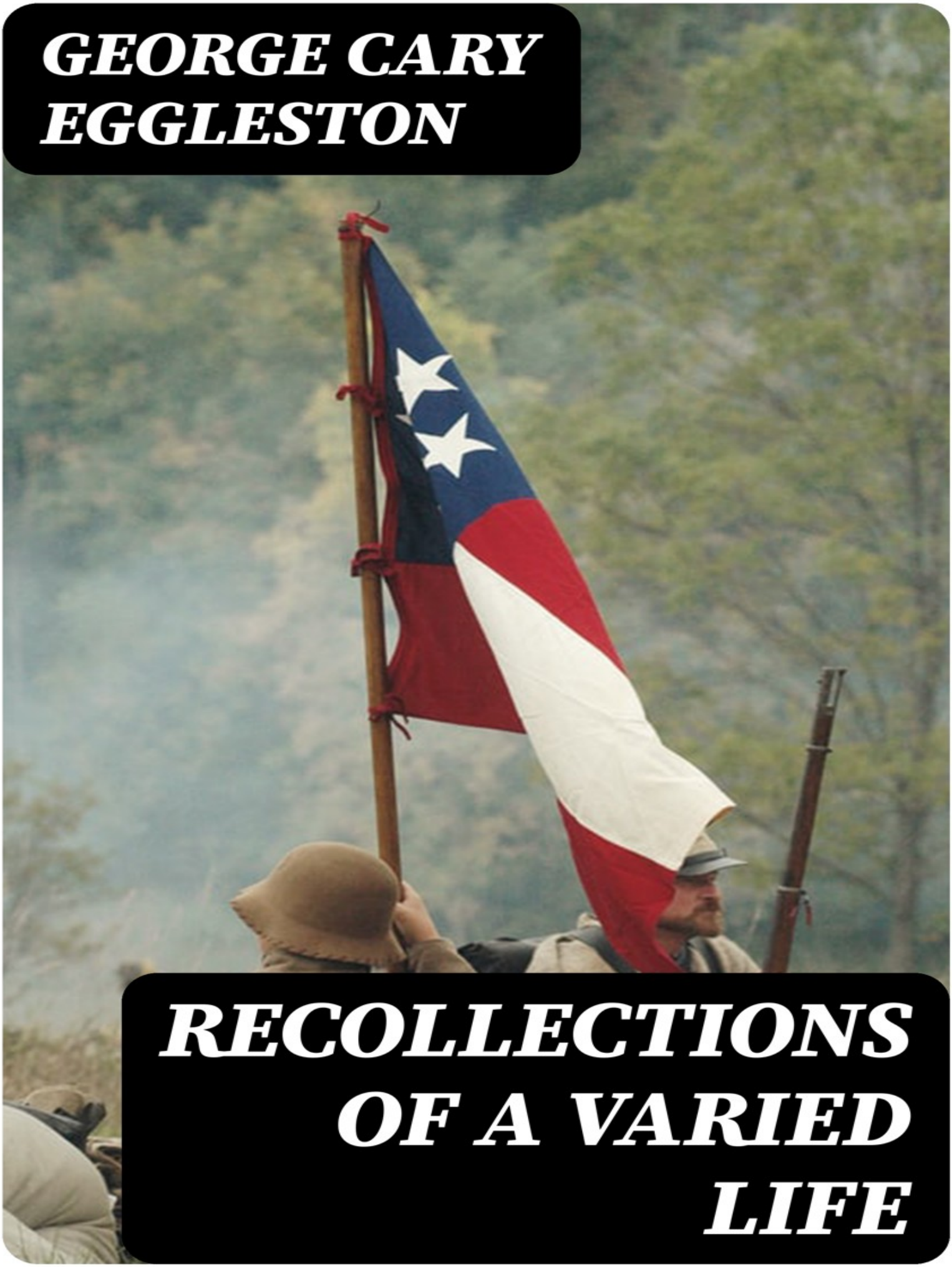
GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON



RECOLLECTIONS OF A VARIED LIFE

George Cary Eggleston

Recollections of a Varied Life

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Mr. Howells once said to me: "Every man's life is interesting—to himself."

