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Author: Ezra Meeker

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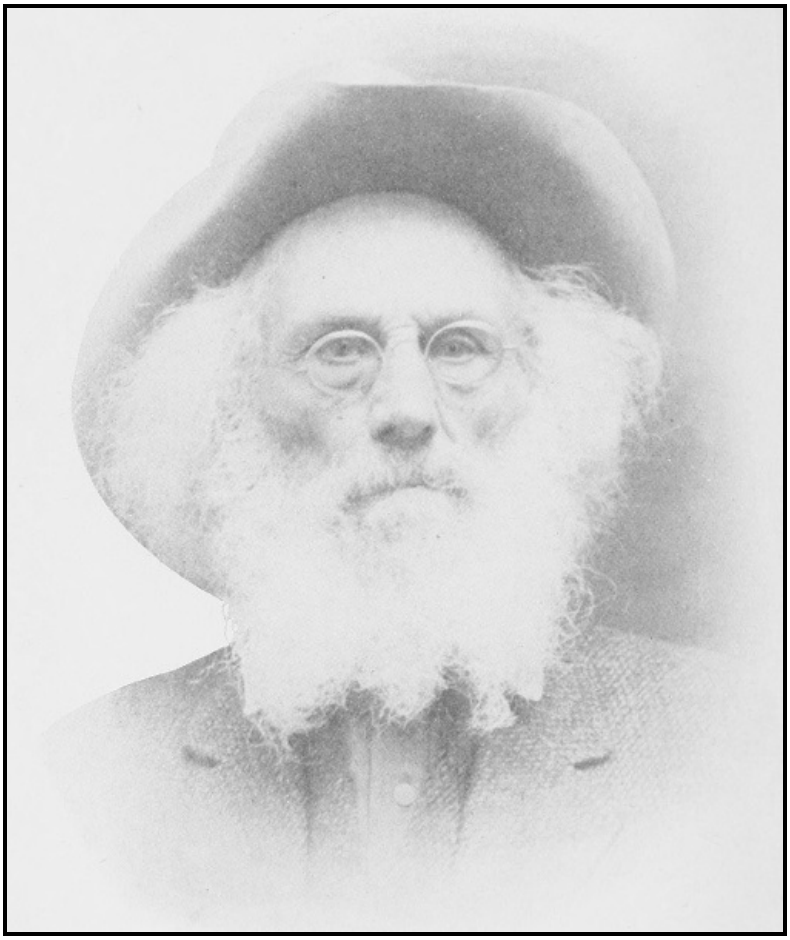

EZRA MEEKER
WASHINGTON, D. C., JAN. 23, 1916. BORN DEC. 29, 1830

THE BUSY LIFE

OF

EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS

OF

EZRA MEEKER

VENTURES AND ADVENTURES

Sixty-three years of Pioneer Life in the Old Oregon Country; An Account
of the Author's Trip Across the Plains with an Ox Team, 1852;
Return Trip, 1906-7; His Cruise on Puget Sound, 1853;
Trip Through the Natchess Pass, 1854; Over
the Chilcoot Pass; Flat-boating on the
Yukon, 1898.

THE OREGON TRAIL

AUTHOR OF PIONEER "REMINISCENCES OF PUGET SOUND"—"THE TRAGEDY OF
LESCHI"—"HOP CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES"—"WASHINGTON
TERRITORY WEST OF THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS"—"THE OX
TEAM"—"UNCLE EZRA'S SHORT STORIES FOR
THE CHILDREN."

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

$1.50 Postpaid

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

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Press Wm. B. Burford

Indianapolis

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PREFACE

Just why I should write a preface I know not, except that it is fashionable to do so, and yet in the present case there would seem a little explanation due the reader, who may cast his eye on the first chapter of this work.

Indeed, the chapter, "Early Days in Indiana," may properly be termed an introduction, though quite intimately connected with the narrative that follows, yet not necessary to make a completed story of the trip to Oregon in the early fifties.

The enlarged scope of this work, narrating incidents not connected with the Oregon Trail or the Ox Team expedition, may call for this explanation, that the author's thought has been to portray frontier life in the Old Oregon Country, as well as pioneer life on the plains; to live his experiences of eighty-five years over again, and tell them in plain, homely language, to the end the later generation may know how the "fathers" lived, what they did, and what they thought in the long ago.

An attempt has been made to teach the young lessons of industry, frugality, upright and altruistic living as exemplified in the lives of the pioneers.

While acknowledging the imperfections of the work, yet to parents I can sincerely say they may safely place this volume in the home without fear that the adventures recited will arouse a morbid craving in the minds of their children. The adventures are of real life, and incident to a serious purpose in life, and not stories of fancy to make exciting reading, although some of them may seem as such.

"Truth is stranger than fiction," and the pioneers have no need to borrow from their imagination.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

GREETINGS

Upon this, my 85th birthday with good health remaining with me and strength to prompt the will to do, small wonder that I should arise with thankfulness in my heart for the many, many blessings vouchsafed to me.

To my friends (and enemies, if I have any) I dedicate this volume, to be known as "Eighty-five Years of a Busy Life," in the hope of cementing closer companionship and mutual good will to the end, that by looking back into earlier life, we may be guided to better ways in the vista of years to come, to a more forgiving spirit, to a less stern condemnation of the foibles of others and a more joyful contemplation of life's duties.

Having lived the simple life for so many years I could not now change to the more modern ways of "High Living" and would not if I could; nevertheless, the wonderful advance of art and science, the great opportunity afforded for betterment of life in so many ways to challenge our admiration, I would not record myself as against innovation, as saying that all old ways were the best ways, but I will say some of them were. The patient reader will notice this thought developed in the pages to follow and while they may not be in full accord of the teachings, yet, it is the hope of the author the lessons may not fall upon deaf ears.

Being profoundly grateful for so many expressions of good will that have reached me from so many friends, I will reciprocate by wishing that each and every one of you may live to be over a hundred years old, coupled with the admonition to accomplish this you must be possessed with patience, and that "you must keep working to keep young."

Now, please read that grand inspired poem on next page, "Work", before you read the book, to see if you have not there found the true elixir of life and with it the author's hope to reach the goal beyond the century mark.

Greetings to all.

The Outlook, December 2, 1914

WORK

A SONG OF TRIUMPH."

By Angela Morgan.

Work!
Thank God for the might of it,
The ardor, the urge, the delight of it—
Work that springs from the heart's desire,
Setting the soul and the brain on fire.
Oh, what is so good as the heat of it,
And what is so glad as the beat of it,
And what is so kind as the stern command
Challenging brain and heart and hand?

Work!
Thank God for the pride of it,
For the beautiful, conquering tide of it,
Sweeping the life in its furious flood,
Thrilling the arteries, cleansing the blood,
Mastering stupor and dull despair,
Moving the dreamer to do and dare.
Oh; what is so good as the urge of it,
And what is so glad as the surge of it,
And what is so strong as the summons deep
Rousing the torpid soul from sleep?

Work!
Thank God for the pace of it,
For the terrible, keen, swift race of it;
Fiery steeds in full control,
Nostrils aquiver to greet the goal.
Work, the power that drives behind,
Guiding the purposes, taming the mind,
Holding the runaway wishes back,
Reining the will to one steady track,
Speeding the energies faster, faster,
Triumphing over disaster.
Oh! what is so good as the pain of it,
And what is so great as the gain of it,
And what is so kind as the cruel goad,
Forcing us on through the rugged road?

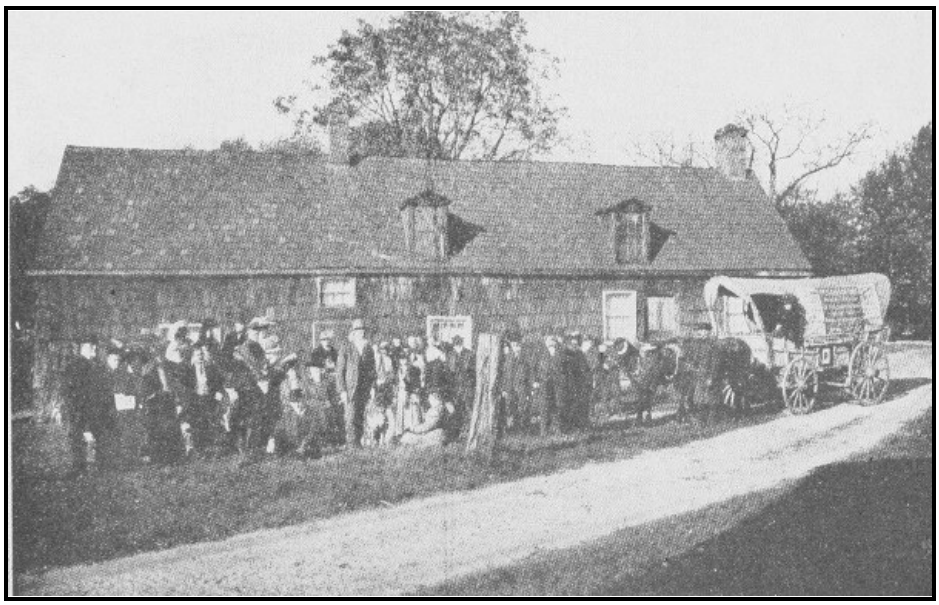
Work!
Thank God for the swing of it,
For the clamoring, hammering ring of it,
Passion of labor daily hurled
On the mighty anvils of the world
Oh, what is so fierce as the flame of it,
And what is so huge as the aim of it,
Thundering on through dearth and doubt,
Calling the plan of the Maker out;
Work, the Titan, Work, the friend,
Shaping the earth to a glorious end;
Draining the swamps and blasting the hills,
Doing whatever the spirit wills,
Rending a continent apart
To answer the dream of the Master heart.
Thank God for a world where none may shirk,
Thank God for the splendor of work.

CHAPTER I.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I was born near Huntsville, Butler County, Ohio, about ten miles east of Hamilton, Ohio. This, to me, important event occurred on December 29, A. D. 1830, hence I am many years past the usual limit of three score years and ten.

My father's ancestors came from England in 1637 and in 1665 settled near Elizabeth City, New Jersey, built a very substantial house which is still preserved, furnished more than a score of hardy soldiers in the War of Independence, and were noted for their stalwart strength, steady habits, and patriotic ardor. My father had lost nothing of the original sturdy instincts of the stock nor of the stalwart strength, incident to his ancestral breeding. I remember that for three years, at Carlyle's flouring mill in the then western suburbs of Indianapolis, Ind., he worked 18 hours a day, as miller. He had to be on duty by 7 o'clock a. m., and remained on duty until 1 o'clock the next morning, and could not leave the mill for dinner;—all this for $20 per month, and bran for the cow, and yet his health was good and strength seemed the same as when he began the ordeal. My mother's maiden name was Phoeba Baker. A strong English and Welch strain of blood ran in her veins, but I know nothing farther back than my grandfather Baker, who settled in Butler County, Ohio, in the year 1804, or thereabouts. My mother, like my father, could and did endure continuous long hours of severe labor without much discomfort, in her household duties. I have known her frequently to patch and mend our clothing until 11 o'clock at night and yet would invariably be up in the morning by 4:00 and resume her labors.



The Ancestral Old Homestead, Built 1676.

Both my parents were sincere, though not austere Christian people, my mother in particular inclining to a liberal faith, but both were in early days members of the "Disciples," or as [Pg 3] sometimes known as "Newlites," afterwards, I believe, merged with the "Christian" church, popularly known as the "Campbellites" and were ardent admirers of Love Jameson, who presided so long over the Christian organization at Indianapolis, and whom I particularly remember as one of the sweetest singers that I ever heard.

Small wonder that with such parents and with such surroundings I am able to say that for fifty-eight years of married life I have never been sick in bed a single day, and that I can and have endured long hours of labor during my whole life, and what is particularly gratifying that I can truthfully say that I have always loved my work and that I never watched for the sun to go down to relieve me from the burden of labor.

"Burden of labor?" Why should any man call labor a burden? It's the sweetest pleasure of life, if we will but look aright. Give me nothing of the "man with the hoe" sentiment, as depicted by Markham, but let me see the man with a light heart; that labors; that fulfills a destiny the good God has given him; that fills an honored place in life even if in an humble station; that looks upon the bright side of life while striving as best he may to do his duty. I am led into these thoughts by what I see around about me, so changed from that of my boyhood days where labor was held to be honorable, even though in humble stations.

But, to return to my story. My earliest recollection, curiously enough, is of my schoolboy days, of which I had so few. I was certainly not five years old when a drunken, brutal school teacher undertook to spank me while holding me on his knees because I did not speak a word plainly. That is the first fight I have any recollection of, and would hardly remember that but for the witnesses, one of them my oldest brother, who saw the struggle, where my teeth did such excellent work as to draw blood quite freely. What a spectacle that, of a half-drunken teacher [Pg 4] maltreating his scholars! But then that was a time before a free school system, and when the parson would not hesitate to take a "wee bit," and when, if the decanter was not on the sideboard, the jug and gourd served well in the field or house. To harvest without whisky in the

field was not to be thought of; nobody ever heard of a log-rolling or barn-raising without whisky. And so I will say to the zealous temperance reformers, be of good cheer, for the world has moved in these eighty-five years. Be it said, though, to the everlasting honor of my father, that he set his head firmly against the practice, and said his grain should rot in the field before he would supply whisky to his harvest hands, and I have no recollections of ever but once tasting any alcoholic liquors in my boyhood days.

I did, however, learn to smoke when very young. It came about in this way: My mother always smoked, as long as I can remember. Women those days smoked as well as men, and nothing was thought of it.

Well, that was before the time of matches, or leastwise, it was a time when it was thought necessary to economize in their use, and mother, who was a corpulent woman, would send me to put a coal in her pipe, and so I would take a whiff or two, just to get it started, you know, which, however, soon developed into the habit of lingering to keep it going. But let me be just to myself, —for more than thirty years ago I threw away my pipe and have never smoked since, and never will, and now to those smokers who say they "can't quit" I want to call their attention to one case of a man who did.

My next recollection of school-days was after father had moved to Lockland, Ohio, then ten miles north of Cincinnati, now, I presume, a suburb of that great city. I played "hookey" instead of going to school, but one day while under the canal bridge the noise of passing teams so frightened me that I ran home and betrayed himself. Did my mother whip me? Why, God bless her dear old soul, no. Whipping of children, though, both at home and in the school-room, was [Pg 5] then about as common as eating one's breakfast; but my parents did not think it was necessary to rule by the rod, though then their family government was exceptional. And so we see now a different rule prevailing, and see that the world does move and is getting better.

After my father's removal to Indiana times were "hard," as the common expression goes, and all members of the household for a season were called upon to contribute their mite. I drove four yoke of oxen for twenty-five cents a day, and a part of that time boarded at home at that. This was on the Wabash where oak grubs grew, as father often said, "as thick as hair on a dog's back," but not so thick as that. But we used to force the big plow through and cut grubs with the plow shear, as big as my wrist; and when we saw a patch of them ahead, then was when I learned how to halloo and rave at the poor oxen and inconsiderately whip them, but father wouldn't let me swear at them. Let me say parenthetically that I have long since discontinued such a foolish practice, and that I now talk to my oxen in a conversational tone of voice and use the whip sparingly. When father moved to Indianapolis, I think in 1842, "times" seemed harder than ever, and I was put to work wherever an opportunity for employment offered, and encouraged by my mother to seek odd jobs and keep the money myself, she, however, becoming my banker; and in three years I had actually accumulated $37.00. My! but what a treasure that was to me, and what a bond of confidence between my mother and myself, for no one else, as I thought, knew about my treasure. I found out afterwards, though, that father knew about it all the time.

My ambition was to get some land. I had heard there was a forty-acre tract in Hendricks County (Indiana) yet to be entered at $1.25 per acre, and as soon as I could get $50.00 together I meant to hunt up that land and secure it. I used to dream about that land day times as well as at night. I sawed wood and cut each stick twice for twenty-five cents a cord, and enjoyed the [Pg 6] experience, for at night I could add to my treasure. It was because my mind did not run on school work and because of my restless disposition that my mother allowed me to do this instead of compelling me to attend school, and which cut down my real schoolboy days to less than six months. It was, to say the least, a dangerous experiment and one which only a mother (who knows her child better than all others) dare take, and I will not by any means advise other mothers to adopt such a course.

Then when did you get your education? the casual reader may ask. I will tell you a story. When in 1870 I wrote my first book (long since out of print), "Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains," and submitted the work to the Eastern public, a copy fell into the hands of Jay Cooke, who then had six power presses running advertising the Northern Pacific railroad, and he at once took up my whole edition. Mr. Cooke, whom I met, closely questioned me as to where I was educated. After having answered his many queries about my life on the frontier he would not listen to my disclaimer that I was not an educated man, referring to the work in his hand. The fact then dawned on me that it was the reading of the then current literature of the day that had taught me. I answered that the New York Tribune had educated me, as I had then been a close reader of that paper for eighteen years, and it was there I got my pure English diction, if I possessed it. We received mails only twice a month for a long time, and sometimes only once a month, and it is needless to say that all the matter in the paper was read and much of it re-read and studied in the cabin and practiced in the field. However, I do not set my face against school training, but can better express my meaning by the quaint saying that "too much of a good thing is more than enough," a phrase in a way senseless, which yet conveys a deeper meaning than the literal words express. The context will show the lack of a common school education, after all, was not entirely for want of an opportunity, but from my aversion to confinement and preference for [Pg 7] work to study.

In those days apprenticeship was quite common, and it was not thought to be a disgrace for a child to be "bound out" until he was twenty-one, the more especially if this involved learning a trade. Father took a notion he would "bind me out" to a Mr. Arthens, the mill owner at Lockland,

who was childless, and took me with him one day to talk it over. Finally, when asked how I would like the change, I promptly replied that it would be all right if Mrs. Arthens would "do up my sore toes", whereupon there was such an outburst of merriment that I always remembered it. We must remember that boys in those days did not wear shoes in summer and quite often not in winter either. But mother put a quietus on the whole business and said the family must not be divided, and it was not, and in that she was right. Give me the humble home for a child, that is a home in fact, rather than the grandest palace where home life is but a sham.

I come now to an important event of my life, when father moved from Lockland, Ohio, to near Covington, Indiana. I was not yet seven years old, but walked all the way behind the wagon and began building "castles in the air," which is the first (but by no means the last) that I remember. We were going out to Indiana to be farmers, and it was here, near the banks of the Wabash, that I learned the art of driving four yoke of oxen to a breaking plow, without swearing.

That reminds me of an after-experience, the summer I was nineteen. Uncle John Kinworthy (good old soul he was), an ardent Quaker, who lived a mile or so out from Bridgeport, Indiana, asked me one day while I was passing his place with three yoke of oxen to haul a heavy cider press beam in place. This led the oxen through the front dooryard and in full sight and hearing of three buxom Quaker girls, who either stood in the door or poked their heads out of the window, in company with their good mother. Go through the front yard past those girls the cattle would not, and kept doubling back, first on one side and then on the other. Uncle Johnny, noticing I did not swear at the cattle, and attributing the absence of oaths to the presence of ladies, or maybe, like a good many others, he thought oxen could not be driven without swearing at them, sought an opportunity, when the mistress of the house could not hear him, and said in a low tone, "If thee can do any better, thee had better let out the word." Poor, good old soul, he doubtless justified himself in his own mind that it was no more sin to swear all the time than part of the time; and why is it? I leave the answer to that person, if he can be found, that never swears.

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Yes, I say again, give me the humble home for a child, that is a home in fact, rather than the grandest palace where home life is but a sham. And right here is where this generation has a grave problem to solve, if it's not the gravest of the age, the severance of child life from the real home and the real home influences, by the factory child labor, the boarding schools, the rush for city life, and so many others of like influences at work, that one can only take time to mention examples.

And now the reader will ask, What do you mean by the home life? and to answer that I will relate some features of my early home life, though by no means would say that I would want to return to all the ways of "ye olden times."

My mother always expected each child to have a duty to perform, as well as time to play. Light labor, to be sure, but labor; something of service. Our diet was so simple, the mere mention of it may create a smile with the casual reader. The mush pot was a great factor in our home life; a great heavy iron pot that hung on the crane in the chimney corner where the mush would slowly bubble and splutter over or near a bed of oak coals for half the afternoon. And such mush, always made from yellow corn meal and cooked three hours or more. This, eaten with plenty of fresh, rich milk comprised the supper for the children. Tea? Not to be thought of. Sugar? It was too expensive—cost fifteen to eighteen cents a pound, and at a time it took a week's labor to earn as much as a day's labor now. Cheap molasses, sometimes, but not often. Meat, not more than once a day, but eggs in abundance. Everything father had to sell was low-priced, while everything mother must buy at the store was high. Only to think of it, you who complain of the hard lot of the workers of this generation: wheat twenty-five cents a bushel, corn fifteen cents, pork two and two and a half cents a pound, with bacon sometimes used as fuel by the reckless, racing steamboat captains of the Ohio and Mississippi. But when we got onto the farm with abundance of fruit and vegetables, with plenty of pumpkin pies and apple dumplings, our cup of joy was full, and we were the happiest mortals on earth. As I have said, 4:00 o'clock scarcely ever found mother in bed, and until within very recent years I can say that 5:00 o'clock almost invariably finds me up. Habit, do you say? No, not wholly, though that may have something to do with it, but I get up early because I want to, and because I have something to do.

[Pg 9]

When I was born, thirty miles of railroad comprised the whole mileage of the United States, and this only a tramway. Now, how many hundred thousand miles I know not, but many miles over the two hundred thousand mark. When I crossed the great states of Illinois and Iowa on my way to Oregon in 1852 not a mile of railroad was seen in either state. Only four years before, the first line was built in Indiana, really a tramway, from Madison, on the Ohio River, to Indianapolis. What a furore the building of that railroad created! Earnest, honest men opposed the building just as sincerely as men now advocate public ownership; both propositions are fallacious, the one long since exploded, the other in due time, as sure to die out as the first. My father was a strong advocate of the railroads, but I caught the arguments on the other side advocated with such vehemence as to have the sound of anger. What will our farmers do with their hay if all the teams that are hauling freight to the Ohio River are thrown out of employment? What will the tavern keepers do? What will become of the wagoners? A hundred such queries would be asked by the opponents of the railroad and, to themselves, triumphantly answered that the country would be ruined if railroads were built. Nevertheless, Indianapolis has grown from ten thousand to much over two hundred thousand, notwithstanding the city enjoyed the unusual distinction of being the first terminal city in the state of Indiana. I remember it was the boast of the railroad magnates of that day that they would soon increase the speed of their trains to fourteen miles an hour,—this when they were running twelve.

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In the year 1845 a letter came from Grandfather Baker to my mother that he would give her a thousand dollars with which to buy a farm. The burning question with my father and mother was how to get that money out from Ohio to Indiana. They actually went in a covered wagon to Ohio for it and hauled it home, all silver, in a box. This silver was nearly all foreign coin. Prior to that time, but a few million dollars had been coined by the United States Government. Grandfather Baker had accumulated this money by marketing small things in Cincinnati, twenty-five miles distant. I have heard my mother tell of going to market on horseback with grandfather many times, carrying eggs, butter and even live chickens on the horse she rode. Grandfather would not go in debt, and so he lived on his farm a long time without a wagon, but finally became wealthy, and was reputed to have a "barrel of money" (silver, of course), out of which store the thousand dollars mentioned came. It took nearly a whole day to count this thousand dollars, as there seemed to be nearly every nation's coin on earth represented, and the "tables" (of value) had to be consulted, the particular coins counted, and their aggregate value computed.

It was this money that bought the farm five miles southwest of Indianapolis, where I received my first real farm training. Father had advanced ideas about farming, though a miller by trade, [Pg 11] and early taught me some valuable lessons I never forgot. We (I say "we" advisedly, as father continued to work in the mill and left me in charge of the farm) soon brought up the run-down farm to produce twenty-three bushels of wheat per acre instead of ten, by the rotation of corn, and clover and then wheat. But there was no money in farming at the then prevailing prices, and the land, for which father paid ten dollars an acre, would not yield a rental equal to the interest on the money. Now that same land has recently sold for six hundred dollars an acre.

For a time I worked in the Journal printing office for S. V. B. Noel, who, I think, was the publisher of the Journal, and also printed a free-soil paper. A part of my duty was to deliver those papers to subscribers, who treated me civilly, but when I was caught on the streets of Indianapolis with the papers in my hand I was sure of abuse from some one, and a number of times narrowly escaped personal violence. In the office I worked as roller boy, but known as "the devil," a term that annoyed me not a little. The pressman was a man by the name of Wood. In the same room was a power press, the power being a stalwart negro who turned a crank. We used to race with the power press, when I would fly the sheets, that is, take them off when printed with one hand and roll the type with the other. This so pleased Noel that he advanced my wages to $1.50 a week.

The present generation can have no conception of the brutal virulence of the advocates of slavery against the "nigger" and "nigger lovers," as all were known who did not join in the crusade against the negroes.

One day we heard a commotion on the streets, and upon inquiry were told that "they had just killed a nigger up the street, that's all," and went back to work shocked, but could do nothing. But when a little later word came that it was Wood's brother that had led the mob and that it was "old Jimmy Blake's man" (who was known as a sober, inoffensive colored man) consternation seized Wood as with an iron grip. His grief was inconsolable. The negro had been set upon by the [Pg 12] mob just because he was a negro and for no other reason, and brutally murdered. That murder, coupled with the abuse I had received at the hands of this same element, set me to thinking, and I then and there embraced the anti-slavery doctrines and ever after adhered to them until the question was settled.

One of the subscribers to whom I delivered that anti-slavery paper was Henry Ward Beecher, who had then not attained the fame that came to him later in life, but to whom I became attached by his kind treatment and gentle words he always found time to utter. He was then, I think the pastor of the Congregational Church that faced the "Governor's Circle." The church has long since been torn down.

One episode of my life I remember because I thought my parents were in the wrong. Vocal music was taught in singing school, almost, I might say, as regular as day schools. I was passionately fond of music, and before the change came had a splendid alto voice, and became a leader in my part of the class. This coming to the notice of the trustees of Beecher's church, an effort was made to have me join the choir. Mother first objected because my clothes were not good enough, whereupon an offer was made to suitably clothe me and pay something besides; but father objected because he did not want me to listen to preaching other than the sect (Campbellite) to which he belonged. The incident set me to thinking, and finally drove me, young as I was, into the liberal faith, though I dared not openly espouse it. In those days many ministers openly preached of endless punishment in a lake of fire, but I never could believe that doctrine, and yet their words would carry terror into my heart. The ways of the world are better now in this, as in many other respects.

Another episode of my life while working in the printing office I have remembered vividly all these years. During the campaign of 1844 the Whigs held a second gathering on the Tippecanoe battle-ground. It could hardly be called a convention. A better name for the gathering would be a [Pg 13] political camp-meeting. The people came in wagons, on horseback, afoot—any way to get there—and camped just like people used to do in their religious camp-meetings. The journeymen printers of the Journal office planned to go in a covered dead-ax wagon, and signified they would make a place for the "devil," if his parents would let him go along. This was speedily arranged with mother, who always took charge of such matters. The proposition coming to Noel's ears he said for the men to print me some campaign songs, which they did with a will, Wood running them off the press after night while I rolled the type for him. My! wasn't I the proudest boy that

ever walked the earth? Visions of a pocket full of money haunted me almost day and night until we arrived on the battlefield. But lo and behold, nobody would pay any attention to me. Bands of music were playing here and there; glee clubs would sing and march first on one side of the ground and then the other; processions were marching and the crowds surging, making it necessary for one to look out and not get run over. Coupled with this, the rain would pour down in torrents, but the marching and countermarching went on all the same and continued for a week. An elderly journeyman printer named May, who in a way stood sponsor for our party, told me if I would get up on the fence and sing my songs the people would buy them, and sure enough the crowds came and I sold every copy I had, and went home with eleven dollars in my pocket, the richest boy on earth.

It was about this time the start was made of printing the Indianapolis News, a paper that has thriven all these after years. These same rollicking printers that comprised the party to the battle-ground put their heads together to have some fun, and began printing out of hours a small 9x11 sheet filled with short paragraphs of sharp sayings of men and things about town, some more expressive than elegant, and some, in fact, not fit for polite ears; but the pith of the matter was they treated only of things that were true and of men moving in the highest circles. I cannot [Pg 14] recall the given names of any of these men. May, the elderly man before referred to, a man named Finly, and another, Elder, were the leading spirits in the enterprise. Wood did the presswork and my share was to ink the type and in part stealthily distribute the papers, for it was a great secret where they came from at the start—all this "just for the fun of the thing," but the sheet caused so much comment and became sought after so much that the mask was thrown off and the little paper launched as a "semi-occasional" publication and "sold by carrier only," all this after hours, when the regular day's work was finished. I picked up quite a good many fip-i-na-bits (a coin representing the value of 6¼ cents) myself from the sale of these. After a while the paper was published regularly, a rate established, and the little paper took its place among the regular publications of the day. This writing is altogether from memory of occurrences seventy years ago, and may be faulty in detail, but the main facts are true, which probably will be borne out by the files of the great newspaper that has grown from the seed sown by those restless journeymen printers.

It seems though that I was not "cut out" for a printer. My inclination ran more to the open air life, and so father placed me on the farm as soon as the purchase was made and left me in full charge of the work, while he turned his attention to milling. Be it said that I early turned my attention to the girls as well as to the farm, married young—before I had reached the age of twenty-one, and can truly say this was a happy venture, for we lived happily together for fifty-eight years before the call came and now there are thirty-six descendants to revere the name of the sainted mother.

And now for a little insight into these times of precious memories that never fade, and always lend gladness to the heart.

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CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD DAYS.

My mother said I was "always the busiest young'en she ever saw," which meant I was restless from the beginning—born so.

According to the best information obtainable, I was born in a log cabin, where the fireplace was nearly as wide as the cabin. The two doors on opposite sides admitted the horse, dragging the backlog, to enter in one, and go out at the other, and of course the solid puncheon floor defied injury from rough treatment.

The crane swung to and fro to regulate the bubbling mush in the pot. The skillet and dutch oven occupied places of favor, instead of the cook stove, to bake the pone or johnny cake, or to parch the corn, or to fry the venison, which was then obtainable in the wilds of Ohio.

A curtain at the farther end of the cabin marked the confines of a bed chamber for the "old folk", while the elder children climbed the ladder nailed to the wall to the loft of loose clapboard that rattled when trod upon and where the pallets were so near the roof that the patter of the rain made music to the ear, and the spray of the falling water, not infrequently, would baptize the "tow-heads" left uncovered.

Mother used to give us boys mush and milk for supper, and only that, and then turned us out to romp or play or do up chores as the case might be, and sometimes as I now think of it, we must almost have made a burden of life for her, but she always seemed to think that anything we did in the way of antics was funny and about right.

It is mete to recall to mind that this date (of my birth) 1830, was just after the first railroad was built (1826) in the United States, just after friction matches were discovered (1827), just when the first locomotive was run (1829), and "daguerreotype" was invented. Following these came the [Pg 16] McCormick reaper, immortalizing a name; the introduction of photography (1839), and finally the telegraph (1844) to hand down the name of Morse to all future generations as long as history is recorded. Then came the sewing machine (1846) to lighten the housewife's labor and make possible the vast advance in adornment in dress.

The few pioneers left will remember how the teeth were "yanked" out, and he must "grin and bear it" until chloroform came into use (1847), the beginning of easing the pain in surgical work and the near cessation of blood-letting for all sorts of ills to which the race was heir.

The world had never heard of artesian wells until after I was eleven years old (1841). Then came the Atlantic cable (1858), and the discovery of coal oil (1859). Time and events combined to revolutionize the affairs of the world. I well remember the "power" printing press (the power being a sturdy negro turning a crank), in a room where I worked a while as "the devil" in Noel's office in Indianapolis (1844) that would print 500 impressions an hour, and I have recently seen the monster living things that would seem to do almost everything but think, run off its 96,000 of completed newspapers in the same period of time, folded and counted.

