

## 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.