

The PALIMPSEST

AUGUST 1925

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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

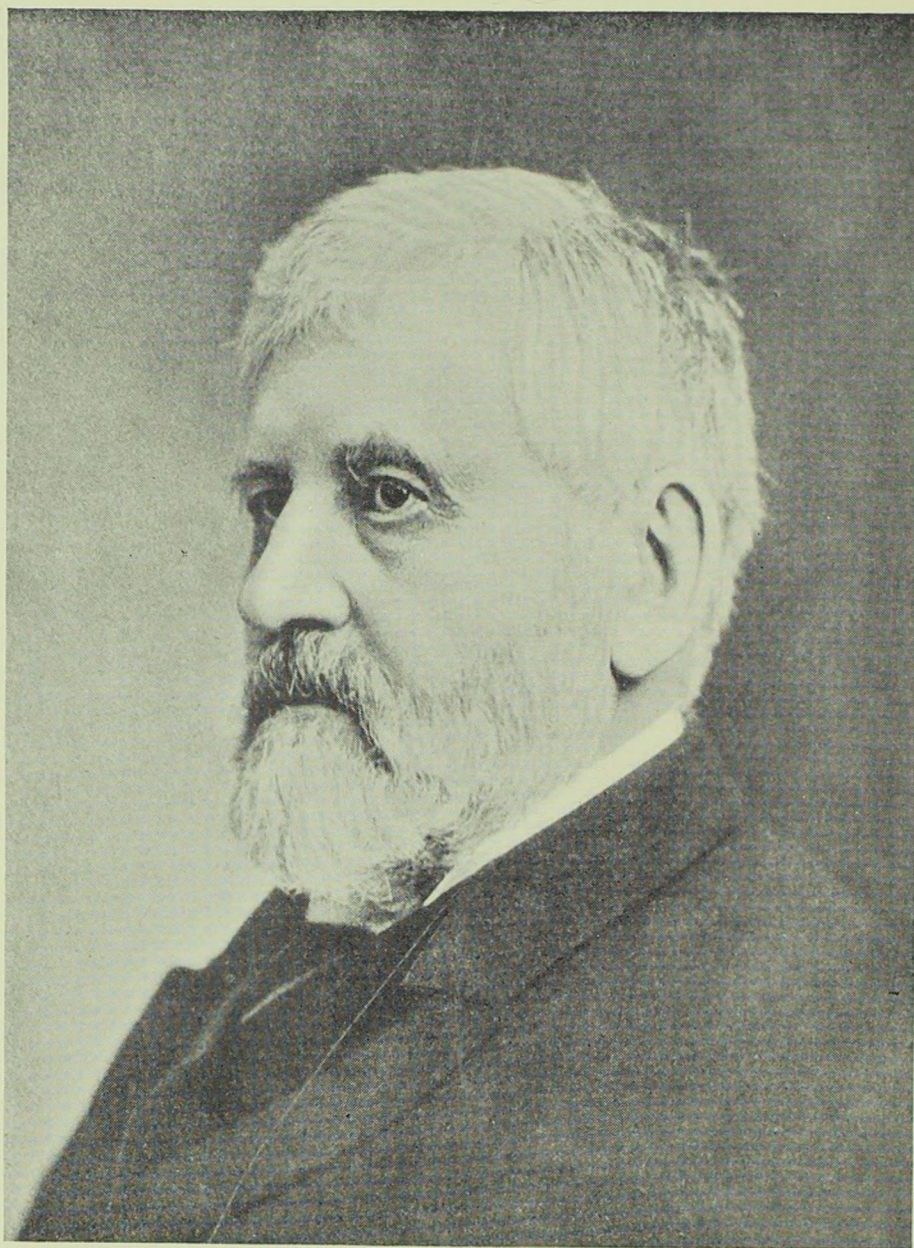
Superintendent

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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WILLIAM BOYD ALLISON

THE PALIMPSEST

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A Diligent Public Servant

William Boyd Allison's congressional career of more than forty-three years was closed by death in August, 1908, shortly after he was nominated for his seventh term in the United States Senate. Such a long public career — one of the longest in American history — and a life that reached nearly four score years stimulate reflections. To some who may remember Allison's death, the names of Benjamin Harrison, James G. Blaine, and Walter Q. Gresham are the echo of another generation. Yet these men, his serious rivals for the Republican presidential nomination in 1888, were all his juniors — and they all preceded him to the grave. That unruffled, wakeful, and thin little boss, Thomas C. Platt, who was influenced by Chauncey M. Depew's objection to Allison, and who defeated Allison by delivering the seventy-two votes of New York to Harrison, let the reins of his power slip from his icy fingers

within two years after Allison's death. Platt's favorite, Depew, another contender in the convention of 1888, and the last surviving candidate of that year, yet lives to recall a too obscure chapter in American politics and the time when the president of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad could aspire to the presidency of the United States.

James A. Garfield, James G. Blaine, and William B. Allison all entered the House of Representatives in 1863. Two other men, Justin S. Morrill and John Sherman, with whom Mr. Allison worked in shaping the financial policy of the country, had already risen to important committee places. They were Allison's seniors, and the longer and nearly parallel service of the former and the more distinguished and varied service of the latter closed before the end of the nineteenth century. The Rhode Island grocer, Nelson W. Aldrich, arrived in Washington fifteen years later than Allison and retired from the Senate in 1911 under a cloud of popular distrust.