The removal to "Lockland", alongside the "raging canal", seemed only a way station to the longer drive to Indiana, the longest walk of my life in my younger days, which I vividly remember to this day, taken from Lockland, ten miles out from Cincinnati, to Attica, Indiana a distance approximately of two hundred miles, when but nine years old, during the autumn of 1839. With the one wagon piled high with the household goods and mother with two babies, one yet in arms. There was no room in the wagon for the two boys, my brother Oliver Meeker, eleven years old, and myself, as already stated but nine. The horses walked a good brisk gait and kept us quite busy to keep up, but not so busy as to prevent us at times from throwing stones at squirrels or to kill a garter snake or gather flowers for mother and baby, or perhaps watch the bees gathering [Pg 17] honey or the red-headed woodpeckers pecking the trees. Barefooted and bareheaded with tow pants and checkered "linsy woolsy" shirt and a strip of cloth for "galluses", as suspenders were then called, we did present an appearance that might be called primitive. Little did we think or care for appearance, bent as we were upon having a good time, and which we did for the whole trip. One dreary stretch of swamp that kept us on the corduroy road behind the jolting wagon was remembered which Uncle Usual Meeker, who was driving the wagon, called the "Big Swamp", which I afterwards learned was near Crawfordsville, Indiana. I discovered on my recent trip with the ox-team that the water of the swamp is gone, the corduroy gone, the timber as well, and instead great barns and pretentious homes have taken their places and dot the landscape as far as the eye can reach.

One habit we boys acquired on that trip stuck to us for life; until the brother was lost in the disaster of the steamer Northerner, January 5, 1861, 23 years after the barefoot trip. We followed behind the wagon part of the time and each took the name of the horse on his side of the road. I was "Tip" and on the off side, while the brother was "Top" and on the near side. "Tip" and "Top", a great big fat span of grey horses that as Uncle Usual said "would run away at the drop of a hat" was something to be proud of and each would champion his favorite ahead of him. We built castles in the air at times as we trudged along, of raising chickens, of getting honey bees, such as we saw at times on the road; at other times it would be horses and then lambs, if we happened to see a flock of sheep as we passed by—anything and everything that our imagination would conjure and which by the way made us happy and contented with our surroundings and the world at large. This habit of my brother's walking on the near side and I on the off side continued, as I

have said, to the end of his life, and we were much together in after life in Indiana, on the plains, and finally here in Washington. We soon, as boys, entered into partnership, raising a garden, chickens, ducks, anything to be busy, all of which our parents enjoyed, and continued our partnership till manhood and until his death parted us. It is wonderful how those early recollections of trivial matters will still be remembered until old age overtakes us, while questions of greater importance encountered later on in life escape our memory and are lost.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DAYS IN INDIANA.

In the early '50's, out four and a half and seven miles, respectively, from Indianapolis, Indiana, there lived two young people with their parents, who were old-time farmers of the old style, keeping no "hired man" nor buying many "store goods." The girl could spin and weave, make delicious butter, knit soft, good shapen socks, and cook as good a meal as any other country girl around about, and was, withal, as buxom a lass as had ever been "born and raised there (Indiana) all her life."

These were times when sugar sold for eighteen cents per pound, calico fifteen cents per yard, salt three dollars a barrel, and all other goods at correspondingly high prices; while butter would bring but ten cents a pound, eggs five cents a dozen, and wheat but two bits (twenty-five cents) a bushel. And so, when these farmers went to the market town (Indianapolis) care was taken to carry along something to sell, either eggs, or butter, or perhaps a half dozen pairs of socks, or maybe a few yards of home-made cloth, as well as some grain, or hay, or a bit of pork, or possibly a load of wood, to make ends meet at the store.

The young man was a little uncouth in appearance, round-faced, rather stout in build—almost fat—a little boisterous, always restless, and without a very good address, yet with at least one redeeming trait of character—he loved his work and was known to be as industrious a lad as any in the neighborhood. [Pg 19]

These young people would sometimes meet at the "Brimstone meeting-house," a Methodist church known (far and wide) by that name; so named by the unregenerate because of the open preaching of endless torment to follow non-church members and sinners after death—a literal lake of fire—taught with vehemence and accompanied by boisterous scenes of shouting by those who were "saved." Amid these scenes and these surroundings these two young people grew up to the age of manhood and womanhood, knowing but little of the world outside of their home sphere,—and who knows but as happy as if they had seen the whole world? Had they not experienced the joys of the sugar camp while "stirring off" the lively creeping maple sugar? Both had been thumped upon the bare head by the falling hickory nuts in windy weather; had hunted the black walnuts half hidden in the leaves; had scraped the ground for the elusive beech nuts; had even ventured to apple parings together, though not yet out of their "teens."

The lad hunted the 'possum and the coon in the White River bottom, now the suburb of the city of Indianapolis, and had cut even the stately walnut trees, now so valuable, that the cunning coon might be driven from his hiding place.

I'M GOING TO BE A FARMER.

"I'm going to be a farmer when I get married," the young man quite abruptly said one day to the lass, without any previous conversation to lead up to such an assertion, to the confusion of his companion, who could not mistake the thoughts that prompted the words. A few months later the lass said, "Yes, I want to be a farmer, too, but I want to be a farmer on our own land," and two bargains were confirmed then and there when the lad said, "We will go West and not live on pap's farm." "Nor in the old cabin, nor any cabin unless it's our own," came the response, and so the resolution was made that they would go to Iowa, get some land and "grow up with the country." [Pg 20]

OFF FOR IOWA.

About the first week of October, 1851, a covered wagon drew up in front of Thomas Sumner's habitation, then but four miles out from Indianapolis on the National road, ready to be loaded for the start. Eliza Jane, the second daughter of that noble man, the "lass" described, then the wife of the young man mentioned, the author, was ready, with cake and apple butter and pumpkin pies, jellies and the like, enough to last the whole trip, and plenty of substantials besides. Not much of a load to be sure, but it was all we had; plenty of blankets, a good sized Dutch oven, and each an extra pair of shoes, cloth for two new dresses for the wife, and for an extra pair of trousers for the husband.

Tears could be restrained no longer as the loading progressed and the stern realization faced the parents of both that the young couple were about to leave them.

"Why, mother, we are only going out to Iowa, you know, where we can get a home that shall be our own; it's not so very far—only about 500 miles."

"Yes, I know, but suppose you get sick in that uninhabited country—who will care for you?"

Notwithstanding this motherly solicitude, the young people could not fail to know that there was a secret feeling of approval in the good woman's breast, and when, after a few miles' travel, the reluctant final parting came, could not then know that this loved parent would lay down her life a few years later in an heroic attempt to follow the wanderers to Oregon, and that her bones would rest in an unknown and unmarked grave of the Platte valley.

Of that October drive from the home near Indianapolis to Eddyville, Iowa, in the delicious (shall

I say delicious, for what other word expresses it?) atmosphere of an Indian summer, and in the atmosphere of hope and content; hope born of aspirations—content with our lot, born of a confidence of the future, what shall I say? What matter if we had but a few dollars in money and but few belongings?—we had the wide world before us; we had good health; and before and above all we had each other, and were supremely happy and rich in our anticipations. [Pg 21]

At this time but one railroad entered Indianapolis—it would be called a tramway now—from Madison on the Ohio River, and when we cut loose from that embryo city we left railroads behind us, except such as were found in the wagon track where the rails were laid crossways to keep the wagon out of the mud. What matter if the road was rough? We could go a little slower, and then wouldn't we have a better appetite for our supper because of the jolting, and wouldn't we sleep a little sounder for it? And so everything in all the world looked bright, and what little mishaps did befall us were looked upon with light hearts, because we realized that they might have been worse.

The great Mississippi River was crossed at Burlington, or rather, we embarked several miles down the river, and were carried up to the landing at Burlington, and after a few days' further driving landed in Eddyville, Iowa, destined to be only a place to winter, and a way station on our route to Oregon.

AN IOWA WINTER.

My first introduction to an Iowa winter was in a surveyor's camp on the western borders of the state, a little north of Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), as cook of the party, which position was speedily changed and that of flagman assigned to me.

If there are any settlers now left of the Iowa of that day (sixty-four years ago) they will remember the winter was bitter cold—the "coldest within the memory of the oldest inhabitant." On my trip back from the surveying party above mentioned to Eddyville, just before Christmas, I encountered one of those cold days long to be remembered. A companion named Vance rested with me over night in a cabin, with scant food for ourselves or the mare we led. It was thirty-five miles to the next cabin; we must reach that place or lay out on the snow. So a very early start was made—before daybreak, while the wind lay. The good lady of the cabin baked some biscuit for a noon lunch, but they were frozen solid in our pockets before we had been out two hours. The wind rose with the sun, and with the sun two bright sundogs, one on each side, and alongside of each, but slightly less bright, another—a beautiful sight to behold, but arising from conditions intolerable to bear. Vance came near freezing to death, and would had I not succeeded in arousing him to anger and gotten him off the mare. [Pg 22]

I vowed then and there that I did not like the Iowa climate, and the Oregon fever was visibly quickened. Besides, if I went to Oregon the government would give us 320 acres of land, while in Iowa we should have to purchase it,—at a low price to be sure, but it must be bought and paid for on the spot. There were no pre-emption or beneficial homestead laws in force then, and not until many years later. The country was a wide, open, rolling prairie—a beautiful country indeed—but what about a market? No railroads, no wagon roads, no cities, no meeting-houses, no schools—the prospect looked drear. How easy it is for one when his mind is once bent against a country to conjure up all sorts of reasons to bolster his, perhaps hasty, conclusions; and so Iowa was condemned as unsuited to our life abiding place.

But what about going to Oregon when springtime came? An interesting event was pending that rendered a positive decision impossible for the moment, and not until the first week of April, 1852, when our first-born baby boy was a month old, could we say that we were going to Oregon in 1852.

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CHAPTER IV.

OFF FOR OREGON.

I have been asked hundreds of times how many wagons were in the train I traveled with, and what train it was, and who was the captain?—assuming that, of course, we must have been with some train.

I have invariably answered, one train, one wagon, and that we had no captain. What I meant by one train is, that I looked upon the whole emigration, strung out on the plains five hundred miles, as one train. For long distances the throng was so great that the road was literally filled with wagons as far as the eye could reach. At Kanesville where the last purchases were made, or the last letter sent to anxious friends, the congestion became so great that the teams were literally blocked, and stood in line for hours before they could get out of the jam. Then, as to a captain, we didn't think we needed one, and so when we drove out of Eddyville, there was but one wagon in our train, two yoke of four-year-old steers, one yoke of cows, and one extra cow. This cow was the only animal we lost on the whole trip—strayed in the Missouri River bottom before crossing.

And now as to the personnel of our little party. William Buck, who became my partner for the trip, was a man six years my senior, had had some experience on the Plains, and knew about the outfit needed, but had no knowledge in regard to a team of cattle. He was an impulsive man, and to some extent excitable; yet withal a man of excellent judgment and as honest as God Almighty makes men. No lazy bones occupied a place in Buck's body. He was so scrupulously neat and cleanly that some might say he was fastidious, but such was not the case. His aptitude for the camp work, and unfitness for handling the team, at once, as we might say by natural selection, divided the cares of the household, sending the married men to the range with the team and the bachelor to the camp. The little wife was in ideal health, and almost as particular as Buck (not [Pg 24] quite though) while the young husband would be a little more on the slouchy order, if the reader will pardon the use of that word, more expressive than elegant.

Buck selected the outfit to go into the wagon, while I fitted up the wagon and bought the team.

We had butter, packed in the center of the flour in double sacks; eggs packed in corn meal or flour, to last us nearly five hundred miles; fruit in abundance, and dried pumpkins; a little jerked beef, not too salt, and last, though not least, a demijohn of brandy for "medicinal purposes only," as Buck said, with a merry twinkle of the eye that exposed the subterfuge which he knew I understood without any sign. The little wife had prepared the home-made yeast cake which she knew so well how to make and dry, and we had light bread all the way, baked in a tin reflector instead of the heavy Dutch ovens so much in use on the Plains.

Albeit the butter to considerable extent melted and mingled with the flour, yet we were not much disconcerted, as the "short-cake" that followed made us almost glad the mishap had occurred. Besides, did we not have plenty of fresh butter, from the milk of our own cows, churned every day in the can, by the jostle of the wagon? Then the buttermilk! What a luxury! Yes, that's the word—a real luxury. I will never, so long as I live, forget that short-cake and corn-bread, the puddings and pumpkin pies, and above all the buttermilk. The reader who smiles at this may recall that it is the small things that make up the happiness of life.

But it was more than that. As we gradually crept out on the Plains and saw the sickness and suffering caused by improper food and in some cases from improper preparation, it gradually dawned on me how blessed I was, with such a partner as Buck and such a life partner as the little wife. Some trains, it soon transpired, were without fruit, and most of them depended upon saleratus for raising their bread. Many had only fat bacon for meat until the buffalo supplied a [Pg 25] change; and no doubt much of the sickness attributed to the cholera was caused by an ill-suited diet.

I am willing to claim credit for the team, every hoof of which reached the Coast in safety. Four (four-year-old) steers and two cows were sufficient for our light wagon and light outfit, not a pound of which but was useful (except the brandy) and necessary for our comfort. Not one of these steers had ever been under the yoke, though plenty of "broke" oxen could be had, but generally of that class that had been broken in spirit as well as in training, so when we got across the Des Moines River with the cattle strung out to the wagon and Buck on the off side to watch, while I, figuratively speaking, took the reins in hand, we may have presented a ludicrous sight, but did not have time to think whether we did or not, and cared but little so the team would go.

FIRST DAY OUT.

The first day's drive out from Eddyville was a short one, and so far as I now remember the only one on the entire trip where the cattle were allowed to stand in the yoke at noon while the owners lunched and rested. I made it a rule, no matter how short the noontime, to unyoke and let the cattle rest or eat while we rested and ate, and on the last (1906) trip rigidly adhered to that rule.

An amusing scene was enacted when, at near nightfall, the first camp was made. Buck excitedly insisted we must not unyoke the cattle. "Well, what shall we do?" I asked; "They can't live in the yoke always; we will have to unyoke them sometimes."

"Yes, but if you unyoke here you will never catch them again," came the response. One word brought on another, until the war of words had almost reached the stage of a dispute, when a stranger, Thomas McAuley, who was camped nearby, with a twinkle in his eye I often afterwards saw and will always remember, interfered and said his cattle were gentle and there were three men of his party and that they would help us yoke up in the morning. I gratefully accepted his proffered help, speedily unyoked, and ever after that never a word with the merest semblance of contention passed between Buck and myself. [Pg 26]

Scanning McAuley's outfit the next morning I was quite troubled to start out with him, his teams being light, principally cows, and thin in flesh, with wagons apparently light and as frail as the teams. But I soon found that his outfit, like ours, carried no extra weight; that he knew how to care for a team; and was, withal, an obliging neighbor, as was fully demonstrated on many trying occasions as we traveled in company for more than a thousand miles, until his road to California parted from ours at the big bend of the Bear River.

Of the trip through Iowa little remains to be said further than that the grass was thin and washy, the roads muddy and slippery, and weather execrable, although May had been ushered in long before we reached the little Mormon town of Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), a few miles above where we crossed the Missouri River.

CHAPTER V.

CROSSING THE MISSOURI.

"What on earth is that?" exclaimed Margaret McAuley, as we approached the ferry landing a few miles below where Omaha now stands.

"It looks for all the world like a great big white flatiron," answered Eliza, the sister, "doesn't it, Mrs. Meeker?" But, leaving the women folks to their similes, we drivers turned our attention more to the teams as we encountered the roads "cut all to pieces" on account of the concentrated travel as we neared the landing and the solid phalanx of wagons that formed the flatiron of white ground.

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We here encountered a sight indeed long to be remembered. The "flatiron of white" that Eliza had seen proved to be wagons with their tongues pointing to the landing—a center train with other parallel trains extending back in the rear and gradually covering a wider range the farther back from the river one would go. Several hundred wagons were thus closely interlocked completely blocking the approach to the landing by new arrivals, whether in companies or single. All around about were camps of all kinds, from those without covering of any kind to others with comfortable tents, nearly all seemingly intent on merrymaking, while here and there were small groups engaged in devotional services. We soon ascertained these camps contained the outfits, in great part, of the wagons in line in the great white flatiron, some of whom had been there for two weeks with no apparent probability of securing an early crossing. At the turbulent river front the muddy waters of the Missouri had already swallowed up three victims, one of whom I saw go under the drift of a small island as I stood near his shrieking wife the first day we were there. Two scows were engaged in crossing the wagons and teams. In this case the stock had rushed to one side of the boat, submerged the gunwale, and precipitated the whole contents into the dangerous river. One yoke of oxen, having reached the farther shore, deliberately entered the river with a heavy yoke on and swam to the Iowa side, and were finally saved by the helping hands of the assembled emigrants.

"What shall we do?" was passed around, without answer. Tom McAuley was not yet looked upon as a leader, as was the case later. The sister Margaret, a most determined maiden lady, the oldest of the party and as resolute and brave as the bravest, said to build a boat. But of what should we build it? While this question was under consideration and a search for material made, one of our party, who had gotten across the river in search of timber, discovered a scow, almost completely buried, on the sandpit opposite the landing, "only just a small bit of railing and a corner of the boat visible." The report seemed too good to be true. The next thing to do was to find the owner, which in a search of a day we did, eleven miles down the river. "Yes, if you will stipulate to deliver the boat safely to me after crossing your five wagons and teams, you can have it," said the owner, and a bargain was closed right then and there. My! but didn't we make the sand fly that night from that boat? By morning we could begin to see the end. Then busy hands began to cut a landing on the perpendicular sandy bank on the Iowa side; others were preparing sweeps, and all was bustle and stir and one might say excitement.

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By this time it had become noised around that another boat would be put on to ferry people over, and we were besieged with applications from detained emigrants. Finally, the word coming to the ears of the ferrymen, they were foolish enough to undertake to prevent us from crossing ourselves. A writ of replevin or some other process was issued, I never knew exactly what, directing the sheriff to take possession of the boat when landed, and which he attempted to do. I never before nor since attempted to resist an officer of the law, nor joined to accomplish anything by force outside the pale of the law, but when that sheriff put in an appearance, and we realized what it meant, there wasn't a man in our party that did not run for his gun to the nearby camp, and it is needless to add that we did not need to use them. As if by magic a hundred guns were in sight. The sheriff withdrew, and the crossing went peaceably on till all our wagons were safely landed. But we had another danger to face; we learned that there would be an attempt made to take the boat from us, not as against us, but as against the owner, and but for the adroit management of McAuley and my brother Oliver (who had joined us) we would have been unable to fulfill our engagements with the owner.

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CHAPTER VI.

OUT ON THE PLAINS.

When we stepped foot upon the right bank of the Missouri River we were outside the pale of civil law. We were within the Indian country where no organized civil government existed. Some people and some writers have assumed that each man was "a law unto himself" and free to do his own will, dependent, of course, upon his physical ability to enforce it.

Nothing could be further from the facts than this assumption, as evil-doers soon found out to their discomfort. No general organization for law and order was effected, but the American instinct for fair play and for a hearing prevailed; so that while there was not mob law, the law of self-preservation asserted itself, and the mandates of the level-headed old men prevailed; "a high court from which there was no appeal," but "a high court in the most exalted sense; a senate composed of the ablest and most respected fathers of the emigration, exercising both legislative and judicial power; and its laws and decisions proved equal to any worthy of the high trust reposed in it," so tersely described by Applegate as to conditions when the first great train moved out on the Plains in 1843, that I quote his words as describing conditions in 1852. There was this difference, however, in the emigration of 1843—all, by agreement, belonged to one or the other of the two companies, the "cow column" or the "light brigade," while with the emigrants of 1852 it is safe to say that more than half did not belong to large companies, or one might say any organized company. But this made no difference, for when an occasion called for action a "high court" was convened, and woe-betide the man that would undertake to defy its mandates after its deliberations were made public.

One incident, well up on the Sweetwater, will illustrate the spirit of determination of the sturdy old men (elderly, I should say, as no young men were allowed to sit in these councils) of the [Pg 30] Plains, while laboring under stress of grave personal cares and with many personal bereavements. A murder had been committed, and it was clear that the motive was robbery. The suspect had a large family and was traveling along with the moving column. Men had volunteered to search for the missing man and finally found the proof pointing to the guilt of the suspect. A council of twelve men was called and deliberated until the second day, meanwhile holding the murderer safely within their grip. What were they to do? Here was a wife and four little children depending upon this man for their lives; what would become of his family if justice was meted out to him? Soon there came an under-current of what might be termed public opinion—that it was probably better to forego punishment than to endanger the lives of the family; but the council would not be swerved from its resolution, and at sundown of the third day the criminal was hung in the presence of the whole camp, including the family, but not until ample provisions had been made to insure the safety of the family by providing a driver to finish the journey. I came so near seeing this that I did see the ends of the wagon tongues in the air and the rope dangling therefrom, but I have forgotten the names of the parties, and even if I had not, would be loath to make them public.

From necessity, murder was punishable with death; but stealing, by a tacit understanding, with whipping, which, when inflicted by one of those long ox lashes in the hands of an expert, would bring the blood from the victim's back at every stroke. Minor offenses, or differences generally, took the form of arbitration, the decision of which each party would abide by, as if emanating from a court of law.

Lawlessness was not common on the Plains, no more so than in the communities from which the great body of the emigrants had been drawn; in fact, not so much so, as punishment was swift and certain, and that fact had its deterrent effect. But the great body of the emigrants were a law-abiding people from law-abiding communities.

And now as to our mode of travel. I did not enter an organized company, neither could I travel [Pg 31] alone. Four wagons, with nine men, by tacit agreement, traveled together for a thousand miles, and separated only when our roads parted, the one to California, the other to Oregon. And yet we were all the while in one great train, never out of sight or hearing of others. In fact, at times, the road would be so full of wagons that all could not travel in one track, and this fact accounts for the double road-beds seen in so many places on the trail. One of the party always went ahead to look out for water, grass and fuel, three requisites for a camping place. The grass along the beaten track was always eaten off close by the loose stock, of which there were great numbers, and so we had frequently to take the cattle long distances from camp. Then came the most trying part of the whole trip—the all-night watch, which resulted in our making the cattle our bed-fellows, back to back for warmth; for signal as well, to get up if the ox did. It was not long, though, till we were used to it, and slept quite a bit except when a storm struck us; well, then, to say the least, it was not a pleasure outing. But weren't we glad when the morning came, with, perchance, the smoke of the campfire in sight, and maybe, as we approached, we could catch the aroma of the coffee; and then such tender greetings and such thoughtful care that would have touched a heart of stone, and to us seemed like a paradise. We were supremely happy.

People, too, often brought their own ills upon themselves by their indiscreet action, especially in the loss of their teams. The trip had not progressed far until there came a universal outcry against the heavy loads and unnecessary articles, and soon we began to see abandoned property. First it might be a table or a cupboard, or perhaps a bedstead or a heavy cast-iron cook-stove. Then began to be seen bedding by the wayside, feather beds, blankets, quilts, pillows—everything of the kind that mortal man might want. And so, very soon here and there an

abandoned wagon could be seen, provisions, stacks of flour and bacon being the most abundant— [Pg 32]
all left as common property. Help yourself if you will; no one will interfere; and, in fact, in some places a sign was posted inviting all to take what they wanted. Hundreds of wagons were left and hundreds of tons of goods. People seemed to vie with each other to give away their property, there being no chance to sell, and they disliked to destroy. Long after the mania for getting rid of goods and lightening the load, the abandonment of wagons continued, as the teams became weaker and the ravages of cholera struck us. It was then that many lost their heads and ruined their teams by furious driving, by lack of care, and by abuse. There came a veritable stampede—a strife for possession of the road, to see who should get ahead. Whole trains (often with bad blood) would strive for the mastery of the road, one attempting to pass the other, frequently with drivers on each side the team to urge the poor, suffering brutes forward.

"What shall we do?" passed from one to another in our little family council.

"Now, fellers," said McAuley, "don't lose your heads, but do just as you have been doing; you gals, just make your bread as light as ever, and we'll boil the water and take river water the same as ever, even if it is almost as thick as mud."

We had all along refused to "dig little wells near the banks of the Platte," as many others did, having soon learned that the water obtained was strongly charged with alkali, while the river water was comparatively pure, other than the fine impalpable sediment, so fine as to seemingly be held in solution.

"Keep cool," he continued; "maybe we'll have to lay down, and maybe not. Anyway, it's no use frettin'. What's to be will be, 'specially if we but help things along."

This homely yet wise counsel fell upon willing ears, as most all were already of the same mind; and we did "just as we had been doing," and escaped unharmed.

I look back on that party of nine men and three women (and a baby), with four wagons, with [Pg 33]
feelings almost akin to reverence.

Thomas McAuley became by natural selection the leader of the party, although no agreement of the kind was ever made. He was, next to his maiden sister, the oldest of the party, a most fearless man, who never lost his head, whatever the emergency, and I have been in some pretty tight places with him. While he was the oldest, I was the youngest of the men folks of the party, and the only married man of the lot, and if I do have to say it, the strongest and ablest to bear the brunt of the work (pardon me, reader, when I add, and willing according to my strength, for it is true), and so we got along well together until the parting of the way came. This spirit, though, pervaded the whole camp both with the men and women folks to the end. Thomas McAuley still lives, at Hobart Hills, California, or did a few years ago when I last heard from him, a respected citizen. He has long since passed the eighty-year mark, and has not "laid down" yet.

Did space but permit I would like to tell more in detail of the members of that little happy party (family we called ourselves) camped near the bank of the Platte when the fury of that great epidemic—cholera—burst upon us, but I can only make brief mention. William Buck—one of Nature's noblemen—has long ago "laid down." Always scrupulously neat and cleanly, always ready to cater to the wants of his companions and as honest as the day is long, he has ever held a tender place in my heart. It was Buck that selected our nice little outfit, complete in every part, so that we did not throw away a pound of provisions nor need to purchase any. The water can was in the wagon, of sufficient capacity to supply our wants for a day, and a "sup" for the oxen and cows besides. The milk can in the wagon always yielded its lump of butter at night, churned by the movement of the wagon from the surplus morning's milk. The yeast cake so thoughtfully provided by the little wife ever brought forth sweet, light bread baked in that tin reflector before the "chip" (buffalo) fire. That reflector and those yeast cakes were a great factor conducive to our [Pg 34]
health. Small things, to be sure, but great as to results. Instead of saleratus biscuit, bacon and beans, we had the light bread and fruit, with fresh meats and rice pudding, far out on the Plains, until our supply of eggs became exhausted.

Of the remainder of the party, brother Oliver "laid down" fifty-five years ago, but his memory is still green in the hearts of all who knew him. Margaret McAuley died a few years after reaching California. Like her brother, she was resolute and resourceful, and almost like a mother to the younger sister and the young wife and baby. And such a baby! If one were to judge by the actions of all the members of that camp, the conclusion would be reached there was no other baby on earth. All seemed rejoiced to know there was a baby in camp; young (only seven weeks old when we started) but strong and grew apace as the higher altitude was reached.

Eliza, the younger sister, a type of the healthy, handsome American girl, graceful and modest, became the center of attraction upon which a romance might be written, but as the good elderly lady still lives, the time has not yet come, and so we must draw the veil.

Of the two Davenport brothers, Jacob, the youngest, became ill at Soda Springs, was confined to the wagon for more than seven hundred miles down Snake River in that intolerable dust, and finally died soon after we arrived in Portland.

John, the elder brother, always fretful, but willing to do his part, has passed out of my knowledge. Both came of respected parents on an adjoining farm to that of my own home near Indianapolis, but I have lost all trace of them.

Perhaps the general reader may not take even a passing interest in this little party (family) here described. I can only say that this was typical of many on the Trail of '52. The McAuleys or Buck and others of our party could be duplicated in larger or smaller parties all along the line. [Pg 35] There were hundreds of noble men trudging up the Platte at that time in an army over five hundred miles long, many of whom "laid down," a sacrifice to their duty, or maybe to inherent weakness of their system. While it is true such an experience brings out the worst features of individual characters, yet it is also true that the shining virtues come to the front likewise; like pure gold, they are found where least expected.

Of the fortitude of the women one cannot say too much. Embarrassed at the start by the follies of fashion (and long dresses which were quickly discarded and the bloomer donned), they soon rose to the occasion and cast false modesty aside. Could we but have had the camera (of course not then in existence) trained on one of those typical camps, what a picture there would be. Elderly matrons dressed almost like the little sprite miss of tender years of today. The younger women were rather shy of accepting the inevitable, but finally fell into the procession, and we had a community of women wearing bloomers without invidious comment, or, in fact, any comment at all. Some of them went barefoot, partly from choice and in some cases from necessity. The same could be said of the men, as shoe leather began to grind out from the sand and dry heat. Of all the fantastic costumes it is safe to say the like was never seen before. The scene beggars description. Patches became visible upon the clothing of preachers as well as laymen; the situations brooked no respecter of persons. The grandmother's cap was soon displaced by a handkerchief or perhaps a bit of cloth. Grandfather's high crowned hat disappeared as if by magic. Hatless and bootless men became a common sight. Bonnetless women were to be seen on all sides. They wore what they had left or could get, without question as to the fitness of things. Rich dresses were worn by some ladies because they had no others; the gentlemen drew upon their wardrobes until scarcely a fine unsoiled suit was left.

The dust has been spoken of as intolerable. The word hardly expresses the situation; in fact, the English language contains no words to properly express it. Here was a moving mass of [Pg 36] humanity and dumb brutes, at times mixed in inextricable confusion, a hundred feet wide or more. Sometimes two columns of wagons traveling on parallel lines and near each other would serve as a barrier to prevent loose stock from crossing; but usually there would be a confused mass of cows, young cattle, horses, and footmen moving along the outskirts. Here and there would be the drivers of loose stock, some on foot and some on horseback;—a young girl, maybe, riding astride, with a younger child behind, going here and there after an intractable cow, while the mother could be seen in the confusion lending a helping hand. As in a thronged city street, no one seemed to look to the right or to the left, or to pay much, if any, attention to others, but bent alone on accomplishing the task in hand. Over all, in calm weather at times, the dust would settle so thick that the lead team of oxen could not be seen from the wagon—like a London fog, so thick one might almost cut it. [1] Then, again, that steady flow of wind up to and through the South Pass would hurl the dust and sand in one's face sometimes with force enough to sting from the impact upon the face and hands.

Then we had storms that were not of sand and wind alone;—storms that only a Platte Valley in summer or a Puget Sound winter might turn out;—storms that would wet one to the skin in less time that it takes to write this sentence. One such I remember being caught in while out on watch. The cattle traveled so fast it was difficult to keep up with them. I could do nothing else than follow, as it would have been as impossible to turn them as it would to change the direction of the wind. I have always thought of this as a cloudburst. Anyway, there was not a dry thread left on me in an incredibly short time. My boots were as full of water as if I had been wading over [Pg 37] boot-top deep, and the water ran through my hat as though it was a sieve, almost blinding me in the fury of wind and water. Many tents were leveled, and, in fact, such occurrences as fallen tents were not uncommon.

One of our neighboring trains suffered no inconsiderable loss by the sheets of water on the ground, floating their camp equipage, ox yokes, and all loose articles away; and they only narrowly escaped having a wagon engulfed in the raging torrent that came so unexpectedly upon them. Such were some of the discomforts on the Plains in '52.

FOOTNOTE:

[1] The author spent four winters in London on the world's hop market, and perhaps has a more vivid recollection of what is meant by a London fog than would be understood by the general reader. I have seen the fog and smoke there so black that one could not see his hand held at arm's length, and it reminded me of some scenes in the dust on the Plains.

CHAPTER VII.

OUT ON THE PLAINS—BUFFALO STAMPEDE.

The buffalo trails generally followed the water courses or paralleled them, while again they would lead across the country with scarcely any deviation from a direct course. When on the road a herd would persistently follow their leader, whether in the wild tumult of a stampede or the more leisurely grazing as they traveled.

