bill" Cody first saw the light of day.

The most complete account of Parkhurst that has come to us is that of Aug. P. Richter, for many years editor of *Der Demokrat* of Davenport; and it is this story which is printed in the present number of THE

PALIMPSEST. The letters and accounts, however, whether from friend or relative, are alike in one respect. They fail to answer the question: Where is Clinton Parkhurst? With all of them the trails run out and stop. We have heard that two of his friends say, in identical phraseology, that he is "basking on the shores of the Pacific", but they do not say where.

Probably we could find his address by writing to the Pension Department at Washington. But this we do not intend to do. The biographical mosaic is nearly complete. If the subject of the portrait wishes to keep the corner piece in his pocket during his last few years, it is his right and we shall respect it. We are happy to have read some of his writings, and to know something of the man, and we shall wish him many happy days on the sunset shores of America.

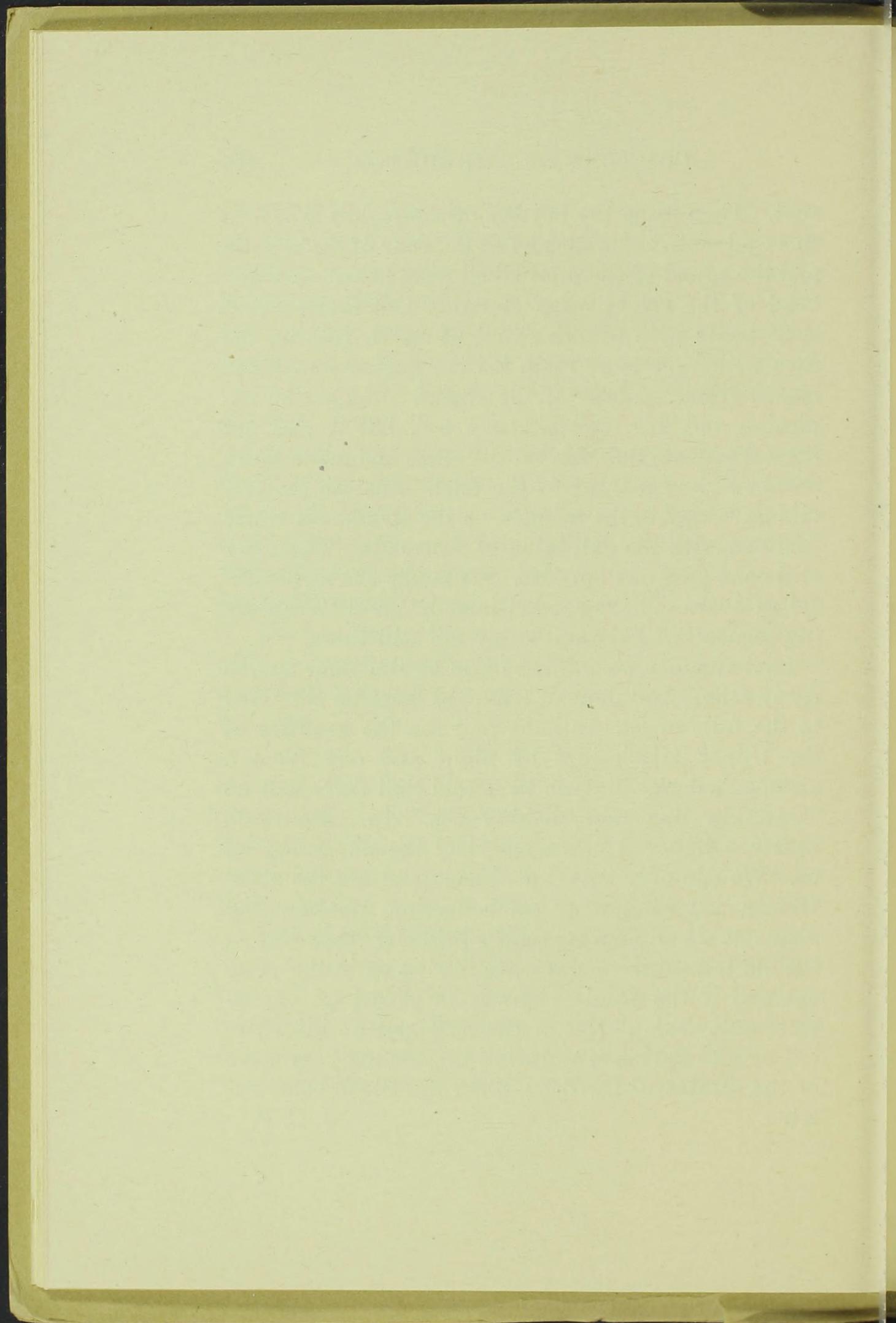
THE RIVER

It will soon be two hundred and fifty years since the canoes of Marquette and Jolliet swept out of the Wisconsin into the waters of the Mississippi; and in those long years the river has had a wonderful history. Full of romance are the days when explorer and fur trader paddled their slender barks up and down the stream. Upon its broad highway the settlers of the Louisiana Purchase arrived. Primitive steamboats laid their course along the beautiful shores of the prairie land of Iowa, while busy ferries laced their way back and forth across the cur-

rent. Then came the heyday of the paddle wheel — those adventurous times when the roar of the whistle and the sound of the pilot's bell were heard on every bend of the river; when captains and crews raced their boats with a high spirit of sport, feeding the fires with barrels of resin till the flames sometimes blazed from the tops of the stacks. Snags and explosion and fire took a heavy toll, but it was not these accidents that spoiled the game and made Mark Twain's river a thing of the past. Just as the ferries gave way to the bridges, so the steamboat traffic declined with the extension of railroads. The river still runs past our borders. Its banks are as beautiful as ever. The "wooded islands" and "enchanted scenes" of Beltrami's day are still there.

Last summer we wanted to do as Beltrami and so many others had done — travel by boat up the river to the falls of St. Anthony and see the beauties of the Upper Mississippi by night and day from a steamer's deck. But we were told that there was no steamship line now making the trip. Beltrami, nearly a hundred years ago, had the advantage of us. We can only travel alongside and see the river from a car window or catch fleeting, smoke-veiled vistas as we slip across on the bridges. However, if the old adventurous days are denied us in the present and if the scenic highway is closed we can at least enjoy the glories of the past and we intend to tell in *THE PALIMPSEST* during the coming year some of the stories of the days when the Steamboat was King.

J. C. P.



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