During his public life, Allison saw the weathercock of popular opinion point in many directions. His own political activities partly illustrate these changes; and so wisely did he sense them that, whether he yielded or resisted, his reputation for sound judgment steadily rose. He participated in a Free Soil campaign in Ohio, and was a delegate from Iowa to the convention that nominated Lincoln

in 1860. He fought the "copperheads"; he was a radical when the term connoted fervid patriotism; he hesitated on protection, dallied with silver, and became orthodox on both. Stirred by the ideals which created the Republican party, he was depressed by the drab days of the seventies; and, after the arrival of "big business", with an easy and urbane temper, he accommodated himself to its creatures, who had never breathed the classical atmosphere of an ante-bellum academy, and who thought that, because one would not keep a ledger for its own sake, one should not read a classic for the same reason. Having cautiously ridden through the Populistic storm, he lent the weight of his great experience and skilful seamanship to sailing in waters where the Progressive storm was soon to break. Finally, his life, which began two days before John Quincy Adams quitted the Executive Mansion and two days before the Westerners at Jackson's inaugural ball soiled the upholstering with their muddy boots, ended when William Howard Taft was running for President on a platform which pledged his party to revise the tariff.

John Allison, the father of William Boyd, was born in Bellefont, Pennsylvania, in 1798. The Allisonsons had come from Ireland and a number of them had served in the American army during the Revolution. It is not known what were the circumstances of John Allison's father. Whether pressed by the poverty which attended so many of the eighteenth

century Scotch-Irish settlers in America or urged by the spirit of adventure, John Allison moved out on the Ohio frontier in 1823 and settled near Perry in what is now Ashland County.

It was there that William Boyd Allison was born on March 2, 1829. His first home was a log house in the timber, which extended in every direction, broken only by a few clearings and still rarer villages. Eighty acres of forest yield but slowly to the labor of one family, and young Allison probably helped with the clearing and attended log-rollings where hard labor was relieved by coarse jokes and whisky. The Indians were no longer dangerous, but malaria and the unceasing toil of pioneers still took their toll of life. Such a country would seem to offer no prospect to a youth but to clear fields as his father had, to till them, and to sink into a grave with hands knotted by labor and rheumatism, with a back bent by lifting logs, and with a stomach ruined by salt pork and lye hominy.

The fact is, however, that opportunity opened before many a youth who looked out from the rude pioneer settlements in that quarter of the world where lived "about the best human material that America had ever seen". An Irish family of three or four generations in America found itself in a State where New Englanders had planted schools. During the winter months, Allison, who could not, like Joseph H. Choate, boast that his education had begun a hundred years before his birth, walked two

miles, probably by a road where the axe had cleared scarcely more than a trail to the "Old Field School". At sixteen he entered Wooster Academy, where he studied for two years. "Big-eyed Bill", as he was known, was an awkward, over-grown, good-humored youngster whom the girls liked to tease none the less because he ran after them and kissed them when he caught them. This boy, who never wore suspenders and was always hitching up his trousers, who had a strong tobacco breath, and who never told the teachers about his tormentors, soon showed that he had good stuff in him. The greenhorn who walked in from the farm every morning and who excited so many uncontrolled snickers was something more than a butt for jokes. He soon excelled in mathematics, studied Latin and Greek, and probably surveying which was the practical subject of that day. Debating also engrossed the attention of the youths of an age which had not libelled energy by calling it "pep".

From Wooster Academy, Allison went to Allegheny College at Meadville, Pennsylvania, where he remained one year. Then he taught a country school for a year and this experience was followed by a year in Western Reserve College at Hudson, Ohio. "Big-eyed Bill" was, in the vernacular of a later day, beginning "to arrive". He was twenty-one and had been in college two years. While serving as deputy to the county clerk of Ashland County, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1852.

Clients were not numerous at first, and it is said that the young attorney diligently studied history, politics, and finance. But the fact that such studies engaged a young attorney waiting for clients is not all one would wish to know. The political atmosphere of his home and the uneasy stirrings of the period when he had to make his choice of party allegiance are important. William B. Allison's father was an "Old Line" Whig who had voted for Clay in 1824. Whatever newspapers reached the frontier home must have been chosen according to this bias. Hence young Allison's earliest political faith must have included the Whig casuistry on slavery, an interest in protection, and a passion for internal improvements. A nation facing a great moral question was to be saved by turnpikes and canals.

In 1846, the first year Allison was in Wooster Academy, Ohio mustered only eleven thousand votes for the repeal of the Black Laws. Lowell's *The Present Crisis* was fresh from the press. Iowa was admitted into the Union as the first free State west of the Mississippi River. It was the year of the Wilmot Proviso, and the following spring a little New England boy, John D. Long, who was later to preside over the Navy Department during the war with Spain confided to his diary how wicked was our war with Mexico.

But popular opinion moved rapidly in the nine years from 1847 to 1855, and Allison grew from an

awkward school boy to a rising young attorney who was sent as a delegate to the Anti-Nebraska Republican Convention which nominated Salmon P. Chase for Governor. It was a period of political ferment. Chase had left the Democratic ranks, and Allison quitted the sinking hull of the Whig party. The next year he took an active part locally in support of John C. Frémont for President.

In 1857 when Allison was twenty-eight, he moved to Dubuque and became a law partner of B. M. Samuels. At that time Dubuque offered an attractive field, having grown in twenty years from a straggling village with a mayor's office among the green stumps to a city of fifteen thousand. Property had risen to amazing values. Almost one thousand steamboats touched its wharves yearly. Three railroads reached the shore opposite Dubuque, and four projecting west and north from the city seemed to make it certain to be the distributing point for that vast region already penetrated for twenty miles by the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad.

Mr. Allison entered into an active practice. His transition from a struggling attorney in a small Ohio village to an important lawyer in a metropolis of the Northwest was rapid. The annals of America furnish examples of more restless spirits hastening West at earlier ages, but if Mr. Allison had been in no hurry to come West, he quickly began to play his part. Within fifteen years he served another apprenticeship in local politics, raised four regiments

to help suppress the rebellion of the South, represented his district eight years in the lower house of Congress, and won a seat in the United States Senate.