However, for nearly a thousand miles a goodly supply of fresh meat was obtainable from the adventurous hunters, who in spite of the appalling calamity that had overtaken the moving column of the emigrants would venture out on the chase, the temptation being too great to restrain their ardor.

A story is told, and it is doubtless true, of a chase on the upper regions of the Missouri, where the leaders, either voluntarily or by pressure from the mass behind, leaped to their death over a perpendicular bluff a hundred feet high overlooking the river, followed blindly by the herd until not only hundreds but thousands lay at the foot struggling in inextricable confusion, piling one upon another till the space between the river and the bluff was bridged and the belated victims plunged headlong into the river.

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Well up the Platte but below Fort Laramie, we had the experience of a night stampede that struck terror to the very vitals of man and beast. It so happened that evening we had brought our cattle into camp, a thing we did not usually do. We had driven the wagons into a circle with the tongue of one wagon chained to the hind axle tree of the one in front, with the cattle inside the circle and the tents outside. I slept in the wagon that night, which was not often, for usually I would be out on the range with the oxen, and if I slept at all, snugged up close to Dandy's back. My partner, William Buck, was in the tent nearby and sleeping on the ground, likewise brother Oliver.

We first heard the approaching storm, but almost instantly every animal in the corral was on his feet. Just then the alarm was given and all hands turned out, not yet knowing what caused the general commotion. A roar like an approaching storm could be heard in the distance. We can liken it to the roar of a heavy railroad train on a still night passing at no great distance. As by instinct all suddenly seemed to know what was approaching, the tents were emptied of their inmates, the weak parts of the corral guarded, the frightened cattle looked after, and everyone in the camp was on the alert to watch what was coming.

In the darkness of the night we could soon see the form of the foremost leader and then such dense masses that one could not distinguish one from the other. How long they were passing we forgot to note; it seemed like an age. When daylight came a few stragglers were yet to be seen and fell under the unerring aim of the frontier-man's rifle. Our neighbors in camp did not escape loss. Some were detained for days gathering up their scattered stock, while again others were unable to find them, and lost their teams, or a part of them, and never did recover them.

At times when not on the road, the buffalo were shy, difficult to approach and hard to bag, even with the long range rifles of the pioneers.

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CHAPTER VIII.

OUT ON THE PLAINS.

As soon as a part of our outfits were landed on the right bank of the river our trouble with the Indians began, not in open hostilities, but in robbery under the guise of beggary. The word had been passed around in our little party that not one cent's worth of provisions would we give up to the Indians,—believing this policy was our only safeguard from spoliation, and in that we were right. The women folks had been taken over the river with the first wagon, and sent off a little way to a convenient camp, so that the first show of arms came from that side of our little community, when some of the bolder Pawnees attempted to pilfer around the wagons. But no blood was shed, and I may say in passing there was none shed by any of our party during the entire trip, though there was a show of arms in several instances. One case in particular I remember. Soon after we had left the Missouri River we came to a small bridge over a washout across the road, evidently constructed very recently by some train just ahead of us. The Indians had taken possession and demanded pay for crossing. Some ahead of us had paid, while others were hesitating, but with a few there was a determined resolution not to pay. When our party came up it remained for that fearless man, McAuley, in quite short order to clear the way though the Indians were there in considerable numbers. McAuley said, "You fellers come right on, for I'm going across that bridge if I have to run right over that Ingen settin' there." And he did almost run over the Indian, who at the last moment got out of the way of his team, which was followed in such quick succession and with such a show of arms that the Indians withdrew, and left the road unobstructed.

In another instance, I came very near getting into serious trouble with three Indians on horseback. We had hauled off away from the road to get water, I think, and became separated from the passing throng, and almost, but not quite out of sight of any wagons or camps. The Indians came up ostensibly to beg, but really to rob, and first began to solicit, and afterwards to threaten. I started to drive on, not thinking they would use actual violence, as there were other emigrants certainly within a half mile, and thought they were merely trying to frighten me into giving up at least a part of my outfit. Finally one of the Indians whipped out his knife and cut loose the cow that I was leading behind the wagon. I did not have to ask for my gun, as my wife in the wagon, who had seen the act, believed, as I did, that the time had come to fight, and handed me my trusty rifle out under the cover, and before the savages had time to do anything further they saw the gun. They were near enough to make it certain that one shot would take deadly effect, but instead of shooting one, I trained the gun in the direction so I might quickly choose between the three, and in an instant each Indian was under cover of his horse, and speeding away in great haste. The old story that "almost anyone will fight when cornered" was exemplified in this incident, but I did not want any more such experiences and consequently thereafter became more careful.

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We did not, however, have much trouble with the Indians in 1852. The facts are, the great numbers of emigrants, coupled with the superiority of their arms, placed them on comparatively safe grounds. And it must be remembered, also, that this was before the treaty-making period, which has so often been followed by bloodshed and war.

But to return to the river bank. We crossed on the 17th and 18th of May, and drove out a short way on the 19th, but not far enough to be out of hearing of a shrill steamboat whistle that resounded over the prairie, announcing the arrival of a steamer.

I never knew the size of that steamer, or the name, but only know that a dozen or more wagons could be crossed at once, and that a dozen or more trips could be made during the day, and as many more at night, and that we were overtaken by this throng of a thousand wagons thrown upon the road, that gave us some trouble and much discomfort.

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And now that we were fairly on the way the whole atmosphere, so to speak, seemed changed. Instead of the discordant violin and more discordant voices, with the fantastic night open-air dances with mother earth as a floor, there soon prevailed a more sober mein, even among the young people, as they began to encounter the fatigue of a day's drive and the cares of a night watch. With so many, the watchword was to push ahead and make as big a day's drive as possible; hence it is not to be wondered at that nearly the whole of the thousand wagons that crossed the river after we did soon passed us.

"Now, fellers, jist let 'em rush on, and keep cool, we'll overcatch them afore long," said McAuley. And we did, and passed many a broken-down team, the result of that first few days of rush. It was this class that unloaded such piles of provisions, noted elsewhere, in the first two hundred mile stretch, and that fell such easy prey to the ravages of the epidemic of cholera that struck the moving column where the throng from the south side of the Platte began crossing. As I recollect this, it must have been near where the city of Kearney now stands, which is about two hundred miles west of the Missouri River. We had been in the buffalo country several days, and some of our young men had had the keen edge of the hunting zeal worn off by a day's ride in the heat. A number of them were sick from the effects of overheating and indiscreet drinking of impure water. Such an experience came vividly home to me in the case of my brother Oliver, who had outfitted with our Hoosier friends near Indianapolis, but had crossed the Missouri River in company with us. Being of an adventurous spirit, he could not restrain his ardor, and gave chase to the buffaloes, and fell sick almost unto death. This occurred just at the time when we had encountered the cholera panic, and of course it must be the cholera that had seized him with

such an iron grip, argued some of his companions. His old-time comrades and neighbors, all but two, and they could not delay. I said, "It's certain death to take him along in that condition," which they admitted was true. "Divide the outfit, then." The Davenport boys said they would not leave my brother, and so their portion of the outfit was put out also, which gave the three a wagon and team. Turning to Buck, I said, "I can't ask you to stay with me." The answer came back quick as a flash, "I am going to stay with you without asking," and he did, too, though my brother was almost a total stranger. We nursed the sick man for four days amidst scenes of excitement and death I hope never to witness again, with the result that on the fifth day we were able to go on and take the convalescent with us and thus saved his life. It was at this point the sixteen hundred wagons passed us as noted elsewhere in the four days' detention, and loose stock so numerous, we made no attempt to count them. [Pg 42]

Of course, this incident is of no particular importance, except to illustrate what life meant in those strenuous days. The experience of that camp was the experience, I may say, of hundreds of others; of friends parting; of desertion; of noble sacrifice; of the revelation of the best and worst of the inner man. Like the shifting clouds of a brightening summer day, the trains seemed to dissolve and disappear, while no one, apparently, knew what had become of their component parts, or whither they had gone.

There did seem instances that would convert the most skeptical to the Presbyterian doctrine of total depravity, so brutal and selfish were the actions of some men; brutal to men and women alike; to dumb brutes, and in fact to themselves. And, yet, it is a pleasure to record that there were numerous instances of noble self-sacrifice, of helpfulness, of unselfishness, to the point of imperiling their own lives. It became a common saying to know one's neighbors, they must be seen on the Plains.

The army of loose stock that accompanied this huge caravan, a column, we may almost say, of five hundred miles long without break, added greatly to the discomfort of all. Of course, the number of cattle and horses will never be known, but their number was legion compared to those that labored under the yoke, or in the harness. A conservative estimate would be not less than six animals to the wagon, and surely there were three loose animals to each one in the teams. By this it would appear that as sixteen hundred wagons passed while we tarried four days, nearly ten thousand beasts of burden and thirty thousand loose stock accompanied them. As to the number of persons, certainly there were five to the wagon, perhaps more, but calling it five, eight thousand people, men, women and children, passed on during those four days—many to their graves not afar off. [Pg 43]

We know by the inscribed dates found on Independence Rock and elsewhere that there were wagons full three hundred miles ahead of us. The throng had continued to pass the river more than a month after we had crossed, so that it does not require a stretch of the imagination to say the column was five hundred miles long, and like Sherman's march through Georgia, fifty thousand strong.

Of the casualties in that mighty army I scarcely dare guess. It is certain that history gives no record of such great numbers migrating so long a distance as that of the Pioneers of the Plains, where, as we have seen, the dead lay in rows of fifties and groups of seventies. Shall we say ten per cent fell by the wayside? Many will exclaim that estimate is too low. Ten per cent would give us five thousand sacrifices of lives laid down even in one year to aid in the peopling of the Pacific Coast states. The roll call was never made, and we know not how many there were. The list of mortalities is unknown, and so we are lost in conjecture, and now we only know that the unknown and unmarked graves have gone into oblivion.

Volumes could be written of life on the Plains and yet leave the story not half told. In some matter before me I read, "found a family, consisting of husband, wife and four small children, whose cattle we supposed had given out and died. They were here all alone, and no wagon or cattle in sight"—had been thrown out by the owner of a wagon and left on the road to die. In a nearby page I read, "Here we met Mr. Lot Whitcom, direct from Oregon—. Told me a great deal about Oregon. He has provisions, but none to sell, but gives to all he finds in want, and who are unable to buy." These stories of the good Samaritan, and the fiendish actions of others could be multiplied indefinitely, but I quote only extracts from these two, written on the spot, that well illustrate the whole. [Pg 44]

Mrs. Cecelia Emily McMillen Adams, late of Hillsboro, Oregon, crossed the Plains in 1852, and kept a painstaking diary, and noted the graves passed, and counted them. Her diary is published in full by the Oregon Pioneer Association, 1904. I note the following: "June fourteenth. Passed seven new made graves. June 15th. Sick headache, not able to sit up. June 16th. Passed 11 new graves. June 17th. Passed six new graves. June 18th. We have passed twenty-one new made graves today. June 19th. Passed thirteen graves today. June 20th. Passed ten graves. June 21st. No report. June 22nd. Passed seven graves. If we should go by all the camping grounds, we should see five times as many graves as we do."

This report of seventy-five dead in 106 miles, and that "if we should go by all the camping grounds we should see five times as many graves as we do," coupled with the fact that a parallel column from which we have no report was traveling up the Platte on the south side of the river, and that the outbreak of the cholera had taken place originally in this column coming from the southeast, fully confirms the estimate of 5,000 deaths on the Plains in 1852. It is in fact rather under than over the actual number who laid down their lives that year. I have mislaid the authority, but at the time I read it, believed the account to be true, of a scout that passed over

the ground late that year (1852) from the Loop Fork of the Platte to the Laramie, a distance approximating 400 miles, that by actual count in great part and conservative estimate of the remainder, there were six fresh graves to the mile for the whole distance—this, it is to be remembered, on the one side of the river in a stretch where for half the distance of a parallel column traveling on the opposite bank, where like conditions prevailed. [Pg 45]

A few more instances must suffice to complete this chapter of horrors.

L. B. Rowland, now of Eugene, Oregon, recently told me the experience of his train of twenty-three persons, between the two crossings of the Snake River, of which we have just written. Of the twenty-three that crossed, eleven died before they reached the lower crossing.

Mrs. M. E. Jones, now of North Yakima, states that forty people of their train died in one day and two nights, before reaching the crossing of the Platte. Martin Cook, of Newberg, Oregon, is my authority for the following: A family of seven persons, the father known as "Dad Friels," from Hartford, Warren County, Iowa, all died of cholera, and were buried in one grave. He could not tell me the locality nor the exact date, but it would be useless to search for the graves, as all have long ago been leveled by the passing hoofs of the buffalo or domestic stock, or met the fate of hundreds of shallow graves, having been desecrated by hungry wolves.

A pathetic thought came uppermost in the minds of the emigrants as the fact dawned upon them that all the graves were fresh made, and that those of previous years had disappeared—either leveled by the storms of wind or rain; by the hoofs of the passing throng of stock; or possibly by ravages of the hungry wolf. Many believed the Indians had robbed the graves for the clothing on the bodies. Whatever the cause, the fact was realized that the graves of previous years were all, or nearly all gone, and that the same fate awaited the last resting place of those loved ones laid away in such great numbers.

One of the incidents that made a profound impression upon the minds of all; the meeting of eleven wagons returning and not a man left in the entire train;—all had died, and had been buried on the way, and the women were returning alone from a point well up on the Platte below Fort Laramie. The difficulties of a return trip were multiplied on account of the passing throng moving westward. How they succeeded, or what became of them I never knew, but we did know a terrible task lay before them. [Pg 46]

As the column passed up the Platte, there came some relief for awhile from the dust and a visible thinning out of the throng; some had pushed on and gotten out of the way of the congested district, while others had lagged behind; and then it was patent that the missing dead left not only a void in the hearts of their comrades, but also a visible space upon the road, while their absence cast a gloom over many an aching heart.

As we gradually ascended the Sweetwater, the nights became cooler, and finally, the summit reached, life became more tolerable and suffering less acute. The summit of the Rocky Mountains, through the South Pass presents a wide, open undulating country that extends for a long distance at a very high altitude—probably 6,000 feet above sea level, until Bear River is reached, a distance of over 150 miles. This is a region of scant herbage and almost destitute of water, except at river crossings, for on this stretch of the Trail, the way leads across the water courses, and not with them.

The most attractive natural phenomena encountered on the whole trip are the soda springs near the Bear River, and in fact right in the bed of the river. One of these, the Steamboat spring, was spouting at regular intervals as we passed. These have, however, ceased to overflow as in 1852, as I learned on my recent trip.

When the Snake River was reached and in fact before, the heat again became oppressive, the dust stifling, and thirst at times almost maddening. In some places we could see the water of the Snake, but could not reach it as the river ran in the inaccessible depths of the canyon. Sickness again became prevalent, and another outbreak of cholera claimed many victims. [Pg 47]

There were but few ferries and none in many places where crossings were to be made, and where here and there a ferry was found the charges were high—or perhaps the word should be, exorbitant—and out of reach of a large majority of the emigrants. In my own case, all my funds had been absorbed in procuring my outfit at Eddyville, Iowa, not dreaming there would be use for money "on the Plains" where there were neither supplies nor people. We soon found out our mistake, however, and sought to mend matters when opportunity offered. The crossing of the Snake River, though late in the trip, gave the opportunity.

About thirty miles below Salmon Falls the dilemma confronted us to either cross the river or starve our teams on the trip down the river on the south bank.

Some emigrants had calked three wagon-beds and lashed them together, and were crossing, but would not help others across for less than three to five dollars a wagon, the party swimming their own stock. If others could cross in wagon-beds, why could I not do likewise? and without much ado all the old clothing that could possibly be spared was marshaled, tar buckets ransacked, old chisels and broken knives hunted up, and a veritable boat repairing and calking campaign inaugurated, and shortly the wagon-box rode placidly, even if not gracefully on the turbid waters of the formidable river. It had been my fortune to be the strongest physically of any of our little party of four men, though I would cheerfully accept a second place mentally.

My boyhood pranks of playing with logs or old leaky skiffs in the waters of White River now served me well, for I could row a boat even if I had never taken lessons as an athlete. My first venture across the Snake River was with the wagon gear run over the wagon box, the whole being gradually worked out into deep water. The load was so heavy that a very small margin was [Pg 48] left to prevent the water from breaking over the sides, and some actually did, as light ripples on the surface struck the "Mary Jane," as we had christened (without wine) the "craft" as she was launched. However, I got over safely, but after that took lighter loads and really enjoyed the novelty of the work and the change from the intolerable dust to the atmosphere of the water.

Some were so infatuated with the idea of floating on the water as to be easily persuaded by an unprincipled trader at the lower crossing to dispose of their teams for a song, and embark in their wagon beds for a voyage down the river. It is needless to say that these persons (of whom there were a goodly number) lost everything they had and some, their lives, the survivors, after incredible hardships, reaching the road again to become objects of charity while separated entirely from friends. I knew one survivor, who yet lives in our state, who was out seven days without food other than a scant supply of berries and vegetable growth, and "a few crickets, but not many," as it was too laborious to catch them.

We had no trouble to cross the cattle, although the river was wide. Dandy would do almost anything I asked of him, so, leading him to the water's edge, with a little coaxing I got him into swimming water and guided him across with the wagon bed, while the others all followed, having been driven into the deep water following the leader. It seems almost incredible how passively obedient cattle will become after long training on such a trip, in crossing streams.

We had not finished crossing when tempting offers came from others to cross them, but all our party said "No, we must travel." The rule had been adopted to travel some every day possible. "Travel, travel, travel," was the watchword, and nothing could divert us from that resolution, and so on the third day we were ready to pull out from the river with the cattle rested from the enforced detention.

But what about the lower crossing? Those who had crossed over the river must somehow get [Pg 49] back. It was less than 150 miles to where we were again to cross to the south side (left bank) of the river. I could walk that in three days, while it would take our teams ten. Could I go on ahead, procure a wagon box and start a ferry of my own? The thought prompted an affirmative answer at once; so with a little food and a small blanket the trip to the lower crossing was made. It may be ludicrous, but is true, that the most I remember about that trip is the jackrabbits—such swarms of them I had never seen before as I traveled down the Boise Valley, and never expect to see again.

The trip was made in safety, but conditions were different. At the lower crossing, as I have already said, some were disposing of their teams and starting to float down the river; some were fording, a perilous undertaking, but most of them succeeded who tried, and besides a trader whose name I have forgotten had an established ferry near the old fort (Boise). I soon obtained a wagon-bed, and was at work during all the daylight hours (no eight-hour-a-day there) crossing people till the teams came up, (and for several days after), and left the river with $110 in my pocket, all of which was gone before I arrived in Portland, save $2.75.

I did not look upon that work then other than as a part of the trip, to do the best we could. None of us thought we were doing a heroic act in crossing the plains and meeting emergencies as they arose. In fact, we did not think at all of that phase of the question. Many have, however, in later life looked upon their achievement with pardonable pride, and some in a vainglorious mood of mind.

A very pleasant incident recently occurred in reviving memories of this episode of my life, while visiting my old time friend Edward J. Allen, [2] mentioned elsewhere in this work. It was my good fortune to be able to spend several day; with that grand "Old Timer" at his residence in Pittsburg, [Pg 50] Pa. We had not met for fifty years. The reader may readily believe there had been great changes with both of us as well as in the world at large in that half century of our lives. My friend had crossed the plains the same year I did, and although a single man and young at that, had kept a diary all the way. Poring over this venerable manuscript one day while I was with him, Mr. Allen ran across this sentence, "The Meeker brothers sold out their interest in the ferry today for $185.00, and left for Portland." Both had forgotten the partnership though each remembered their experience of the ferrying in wagon-boxes.

From the lower crossing of the Snake River, at Old Fort Boise to The Dalles is approximately 350 miles. It became a serious question with many whether there would be enough provisions left to keep starvation from the door, or whether the teams could muster strength to take the wagons in. Many wagons were left by the wayside. Everything possible shared the same fate; provisions and provisions only were religiously cared for—in fact, starvation stared many in the face. Added to the weakened condition of both man and beast small wonder if some thoughtless persons would take to the river in their wagon-beds, many to their death, and the remaining to greater hardships.

I can not give an adequate description of the dust, which seemed to get deeper and more impalpable every day. I might liken the wading in the dust, to wading in water as to resistance. Often times the dust would lie in the road full six inches deep, and so fine that one wading through it would scarcely leave a track. And such clouds, when disturbed—no words can describe it.

The appearance of the people is described in the chapter following.

FOOTNOTE:

[2] Recently died at the age of 89.

CHAPTER IX.

FLOATING DOWN THE RIVER. [3]

On a September day of 1852 an assemblage of persons could be seen encamped on the banks of the great Columbia, at The Dalles, now a city of no small pretensions, but then only a name for the peculiar configuration of country adjacent to and including the waters of the great river.

One would soon discover this assemblage was constantly changing. Every few hours stragglers came in from off the dusty road, begrimed with the sweat of the brow commingled with particles of dust driven through the air, sometimes by a gentle breeze and then again by a violent gale sweeping up the river through the mountain gap of the Cascade Range. A motley crowd these people were, almost cosmopolitan in nationality, yet all vestige of race peculiarities or race prejudice ground away in the mill of adversity and trials common to all alike in common danger. And yet, the dress and appearance of this assemblage were as varied as the human countenance and as unique as the great mountain scenery before them. Some were clad in scanty attire as soiled with the dust as their brows; others, while with better pretensions, lacked some portions of dress required in civilized life. Here a matronly dame with clean apparel would be without shoes, or there, perhaps, the husband without the hat or perhaps both shoes and hat absent; there the youngsters of all ages, making no pretensions to genteel clothing other than to cover their nakedness. An expert's ingenuity would be taxed to the utmost to discover either the texture or original color of the clothing of either juvenile or adult, so prevailing was the patch work and so inground the particles of dust and sand from off the plains.

Some of these people were buoyant and hopeful in the anticipation of meeting friends whom they knew were awaiting them at their journey's end, while others were downcast and [Pg 52] despondent as their thoughts went back to their old homes left behind, and the struggle now so near ended, and forward to the (to them) unknown land ahead. Some had laid friends and relatives tenderly away in the shifting sands, who had fallen by the wayside, with the certain knowledge that with many the spot selected by them would not be the last resting place for the bones of the loved ones. The hunger of the wolf had been appeased by the abundance of food from the fallen cattle that lined the trail for a thousand miles or more, or from the weakened beasts of the emigrants that constantly submitted to capture by the relentless native animals.

The story of the trip across the plains in 1852 is both interesting and pathetic, but I have planned to write of life after the journey rather than much about the journey itself; of the trials that beset the people after their five months' struggle on the tented field of two thousand miles of marching were ended, where, like on the very battlefield, the dead lay in rows of fifties or more; where the trail became so lined with fallen animals, one could scarcely be out of sight or smell of carrion; where the sick had no respite from suffering, nor the well from fatigue. But this oft told story is a subject of itself, treated briefly to the end we may have space to tell what happened when the journey was ended.

The constant gathering on the bank of the Columbia and constant departures of the immigrants did not materially change the numbers encamped, nor the general appearance. The great trip had moulded this army of homeseekers into one homogeneous mass, a common brotherhood, that left a lasting impression upon the participants, and, although few are left now, not one but will greet an old comrade as a brother indeed, and in fact, with hearty and oftentimes tearful congratulations.

We camped but two days on the bank of the river. When I say we, let it be understood that I mean myself, my young wife, and the little baby boy, who was but seven weeks old when the start was made from near Eddyville, Iowa. Both were sick, the mother from gradual exhaustion during [Pg 53] the trip incident to motherhood, and the little one in sympathy, doubtless drawn from the mother's breast.

Did you ever think of the wonderful mystery of the inner action of the mind, how some impressions once made seem to remain, while others gradually fade away, like the twilight of a summer sunset, until finally lost? And then how seemingly trivial incidents will be fastened upon one's memory while others of more importance we would recall if we could, but which have faded forever from our grasp? I can well believe all readers have had this experience, and so will be prepared to receive with leniency the confession of an elderly gentleman, (I will not say old), when he says that most of the incidents are forgotten and few remembered. I do not remember the embarking on the great scow for the float down the river to the Cascades, but vividly remember, as though it were but yesterday, incidents of the voyage. We all felt (I now mean the immigrants who took passage) that now our journey was ended. The cattle had been unyoked for the last time. The wagons had been rolled to the last bivouac; the embers of the last camp fire had died out; the last word of gossip had been spoken, and now, we were entering a new field with new present experience, and with new expectancy for the morrow.

The scow or lighter upon which we took passage was decked over, but without railing, a simple, smooth surface upon which to pile our belongings, which, in the majority of cases made but a very small showing. I think there must have been a dozen families, or more, of sixty or more persons, principally women and children, as the young men (and some old ones, too) were struggling on the mountain trail to get the teams through to the west side. The whole deck surface of the scow was covered with the remnants of the immigrants' outfits, which in turn were covered by the owners, either sitting or reclining upon their possessions, leaving but scant room

to change position or move about in any way.

[Pg 54] Did you ever, reader, have the experience when some sorrow overtook you, or when some disappointment had been experienced, or when deferred hopes had not been realized, or sometimes even without these and from some unknown, subtle cause, feel that depression of spirits that for lack of a better name we call "the blues"? When the world ahead looked dark; when hope seemed extinguished and the future looked like a blank? Why do I ask this question? I know you all to a greater or less degree have had just this experience. Can you wonder that after our craft had been turned loose upon the waters of the great river, and begun floating lazily down with the current, that such a feeling as that described would seize us as with an iron grip? We were like an army that had burned the bridges behind them as they marched, and with scant knowledge of what lay in the track before them. Here we were, more than two thousand miles from home, separated by a trackless, uninhabited waste of country, impossible for us to retrace our steps. Go ahead we must, no matter what we were to encounter. Then, too, the system had been strung up for months, to duties that could not be avoided or delayed, until many were on the verge of collapse. Some were sick and all reduced in flesh from the urgent call for camp duty, and lack of variety of food. Such were the feelings and condition of the motley crowd of sixty persons as we slowly neared that wonderful crevice through which the great river flows while passing the Cascade mountain range.

For myself, I can truly say, that the trip had not drawn on my vitality as I saw with so many. True, I had been worked down in flesh, having lost nearly twenty pounds on the trip, but what weight I had left was the bone and sinew of my system, that served me so well on this trip and has been my comfort in other walks of life at a later period. And so, if asked, did you experience hardships on the trip across the plains, I could not answer yes without a mental reservation that it might have been a great deal worse. I say the same as to after experience, for these subsequent [Pg 55] sixty years or more of pioneer life, having been blessed with a good constitution, and being now able to say that in the fifty-eight years of our married life, the wife has never seen me a day sick in bed. But this is a digression and so we must turn our attention to the trip on the scow, "floating down the river."

In our company, a party of three, a young married couple and an unmarried sister, lounged on their belongings, listlessly watching the ripples on the water, as did also others of the party. But little conversation was passing. Each seemed to be communing with himself or herself, but it was easy to see what were the thoughts occupying the minds of all. The young husband, it was plain to be seen, would soon complete that greater journey to the unknown beyond, a condition that weighed so heavily upon the ladies of the party, that they could ill conceal their solicitude and sorrow. Finally, to cheer up the sick husband and brother, the ladies began in sweet, subdued voices to sing the old familiar song of Home, Sweet Home, whereupon others of the party joined in the chorus with increased volume of sound. As the echo died away, at the moment of gliding under the shadow of the high mountain, the second verse was begun, but was never finished. If an electric shock had startled every individual of the party, there could have been no more simultaneous effect than when the second line of the second verse was reached, when instead of song, sobs and outcries of grief poured forth from all lips. It seemed as if there was a tumult of despair mingled with prayer pouring forth without restraint. The rugged boatmen rested upon their oars in awe, and gave away in sympathy with the scene before them, until it could be truly said no dry eyes were left nor aching heart but was relieved. Like the downpour of a summer shower that suddenly clears the atmosphere to welcome the bright shining sun that follows, so this sudden outburst of grief cleared away the despondency to be replaced by an exalted exhilarating feeling of buoyancy and hopefulness. The tears were not dried till mirth took [Pg 56] possession—a real hysterical manifestation of the whole party, that ended all depression for the remainder of the trip.

But our party was not alone in these trials. It seems to me like the dream of seeing some immigrants floating on a submerged raft while on this trip. Perhaps, it is a memory of a memory, or of a long lost story, the substance remembered, but the source forgotten.

Recently a story was told me by one of the actors in the drama, that came near a tragic ending. Robert Parker, who still lives at Sumner, one of the party, has told me of their experience. John Whitacre, afterwards Governor of Oregon, was the head of the party of nine that constructed a raft at The Dalles out of dry poles hauled from the adjacent country. Their stock was then started out over the trail, their two wagons put upon the raft with their provisions, bedding, women, and children in the wagons, and the start was made to float down the river to the Cascades. They had gotten but a few miles until experience warned them. The waves swept over the raft so heavily that it was like a submerged foundation upon which their wagons stood. A landing a few miles out from The Dalles averted a total wreck, and afforded opportunity to strengthen the buoyancy of their raft by extra timber packed upon their backs for long distances. And how should they know when they would reach the falls? Will they be able to discover the falls and then have time to make a landing? Their fears finally got the better of them; a line was run ashore and instead of making a landing, they found themselves hard aground out of reach of land, except by wading a long distance, and yet many miles above the falls (Cascades). Finally, a scow was procured, in which they all reached the head of the Cascades in safety. The old pioneer spoke kindly of this whole party, one might say affectionately. One, a waif picked up on the plains, a tender girl of fifteen, fatherless and motherless, and sick—a wanderer without relatives or acquaintances—all under the sands of the plains—recalled the trials of the trip vividly. But, he had cheerful news of [Pg 57] her in after life, though impossible at the moment to recall her name. Such were some of the

experiences of the finish of the long, wearisome trip of those who floated down the river on flatboat and raft.

FOOTNOTE:

[3] A chapter from Pioneer Reminiscences, by the author, published 1905.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARRIVAL.

About nine o'clock at night, with a bright moon shining, on October 1st, 1852, I carried my wife in my arms up the steep bank of the Willamette River, and three blocks away in the town of Portland to a colored man's lodging house.

"Why, suh, I didn't think yuse could do that, yuse don't look it," said my colored friend, as I deposited my charge in the nice, clean bed in a cozy little room.

From April until October, we had been on the move in the tented field, with never a roof over our heads other than the wagon cover or tent, and for the last three months, no softer bed than either the ground or bottom of the wagon bed. We had found a little steamer to carry us from the Cascades to Portland, with most of the company that had floated down the river from The Dalles, in the great scow. At the landing we separated, and knew each other but slightly afterwards. The great country, Oregon, (then including Puget Sound) was large enough to swallow up a thousand such immigrations and yet individuals be lost to each other, but a sorrier mess it would be difficult to imagine than confronted us upon arrival. Some rain had fallen, and more soon followed. With the stumps and logs, mud and uneven places, it was no easy matter to find a resting place for the tented city so continuously enlarging. People seemed to be dazed; did not know what to do; insufficient shelter to house all; work for all impossible; the country looked a veritable great field of forest and mountain. Discouragement and despair seized upon some, [Pg 58] while others began to enlarge the circle of observation. A few had friends and acquaintances, which fact began soon to relieve the situation by the removals that followed the reunions, while suffering, both mental and physical, followed the arrival in the winter storm that ensued, yet soon the atmosphere of discontent disappeared, and general cheerfulness prevailed. A few laid down in their beds not to arise again; a few required time to recuperate their strength, but with the majority, a short time found them as active and hearty as if nothing had happened. For myself, I can truly say, I do not remember the experience as a personal hardship. I had been born of healthy parents. I know of my father working eighteen hours a day for three years in the Carlisle mill at Indianapolis, Indiana, for 75 cents a day, and as an experienced miller at that. If his iron will or physical perfection or something had enabled him to endure this ordeal and retain his strength, why could not I, thirty years younger, hew my way? I did not feel fatigued. True, I had been "worked down" in flesh, but more from lack of suitable food than from excessive exertion. Any way, I resolved to try.