I suppose that is true, though in the cases of some men it seems a difficult thing to understand.

At any rate it is not because of personal interest in my own life that I am writing this book. I was perfectly sincere in wanting to call these chapters "The Autobiography of an Unimportant Man," but on reflection I remembered Franklin's wise saying that whenever he saw the phrase "without vanity I may say," some peculiarly vain thing was sure to follow.

I am seventy years old. My life has been one of unusually varied activity. It has covered half the period embraced in the republic's existence. It has afforded me opportunity to see and share that development of physical, intellectual, and moral life conditions, which has been perhaps the most marvelous recorded in the history of mankind.

Incidentally to the varied activities and accidents of my life, I have been brought into contact with many interesting men, and into relation with many interesting events. It is of these chiefly that I wish to write, and if I were minded to offer an excuse for this book's existence, this would be the marrow of it. But a book that needs excuse is inexcusable. I make no apology. I am writing of the men and things I remember, because I wish to do so, because my publisher wishes it, and because he and I think that others will be interested in the result. We shall see, later, how that is.

This will be altogether a good-humored book. I have no grudges to gratify, no revenges to wreak, no debts of wrath to repay in cowardly ways; and if I had I should put them all aside as unworthy. I have found my fellow-men in the main kindly, just, and generous. The chief pleasure I have had in living has been derived from my association with them in good-fellowship and all kindliness. The very few of them who have wronged me, I have forgiven. The few who have been offensive to me, I have forgotten, with conscientiously diligent care. There has seemed to me no better thing to do with them.

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It is difficult for any one belonging to this modern time to realize the conditions of life in this country in the eighteen-forties, the period at which my recollection begins.

The country at that time was all American. The great tides of immigration which have since made it the most cosmopolitan of countries, had not set in. Foreigners among us were so few that they were regarded with a great deal of curiosity, some contempt, and not a little pity. Even in places like my native town of Vevay, Indiana, which had been settled by a company of Swiss immigrants at the beginning of the century, the feeling was strong that to be foreign was to be inferior. Those who survived of the original

Swiss settlers were generously tolerated as unfortunates grown old, and on that account entitled to a certain measure of respectful deference in spite of their taint.

The Lure of New Orleans

To us in the West, at least, all foreigners whose mother tongue was other than English were "Dutchmen." There is reason to believe that this careless and inattentive grouping prevailed in other parts of the country as well as in the West. Why, otherwise, were the German speaking people of Pennsylvania and the mountain regions south universally known as "Pennsylvania Dutch?"

And yet, in spite of the prevailing conviction that everything foreign was inferior, the people of the Ohio valley—who constituted the most considerable group of Western Americans—looked with unapproving but ardent admiration upon foreign life, manners, and ways of thinking as these were exemplified in New Orleans.

In that early time, when the absence of bridges, the badness of roads, and the primitive character of vehicular devices so greatly emphasized overland distances, New Orleans was the one great outlet and inlet of travel and traffic for all the region beyond the mountain barrier that made the East seem as remote as far Cathay. Thither the people of the West sent the produce of their orchards and their fields to find a market; thence came the goods sold in the "stores," and the very money—Spanish and French silver coins—that served as a circulating medium. The men who annually voyaged thither on flat-boats, brought back wondering tales of the strange things seen there, and especially of the enormous wickedness encountered among

a people who had scarcely heard of the religious views accepted among ourselves as unquestioned and unquestionable truth. I remember hearing a whole sermon on the subject once. The preacher had taken alarm over the eagerness young men showed to secure employment as "hands" on flat-boats for the sake of seeing the wonderful city where buying and selling on the Sabbath excited no comment. He feared contamination of the youth of the land, and with a zeal that perhaps outran discretion, he urged God-fearing merchants to abandon the business of shipping the country's produce to market, declaring that he had rather see all of it go to waste than risk the loss of a single young man's soul by sending him to a city so unspeakably wicked that he confidently expected early news of its destruction after the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The "power of preaching" was well-nigh measureless in that time and region, but so were the impulses of "business," and I believe the usual number of flat-boats were sent out from the little town that year. The merchants seemed to "take chances" of the loss of souls when certain gain was the stake on the other side, a fact which strongly suggests that human nature in that time and country was very much the same in its essentials as human nature in all other times and countries.