The young statesman did not practice at the bar long enough nor did law ever so engross his attention that his legal pursuits merit more than the barest mention in a sketch like this. His military service engaged him scarcely more than a year. During that time he was on Governor Kirkwood's staff with the rank of colonel, he raised four regiments, and managed his own commissary and quartermaster departments. After a while he fell sick from exposure and overwork, and returned to politics.

Politics was his profession. Within two years after coming to Iowa, he was a delegate to the Republican convention that nominated Samuel J. Kirkwood for Governor. The next year, 1860, he was a delegate to the Republican State Convention and also to the national convention where he first supported Chase but later joined the Lincoln throng.

In the spring of 1862, while yet on Governor Kirkwood's staff, Colonel Allison conceived the idea of allowing the enlisted men to vote in the autumn election. Governor Kirkwood and Senator Grimes were both impressed by the suggestion, a special session of the General Assembly was called to pass the necessary legislation, and the soldiers had the opportunity of helping to save the Union party at

the polls as well as the Union cause on the field of battle.

Colonel Allison was nominated for Congress in the summer of 'sixty-two. His Democratic rival was Dennis A. Mahony, a Dubuque editor who did not conceal his Southern sympathies and whose address was a Washington prison during the campaign. In Iowa the campaign was bitterly waged. The political fortunes of the administration were at a low ebb and the patriots in the North had their work to do, when "the cause might be as fatally lost at the ballot box as on the battle field". The Third Congressional District of Iowa was one of the fronts. Colonel Allison won.

He took his seat in the Thirty-eighth Congress on December 7, 1863. Gettysburg and Vicksburg were behind: reconstruction cast its ominous shadow before. Congress faced both the difficulties of war and the problems of settlement. As to the former, the policy of the government on questions of finance, enlistments, emancipation, and the exercise of war powers was already fixed, either by the design of leaders or the relentless and hastening force of circumstances. Thus in his first term, Allison voted for new loans, for the continuance of the bounty system, for the amendment of the national bank act, for the Thirteenth Amendment, and for the Wade-Davis plan of reconstruction by Congress.

Allison's four terms in the House of Representatives cover the period from 1863 to 1871. They were

years in which statesmen, embarrassed by the bitter feuds, the obstinacy of opposing personalities, and the provocations and errors of men too attached to dogmas, which mark the political reconstruction of the South, had to achieve important adjustments of the currency and of taxation. Nor did Representative Allison escape the hate which mars the record of that period. He made an elaborate and bitter speech in favor of confiscating the lands of the rebels, he supported the reconstruction measures of the radicals, and he took an active part in the impeachment of President Johnson.

The record of the Congressman from the third Iowa district on the post-war problems of currency and taxation was uneven. On the former he vacillated, while in connection with the latter he showed wisdom, statesmanlike poise, and laborious usefulness. He voted with the majority of the House on December 18, 1867, when it pledged itself to carry out Secretary Hugh McCulloch's policy of contracting the currency and of resuming specie payments. He then supported a bill which provided a drastic scheme of contraction. After this bill had failed to receive a majority, he voted with the inflationists against the compromise measure which became a law. Two years later he voted against the hard money men to stop any contraction whatever.

But on the readjustment of taxation Representative Allison needs no apologist. At the beginning of his second term, he was placed on the Committee on

Ways and Means, and at once took an important part in framing tariff and internal revenue bills. Such measures required endless labor and minute information about the conditions of business, of foreign and domestic manufactures, and of commerce. During the war, heavy taxes had been levied upon domestic manufactures, and they had been protected from foreign competition by compensatory duties which also yielded abundant revenues. Scarcely an internal tax or an import duty could be changed which did not involve the readjustment of the rates on many other articles in order to save business from a too violent shock. Mr. Allison seemed to have remembered Burke's dictum that one "would do more by figures of arithmetic than by figures of rhetoric". He attended the House constantly when tax bills were pending, to bear his full share of the labor of explaining administrative details and legal difficulties of enforcement, comparing proposed rates, and estimating revenue. Sometimes when an amendment was offered, he would explain that it had been anticipated by a paragraph not yet reached. He would call attention to the fact that certain amendments belonged elsewhere, that the House had already decided certain points by accepting or rejecting amendments, or that disputed rates had been reserved for consideration until other sections of the bill were decided. Such activity does not win the applause of galleries, nor does it make interesting reading to be franked to constituents, but it is a

necessary and no small part of the labor of governing a nation.

During Allison's eight years in the House, the Republicans were not united on the policy of protection. The protectionists enjoyed the vantage-ground of already having either protective or prohibitive duties. Every reduction of the internal revenue, which was popular, left them a proportionately greater quantity of Morrill's health-giving tonic in the guise of compensatory duties. Some Western members of Congress, whose constituents were interested in cheap rails for their railroads, protested against the excessive nursing Thaddeus Stevens secured for Pennsylvania's infant iron and steel industries. Allison was one of those who braved Stevens's raillery about the secessionist relic of free trade being located along the Mississippi River. On all the test votes he sided against those who were demanding higher duties. The protective duties granted to the iron and woolen interests excited his anger, and he accused protectionists of bad faith, since they had secured reductions of internal taxes on their products by letting it be understood they would agree to reductions of the import duties. He joined with the moderate tariff group to force from Blaine a promise to appoint Garfield chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. Blaine promised what they asked, got their votes for the speakership, and then appointed Henry L. Dawes, a protectionist, chairman.

In 1870, Allison made his longest speech on the tariff. It was an able indictment of the duties which certain interests enjoyed, and a review of the means by which such rates had been secured. He pointed out how the high tariff limited the market of our agricultural class and injured our merchant marine. But the protectionists had sent their free literature throughout the Northwest, had organized associations, and had contributed large sums to mold public sentiment. In short the Northwest was "sold" to the idea of protecting home industry and American labor. A year later, when a candidate for the United States Senate, Allison's friends had to apologize for his tariff record and he himself made speeches to the Iowa farmers about a judicious adjustment of the duties which would protect "any legitimate industry" and he did not "know any Republican who would seek to place the American laborer on a par with the European".