My brother, Oliver, who had crossed the plains with me—a noble man and one destined, had he lived, to have made his mark—came ahead by the trail. He had spied out the land a little with unsatisfactory results, met me and pointed the way to our colored friend's abode. We divided our purse of $3.75, I retaining two dollars and he taking the remainder, and with earliest dawn of the 2nd found the trail leading down the river, searching for our mutual benefit for something to do.

Did you, reader, ever have the experience of a premonition that led you on to success? Some say this is simply chance; others say that it is a species of superstition, but whatever it is, probably most of us, some time in our lives have had some sort of trials to set us to thinking.

As we passed up the Willamette, a few miles below Portland, on the evening of our arrival, a [Pg 59] bark lay seemingly right in our path as we steamed by. Standing upon the lower deck of our little steamer, this vessel looked to our inexperienced eyes as a veritable monster, with masts reaching to the sky, and hull towering high above our heads. Probably not one of that whole party of frontiersmen had ever before seen a deep sea vessel. Hence, small wonder, the novelty of this great monster, as we all thought of the vessel, should excite our admiration and we might almost say, amazement. That was what we came so far for, to where ships might go down to the sea and return laden with the riches of the earth. The word passed that she was bound for Portland with a cargo of merchandise and to take a return cargo of lumber. There, as we passed, flashed through my mind, will be my opportunity for work tomorrow, on that vessel.

Sure enough, when the morrow came, the staunch bark Mary Melville lay quietly in front of the mill, and so, not losing any time in early morning, my inquiry was made "do you want any men on board this ship?" A gruff looking fellow eyed me all over as much as to say, "not you," but answered, "yes, go below and get your breakfast." I fairly stammered out, I must go and see my wife first, and let her know where I am, whereupon came back a growl "of course, that will be the last of you; that's the way with these new comers, always hunting for work and never wanting it" (this aside to a companion, but in my hearing). I swallowed my indignation with the assurance that I would be back in five minutes and so went post haste to the little sufferer to impart the good news.

Put yourself in my place, you land lubber, who never came under the domination of a brutal mate of a sailing vessel fifty years ago. My ears fairly tingled with hot anger at the harsh orders, but I stuck to the work, smothering my rage at being berated while doing my very best to please and to expedite the work. The fact gradually dawned on me that the man was not angry, but had fallen in the way of talking as though he was, and that the sailors paid slight heed to what he [Pg 60] said. Before night, however, the fellow seemed to let up on me, while increasing his tirade on the heads of their regular men. The second and third day wore off with blistered hands, but with never a word about wages or pay.

"Say, boss, I'se got to pay my rent, and wese always gets our pay in advance. I doesn't like to ask you, but can't you get the old boss to put up something on your work?" I could plainly see that it was a notice to pay or move. He was giving it to me in thinly veiled words. What should I do? Suppose the old skipper should take umbrage, and discharge me for asking for wages before the end of the week? But when I told him what I wanted the money for, the old man's eyes moistened, but without a word, he gave me more money than I had asked for, and that night the steward handed me a bottle of wine for the "missus," which I knew instinctively came from the old captain.

The baby's Sunday visit to the ship; the Sunday dinner in the cabin; the presents of delicacies that followed, even from the gruff mate, made me feel that under all this roughness, a tender spot of humanity lay, and that one must not judge by outward appearances too much—that even way out here, three thousand miles from home, the same sort of people lived as those I had left behind me.

"St. Helens, October 7th, 1852.

"Dear Brother: Come as soon as you can. Have rented a house, sixty boarders; this is going to be the place. Shall I send you money?

O. P. M."

The mate importuned me to stay until the cargo was on board, which I did until the last stick of lumber was stowed, the last pig in the pen, and the ship swung off bound on her outward voyage. I felt as though I had an interest in her, but, remembering the forty dollars in the aggregate I had received, with most of it to jingle in my pockets, I certainly could claim no financial interest, but [Pg 61] from that day on I never saw or heard the name of the bark Mary Melville without pricking my ears (figuratively, of course) to hear more about her and the old captain and his gruff mate.

Sure enough, I found St. Helens to be the place. Here was to be the terminus of the steamship line from San Francisco. "Wasn't the company building this wharf?" They wouldn't set sixty men to work on the dock without they meant business. "Ships can't get up that creek" (meaning the Willamette), "the big city is going to be here." This was the talk that greeted my ears, after we had carried the wife, (this time in a chair) to our hotel. Yes, our hotel, and had deposited her and the baby in the best room the house afforded.

It was here I made acquaintance with Columbia Lancaster, afterwards elected as the first delegate to Congress from Washington. I have always felt that the published history of those days has not done the old man justice, and has been governed in part, at least, by factional bias. Lancaster believed that what was worth doing at all was worth doing well, and he lived it. He used to come across the Columbia with his small boat, rowed by his own hand, laden with vegetables grown by himself on his farm opposite St. Helens, in the fertile valley of the Lewis River. I soon came to know what Lancaster said of his produce was true to the letter; that if he told me he had good potatoes, he had, and that they were the same in the middle or bottom of the sack as at the top. And so with all his produce. We at once became his heaviest customer, and learned to trust him implicitly. I considered him a typical pioneer, and his name never would have been used so contemptuously had it not been that he became a thorn in the side of men who made politics a trade for personal profit. Lancaster upset their well laid plans, carried off the honors of the democratic nomination, and was elected as our first delegate in Congress from the new Territory of Washington.

One January morning of 1853, the sixty men, (our boarders) did not go to work dock building as [Pg 62] usual. Orders had come to suspend work. Nobody knew why, or for how long. We soon learned the why, as the steamship company had given up the fight against Portland, and would thenceforward run their steamers to that port. For how long, was speedily determined, for the dock was not finished and was allowed to fall into decay and disappear by the hand of time.

Our boarders scattered, and our occupation was gone, and our accumulation in great part rendered worthless to us by the change.

Meantime, snow had fallen to a great depth; the price of forage for cattle rose by leaps and bounds, and we found that we must part with half of our stock to save the remainder. It might be necessary to feed for a month, or for three months, but we could not tell, and so the last cow was given up that we might keep one yoke of oxen, so necessary for the work on a new place. Then the hunt for a claim began again. One day's struggle against the current of Lewis River, and a night standing in a snow and sleet storm around a camp fire of green wood, cooled our ardor a little, and two hours sufficed to take us back home next morning.

But claims we must have. That was what we had come to Oregon for; we were going to be farmers. Wife and I had made that bargain before we closed the other more important contract. We were, however, both of one mind as to both contracts. Early in January of 1853 the snow began disappearing rapidly, and the search became more earnest, until finally, about the 20th of January, I drove my first stake for a claim, to include the site where the town, or city, of Kalama now stands, and here built our first cabin.

That cabin I can see in my mind as vividly as I could the first day after it was finished. It was the first home I ever owned. What a thrill of joy that name brought to us. Home. It was our home, and no one could say aye, yes, or no, as to what we should do. No more rough talk on ship board [Pg 63] or at the table; no more restrictions if we wished to be a little closer together. The glow of the cheek had returned to the wife; the dimple to the baby. And such a baby. In the innocence of our

souls we really and truly thought we had the smartest, cutest baby on earth. I wonder how many millions of young parents have since experienced that same feeling? I would not tear the veil from off their eyes if I could. Let them think so, for it will do them good—make them happy, even if, perchance, it should be an illusion—it's real to them. But I am admonished that I must close this writing now, and tell about the cabin, and the early garden, and the trip to Puget Sound in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST CABIN.

What a charm the words our first cabin have to the pioneer. To many, it was the first home ever owned by them, while to many others, like myself, the first we ever had. We had been married nearly two years, yet this was really our first abiding place. All others had been merely way stations on the march westward from Indianapolis to this cabin. Built of small, straight logs, on a side hill, with the door in the end fronting the river, and with but little grading, for the rocky nature of the location would not admit of it. Three steps were required to reach the floor. The ribs projected in front a few feet to provide an open front porch, with a ground floor, not for ornament, but for storage for the dry wood and kindling so necessary for the comfort and convenience of the mistress of the house. The walls were but scant five feet, with not a very steep roof, and a large stone fire place and chimney—the latter but seven feet high—completed our first home.

The great river, nearly a mile and three-quarters wide, seemed to tire from its ceaseless flow at least once a day as if taking a nooning spell, while the tides from the ocean, sixty miles away, [Pg 64] contended for mastery, and sometimes succeeded in turning the current up stream. Immediately in front of our landing lay a small island of a few acres in extent, covered with heavy timber and driftwood. This has long since disappeared and ships now pass over the spot with safety.

Scarcely had we become settled in our new home before there came a mighty flood that covered the waters of the river with wrecks of property impossible to enumerate. Our attention was immediately turned to securing logs that came floating down the river in great numbers. In a very short time we had a raft that was worth quite a sum of money could we but get it to the market. Encouraged by this find, we immediately turned our attention to some fine timber standing close to the bank nearby, and began hand logging to supplement what we had already secured afloat. I have often wondered what we would have done had it not been for this find, for in the course of seven weeks three of us marketed eight hundred dollars' worth of logs that enabled us to obtain flour, even if we did pay fifty dollars a barrel, and potatoes at two dollars a bushel, and sometimes more.

And yet, because of that hand logging work, Jane came very near becoming a widow one morning before breakfast, but did not know of it until long afterwards. It occurred in this way. We did not then know how to scaffold up above the tough, swelled butts of the large trees, and this made it very difficult to chop them down. So we burned them by boring two holes at an angle to meet inside the inner bark, and by getting the fire started, the heart of the tree would burn, leaving an outer shell of bark. One morning, as usual, I was up early, and after starting the fire in the stove and putting on the tea kettle, I hastened to the burning timber to start afresh the fires, if perchance, some had ceased to burn. Nearing a clump of three giants, two hundred and fifty feet tall, one began toppling over toward me. In my confusion I ran across the path where it fell, [Pg 65] and while this had scarce reached the ground, a second started to fall almost parallel to the first, scarcely thirty feet apart at the top, leaving me between the two with limbs flying in a good many directions. If I had not become entangled in some brush, I would have gotten under the last falling tree. It was a marvelous escape, and would almost lead one to think that there is such a thing as a charmed life.

The rafting of our precious accumulations down the Columbia River to Oak Point; the relentless current that carried us by where we had contracted our logs at six dollars a thousand; the following the raft to the larger waters, and finally, to Astoria, where we sold them for eight dollars, instead of six per thousand, thus profiting by our misfortunes; the involuntary plunge off the raft into the river with my boots on; the three days and nights of ceaseless toil and watching would make a thrilling story if we had but the time to tell it. Our final success was complete, which takes off the keen edge of the excitement of the hour, and when finished, we unanimously voted we would have none of it more.

At Oak Point we found George Abernethy, former Governor of Oregon, who had quite recently returned with his family from the "States," and had settled down in the lumber business. He had a mill running of a capacity of about 25,000 feet of lumber a day. It was a water power mill, and the place presented quite a smart business air for the room they had. But Oak Point did not grow to be much of a lumber or business center, and the water mill eventually gave way to steam, located elsewhere, better suited for the business.

The flour sack was nearly empty when we left home expecting to be absent but one night, and now we had been gone a week. There were no neighbors nearer than four miles and no roads—scarcely a trail—the only communication was by the river. What about the wife and baby alone in the cabin with the deep timber close by in the rear, and heavy jungle of brush in the front? Nothing about it. We found them all right upon our return, but like the log drivers with their [Pg 66] experience, the little wife said she wanted no more of cabin life alone. And yet, like adventures and like experiences followed.

The February sun of 1853 shone almost like midsummer. The clearing grew almost as if by magic. We could not resist the temptation to begin planting, and before March was gone, the rows of peas, lettuce, and onions growing on the river bank could be seen from the cabin door, thirty rods away.

One day I noticed some three-cornered bits of potatoes that had been cut out, not bigger than the end of my finger. These all ran to a point as though cut out from a pattern. The base, or outer skin, all contained an eye of the potato. The wife said these would grow and would help us out about seed when planting time came, and we could have the body of the potatoes to eat. That would have seemed a plausible scheme had we been able to plant at once, but by this time we had been forcibly reminded that there was another impending flood for June, incident to the melting of the snow on the mountains, a thousand miles away as the channel ran. But the experiment would not cost much, so the potato eyes were carefully saved and spread out on shelves where they became so dry that they would rattle like dry onion sets when handled. Every steamer outward bound carried potatoes for the San Francisco market, until it became a question whether enough would be left for seed, so that three and even four cents per pound was asked and paid for sorry looking culls. We must have seed, and so, after experimenting with the dried eyes, planted in moist earth in a box kept warm in the cabin, we became convinced that the little lady of the household was right, so ate potatoes freely even at these famine prices. Sure enough, the flood came, the planting delayed until July, and yet a crop was raised that undug brought in nearly four hundred dollars, for we did not stay to harvest them, or in fact, cultivate them, leaving that to another who became interested in the venture.

In April, the word began to pass around that we were to have a new Territory to embrace the [Pg 67] country north of the Columbia River, with its capital on Puget Sound, and here on the Columbia we would be way off to one side and out of touch with the people who would shortly become a great, separate commonwealth. Besides, had we not come all the way across the plains to get to the Sea Board, and here we were simply on the bank of a river—a great river to be sure, with its ship channel, but then, that bar at the mouth, what about it? Then the June freshet, what about that?

So, leaving the little wife and baby in the cabin home, one bright morning in May, my brother Oliver and myself made each of us a pack of forty pounds and took the trail, bound for Puget Sound, camping where night overtook us, and sleeping in the open air without shelter or cover other than that afforded by some friendly tree with drooping limbs. Our trail first led us down near the right bank of the Columbia to the Cowlitz, thence up the latter river thirty miles or more, and then across the country nearly sixty miles to Olympia, and to the salt sea water of the Pacific sent inland a hundred and fifty miles by the resistless tides, twice a day for every day of the year.

Our expectations had been raised by the glowing accounts about Puget Sound, and so, when we could see in the foreground but bare, dismal mud flats, and beyond but a few miles, of water with a channel scarce twice as wide as the channel of the great river we had left, bounded on either side by high table, heavily timbered land, a feeling of deep disappointment fell upon us, with the wish that we were back at our cabin on the river.

Should we turn around and go back? No, that was what we had not yet done since leaving our Indiana home eighteen months before; but what was the use of stopping here? We wanted a place to make a farm, and we could not do it on such forbidding land as this. Had not the little wife and I made a solemn bargain or compact, before we were married that we were going to be farmers? Here, I could see a dense forest stretched out before me quite interesting to the [Pg 68] lumberman, and for aught I know, channels for the ships, but I wanted to be neither a lumberman nor sailor, and so my first camp on Puget Sound was not cheerful and my first night not passed in contentment.

Olympia at the time contained about 100 inhabitants. It could boast having three stores, a hotel, a livery stable, and saloon, with one weekly newspaper, then publishing its thirtieth number. A glance at the advertising columns of this paper, the "Columbian," (named for what was expected would be the name of the new Territory) disclosed but few local advertisers, the two pages devoted to advertising being filled by announcements of business other than in Olympia. "Everybody knows everybody here," said a business man to me, "so what's the use of advertising." And it was thus with those who had been in the place for a few weeks, and so it continued all over the pioneer settlements for years. To meet a man on the road or on the street without speaking was considered rude. It became the universal practice to greet even strangers as well as acquaintances, and to this day I doubt if there are many of the old settlers yet devoid of the impulse to pass the time of day with hearty greetings to whomsoever they may meet, be they acquaintances or strangers.

Edmund Sylvester in partnership with Levi L. Smith, located the claims where the town of Olympia is built, in 1848. Mr. Smith soon after died, leaving Sylvester as sole proprietor of the town, where I saw him, as it will appear, five years later. It is said that Colonel I. N. Ebey suggested the name Olympia, which was not given to the place until after Mr. Sylvester's flight to the gold mines of California and return in 1850.

But we could not stay here at Olympia. We had pushed on past some good locations on the Chehalis, and further south, without locating, and now, should we retrace our steps? Brother Oliver said no. My better judgment said no, though sorely pressed with that feeling of homesickness, or blues, or whatever we may call it. The resolve was quickly made that we would [Pg 69] see more of this Puget Sound, that we were told presented nearly as many miles of shore line as we had traveled westward from the Missouri River to Portland, near sixteen hundred miles, and which we afterwards found to be true.

But how were we to go and see these, to us unexplored waters? I said I would not go in one of

those things, the Indian canoe, that we would upset it before we were out half an hour. Brother Oliver pointed to the fact the Indians navigated the whole Sound in these canoes, and were safe, but I was inexorable and would not trust my carcass in a craft that would tip so easily as a Siwash canoe. When I came to know the Indians better, I ceased to use such a term, and afterwards when I saw the performances of these apparently frail craft, my admiration was greater in degree than my contempt had been.

Of the cruise that followed on Puget Sound, and in what manner of craft we made it, and of various incidents of the trip that occupied a month, I must defer telling now, and leave this part of the story for succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER XII.

CRUISE ON PUGET SOUND.

Put yourself in my place, reader, for a time—long enough to read this chapter. Think of yourself as young again, if elderly (I will not say old); play you have been old and now young again, until you find out about this trip on Puget Sound fifty and more years ago. Then think of Puget Sound in an inquiring mood, as though you knew nothing about it, only a little indefinite hear-say; enough to know there is such a name, but not what manner of place or how large or how small; whether it was one single channel, like a river, or numerous channels; whether it was a bay or a series of bays or whether it was a lake, but somehow connected with the sea, and then you will [Pg 70] be in the mood these two young men were, when they descended the hill with their packs on their backs and entered the town of Olympia in May, 1853. Now, if you are in this inquiring mood, I will take you in my confidence and we will live the cruise over again of thirty-two days of adventures and observation on Puget Sound sixty-two years ago.

I was but a few months past twenty-three, while my brother Oliver could claim nearly two years' seniority. We had always played together as boys, worked together as men, and lived together ever after his marriage until the day of his death, now nearly sixty years ago, and so far as I can remember, never had a disagreement in our whole life.

So, when we cast off the line at Olympia, on or about the 28th day of May, 1853, we were assured of one thing and that was a concert of action, be there danger or only labor ahead. Neither of us had had much experience in boating, and none as to boat building, but when we decided to make the trip and discard the idea of taking a canoe we set to work with a hearty good will to build us a skiff out of light lumber, then easily obtained at the Tumwater mill of Hays, Ward & Co., in business at that place.

We determined to have the skiff broad enough to not upset easily, and long enough to carry us and our light cargo of food and bedding. Like the trip across the plains we must provide our own transportation. We were told that the Sound was a solitude so far as transportation facilities, with here and there a vessel loading piles and square timber for the San Francisco market. Not a steamer was then plying on the Sound; not even a sailing craft that essayed to carry passengers. We did not really know whether we would go twenty miles or a hundred; whether we would find small waters or large; straight channels or intricate by-ways; in a word we knew but very little of what lay before us. If we had known a little more, we would not have encountered the risks we did. One thing we knew, we could endure sturdy labor without fatigue, and improvised camp [Pg 71] without discomfort, for we were used to just such experiences. Poor innocent souls, we thought we could follow the shore line and thus avoid danger, and perhaps float with the tide and thus minimize the labor, and yet keep our bearings.

George A. Barnes sold us the nails and oakum for building the boat and charged us 25 cents per pound for the former, but could not sell us any pitch as that was to be had for the taking. However, articles of merchandise were not high, though country produce sold for extreme prices.

Recently I have seen a "retail prices current of Puget Sound, Washington Territory, corrected weekly by Parker, Colter & Co.," in which, among many others, the following prices are quoted in the columns of the only paper in the Territory then published in Olympia, the "Columbian," as follows:

Pork, per lb., 20c; flour, per 100 lbs., $10.00; potatoes, per bushel, $3.00; butter, per lb., $1.00; onions, per bushel, $4.00; eggs, per dozen, $1.00; beets, per bushel, $3.50; sugar, per lb., 12½c; coffee, per lb., 18c; tea, per lb., 75c and $1.00; molasses, per gallon, 50c and 75c; salmon, per lb., 10c; whisky, per gallon, $1.00; sawed lumber, fir, per M, $20.00; cedar, per M, $30.00; shingles, per M, $4.25 to $5.00; piles, per foot, 5c to 8c; square timber, per foot, 12c to 15c.

Thus it will be seen that what the farmer had to sell was high while much he must buy was comparatively cheap, even his whisky, then but a dollar a gallon, while his potatoes sold for $3.00 a bushel.

This Parker, of Parker, Colter & Co., is the same John G. Parker, Jr., of steamboat fame who yet lives in Olympia, now an old man, but never contented without his hand on the wheel in the pilot house, where I saw him but a few years ago on his new steamer the Caswell, successor to his first, the Traveler, of fifty years before.

Two or three other stores besides Barnes' and Parker's were then doing business in Olympia, the Kandall Company, with Joseph Cushman as agent; A. J. Moses, and I think the Bettman [Pg 72] Brothers.

Rev. Benjamin F. Close, Methodist, held religious service in a small building near Barnes' store, but there was no church edifice for several years. Near by, the saloon element had found a foothold, but I made no note of them in my mind other than to remember they were there and running every day of the week including Sunday.

The townsite proprietor, Edmund Sylvester, kept the hotel of the town, the "Washington," at the corner of 2nd and Main Street, a locality now held to be too far down on the water front, but then the center of trade and traffic.

G. N. McConaha and J. W. Wiley dispensed the law and H. A. Goldsborough & Simmons (M. T.

Simmons) looked out for the real estate and conveyances. Add to these a bakery, a livery stable, and a blacksmith shop and we have the town of Olympia in our mind again of possibly 100 people who then believed a great future lay in store for their embryo city "at the head of Puget Sound."

Three leading questions occupied the attention of all parties while we were in this little ambitious city, the new Territorial organization so soon to be inaugurated, the question of an overland railroad, and of an over mountain immigrant wagon road. The last was the absorbing topic of conversation, as it was a live enterprise dependent upon the efforts of the citizens for success. Meetings had been held in different parts of the district west of the Cascade Mountains and north of the Columbia River, and finally subscription lists were circulated, a cashier and superintendent appointed, with the result, as stated elsewhere, of opening the way for the first immigration over the Cascade Mountains via the Natchess Pass, but the particulars of this work are given in other chapters following.

As the tide drew off the placid waters of the bay at Olympia with just a breath of air, our little craft behaved splendidly as the slight ripples were jostled against the bow under the pressure of the sail and brought dreams of a pleasure trip, to make amends for the tiresome pack across the [Pg 73] country. Nothing can be more enjoyable than favorable conditions in a boating trip, the more specially to those who have long been in the harness of severe labor, and for a season must enjoy enforced repose. And so we lazily floated with the tide, sometimes taking a few strokes with the oars, and at other times whistling for the wind, as the little town of Olympia to the south, became dimmed by distance.

At this southern extremity of the Sound without the accumulation of water to struggle for passage, as through the channel to the north, the movement is neither swift, nor disturbed with cross currents to agitate the surface—more like the steady flow of a great river.

But we were no sooner fairly out of sight of the little village and out of the bay it was situated upon (Budd's Inlet), than the query came up as to which way to go. Was it this channel or that or yet another one we should take? Let the tide decide; that will take us out toward the ocean we urged. No, we are drifting into another bay; that cannot be where we want to go; why, we are drifting right back almost in the same direction from which we came, but into another bay. We'll pull this way to that point to the northeast. But there seems a greater opening of waters to the northwest; yes, but I do not see any way out there. Neither is there beyond that point (Johnson's Point); and so we talked and pulled and puzzled until finally it dawned upon us that the tide had turned and we were being carried back to almost the spot from whence we came, into South Bay.

"Now the very best thing we can do is to camp," said the senior of the party of two, to which the junior, your humble writer, readily assented, and so our first night's camp was scarcely twelve miles from where we had started in the morning.

What a nice camping place this. The ladies would say lovely, and why not? A beautiful pebbly beach that extended almost to the water's edge even at low tide with a nice grassy level spit; a [Pg 74] back ground of evergreen giant fir timber; such clear, cool water gushing out from the bank near by, so superlative in quality as to defy words to adequately describe; and such fuel for the camp fire, broken fir limbs with just enough pitch to make a cheerful blaze and yet body enough to last well. Why, we felt so happy that we were almost glad the journey had been interrupted. Oliver was the carpenter of the party, the tent builder, wood getter, and general roust-a-bout, to coin a word from camp parlance, while I, the junior, was the "chief cook and bottle washer," as the senior would jocularly put it.

At the point a little beyond where we landed we found next morning J. R. Johnson, M. D., with his cabin on the point under the pretentious name of "Johnson's Hospital," opened as he said for the benefit of the sick, but which, from what I saw in my later trips I think his greatest business was in disposing of cheap whisky of which he contributed his share of the patronage.

An Indian encampment being near by, a party of them soon visited our camp and began making signs for trade. "Mika tik-eh clams?" came from out the mouth of one of the matrons of the party as if though half choked in the speaking, a cross between a spoken word and a smothered guttural sound in the throat.

"What does she say, Oliver?" the junior said, turning for counsel to the superior wisdom of the elder brother.

"I'm blessed if I know what she says, but she evidently wants to sell some clams."

And so, after considerable dickering, and by signs and gestures and words oft repeated we were able to impart the information that we wanted a lesson in cookery; that we wanted her to show us how to cook them, and that we would buy some. This brought some merriment in the camp. The idea, that there lived a person that did not know how to cook clams. Without saying by your leave or anything else the motherly looking native began tearing down our camp fire.

"Let her alone," said the senior, "and see what she's up to," noticing that the younger man was [Pg 75] going to remonstrate against such an interference with his well laid plans for bread baking. And so the kitchen of the camp was surrendered to the native matron, who quietly covered the hot pebbles and sand where the fire had been, with a lighter layer of pebbles, upon which the clams were deposited and some fine twigs placed on top, upon which earth was deposited. "K-l-o-s-h-e," said the matron. "Hy-as-kloshe," said her seignior, who sat squatting watching the operation with evident pride upon the achievement of his dame.

"What did they say?" innocently inquired the junior brother.

"I know what they said, but I don't know what they meant," responded the elder one, "unless it was she had done a good job, which I think she has," and thus began and ended our first lesson in the Chinook jargon, and our first introduction to a clam bake.

What memories hover around these three words, "the clam bake." Did you ever, may I ask my readers, other than those of ye olden times, did you ever participate in the joys of a regular old-fashioned clam bake, with or without the corn, with or without the help of the deft native hand? If you never have, then go straightway, before you die, to the end that you may ever after have the memory of the first clam bake, even if it be but a memory, and likewise be the last.

Our first clam bake gave us great encouragement. We soon learned that these bivalves were to be found in almost unlimited quantity, and were widely distributed; that the harvest was ready twice a day, when the tide was out, and that we need have no fear of a famine even if cast away in some unfrequented place.

"Yah-ka kloshe al-ta," said the dame, uncovering the steaming mass and placing them on a sliver found near by "de-late kloshe; kloshe muck-a-muck al-ta," and so, without understanding what she said, but knowing well what she meant, we fell to in disposing of this, our first clam dinner. [Pg 76]

Dividing with them the bread that had been baked, and some potatoes that had been boiled, the natives soon withdrew to their own camp, where, before retiring for the night, we repaid the visit.

To see the little fellows of the camp scud behind the mother when the strangers entered, and shyly peep out from their retreat, and the mother lovingly reassuring them with kind, affectionate caresses, and finally coaxing them out from under cover, revealed the character of the natives we had neither of us realized before. We had been in the Indian country for nearly a year, but with guns by our side if not in our hands for nearly half the time, while on the plains, but we had not stopped to study the Indian character. We took it for granted that the Indians were our enemies and watched them suspiciously accordingly, but here seemed to be a disposition manifested to be neighborly and helpful. We took a lesson in Chinook, and by signs and words combined held conversation until a late hour, when, upon getting ready for taking leave, a slice of venison was handed us, sufficient for several meals. Upon offering to pay for it we were met with a shake of the head, and with the words, "wake, wake, kul-tus-pot-latch," which we understood by their actions to mean they made us a present of it.

This present from the Indian let in a flood of light upon the Indian character. We had made them a present first, it was true, but did not expect any return, except perhaps good will, and in fact, cannot now say we particularly expected that, but were impelled to do our act of courtesy from the manner of their treatment and from the evident desire to be on friendly terms. From that time on during the trip, and I may say, for all time since, I have found the Indians of Puget Sound ready to reciprocate acts of kindness, and hold in high esteem a favor granted if not accompanied by acts apparently designed to simply gain an advantage.

We often forget the sharp eyes and ears of little children and let slip words that are quickly absorbed to their hurt by affecting their conduct. While the Indian is really not a suspicious person, nevertheless, he is quick to detect and as quick to resent a real or supposed slight as the little five-year-old who discovers his elders in their fibs or deceit. Not that the Indian expects socially to be received in your house or at your table, yet little acts of kindness, if done without apparent design, touch their better nature and are repaid more than a hundred fold, for you thereafter have a friend and neighbor, and not an enemy or suspicious maligner. [Pg 77]

All of this did not dawn on the young men at the time, though their treatment of the Indians was in harmony with friendly feelings which we found everywhere and made a lasting impression.

Subsequent experience, of course, has confirmed these first impressions with the wider field of observation in after years, while employing large numbers of these people in the hop fields of which I hope to write later. And so now must end this chapter with the subject of the "cruise" to be continued at another sitting.

CHAPTER XIII.

CRUISE ON PUGET SOUND.

"Keep to the right, as the law directs," is an old western adage that governs travelers on the road, but we kept to the right because we wanted to follow the shore as we thought it safer, and besides, why not go that way as well as any other,—it was all new to us. So, on the second morning, as we rounded Johnson's Point and saw no channel opening in any direction; saw only water in the foreground and timber beyond, we concluded to skirt the coast line and see what the day would bring forth. This led us a southeasterly course and in part doubling back with that [Pg 78] traveled the previous day, and past what became the historical grounds of the Medicine Creek Treaty Council, or, rather leaving this two miles to our right as the Nisqually flats were encountered. Here we were crowded to a northerly course, leaving the Nisqually House on the beach to the east without stopping for investigation.

According to Finlayson's journal, as I afterwards ascertained, this had been built twenty-three years before. At least, some house had been built on this spot at that time (1829 or 1830), though the fort by that name one-fourth mile back from the water was not constructed until the summer of 1833, just twenty years previous to our visit.

This fort mentioned must not be confounded with the Nisqually fort built some three years later (1836) a mile farther east and convenient to the waters of Segwalitchew Creek, which there runs near the surface of the surrounding country. All remains of the old fort have long since vanished, but the nearly filled trenches where the stockade timbers stood can yet be traced, showing that a space 250 feet square had been enclosed. Another visible sign was an apple tree yet alive near the spot, grown from seed planted in 1833, but now, when I visited the place in June, 1903, overshadowed by a lusty fir that is sapping the life of the only living, though mute, witness (except it may be the Indian, Steilacoom) we have of those early days, when the first fort was built by the intrepid employes of the Hudson Bay Company.

An interesting feature of the intervening space between the old and the newer fort is the dense growth of fir timber averaging nearly two feet in diameter and in some cases fully three, and over a hundred feet high on what was prairie when the early fort builders began work. The land upon which this timber is growing still shows unmistakable signs of the furrow marks that can be traced through the forest. Verily, this is a most wonderful country where forest product will grow, if properly protected, more rapidly than the hand of man will destroy.

As the tide and wind favored us we did not stop, but had not proceeded far before we came in [Pg 79] sight of a fleet of seven vessels lying at anchor in a large bay of several miles in extent.

Upon the eastern slope of the shores of this bay lay the two towns, Port Steilacoom, established January 23d, 1851, by Captain Lafayette Balch, and Steilacoom City, upon an adjoining land claim taken by John B. Chapman, August 23d, of same year and later held by his son, John M. Chapman. These two rival towns were built as far apart as possible on the frontage lands of the claim owners (about one mile apart) and became known locally as Upper and Lower Steilacoom, the latter name being applied to Balch's town.

