

**MEMORIES OF EIGHTY
YEARS; AUTOSKETCHES,
RANDOM NOTES AND
REMINISCENCES**

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Memories of eighty years; autosketches, random notes and reminiscences by John Hamilcar Hollister

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JOHN HAMILCAR HOLLISTER

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REMINISCENCES**



1849

John H. Hollister

Memories of Eighty Years

AUTOSKETCHES, RANDOM NOTES
AND REMINISCENCES

BY
JOHN HAMILCAR HOLLISTER



Chicago, Illinois
1912

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My dear *Friends*: —

For many years Dr. Martin and I made it our custom, when not otherwise engaged, to go over to the old home at 3430 Rhodes Avenue, late in the evening, for a "just before bed-time" chat with the dear people there. Almost invariably we found them seated before a bright open fire, my father reading aloud from some big book — nothing frivolous, mind you — and my mother fashioning a dainty gift from ribbon or from a bright bit of worsted for some loved friend. Often our conversation turned to bygone days, and so interesting was it and so varied, that over and over again I exclaimed "Papa, why don't you talk this into a phonograph. I shall forget it all and some day I shall want it so much!"

Then one fall, the fall of 1908, came a season of great mystery — a dropping of newspapers over unknown somethings in unexpected places and a hasty pushing aside of innocent looking bits of paper. As a result, I received, that Christmas, a square white box. In it, neatly typewritten, were sixteen chapters of "Memories." Each chapter had been tied by my mother's dear fingers with a bright scarlet ribbon and a sprig of holly, and I need not tell you that of all the gifts of my life, this was the most precious.

That was our last Christmas as an unbroken family. My mother died the following February, and in his great loneliness my father turned with unanticipated pleasure to the continuance of this self-appointed task. Having laid aside the responsibilities and duties of an unusually active life, he now found that this labor of love was indeed a blessing in disguise. Many were the chapters that we planned for future writing and many were the sketches outlined to be filled in. Much that I long to have remains untold, but I am glad there were pages still unwritten, for I rejoice

Ellen's Historical Society

11/11/11

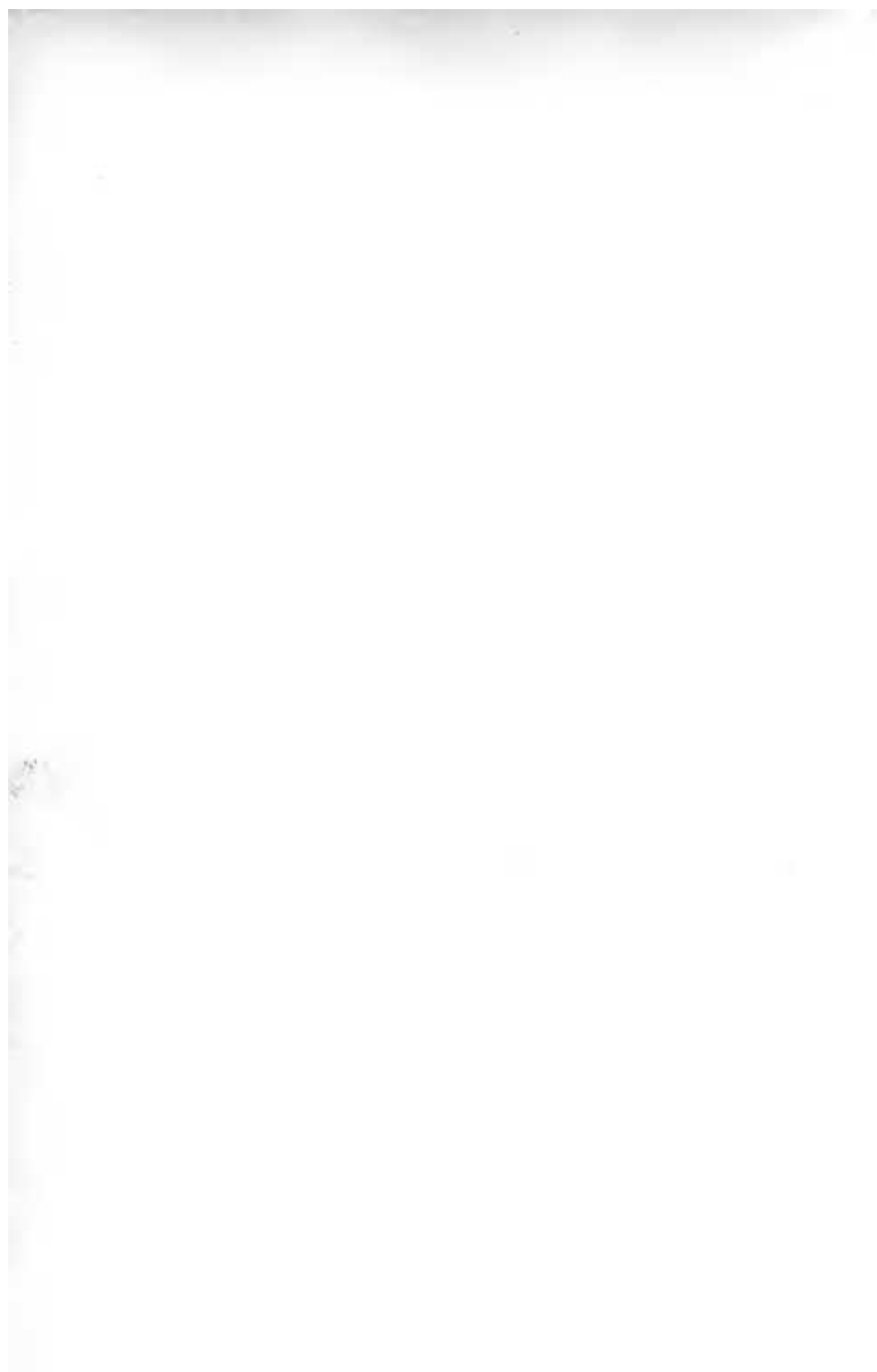
to think that he never felt that the sands of life had quite run out while work yet remained for him to do.

In his manuscript there are one or two slight inaccuracies which, owing to the fact that our books are all packed away, I have been unable to verify or correct. These, however, are trifling and unimportant.

His medical career is here somewhat briefly touched upon because in a series of articles which he had recently written, and to which he here refers, he had dealt at length with his professional relations. The most vital period of his life seems to have been that of the Civil War. Over and over again, he referred to the experiences covered by those crucial years, and always with the deepest interest and intensity. The chapters upon African Slavery were written during the summer of 1910, which he spent with us at Midlothian. All day long he would sit absorbed in some big volume, until the lengthening shadows would have tried younger eyes than his; and early in the morning, upon our upper porch in the treetops, I would hear him clicking away upon his little typewriter, as he copied the work of the day before.

And now I am sharing what the dear hand has written with you, because I know how much you loved and respected my father and because I hope this little remembrance of him will prove a real joy to you. It is the last effort of a long and busy life; a life singularly simple and unassuming in itself, yet of such inspiration and strength to those about him; a life full of dignity, earnest purpose and power, yet withal full of hope, happiness and love; a life fully completed and rounded out, of which our hearts all may say "He has fought a good fight, he has finished his course, he has kept the faith."

Yours most truly
Louella Hallister Washburn
Hotel Metropole,
Chicago.



foreword

THIS little book does not aspire to publicity. It is written at the request of my wife and children. As they are responsible for its production, so must they be for its imperfections.

To my wife, let it be a memento of sixty years of married life; to our children, Dr. Franklin H. Martin and Isabelle Hollister Martin, a Christmas gift.

CHRISTMAS, 1908.