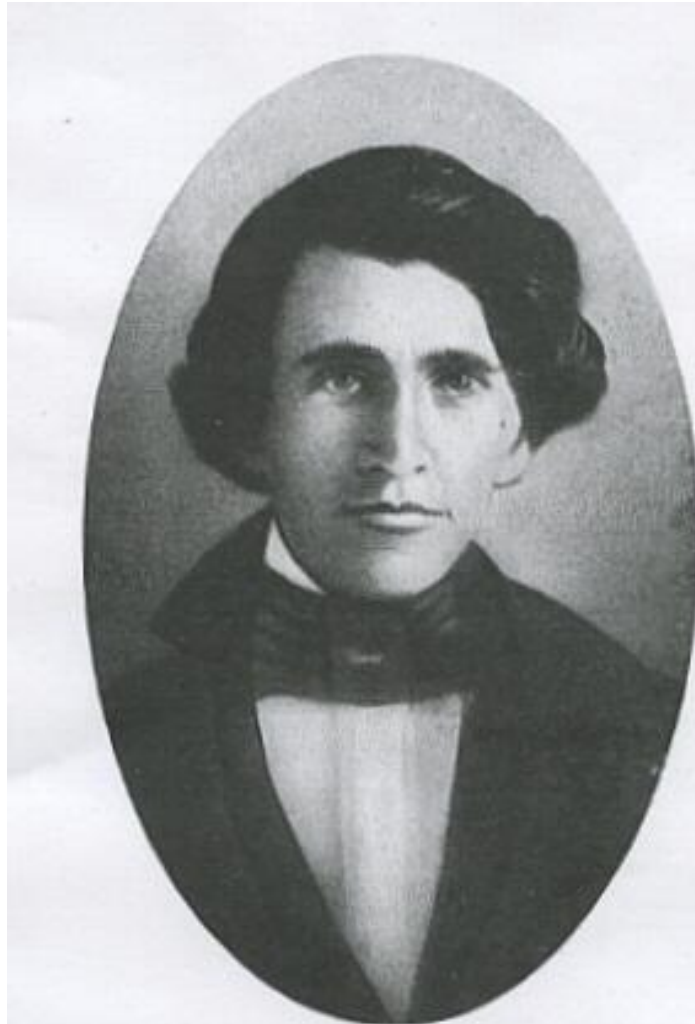


A TOUR THROUGH INDIANA IN 1840

The Diary of John Parsons of Petersburg, Virginia

Edited by Kate Milner Rabb



JOHN PARSONS

From a daguerrotype

CHAPTER XXI

NEW ALBANY, July 30, 1840.

TRULY fortune hath favored me beyond belief in ending my journey in this place, so redolent of the perfume of youth, romance and beauty.

The trail from Vincennes to New Albany is one of the oldest in the state, having been used by the Indians in their journeys from Kentucky across the Falls of the Ohio to Vincennes, one of the oldest towns in the country. For a long time the stage route followed exactly the old Indian trail, but in 1832 a new road was opened up, macadamized, and made a toll road, the section over the Knobs alone, I am told, costing \$100,000. It is in this old part of the state quite near New Albany that Corydon, the state's first capital, is situated and greatly I regret that lack of time prevents my visiting it. 'Tis a quaint town, they say, and the old stone capitol building quite pretentious.

Space will not permit my entering upon a description of this beautiful country, and I have in previous entries dwelt upon the giant trees, the incredible number of wild grapevines festooning them, the wonderfully luxuriant vegetation, the feathered songsters of brilliant hues, the flowers, all uniting to form a picture of indescribable loveliness. The only point I will note is that as we progressed farther south the vegetation increased in luxuriance, and the canebrake, so familiar to the dweller in the land of the cotton and the cane, was frequently to be observed.