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A Travel Center

The remoteness of the different parts of the country from each other in those days is difficult to understand, or even fairly to imagine nowadays. For all purposes of civilization remoteness is properly measured, not by miles, but by the difficulty of travel and intercourse. It was in recognition of this that the founders of the Republic gave to Congress authority to establish "post offices and post roads," and that their successors lavished money upon endeavor to render human intercourse easier, speedier, and cheaper by the construction of the national road, by the digging of canals, and by efforts to improve the postal service. In my early boyhood none of these things had come upon us. There were no railroads crossing the Appalachian chain of mountains, and no wagon roads that were better than tracks over ungraded hills and quagmire trails through swamps and morasses. Measured by ease of access, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore were at a greater distance from the dwellers in the West than Hong Kong or Singapore is now, while Boston was remoter than the mountains of the moon.

There were no telegraphs available to us; the mails were irregular, uncertain, and unsafe. The wagons, called stagecoaches, that carried them, were subject to capture and looting at the hands of robber bands who infested many parts of the country, having their headquarters usually at some town where roads converged and lawlessness reigned supreme.

One such town was Napoleon, Indiana. In illustration of its character an anecdote was related in my boyhood. A

man from the East made inquiry in Cincinnati concerning routes to various points in the Hoosier State, and beyond.

"If I want to go to Indianapolis, what road do I take?" he asked.

"Why, you go to Napoleon, and take the road northwest."

"If I want to go to Madison?"

"Go to Napoleon, and take the road southwest."

"Suppose I want to go to St. Louis?"

"Why, you go to Napoleon, and take the national road west."

And so on, through a long list, with Napoleon as the starting point of each reply. At last the man asked in despair:

"Well now, stranger, suppose I wanted to go to Hell?"

The stranger answered without a moment's hesitation, "Oh, in that case, just go to Napoleon, and stay there."

That is an episode, as the reader has probably discovered. To return to the mails. It was not until 1845, and after long agitation, that the rate on letters was reduced to five cents for distances less than three hundred miles, and ten cents for greater distances. Newspaper postage was relatively even higher.

The result of these conditions was that each quarter of the country was shut out from everything like free communication with the other quarters. Each section was isolated. Each was left to work out its own salvation as best it might, without aid, without consultation, without the chastening or the stimulation of contact and attrition. Each region cherished its own prejudices, its own dialect, its own ways of living, its own overweening self-consciousness of

superiority to all the rest, its own narrow bigotries, and its own suspicious contempt of everything foreign to itself.

In brief, we had no national life in the eighteen-forties, or for long afterwards,—no community of thought, or custom, or attitude of mind. The several parts of the country were a loose bundle of segregated and, in many ways, antagonistic communities, bound together only by a common loyalty to the conviction that this was the greatest, most glorious, most invincible country in the world, God-endowed with a mental, moral, and physical superiority that put all the rest of earth's nations completely out of the reckoning. We were all of us Americans—intense, self-satisfied, self-glorifying Americans—but we had little else in common. We did not know each other. We had been bred in radically different ways. We had different ideals, different conceptions of life, different standards of conduct, different ways of living, different traditions, and different aspirations. The country was provincial to the rest of the world, and still more narrowly provincial each region to the others.

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The Composite West

I think, however, that the West was less provincial, probably, and less narrow in its views and sympathies than

were New England, the Middle States, and the South at that time, and this for a very sufficient reason.