Senator Allison, from his entrance into the Senate in 1873 to his death, generally exercised a moderating influence upon the tariff policy of his party. He opposed the formation of the tariff commission in 1883 as a scheme to delay a needed revision of internal revenues and import duties, and he opposed the action of Congress in raising the duties recommended by the tariff commission. In 1888, while the Mills Bill was before the House, he was chairman of a sub-committee instructed to prepare a substitute for the House bill. His work on this committee and

the testimony which he took became the basis of the McKinley tariff. In 1897 he had charge of the Dingley tariff in the Senate.

In connection with the tariff, a singularly typical labor of Senator Allison deserves notice. During the years 1885 to 1887, he was chairman of a committee which was charged with investigating the collection of customs duties. Its labors included an investigation of the New York, Boston, and other custom houses, the tricks of evasion, the rules and regulations of classifying and appraising imports, and the means of detecting frauds. His committee reported a bill which became law and effected a complete revision of the customs regulations.

Senator Allison's name is connected with a compromise silver bill which, whatever embarrassment it caused the Treasury, had at least the merit of preventing free coinage at a time when European countries were ready to dispose of their silver. He could hardly be supposed, in 1878, to know that silver was destined to run a wilder course in the next twenty years than it had in the previous two centuries. He held that not to use silver would work a hardship and an injustice upon the debtor class, that free coinage would place the United States upon a silver basis and bring a train of disastrous results, and that the growth of population, the increased volume of business, and the contraction of the national bank notes due to the payment of the national debt obligated the government to supply

more money. Hence he favored the limited coinage of silver, the seigniorage going to the government; and, since there was a great volume of legal-tender money abroad, he thought that we could secure an international agreement to fix the value of silver provided we made it clear that European countries had no prospect of profit by our undertaking the free coinage of silver alone. He supported with hesitation the Sherman Silver Act of 1890, and three years later was active in securing its repeal. President Harrison made him chairman of the American delegation to the Brussels international conference in 1892, to secure bimetallism. Finally he supported the adoption of the gold standard in 1900.

A public career as long as Senator Allison's gives an opportunity for captious flings at its inconsistencies. Changes of opinion can be defended on the honorable ground that the lessons of experience justify abandoning any *a priori* position, though one may suspect that the murmurs of the multitude were quite as impressive as any empirical teachings. Senator Allison voted for the prodigal land grants to the railroads, which were not the least important events of the overcrowded sixties. He supported the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 — though pointing out some of the legal difficulties which it later encountered — and helped to clear up the ambiguities from which the original bill suffered. In 1906 he had an active part in steering the Hepburn Act through the Senate. It is significant that a

man who was not shocked by the vicious lobbying which attended the passage of the land grant to the Northern Pacific Railroad could, nearly forty years later, enjoy the confidence of President Roosevelt during the passage of the Hepburn Act.

Soon after entering the Senate, Allison was made chairman of a committee which was instructed to investigate the government of the District of Columbia and make recommendations. A bill was reported which was accepted by Congress and the President, reorganizing the finances of the District and fixing the form of government which still exists with only minor changes.

Senator Allison became chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs in 1875, which he held until 1881. As chairman of a commission appointed to treat with the Sioux Indians, he made two recommendations which became the fundamental principles of the Indian policy adopted twelve years later: the legal establishment of private property among the Indians, and more generous provision for their education.

In 1881 he was made chairman of the Committee on Appropriations of which he had been a member for eleven years, and he served as chairman during the next quarter of a century. Besides this, when he died he held second place on the Committee on Finance and was a member of the Senate steering committee. Other honors were offered him. Garfield, Harrison, and McKinley wanted him to be

Secretary of the Treasury, but he declined. McKinley earnestly solicited him to accept the vice-presidential nomination in 1900, but he preferred to remain in the Senate. And the last special mark of respect and confidence which he received was a place on the commission sent to Europe in 1908, to study banking systems. Ill health prevented his going, and before the summer passed he died.

The career of Senator Allison does not easily lend itself to appraisal. He was usually a moderate tariff man, yet he is credited with being the author of the indefensible tin-plate schedules of the McKinley tariff. He was reported to have sneered at Hayes's idea of civil service reform in 1876, but in 1888, Hayes, whose first choice was Sherman, thought Allison an especially good man for President. He voted to pass a river and harbor bill over President Arthur's veto, but his careful scrutiny trimmed many a vicious item from appropriation bills. In 1871, when he was running for the United States Senate, his friends could represent him as a supporter of Grant's administration, while at the same time he had the favor of the liberals in the party. Eastern Republicans regarded him and his Western friends in 1888 as dangerous on account of their opposition to the railroads to which they had previously voted generous land grants; yet twenty years later he died, an acknowledged conservative and a trusted counselor of President Roosevelt. Senator R. F. Pettigrew has declared him to be a tool of the

railroad interests, ever slipping into conference reports the provisions his masters desired; yet he enjoyed the confidence of the people of Iowa through a long period of many upheavals. He numbered among his friends Garfield and Conkling, Dolliver and Aldrich.

Perhaps in actual government men do not differ as widely as the public would have them. Senator Allison's methods and appearance were well calculated to lessen rather than aggravate differences of opinions. In 1863, he was described as mild and gentle, well-dressed and handsome, smoking constantly and chatting easily. In 1879, playing the rôle of a gentle peacemaker between contending factions was a natural faculty. In 1886, years but added dignity to a graceful figure distinguished by brown eyes and dark brown hair. Such a person must have taken the sharp edge off many a give-and-take in committee room and Senate chamber.