The first town of any size at which our stage stopped was Washington, the seat of justice of Daviess County, a flourishing town whose houses are constructed in a genteel style. Mount Pleasant in Martin County, on an elevated site, with fine springs, came next, and then, Hindostan, a village with a most interesting history, and to whose name the inhabitants give a most rude and barbarous pronunciation which I succeeded in understanding only after frequent repetitions, Hindawson.

A gentleman on the stage coach, perceiving my interest, gave me something of the history of this town, now fallen into ruin and decay. A trail from Clarksville (of which more anon) to Vincennes, crossed the river at this point, and early settlers, considering the situation an advantageous one, entered land here prior to 1812, the first land, he asserted, entered from the United States in this country. A ferry was established, many settlers came in, and for a season, the town promised to be one of the most flourishing settlements in the state. An early traveler, said he, wrote of it as "an infant ville, Hindostan, on the falls of the White River, a broad crystal stream, running navigable to the Ohio, over a bed of sand and stone, smooth and white as a floor of marble, a pleasant, healthy place,

the land rich and inviting." This state of affairs continued until 1820, mills and business houses flourishing, the place far in advance of any settlement outside of Vincennes and New Albany, when, in 1827, a mysterious malady swept over the community, like one of the ancient plagues, and, in a night, the dead outnumbered the living. The curse remained after the plague passed on, never again was it possible to recall the first prosperity. The next year, the seat of justice was removed to another town, the living departed one by one, and now all that is left of Hindostan is a few crumbling houses by the river, which ripples on as gaily as ever, over its marble-white bed of sand and stone. A village fallen to decay is always a melancholy sight, but how much more melancholy in these Western woods, where all else is young and flourishing, and where age and decay would seem to have no part.

Characteristic of this part of the state are the many swift and beautiful streams, one of which, Lick Creek, runs through the settlement of Paoli, a flourishing post town and seat of justice of the county of Orange. This town has six stores of general merchandise, three taverns, two oil mills, a cotton factory, a county seminary, and the land surrounding it is, I am informed, good farming land, in a high state of cultivation, and the farms are abounding with the comforts and necessities of life.

It was a matter of deep regret to me that here I had not the time to go to view a great natural curiosity nine miles west of this town. The place is known as the French Lick, a spring of mineral water which contains, said my informant, a large portion of some other substance than salt, though it has not yet been sufficiently analyzed to determine precisely the ingredients. It is of a bluish color and emits a very strong, offensive odor, and is exceedingly loathsome.¹

Our road, always beautiful, dropped farther and farther to the south and we passed through Fredericksburg, on the west bank of Blue River, and then Greenville, twelve miles northwest of New Albany, 'tis said. When the location of the county seat was in question Greenville was one of the contestants and offered a considerable subscription. New Albany's subscription was a few dollars larger, and to it was added the donation of a bell for the Court House, and this won the victory.

The range of hills known at New Albany as the Knobs, and called by the Indians Silver Hills, hence the legend that somewhere within this range

¹ The Gazetteer of 1849 states that this land was donated by the state to Congress on the supposition that the salt might be in sufficient quantity to make its possession valuable to the government but as the plan was not practicable, the lands were sold. The Gazetteer goes on to state that "it has been learned that the waters are valuable for their medicinal properties." – Editor.

lies a silver mine known only to the Indians, is said by my informant to run along the northern bank of the Ohio from the western part of the state to New Albany, at which place it turns, circling the city and runs through the county from south to north, making a wide circuit from the river and returning to it at Madison. Hills is a modest term for these giant and beautiful elevations, thickly covered with trees and undergrowth, from whose tops one commands an entrancing view of the surrounding country. To the top of one of these, Bald Knob, a gentleman of New Albany led me, one day, up the old Indian trail, and ne'er shall I forget the view spread before my eyes. The wide expanse of country, the sparkling "Belle Riviere" visible in its turns above and below the city, the Falls with their never ceasing, musical roar; the fields, covered with bountiful harvests; the range of Silver Hills, stretching to the horizon, towering from 400 to 600 feet in grandeur and beauty; in one direction Jeffersonville, named for the great Virginian and laid out according to his plan; on the other, New Albany, most charming city, with its spacious streets, Water, High, Market and Spring, running parallel to the river, its public squares and market houses, its beautiful and commodious harbor – surely 'twas with no more enrapturing vision than this that Satan tempted the Master from the mountain top.