The people in New England rarely came into contact with those of the Middle and Southern States, and never with those of the West. The people of the Middle States and those of the South were similarly shut within themselves, having scarcely more than an imaginary acquaintance with the dwellers in other parts of the country. The West was a common meeting ground where men from New England, the Middle States, and the South Atlantic region constituted a varied population, representative of all the rest of the country, and dwelling together in so close a unity that each group adopted many of the ways and ideas of the other groups, and correspondingly modified its own. These were first steps taken toward homogeneity in the West, such as were taken in no other part of the country in that time of little travel and scanty intercourse among men. The Virginians, Carolinians, and New Englanders who had migrated to the West learned to make and appreciate the apple butter and the sauerkraut of the Pennsylvanians; the pie of New England found favor with Southerners in return for their hoecake, hominy, chine, and spareribs. And as with material things, so also with things of the mind. Customs were blended, usages were borrowed and modified, opinions were fused together into new forms, and speech was wrought into something different from that which any one group had known—a blend, better, richer, and more forcible than any of its constituent parts had been.

In numbers the Virginians, Kentuckians, and Carolinians were a strong majority in the West, and the so-called

"Hoosier dialect," which prevailed there, was nearly identical with that of the Virginian mountains, Kentucky, and the rural parts of Carolina. But it was enriched with many terms and forms of speech belonging to other sections. Better still, it was chastened by the influence of the small but very influential company of educated men and women who had come from Virginia and Kentucky, and by the strenuous labors in behalf of good English of the Yankee school-ma'ams, who taught us by precept to make our verbs agree with their nominatives, and, per contra, by unconscious example to say "doo," "noo," and the like, for "dew," "new," etc.

The prevalence of the dialect among the uneducated classes was indeed, though indirectly, a ministry to the cause of good English. The educated few, fearing contamination of their children's speech through daily contact with the ignorant, were more than usually strict in exacting correct usage at the hands of their youngsters. I very well remember how grievously it afflicted my own young soul that I was forbidden, under penalty, to say "chimbly" and "flanner" for "chimney" and "flannel," to call inferior things "ornery," to use the compromise term "'low"—abbreviation of "allow,"—which very generally took the place of the Yankee "guess" and the Southern "reckon," and above all to call tomatoes "tomatices."

It is of interest to recall the fact that this influential class of educated men and women, included some really scholarly persons, as well as a good many others who, without being scholarly, were educated and accustomed to read. Among the scholarly ones, within the purview of my memory, were

such as Judge Algernon S. Stevens, Judge Algernon S. Sullivan, Judge Miles Cary Eggleston, the Hendrickses, the Stapps, the Rev. Hiram Wason, my own father, and Mrs. Julia L. Dumont, a very brilliant woman, who taught school for love of it and wrote books that in our time would have given her something more than the provincial reputation she shared with Alice and Phœbe Cary, and some others.

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The Sturdy Kentuckians

Of still greater consequence, perhaps, so far as influence upon their time and country was concerned, were the better class of Kentuckians who had crossed the Ohio to become sharers in the future of the great Northwest.

These were mostly men of extraordinary energy—physical and mental—who had mastered what the Kentucky schoolmasters could teach them, and had made of their schooling the foundation of a broader education the dominant characteristic of which was an enlightenment of mind quite independent of scholarly acquisition.

These men were thinkers accustomed, by habit and inheritance, to look facts straight in the face, to form their own opinions untrammeled by tradition, unbiased by fine-spun equivocation, and wholly unrestrained in their search for truth by conventional hobbles of any kind. Most of them

had more or less Scotch-Irish blood in their veins, and were consequently wholesome optimists, full of courage, disposed to righteousness of life for its own sake, and resolutely bent upon the betterment of life by means of their own living.

Most of them numbered one or more Baptist or Methodist preachers among their ancestry—men of healthy minds and open ones, men to whom religion was far less a matter of emotion than of conduct, men who did the duty that lay next to them—be it plowing or praying, preaching or fighting Indians or Englishmen—with an equal mind.

Men of such descent were educated by environment in better ways than any that schools can furnish. From infancy they had lived in an atmosphere of backwoods culture,—culture drawn in part from such books as were accessible to them, and in greater part from association with the strong men who had migrated in early days to conquer the West and make of it a princely possession of the Republic.

