

CHAPTER V

THE JOURNEY

ON Wednesday, Oct. 4, 1843, the journey westward began. Most of the Band were at the appointed place, but not all. One, Mr. Erastus Ripley, had been invited to spend another year at the seminary as resident licentiate. Another, Mr. J. J. Hill, since the parting at Andover, had lost a father by death, and would be detained until spring. A third, Mr. W. B. Hammond, did not come, through fear of a Western climate, and Mr. Horace Hutchinson was detained a day by the death of a friend, but would probably overtake the company by night travel. And yet their number was nearly complete by the appearance of two as twain. Mr. Daniel Lane and Mr. A. B. Robbins, with characteristic foresight, had taken to themselves wives in view of losses from our original number that might possibly occur.

We will not follow the journey in detail. A few points only will be noticed in passing, such as, after the lapse of years, shine out brightest on memory's page. Twenty-five years ago, a journey from the Atlantic to the Mississippi was long and tedious. A week then would scarcely suffice for what can now

be accomplished in a day. As practically performed by the Band, it was divided into three parts—the railroad, the lakes, and the prairies. The first was soon over, and soon forgotten, bringing them on their way to Buffalo, then the terminus of travel westward by cars. Here their reception and stay for a while were most pleasant. There was then living in that city, as pastor of one of the churches, that most fervent and earnest Christian man, Dr. Asa T. Hopkins. He died Nov. 28, 1847. Though a stranger to all, he gave them a brother's welcome, and commended them to the hospitalities of his people. What kind Christian families they found! Surely this cannot be the West, thought they; not far enough yet for missionary ground.

On Saturday they took a trip to Niagara, to gaze upon the Falls, that wondrous work of God, returning at night to Buffalo to spend the Sabbath with their kind friends. It was a bright, pleasant day, and their hearts were joyous within them.

The following clipping from a Buffalo paper will reveal how the day was spent:

Rev. Messrs. Ephraim Adams, of New Ipswich, N. H., Harvey Adams, Franklin City, Ct., Ebenezer Alden, Randolph, Mass., Horace Hutchinson, Sutton, Mass., Daniel Lane, Freeport, Me., Alden B. Robbins, Salem, Mass., William Salter, New York City, N. Y., Benjamin A. Spaulding, Bedford, Mass., and Edwin B. Turner, Monticello, Ill., met in this city,

on Saturday last, by agreement, on their way to the Territory of Iowa, and remained over Sabbath. The most of them attended divine service at the First Presbyterian Church, where, opportunely, they were permitted to partake of the communion, before their departure for the West. In the evening of that day, by appointment, these gentlemen attended a general meeting, in the First Church, at which Messrs. Salter, Robbins, E. Adams, Sutton and Lane, spoke to a large audience, in the most interesting manner, in regard to the enterprise upon which they have entered. It appears that some time in February last, two or three young men in Andover Theological Seminary, in casting about for the field of their future labors as clergymen, hit upon a plan of going to Iowa, and laboring there. They communicated this plan to others, who joined them; and finally to the Home Missionary Society, where it was favorably received, and these young men with two others, Rev. Messrs. James J. Hill, of Phippsburg, Me., and Wm. B. Hammond, of Fair Haven, Mass., (who are detained by sickness) eleven in all, made arrangements with that society to go to Iowa, and devote themselves as missionaries to that young and rapidly growing territory. We are glad to see Protestant New England alive to the necessity of scattering religious and scientific light and knowledge in the valley of the Mississippi. For, in the forcible language of Professor Post, of Jacksonville, (Ill.) who also attended and addressed the meeting above named, "A plea for the West is a plea for the East. If the West sins, the East will sin with her. If the West falls, she will drag down the East with her. The chain of great lakes on the north, and the Mississippi and her arms on the west, whose navigable waters would, in a

straight line, surround the globe, bind the East and the West so indissolubly together, that the fate of the one must be the fate of the other."

These missionaries, together with Professor Post, and four other missionaries, bound to Michigan and Wisconsin, who providentially met the Iowa Band here, left last evening in the *Missouri* for their several destinations. May they have a safe and pleasant passage, and be successful in their undertaking! We cannot refrain from saying that we have seldom seen so many men banded together in an enterprise, who seemed to possess such sterling good sense, and humble, quiet characters, coupled with firmness and decision, as did these young men.

On Monday morning all felt as though they had enjoyed the acquaintance of weeks, and were almost sad at parting. But the parting came. In the evening of that day, Oct. 9, they went on board the steamer "Missouri," bound for Chicago. The good pastor, and other Christian friends, accompanied them on board to bid them Godspeed, and say adieu. A hymn was sung, and a prayer offered. Beautiful in the bloom of youth, and with sweetest voice in that evening's song, was the sister of the pastor's wife, who stood among them there; but the sad news came a few months afterwards, that the rose was fading upon her cheek, and soon again that she was dead. By her side stood Miss Jane Brush, who became the wife of Edwin B. Turner, a little older in years, but her companion in the family, bidding with others

Now began Western life: and, for a while, it was well enjoyed. Now in a slough in the bottom-lands of some sluggish stream, and now high up on the rolling prairie; what a vast extent of land meets the eye, land in every direction, with scarce a shrub or a tree to be seen! How like a black ribbon upon a carpet of green stretches away in the distance before them the road they are to travel! And occasionally some far-off cloth-covered wagon like their own is descried, like a vessel at sea, rightly named a "prairie schooner." In the settled portions, what farms! what fences! how unlike their Eastern homes! No stones, no barns, children and pigs running together. Then what places in which to sleep! and what breakfasts! If, after a morning ride, they made a lucky stop, such honey! such milk! such butter and eggs! and all so cheap,—twelve and a half cents a meal!

Day by day they traveled on, gazing, wondering, remarking and being remarked upon. Some thought them "land-sharks," some Mormons. But even this became at last wearisome and monotonous. On Saturday afternoon, the southern party, worn with travel, halted at Galesburg for another Sabbath's rest.

Monday morning found them early on their way, refreshed, and eager for the end. "To-day," thought they, "the setting sun is to look with us upon the great Mississippi!" and so it proved. For an hour or

so, near the close of the day, they had been winding and jolting through timbered bottom-lands among huge trees, grand in their silence, gazing the while earnestly forward, till at last it was seen,—the smooth, broad bosom of the great river, with the last silvery rays of the setting sun playing upon it.

"Three cheers," cried they, "for the Mississippi!" Their hearty cheers rang out upon the forest; and, in a few moments more, they were on the river's bank. But the ferry-boat had just made its last trip for the day; and, though they hallooed for help, no one responded to the call. The twilight deepened. It was soon dark, save as the stars and the moonbeams sparkled and danced upon the waters. The halloeing had ceased as useless, and things looked desperate; but the dip of a paddle was heard, and a canoe soon came in sight. It was a chance to cross the river,—twenty-five cents apiece, and a bark of limited accommodations. Brothers Salter and Turner declared they would rather stay by the stuff all night. The others paid the price, and stepped in. It was a heavy load for a light canoe, and all must remain motionless. So, in stillness and silence, with God's stars looking down upon them, they were paddled across to Iowa's shore.

Now in Iowa, at Burlington! Kind friends, even here, were awaiting their arrival; and, as the news spread, they were soon constrained to turn from tavern fare to Christian homes. The watchers by the

stuff came over in the morning; and before another night they had traveled fifteen miles on Iowa soil to Denmark. They had seen the Western pastor in his home, and he had scattered them for hospitality among the members of his flock.⁶ The northern party soon came in safety. All were to rest a while, and then scatter.

⁶ See note 3.