Some such view, though not so grand and far-reaching, because it was from a lower knob, did I see the time we paused at the Rising Sun Tavern on the last hill top to be crossed before descending to the level and New Albany. This hilltop inn was built, I was told, by Caleb Dayton, who came here from Connecticut in 1826. The inn is of logs but was weatherboarded a few years ago, and is a handsome, substantial structure, with high gabled roof, and great main room on one side of the hall, with a deep closet with glass doors, and a monstrous fireplace. The house has many windows, set-in porches and large wagon yards and a stable to accommodate both stages and emigrants, and the sign painted with the rising sun hangs on an iron arm affixed to a wooden post in front of the house that all may see.

'Tis frequently quite merry here, my host informed me, for great hunting parties come over from Louisville to remain for a week, wearing their fringed buckskin hunting suits, and with their muskets and their hounds, and there is always the stage both ways each day, to say nothing of parties of emigrants pushing into the Wabash country. Mr. Dayton also made known to me that this road was known as the Daniel Boone Trace, because 'twas said that the Indians once stole Daniel Boone's daughter in Kentucky and that the mighty hunter pursued them over this road, overtook them, rescued the girl and wreaked his vengeance upon her captors.

Again under way, and down the steep hillside past the famous big Raeger Spring, at which the horses are always watered, and then, on and on, bits champing, harness rattling, till we are come into New Albany!

I had known when I stood on the Dayton knob and looked over the enchanted and enchanting country that I should love New Albany; even there I felt its charm; how much more, as we drove over its broad streets and drew up with great noise and ceremony before the long, low, many-gabled, many-windowed house on High Street, which bore the name of High Street or Hale's Tavern, one of the best taverns, the driver had already informed me, west of the Allegheny Mountains, and one frequented, so he says, by the beauty and fashion of the South, who flee hither up the Mississippi and Ohio in the summer season to avoid the dread scourge of the yellow fever. Mr. Daniel Webster, he informed me, Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Henry Clay and Gen. William Henry Harrison have been among its distinguished guests, to say nothing of a long array of less widely-known but most excellent gentlemen. And this, it was explained to me later, is not at all remarkable, for New Albany is the head of navigation of the Ohio, and tavern headquarters for all steamboat men. Naturally, it is, in the season, the scene of much festivity and many social gatherings.

When I entered the low-ceilinged cozy office room I felt at once this atmosphere of hospitality and of the charm given a house whose walls have witnessed much merry making. And when I met mine host I was still more pleased, for Dr. Hale is a true gentleman, his ruffled shirt white as the driven snow, his broadcloth of the finest and blackest, and his dignity of the sort that would do credit to a Virginia statesman, tempered as it is with the proper courtesy to the stranger. I could see at once why notables, beauties and fashionables, once come to this inn, would return again and again.

'Twas Dr. Hale gave me my first historical information regarding New Albany. 'Twas founded, he said, by three brothers, Joel, Abner and Nathaniel Scribner, who, attracted by the site near the Falls of the river, bought it in 1813, convinced that "the world would one day revolve around New Albany." This city, says he, now numbering 4,226 inhabitants, and only last year incorporated as a city, worth its matchless situation at the head of navigation, will in time become the largest interior city on the continent. Its founders were all public-spirited men, foremost in all benevolent and liberal enterprises for building up and bettering the community, and said he, "The enterprise, industry, morality and public spirit which have heretofore contributed so much to its growth will not fail to carry it on hereafter."

Quickly perceiving my interest in the city and its activities, Dr. Hale told me much of its business, its printing offices, its stores of general merchandise, liquor stores, foundries, mills, one in particular, propelled by

steam power, in which 100 barrels of flour are manufactured in twenty-four hours; its schools, of which more anon; its churches, and above all, its ship yards, for he said, "While this country is not excelled in the state in the variety and extent of its business, its average income from the river business alone is more than \$75,000 each year."