The books they had were few, but they were the very best that English literature afforded, and they read them over and over again with diligence and intelligence until they had made their own every fecundative thought the books suggested. Then they went away, and thought for themselves, with untrammeled freedom, of the things thus presented to their minds. I have sometimes wondered if their method of education, chiefly by independent thinking, and with comparatively little reverence for mere "authority," might not have been better, in its character-building results at least, than our modern, more bookish process.

That question does not concern us now. What I wish to point out is the fact that the country owes much to the influence of these strong men of affairs and action, whose conviction that every man owes it to his fellow-men so to live that this may be a better world for other men to live in because of his having lived in it, gave that impulse to education which later made Indiana a marvel and a model to the other states in all that concerns education. Those men believed themselves and their children entitled to the best in schooling as in everything else, and from the very beginning they set out to secure it.

Early Educational Impulses

If a wandering schoolmaster came within call, they gave him a schoolhouse and a place to live in, and bade him "keep school." When he had canvassed the region round about for "scholars," and was ready—with his ox gads—to open his educational institution, the three or four of these men whose influence pervaded and dominated the region round about, said a word or two to each other, and made themselves responsible for the tuition fees of all the boys and girls in the neighborhood whose parents were too poor to pay.

In the same spirit, years later, when an effort was made to establish colleges in the state, these men or their children who had inherited their impulse, were prompt to furnish the money needed, however hard pressed they might be for money themselves. I remember that my mother—the daughter of one of the most conspicuous of the Kentuckians—when she was a young widow with four children to bring up on an income of about $250 a year,

subscribed $100 to the foundation of Indiana Asbury University, becoming, in return, the possessor of a perpetual scholarship, entitling her for all time to maintain a student there free of tuition. It was with money drawn from such sources that the colleges of Indiana were founded.

Under the influence of these Kentuckians, Virginians, and men of character who in smaller numbers had come out from New England and the Middle States, there was from the first an impulse of betterment in the very atmosphere of the West. Even the "poor whites" of the South who had migrated to the Northwest in pursuit of their traditional dream of finding a land where one might catch "two 'possums up one 'simmon tree," were distinctly uplifted by the influence of such men, not as a class, perhaps, but in a sufficient number of individual cases to raise the average level of their being. The greater number of these poor whites continued to be the good-natured, indolent, unthrifty people that their ancestors had always been. They remained content to be renters in a region where the acquisition of land in independent ownership was easy. They continued to content themselves with an inadequate cultivation of their crops, and a meager living, consequent upon their neglect. They continued to give to shooting, fishing, and rude social indulgences the time they ought to have given to work. But their children were learning to read and write, and, better still, were learning by observation the advantages of a more industrious living, and when the golden age of steamboating came, they sought and found profitable employment either upon the river or about the wharves. The majority of these were content to remain laborers, as deckhands and the like,

but in some of them at least ambition was born, and they became steamboat mates, pilots, and, in some cases, the captains and even the owners of steamboats. On the whole, I think the proportion of the class of people who thus achieved a higher status, bettering themselves in enduring ways was quite as large as it ever is in the history of an unfortunate or inferior class of men. In the generations that have followed some at least of the descendants of that "poor white" class, whose case had always been accounted hopeless, have risen to distinction in intellectual ways. One distinguished judge of our time, a man now of national reputation, is the grandson of a poor white who negligently cultivated land rented from a relative of my own. His father was my schoolmate for a season, and was accounted inferior by those of us who were more fortunately descended. So much for free institutions in a land of hope, opportunity, and liberty, where the "pursuit of happiness" and betterment was accounted an "unalienable right."