It is characteristic of Allison's public labor that he was so long engaged in the prosaic task of explaining items of appropriation bills. There is nothing to excite the popular imagination in explaining the need of increasing the allowance for salaries in an assay office, of supplying the deficiency for building a post-office in a remote town, and of repairing the locks in a canal. Such, however, was the work of Senator Allison throughout a whole generation. Such also is a large part of governmental activities. "It is well known to Senators," said Allison on the

occasion of the death of Orville H. Platt, "though not apparent often to the general public, that there is a large amount of what might be called 'drudgery work' necessary to be done in the committees and in the Senate, which is very important but not of such general public interest as to attract the attention of the country. This work must be done by those competent and faithful in the discharge of their public duties."

That statement is a fitting summary and eulogy of his own life. There is something singularly impressive in visioning him explaining hundreds of paragraphs of tax bills in the late sixties, and watching him through the sweep of forty years performing the same arduous labor. In the evening of life he could still toss off a day's work with an ease and rapidity which amazed younger men. Like Burke he knew much "of public industry in its exertions". Carrying on the government was his profession.

VERNON COOPER

Presidential Hopes

“I think no other person ever came so near the Presidency of the United States, and missed it.” Thus wrote Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts in his *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, referring to the failure of Senator William B. Allison of Iowa to secure the Republican nomination for the presidency in the convention of 1888. While the statement is not historically accurate, it indicates that the best opportunity an Iowan ever had to secure the presidency of the United States was lost.

The candidacy of Senator Allison for the Republican nomination was formally launched at the State convention held in the Grand Opera House at Des Moines on March 21 and 22, 1888. Assembled there were the Republican leaders of the State, old and young, filled with enthusiasm for Allison. To the brilliant young orator from Fort Dodge, Jonathan P. Dolliver, was assigned the honor of acting as temporary chairman, and in that capacity delivering the keynote speech of the convention.

Without delay Dolliver announced that it was the purpose of the Republicans of Iowa to present “the name of a representative western statesman — William B. Allison” — as a candidate for the presidential nomination. He then delivered a stirring eulogy of Iowa’s “favorite son”, referring to his

long record of a quarter of a century in Washington. Dolliver made it clear that it was necessary for the Republicans to nominate a man who could unite the various factions of the party, and who could also bring together the farm and the factory "in a common fight for the national prosperity." "Such a man," declared the orator, "is Wm. B. Allison, the log cabin student of Ohio — the statesman of Iowa."

Later in the day, after the convention had been permanently organized, a report of the resolutions committee was brought in, formally presenting the name of Allison to the Republicans of the country "not from a feeling of State pride, but from the profound conviction that we are acting in obedience to an obligation now resting upon the Republicans everywhere, to urge the selection only of the strongest and best candidate". The resolution was adopted with "tremendous cheers". That night an enthusiastic ratifying meeting was held, and an Allison brigade was organized to attend the National Republican Convention in Chicago.

During the three months intervening before the national convention the Allison campaign was pushed in other States. By the end of April, Allison supporters were confident that the Northwest would be very solid for him, and hope was expressed that Illinois and New York would support him "at the right time". But long before the time set for the convention it was evident that none of the "favorite sons", who had been put forward by their respective

States, would have the majority necessary to secure the nomination.

In view of this situation, the Iowans transferred their activities to Chicago. For about a week before the convention was due to open, that city was "alive with President-makers". Among these were many of the Iowa delegates and others who were present to aid in lining up delegates from other States in support of the Allison candidacy. The Iowa headquarters were established at the Grand Pacific Hotel in a large room, profusely decorated with flags and pictures of Allison. In one corner was a stand where visiting Iowans could obtain Allison badges.

The Iowa delegation had been selected with care and included men of influence and ability. Among the more prominent of them were Senator James F. Wilson, W. P. Hepburn, David B. Henderson, John W. Stone, George D. Perkins, and J. S. Clarkson. Assisting them in the work of organizing the Allison forces were many volunteer workers, including such men as John H. Gear, Jacob Rich, and Charles Beardsley. From all parts of Iowa came individuals and groups eager to help the Allison cause. It was estimated that on the opening day of the convention there were a thousand Iowans in Chicago. The largest delegation came from Dubuque, which was Allison's home city. Accompanying this delegation there were said to be about two hundred Democrats who were as anxious as the Republicans to see Allison nominated.

Nothing was left undone by the Allison managers that would help to create sentiment in favor of the Iowa candidate. On June 19, 1888, the convention began its sessions, and that night the Allison Club staged a street parade for the purpose of stirring up enthusiasm. Under the leadership of Colonel W. H. Thrift, about twelve hundred men formed in marching order at the Iowa headquarters. In the line was the Dubuque Allison Club with about four hundred marchers including the Decorah Drum Corps, the Corn Palace Club of Sioux City with the Knights of Pythias band, and the Des Moines Club with two hundred members present.

The line of march followed Van Buren, State, Madison, Dearborn, Lake, Clark, and Randolph streets to Michigan Avenue, then to Harrison and Clark streets and back to the Grand Pacific Hotel. During the march, the paraders passed through the Palmer House and the Tremont House and past Battery D and the Leland Hotel, where the headquarters of other delegations were established. At each of these places they were greeted cordially, while loud cheers marked their progress along the streets. The parading men, with their Allison banners, presented a fine appearance, and were "generally admired for their excellent marching".

It was not until the afternoon of the third day of the convention that the nomination of candidates began. First the name of Walter Q. Gresham of Indiana was presented by the Illinois delegation, and

this was followed by the action of Indiana in putting forward Benjamin Harrison. At three forty-five o'clock the roll call proceeded and Iowa was called. Amidst loud cheering, W. P. Hepburn took the platform and for about half an hour he was the center of attraction. After praising the Republican party, he stated that his State had instructed him to place before the convention the name of William B. Allison. The mention of Allison's name was the signal for a demonstration. The Iowa delegation stood, while there was loud cheering in the galleries as well as on the floor.