From 1830 to 1835, he informed me, seventeen boats were built here, of the value of \$377,642. From 1835 to this year, thirty-three vessels of the value of \$714,942 and the output is expected to rise in the next year or two to thirty-eight boats each year. It is this building and the fact that the city is a headquarters for river men that give it so different an atmosphere from other cities I have visited, - for there is a constant stream of visitors and of merchandise from New Orleans and in many respects its atmosphere is that of a Southern city.

"The society of this city," says Dr. Hale, "you will soon perceive, is most delightful. 'Twas because of these founders and the men who have succeeded them. They first shaped the city in its tastes, its refinement and geniality and with the crowning glories of religion, and the highest morals to bless it, it has so continued ever since. The excellent society at New Albany will always be its chief attraction."

'Twas Dr. Hale introduced me to the mayor of the city, Mr. Shepard Whitman, a most estimable gentleman, who at once invited me to a meeting of the Lyceum to be held that same evening at 6 o'clock. This Lyceum, it seems, was established some years ago, and has already a number of members and a library of several hundred valuable books and the necessary apparatus for illustrating different sciences.

I found the meeting of special interest because 'twas well attended, giving me thus the opportunity to meet at once the town's most respectable citizens, and as the constitution and by-laws were read by the secretary, Mr. Alexander McClelland, I learned the object and aims of the society. The object of this - a called meeting - was to rouse the interest of the members, which, I gathered, had been somewhat lagging, and on motion of Mr. Whitman, it was "resolved that we make all exertion possible to sustain this institution, inasmuch as we regard it as the most inestimable means for the advancement of the youth of both sexes as well in morals as in education, and that the better to effect this object, Mr. T. J. Barnett be requested to deliver an introductory address at the next meeting and that the public generally be invited to attend and unite with us." This Mr. Barnett, I was to learn later, is both an editor and a lawyer, a man of splendid attainments, a superior scholar and a fine speaker, one of the finest, indeed, in the city.

The members present were Dr. Clapp, Mr. John Evans, Mr. D. M. Hooper, my host, Mr. Whitman, Mr. H. B. Shields, Mr. Charles Woodruff, Mr. David Hedden, Mr. T. J. Barnett, Mr. Andrew Thickstun, Mr. James Brocks and Mr. Alexander McClelland. Of these, Dr. Clapp is the president, Mr.

Hooper, the vice-president of the Lyceum, Mr. Shields, the treasurer, Mr. Thickstun, the librarian, Mr. Hedden, one of the curators. Mr. Bollman, the corresponding secretary, was not present and neither was Mr. Dwyer, the other curator.

In chatting with these gentlemen after the meeting, for all proved themselves most agreeable and tarried to converse with me, I learned that Mr. Hedden is one of the pioneer settlers, and that the name Shields is one indissolubly connected with the settling of New Albany. Mr. Patrick Shields, whom I was later to meet, being one of its most distinguished citizens, and associate of Gen. Harrison, a member of the Congregational Convention, the first circuit judge of Harrison County, an associate judge of this county, and his wife, the daughter of Clement Nance, a Huguenot, she said to be the first white woman to cross the Knobs.

Dr. Clapp I found to be a most agreeable gentleman. He, too, came here nearly thirty years ago and married a daughter of one of the founders of the town. He is a most prominent, influential and respected citizen and a most successful practitioner, and through his kindness I met many of the physicians of the city, Dr. P. S. Shields, Dr. Leonard, Dr. Cooper, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Hoover and Dr. Dowling, also a Dr. John Sloan, who had but recently graduated from Bowdoin College and come here to engage in the practice of medicine.