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A Poor Boy's Career

In another case that comes home to me for reasons, the betterment was more immediate. My maternal grandfather, the old Kentuckian, George Craig, whose name is preserved in many ways in the geographical nomenclature of Southern Indiana, had an abundantly large family of children. But with generously helpful intent it was his habit to adopt bright boys and girls whose parents were poverty-stricken, in order to give them such education as was available in that time and country, or, in his favorite phrase, to "give them a show in the world." One of these adopted boys was the child of parents incredibly poor. When he came to my grandfather the boy had never seen a tablecloth or slept in a bed. He knew nothing of the uses of a knife and fork. A glass tumbler was to him a wonder thing. He could neither read nor write, though he was eleven years of age. The towel given to him for use on his first introduction to the family was an inscrutable mystery until one of the negro servants explained its uses to him.

Less than a score of years later that boy was a lawyer of distinction, a man of wide influence, a state senator of unusual standing, and chairman of the committee that investigated and exposed the frauds perpetrated upon the

state in the building of the Madison and Indianapolis railroad—the first highway of its kind constructed within the state. In one sense, he owed all this to George Craig. In a truer sense he owed it to his own native ability, which George Craig was shrewd enough to discover in the uncouth and ignorant boy, and wise enough to give its opportunity.

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It was a common practice of the thrifty and well-to-do of that time, thus to adopt the children of their poorer neighbors and bring them up as members of their own families. Still more common was the practice of taking destitute orphans as "bound boys" or "bound girls." These were legally bound to service, instead of being sent to the poorhouse, but in practical effect they became members of the families to whose heads they were "bound," and shared in all respects the privileges, the schooling, and everything else that the children of the family enjoyed. They were expected to work, when there was work to be done, but so was every other member of the family, and there was never the least suggestion of servile obligation involved or implied. I remember well the affection in which my mother's "bound girls" held her and us children, and the way in which, when they came to be married, their weddings were

provided for precisely as if they had been veritable daughters of the house.

On one of those occasions it was rumored in the village, that a "shiveree"—Hoosier for charivari—was to mark the event. My father, whose Virginian reverence for womanhood and marriage and personal dignity, was prompt to resent that sort of insult, went to a neighbor and borrowed two shotguns. As he carried them homeward through the main street of the village, on the morning before the wedding, he encountered the ruffian who had planned the "shiveree," and was arranging to carry it out. The man asked him, in surprise, for my father was a studious recluse in his habits, if he were going out after game.

"Shooting Stock"

"No," my father replied. "It is only that a very worthy young woman, a member of my family, is to be married at my house to-night. I hear that certain 'lewd fellows of the baser sort' are planning to insult her and me and my family with what they call a 'shiveree.' If they do anything of the kind, *I am going to fire four charges of buckshot into the crowd*."

As my father was known to be a man who inflexibly kept his word, there was no "shiveree" that night.

That father of mine was a man of the gentlest spirit imaginable, but at the same time a man of resolute character, who scrupulously respected the rights and the dignity of others, and insistently demanded a like respect for his own. Quite episodically, but in illustration of the manners of the time, I may here intrude an incident, related to me many years afterwards by Judge Taylor, a venerable

jurist of Madison. My father was looking about him for a place in which to settle himself in the practice of law. He was temporarily staying in Madison when a client came to him. The man had been inveigled into a game of cards with some sharpers, and they had worked off some counterfeit money upon him. He purposed to sue them. My father explained that the law did not recognize the obligation of gambling debts, and the man replied that he knew that very well, but that he wanted to expose the rascals, and was willing to spend money to that end. The case came before Judge Taylor. My father made an eloquently bitter speech in exposition of the meanness of men who—the reader can imagine the rest. It was to make that speech that the client had employed the young lawyer, and, in Judge Taylor's opinion he "got his money's worth of gall and vitriol." But while the speech was in progress, the three rascals became excited and blustering under the castigation, and he, the judge, overheard talk of "shooting the fellow"—to wit my father. Just as the judge was meditating measures of restraint that might be effective at a time when most men were walking arsenals, he heard one of them hurriedly warn his fellows in this wise:

"Say—you'd better not talk too much about shooting—they tell me that young lawyer comes from Virginia, and he *may be of shooting stock*."

The Virginians had a reputation for quickness on trigger in that region. The warning was sufficient. The three gamblers took their punishment and slunk away, and there was no assassination.