After this interruption, Hepburn proceeded to point out that Iowa had not once in thirty-four years wavered in its support of Republicanism. He praised the record of Allison which was written in the national legislation for the past quarter of a century. Continued cheering greeted his assertion that Allison would not be found returning rebel flags. Allison, declared Hepburn, would not usurp legislative functions "by a reckless and wanton use of the veto power", nor would he be guilty of urging home rule for Ireland and at the same time consent to the disfranchisement of six hundred thousand American citizens by keeping the Territory of Dakota out of the Union. If nominated and elected, Allison would be "true to country and the principles of our party", said Hepburn, in the conclusion of his speech.

When Hepburn had finished there was loud cheer-

ing for several minutes led by the Iowans, who were joined by delegates from Maryland and the Territories. The roll call then proceeded and other candidates were presented to the convention before adjournment for the day.

On the morning of June 22, 1888, the fourth day of the convention, the balloting began. On the first ballot thirteen men received votes, the highest number going to John Sherman of Ohio. Next came Walter Q. Gresham of Indiana, followed in order by Chauncey M. Depew of New York, R. A. Alger of Michigan, Benjamin Harrison of Indiana, and William B. Allison of Iowa who received seventy-two votes. His chief support came from Iowa, Rhode Island, and Tennessee, but he received scattering support from thirteen other delegations. Two additional ballots were taken that day, Allison receiving seventy-five and eighty-eight votes respectively.

The balloting was resumed on the following morning but without any decisive result. On the fourth ballot Allison again received eighty-eight votes, but on the fifth his total mounted to ninety-nine. It was evident that the deadlock would continue so the convention adjourned until four o'clock in the afternoon, but as it was Saturday balloting was not resumed and further action was deferred until the following Monday.

Immediately after the adjournment at noon on June 23rd, a meeting of representatives of the vari-

ous delegations was called in a room adjoining the convention hall to see if they could agree on a candidate. Senator George F. Hoar was present with authority from the Massachusetts delegation to support either Allison or Harrison. Clarkson of Iowa was present to support Allison, while the representatives of the Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Illinois delegations were authorized to support any candidate whom they saw fit. Other representatives promised that the delegations from their States would abide by the decision of the conference. The New York delegation had promised to support any candidate agreed upon by their delegates at large — Thomas C. Platt, Warner Miller, Frank Hiscock, and Chauncey M. Depew.

At the conference several names were discussed and then Senator Hoar made an earnest plea for the selection of Allison. Finally it was agreed by the representatives present that their States would vote for Allison, but the promise of New York to do so hinged on securing the consent of Depew who was not present at the meeting. No one doubted that he would agree, and all felt, when the meeting ended, that Allison would be nominated.

But shortly before the convention was to resume business another meeting was called to make certain that there would be no obstruction of the plans. To the consternation of all, the New York representatives announced that they could not fulfill their promise to deliver the New York delegation to Alli-

son because Depew would not consent to it. Depew, who had withdrawn from the race, took the attitude that his failure to secure more support in the convention had been due to the opposition of the agrarian element led by Iowa. He was president of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad and for this reason was regarded with hostility by the agricultural interests which were reputed to be Allison's strongest backers.

It was plainly evident that Depew was nettled by his failure to secure the nomination and that he was determined to avenge himself at the expense of Allison. While he yielded to the anti-railroad group so far as to withdraw from the race himself, "he would not so far submit to such an unreasonable and socialistic sentiment as to give his consent that it should dictate a candidate for the Republican Party". This determination proved to be fatal for Allison's hopes. Had New York supported him, he would also have secured the votes of California, Iowa, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and perhaps Missouri — enough to assure him of the nomination.

When the seventh ballot was taken on Monday morning, June 25th, it was evident that the nomination of Allison was hopeless. He received only seventy-six votes while Harrison received two hundred and seventy-eight, Sherman two hundred and thirty-one, Alger one hundred and twenty, and Gresham ninety-one. The Iowa delegation realized

the uselessness of prolonging the contest, so after the seventh ballot had been concluded, David B. Henderson secured the floor and withdrew Allison's name. This was a signal for various delegations to cast their votes for Harrison who, on the eighth ballot, received five hundred and forty-four votes — more than the required majority.

Allison's defeat in 1888 did not cause him to give up the hope of being President. As the election of 1896 approached, sentiment began to develop in favor of him as a candidate for the Republican nomination. A great impetus was given to the Allison boom by the Republican State Convention which met in Des Moines on March 11, 1896. It was an enthusiastic Allison convention from beginning to end.

History repeated itself on this occasion, for Jonathan P. Dolliver was again the temporary chairman and again delivered the keynote speech as he had eight years before. For over an hour he spoke amid frequent applause in praise of Allison and his record. In conclusion, he said:

“No man has been proposed for the nomination whose election would not bring honor to the chief office of the people, but among all the illustrious men who are presented for the favor of the party in this year of hope and victory, not one outranks in ripened preparation for its duties, the unassuming leader of republicanism in Iowa, whose name is on the lips and in the hearts of all our people to-day.”

Following the permanent organization of the convention the resolutions committee brought in its report, formally presenting Allison to the Republican party of the country as a candidate for the presidential nomination. His long record and demonstrated ability were dwelt upon, and his acquaintance with the tariff, financial matters, and foreign affairs was especially stressed. The resolutions concluded: "Strong in every mental, moral and personal quality, strong in his industry and capacity to labor, strong in his firmness and conscientiousness of opinion, strong in his freedom from extremes and sectionalism, strong in a long record of unerring judgment as to public measures, strong in his universal reputation for conservatism and soundness and safety, the republicans of Iowa present him to the party and the nation as the ideal candidate." On the motion of Governor Francis M. Drake that the resolutions be adopted unanimously, everyone in the hall arose and "the cheers that rang throughout the convention hall were gigantic in magnitude."