We found the stocks of goods carried by the merchants of these two towns exceeded those held by the Olympia merchants, and that at Fort Nisqually, six miles distant, the merchandise carried by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company would probably equal that of all three of the towns combined, possibly, in the aggregate, over one hundred thousand dollars for the whole district under review.

Evidently a far larger trade centered on Steilacoom Bay and vicinity than at any other point we had seen and, as we found afterwards, than any other point on Puget Sound. Naturally we would here call a halt to examine the country and to make ourselves acquainted with the surroundings that made this early center of trade.

One mile and a half back from the shore and east of lower Steilacoom we found what was by courtesy called Fort Steilacoom but which was simply a camp of a company of United States soldiers in wooden shells of houses and log cabins. This camp or fort had been established by Captain Bennett H. Hill with Company M, 1st Artillery, August 27th, 1849, following the attempted robbery of Fort Nisqually the previous May by Pat Kanim and his followers, the Snoqualmie Indians.

Dr. Tolmie, Chief Factor of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company at Fort Nisqually, quickly seized the opportunity to demand rent from the United States for the occupancy of the site of [Pg 80] Fort Steilacoom, of six hundred dollars a year, and actually received it for fifteen years and until the final award was made extinguishing the claims of his company. We found the plains alive with this company's stock (many thousand head) running at large and fattened upon the scant but nutritious grass growing upon the adjacent prairie and glade lands.

Balch and Webber were doing a thriving trade in their store at the little town of Steilacoom, besides their shipping trade of piles and square timber, shingles, lumber, cord wood, hides, furs, fish, and other odds and ends. Just across the street from their store stood the main hotel of the place with the unique history of being the only building erected on Puget Sound from lumber shipped from the eastern seaboard. Captain Balch brought the building with him from Maine, ready to set up. At the upper town Philip Keach was merchandising while Abner Martin kept a

hotel. Intense rivalry ran between the two towns in the early days when we were at Steilacoom.

Thomas M. Chambers, father of the prominent members of the Olympia community of that name, had built a saw-mill on Steilacoom creek, two miles from the town, and a grist mill where farmers oftentimes came with pebbles in their wheat to dull the burrs.

We are wont now to speak of this place as "poor old Steilacoom," with its tumbled-down houses, rotting sidewalks and decayed wharves; the last vestige of the latter of which has disappeared; but then everything was new, with an air of business bustle that made one feel here was a center of trade. The sight of those seven vessels lying in the offing made a profound impression upon our minds. We had never before seen so many ships at one place as were quietly lying at anchor in front of the embryo city. Curiously enough, here was the very identical vessel we had first seen on the Willamette River, the bark "Mary Melville," with her gruff mate and big hearted master, Capt. Barston, with whom the reader has been made acquainted in a previous chapter. I took no special note of the names of these vessels other than this one, but from the columns of the Columbian I am able to glean the names of twenty-two vessels, brigs, barks, and schooners, then plying between Puget Sound and San Francisco, which are as follows:

[Pg 81]

Brig Cyclops, Perkins; Bark Delegate, ——; Brig Tarquina, ——; Bark John Adams, McKelmer; Brig G. W. Kendall, Gove; Brig Merchantman, Bolton; Brig Kingsbury, Cook; Schooner Cynosure, Fowler; Brig George Emery, Diggs; Bark Mary Melville, Barston; Bark Brontes, Blinn; Bark Sarah Warren, Gove; Ship Persia, Brown; Brig I. C. Cabot, Dryden; Brig Jane, Willett; Ship Rowena, ——; Brig Willingsly, Gibbs; Brig Mary Dare, Mowatt; Brig John Davis, Pray; Bark Carib, Plummer; Brig Leonesa, Howard, and Schooner Franklin, Leary. There were probably more, but I do not recall them, but these were enough to keep every man busy that could swing an axe, drag a saw or handle that instrument of torture, the goad stick, and who was willing to work.

All this activity came from the shipment of piles, square timbers, cordwood, shingles, with small quantities of lumber—all that was obtainable, which was not very much, to the San Francisco market. The descent of timber on the roll-ways sounded like distant thunder, and could be heard almost all hours of the day, even where no camps were in sight, but lay hidden up some secluded bay or inlet.

We were sorely tempted to accept the flattering offer of $4.00 each day for common labor in a timber camp, but soon concluded not to be swerved from the course we had outlined.

It was here, and I think at this time, I saw the Indian "Steilacoom," who still lives. I saw him recently at his camp in the Nisqually bottom, and judge he is bordering on ninety years. Steilacoom helped to build old Fort Nisqually in 1833, and was a married man at that time. People called him chief because he happened to bear the name adopted for the town and creek, but he was not a man of much force of character and not much of a chief. I think this is a remarkable case of longevity for an Indian. As a race, they are short lived. It was here, and during this visit, we began seeing Indians in considerable numbers. Off the mouth of the Nisqually and several places along the beach and floating on the bay we saw several hundred in the aggregate of all ages and kind. There seemed to be a perfect abandon as to care or thought for the future, or even as to the immediate present, literally floating with the tide. In those days, the Indians seemed to work or play by spurts and spells. Here and there that day a family might be seen industriously pursuing some object, but as a class there seemed to be but little life in them, and we concluded they were the laziest set on earth. I afterwards materially modified that opinion, as I became better acquainted with their habits, for I have found just as industrious Indians, both men and women, and as reliable workers, as among the whites, though this class, it may be said, is exceptional with the men. The women are all industrious.

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Shall we camp here and spy out the land, or shall we go forward and see what lay before us? Here were the ideals, that had enticed us so far from our old home, where "ships went down into the sea," with the trade of the whole world before us. We waxed eloquent, catching inspiration from people of the town. After a second sober thought we found we had nothing to trade but labor, and we had not come this far to be laborers for hire. We had come to look up a place to make a farm and a farm we were going to have. We, therefore, set about searching for claims, and the more we searched the less we liked the looks of things.

The gravelly plains near Steilacoom would not do: neither the heavy fir timber lands skirting the waters of the Sound, and we were nonplused and almost ready to condemn the country. Finally, on the fourth day after a long, wearisome tramp, we cast off at high tide, and in a dead calm, to continue our cruise. The senior soon dropped into a comfortable afternoon nap, leaving me in full command. As the sun shone nice and warm and the tide was taking us rapidly in the direction we wanted to go, why not join, even if we did lose the sight seeing for which the journey was made.

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I was shortly after aroused by the senior exclaiming, "What is that?" and then answering half to himself and half to me, "Why, as I live, it's a deer swimming way out here in the bay." Answering, half asleep and half awake, that that could not be, the senior said: "Well, that's what it is." We gave chase and soon succeeded in getting a rope over its horns. We had by this time drifted into the Narrows, and soon found that we had something more important to look after than towing a deer among the tide-rips of the Sound, and turning him loose pulled for dear life for the shore, and found shelter in an eddy. A perpendicular bluff rose from the high water mark, leaving no place for a camp fire or bed. The tide seemed to roll in waves and with contending forces of currents and counter currents, yet all moving in a general direction. It was our first introduction

to a real genuine, live tide-rip, that seemed to harry the waters as if boiling in a veritable caldron, swelling up here and there in centers to whirl in dizzy velocity and at times break into a foam, and, where a light breeze prevailed, into spray. Then in some areas it would seem the waters in solid volume would leap up in conical, or pointed shape—small waves broken into short sections, that would make it quite difficult for a flat bottom boat like our little skiff to float very long. We congratulated ourselves upon the escape, while belittling our careless imitation of the natives of floating with the tide. Just then some Indian canoes passed along moving with the tide. We expected to see them swamped as they encountered the troubled waters, but to our astonishment they passed right through without taking a drop of water. Then here came two well manned canoes creeping along shore against the tide. I have said well-manned, but in fact, half the paddles were wielded by women, and the post of honor, or that where most dexterity was required, was occupied by a woman. In shore, short eddies would favor the party, to be ended by a severe tug against the stiff current.

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"Me-si-ka-kwass kopa s'kookum chuck," said the maiden in the bow of the first canoe, as it drew along side our boat, in which we were sitting.

Since our evening's experience at the clam bake camp, we had been industriously studying language, and pretty well mastered the Chinook, and so we with little difficulty understood her to ask if we were afraid of the rough waters, to which we responded, part in English and part in Chinook, that we were, and besides that it was impossible for us to proceed against the strong current.

"Ne-si-ka mit-lite," that is to say, she said they were going to camp with us and wait for the turn of the tide, and accordingly landed near by, and so we must wait for the remainder of this story in chapters to follow.

CHAPTER XIV.

CRUISE ON PUGET SOUND.

By the time the tide had turned, night had come and we were in a quandary as to what to do; whether to camp in our boat, or to start out on unknown waters in the dark. Our Indian visitors began making preparations to proceed on their journey, and assured us it was all right ahead, and offered to show us the way to good camping grounds in a big bay where the current was not strong, and where we would find a great number of Indians in camp.

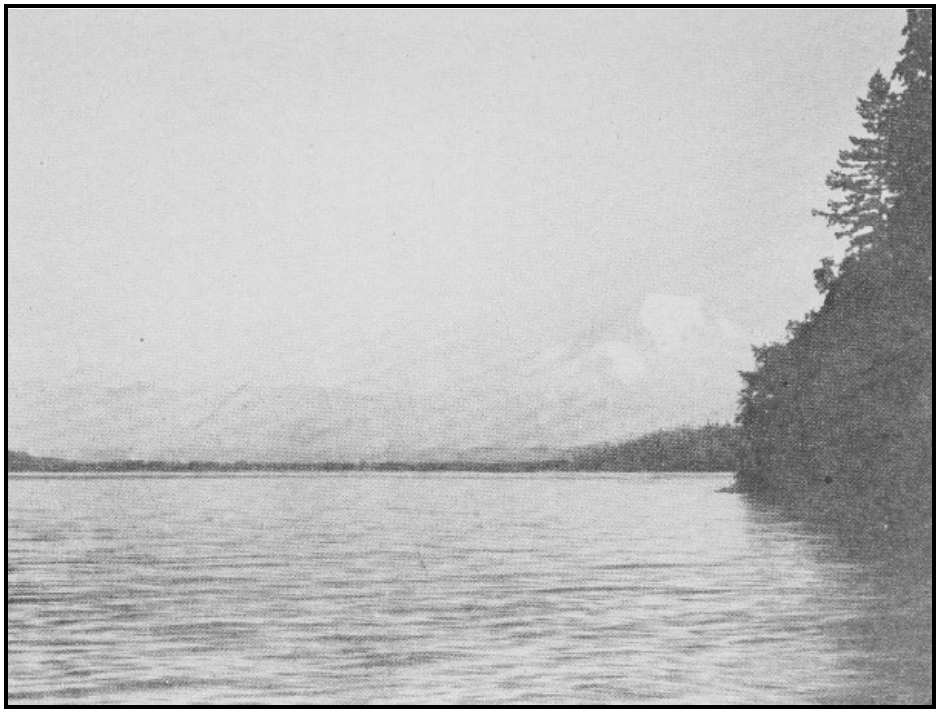
It did not occur to us to have any fear of the Indians We did not at all depend on our prowess or personal courage, but felt that we were among friends. We had by this time come to know the general feeling existing between Indians and whites, and that there was no trouble, as a class, [Pg 85] whatever there might be as to individuals. I do not want my reader to understand we thought we were doing an heroic act in following a strange party of Indians into unknown waters and into an unknown camp of the natives after dark, or that I think so now. There was no danger ahead of us other than that incident to the attempt of navigating such waters with so frail a boat, and one so unsuited in shape as well as build, for rough waters, and by persons so inexperienced on the water.

Sure enough, a short pull with a favorable current, brought us through the Narrows and into Commencement Bay and in sight of numerous camp fires in the distance. Our Indian friends lazily paddled along in company, while we labored vigorously with our oars as we were by this time in a mood to find a camp where we could have a fire and prepare some food. I remember that camp quite vividly, though cannot locate it exactly, but know that it was on the water front within the present limits of the city of Tacoma. A beautiful small rivulet came down a ravine and spread out on the beach, and I can remember the shore line was not precipitous and that it was a splendid camping ground. The particular thing I do remember is our supper of fresh salmon. Of all the delicious fish known, give me the salmon caught by trolling in early summer in the deep waters of Puget Sound; so fat that the excess of oil must be turned out of the pan while cooking. We had not then learned the art of cooking on the spit, or at least, did not practice it. We had scarcely gotten our camp fire under way before a salmon was offered us, but I cannot recall what we paid, but I know it was not a high price, else we would not have purchased. At the time we did not know but trolling in deep water for this king of fish was the only way, but afterwards learned of the enormous quantities taken by the seine direct from salt water.

Two gentlemen, Messrs. Swan and Riley, had established themselves on the bay, and later in the season reported taking two thousand large fish at one haul with their seine, three-fourths of [Pg 86] which were salmon. As I have a fish story of my own to tell of our experience later, I will dismiss the subject for the present.

We were now in the bay, since made famous in history by that observing traveler, Theodore Winthrop, who came from the north a few months later, and saw the great mountain, "a cloud compeller," reflected in the placid waters of the Sound, "Tacoma" [4] as he wrote, Rainier, as we saw it. A beautiful sight it was and is whatever the name, but to us it was whatever others said it was, while Winthrop, of a poetic mind, was on the alert for something new under the sun, if it be no more than a name for a great mountain.

Winthrop came in September, while we were in the bay in June, thus ante-dating his trip by three months or more. To Winthrop belongs the honor of originating the name Tacoma from some word claimed to have been spoken by the Indians as the name of the mountain. As none of the pioneers ever heard the word until many years afterwards, and not then until after the posthumous publication of Winthrop's works ten years after his visit, I incline to the opinion that Winthrop coined the word out of his imaginative brain.



Mount Tacoma.

We again caught sight of the mountain the next day, as we approached the tide flats off the [Pg 88] mouth of the Puyallup River. We viewed the mountain with awe and admiration, but gave no special heed to it, more than to many other new scenes engaging our attention. It was land we wanted whereby we might stake a claim, and not scenery to tickle our fancy. Yet, I doubt if there lives a man, or ever did, who has seen that great mountain, but has been inspired with higher thoughts, and we may say higher aspirations, or who has ever tired looking upon this grand pile, the father of five great rivers.

We floated into the mouth of the Puyallup River with a vague feeling as to its value, but did not proceed far until we were interrupted by a solid drift of monster trees and logs, extending from bank to bank up the river for a quarter of a mile or more. We were told by the Indians there were two other like obstructions a few miles farther up the river, and that the current was "de-late-hyas-skoo-kum," which interpreted means that the current was very strong. We found this to be literally true during the next two or three days we spent on the river.

We secured the services of an Indian and his canoe to help us up the river, and left our boat at the Indian's camp near the mouth.

The tug of two days to get six miles up the river, the unloading of our outfit three times to pack it over cut-off trails, and the dragging of our canoe around the drifts, is a story of constant toil with consequent discouragement, not ending until we camped on the bank of the river within the present limits of the little thriving city of Puyallup, founded afterwards by me on a homestead claim taken many years later. The little city now contains over six thousand inhabitants and is destined to contain many thousand more in the lapse of time.

The Puyallup Valley at that time was a solitude. No white settlers were found, though it was known two, who lived with Indian women, had staked claims and made some slight improvements —a man by the name of Hayward, near where the town of Sumner is now located, and William [Pg 89] Benson, on the opposite side of the river, and a mile distant from the boundaries of Puyallup. An Indian trail led up the river from Commencement Bay, and one westward to the Nisqually plains, over which pack animals could pass, but as to wagon roads, there were none, and as to whether a feasible route for one could be found only time with much labor could determine.

When we retraced our steps, and on the evening of the third day landed again at the mouth of the river after a severe day's toil of packing around drifts and hauling the canoe overland past drifts, it was evident we were in no cheerful mood. Oliver did not sing as usual while preparing for camp, or rally with sallies of wit and humor as he was wont to do when in a happy mood. Neither did I have much to say, but fell to work mechanically preparing the much needed meal, which we ate in silence, and forthwith wrapped ourselves in our blankets for the night, but not for immediate slumber.

We had crossed the two great states of Illinois and Iowa, over hundreds of miles of unoccupied prairie land as rich as anything that "ever laid out of doors," on our way from Indiana to Oregon, in search of land on which to make a home, and here, at what we might say "at the end of our rope" had found the land, but under such adverse conditions that seemed almost too much to overcome. It was a discouraging outlook, even if there had been roads. Such timber! It seemed an appalling undertaking to clear it, the greater portion being covered with a heavy growth of balm and alder trees, and thick tangle of underbrush besides, and so, when we did fall to sleep that night, it was without visions of new found wealth.

And yet, later, I did tackle a quarter section of that heaviest timber land, and never let up until the last tree, log, stump, and root disappeared, though of course, not all of it by my own hands. Nevertheless, with a goodly part, I did say, come, boys, and went into the thickest of the work.

But, of the time of which I am writing, there was more to consider than the mere clearing, [Pg 90] which we estimated would take thirteen years of solid work for one man to clear a quarter-section; the question of going where absolutely there were no neighbors, no roads, no help to open them, and in fact, without a knowledge as to whether a feasible route could be found, compelled us to decide against locating.

A small factor came in to be considered. Such swarms of mosquitoes we had never seen before. These we felt would make life a burden, forgetting that as the country became opened they would disappear. I may relate here a curious phenomenon brought to light by after experience. My donation claim was finally located on high table land, where no surface water could be found in summer for miles around, and there were swarms of mosquitoes, while on the Puyallup homestead taken later, six miles from the mouth of the river, and where water lay on the surface, in spots, the whole summer long, we seldom saw one of these pests there. I never could account for this, and have long since ceased to try; I only know it was so.

If we could have but known what was coming four months later, doubt not, notwithstanding our discouragement, we would have remained and searched the valley diligently for the choicest locations. In October following, there came the first immigrants that ever crossed the Cascade Mountains, and located in a body nearly all of the whole valley, and before the year was ended had a rough wagon road out to the prairies and to Steilacoom, the county seat.

As I will give an account of the struggles and trials of these people later in this work, I will here dismiss the subject by saying that no pioneer who settled in the Puyallup Valley, and stuck to it, failed finally to prosper and gain a competence.

We lingered at the mouth of the river in doubt as to what best to do. My thoughts went back to the wife and baby in the lonely cabin on the Columbia River, and then again to that bargain we had made before marriage that we were going to be farmers, and how could we be farmers if we [Pg 91] did not have the land? Under the donation act we could hold three hundred and twenty acres, but we must live on it for four years, and so it behooved us to look out and secure our location before the act expired, which would occur the following year. So, with misgivings and doubts, we finally, on the fourth day, loaded our outfit into our skiff and floated out on the receding tide, whither, we did not know.

FOOTNOTE:

[4] Winthrop, in his delightful book, "The Canoe and the Saddle," describing his trip from Port Townsend to Nisqually, in September, 1853, says:

> "We had rounded a point and opened Puyallup Bay, a breath of sheltered calmness, when I, lifting sleepy eyelids for a dreamy stare about, was suddenly aware of a vast white shadow in the water. What cloud, piled massive on the horizon, could cast an image so sharp in outline, so full of vigorous detail of surface? No cloud, as my stare, no longer dreamy, presently discovered—no cloud, but a cloud compeller. It was a giant mountain dome of snow, swelling and seeming to fill the aerial spheres as its image displaced the blue deeps of tranquil water. The smoky haze of an Oregon August hid all the length of its lesser ridges, and left this mighty summit based upon uplifting dimness. Only its splendid snows were visible, high in the unearthly regions of blue noonday sky. The shore line drew a cincture of pines across its broad base, where it faded unreal into the mist. The same dark girth separated the peak from its reflection, over which my canoe was now pressing, and sending wavering swells to scatter the beautiful vision before it.
>
> "Kindly and alone stood this majesty, without any visible consort, though far to the north and to the south its brethren and sisters dominated their realms, each in isolated sovereignty, rising from the pine-darkened sierra of the Cascade Mountains—above the stern chasm where the Columbia, Achilles of rivers, sweeps, short lived and jubilant, to the sea—above the lovely valley of the Willamette and Ningua. Of all the peaks from California to Frazier River, this one was royalest. Mount Regnier, Christians have dubbed it in stupid nomenclature, perpetuating the name of somebody or nobody. More melodiously the Siwashes call it Tacoma—a generic term, also applied to all snow peaks."

CHAPTER XV.

CRUISE ON PUGET SOUND.

As we drew off on the tide from the mouth of the Puyallup River, numerous parties of Indians were in sight, some trolling for salmon, with a lone Indian in the bow of his canoe, others with a pole with barbs on two sides fishing for smelt, and used in place of a paddle, while again, others with nets, all leisurely pursuing their calling, or more accurately speaking, seemed waiting for a fisherman's luck. Again, other parties were passing, singing a plaintive ditty in minor key with two or more voices, accompanied by heavy strokes of the paddle handle against the side of the canoe, as if to keep time. There were really some splendid female voices to be heard, as well as male, and though there were but slight variations in the sounds or words, they seemed never to tire in repeating, and, I must confess, we never tired listening. Then, at times, a break in the singing would be followed by a hearty laugh, or perhaps a salutation be given in a loud tone to some distant party, which would always bring a response, and with the resumption of the paddles, like the sailors on the block and fall, the song would be renewed, oftentimes to bring back a distant echo from a bold shore. These scenes were repeated time and again, as we encountered the natives in new fields that constantly opened up to our view.

We laid our course in the direction the tide drew us, directly to the north in a channel three [Pg 92] miles in width, and discarded the plan of following the shore line, as we found so little variation in the quality of soil. By this time we began to see that opportunity for farms on the immediate shores of Puget Sound were few and far between—in fact, we had seen none. During the afternoon and after we had traveled, by estimate, near twenty miles, we saw ahead of us larger waters, where, by continuing our course, we would be in a bay of five or six miles in width, with no very certain prospect of a camping place. Just then we spied a cluster of cabins and houses on the point to the east, and made a landing at what proved to be Alki Point, the place then bearing the pretentious name of New York.

We were not any too soon in effecting our landing, as the tide had turned and a slight breeze had met it, the two together disturbing the water in a manner to make it uncomfortable for us in our flat bottomed boat.

Here we met the irrepressible C. C. Terry, proprietor of the new townsite, but keenly alive to the importance of adding to the population of his new town. But we were not hunting townsites, and of course lent a deaf ear to the arguments set forth in favor of the place.

Captain William Renton had built some sort of a saw-mill there, had laid the foundation to his great fortune accumulated later at Port Blakely, a few miles to the west, to which point he later removed. Terry afterwards gave up the contest, and removed to Seattle.

We soon pushed on over to the east where the steam from a saw-mill served as the guiding star, and landed at a point that cannot have been far removed from the west limit of the present Pioneer Place of Seattle, near where the totem pole now stands.

Here we found the never to be forgotten Yesler, not whittling his pine stick as in later years, but as a wide awake business man, on the alert to drive a trade when an opportunity offered, or spin a yarn, if perchance time would admit. I cannot recall meeting Mr. Denny, though I made his acquaintance soon after at my own cabin on McNeil's Island. In fact, we did not stay very long in [Pg 93] Seattle, not being very favorably impressed with the place. There was not much of a town, probably twenty cabins in all, with a few newer frame houses. The standing timber could scarcely have been farther removed than to be out of reach of the mill, and of course, scarcely the semblance of a street. The lagoon presented an uninviting appearance and scent, where the process of filling with slabs and sawdust had already begun. The mill, though, infused activity in its immediate vicinity, and was really the life of the place.

As we were not looking for a millsite or a townsite, we pushed on north the next day. We had gone but a few miles until a favorable breeze sprang up, bringing with it visions of a happy time sailing, but with the long stretch of open waters back of us of ten miles, or more, and of several miles in width, and with no visible shelter ahead of us, or lessening of width of waters, we soon felt the breeze was not so welcome after all. We became doubtful as to the safety of sailing, and were by this time aware of the difficulty of rowing a small, flat-bottom boat in rough waters with one oar sometimes in the water and the other in the air, to be suddenly reversed. While the wind was in our favor, yet the boat became almost unmanageable with the oars. The sail once down was not so easy to get up again, with the boat tipping first one way and then another, as she fell off in the trough of the waves. But finally the sail was set again, and we scudded before the wind at a rapid rate, not feeling sure of our bearings, or what was going to happen. The bay looked to us as if it might be five miles or more wide, and in fact, with the lowering weather, we could not determine the extent. The east shore lay off to our right a half a mile or so distant, where we could see the miniature waves break on the beach, and at times catch the sound as they rolled up on the gravel banks. We soon realized our danger, but feared to attempt a landing in the surf. Evidently the wind was increasing, the clouds were coming down lower and rain began to fall. [Pg 94] There was but one thing to do. We must make a landing, and so the sail was hastily taken down again, and the junior of the party took to the oars, while the senior sat in the stern with paddle in hand to keep the boat steady on her course, and help a little as opportunity offered. But fortune favored us in luckily finding a smooth pebbly beach, and while we got a good drenching in landing, and the boat partially filled before we could haul her up out of reach of the surf, yet we

lost nothing outright, and suffered but slight loss by damage from water. We were glad enough to get ashore and thankful that the mishap was no worse. Luckily our matches were dry and a half hour or so sufficed to build a rousing camp fire, haul our boat above high tide, to utilize it as a wind break and roof turned bottom up at an angle of forty-five degrees. Just how long we were compelled to remain in this camp, I cannot recall, but certainly two days, and I think three, but we did not explore the adjacent land much, as the rain kept us close in camp. And it was a dismal camp, although we had plenty to eat and could keep dry and warm. We here practiced the lesson taught us the evening of our first camp, by the native matron, and had plenty of clams to supplement our other provisions during the whole period, and by the time we broke up camp, concluded we were expert clam-bakers. But all such incidents must have an end, and so the time came when we broke camp and pulled for the head of Whidby's Island, a few miles off to the northwest.

And now I have a fish story to tell. I have always been shy of telling it, lest some smart one should up and say I was just telling a yarn and drawing on my imagination, but, "honor bright," I am not. But to be sure of credence, I will print the following telegram recently received, which, as it is printed in a newspaper, must be true:

> "Nanaimo, B. C., Friday, Jan. 29.—Another tremendous destruction of herring occurred on the shores of Protection Island a day or two ago in exactly the same way as took place near Departure Bay about three weeks ago, and today the entire atmosphere of the city carries the nauseous smell of thousands upon thousands of tons of decaying fish which threatens an epidemic of sickness.

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> "The dead fish now cover the shores of Protection Island continuously for three miles to a depth ranging all the way from fifteen inches to three feet. The air is black with sea gulls. So thick have the fish been at times that were a fishing boat caught in the channel while a shoal of herring was passing, the rush of fish would literally lift the boat out of the water."

We had not proceeded far before we heard a dull sound like that often heard from the tide-rips where the current meets and disturbs the waters as like in a boiling caldron. But as we approached the disturbance, we found it was different from anything we had seen or heard before. As we rested on our oars, we could see that the disturbance was moving up toward us, and that it extended as far as we could see, in the direction we were going. The sound had increased and became as like the roar of a heavy rainfall, or hailstorm in water, and we became aware that it was a vast school of fish moving south, while millions were seemingly dancing on the surface of the water and leaping in the air. We could sensibly feel them striking against the boat in such vast numbers as to fairly move it as we lay at ease. The leap in the air was so high as to suggest tipping the boat to catch some as they fell back, and sure enough, here and there one would leap into the boat. We soon discovered some Indians following the school, who quickly loaded their canoes by using the barbed pole as a paddle and throwing the impaled fish into their canoes in surprising numbers. We soon obtained all we wanted by an improvised net.

We were headed for Whidby's Island, where, it was reported, rich prairie land could be found. The bay here at the head of the island was six or seven miles wide and there was no way by which we could keep near shore. Remembering the experience of a few days before, in waters not so large as here, the younger of the two confided his fears to his older companion, that it was unwise to loiter and fish, howsoever novel and interesting, and so began pulling vigorously at the oars to find himself greatly embarrassed by the mass of fish moving in the water. So far as we could see there was no end to the school ahead of us, the water, as far as the eye could reach, presenting the appearance shown with a heavy fall of hail. It did seem at times as if the air was literally filled with fish, but we finally got rid of the moving mass, and reached the island shore in safety, only to become again weather bound in an uninhabited district of country that showed no signs of the handiwork of civilized man.

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CHAPTER XVI.

CRUISE ON PUGET SOUND.

This camp did not prove so dreary as the last one, though more exposed to the swell of the big waters to the north, and sweep of the wind. To the north we had a view of thirty miles or more, where the horizon and water blend, leaving one in doubt whether land was in sight or not, though as we afterwards ascertained, our vision could reach the famous San Juan Island, later the bone of contention between our Government and Great Britain. Port Townsend lay some ten miles northerly from our camp, but was shut out from view by an intervening headland. Marrowstone Point lay about midway between the two, but we did not know the exact location of the town, or for that matter, of our own. We knew, like the lost hunters, where we were, but the trouble was, we "didn't know where any place else was"; not lost ourselves, but the world was lost from us. In front of us, the channel of Admiralty Inlet, here but about four miles wide, stretched out to the north into a fathomless sea of waters that for aught we knew, opened into the wide ocean. Three ships passed us while at this camp, one coming, as it would seem, from out of space, a mere speck, to a full-fledged, deep-sea vessel, with all sails set, scudding before the wind and passing up the channel past us on the way to the anchorage of the seven vessels, the other two gracefully beating their way out against the stiff breeze to the open waters beyond. What prettier sight can one see than a full-rigged vessel with all sails spread, either beating or sailing before the wind? Our enthusiasm, at the sight, knew no bounds; we felt like cheering, clapping our hands, or adopting any other method of manifesting our pleasure. We had, as a matter of prudence, canvassed the question of returning from this camp as soon as released from this stress of weather, to the bay of the anchored ships in the more southern waters, but the sight of these ships, and the sight of this expanse of waters, coupled with perhaps a spirit of adventure, prompted us to quietly bide our time and to go farther, when released.

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When I look back upon that decision, and in fact, upon this whole incident of my life, I stand amazed to think of the rashness of our actions and of the danger encountered from which we escaped. Not but two men with proper appliances, and with ripe experience, might with perfect security make just such a trip, but we were possessed of neither and ran the great risks accordingly.

It was a calm, beautiful day when we reached Port Townsend, after a three hours' run from our camp on the island. As we rounded Marrowstone Point, near four miles distant, the new village came into view. A feeling of surprise came over us from the supposed magnitude of the new town. Distance lends enchantment, the old adage says, but in this case the nearer we approached the embryo city, the greater our admiration. The beautiful, pebbly beach in front, the clear, level spot adjoining, with the beautiful open and comparatively level plateau in the background, and with two or three vessels at anchor in the foreground, there seemed nothing lacking to complete the picture of a perfect city site. The contrast was so great between the ill-smelling lagoon of Seattle or the dismal, extensive tide flats of Olympia, that our spirits rose almost to a feeling of exultation, as the nose of our little craft grounded gently on the beach. Poor, innocent souls, we could not see beyond to discover that cities are not built upon pleasure grounds, and that there are causes beyond the ken of man to fathom the future destiny of the embryo towns of a new commonwealth.

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We found here the enthusiastic Plummer, the plodding Pettygrove and the industrious, enterprising Hastings, jointly intent upon building up a town, "the greatest shipping port on the coast," as they were nearest possible to the sea, while our Olympia friends had used exactly the opposite arguments favoring their locality, as "we are the farthest possible inland, where ships can come." Small wonder that land-lubbers as we were should become confused.

Another confusing element that pressed upon our minds was the vastness of the waters explored, and that we now came to know were yet left unexplored. Then Puget Sound was looked upon as anchorage ground from the Straits on the north to Budd's Inlet on the south, forgetting, or rather not knowing, of the extreme depth of waters in many places. Then that wonderful stretch of shore line of sixteen hundred miles, with its forty or more islands of from a few acres in extent to thirty miles of length, with the aggregate area of waters of several hundred square miles, exclusive of the Straits of Fuca and Gulf of Georgia. All these marvels gradually dawned upon our minds as we looked and counseled, forgetting for the time the imminent risks we were taking.