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The readiness with which the well-to-do men of that region adopted or otherwise made themselves responsible for the bringing up of destitute children, was largely due to the conditions of life that prevailed in that time and country. There was no considerable expense involved in such adoption. The thrifty farmer, with more land than he could possibly cultivate, produced, easily, all the food that even a multitudinous family could consume. He produced also the wool, the flax, and the cotton necessary for clothing, and these were carded, spun, woven, and converted into garments for both sexes by the women folk of the home. Little, if anything, was bought with actual money, and in the midst of such abundance an extra mouth to feed and an extra back to clothe counted for next to nothing, while at that time, when work, on everybody's part, was regarded quite as a matter of course, the boy or girl taken into a family was easily able to "earn his keep," as the phrase was.

Nevertheless, there was a great-hearted generosity inspiring it all—a broadly democratic conviction that everybody should have a chance in life, and that he who had should share with his brother who had not, freely and without thought of conferring favor.

A Limitless Hospitality

It was upon that principle, also, that the hospitality of that time rested. There was always an abundance to eat,

and there was always a bed to spare for the stranger within the gates; or if the beds fell short, it was always easy to spread a pallet before the fire, or, in extreme circumstances, to make the stranger comfortable among a lot of quilts in a corn-house or hay-mow.

It was my grandfather's rule and that of other men like him, to provide work of some sort for every one who asked for it. An extra hoe in summer was always of use, while in winter there was corn to be shelled, there were apples to be "sorted," tools to be ground, ditches to be dug, stone fences to be built, wood to be chopped, and a score of other things to be done, that might employ an extra "hand" profitably. Only once in all his life did George Craig refuse employment to a man asking for it. On that occasion he gave supper, lodging, and breakfast to the wayfarer; but during the evening the man complained that he had been walking all day with a grain of corn in his shoe, and, as he sat before the fire, he removed it, to his great relief but also to his undoing as an applicant for permanent employment. For the energetic old Kentuckian could conceive of no ground of patience with a man who would walk all day in pain rather than take the small trouble of sitting down by the roadside and removing the offending grain of corn from his shoe.

"I have no use," he said, "for a man as lazy as that."

Then his conscience came to the rescue.

"I can't hire a lazy fellow like you for wages," he said; "but I have a ditch to be dug. There will be fifteen hundred running feet of it, and if you choose, I'll let you work at it, at so much a foot. Then if you work you'll make wages, while if

you don't there'll be nothing for me to lose on you but your keep, and I'll give you that."

The man decided to move on.

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The life of that early time differed in every way from American life as men of the present day know it.

The isolation in which every community existed, compelled a degree of local self-dependence the like of which the modern world knows nothing of. The farmers did most things for themselves, and what they could not conveniently do for themselves, was done for them in the villages by independent craftsmen, each cunningly skilled in his trade and dependent upon factories for nothing. In my native village, Vevay, which was in nowise different from other Western villages upon which the region round about depended for supplies, practically everything wanted was made. There were two tinsmiths, who, with an assistant or two each, in the persons of boys learning the trade, made every utensil of tin, sheet-iron, or copper that was needed for twenty-odd miles around. There were two saddlers and harnessmakers; two or three plasterers; several brick masons; several carpenters, who knew their trade as no carpenter does in our time when the planing mill furnishes everything already shaped to his hand, so that the

carpenter need know nothing but how to drive nails or screws. There was a boot- and shoe-maker who made all the shoes worn by men, women, and children in all that country, out of leather bought of the local tanner, to whom all hides were sold by their producers. There was a hatter who did all his own work, whose vats yielded all the headgear needed, from the finest to the commonest, and whose materials were the furs of animals caught or killed by the farmers' boys and brought to town for sale. There was even a wireworker, who provided sieves, strainers, and screenings of every kind, and there was a rope walk where the cordage wanted was made.

