

## MISCELLANEOUS.

*Written for this Paper.*

WILLIAM B. ALLISON.

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spent an evening not long ago with Senator William B. Allison. He lives on Vermont avenue, within a three minutes' walk of the White House, in one of the most fashionable parts of the city. The houses about his Washington home are comparatively new, but nearly every one of them has a famous resident and each of the older places has had its history. Just above is the red brick house which Justin S. Morrill, the oldest man in the United States Senate, has occupied for years. Just below is the big brick in which Secretary Charles Foster lived when he was carrying the burden of the United States treasury and a secret load of personal financial ruin through the smiles and quirks of Washington society. Across the way, on the corner of 14th street, is the old home of Gen. Bob Schenck, now changed into a flat, with a flower store and a wine shop in the basement. In the block below lives Senator McMillan of Michigan, in an \$80,000 brick mansion, and around the corner on Massachusetts avenue are the houses of a baker's dozen of Supreme Court justices, famous senators and rich literary men. Senator Allison's house is one of the plainest of the neighborhood. It is a white three-story brick, built in the conventional style, with a big parlor in the front, a library at the back and a dining room somewhere in the rear. It is well furnished, and its walls are covered with choice engravings and good paintings.

SENATOR ALLISON IN 1895.

It was in the library that I met the Senator. He is one of the healthiest looking men in public life. He is now sixty-six, but he is in splendid condition, both physically and intellectually, and I might also say psychically. He has always cultivated looking at matters in a common-sense, conservative way, and while he has been a hard worker and a fairly good liver, his life has been an even one, and he has not allowed the chase for the dollar nor the ambitions of politics to contract and distort his soul. He is clear headed and clean. Always well dressed, he makes you think of a New York club man or banker rather than of the average American statesman. His black clothes are well cut, and the linen of his shirt and his broad expansive collar, which exceeds even that of William M. Evarts in size, is of the finest material and as white as the driven snow. His hair within the last year has perceptibly whitened, and it is fast becoming iron gray. His eye however, is bright, and the rosy corpuscles that shine through his fair skin show that his blood is full of iron. He has a strong face. His

forehead is very broad and above the average height. His nose is large, and his mouth and lower jaw are indicative of determination and will. He is a good story teller, and he has a hearty laugh. His voice is deep and strong. His words come slowly, but he seldom makes a mistake, and the sentences of his private conversation are almost as rounded as those which he delivers on the floor of the Senate. He was sitting at a table with a box of cigars and a pile of papers beside him when I called, and he smoked as he talked.

## VALUABLE HISTORICAL PAPERS.

As I looked at the papers I thought of a call which I recently made on Senator John Sherman, whom I found working over the manuscripts of his past, and I asked Senator Allison what had been his habit in regard to keeping papers and data concerning the historic events of which he has formed so great a part. He replied that he had preserved some letters, but that he had never kept a daily journal.

"I am sorry," said he, "that I have never kept a diary. I have kept papers somewhat, and I have a large amount of correspondence scattered through my boxes. I may write my memoirs in my old age. I imagine it would be rather pleasant work. My attention was called to it by the recent death of my colleague, Senator Wilson. I had to write something concerning him, and it was in doing this that the past came up before me. For thirty years back I have known every man who has been connected with our public affairs. I have known the inside of things, and the motives of our great men. I have been, as it were, behind the scenes, and there are many things that have never been published which it seems to me would make interesting reading. I am not thinking of writing now, and I don't know that I ever will write. But the task strikes me as a pleasant one."

## THE CONVENTION OF 1860.

"Tell me, Senator, about your first connection with politics."

"I can give you my first political office," replied Senator Allison. "It was as one of the tally secretaries of the convention of 1860, which nominated President Lincoln. I was born and educated, you know, in Ohio, and after my graduation at the Western Reserve College, I began the practice of the law at the little town of Ashland, somewhere near the center of the state. It is just about fifteen miles from Mansfield, whence John Sherman comes, and where the late Samuel J. Kirkwood used to practice law before he went to Iowa. Iowa, you know, is settled largely by Ohio people, and after I had practiced law for a time at Ashland I got the western fever and went out there. This was in 1857. I was republican in my tendencies, and though I was practicing law I was much interested in politics, and I was made one of the delegates to this convention in 1860.

"For some reason or other, they made me one of the tally clerks. I sat right in front of George Ashmun of Massachusetts, who was the president of the convention, and I believe that I gave to him the first news of Lincoln's nomina-

tion. I kept footing up the figures as they came in, and some time before the members of the convention were aware of the fact I saw that Lincoln would be elected, and I turned about and told Mr. Ashmun the fact. A few moments later the convention realized it, and then ensued one of the most wonderful scenes of our history. The convention was held in the old Wigwam in Chicago, and there were about ten thousand people present. When the vote was announced a scream went up from thousands of throats, and fully one thousand hats were thrown into the air. It rained hats for several minutes after the announcement, and I can still see the hats rising and falling. The people lost control of themselves, and I have often wondered what became of those hats, for there was not much possibility of recovering your hat in a mob like that."

## HOW HE CAME TO CONGRESS.

"How did you happen to come to Congress, Senator?"

"Well," replied Senator Allison, "that is something of a story. I don't think I was ambitious to be a politician. I certainly made no effort to secure my first nomination, and it came about indirectly through the influence and prestige which I acquired by being the friend of Samuel J. Kirkwood, who was then governor of Iowa. As soon as he was elected he put me on his staff, and at the outbreak of the war he directed me to raise some regiments for the army. My territory was north Iowa, and I had organized three regiments along in 1861, when I was taken sick, and for a year I was unable to do anything. As soon as I recovered Governor Kirkwood put me again at work, and I raised three more regiments, or six regiments in all. This was in 1862, and it was just about the time of nominating members of Congress. The candidate for nomination of the republican party from our country was an extremely radical man. He wanted slavery abolished at once, and wanted the President to adopt the most extreme measures as to the carrying on of the war. I was a little more conservative, and the large conservative element of the district made me their candidate. The result was that I was nominated, and the opposing democratic candidate was an editor, who was then in jail on account of disloyalty. He had been ordered there by Secretary Stanton, and the issue was a straight one of for the Union or against it.

## VOTING IOWA SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD.

"You can hardly imagine today the situation in 1862-63," Senator Allison continued. "The democratic party was strong, and the republican party had been depleted by the volunteers for the war, which had, you know, been called for again and again.

"In organizing my regiments for the army, I noted that nine tenths of them were republicans, and in looking over the congressional field I found that if all these votes were to be lost, I would probably be defeated. The men were to go away to the field in a few days. If I could have their votes, I would be elected. How to get them I did not know. I worried over the matter, and finally decided that if their votes could be taken in the field, it would save not only this congressional district to the republican party, but others in different parts of Iowa. It was then a recess of the legislature, however, and such a measure would require legislative action.