

## Messrs. Byers and Richman

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more or less lengthy allusions included in the long list of publications printed by the Federal Government. A large majority of these descriptions are unknown to the people of the State, who consequently know not where to look for the information desired.

Yet all these have to be gone over, involving so much time and labor that considerable hesitancy arises before the preparation of indices of this kind is entered upon finally.

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#### MESSRS. BYERS AND RICHMAN.

It is doubtless known to our readers that Col. S. H. M. Byers, of Oskaloosa, has for the past two years held the position of Consul-General at St. Gall, Switzerland, to which he was appointed by President Harrison. It was announced in the public journals about the middle of May that he had been recalled by President Cleveland, and that Hon. Irving B. Richman, of Muscatine, had been appointed to fill his place. As both gentlemen are widely known, the present is deemed a fitting occasion to make mention of their merits and distinguished public services, and especially because of the excellent work they have done in the direction of Iowa history.

Mr. Byers was born in Pulaski, Pa., July 23, 1838. The family came to Iowa in 1851, and settled in Oskaloosa in 1853. After his school days he studied law and was admitted to the bar. When the Fifth Iowa Infantry was raised, young Byers enlisted as a private. He was immediately appointed Quartermaster's Sergeant. A little later he was commissioned as First Lieutenant and Adjutant of the regiment. He served in this capacity until the battle of Mission Ridge, where he was captured by the Confederates. He was, first and last, in six different prisons, including the Libby at Richmond, and was one of the Union officers who were placed under the fire of our own guns at Charleston, S. C. During this long imprisonment of one year and four months he escaped three times, but was as often recaptured. While in prison he wrote his well-known song of "Sherman's March to the Sea," thus winning national

fame and giving a name to that great expedition. A few hours after he had again escaped at Columbia, S. C., the city fell before the attack of Gen. Sherman, and the long sojourn in the enemy's country ended. He was at once appointed to a place on the staff of the commanding General, receiving also kindly attentions from Gen. Grant, and thenceforward his lines fell in pleasant places, although his health was ruined. In fact, when he was mustered out of the military service he was a physical wreck. It was several years before he regained anything like even a tolerable degree of health, and from the effects of his sufferings while in prison he has never fully recovered. No sooner was he out of the army than he was compelled to set about earning a livelihood, though he was a fitter subject for a hospital than for any active employment. He had, indeed, acquired a national reputation by his popular song of "Sherman's March to the Sea," but even that availed him little in the "struggle for existence" which at once confronted him. After some years at home he was appointed U. S. Consul to Zurich, Switzerland, where he served with such distinguished credit that he was promoted to the post of Consul-General at Rome, from which he was recalled at the beginning of Mr. Cleveland's first administration.

Coming home, he resided in Oskaloosa during the succeeding four years, much of the time engaged in writing his excellent and well-known book, "Iowa in War Times." He had long before published a thrilling little volume which will one of these days be worth its weight in gold, entitled, "What I saw in Dixie; or Sixteen Months in Rebel Prisons." President Harrison made him Consul-General at St. Gall, some two years ago, where he is now to be superceded by Mr. Richman.

In addition to his official services, which have always been as acceptable to the Government as they have been popular with the multitude of Americans who have met him abroad, Col. Byers has found time to perform considerable literary labor. He has contributed many very able illustrated articles to the best magazines of the country, as well as published two or three volumes of poetry. His official and special reports

have been cyclopedic in the amount and value of the information contained in them. During all the years he has been abroad his thoughts have constantly been upon his native land, and he has striven to the utmost of his powers to benefit his countrymen. Among other good deeds, he is collecting, at his own expense, a gallery of fine paintings in oil, for Penn College, Oskaloosa. He deserves all the honors, all the consideration, which can come to the good and faithful servant.

While Mr. Richman has attained his present honorable position without the terrible "storm and stress" entailed upon "Adjutant Byers" during the war of the Rebellion, he is a young man whose merits may well be deemed of the first order. He was born at Muscatine, Iowa, October 27, 1861. He graduated at the Iowa State University in 1883, and was admitted to the bar two years later. In 1889 the citizens of his county elected him to the lower house of our State Legislature, where he served two terms. With his party ticket he was defeated for Presidential Elector in 1892. A fine speaker and debater—always ready, cool, dignified and judicious—he took and maintained a very high position from the beginning of his legislative service. Like Col. Byers, he has won much distinction in literature, having published elaborate articles in "The Atlantic Monthly," "Political Science Quarterly" and "The Magazine of American History." He has also achieved considerable success in the domain of State History, having given especial attention to the career of "John Brown in Iowa," "Mormonism in Iowa," "The Spirit Lake Massacre," "The Indian Chiefs Keokuk and Black Hawk," and many other topics. Some of his monographs have been published, though the greater portion have not yet seen the light. He has it in contemplation to issue a book before many months. With youth and health, high culture, literary tastes and thorough knowledge of the law, he goes forth to his new duties splendidly equipped. His future career would seem to be full of promise.

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