Upon closer examination of the little town, we found our first impression from the distance illusory. Many shacks and camps, at first mistaken for the white men's houses, were found to be occupied by the natives, a drunken, rascally rabble, spending their gains from the sale of fish and oil in a debauch that would last as long as their money was in hand.

This seemed to be a more stalwart race of Indians, stronger and more athletic, though strictly of the class known as fish Indians, but better developed than those to the south, from the buffeting received in the larger waters of the Straits, and even out in the open sea in their fishing excursions with canoes, manned by thirty or more men.

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The next incident of the trip that I can remember is when we were pulling for dear life to make a landing in front of Colonel Ebey's cabin, on Whidby's Island, opposite Port Townsend. We were carried by the rapid current quite a way past the landing, in spite of our utmost efforts. It would be a serious thing to be unable to land, as we were now in the open waters, with a fifteen-mile

stretch of the Straits of Fuca before us. I can remember a warm greeting at the hands of Ebey, the first time I had ever seen him. He had a droll stoppage in his speech that at first acquaintance would incline one to mirth, but after a few moments' conversation such a feeling would disappear. Of all the men we had met on the whole trip, Colonel Ebey made the most lasting impression. Somehow, what he did say came with such evident sincerity and sympathy, and with such an unaffected manner, that we were drawn close to him at once. It was while living in these same cabins where we visited him, that four years later the northern Indians, from British Columbia, came and murdered him and carried off his head as a trophy in their savage warfare.

We spent two or three days in exploring the island, only to find all the prairie land occupied, but I will not undertake from memory to name the settlers we found there. From our acquaintance, and from published reports, I came to know all of them, but do not now recall a single individual adult alive who was there then; a striking illustration of having outlived the most of my generation.

Somehow, our minds went back to the seven ships we had seen at anchor in front of Steilacoom; to the sound of the timber camps; to the bustle and stir of the little new village; to the greater activities that we saw there than anywhere else on the waters of the Sound, and likewise my thoughts would go beyond to the little cabin on the Columbia River, and the little wife domiciled there, and the other little personage, and so when we bade Colonel Ebey good-bye, it was the signal to make our way as speedily as possible to the waters of the seven ships.

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Three days sufficed to land us back in the coveted bay with no greater mishap than getting off our course into the mouth of Hood's Canal, and being lost another half day, but luckily going on the right course the while.

But, lo and behold, the ships were gone. Not a sailing craft of any kind was in sight of the little town, but the building activity continued. The memory of those ships, however, remained and determined our minds as to the important question where the trade center was to be, and that we would look farther for the coveted spot upon which to make a home.

I look back with amazement at the rash undertaking of that trip, so illy provided, and inexperienced, as we were, and wonder that we escaped with no more serious mishap than we had. We were not justified in taking these chances, or at least I was not, with the two dependents left in the cabin on the bank of the Columbia River, but we did not realize the danger until we were in it, and hence did not share in the suspense and uneasiness of that one left behind. Upon the whole, it was a most enjoyable trip, and one, barring the risk and physical inability now to play my part, I could with great enjoyment encounter the same adventure of which I have only related a mere outline. Did you ever, reader, take a drive, we will say in a hired outfit, with a paid coachman, and then take the lines in your own hands by way of contrast? If so, then you will realize the thrill of enjoyment where you pull your own oars, sail your own craft, cook your own dinner, and lie in your own bed of boughs, and go when and where you will with that keen relish incident to the independence and uncertainties of such a trip. It was a wild, reckless act, but we came out stronger than ever in the faith of the great future in store for the north country, where we finally made our home and where I have lived ever since, now over sixty-four years.

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CHAPTER XVII.

FROM COLUMBIA RIVER TO PUGET SOUND.

"Can I get home tonight?" I asked myself, while the sun was yet high one afternoon of the last week of June (1853).

I was well up river, on the left bank of the Cowlitz. I could not tell how far, for there were no milestones, or way places to break the monotony of the crooked, half obstructed trail leading down stream. I knew that at the best it would be a race with the sun, for there were many miles between me and the cabin, but the days were long, and the twilight longer, and I would camp that much nearer home if I made haste. My pack had been discarded on the Sound; I did not even have either coat or blanket. The heavy, woolen shirt, often worn outside the pants, will be well remembered by my old-time pioneer readers. Added to this, the well worn slouch hat, and worn shoes, both of which gave ample ventilation, completed my dress; socks, I had none, neither suspenders, the improvised belt taking their place; and so I was dressed suitable for the race, and was eager for the trial.

I had parted with my brother at Olympia, where he had come to set me that far on my journey; he to return to the claims we had taken, and I to make my way across country for the wife and baby, to remove them to our new home. I did not particularly mind the camping so much if necessary, but did not fancy the idea of lying out so near home, if I could by extra exertion reach the cabin that night. I did not have the friendly ox to snug up to for warmth, as in so many bivouacs while on the plains, but I had matches, and there were many mossy places for a bed and friendly shelter of the drooping cedars. We never thought of "catching cold" by lying on the ground or on cedar boughs, or from getting a good drenching. Somehow it did seem I was free from all care of bodily ailment, and could endure continued exertion for long hours without the [Pg 102] least inconvenience. The readers of this generation doubtless will be ready to pour out their sympathy for the hardships of the lonely trail, and lone camp, and the supperless bed of boughs, but they may as well reserve this for others of the pioneers whose systems were less able to bear the unusual strain of the new conditions. But the camp had to be made; the cabin could not be reached, for the trail could not be followed at night, nor the Kalama Creek crossed; so, slackening my pace at nightfall to gradually cool my system, I finally made my camp and slept, as sound as if on a bed of down, with the consolation that the night was short and that I could see to travel by 3 o'clock, and it did not make so very much difference, after all.

I can truly say that of all those years of camp and cabin life, I do not look upon them as years of hardship. To be sure, our food was plain as well as dress, our hours of labor long and labor frequently severe, and that the pioneers appeared rough and uncouth, yet underlying all this, there ran a vein of good cheer, of hopefulness, of the intense interest always engendered with strife to overcome difficulties where one is the employer as well as the employed. We never watched for the sun to go down, or for the seven o'clock whistle, or for the boss to quicken our steps, for the days were always too short, and interest in our work always unabated.

The cabin could not be seen for a long distance on the trail, but I thought I caught sight of a curl of smoke and then immediately knew I did, and that settled it that all was well in the cabin. But when a little nearer, a little lady in almost bloomer dress was espied milking a cow, and a frisking, fat calf in the pen was seen, then I knew, and all solicitude vanished. The little lady never finished milking that cow, nor did she ever milk others when the husband was at home, though she knew how well enough, and never felt above such work if a necessity arose, but we parceled out duties on a different basis, with each to their suited parts. The bloom on the cheek of the little wife, the baby in the cabin as fat as the calf, told the story of good health and [Pg 103] plentitude of food, and brought good cheer with the welcome home. The dried potato eyes had just been planted, although it was then the first week of July, following the receding waters of the June freshet up the Columbia, and were sprouting vigorously. I may say, in passing, there came a crop from these of nearly four hundred bushels at harvest time.

It did seem there were so many things to talk about that one could scarcely tell where to begin or when to stop. "Why, at Olympia, eggs were a dollar a dozen. I saw them selling at that. That butter you have there on the shelf would bring a dollar a pound as fast as you could weigh it out; I saw stuff they called butter sell for that; then potatoes were selling for $3.00 a bushel and onions at $4.00. Everything the farmer raises sells high." "Who buys?" "Oh, almost everybody has to buy; there's the ships and the timber camps, and the hotels, and the—"

"Where do they get the money?"

"Why, everybody seems to have money. Some take it there with them. Then men working in the timber camps get $4.00 a day and their board. I saw one place where they paid $4.00 a cord for wood to ship to San Francisco, and one can sell all the shingles he can make at $4.00 a thousand, and I was offered 5 cents a foot for piles. If we had Buck and Dandy over there we could make twenty dollars a day putting in piles."

"Where could you get the piles?"

"Off the government land, of course. All help themselves to all they want. Then there are the fish, and the clams, and the oysters, and—"

"But what about the land for a claim?"

That question was a stumper. The little wife never lost sight of that bargain made before we were married, that we were going to be farmers; and here now I found myself praising a country I could not say much for its agricultural qualities, but other things quite foreign to that interest.

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But if we could sell produce higher, might we not well lower our standard of an ideal farm? The claim I had taken was described with a tinge of disappointment, falling so far below in quality of what we had hoped to acquire, but still adhering to the resolution to be farmers, we began the preparations for removal to the Sound.

The wife, baby, bedding, ox yoke, and log chain were sent up the Cowlitz in a canoe, while Buck and Dandy and I renewed our acquaintance by taking to the trail where we had our parting bivouac. We had camped together many a night on the plains, and slept together literally, not figuratively. I used to crowd up close under Buck's back while napping on watch, for the double purpose of warmth and signal—warmth while at rest, signal if the ox moved. On this occasion I was illy prepared for a cool night camp, having neither blanket nor coat, as I had expected to reach "Hard-Bread's" Hotel, where the people in the canoe would stop over night. But I could not make it and so again laid on the trail to renew the journey bright and early the next morning.

Hard Bread's is an odd name for a hotel, you will say; so it is, but the name grew out of the fact that Gardner, the old widower that kept "bachelor's" hall at the mouth of Toutle River, fed his customers on hard tack three times a day, if perchance any one was unfortunate enough to be compelled to take their meals at his place.

I found the little wife had not fared any better than I had on the trail, and, in fact, not so well, for the floor of the cabin was a great deal harder than the sand spit where I had passed the night, with plenty of pure, fresh air, while she, in a closed cabin, in the same room with many others, could neither boast of fresh air nor freedom from creeping things that make life miserable. With her shoes for a pillow, a shawl for covering, small wonder the report came "I did not sleep a wink last night."

Judge Olney and wife were passengers in the same canoe and guests at the same house with the wife, as also Frank Clark, who afterwards played a prominent part at the bar, and in the political affairs of Pierce County in particular, and incidentally of the whole Territory.

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We soon arrived at the Cowlitz landing, and at the end of the canoe journey, so, striking the tent that had served us so well on the plains, and with a cheerful camp fire blazing for cooking, speedily forgot the experience of the trail, the cramped passage in the canoe, the hard bread, dirt and all, while enjoying the savory meal, the like of which only the expert hands of the ladies of the plains could prepare.

But now we had fifty miles of land to travel before us, and over such a road! Words cannot describe that road, and so I will not try. One must have traveled it to fully comprehend what it meant. However, we had one consolation, and that was it would be worse in winter than at that time. We had no wagon. Our wagon had been left at The Dalles, and we never saw nor heard of it again. Our cows were gone—given for provender to save the lives of the oxen during the deep December snow, and so when we took account of stock, we had Buck and Dandy, the baby, and a tent, an ox yoke and chain, enough clothing and bedding to keep us comfortable, with but very little food and no money—that had all been expended on the canoe passage.

Shall we pack the oxen and walk, and carry baby, or shall we build a sled and drag our things over to the Sound, or shall I make an effort to get a wagon? This latter proposition was the most attractive, and so next morning, driving Buck and Dandy before me, leaving the wife and baby to take care of the camp, the search for a wagon began.

That great hearted old pioneer, John R. Jackson, did not hesitate a moment, stranger as I was, to say, "Yes, you can have two if you need them." Jackson had settled eight years before, ten miles out from the landing, and had an abundance around him, and like all those earlier pioneers, took a pride in helping others who came later. Retracing the road, night found me again in camp, and all hands happy, but Jackson would not listen to allowing us to proceed the next day any farther than his premises, where he would entertain us in his comfortable cabin, and send us on our way the morning following, rejoicing in plenty.

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Without special incident or accident, we in due time arrived at the foot of the falls of the Deschutes (Tumwater), and on the shore of Puget Sound. Here a camp must be established again; the little wife and baby left while I drove the wagon over the tedious road to Jackson's and then returned with the oxen to tide water.

The reader may well imagine my feelings, when, upon my return, my tent, wife, baby, and all were gone. We knew before I started on my return trip that smallpox was raging among the Indians, and that a camp where this disease was prevalent was in sight less than a quarter of a mile away. The present-day reader must remember that dread disease had terrors then that, since universal vaccination, it does not now possess. Could it be possible my folks had been sick and had been removed? The question, however, was soon solved. I had scarcely gotten out of sight upon my trip before one of those royal pioneer matrons came to the camp and pleaded and insisted and finally almost frightened the little wife to go and share her house with her which was near by, and be out of danger from the smallpox.

And that was the way we traveled from the Columbia River to Puget Sound.

God bless those earlier pioneers; they were all good to us, sometimes to the point of embarrassment by their generous hospitality.

I can not dismiss this subject without reverting to one such, in particular, who gave his whole crop during the winter of which I have just written, to start immigrants on the road to prosperity, and, in some instances, to prevent suffering.

In consequence of the large immigration and increased demand, prices of provisions had run sky high, and out of reach of some of the recent immigrants with large families. George Bush had squatted on a claim seven miles south of Olympia, in 1845, and had an abundance of farm [Pg 107] produce, but would not sell a pound of anything to a speculator; but to immigrants, for seed or for immediate pressing wants, to all alike, without money and without price—"return it when you can," he would say—and so divided up his whole crop, then worth thousands of dollars. And yet this man's oath could not at that time be taken; neither could he sue in the courts or acquire title to the land upon which he lived, or any land. He had negro blood in his veins, and under the law of this great country, then, was a proscribed outcast. Conditions do change as time passes. The wrong was so flagrant in this particular case that a special act of Congress enabled this old, big-hearted pioneer of 1845 to hold his claim, and his descendants are living on it yet.

I have been so impressed with the altruistic character of this truly great man that I have procured this testimonial from a close acquaintance and neighbor, Prof. Ayres, who has kindly written the history of the life of this truly great pioneer.

A GREAT PIONEER—GEORGE BUSH, THE VOYAGER.

The history of the Northwest settlement cannot be fully written without an account of George Bush, who organized and led the first colony of American settlers to the shores of Puget Sound, whose great humanity, shrewd intelligence, and knowledge of the natives, who then numbered thousands about the headwaters of the Sound, had much to do with carrying the first settlers safely through all of the curses of famine and war while the feeble colony was slowly gaining enough strength to protect itself.

Mr. Bush claimed to have been born about 1791 in what is now Missouri, but was then the French Colony of Louisiana, and in the extreme Far West, and only reached by the most daring hunters. His early manhood was spent in the employ of the great trading companies who reached out into the Rock Mountains each season and gathered furs from the Indians and the occasional [Pg 108] white trappers.

Bush first began this work (?) with Rabidean, the Frenchman, who made his headquarters at St. Louis, but later on enlisted with the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been given unrestrained dominion over all Canada outside of the settlements in the East, and, not satisfied with that, sent its trading parties down across the national line, where it was safe to do so. It was during this employment with the Hudson Bay Company that Bush reached the Pacific Coast in the late twenties, and while he did not get as far south as Puget Sound (then occupied by the company and claimed as a part of the British Dominion), he learned of its favorable climate, soil and fitness for settlement.

He then returned to Missouri about 1830, settled in Clay County, married a German-American woman and raised a family of boys.

In 1843, Marcus Whitman made his famous trip from Oregon to the national capital and excited the whole country by his stories of the great possible future of the extreme Northwest and the duty of the Government to insist upon its claim to dominion over the western coast from the Mexican settlement in California up to the Russian possessions in the far north.

Everything got into politics then, even more than now, and the Democratic party, which until then had been the most aggressive in extending the national bounds, took up the cry of "Fifty-four Forty or Fight", to win what they knew would be a close contest for President in 1844.

This meant the taking possession of the whole thousand miles or more of coast by settlement and driving the English out by threats or force.

As I have indicated before, the people of St. Louis and Missouri had become deeply interested in the extreme west through their trading interests, and as the retired voyager was one of the very few who knew about the western coast and had sufficient fitness for leadership he was encouraged by his friends to make up a party and cross the plains to the new Oregon. [Pg 109]

This was in the winter of 1843-4 and early in the spring, he, with four other families and three single men, set out with a large outfit of wagons and live stock over what is now known as the "Old Oregon Trail."

The names of this company were as follows:

George Bush, his wife and sons (Wm. Owen, Joseph, R. B., Sanford—now living—and Jackson);

Col. M. T. Simmons, wife and seven children;

David Kindred, wife and one son;

Gabriel Jones, wife and three children;

Wm. McAllister, wife and several children, and the three young bachelors, Samuel Crockett, Reuben Crowder, and Jesse Ferguson.

Of these families, the Jones and Kindreds are now extinct, and of the original party only two sons of Col. Simmons and Sanford Bush are now living. Semis Bush, the youngest son of George Bush, was born after their arrival, in 1847, on Bush Prairie and, by the way, is perhaps the oldest living white American born in the Puget Sound basin.

The Bush party suffered the usual hardships of the overland journey but met no great disaster, and reached The Dalles late in the fall of 1844. There they camped for the winter and decided their future plans.

At that time the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, the sole official representative of the British Government, was on the Columbia River with its chief settlements at Vancouver and The Dalles.

It was the policy of the company to prevent all settlement north of the Columbia River and confine its use to the fur-bearing industry and depend upon the Indians for the necessary hunting and trapping. The employes of the company consisted of the necessary factors and clerks, some English, but more Scotch, while the rest, boatmen, etc., were nearly all Canadian French.

The great chief factor for the whole west was Dr. McLoughlin, a benevolent despot, well fitted [Pg 110] to govern his savage dominion so long as the Yankees kept away, but at the period in question he found himself in a painful conflict between the interests of humanity and the demands of his superiors.

The governing board in London was composed of members of the government and aristocracy who were extremely resentful of the demands and claims of the American politicians and gave most imperative orders to Governor McLoughlin and the other factors and agents on the Coast to discourage all settlement by the Americans north of the Columbia River and to furnish no supplies or other assistance to the American travelers or settlers. This prohibition also extended, though less rigidly, to the Oregon settlements south of the Columbia, for the company saw clearly that unless the emigration could be checked the vast profits of their fast growing trade in the west would soon be lost.

Sanford Bush, though a small boy at the time, remembers the trip well, and tells me that the main dependence of his father's party and the other early settlers was the friendliness of the French Canadians, who had much more sympathy for the poor settlers than with the English stockholders, and did not hesitate to smuggle all sorts of supplies, especially of food, from their farms into the hands of the Americans, and it was in this emergency that the former experience and intimate acquaintance of George Bush with the French and their desire to assist him turned his attention to the Puget Sound country and made it possible for him to smuggle his party up into territory that was yet claimed by the British, without its becoming officially known to the chief factor. At that time the road from the Columbia River, or rather from the landing on the Cowlitz River, to the head of the Sound was only a single trail through dense forests, and that was always more or less blocked by falling timber. No vehicle could get through and, while Sanford says that the party did get some of the twenty wagons with which they left Missouri [Pg 111] through to The Dalles, they only reached the Sound with what they could pack on their animals or drag on rude sleds.

In this condition the little party reached the extreme head of the Sound at Tumwater early in the spring of 1845 and proceeded to take possession of such tracts of land as took their fancy, covering what is now the town of Tumwater and back along the west side of the little Des Chutes River, and out on the prairie, which begins about a mile south of the landing and extends down about three miles to a rise of ground not far from the river. Upon this commanding site George Bush pitched his last camp and there his family descendants have lived to the present time, and the prairie of some five square miles extent has always been known as Bush Prairie.

Mr. Bush was a farmer, and having brought as much live stock as possible he at once broke up some of the best of the open prairie. He was so successful that in a very few years his farm was the main resource for grain, vegetables and fruit for supplying the newcomers in that region.

Let me say in passing that his memory is honored to this day among the early families for the fact that while he was at times the only man in the country with food for sale he would never take advantage by raising the price nor allow anyone to buy more than his own needs during an emergency.

In 1845 there were no mills on the Sound for grinding grain nor sawing lumber and as quick as the necessary outfit could be secured, which was about three years later, all of the Bush party, with Mr. Simmons as manager, joined in constructing a combined saw and grist mill at the foot of the lower Tumwater Fall, and where the small streams and rafts of timber could reach it at high tide.

For the grist mill, the main question was a pair of grinding stones and these were secured from a granite boulder on the shore of Mud Bay, the western branch of Budd's Inlet, at the head of which Tumwater and (two miles north) Olympia are situated. A man named Hamm, a stonecutter [Pg 112] by trade, worked out and dressed the stones for use. I have tried to find these but am told that one was allowed to sink into the mud near the old mill site, while the other was taken out to the Bush farm, but it cracked to pieces many years ago and is now all gone.

It may be of interest to add that in the late seventies a man by the name of Horton originated the patent wood pipe industry in a mill on the site of the first mill.

In the same year of the first mill, in 1848, was loaded the first cargo of freight for export from the Upper Sound. This was on the brig Orbit, which had just come from the east around the Horn, and for this also Bush and his party made up a cargo of piles and hand-sawed shingles, etc. The vessel had brought quite a quantity of supplies and these made the first respectable stock of goods for the little store which the party had started in connection with the mill.

THE FANNING MILL.

The Bush family still possess and use an interesting relic of that first vessel. The Orbit brought out from the east two families named Rider and Moulton, and in their outfit were two fanning mills. So far as known, these were the first ever brought to the Sound and were certainly the first outside of Nisqually, the Hudson Bay station for the Sound.

As Bush was the greatest grain raiser and the new grist mill could not well get along without it, Mr. Bush secured one of these fanning mills and for some time all of the settlers who attempted to raise grain were permitted to use it.

It is singular that this old hand mill, which was such an important and hard worked factor in the first settlement, should, sixty-five years later, still be as efficient as ever and still be a necessity for the grandchildren of the old pioneer.

The other mill was secured by John R. Jackson, who was the first American settler on Cowlitz Prairie, and was also a former employe of the Hudson's Bay Company. [Pg 113]

As I have said before, George Bush was not only remarkable, for his time, in the virtues of humanity, sympathy and wise justice, which virtues have been well kept by his descendants, but he had a rare power over the natives and, while the different tribes often fought out their quarrels in the neighborhood, none of the Bush family was ever molested so long as they kept west of the Des Chutes River. Sanford tells of one occasion when two tribes, numbering many hundreds, fought all day on the Bush farm but both sides promised not to injure the whites.

As, however, the natives had only a few very poor guns and little ammunition, only a few were hurt and the battle consisted mostly of yells and insults.

I asked Sanford and Lewis about Chief Leschi. They say he often came to their place up to the time of the war, and as his mother belonged to the more fierce Klickitats of the trans-mountain tribes, so Leschi was more of a positive and aggressive character than his clam-digging brothers, but was always friendly and respectful to those who treated him fairly.

THE FIRST COUGAR.

It was during one of Leschi's visits to their place, about 1850, that one of the ponies was killed by some wild animal. The same thing had happened several times about the Cowlitz but none of the Indians nor any of the French trappers had, up to that time, ever seen any around that was capable of the mischief. Mr. Bush set a large bear trap that he had brought from Missouri near the remains of the pony and was fortunate enough to capture what proved to be a remarkably long bodied and long tailed cougar, the first, so far as the Bush brothers could learn, that had ever been seen on the Sound. In honor of the event, Leschi was allowed to take charge of removing and preparing the skin of the new kind of game.

Asked about the cause of the Indian war which was started by Leschi on the ground that his people had been deceived and robbed in the outlining of their reservation on the Nisqually, Sanford and Lewis assert positively that all of the whites of the Tumwater and Bush Prairie section were agreed that the Indians were badly wronged and there was much sympathy with the Leschi party. [Pg 114]

When the war opened, Leschi sent word to Bush promising that none of the whites on the west side of the Des Chutes would be molested and this proved to be true, though all of the natives were in a restless condition over the trouble for many months.

The most critical experience that the Bush company had with the Indians was a few years before, in May, 1849, when Pat Kamm, chief of the Snoqualmies, landed nearby on the bay (Budd Inlet) with a great fleet of war canoes, and made it known that they were going to destroy all of the whites. In this emergency, a squad went down and told them that Chief Bush had a terrible great gun that would sink all of the canoes as soon as they should come around what is now known as Capitol Point. This alarmed the natives so much that they finally gave up their purpose and returned down Sound. It is to be added that the "terrible gun" was a very heavy rifle that Bush had brought from the East and which kicked so badly that nobody dared fire it twice.

Mr. Bush carried on his farm with great success and kept the high respect and good will of all the settlement until his death in 1867 at the age of 76. His eldest son, William Owen, who succeeded his father as the recognized head of the family, was born in 1832 and was twelve years old when he crossed the plains. He had the same gentle virtues of his father and was always consulted in the affairs and politics of Thurston County. During the first state legislature of '89-90, he was an active and influential member. While he carried on both a logging and

farming business, he was also greatly interested in the world fairs, and at Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis took several notable prizes for his remarkable exhibits of Puget Sound productions, all raised on his own farm. At the Centennial Fair, in 1876, he took the world's prize for wheat; and from the Chicago Fair he brought back over two hundred kinds of grain, which he raised in separate rows in one field.

Wm. Owen died in 1906 and his brother Sanford, with two sons of Col. Simmons were all that are left of the first American colony of Puget Sound.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECOND CABIN.

What I am now about to write may provoke a smile, but I can only say, reader, put yourself in my place. That there should be a feeling akin to affection between a man and an ox will seem past comprehension to many. The time had come that Buck and Dandy and I must part for good and all. I could not transport them to our island home, neither provide for them. These patient, dumb brutes had been my close companions for the long, weary months on the plains, and had never failed me; they would do my bidding to the letter. I often said Buck understood English better than some people I had seen in my lifetime. I had done what not one in a hundred did; that was, to start on that trip with an unbroken ox and cow team. I had selected these four-year-old steers for their intelligent eyes as well as for their trim build, and had made no mistake. We had bivouacked together; actually slept together, lunched together. They knew me as far as they could see, and seemed delighted to obey my word, and I did regret to feel constrained to part with them. I knew they had assured my safe transit on the weary journey, if not even to the point of having saved my life. I could pack them, ride them, drive them by the word and receive their salutations, and why should I be ashamed to part with feelings of more than regret.

But I had scant time to spend on sentiment. The brother did not expect my return so soon. The [Pg 116] island claim (and cabin, as I thought) must be reached; the little skiff obtained in which to transport the wife and baby, not yet feeling willing to trust them in a canoe.

So, without further ado, a small canoe was chartered, and my first experience to "paddle my own canoe" materialized. It seemed this same place where we had our first clam bake was the sticking point again. The tide turned, night overtook me, and I could go no farther. Two men were in a cabin, the Doctor Johnson heretofore mentioned and a man by the name of Hathaway, both drunk and drinking, with a jug handy by, far from empty. Both were men that seemed to me to be well educated, and, if sober, refined. They quoted from Burns, sang songs and ditties, laughed and danced until late in the night, when they became exhausted and fell asleep. They would not listen to my suggestion that I would camp and sleep outside the cabin, and I could not sleep inside, so the night passed off without, rest or sleep until the tide turned, and I was glad enough to slip away, leaving them in their stupor.

A few miles vigorous paddling brought me to McNeil Island, opposite the town of Steilacoom, where I expected to find our second cabin, my brother and the boat. No cabin, no brother, no boat, were to be seen. A raft of cabin logs floating in the lagoon near by, where the United States penitentiary now stands, was all the signs to be seen, other than what was there when I left the place for my return trip to the Columbia River. I was sorely puzzled as to what to do. My brother was to have had the cabin ready by the time I returned. He not only had not done that, but had taken the boat, and left no sign as to where it or he could be found. Not knowing what else to do I mechanically paddled over to the town, where, sure enough, the boat was anchored, but nobody knew where the man had gone. I finally found where the provisions had been left, and, after an earnest parley, succeeded in getting possession. I took my canoe in tow and soon made my way [Pg 117] back to where the little folks were, and speedily transferred the whole outfit to the spot that was to be our island home; set up our tent, and felt at home once more.

The village, three miles away, across the bay, had grown during my absence and in the distance looked like a city in fact as well as in name. The mountain looked bigger and taller than ever. Even the songs of the Indians sounded better, and the canoes seemed more graceful, and the paddles wielded more expertly. Everything looked cheerful, even to the spouting clams on the beach, and the crow's antics of breaking clams by rising in the air and dropping them on the boulders. So many new things to show the folks that I for a time almost forget we were out of provisions and money, and did not know what had happened to the brother. Thoughts of these suddenly coming upon us, our spirits fell, and for a time we could hardly say we were perfectly happy.

"I believe that canoe is coming straight here," said the little wife, the next morning, about nine o'clock. All else is dropped, and a watch set upon the strange craft, moving slowly, apparently in the long distance, but more rapidly as it approached, and there sat the brother. Having returned to the village and finding that the boat and provisions had been taken, and seeing smoke in the bight, he knew what had happened, and, following his own good impulse, we were soon together again, and supremely happy. He had received a tempting offer to help load a ship, and had just completed his contract, and was able to exhibit a "slug" [5] of money and more besides that looked precious in our eyes.

The building of the cabin, with its stone fireplace, cat-and-clay chimney, its lumber floor, real [Pg 118] window with glass in, together with the high post bedstead out of tapering cedar saplings, the table fastened to the wall, with rustic chairs, seemed but like a play spell. No eight hour a day work there—eighteen would be nearer the mark—we never tired.

There came a letter: "Boys, if Oliver will come back to cross with us, we will go to Oregon next year," this signed by the father, then fifty years old. The letter was nearly three months old when we received it. What should we say and what should we do? Would Davenport pay for the Columbia River claims and the prospective potato crop in the fall—could he? We will say yes, Oliver will be with you next Spring. We must go to the timber camp to earn the money to pay expenses of the trip and not depend altogether on the Columbia River asset.

"What shall we do with the things?" said the little wife.

"Lock them up in the cabin," said the elder brother.

"And you go and stay with Dofflemire," said the young husband.

"Not I," said the little wife, "I'm going along to cook," and thus it was that all our well-laid plans were suddenly changed, our clearing land deferred, the chicken house, the inmates of which were to make us rich, was not to be built, the pigs were not bought to fatten on the clams, and many other pet schemes dropped that we might accomplish this one object, that Oliver might go back to Iowa to "bring the father out" across the Plains.

"We Struck Rapid, Heavy, But Awkward Strokes.

We struck rapid, heavy, but awkward strokes in the timber camp established on the bluff overlooking the falls at Tumwater, while the little wife supplied the huckleberry pudding for dinner, plenty of the lightest, whitest bread, vegetables, meat, and fish served in style good enough for kings; such appetites! No coaxing required to eat a hearty meal; such sound sleep; such satisfaction! Talk about your hardships. We would have none of it. It was a pleasure as we counted the eleven dollars a day that the Tullis brothers paid us for cutting logs, at one dollar and seventy cents a thousand, which we earned every day, and Sundays, too, seventy-seven dollars a week. Yes, we were going to make it. "Make what?" the reader will say. Why, succeed in getting money enough together to pay the passage of the elder brother to Iowa. And what a trip. Over to the Columbia River, out from there by steamer to San Francisco, then to the Isthmus, then New York, after which by rail as far west as there was a railroad and then walk to Eddyville, Iowa, from where the start was again to be made. [Pg 120]

Again the younger brother was left without money and but a scant supply of provisions, and winter had come on. The elder brother was speeding on his way, and could not be heard from frequently. How our little family succeeded in getting enough together to eat is not an interesting topic for the general reader. Suffice to say, we always secured abundance, even if at times the variety was restricted.

It was soon after Oliver's departure that I first made the acquaintance of Dr. Tolmie. It was upon the occasion when our new baby was born, now the mother of eight grown-up children, and several times a grandmother, Mrs. Ella Templeton of Halsey, Oregon.