I made also the acquaintance of many of the lawyers, this through a letter to John S. Davis, a gentleman of prominence both in the law and in politics, and who is in partnership with Maj. Henry P. Thornton, who introduced me to his brothers at the bar. Especially congenial I found Randall Crawford, who is a fine student and scholar and who, with James C. Collins, has, 'tis said, three-fourths of the law business of the city.

Other names I will set down that I may not forget them, some merchants, some city officials, all men of prominence; Peter Stoy, a pioneer; Mr. Paxton and Mr. Eastburn, James R. Shields, cashier of the bank, a most imposing structure with great columns at the front; Mr. Fitch, Mr. Warren, Mr. Pattison, Preston F. Tuley and Mr. Pennington, the merchant. I was soon to learn that a meeting with any one of these gentlemen meant, through his kind offices a meeting with another and another, so that, in an incredibly short time I had shaken the hand of nearly every respectable citizen of the place and had received more invitations to various gatherings than I had the time to accept.

'Twas on my way to some meeting to which I had been invited, stopping along High Street to gaze into the window of Mr. Pattison, where was to be seen a most ravishing display of hats, black beavers, gray and white, also black and drab satin beavers, and gentlemen's leghorn hats, which display minded me, that as the weather here was become of such extreme warmth, I should mayhap purchase me one of these leghorns

and don my linen suit. Suddenly, I felt a touch on my arm, and looked around to behold my old friend, Louis Hicklin.

Time permits not that I should inscribe all the words that passed between us, for I was truly attached to this good man, and I could see that time and absence had not diminished the affection he had so clearly demonstrated that he felt for me. His welcome was a warm one. He has but just come to this part of the country to preach at some camp meetings, and as he was at this moment at leisure, he insisted that I stroll with him about the streets and pass the time in conversation over my travels and experiences since we parted. We did so, and he at the same time told me something of the history of his church in New Albany. Being an old town, the church was founded early, and is now strong and flourishing, there having been held last year at the Wesley Chapel a most extensive and powerful revival of religion. My friend the Rev. Allen Wiley, who took me to the camp meeting, was stationed here a few years ago, and was most popular, a statement I did not in the least question. Mr. Hicklin bethought himself to tell me a most excellent story of a recent conference here, a year or two ago, perhaps.²

Most of the preachers from the eastern part of the state, among them Mr. Hicklin, who was then stationed at Vevay, came on the river and on their return forty or fifty of them, among them Bishop Soule, took passage on the General Pike, a steamboat running between Louisville and Cincinnati. There was a large company of gamblers on board, said Mr. Hicklin, returning from the Louisville races, which had just closed. These men took possession of the gentleman's cabin and in a short time were engaged in gambling at cards and in consuming vast quantities of liquor. Bishop Soule, a remarkable person, tall, muscular and athletic, viewed this scene with the utmost abhorrence, and, presently calling the ministers together, he began to sing, joined at once by his companions:

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In hell or earth or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly."

It did not take many such hymns, shouted forth in such stentorian tones, said Mr. Hicklin, to cause these "devils" to fly. Very shortly they abandoned the cabin and fled either to the deck or to their staterooms, and the rest of the voyage was passed in decent quiet.

² This conference to which Mr. Parsons refers was held in New Albany in 1837. – Editor.

Mr. Hicklin pointed out to me in the course of our stroll the New Albany Seminary,³ a flourishing institution under the protection of the Methodist Church, with about 200 scholars, male and female.

When on my return to the inn, after an appointment with Mr. Hicklin for the morrow, I spoke with Mrs. Hale of the flourishing condition of the Methodist Church, she at once declared that the Presbyterian, the church of the Scribner family, was in an equally flourishing condition, having held its first meeting in 1817 in the old Scribner home. She also told me of the female prayer meeting organized in 1823, at her home, the tavern, by herself, Mrs. Ayres, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Shields, and of the organization, the next year, of the Female Bible Society at the home of Mrs. Phoebe Scribner, at which Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Ayres, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Abner and Mrs. Joel Scribner became members, together with fifty-eight other ladies, and the organization is still flourishing. The Baptist and Campbellite Churches were also founded here at a somewhat later date and all have flourished, so that Dr. Hale is without doubt correct when he attributes much of the city's flourishing condition to "the crowning glories of religion and the highest morals."

