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PREFACE

THE border wars must be taken to constitute a phase of that critical period in American history when two antagonistic fundamentals of government contended for supremacy. The devotion of adherents to respective principles was fanatical and fierce, and unusual animosities were engendered.

By stormy conventions the two ideas of the destiny of our common country were reconciled in our growth to the Mississippi. Newly bound and hedged about, they were flung upon the soil of Missouri. But the compromise of a principle is a crime, and the feeble barriers set by time-serving statesmen became tense and strained. The advance-guard of a higher national life burst them asunder and emerged upon the Great Plains. There the contest to maintain itself became a grapple for the existence of the government, and ended in civil war.

The story of the border is the history of preliminary forays and the shock of army upon army in the national contest. It covers ten years. In wealth of romantic incidents, stirring adventures, hair-breadth escapes, sanguinary ambushes, deadly encounters, individual vengeance, relentless desolation of towns and communities, and bloody murder, no other part of America can compare with it. Some future Scott will make himself immortal by telling this wonderful story.

This is the first effort, it is believed, to make any serious study of the conditions prevailing on the border. The state of society about Lawrence as shown in the year 1860 may be accepted as representative of the general conditions found in Kansas up to the Civil War, and no attempt to describe them has been found. The state of disorder in Missouri was the result in some degree of the reaction upon itself of its course in Kansas. The time has not yet come when a dispassionate study of the conditions which existed in Missouri will be acceptable

to all the people of that great commonwealth. But the position that the Missourian suffered most from his brother Missourian is founded on facts and will be sustained by future writers.

Nothing has been written in a sensational way. The simple statement of what occurred is sensational enough, and the old idea that truth is stranger than fiction is demonstrated.

Except the men at the heads of the respective governments, and some of the leading generals, Quantrill is the most widely-known man connected with the Civil War. His place in the public estimation of the South was based upon a misapprehension of his life and motives. He voluntarily imposed himself on the South. He told little of his prior life, and that which he did tell was wholly untrue. It is due to the South that his life be revealed as it actually was. That done, his character and his motives stand clearly outlined. Heretofore there has been nothing on which to base a reason for many incidents in the warfare of the border.

It is one of the strange decrees of fate that the normal man is rarely mentioned in history or literature. The citizen who labors diligently to support his family, to build up his city, to sustain his state, gets little or no notice in the annals of his time. It is the abnormal man, the man in desperate extremity, who is portrayed for the amusement or instruction of mankind.

This work could never have been written fully but for the preliminary labors of the late W. W. Scott, editor of the *Iron Valley Reporter*, Canal Dover, Ohio. He grew up with Quantrill, and it was his desire to write an account of the life of the noted guerrilla. He secured from Mrs. Quantrill the letters written her by her son. He traveled extensively to secure facts. He located the grave and removed the body. Mrs. Quantrill stipulated that the story of her son should not be written in her lifetime. But she outlived Mr. Scott, and he never got beyond the point of gathering material. After his death the author bought his papers.

Many of the most stirring events of the border wars do not properly fall within the scope of this work. It is the intention of the author to publish another book in which will appear adequate

accounts of the transactions and doings in the Border Wars of Atchison, Lane, Brown, Robinson, Thayer, Shelby, Jennison, Hoyt, Bill Anderson, Clements, the Youngers, the James boys, George Todd, Senator Steven B. Elkins, Captain William H. Gregg, and the operations generally of Free-State pioneers, border-ruffians, Red Legs, Guerrillas, and Jayhawkers in the disorders on the border.

The author realizes that there may be some objection to the repetition of the statement in the notes that documents cited as authority may be found in his Collection. But long and persistent effort failed to devise a better plan.

This is not designed to be a "Life" of Quantrill, but an account of those incidents of the Border Wars in which he and his men were the leading characters. All that could be learned of the famous outlaw and his family has been set down. It was necessary that this work should be written. Little of the story has ever been told. There has been no definite information. All has been myth, doubt, assertion, beautiful generalization, conjecture. In a general way it has been known that banditti infested the border, that ruthless hands were red with blood, that many a night flared red with burning homes and sacked towns. But of the family and parentage of Quantrill, his life in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas—of his trip to Utah and Pike's Peak, his school, his life at Lawrence, and the Morgan Walker raid—of the organization of his band of guerrillas, its operations in Missouri, Kansas, Texas, and what is now Oklahoma, of his expulsion therefrom and the disintegration thereof—of his life with Kate Clarke, his expedition to Kentucky and his operations there—of his death, burial, and exhumation—of these things no man has been able to speak with confidence, for knowledge of them was not at hand. And the importance of this information is realized when we remember that it embraces much of the history of four states in the Civil War and portrays the bloodiest man known to the annals of America.

There is no good portrait of Quantrill. He had a tin-type

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made at the beginning of the war. It was lost in the yard of one Fields, in Jackson county, who found it and preserved it until Thomson Quantrill came to Missouri. He demanded the picture and it was given to him, but it was first photographed. The photographs made from this tin-type, which had lain in the ground some time, are all the portraits known of Quantrill. Some one supposed he wore a mustache, and with a brush supplied one. E. P. DeHart had the portrait painted in Confederate uniform in company with a character known as "Indian Jim," no copy of which has been found. A. M. Winner, Kansas City, Mo., had it painted in Confederate uniform, rank of Colonel, prints of which are common.

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