Industrial Independence

In most households the women folk fashioned all the clothes worn by persons of either sex, but to meet the demand for "Sunday bests" and that of preachers who must wear broadcloth every day in the week, and of extravagant young men who wished to dazzle all eyes with "store clothes," there was a tailor who year after year fashioned garments upon models learned in his youth and never departed from. No such thing as ready-made clothing or boots or shoes—except women's slippers—was known at the time of which I now write. Even socks and stockings were never sold in the shops, except upon wedding and other infrequent occasions. For ordinary wear they were knitted at home of home-spun yarn. The statement made above is scarcely accurate. Both socks and stockings were occasionally sold in the country stores, but they were almost exclusively the surplus products of the industry of women

on the farms round about. So were the saddle blankets, and most of the bed blankets used.

Local self-dependence was well-nigh perfect. The town depended on the country and the country on the town, for nearly everything that was eaten or woven or otherwise consumed. The day of dependence upon factories had not yet dawned. The man who knew how to fashion any article of human use, made his living by doing the work he knew how to do, and was an independent, self-respecting man, usually owning his comfortable home, and destined by middle age to possess a satisfactory competence.

Whether all that was economically or socially better than the system which has converted the independent, home-owning worker into a factory hand, living in a tenement and carrying a dinner pail, while tariff tribute from the consumer makes his employer at once a millionaire and the more or less despotic master of a multitude of men—is a question too large and too serious to be discussed in a book of random recollections such as this. But every "strike" raises that question in the minds of men who remember the more primitive conditions as lovingly as I do.

As a matter of curious historical interest, too, it is worth while to recall the fact that Henry Clay—before his desire to win the votes of the Kentucky hemp-growers led him to become the leading advocate of tariff protection—used to make eloquent speeches in behalf of free trade, in which he drew horrifying pictures of life conditions in the English manufacturing centers, and invoked the mercy of heaven to spare this country from like conditions in which economic considerations should ride down social ones, trample the life

out of personal independence, and convert the home-owning American workman into a mere "hand" employed by a company of capitalists for their own enrichment at cost of his manhood except in so far as the fiat of a trades union might interpose to save him from slavery to the employing class.

Those were interesting speeches of Henry Clay's, made before he sacrificed his convictions and his manhood to his vain desire to become President.

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The Early Railroad

At the time of my earliest recollections there was not a mile of railroad in Indiana or anywhere else west of Ohio, while even in Ohio there were only the crudest beginnings of track construction, on isolated lines that began nowhere and led no whither, connecting with nothing, and usually failing to make even that connection.

He who would journey from the East to the West, soon came to the end of the rails, and after that he must toilsomely make his way by stagecoach across the mountains, walking for the most part in mud half-leg deep, and carrying a fence rail on his shoulder with which to help the stalled stagecoach out of frequent mires.

Nevertheless, we heard much of the railroad and its wonders. It was our mystery story, our marvel, our current Arabian Nights' Entertainment. We were told, and devoutly believed, that the "railcars" ran at the rate of "a mile a minute." How or why the liars of that early period, when lying must have been in its infancy as an art, happened to hit upon sixty miles an hour as the uniform speed of railroad trains, I am puzzled to imagine. But so it was. There was probably not in all the world at that time a single mile of railroad track over which a train could have been run at such a speed. As for the railroads in the Western part of this country, they were chiefly primitive constructions, with tracks consisting of strap iron—wagon tires in effect—loosely spiked down to timber string pieces, over which it would have been reckless to the verge of insanity to run a train at more than twelve miles an hour under the most favorable circumstances. But we were told, over and over again, till we devoutly believed it—as human creatures always believe what they have been ceaselessly told without contradiction—that the "railcars" always ran at the rate of a mile a minute.

The first railroad in Indiana was opened in 1847. A year or two later, my brother Edward and I, made our first journey over it, from Madison to Dupont, a distance of thirteen miles. Edward was at that time a victim of the faith habit; I was beginning to manifest a skeptical, inquiring tendency of mind which distressed those responsible for me. When Edward reminded me that we were to enjoy our first experience of traveling at the rate of a mile a minute, I borrowed his bull's-eye watch and set myself to test the