But the enthusiasm shown for Allison in Iowa was not duplicated in other States. Sentiment throughout the Republican party crystallized rapidly in favor of William McKinley of Ohio. On May 4, 1896, the McKinley headquarters issued a statement claiming five hundred and five delegates, with only four hundred and fifty-six necessary for the nomination.

In spite of the claims of the McKinley forces,

Allison refused to withdraw and his name was presented to the National Republican Convention at St. Louis on June 18, 1896, by John N. Baldwin of Council Bluffs. Only one ballot was necessary, for McKinley received six hundred and sixty-one and a half votes. Thomas B. Reed of Maine received eighty-three and a half votes, M. S. Quay of Pennsylvania sixty-one and a half votes, Levi P. Morton of New York fifty-five votes, while Allison was last with thirty-five and a half votes. This defeat ended Allison's hopes of becoming President of the United States.

ERIK MCKINLEY ERIKSSON

Young Men for Old

Few men have had the privilege of being intimately connected with the political history of Iowa for the span of half a century. Yet this is the distinction achieved by William B. Allison whose political career began with his appointment as military aide to Governor Kirkwood in 1861 and ended with his death as United States Senator in 1908 — a period of forty-seven years of practically continuous public service.

Having served four terms in Congress as Representative it was not unnatural that Mr. Allison should aspire to a seat in the United States Senate — an ambition which led him to enter into an unsuccessful contest for the office in 1870. But no sooner was this election over than plans were made for the struggle that would occur two years later when a successor to Senator James Harlan would be chosen. Even at this early time, Allison, somewhat against his own inclinations, was urged by his friends to again enter a race in which he had so recently been defeated. The actual campaign, however, did not claim public attention until the summer of 1871 — but from then until the end of the struggle in January, 1872, a contest ensued between the supporters of the two candidates which is known as one of the most spectacular in the history of Iowa.

The Harlan-Allison campaign was primarily one of personalities — a struggle that “teemed with bitter and abusive personal attacks.” Indeed, it appears from an examination of the records that no event in the lives of the contestants was considered too trivial for exploitation as political capital. This was particularly true in regard to Senator Harlan, and although most of the charges against him were disproved or without any foundation they furnished his opponents with ammunition which had a distinctly harmful effect upon his campaign. According to one account the Republicans of Iowa seemed “eager for a pretext to transfer their allegiance”.

Senator Harlan had seen much of public service and was getting on in years. In fact, the argument was used in the campaign that he had for nearly twenty years lived almost entirely in Washington — as Senator and Secretary of the Interior — and was therefore too far out of touch with “the spirit and needs of the people of Iowa to represent them faithfully”. On the other hand Mr. Allison — a man in the early prime of life though not without experience — lived in that section of the State which had never had a Senator in Congress. In a narrow sense the northern part of Iowa had not been adequately represented, for even the State officers up to that time had most generally lived in the southern portion of the State. Thus sectionalism in its most provincial form entered the political arena.

One of the high lights of the campaign was “an

insidious attempt" to lessen Senator Harlan's chances in the election by appealing to "sectarian prejudice". It appears that some doubt had arisen in the minds of certain members of the Methodist clergy as to the Senator's standing in the church and in response to an inquiry Dr. John P. Newman, pastor of the church that Mr. Harlan attended in Washington, wrote a personal letter to an Iowa minister which was intended to give the Senator a "clean bill of health". Moreover, the letter urged that he be given proper support in the coming contest. Unfortunately this letter came into the possession of the editor of the Dubuque *Herald*, a Democratic organ, and was given considerable publicity.

It was a favorite partisan assertion that the "Newman Letter" had been lithographed and sent to Methodist clergy all over the State in an attempt to "array the membership of the Methodist church solidly under the Harlan banner". Both Mr. Newman and the Senator denied the charge, but the wave of indignation seemed only to increase. The newspapers discussed the matter — with considerable heat if not much light — and by sheer persistency tended to prejudice the people against Mr. Harlan.

Both candidates, having held public office, were criticized on the basis of their records: both were accused of official corruption and of using their positions not as a public trust but as a means of personal gain. It was alleged that Harlan had been the cause of a gigantic steal from the government through a

padding of the pension roll; that Allison while a member of Congress had used his influence to get a subsidy for a railroad in which he was a stockholder. Harlan was accused of using his franking privilege to distribute campaign literature in his own behalf; Allison was said to hold free-trade ideas. If there had been only a modicum of truth in the array of charges and counter-charges neither candidate was entitled to the vote of any honest man.

Throughout the campaign partisanship was tuned to the highest pitch and the candidate with the longer public record proved the better sounding board. As one writer put it "the powerful malcontents" were "not Allison men in any strict sense" but were "simply and hotly anti-Harlan."

Following the general election, however, in which the State went overwhelmingly Republican the contest rather narrowed its scope — every effort being made to influence the newly elected legislators. The campaign was nearing its close. Both sides in the struggle held numerous conferences and caucuses previous to the meeting of the General Assembly. The Savery Hotel in Des Moines teemed with political activity.

The Republican senatorial caucus was held on the night of January 10th — the third day of the session of the Fourteenth General Assembly. Sixty-one votes were necessary for a choice. On the informal ballot Allison received sixty votes, Harlan thirty-eight, and James F. Wilson twenty-two. The first

formal ballot gave Allison fifty-nine and Harlan forty-two, but on the second formal ballot Allison received two votes more than necessary.

Thus the long drawn-out contest came to an end. At the joint convention of the two houses on January 17, 1872, the decision of the Republican caucus was ratified. William B. Allison became one of the United States Senators from Iowa on March 4, 1873 — a position which he held continuously until the day of his death on August 4, 1908.