Of course, Dr. Tolmie did not practice medicine. He had the cares of the great foreign corporation, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, on his shoulders. He was harassed by the settlers, who chafed because a foreign corporation had fenced up quite large tracts of grazing and some farming lands, and had thousands of sheep and cattle on the range. Constant friction was the result. The cattle were wild; therefore, some settler would kill one every now and then, and make the remainder still wilder, and again, therefore, the more the reason that others might be killed. The Doctor was a patient, tactful man, with an impulse to always do one a good turn for the sake of doing it. Consequently, when asked to attend, he did so without hesitation, though the request came from a perfect stranger and compliance was to his great inconvenience, yet without [Pg 121]

fee and without expectation of ever meeting the parties again. This first acquaintance ripened into friendship lifelong, that became closer as he neared his end. But recently, fifty years after this event, I have had the pleasure of a visit from two of his daughters, and I may say there has been scarcely a year in all this time but some token of friendship has passed. He was a noble man, with noble impulses. He died on his farm near Victoria many years ago.

Soon after this, I made my first acquaintance with Arthur A. Denny. It came about in this way. He and two other gentlemen were returning from the first Territorial Legislature, then just adjourned. Wind and tide compelled them to suspend their journey from Olympia to Seattle, and to stay over night with us in the little cabin. This was early in May, 1854. Mr. Denny remarked in the morning that he thought there was a good foundation under my cabin floor, as he did not find any spring to the bed. He and his companion laid on the floor, but I remember we did not go to bed very early. All during the session we had heard a great deal about removing the capital of the Territory from Olympia to Steilacoom. The legislature had adjourned and no action had been taken, and, in fact, no bill for the purpose was introduced. Mr. Denny said that before the recess a clear majority of both houses were in favor of removal to Steilacoom, but for the mistake of Lafayette Balch, member of the council from Pierce County, the removal would have been accomplished. Balch, so Denny told me, felt so sure of his game that he did not press to a vote before the recess.

At that, the first session of the legislature, the mania was for territorial roads; everybody wanted a territorial road. One, projected from Seattle to Bellingham Bay, did not meet with approval by Balch. Stroking his long beard as he was wont to do almost mechanically, he "thought they had gone far enough in establishing roads for one session." It was impolitic in the highest degree for Balch to offend the northern members in this way, as also unnecessary, as usually these roads remained on paper only, and cost nothing. However, he lost his majority in the council, and so the project died, to the very great disappointment of the people of Steilacoom and surrounding country.

FOOTNOTE:

[5] A "slug" was fifty dollars value in gold, minted by private parties, in octagon form and passed current the same as if it had borne the government's stamp. "Slugs" were worth as much melted as in the coined form. My ideas about the gold standard were formed at that time, and I may say my mind never changed on this subject.

The "Beaver Money," so called because of the stamp of a beaver on the piece, issued by the pioneers of Oregon, of the value of $5.00, was another instance of no change in value of gold from the melting pot to the mold. It was simply a matter of convenience to be rid of the more cumbersome legal tender, wheat, which had been in vogue so long.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS.

The latter part of August, 1854, James K. Hurd, of Olympia, sent me word that he had been out on the immigrant trail and heard that some of my relations on the road were belated and short of provisions. He advised me that I should go to their assistance, and particularly if I wanted to be sure they should come direct to Puget Sound over the Cascade Mountains, and not go down the Columbia River into Oregon. How it could be, with the experience of my brother Oliver to guide them, that my people should be in the condition described was past my comprehension. However, I accepted the statement as true and particularly felt the importance of their having certain knowledge as to prevailing conditions of an over-mountain trip through the Natchess Pass. But how could I go and leave wife and two babies on our island home? The summer had been spent clearing land and planting crops, and my finances were very low. To remove my family would cost money, besides the abandonment of the season's work to almost a certain destruction. The wife said at once, and without a moment's hesitation, to go, and she and Mrs. Darrow, who was with us as nurse and companion friend, would stay "right where we are until you get back," with a confidence in which I did not share. The trip at best was hazardous to an extent, even when undertaken well prepared and with company. So far as I could see, I might have to go on foot and pack my food and blanket on my back, and I knew that I would have to go alone. I knew some [Pg 123] work had been done on the road during the summer, but was unable to get definite information as to whether any camps were yet left in the mountains, and did not have that abiding faith in my ability to get back that rested in the breast of the little, courageous wife, but I dared not impart my forebodings to harass and intensify her fears and disturb her peace of mind while absent. The immigration the previous year, as related elsewhere, had encountered formidable difficulties in the mountains, narrowly escaping the loss of everything, if not facing actual starvation. Reports were current that the government appropriation for a military road had been expended, and that the road was passable for teams, but a like report had been freely circulated the previous year, with results almost disastrous to those attempting to come through. I could not help feeling that possibly the same conditions yet existed. The only way to determine the question was to go and see for myself; meet my father's party and pilot them through the pass.

It was on the third day of September of 1854 that I left home. I had been planting turnips for two days, and made a memorandum of the date, and by that fix the date of my departure. Of that turnip crop I shall have more to say later, as it had a cheering effect upon the incoming immigrants.

At Steilacoom there was a character then understood by few, and I may say by not even many to the end, in whom, somehow, I had implicit confidence. Dr. J. B. Webber, afterwards of the firm of Balch & Webber, of Steilacoom, the largest shipping and mercantile firm on the Sound, was a very eccentric man. Between him and myself there would seem to be a gulf that could not be closed. Our habits of life were as diametrically opposite as possible for two men to be. He was always drinking; never sober, neither ever drunk. I would never touch a drop, while the doctor would certainly drink a dozen times a day, just a little at a time, but seemingly tippling all the time. Then, he openly kept an Indian woman in defiance of the sentiment of all the families of the [Pg 124] community. It was with this man that I entrusted the safekeeping of my little family. I knew my wife had such an aversion to this class that I did not even tell her with whom I would arrange to look out for her welfare, but suggested another to whom she might apply in case of need. I knew Dr. Webber for long years afterwards, and until the day of his horrible death with delirium tremens, and never had my faith shaken as to the innate goodness of the man. Why these contrary traits of character should be, I cannot say, but so it was. His word was as good as his bond, and his impulses were all directly opposite to his personal habits. Twice a week an Indian woman visited the cabin on the island, always with some little presents and making inquiries about the babies and whether there was anything needed, with the parting "alki nika keelapie" (by and by I will return); and she did, every few days after my absence.

When I spoke to Webber about what I wanted, he seemed pleased to be able to do a kind act, and, to reassure me, got out his field glasses and turned it on the cabin across the water, three miles distant. Looking through it intently for a moment and handing the glass to me, said, "I can see everything going on over there, and you need have no uneasiness about your folks while gone," and I did not.

With a 50-pound flour sack filled with hard bread, or navy biscuit, a small piece of dried venison, a couple of pounds of cheese, a tin cup and half of a three point blanket, all made into a pack of less than forty pounds, I climbed the hill at Steilacoom and took the road leading to Puyallup, and spent the night with Jonathan McCarty, near where the town of Sumner now is.

McCarty said: "You can't get across the streams on foot; I will let you have a pony. He is small, but sure-footed, and hardy, and will in any event carry you across the rivers." McCarty also said: "Tell your folks this is the greatest grass country on earth; why, I am sure I harvested five tons of timothy to the acre this year." Upon my expressing a doubt, he said he knew he was correct by [Pg 125] the measurement of the mow in the barn and the land. In after years, I came to know he was correct, though at the time I could not help but believe he was mistaken.

The next day found me on the road with my blanket under the saddle, my sack of hard bread strapped on behind the saddle, and myself mounted to ride on level stretches of the road, or across streams, of which, as will appear later, I had full forty crossings to make, but had only one

ahead of me the first day. That one, though, as the Englishman would say, was a "nasty" one, across White River at Porter's place.

White River on the upper reaches is a roaring torrent only at all fordable in low water and in but few places. The rush of waters can be heard for a mile or more from the high bluff overlooking the narrow valley, or rather canyon, and presented a formidable barrier for a lone traveler. The river bed is full of boulders worn rounded and smooth and slippery, from the size of a man's head to very much larger, thus making footing for animals uncertain. After my first crossing, I dreaded those to come, which I knew were ahead of me, more than all else of the trip, for a misstep of the pony meant fatal results in all probability. The little fellow, though, seemed to be equal to the occasion. If the footing became too uncertain, he would stop stock still, and pound the water with one foot and finally reach out carefully until he could find secure footing, and then move up a step or two. The water of the river is so charged with the sediment from the glaciers above, that the bottom could not be seen—only felt—hence the absolute necessity of feeling one's way. It is wonderful, the sagacity or instinct or intelligence, or whatever we may call it, manifested by the horse. I immediately learned that my pony could be trusted on the fords better than myself, thereafter I held only a supporting, but not a guiding rein, and he carried me safely over the forty crossings on my way out, and my brother as many on the return trip.

Allen Porter lived near the first crossing, on the farther side, and as this was the last settler I would see and the last place I could get feed for my pony, other than grass or browse, I put up for [Pg 126] the night under his roof. He said I was going on a "Tom fool's errand," for my folks could take care of themselves, and tried to dissuade me from proceeding on my journey. But I would not be turned back and the following morning cut loose from the settlements and, figuratively speaking, plunged into the deep forest of the mountains.

The road (if it could be properly called a road) lay in the narrow valley of White River, or on the mountains adjacent, in some places (as at Mud Mountain) reaching an altitude of more than a thousand feet above the river bed. Some places the forest was so dense that one could scarcely see to read at midday, while in other places large burns gave an opening for daylight.

During the forenoon of this first day, while in one of those deepest of deep forests, where, if the sky was clear, and one could catch a spot you could see out overhead, one might see the stars as from a deep well, my pony stopped short, raised his head with his ears pricked up, indicating something unusual was at hand. Just then I caught an indistinct sight of a movement ahead, and thought I heard voices, while the pony made an effort to turn and flee in the opposite direction. Soon there appeared three women and eight children on foot, coming down the road in blissful ignorance of the presence of any one but themselves in the forest.

"Why, stranger! Where on earth did you come from? Where are you going to, and what are you here for?" was asked by the foremost woman of the party, in such quick succession as to utterly preclude any answer, as she discovered me standing on the roadway holding my uneasy pony. Mutual explanations soon followed. I soon learned their teams had become exhausted, and that all the wagons but one had been left, and this one was on the road a few miles behind them; that they were entirely out of provisions and had had nothing to eat for twenty hours, except what natural food they had gathered, which was not much. They eagerly inquired the distance to food, [Pg 127] which I thought they might possibly reach that night, but in any event the next morning early. Meanwhile I had opened my sack of hard bread and gave each a cracker, in the eating of which the sound resembled pigs cracking dry, hard corn.

Of those eleven persons, I only know of but one now alive, although, of course, the children soon outgrew my knowledge of them, but they never forgot me.

Mrs. Anne Fawcet, the spokesman of the party, I knew well in after years, and although now eighty years old [6] (she will pardon me for telling her age), is living in good circumstances a mile out from the town of Auburn, nearly twenty miles south of Seattle, and but a couple of miles from the scene of the dreadful massacre at the outbreak leading to the Indian war of 1855, where the gallant Lieutenant Slaughter lost his life.

Mrs. Fawcet can scarcely be called a typical pioneer woman, yet there were many approaching her ways. She was of too independent a character to be molded into that class; too self-reliant to be altogether like her neighbor housewives; and yet was possessed of those sturdy virtues so common with the pioneer—industry and frugality, coupled with unbounded hospitality. The other ladies of the party, Mrs. Herpsberger and Mrs. Hall, I never knew afterwards, and have no knowledge as to their fate, other than that they arrived safely in the settlement.

But we neither of us had time to parley or visit, and so the ladies with their children, barefoot and ragged, bareheaded and unkempt, started down the mountain intent on reaching food, while I started up the road wondering or not whether this scene was to be often repeated as I advanced on my journey. A dozen biscuits of hard bread is usually a very small matter, but with me it might mean a great deal. How far would I have to go? When could I find out? What would be the plight of my people when found? Or would I find them at all? Might they not pass by and be on the way [Pg 128] down the Columbia River before I could reach the main immigrant trail? These and kindred questions weighed heavily on my mind as I slowly and gradually ascended the mountain.

Some new work on the road gave evidence that men had recently been there, but the work was so slight one could easily believe immigrants might have done it as they passed. Fifteen thousand dollars had been appropriated by Congress for a military road, which report said would be

expended in improving the way cut by the immigrants and citizens through the Natchess Pass during the summer of 1853. I saw some of the work, but do not remember seeing any of the men, as I stuck close to the old trail, and so my first camp was made alone, west of the summit and without special incident. I had reached an altitude where the night chill was keenly felt, and, with my light blanket, missed the friendly contact of the back of the faithful ox that had served me so well on the plains. My pony had nothing but browse for supper, and was restless. Nevertheless I slept soundly and was up early, refreshed and ready to resume the journey.

FOOTNOTE:

[6] Since these lines were penned the good lady died at the age of 88.

CHAPTER XX.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS—[CONTINUED].

It is strange how the mind will vividly retain the memory of some incidents of no particular importance, while the recollection of other passing events so completely fades away. I knew I had to cross that ugly stream, White River, five times during the first day's travel, but cannot recall but one crossing, where my pony nearly lost his balance, and came down on his knees with his nose in the water for the moment, but to recover and bravely carry me out safely.

The lone camp well up on the mountain had chilled me, but the prospect before me and that I had left behind brought a depressed feeling most difficult to describe. I had passed through long [Pg 129] stretches of forest so tall and so dense that it seemed incredible that such did exist anywhere on earth. And then, the road; such a road, if it could be called a road. Curiously enough, the heavier the standing timber, the easier it had been to slip through with wagons, there being but little undecayed or down timber. In the ancient of days, however, great giants had been uprooted, lifting considerable earth with the upturned roots, that, as time went on and the roots decayed formed mounds two, three, or four feet high, leaving a corresponding hollow in which one would plunge, the whole being covered by a dense, short, evergreen growth, completely hiding from view the unevenness of the ground. Over these hillocks and hollows the immigrants had rolled their wagon wheels, and over the large roots of the fir, often as big as one's body and nearly all of them on top of the ground. I will not undertake to say how many of these giant trees were to be found to the acre, but they were so numerous and so large that in many places it was difficult to find a passageway between them, and then only by a tortuous route winding in various directions. When the timber burns were encountered the situation was worse. Often the remains of timber would be piled in such confusion that sometimes wagons could pass under legs that rested on others; then again others were encountered half buried, while still others would rest a foot or so from the ground. These, let the reader remember, oftentimes were five feet or more in diameter, with trunks from two to three hundred feet in length. All sorts of devices had been resorted to in order to overcome those obstructions. In many cases, where not too large, cuts had been taken out, while in other places the large timber had been bridged up to by piling smaller logs, rotten chunks, brush, or earth, so the wheels of the wagon could be rolled up over the body of the tree. Usually three notches would be cut on the top of the log, two for the wheels and one for the reach or coupling pole to pass through.

In such places the oxen would be taken to the opposite side, a chain or rope run to the end of [Pg 130] the tongue, a man to drive, one or two to guide the tongue, others to help at the wheels, and so with infinite labor and great care the wagons would gradually be worked down the mountain in the direction of the settlements. Small wonder that the immigrants of the previous year should report that they had to cut their way through the timber, while the citizen road workers had reported that the road was opened, and small wonder that the prospect of the road should have as chilling effect on my mind as the chill of the mountain air had had on my body.

But, the more difficulties encountered, the more determined I became, at all hazards, to push through, for the more the necessity to acquaint myself with the obstacles to be encountered and to be with my friends to encourage and help them. Before me lay the great range or pass, five thousand feet above sea level, and the rugged mountain climb to get to the summit, and the summit prairies where my pony could have a feast of grass. It was on this summit hill the immigration of the previous year had encountered such grave difficulties. At the risk of in part repeating, I am tempted to quote some of my own words to a select party of friends, the teachers of the county in which I have lived so long, prepared for that special occasion.

"About twenty miles north of the great mountain of the Cascade range is a picturesque, small scope of open country known as Summit Prairie, in the Natchess Pass, some seventy miles southeasterly from this city (Tacoma). In this prairie, fifty years ago this coming autumn, a camp of immigrants was to be seen. * * * Go back they could not; either they must go ahead or starve in the mountains. A short way out from the camp a steep mountain declivity lay square across their track. As one of the ladies of the party said, when she first saw it: 'Why Lawsee Massee! We have come to the jumping off place at last!' This lady felt, as many others of the party felt, like they had come to the end of the world (to them), and the exclamation was not for stage effect, [Pg 131] but of fervent prayer for deliverance.

"Stout hearts in the party were not to be deterred from making the effort to go ahead. Go around this hill they could not; go down it with logs trailed to the wagons, as they had done before, they could not, as the hill was so steep the logs would go end over end and be a danger instead of a help. So the rope they had was run down the hill and found to be too short to reach the bottom. One of the leaders of the party (I knew him well) turned to his men and said, 'Kill a steer'; and they killed a steer, cut his hide into strips and spliced it to the rope. It was found yet to be too short to reach to the bottom. The order went out: 'Kill two more steers!' And two more steers were killed, their hides cut into strips and spliced to the rope, which then reached the bottom of the hill; and by the aid of that rope and strips of the hides of those three steers, twenty-nine wagons were lowered down the mountain side to the bottom of the steep hill.

"Now, my friends, there is no fiction about this story—it is a true story, and some of the actors are yet alive, and some of them live in this county. Nor were their trials ended when they got their wagons down to the bottom of that hill.

"Does it now seem possible for mortal man to do this? And yet this is only a plain statement of an incident of pioneer life without giving any names and dates, that can yet be verified by living witnesses; but these witnesses are not here for long.

"James Biles, who afterwards settled near Olympia, was the man who ordered the steers killed to procure the hides to lengthen out the rope. Geo. H. Himes, of Portland, who is still living, was one of the party; so was Stephen Judson, of Steilacoom; also Nelson Sargent, of Grand Mound, now a very old man.

"The feat of bringing that train of twenty-nine wagons in with the loss of only one is the greatest of anything I ever knew or heard of in the way of pioneer travel.

"With snail-like movements, the cattle and men becoming weaker and weaker, progress was [Pg 132] made each day until it finally seemed as if the oxen could do no more, and it became necessary to send them forward on the trail ten miles, where it was known plenty of grass could be had. Meantime the work on the road continued until the third day, when the last particle of food was gone. The teams were brought back, the trip over the whole ten miles made, and Connell's Prairie reached at dark.

"The struggle over that ten miles, where to a certain extent each party became so intent on their particular surroundings as to forget all else, left the women and children to take care of themselves while the husbands tugged at the wagons. I now have in mind to relate the experience of one of these mothers with a ten-year-old boy, one child four years and another eight months.

"Part of the time these people traveled on the old trail and part on the newly-cut road, and by some means fell behind the wagons, which forded that turbulent, dangerous stream, White River, before they reached the bank, and were out of sight, not knowing but the women and children were ahead.

"I wish every little boy of ten years of age of this great State, or, for that matter, twenty years old or more, could read and profit by what I am now going to relate, especially if that little or big boy at times thinks he is having a hard time because he is asked to help his mother or father at odd times, or perchance to put in a good solid day's work on Saturday, instead of spending it as a holiday; or if he has a cow to milk or wood to split, or anything that is work, to make him bewail his fate for having such a hard time in life. I think the reading of the experience of this little ten-year-old boy with his mother and the two smaller children would encourage him to feel more cheerful and more content with his lot.

"As I have said, the wagons had passed on, and there these four people were on the right bank of the river while their whole company was on the opposite bank, and had left them there alone.

"A large fallen tree reached across the river, but the top on the further side lay so close to the [Pg 133] water that a constant trembling and swaying made the trip dangerous.

"None of them had eaten anything since the day previous, and but a scant supply then; but the boy resolutely shouldered the four-year-old and safely deposited him on the other side. Then came next the little tot, the baby, to be carried in arms across. Next came the mother.

"'I can't go!' she exclaimed; 'it makes me so dizzy.'

"'Put one hand over your eyes, mother, and take hold of me with the other,' said the boy; and so they began to move out sideways on the log, a half step at a time.

"'Hold steady, mother; we are nearly over.'

"'Oh, I am gone!' was the only response, as she lost her balance and fell into the river, but happily so near the farther bank that the little boy was able to catch a bush with one hand that hung over the bank, while holding on to his mother with the other, and so she was saved.

"It was then nearly dark, and without any knowledge of how far it was to camp, the little party started on the road, only tarrying long enough on the bank of the river for the mother to wring the water out of her skirts, the boy carrying the baby, while the four-year-old walked beside his mother. After nearly two miles of travel and ascending a very steep hill, it being now dark, the glimmer of camp lights came into view; but the mother could see nothing, for she fell senseless, utterly prostrated.

"I have been up and down that hill a number of times, and do not wonder the poor woman fell helpless after the effort to reach the top. The great wonder is that she should have been able to go as far as she did. The incident illustrates how the will power can nerve one up to extraordinary achievements, but when the object is attained and the danger is past, then the power is measurably lost, as in this case, when the good woman came to know they were safe. The boy hurried his two little brothers into camp, calling for help to rescue his mother. The appeal was [Pg 134] promptly responded to, the woman being carried into camp and tenderly cared for until she revived.

"Being asked if he did not want something to eat, the boy said 'he had forgotten all about it,' and further, 'he didn't see anything to eat, anyway'; whereupon some one with a stick began to uncover some roasted potatoes, which he has decided was the best meal he has ever eaten, even to this day.

"This is a plain recital of actual occurrences, without exaggeration, obtained from the parties themselves and corroborated by numerous living witnesses.

"There were 128 people in that train, and through the indefatigable efforts of Mr. Geo. H. Rimes, of Portland, Oregon, who was one of the party, and in fact the ten-year-old boy referred to, I am able to give the names in part.

"I have been thus particular in telling this story to illustrate what trials were encountered and overcome by the pioneers of that day, to the end that the later generations may pause in their hasty condemnation of their present surroundings and opportunities and to ask themselves whether in all candor they do not feel they are blessed beyond the generation that has gone before them, the hardy pioneers of this country."

This book could easily be filled by the recital of such heroic acts, varying only in detail and perhaps in tragic results; yet would only show in fact the ready, resourceful tact of the pioneers of those days.

I want to repeat here again that I do not look upon that generation of men and women as superior to the present generation, except in this: The pioneers had lost a large number of physically weak on the trip, thus applying the great law of the survival of the fittest; and further, that the majority of the pioneers in the true sense of the word—frontiersmen for generations before—hence were by training and habits eminently fitted to meet the emergencies of the trip and conditions to follow.

One of the incidents of this trip should be related to perpetuate the memory of heroic actions of the times, that of the famous ride across these mountains and to Olympia, of Mrs. Catherine Frazier, one of this party, on an ox. [Pg 135]

Three days after arrival, Mrs. Frazier gave birth to the third white child born in Pierce County, Washington Frazier, named after the great territory that had been chosen for the home of the parents and descendants.

The first report, that the "mother and son were doing well," can again and again be repeated, as both [7] are yet alive, the mother now past seventy-three and the son fifty, and both yet residing at South Bay, near Olympia, where the parents soon settled after arrival.

The curious part of such incidents is the perfect unconsciousness of the parties of having done anything that would be handed down to posterity as exhibiting any spirit of fortitude or of having performed any heroic act. The young bride could not walk, neither could she be taken into the wagons, and she could ride an ox, and so, without ceremony, mounted her steed and fell into the procession without attracting especial attention or passing remark. Doubtless the lady, at the time, would have shrunk from any undue notice, because of her mount, and would have preferred a more appropriate entry into the future capital of the future State, but it is now quite probably that she looks upon the act with a feeling akin to pride, and in any event, not with feelings of mortification or false pride that possibly, at that time, might have lurked within her breast.

The birth of children was not an infrequent incident on the plains, the almost universal report following, "doing as well as could be expected," the trip being resumed with but very short interruption, the little ones being soon exhibited with the usual motherly pride.

FOOTNOTE:

[7] Since these lines were penned Mrs. Frazier has joined the majority of that generation in the life beyond.

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CHAPTER XXI.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS—[CONTINUED.]

Readers of previous chapters will remember the lonely camp mentioned and the steep mountain ahead of it to reach the summit.

What with the sweat incident to the day's travel, the chill air of an October night in the mountains, with but half a three-point blanket as covering and the ground for a mattress, small wonder my muscles were a little stiffened when I arose and prepared for the ascent to the summit. Bobby had, as I have said, been restless during the night, and, when the roll of blankets and the hard bread was securely strapped on behind, suddenly turned his face homeward, evidently not relishing the fare of browse for supper. He seemingly had concluded he had had enough of the trip, and started to go home, trotting off gaily down the mountain. I could do nothing else but follow him, as the narrow cut of the road and impenetrable obstructions on either side utterly precluded my getting past to head off his rascally maneuvers. Finally, finding a nip of grass by the roadside, the gait was slackened so that after several futile attempts I managed to get a firm hold of his tail, after which we went down the mountain together, much more rapidly than we had come up the evening before. Bobby forgot to use his heels, else he might for a longer time been master of the situation. The fact was, he did not want to hurt me, but was determined to break up the partnership, and, so far as he was concerned, go no further into the mountains where he could not get a supper. By dint of persuasion and main strength of muscle the contest was finally settled in my favor, and I secured the rein. Did I chastise him? Not a bit. I did not blame him. We were partners, but it was a one-sided partnership, as he had no interest in the enterprise other than to get enough to eat as we went along, and when that failed, rebelled.

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It is wonderful, the sagacity of the horse or ox. They know more than we usually think they do. Let one be associated (yes, that's the word, associated) with them for a season alone. Their characteristics come to the front and become apparent, without study. Did I talk to my friend Bobby? Indeed, I did. There were but few other animate things to talk to. Perhaps one might see a small bird flit across the vision or a chipmunk, or hear the whirr of the sudden flight of the grouse, but all else was solitude, deep and impressive. The dense forest through which I was passing did not supply conditions for bird or animal life in profusion.

"You are a naughty lad, Bobby," I said, as I turned his head eastward to retrace the mile or so of the truant's run.

We were soon past our camping ground of the night before, and on our way up the mountain. Bobby would not be led, or if he was, would hold back, till finally making a rush up the steep ascent, would be on my heels or toes before I could get out of the way. "Go ahead, Bobby," I would say, and suiting action to words seize the tail with a firm grasp and follow. When he moved rapidly, by holding on I was helped up the mountain. When he slackened his pace, then came the resting spell. The engineering instinct of the horse tells him how to reduce grades by angles. So Bobby led me up the mountain in zig-zag courses, I following always with the firm grasp of the tail that meant we would not part company, and we did not. I felt that it was a mean trick to compel the poor brute to pull me up the mountain by his tail, supperless, breakfastless, and discontended. It appeared to me it was just cause to sever our friendship, which by this time seemed cemented closely, but then I thought of the attempted abandonment he had been guilty of, and that perhaps he should submit to some indignities at my hand in consequence.

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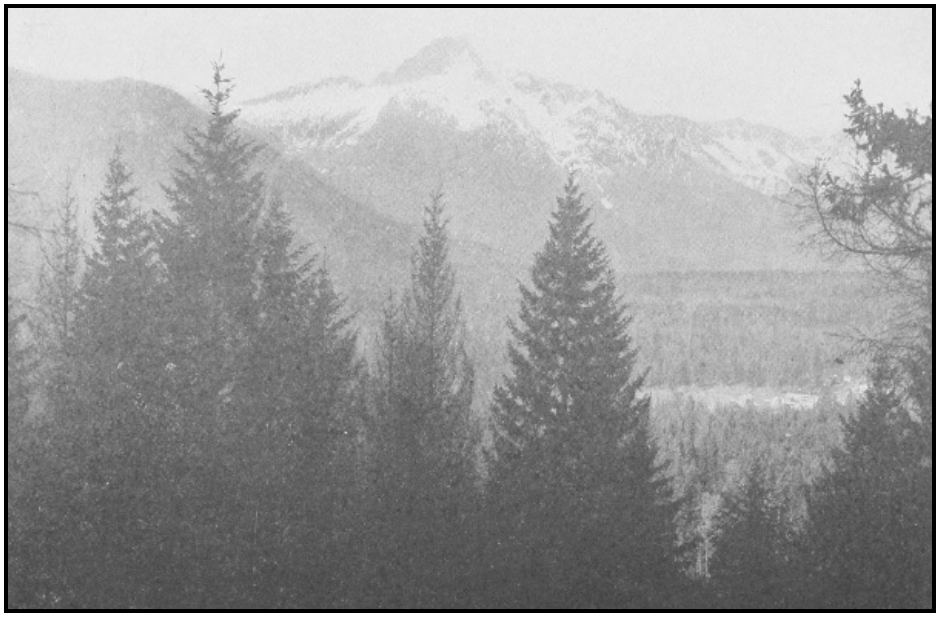
By noon we had surmounted all obstacles, and stood upon the summit prairie—one of them, for there are several—where Bobby feasted to his heart's content, while I—well, it was the same old story, hard tack and cheese, with a small allotment of dried venison.



To the south, apparently but a few miles distant, the old mountain, Rainier of old, Tacoma by Winthrop, loomed up into the clouds full ten thousand feet higher than where I stood, a grand scene to behold, worthy of all the effort expended to attain this view point. But I was not attuned to view with ecstasy the grandeur of what lay before me, but rather to scan the horizon to ascertain, if I could, what the morrow might bring forth. The mountain to the pioneer has served as a huge barometer to forecast the weather. "How is the mountain this morning?" the farmer asks in harvest time. "Has the mountain got his night cap on?" the housewife inquires before her wash is hung on the line. The Indian would watch the mountain with intent to determine whether he might expect "snass" (rain), or "kull snass" (hail), or "t'kope snass" (snow), and seldom failed in his conclusions, and so I scanned the mountain top that day partially hid in the clouds, with the forebodings verified at nightfall, as will be related later.

The next camp was in the Natchess Canyon. I had lingered on the summit prairie to give the pony a chance to fill up on the luxuriant but rather washy grass, there found in great abundance. For myself, I had had plenty of water, but had been stinted in hard bread, remembering my experience of the day before, with the famishing women and children. I began to realize more and more the seriousness of my undertaking, particularly so because I could hear no tidings. A light snow storm came on just before nightfall, which, with the high mountains on either side of the river, spread approaching darkness rapidly. I was loth to camp; somehow I just wanted to go on, and doubtless would have traveled all night if I could have safely found my way. The canyon was but a few hundred yards wide, with the tortuous river first striking one bluff and then the other, necessitating numerous crossings; the intervening space being glade land of large pine growth with but light undergrowth and few fallen trees. The whole surface was covered with [Pg 140] coarse sand, in which rounded boulders were imbedded so thick in places as to cause the trail to be very indistinct, particularly in open spots, where the snow had fallen unobstructed. Finally, I saw that I must camp, and after crossing the river, came out in an opening where the bear tracks were so thick that one could readily believe the spot to be a veritable play-ground for all the animals round about.

I found two good sized trunks of trees that had fallen; one obliquely across the other, and, with my pony tethered as a sentinel and my fire as an advance post I slept soundly, but nearly supperless. The black bears on the west slope of the mountain I knew were timid and not dangerous, but I did not know so much about the mountain species, and can but confess that I felt lonesome, though placing great reliance upon my fire, which I kept burning all night.

Early next morning found Bobby and me on the trail, a little chilled with the cold mountain air and very willing to travel. In a hundred yards or so, we came upon a ford of ice cold water to cross, and others following in such quick succession, that I realized that we were soon to leave the canyon. I had been told that at the 32d crossing I would leave the canyon and ascend a high mountain, and then travel through pine glades, and that I must then be careful and not lose the trail. I had not kept strict account of the crossings like one of the men I had met, who cut a notch in his goad stick at every crossing, but I knew instinctively we were nearly out, and so I halted to eat what I supposed would be the only meal of the day, not dreaming what lay in store for me at nightfall. It would be uninteresting to the general reader to relate the details of that day's travel, and in fact I cannot recall much about it except going up the steep mountain—so steep that Bobby again practiced his engineering instincts and I mine, with my selfish hand having a firm hold on the tail of my now patient comrade.

From the top of the mountain glade I looked back in wonderment about how the immigrants [Pg 141] had taken their wagons down; I found out by experience afterwards.

