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OBSERVATIONS.

The message that W. Morton Smith and Arcule E. Guilmette were drowned by the upsetting of a cat boat which they were sailing on the Hudson last Sunday afternoon, was received in Lincoln in the late afternoon of the same day. The shock of such news stunned those friends across the continent who had heard from time to time of their successful work in New York. Mr. Guilmette's twenty years or so of life in Nebraska had been spent as a student, but among his associates at the university and in Hastings his record is shining bright. Mr. Smith made friends wherever he went. His personality was full of a charm that daily familiarity with, only made stronger. His serene soul sat up somewhere above the reach of vulgarity. A dignity, an elegance, with all a sweetness, characterized his daily life, his every day life. Without kowowing it he was the centre of every circle his friends called intimate. Without getting near enough to vulgarity to make puns his speech sparkled with originality and shrewdness. For a friend he would do anything in his power, and without stipulation. When he left for New York the overgrown Lincoln doll revealed to all his friends that she was stuffed with sawdust, and was cast aside. He went to New York with but little money and without any definite engagement from a newspaper. By sheer pluck and ability in three months time he occupied the most honorable

and best paid place on one of the most important of the New York papers. He had sole charge of the Wall street reports of the *Mail* and *Express*, a position of power and of great responsibility. He had just moved to Undercliff, the surroundings of which he described in THE COURIER of May 29, which is here reprinted:

" * * * Directly across is the little attenuated village of Undercliff, nestling as its name implies under the shelter of the beetling Palisades. The ride across the river affords, especially at this time of year, a view of surpassing loveliness. On its east shore, from Grant's tomb on the heights above Manhattanville, to the far away hills of Yonkers, a distance of fifteen miles, there is a stretch of picturesque country, with the peaks and turrets of castellated piles rising above a wealth of verdure that reaches to the water's edge. The Palisades crowned with lordly trees extend in unbroken symmetry and beauty as far as the eye can see on the other side.

It was to Undercliff that the investigators went. The village has a straggling growth for a mile or more up the river, resting on the grassy beach between the water and the hills. Along the old turnpike, now almost splashed by the gentle waves, now rising twenty or thirty feet above the river, are rows of oak and elm trees, and here and there is an ancient homestead slowly crumbling away. The road passes the huts of fishermen, which in the busy shad season, but recently closed, have been hives of industry. When the fishermen are not bringing in their catch in big boats they are mending their nets, and one may purchase glistening fish that but a few minutes before were coursing the stream. Lilacs bloom along the way and the dandelions hiding in the water, velvet grass seem like little pools of sunshine, fit to splash in as you pass."

The most stylish turnout that one is apt to meet is the prehistoric bus that ambles along in a desultory way, and the whirling wheelman is the sole disturber of the scene's equanimity. The cottage that the persons afore mentioned selected as their summer home faces the Hudson river, with a meadow space filled just now with waving timothy. Between, and at the river's brink is a row of fine trees, the varied tones of oak and elm and chestnut and maple blending in a bullwark of gorgeous green. Through a gap in the trees may be seen the smooth surface of the water, dotted with the sails of an unnumbered fleet, and now and then pierced by great steamers. Back of the cottage, rising from the very door, are the Palisades, which at this point, are three hundred feet high, and here Flora has strewn her favors with a lavish hand. The breezes blow through boughs of oak and birch and elm, fluttering in the distance is a

fall of snow white dogwood blossoms. Violets but a week ago, purpled the tangled grass, and the cowlip added dots of gold. In a canyon, through which a small stream descends with musical sound, are boulders and jagged rocks, and in the thin covering of earth, mountain peaks show their vivid hues. The violets are gone now and with them the myrtle, and the other delicate flowers that came with the first warmth of spring, but the paths are strewn with primroses and wild daisies and dainty white and yellow strawberry blossoms. Blackberry bushes are just beginning to be spotted with white and the buds of wild roses are exposing their pink leaves. There is a large lake, in a basin on the highest part of the Palisades, directly back of the cottage, where pond lilies grow. The woods extend for miles with ever changing beauty. There are points from which one may view the panorama of New York across the river, and the mountains up the Hudson. At night one may see from the cottage porch or from the lofty height above, the thousands of sparkling lights that invest New York, after sunset, with a beautiful glow and brilliance.

There are no excursion parties, as sightseers. One may be as much alone as Thoreau in Walden Woods. And one may enjoy all this within one hour and ten minutes of Trinity church. But the millions prefer to remain in the city and swelter and mayhap eke out pleasure in roof gardens and wild rides in their avenue cable cars.

W. MORTON SMITH.

New York, May 24, 1897.

Those who have seen Mr. Smith sailing on the waters of Burlington Beach will remember the eagerness and facility with which he learned to sail a boat. Those who were privileged to be members of a party that for two successive years camped in the mountains of Wyoming with Mr. Smith will remember his intoxicated, boyish delight in the mountains, the water, the prospect from the heaven reaching hills. The new home in Undercliff he appreciated with the keen, unjaded joy of a poet. Miss Guilmette kept the house for her brother, his friends and hers. They were all at work busily through the week, and on Sundays they were in the habit of going out into the beautiful world close around them which Mr. Smith lovingly describes in the foregoing. The experience he had had with small sailboats in shallow Nebraska waters was no guide when the wind rose, overturned the boat and the strenuous current of the Hudson, pouring into the Atlantic, loosened the chilled fingers from the too slippery support and carried the two men out to sea, while the young girl clung to the centre-board, which afforded her a better hold, and

was picked up by the steam launch, the Lorna Doone, which was a mile away when the accident happened, but immediately put about to their rescue. Only a few more moments and they would all have been saved. The story of the twenty eight years of Mr. Smith's life is the record of a sturdy will following its bent, of a keen intellect conquering adverse circumstances, of unswerving loyalty to his friends, of a cheerfulness pervasive as the sunlight and of a character altogether as lovable as that of Major Pendennis.

William Morton Smith was twenty-eight years of age. He was born in Wellston, Penn. When he was six years of age he went with his parents to Philadelphia, where he lived until he came to Nebraska in 1888. He received a sound school and business education, the latter including a term of service as stenographer with the great Pencoyd Iron works, in one of the suburbs of Philadelphia. The latter part of Mr. Smith's boyhood was spent in the composing room of a daily paper. When he was fourteen one of the reporters was taken sick just before an important political meeting. Six Three offered to report the meeting and his offer was accepted. Morton's work was so well done that he immediately became a regular reporter. Before he was twenty-one years old he came to Lincoln, where his father and eldest brother had preceded the rest of the rest of the family. His first work was on the staff of the *State Journal*, when he reported the work of the legislature of 1888, for that paper, so successfully discussing Nebraska politics that he was offered and accepted a place on the *Omaha Republican*, then making something of a stir under the management of Fred Nye. He was detailed to act as Lincoln correspondent. Later he became manager of the Lincoln bureau, and built up a large circulation for the paper in this territory. When the paper passed under the Wilcox management he remained in charge here until he was called in 1890 to Omaha to take the post of managing editor. The fortunes of the paper were at so low an ebb that he found it impossible to do anything with the property. Once or twice he was able to interest capital to purchase Mr. Wilcox's interest, but that gentleman declined to sell, although the paper was steadily losing money. The prohibition cause was espoused to bring new business, but this brought a boycott from the people of Douglass county and the paper came to a sudden end. Mr. Smith, however, was not responsible in any way for the catastrophe.

Returning to Lincoln Mr. Smith engaged in general newspaper work for several months. When General Thayer was given a new lease on the office of governor he made Mr. Smith a member of his office force. At the end of that