No man in the history of this Commonwealth has ever received the "long continued and almost universal support and confidence of his constituents" as did Senator Allison. The severe and bitter contest with Senator Harlan appears to have exhausted all concerted opposition to him. Indeed, with each succeeding election after 1872 until the campaign just before his death the dissenting voices against him dwindled in number. Even party lines practically disappeared in 1896 when he was the unanimous choice of the Republicans of Iowa as well as of a majority of the rival camp.

Although he had been reëlected to the Senate almost without opposition upon five different occasions, Mr. Allison was, during the campaign of 1908, confronted by an opponent who made it necessary for the supporters of the Senator to put forth every effort in his behalf. The Allison-Cummins contest became in some respects the replica of the one between Harlan and Allison thirty-five years earlier.

There was, however, a very striking difference between the two campaigns in that the latter brought the claims of the rival candidates directly before the people. This was due to the fact that the people of the State were to have their first opportunity in June, 1908, to nominate party candidates at a direct primary election. So the campaign resolved itself into an elaborate and thorough-going attempt to win popular support by means of public speeches in all of the principal cities and towns of the State.

The campaign opened at Council Bluffs on November 25, 1907, when Senator Allison's colleague, Jonathan P. Dolliver, in the course of a public address declared that Governor Cummins was in reality debarred from entering the race. It appears that when Mr. Cummins desired the support of the Allison faction in his campaign for the governorship in 1906 he had written a letter to William H. Torbert stating that he was "not a candidate for Senator Allison's place". Thus was the "Torbert Letter", like the "Newman Letter", injected into the contest — a document concerning which each side in the controversy made its own interpretation.

Governor Cummins formally announced his candidacy on December 15, 1907, when he "emphatically denied" that he had ever promised not to be a contestant against Senator Allison. It is one thing not to be a candidate at a particular time and quite another to promise "never to be". According to one editor, however, the whole controversy was with-

out point since no such promise could be considered "binding upon the people of the State of Iowa."

As in the Harlan-Allison campaign considerable political capital was made of the inability of the incumbent to properly represent the people — in this instance because of his "age and comparative feebleness". On the other hand the younger aspirant "was charged with unscrupulous ambition". So the battle of words continued up to the very eve of the primary.

Both sides in the campaign for the Republican nomination of United States Senator entered the election on June 2, 1908, confident of victory at the hands of the voters. But when the election was over and the ballots were counted it was found that "age and experience" had been vindicated — William B. Allison had been nominated by a majority of ten thousand six hundred and thirty-five votes. And a Republican nomination invariably meant election.

The people's wishes were overruled, however, for on August 4th Senator Allison died. Sorrow was universal. But following a brief period of hushed silence the political machinery began to move again and speculation was rife as to what Governor Cummins would do.

In this matter there appeared to be three courses open to the Governor: he could make a temporary appointment and take his chances with the legislature when it met in January; or he could resign with the understanding that his successor would

appoint him Senator; or he could call a special session of the General Assembly to settle the difficulty. The latter alternative was selected and in response to an executive proclamation the legislature met in special session on the thirty-first of August and proceeded at once to the business at hand.

First of all the primary election law was amended. The new statute made it possible for a second primary to be held on the day of the regular election for the purpose of filling any vacancy that might arise among the nominees for United States Senator—providing the vacancy should occur after the regular primary but more than thirty days prior to the general election. The legislature then proceeded to the task of filling the existing vacancy and on September 8th began to ballot. No candidate could muster a majority, although Cummins was in the lead. Finally the legislature decided to adjourn until after the people had had an opportunity to express their choice at the special primary.

The voters decided the question with characteristic emphasis on November 3rd by recording for Governor Cummins a majority of over forty-two thousand. Accordingly, the General Assembly ratified the choice of the people, and Albert B. Cummins went to Washington to occupy the seat of William B. Allison in the United States Senate.

GEO. F. ROBESON

Comment by the Editor

THE CONSERVATIVE

In the spectrum of social attitudes there is no sharp line of demarcation between radicalism, liberalism, conservatism, and reaction. Each merges into another by imperceptible shades; so that it is quite impossible to say in respect to any idea, here liberalism ends and conservatism begins. The same observation applies as aptly to individuals as to society. A man may hold radical views about the coinage of money and be reactionary toward scientific dogma: he may be red in his attitude on some subjects and yet be yellow, green, or blue with respect to others.

Nevertheless, to recognize the gradations in social opinions is not to deny their separate existence, any more than the spectral phenomenon annihilates colors. Each habitual attitude has definite characteristics of its own. Conservatism is traditionally a philosophy of status quo. If Alexander Pope believed "whatever is, is right", he was a conservative, for he had faith in things as they are. Conservatives are contented people, and insofar as they have been successful in the pursuit of happiness they will resist change. Their attitude is essentially negative. Like the Supreme Court, they are deferential to usage and

custom — opposed to doing anything for the first time. A heavy protective tariff is levied on new ideas at all conservative ports.

A conservative is not stupid or lacking in vision. Seneca's denunciation of waterworks for Rome and the American notion in 1840 that bathtubs were undemocratic and ought to be taxed were reactionary, not conservative. The conservative will consider innovations but is inclined to follow the advice of St. Paul: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Natural selection, rather than mutation, is the technique of conservatism.

Senator Allison had a conservative mind — calm, sane, cautious. It is said of him that he refused to admit there were no black sheep in a flock because he could not see the other side of them. He thought in terms of facts rather than idealistic generalizations: he preferred statistics to plausible assumptions. The path of duty commanded all of his attention, and there was apparently no inclination to indulge in dreamy, sidelong glances to the horizon of speculative possibilities. Even in his youth, when men are supposed to be radical if ever, he was not a reformer; while as an old man he was not reactionary. Always a conservative, he seems to be an exception to Emerson's rule that "we are reformers in spring and summer; in autumn and winter we stand by the old; reformers in the morning, conservatives at night."

J. E. B.

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