I was told, too, a most interesting story of a French settlement (there are two near by), whose brick church, St. Mary's-of-the-Knobs, was built but a few years ago and whose priest, a most interesting character, Father Neyron, was a soldier under Napoleon, a surgeon of great ability, who came to America and became a priest.⁴

My appointment for the morrow with Mr. Hicklin promised the greatest interest. He was going over into the adjoining county of Clark, in which lies Jeffersonville, to a camp meeting, and he proposed that I ride over to that city in his company, view the surrounding country and city, and thence return to New Albany, while he continued on the way to his appointment. As he has trod these paths so many times and is so familiar

³ This institution, founded in 1835 and continuing for ten years, was the predecessor of the famous DePauw Female College at New Albany. "Although the seminary was discontinued as a conference institution, and ceased, it nevertheless accomplished great good in its day and showed that the Methodist was then, as now, the real friend of Christian education." E. C. Holliday's "Indiana Methodism." – Editor.

⁴ It is most unfortunate that Mr. Parsons did not visit these settlements and give us more information concerning them. There were two - one near Mooresville, the other on the Budd Road, both at one time very flourishing. At the first named, a great cooperage business was carried on for a time. Both settlements and traditions are now almost vanished. – Editor.

with the country and its history, I hailed the opportunity with delight, finding, moreover, much pleasure in his company.

On the morrow, therefore, we set forth early, each on horseback, he having his horse and I hiring one, a good animal, with the help of Dr. Hale, ever most obliging.

Leaving New Albany behind and pushing on over the level country which lies between it and Jeffersonville, we rode rapidly, the roads being in good condition, and Mr. Hicklin passing the time most pleasantly in relating to me the story of Clark's grant. For a long time this county was spoken of, he says, as "the Grant," for in 1783, Virginia gave to George Rogers Clark, his officers and soldiers in the Revolution the 149,000 acres of land here, together with 1,000 acres on which was to be located the town of Clarksville, and this land is still under the jurisdiction of Virginia.⁵

He pointed out to me the town of Clarksville and the two-story log house erected by Gen. Clark, in which he lived for a season, beautifully situated upon General's Point, giving a delightful view of the Falls, and told the sad story of his life and death which I had already heard at Vincennes. In this county is the town of Charlestown, he informed me, in which lived the state's first Governor, Jonathan Jennings, and Judge Dewey, whom I had met at Indianapolis. Governor Posey, he says, once lived at Jeffersonville.

The situation of Jeffersonville is a beautiful one, on a terrace a mile above the Falls, beside a deep eddy where boats of the largest size can approach within a cable length of the shore at all stages of the water, and with an enchanting view of Louisville and Corn Island, a historic spot on which Mr. Hicklin told me, Gen. Clark's army encamped in May, 1778, on their way to Kaskaskia.⁶

In 1825, said Mr. Hicklin, when Gen. Lafayette paid his visit to this country, making a tour under the supervision of the Federal government,

⁵ This "Grant" was originally controlled by a charter given by Virginia. In 1852 the General Assembly of Indiana annulled this charter and gave Clarksville a charter under the laws of the state. The old patent dated 1786 and signed by Edmund Randolph of Virginia is still preserved at Clarksville. – Editor.

⁶ This historic spot was a long, narrow strip of land about three-fourths of a mile in length, reaching from what is now Fourth Street to Fourteenth Street in Louisville, and very near the south side of the river. By 1840 much of the heavy timber in which the early settlers had found refuge from the Indians had been cut away and the island had washed away to about seventy acres. It has now entirely disappeared, and even its location is a subject of dispute. – Editor.

he was entertained most sumptuously at Jeffersonville. As he was brought over to Jeffersonville on the General Pike a salute of thrice twenty-four guns was fired from cannon stationed on the river bank, where had been erected three flag staffs twenty feet high with appropriate flags. A reception was tendered him, and afterward, a great dinner, the table spread under an arbor woven of beech boughs, in a wood just above the Posey mansion. At the head of the table was placed a transparency bearing the words, "Indiana welcomes Lafayette, the champion of liberty in both hemispheres," and at the foot, another bearing the words, "Indiana, in 1776, a wilderness; in 1825, a civilized community! Thanks to Lafayette and the soldiers of the Revolution."

The welcome address was made by Governor James Brown Ray, concerning whom I have written in previous entries. There were a vast number of guests present, among them many from Kentucky, fine music by a band, a splendid military escort, a great number of most eloquent toasts, altogether, 'tis said to be the greatest occasion e'er witnessed on Indiana soil. Mr. Hicklin made merry over my stopping him on horseback that I might note these items in my commonplace book, but I assured him that if I did not have it all set down with exactness, time, place and names, it would not be credited by my family and friends, who have no idea of the advance of civilization in the Western country.

We parted in Jeffersonville, and this time somewhat sadly, for I am soon to take my way homeward, and we each felt that we might never meet again. Having given me his blessing, the good man, spurring his horse, turned his face toward the camp grounds, and I mine toward the tavern to which he had directed me.

'Tis well that I have kept so exact a diary; otherwise, I myself might find it difficult to believe all the experiences I have had, all the novelties I have found in the western country. How was I to know that here in Jeffersonville I was to find a resort of beauty and fashion unexcelled in any spot I have ever seen?

Years ago, 'twas discovered that in the outskirts of Jeffersonville were several valuable springs mineralized by sulphur and iron, a powerful natural chalybeate water, and the proprietor, a Swiss, by name Fischli, realizing their value and possible profit to himself, erected a large and commodious building for the reception of those who sought relief either from physical indisposition, their own thoughts, or the disagreeable atmosphere of the cities during the summer months, and laid off the surrounding grounds most beautifully and attractively in walks, bath houses, bowling alleys, fountains, and puzzle gardens. The fame of the place spread rapidly by the river route, and it soon became a mecca for visitors from the South with their families, who hastened here to enjoy a brilliant and attractive society during the summer months. So popular did the place become that two years ago the owners – Mr. Fischli is now

dead – erected a spacious and palatial tavern on the river bank, the finest of its kind, 'tis said, in Indiana or Kentucky, and graded the street leading out to the springs, Broadway, which soon proved, I am told, a highway for the equipage of fashion and wealth.

'Twas toward this caravansary that, following the direction of Mr. Hicklin, I turned my steps, and who can refuse to believe in fate? There, upon one of the porticoes – the sight of them, filled as they were with fashionably-clad women and men, made my heart beat faster – whom should I descry but my friend Buford and his lovely wife!

The recognition was instant, and the upshot of our meeting was that I dispatched a servant to New Albany for some of my baggage, and spent several days in their company. I have not time nor space to set it down, our rides, our drives, our entertainment by Capt. Fitzgerald, - an old sea captain, who dwells in a magnificent mansion built in the Southern style with a great columned porch – presided over, he being a bachelor, by his sister, Mrs. Duane, at a lavish repast, with rounds of beef, elegant desserts, delicious wines, all served in a most elegant fashion, and many others. "O, the dalliance and the wit, the battery and the strife!" Quickly the days sped by in this charmed circle, and all at once I realized that the time had come to say good-by to this merry-making and turn my steps homeward. I communicated my thoughts to Buford, sitting one night on the portico in the moonlight.

"To-morrow, come what may, said I firmly, "I must set my face toward home. Early in the morning I will return to New Albany for my baggage and take my passage on the boat for Cincinnati."

"And are you going to leave us and New Albany without once inquiring about Caroline?" he inquired. "My wife and I have waited and wondered, but she has refused, so far, to let me speak. She said that you perhaps had forgotten her."

I confessed then that my stubborn tongue had refused to ask the question. I had watched and waited in New Albany, hoping that I might encounter her on the street, that somewhere I might hear her name mentioned. Again and again I had tried to question him, but for some reason I could not.

"'Twas no wonder you did not hear her name; her father was a steamboat captain and is long since dead. She and her mother live very quietly in the old house. You will have no trouble to find it; they are well known – the house is a handsome old dwelling. Go, and " he laughed as he rose and extended his hand in farewell. "I may not see you in the morning if you are to depart so early – go, and God be with you!"

'Twas a laughing adieu, but still I felt, at heart, a sincere wish for my welfare and happiness. And so to bed and on the morrow I was on my way back to New Albany – New Albany and journey's end. And what was the couplet that ran through my head and would not out, but

repeated itself again and again such as such foolish things have a habit of doing?

"Trip no farther, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know."

By judicious inquiry and a little direction, I soon found the house. 'Twas one of those old mansions which give the place its character, situated on the high bank of the river, with its terraced garden sloping down to the water, its three-storied latticed porches facing the stream. The grounds, to which entrance was given through a great iron gate, were handsomely laid off in a formal garden, with latticed arbors and summer house, the winding walks set with little boxwood trees between two rows of conch shells, two huge pink shells on either side of the front door, a sure sign, I had been told, of the river man's home. The door, with its die lights and beautiful fan light, recalled my own home, as did the black girl who opened the door to me.

"Miss Caroline? She done gone to the summer house with her work. You want me to call her?"

No, I would seek her out, and turning, I walked slowly, with fast beating heart, toward the distant summer house, whose doorway, I surmised, faced the river, so that I could come upon her unawares. Slowly I went down the graveled path, gazing at the bordering plants, wondering what I should say first. Then, of a sudden, a thought – and hurriedly, I stooped and plucked the flowers, making my selection most carefully, touch-me-not, bluebell, columbine, heliotrope, honeysuckle, myrtle, pansy and rosebud – a most creditable nosegay.⁷

The summer house, vine covered, faced the river, and there, seated in a low chair, her needlework fallen on her lap, the shining bands of her hair drooping over her flushed cheek, sat the lovely Caroline, her deep blue eyes full of dreams. My heart leaped up as I looked at her – modest as the dove, beautiful as an angel – lovelier, far lovelier was she than I had dreamed her. I paused a moment, unseen, to gaze upon the vision; then,

⁷ The reader must remember that Mr. Parsons had purchased in Richmond a copy of "The Flower Vase," the book which Miss Caroline had carried on her journey, and had therefrom learned the language of flowers, a language with which every young lady of that day was conversant. Hence, his nosegay expressed, in the order in which he has named the flowers, impatience, constancy, I can not give thee up, true love, devotion, fidelity, love in absence, tender and pleasant thoughts, and confession of love. – Editor.

the sound of the gravel under my foot aroused her from her reverie and, turning, her eyes met mine!

I pressed the nosegay into her hands. "Read, read," I murmured. And, reading, she turned those glorious eyes upon me, then let the jetty lashes sweep her blushing cheek!

"Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know."

NOTE

On his way home from New Albany, happy in his engagement to Miss Caroline Hunter, Mr. Parsons left the boat at Cincinnati and went to Oxford, Ohio, to visit some relatives from Maryland, who, he heard, had gone there soon after the War of 1812, the same relatives whom his cousin Jonathan had joined after leaving the Wabash country. While here, he suddenly sickened and died, whether from some epidemic disease or from some physical weakness aggravated by the hardships of his long journey is not known. Had he lived, his education, his native brilliancy, his charming personality, would certainly have insured him success and position. The Diary, recently brought to light, is all that remains of his papers.

EDITOR.

Source: A Tour Through Indiana in 1840: The Diary of John Parsons of Petersburg, Virginia, Edited by Kate Milner Rabb, 1920, pp. 357-379 [977.2 R11]