Towards nightfall I found a welcome sound of the tinkling of a bell, and soon saw the smoke of camp fires, and finally the village of tents and grime-covered wagons. How I tugged at Bobby's halter to make him go faster, and then mounted him with not much better results, can better be imagined than told.

Could it be the camp I was searching for? It was about the number of wagons and tents that I had expected to meet. No. I was doomed to disappointment, yet rejoiced to find some one to camp with and talk to other than the pony.

It is not easy to describe the cordial greeting accorded me by those tired and almost discouraged immigrants. If we had been near and dear relatives, the rejoicing could not have been mutually greater. They had been toiling for nearly five months on the road across the plains, and now there loomed up before them this great mountain range to cross. Could they do it? If we cannot get over with our wagons, can we get the women and children through in safety? I was able to lift a load of doubt and fear from off their jaded minds. Before I knew what was happening, I caught the fragrance of boiling coffee and of fresh meat cooking. It seemed the good matrons knew without telling that I was hungry (I doubtless looked it), and had set to work to prepare me a meal, a sumptuous meal at that, taking into account the whetted appetite incident to a diet of hard bread straight, and not much of that either, for two days.

We had met on the hither bank of the Yakima River, where the old trail crosses that river near where the flourishing city of North Yakima now is. These were the people, a part of them, that are mentioned elsewhere in my "Tragedy of Leschi," in the chapter on the White River massacre. Harvey H. Jones, wife and three children, and George E. King, wife and one child. One of the little boys of the camp is the same person—John I. King—who has written the graphic account of the [Pg 142]

tragedy in which his mother and step-father and their neighbors lost their lives—that horrible massacre on White River a year later—and the other, George E. King (but no relation), the little five-year-old who was taken and held captive for nearly four months, and then safely delivered over by the Indians to the military authorities at Fort Steilacoom. I never think of those people but with feelings of sadness; of their struggle, doubtless the supreme effort of their lives, to go to their death. I pointed out to them where to go to get good claims, and they lost no time, but went straight to the locality recommended and immediately to work, preparing shelter for the winter.

"Are you going out on those plains alone?" asked Mrs. Jones, anxiously. When I informed her that I would have the pony with me, a faint, sad smile spread over her countenance as she said, "Well, I don't think it is safe." Mr. Jones explained that what his wife referred to was the danger from the ravenous wolves that infested the open country, and from which they had lost weakened stock from their bold forages, "right close to the camp," he said, and advised me not to camp near the watering places, but up on the high ridge. I followed his advice with the result as we shall see of missing my road and losing considerable time, and causing me not a little trouble and anxiety.

CHAPTER XXII.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS—[CONTINUED.]

The start for the high table desert lands bordering the Yakima Valley cut me loose from all communication, for no more immigrants were met until I reached the main traveled route beyond the Columbia River. I speak of the "desert lands" adjacent to the Yakima from the standpoint of that day. We all thought these lands were worthless, as well as the valley, not dreaming of the untold wealth the touch of water would bring out. The road lay through a forbidding sage plain, [Pg 143] or rather an undulating country, seemingly of shifting sands and dead grass of comparatively scant growth. As the sun rose, heat became intolerable. The dust brought vivid memories of the trip across the plains in places. The heated air trembling in the balance brought the question of whether or not something was the matter with my eyes or brain; whether this was an optical illusion, or real, became a debatable question in my mind. Strive against it with all my might, my eyes would rest on the farther horizon to catch the glimpse of the expected train, till they fairly ached. Added to this, an intolerable thirst seized upon me, and compelled leaving the road and descending into the valley for water. Here I found as fat cattle as ever came to a butcher's stall, fed on this selfsame dead grass, cured without rain. These cattle belonged to the Indians, but there were no Indians in sight. The incident, though, set me to thinking about the possibilities of a country that could produce such fat cattle from the native grasses. I must not linger off the trail; and take chances of missing the expected train, and so another stretch of travel, of thirst, and suffering came until during the afternoon, I found water on the trail, and tethered my pony for his much needed dinner, and opened my sack of hard bread to count the contents, with the conclusion that my store was half gone, and so lay down in the shade of a small tree or bush near the spring to take an afternoon nap. Rousing up before sun down, refreshed, we (pony and I) took the trail in a much better mood than before the nooning. When night came, I could not find it in my heart to camp. The cool of the evening invigorated the pony, and we pushed on. Without having intended to travel in the night, I had, so to speak, drifted into it and finding the road could be followed, though but dimly seen, kept on the trail until a late hour, when I unsaddled and hobbled the pony. The saddle blanket was brought into use, and I was soon off in dream land, and forgot all about the dust, the trail or the morrow.

Morning brought a puzzling sense of helplessness that for the time, seemed overpowering. [Pg 144] I had slept late, and awoke to find the pony had wandered far off on the hill side, in fact, so far, it required close scanning to discover him. To make matters worse, his hobbles had become loosened, giving him free use of all his feet, and in no mood to take the trail again. Coaxing was of no avail, driving would do no good, so embracing an opportunity to seize his tail again, we went around about over the plain and through the sage brush in a rapid gait, which finally lessened and I again became master of him. For the life of me I could not be sure as to the direction of the trail, but happened to take the right course. When the trail was found, the question came as to the whereabouts of the saddle. It so happened that I took the wrong direction and had to retrace my steps. The sun was high when we started on our journey.

A few hundred yards travel brought feelings of uneasiness, as it was evident that we were not on the regular trail. Not knowing but this was some cut off, so continued until the Columbia River bluff was reached, and the great river was in sight, half a mile distant, and several hundred feet of lower level. Taking a trail down the bluff that seemed more promising than the wagon tracks, I began to search for the road at the foot of the bluff to find the tracks scattered, and any resemblance of a road gone; in a word, I was lost. I never knew how those wagon tracks came to be there, but I know that I lost more than a half day's precious time, and again was thrown in a doubting mood as to whether I had missed the long sought for train.

The next incident I remember vividly, was my attempt to cross the Columbia just below the mouth of Snake River. I had seen but few Indians on the whole trip, and in fact, the camp I found there on the bank of the great river was the first I distinctly remember. I could not induce them to cross me over. From some cause they seemed surly and unfriendly. The treatment was so in contrast to what I had received from the Indians on the Sound, that I could not help wondering [Pg 145] what it meant. No one, to my knowledge, lost his life by the hands of the Indians that season, but the next summer all, or nearly all, were ruthlessly murdered that ventured into that country unprotected.

That night I camped late, opposite Wallula (old Fort Walla Walla), in a sand storm of great fury. I tethered my pony this time, rolled myself up in the blanket, only to find myself fairly buried in the drifting sand in the morning. It required a great effort to creep out of the blanket, and greater work to relieve the blanket from the accumulated sand. By this time the wind had laid and comparative calm prevailed, and then came the effort to make myself heard across the wide river to the people of the fort. It did seem as though I would fail. Traveling up and down the river bank for half mile, or so, in the hope of catching a favorable breeze to carry my voice to the fort, yet, all to no avail. I sat upon the bank hopelessly discouraged, not knowing what to do. I think I must have been two hours halloaing at the top of my voice until hoarse from the violent effort. Finally, while sitting there, cogitating as to what to do, I spied a blue smoke arising from the cabin, and soon after a man appeared who immediately responded to my renewed efforts to attract attention. The trouble had been they were all asleep, while I was in the early morning expending my breath.

Shirley Ensign, of Olympia, had established a ferry across the Columbia River, and had yet

lingered to set over belated immigrants, if any came. Mr. Ensign came over and gave me glad tidings. He had been out on the trail fifty miles or more, and had met my people, whom he thought were camped some thirty miles away, and thought that they would reach the ferry on the following day. But I would not wait, and, procuring a fresh horse, I started out in a cheerful mood, determined to reach camp that night if my utmost exertions would accomplish it. Sundown came and no signs of camp; dusk came on, and still no signs; finally, I spied some cattle grazing on the upland, and soon came upon the camp in a ravine that had shut them out from view. [Pg 146] Rejoicings and outbursts of grief followed. I inquired for my mother the first thing. She was not there; had been buried in the sands of the Platte Valley, months before; also a younger brother lay buried near Independence Rock. The scene that followed is of too sacred memory to write about, and we will draw the veil of privacy over it.

Of that party, all are under the sod save one—Mrs. Amanda C. Spinning, then the wife of the elder brother so often heretofore mentioned.

With fifty odd head of stock, seven wagons, and seventeen people, the trip was made to the Sound without serious mishap or loss. We were twenty-two days on the road, and thought this was good time to make, all things considered. Provisions were abundant, the health of the party good and stock in fair condition. I unhesitatingly advised the over-mountain trip; meanwhile cautioning them to expect some snow, a goodly amount of hard labor, and plenty of vexation. How long will it take? Three weeks. Why, we thought we were about through. Well, you came to stay with us, did you? But what about the little wife and the two babies on the island home? Father said some one must go and look after them. So, the elder brother was detailed to go to the island folks, whilst I was impressed into service to take his place with the immigrants. It would hardly be interesting to the general reader to give a detailed account, even if I remembered it well, which I do not. So intent did we all devote our energies to the one object, to get safely over the mountains, that all else was forgotten. It was a period of severe toil and anxious care, but not more so than to others that had gone before us, and what others had done we felt we could do, but there was no eight-hour-a-day labor, nor any drones; all were workers. I had prepared the minds of the newcomers for the worst, not forgetting the steep hills, the notched logs, and rough, stony fords, by telling the whole story. "But do you really think we can get through?" said father. [Pg 147] "Yes, I know we can, if every man will put his shoulder to the wheel." This latter expression was a phrase in use to indicate doing one's duty without flinching, but in this case, it had a more literal meaning, for we were compelled often to take hold of the wheels to boost the wagons over logs, and ease them down on the opposite side, as likewise, on the steep mountain side. We divided our force into groups; one to each wagon to drive, four as wheelmen, as we called them, and father with the women folks on foot, or on horseback, with the stock.

God bless the women folks of the plains; the immigrant women, I mean. A nobler, braver, more uncomplaining people were never known. I have often thought that some one ought to write a just tribute to their valor and patience; a book of their heroic deeds. I know this word valor is supposed to apply to men and not to women, but I know that the immigrant women earned the right to have the word, and all it implies, applied to them. Such a trip with all its trials is almost worth the price to bring out these latent virtues of the so-called weaker sex. Strive, however, as best we could, we were unable to make the trip in the allotted time, and willing hands came out with the brother to put their shoulders to the wheels, and to bring the glad tidings that all was well on the island home, and to release the younger brother and the father from further duty, when almost through to the settlements.

Do you say this was enduring great hardships? That depends upon the point of view. As to this return trip, for myself, I can truly say that it was not. I enjoyed the strife to overcome all difficulties, and so did the greater number of the company. They felt that it was a duty and enjoyed doing their duty. Many of them, it is true, were weakened by the long trip across the Plains, but with the better food obtainable, and the goal so near at hand, there was a positive pleasure to pass over the miles, one by one, and become assured that final success was only a matter of a very short time.

One day, we encountered a new fallen tree, as one of the men said, a whopper, cocked up on its [Pg 148] own upturned roots, four feet from the ground. Go around it, we could not; to cut it out seemed an endless task with our dulled, flimsy saw. Dig down, boys, said the father, and in short order every available shovel was out of the wagons and into willing hands, with others standing by to take their turn. In a short time the way was open fully four feet deep, and oxen and wagons passed through under the obstruction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS—[CONTINUED.]

People now traversing what is popularly known as Nisqually Plains, that is, the stretch of open prairie, interspersed with clumps of timber, sparkling lakes, and glade lands, from the heavy timber bordering the Puyallup to a like border of the Nisqually, will hardly realize that once upon a time these bare gravelly prairies supplied a rich grass of exceeding fattening quality and of sufficient quantity to support many thousand head of stock, and not only support but fatten them ready for the butcher's stall. Nearly half a million acres of this land lie between the two rivers, from two to four hundred feet above tide level and beds of the rivers mentioned, undulating and in benches, an ideal part of shade and open land of rivulets and lakes, of natural roads and natural scenery of splendor.

So, when our little train emerged from the forests skirting the Puyallup Valley, and came out on the open at Montgomery's, afterwards Camp Montgomery, of Indian war times, twelve miles southeasterly of Fort Steilacoom, the experience was almost as if one had come into a noonday sun from a dungeon prison, so marked was the contrast. Hundreds of cattle, sheep and horses were quietly grazing, scattered over the landscape, so far as one could see, fat and content. It is not to be wondered that the spirits of the tired party should rise as they saw this scene of content [Pg 149] before them, and thought they could become participants with those who had come before them, and that for the moment rest was theirs if that was what they might choose.

Fort Nisqually was about ten miles southwesterly from our camp at Montgomery's, built, as mentioned elsewhere, by the Hudson Bay Company, in 1833.

In 1840-41, this company's holdings at Nisqually and Cowlitz were transferred to the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. This latter company was organized in London at the instance of Dr. William F. Tolmie, who visited that city to conduct the negotiations in person with the directors of the Hudson Bay Company. He returned clothed with the power to conduct the affairs of the new company, but under the direction of the Hudson Bay Company, and with the restriction not to enter into or interfere with the fur trade; he later became the active agent of both companies at Nisqually.

It was principally the stock of this company that we saw from our camp and nearby points. At that time, the Agricultural Company had several farms on these plains, considerable pasture land enclosed, and fourteen thousand head of stock running at large; sheep cattle and horses.

The United States government actually paid rent to this foreign company for many years for the site where Fort Steilacoom was located on account of the shadowy title of the company under the treaty of 1846.

During this lapse of time, from 1833 to the time our camp was established, many of the company's servants' time had expired and in almost every case, such had taken to themselves Indian wives and had squatted on the choice locations for grazing or small farming. Montgomery himself, near whose premises we were camping, was one of these. A few miles to the south of this place, ran the small creek "Muck," on the surface for several miles to empty into the Nisqually. Along this little creek, others of these discharged servants had settled, and all taken Indian [Pg 150] wives. These were the settlers that were afterwards denounced by Governor Stevens, and finally arrested for alleged treason. Each of these had an abundance of stock and farm produce, and was living in affluence and comfort. One of them, reputed to be the rightful owner of thirteen cows, one summer raised thirty-three calves, the handy lasso rope having been brought into play among the company's herds in secluded places; yet, as the rule, these people were honorable, upright men, though as a class, not of high intelligence, or of sober habits.

Added to this class just mentioned, was another; the discharged United States soldiers. The men then comprising the United States army were far lower in moral worth and character than now. Many of these men had also taken Indian wives and settled where they had chosen to select. Added to these were a goodly number of the previous years' immigrants. By this recital the reader will be apprised of the motley mess our little party were destined to settle among, unless they should chose to go to other parts of the Territory. I did not myself fully realize the complications to be met until later years.

All this while, as we have said, settlers were crowding into this district, taking up donation claims until that act expired by limitation in 1854, and afterward by squatter's rights, which to all appearances, seemed as good as any. My own donation claim afterwards was involved in this controversy, in common with many others. Although our proofs of settlement were made and all requirements of the law complied with, nevertheless, our patents were held up and our title questioned for twenty years, and so, after having made the trip across the Plains, because Uncle Sam had promised to give us all a farm, and after having made the required improvements and resided on the land for the four years, then to be crowded off without title did seem a little rough on the pioneers.

I have before me one of the notices served upon the settlers by the company's agent which tells the whole story. [8] The then thriving town of Steilacoom was involved, as likewise part of the [Pg 151] lands set apart for the Indian Reservation, and it did seem as though it would be hard to get a more thorough mix-up as to titles of the land, than these knotty questions presented.

All this while, as was natural there should be, there was constant friction between some settler and the company, and had it not been for the superior tact of such a man as Dr. Tolmie in charge of the company's affairs, there would have been serious trouble.

As it was, there finally came a show of arms when the company undertook to survey the boundary line to inclose the land claimed, although the acreage was much less than claimed on paper. But the settlers, (or some of them), rebelled, and six of them went armed to the party of surveyors at work and finally stopped them. An old-time friend, John McLeod, was one of the party (mob, the company called it), but the records do not show whether he read his chapter in the Bible that day, or whether instead, he took a double portion of whiskey to relieve his conscience.

It is doubtful whether the old man thought he was doing wrong or thought anything about it, except that he had a belief that somehow or other a survey might make against him getting a title to his own claim.

I had a similar experience at a later date with the Indians near the Muckleshute Reservation, while attempting to extend the sub-divisional lines of the township near where the reserve was located. I could not convince the Indians that the survey meant no harm to them. [Pg 152]

The case was different in the first instance, as in fact, neither party was acting within the limits of their legal rights, and for the time being, the strongest and most belligerent prevailed, but only to be circumvented at a little later date by a secret completion of the work, sufficient to platting the whole.

All this while the little party was halting. The father said the island home would not do, and as he had come two thousand miles to live neighbors, I must give up my claim and take another near theirs, and so, abandoning over a year's hard work, I acted upon his request with the result told elsewhere, of fleeing from our new chosen home, as we supposed, to save our lives, upon the outbreak of the Indian War in two years from the time of the camp mentioned.

One can readily see that these surroundings did not promise that compact, staid settlement of energetic, wide awake pioneers we so coveted, nevertheless, the promise of money returns was good, and that served to allay any discontent that would otherwise arise. I remember the third year we began selling eighteen months' old steers at fifty dollars each, off the range that had never been fed a morsel. Our butter sold for fifty cents a pound, and at times, seventy-five cents, and many other things at like prices. No wonder all hands soon became contented; did not have time to be otherwise.

It came about though, that we were in considerable part a community within ourselves, yet, there were many excellent people in the widely scattered settlements. The conditions to some extent encouraged lawlessness, and within the class already mentioned, a good deal of drunkenness and what one might well designate as loose morals, incident to the surroundings. A case in point:

A true, though one might say a humorous story is told on Doctor Tolmie, or one of his men, of visiting a settler where they knew one of their beeves had been slaughtered and appropriated. To get direct evidence he put himself in the way of an invitation to dinner, where, sure enough, the fresh, fat beef was smoking on the table. The good old pioneer (I knew him well) asked a good, old-fashioned Methodist blessing over the meat, giving thanks for the bountiful supply of the many good things of the world vouchsafed to him and his neighbors, and thereupon in true pioneer hospitality, cut a generous sized piece of the roast for his guest, the real owner of the meat. [Pg 153]

This incident occurred just as here related, and although the facts are as stated, yet we must not be too ready to scoff at our religious friend and condemn him without a hearing. To me, it would have been just as direct thieving as any act could have been, and yet, to our sanctified friend I think it was not, and upon which thereby hangs a tale.

Many of the settlers looked upon the company as interlopers, pure and simple, without any rights they were bound to respect. There had been large numbers of cattle and sheep run on the range and had eaten the feed down, which they thought was robbing them of their right of eminent domain for the land they claimed the government had promised to give them.

The cattle became very wild, in great part on account of the settlers' actions, but the curious part was they afterwards justified themselves from the fact that they were wild, and so it happened there came very near being claim of common property of the company's stock, with not a few of the settlers.

One lawless act is almost sure to breed another, and there was no exception to the rule in this strange community, and many is the settler that can remember the disappearance of stock which could be accounted for in but one way—gone with the company's herd. In a few years, though, all this disappeared. The incoming immigrants from across the plains were a sturdy set as a class, and soon frowned down such a loose code of morals.

For the moment let us turn to the little camp on the edge of the prairie, of seven wagons and three tents. There came a time it must be broken up. No more camp fires, with the fragrant coffee morning and evening; no more smoking the pipe together over jests, or serious talk; no more tucks in the dresses of the ladies, compelled first by the exigencies of daily travel and now [Pg 154]

to be parted with under the inexorable law of custom or fashion; no more lumps of butter at night, churned during the day by the movement of wagon and the can containing the morning's milk. We must hie us off to prepare shelter from the coming storms of winter; to the care of the stock; the preparations for planting; to the beginning of a new life of independence.

FOOTNOTE:

[8] ORIGINAL WARNING TO THOMAS HADLEY.

We hereby certify that a correct copy of the within notice was presented to T. Hadley by Mr. Wm. Greig this 6th day of April, 1857.

WILLIAM GREIG.
ALFRED MCNEILL.
AMBROSE SKINNER.

Nisqually, W. T., 12th March, 1857.

To Mr. Thomas Hadley.—Sir: I hereby warn you that, in cultivating land and making other improvements on your present location in or near the Talentire precinct, Pierce County, Washington Territory, you are trespassing on the lands confirmed to the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company by the Boundary Treaty, ratified in July, 1846, between Great Britain and the United States of America. Very Respectfully,

Your Obed't Servt.,
W. F. TOLMIE,
Agent Puget's Sound Agricultural Company.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRIP THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS—[CONTINUED.]

It almost goes without saying, that before the final break up of the camp and separation of the parties there must be some sort of celebration of the event, a sort of house warming or surprise party—something must be done out of the usual course of events. So, what better could these people do than to visit the island [9] home they had heard so much about, and see for themselves some of the wonder land described.

My cabin stood on the south side of the bight or lagoon within stone throw of where the United States penitentiary now stands and only a few feet above high tide level. The lagoon widens and deepens from the entrance and curves to the south with gentle slope on either side, the whole forming a miniature sheltered valley of light, timbered, fertile land. On the higher levels of the receding shore, great quantities of salal and high bush huckleberries grew in profusion, interspersed with what for lack of a better name we called Sweet Bay, the perfumes from the leaves of which permeated the atmosphere for long distances. In the nearby front a long flat or [Pg 155] sandy beach extended far out from the high tide line where the clams spouted in countless numbers, and crows played their antics of breaking the shell by dropping to the stony beach the helpless bivalve they had stealthily clutched and taken to flight with them.

Off to the eastward and three miles distant the town of Steilacoom, or rather the two towns, loomed up like quite a city, on the ascending slope of the shore, to make us feel after all we were not so far off from civilization, particularly at the time as two or more deep sea vessels (ships we called them), were in port discharging merchandise. Southeasterly, the grand mountain, before mentioned, rose so near three miles high above the tide level that that was the height spoken by all and as being fifty miles distant.

Nisqually House, on the arm of the bay known as Nisqually Beach, five miles distant, could be seen in clear weather, while the Hudson Bay Fort of that name was hidden from view by intervening timber, two miles easterly from the beach.

The Medicine Creek council grounds, afterwards made famous by the treaty council held a few months later than the date of which I am writing, lay across the Nisqually tide flats, south from Nisqually House, near three miles distant, but the view of this was cut off by an intervening island (Anderson), of several sections in extent, and of varying elevations to a maximum of near four hundred feet.

Fortunately one of those "spells" of weather had settled over the whole country, a veritable Indian Summer, though now bordering on the usually stormy month of November, a little hazy, just enough to lend enchantment to the landscape, and warm enough to add pleasurable experience to the trip the little party was to make. Add to these surroundings the smooth glassy waters of the bay, interspersed here and there by streaks and spots of troubled water to vary the outlook, small wonder that enthusiasm ran high as the half-rested immigrants neared the cabin in their boat and canoe, chartered for the trip, piloted and paddled by the Indians and [Pg 156] supplemented by the awkward stroke of the landlubber's oar.

"What in the world are we going to do with all these people?" I said to the little wife, half apologetically, partly quizzical and yet with a tinge of earnestness illy concealed.

"Oh, never mind, we will get along all right some way; I'll venture father has brought a tent." And sure enough, the party had brought the three tents that had served them so well for so long a time, on the long journey, and much of their bedding also.

Father had been over to the cabin before, and taken the measurement.

"Eighteen feet square," he said, "that's a pretty good size, but I don't see why you boys didn't build it higher; it's scant seven feet."

Yes, the walls were but seven feet high. When building, the logs ran out, the sky was threatening and we had a race with the storm to get a roof over our heads.

"But that's a good fireplace," he continued; "there must be pretty good clay here to hold these round stones so firmly. And that's as good a cat-and-clay chimney as I had in Ohio, only mine was taller, but I don't see that it would draw any better than this." This one was just nine feet high, but I said there was plenty of room to build it higher.

The floor was rough lumber, or had been when laid, but the stiff scrub brush of twigs and strong arms of house cleaners had worn off the rough till when cleaned it presented a quite creditable appearance. And the walls! "Why, you have a good library on these walls; all the reading matter right side up, too; the Tribune is a great paper, indeed; you must have sent for it right away when you got here," and so I had, and continued steadily for eighteen years, and thereby hangs a tale, which, though a digression, I will tell before writing more about our visitors.

Eighteen years after my arrival from across the plains in October, 1852, I made my first trip to [Pg 157] the "States," to our old home and to New York. I had to go through the mud to the Columbia River, then out over the dreaded bar to the Pacific Ocean, and to San Francisco, then on a seven days' journey over the Central, Union Pacific and connecting lines and sit bolt upright all the way

—no sleeper cars then, no diners either, that I remember seeing. I remember I started from Olympia on this trip the first week in December. Mr. —— Woodward of Olympia suggested that we gather all the varieties of flowers obtainable in the open air and that I press them in the leaves of my pamphlets (presently to be mentioned), and in that way to dry and press them, so I might exhibit the product of our wonderful mild climate up to the month of December. We succeeded in getting fifty-two varieties then in bloom in the open air, and all were well dried and preserved when I arrived at my original starting place, Eddyville, Iowa. Here, loving friends, Mrs. Elizabeth Male (Aunt Lib, we call her now), and a little sprightly youngster, Miss Molly Male, the well-known teacher in Tacoma, artistically arranged my treasures on tinted paper ready for exhibition upon my arrival in New York.

I had written an eighty-page pamphlet (long since out of print) [10], descriptive of Washington Territory, and my friend E. T. Gunn, of the Olympia Transcript, printed them—five thousand copies—most of which I took with me. The late Beriah Brown gave me a letter of introduction to his old-time friend, Horace Greeley, to whom I presented it, and was kindly received and commended to Chairman Ely of the New York Farmer's Club, and by him given an opportunity to exhibit my flowers, speak to the club about our country and tell them about our climate. This little talk was widely circulated through the proceedings of the club and printed in a number of the great papers, among them the Tribune.

This coming to the notice of Jay Cooke, of Northern Pacific fame, with his six power presses just started at Philadelphia to advertise the Northern Pacific route, I was called to his presence [Pg 158] and closely questioned, and finally complimented by the remark that he "did not think they could afford to have any opposition in the field of advertising," took up my whole edition and sent them on their way to his various financial agencies.

Our visitors were all soon at home with their tents up, their blankets out airing, the camp fires lit and with an abandon truly refreshing turned out like children from school to have a good time. The garden, of course, was drawn upon and "such delicious vegetables I never saw before," fell from a dozen lips, during the stay. That turnip patch was planted in September. "Why, that beats anything I ever saw," father said, and as insignificant an incident as it may seem, had a decided effect upon the minds of the party. "Why, here they are growing in November. At home (Iowa) they would by this time be frozen as solid as a brick." "Why, these are the finest flavored potatoes I ever ate," said another. The little wife had a row of sweet peas growing nearby the cabin that shed fragrance to the innermost corner and to the tents, and supplied bouquets for the tables, and plenty of small talk comparing them with those "in the States".

And so the little garden, the sweet peas, and other flowers wild and cultivated, brought contentment among those who at first had had a feeling of despondency and disappointment.

Didn't we have clam bakes? I should say! And didn't the women folks come in loaded with berries? And, what, whoppers of huckleberry puddings, and huckleberry pies and all sorts of good things that ingenuity of the housewives could conjure up.

I had frequently seen deer trotting on the beach and told my visitors so, but somehow they could not so readily find them—had been too noisy—but soon a fat buck was bagged, and the cup of joy was full, the feast was on.

My visitors could not understand, and neither could I, how it came that a nearby island (Anderson) of a few sections in extent, could contain a lake of clear, fresh water several hundred [Pg 159] feet above tide level, and that this lake should have neither inlet nor outlet. It was on the margin of this lake that the first deer was killed and nearby where the elder brother had staked his claim.

Mowich Man, an Indian whom I have known for many years, and, by the way, one of those interfering with the survey of Muckleshute, as related elsewhere, was then one of our neighbors, or at least, frequently passed our cabin with his canoe and people. He was a great hunter, a crack shot, and an all-round Indian of good parts, by the standard applicable to his race. Many is the saddle of venison that this man has brought me in the lapse of years. He was not a man of any particular force of character, but his steadfast friendship has always impressed me as to the worth, from our own standpoint, of the race to which he belonged. While our friends were with us visiting, my Indian friend came along and as usual brought a nice ham of venison to the camp, and at my suggestion, went with the younger men of the visitors to where their first exploit of hunting bore fruit. Our young men came back with loud praise on their lips for the Indian hunter. There was nothing specially noteworthy in the incident only as illustrating what, to a great extent, was going on all over the settled portion of the Territory leading up to a better understanding between the two races. I can safely say that none of the pioneers was without what might be designated as a favorite Indian, that is, an Indian who was particular to gain the good will of his chosen friend, and in most cases would assume, or custom would bring about, the adoption of the white man's name and the Indian would ever afterwards be known by his new name. Mowich Man, however, like Leschi, as we shall see later, while friendly to the whites was possessed of a more independent spirit. Some of Mowich Man's people were fine singers, and in fact his camp, or his canoe if traveling, was always the center for song and merriment, but it is a curious fact one seldom can get the Indian music by asking for it, but rather must wait for its [Pg 160] spontaneous outburst. But Indian songs in those days came out from nearly every nook and corner and seemed to pervade the whole country, so much that we often and often could hear the songs and accompanying stroke of the paddle long before our eyes would rest on the floating

canoes.

Will the reader in his mind dwell on the hardships of the pioneers, or will he rather look upon the brighter side, that the so-called hardships were simply the drill that developed the manhood and womanhood, to make better men and better women, because they had faced a duty they could not shirk, and were thereby profited? Neither did the pioneers as a class want to shirk a duty and those of the later generation, who have poured out their sympathy for the hardships of the poor pioneers may as well save some of it for the present generation, the drones of the community that see no pleasure in the stern duties of life. But I must have done with these reflections to resume my story, now nearly ended, of the visitors at the island home and of the long trip.

Never did kings or queens enjoy their palaces more, nor millionaires their princely residences, than the humble immigrant party did the cabin and tents in their free and luxurious life. Queens might have their jewels, but did we not have ours? Did we not have our two babies, "the nicest, smartest, cutest in all the world?" Did we not have a profusion of fresh air to inhale at every breath, and appetites that made every morsel of food of exquisite flavor?

But we were all far away from what all yet thought of as home, and admonished that winter was coming on and that after a short season of recreation and rest we must separate, each to his task, which we did, and the great trip was ended. The actors separated; and now, as I write, almost all have gone on that greater journey, in which the two of us left are so soon to join.

FOOTNOTES:

[9] McNeil Island, twelve miles westerly as the crow flies from Tacoma.

[10] The last purchasable copy has recently been sold for twenty-five dollars.

CHAPTER XXV.

FIRST IMMIGRANTS THROUGH THE NATCHESS PASS, 1853.

While the breaking of the barrier of the great mountain range for the immigrants to Puget Sound through the Natchess Pass was not in a baptism of blood, certainly it was under the stress of great suffering and anxiety, as shown by the graphic letter following, of that indefatigable worker and painstaking searcher after historic facts, Geo. H. Himes, now of Portland, Oregon, the real father of that great institution, the Oregon Historical Society.

Having, as the reader will see by the reading of other chapters of this work, had some keen personal experiences through this gap of the mountains, it is but natural the incidents will come nearer home to me than to the general reader, particularly as I know the sincerity of purpose of the writer and the utter absence of any spirit of exaggeration. Although some errors have crept into Mr. Himes' letter, where he has drawn from other sources yet this in nowise detracts from the value of his statements, but shows how very difficult it is to ascertain exact facts so long after the events.

The letter follows:

"Portland, Oregon, Jan. 23, 1905.

"My Dear Meeker:

"Some time early in August, 1853, Nelson Sargent, from Puget Sound, met our party in Grand Ronde Valley, saying to his father, Asher Sargent, mother, two sisters and two brothers, and such others as he could make an impression on, 'You want to go to Puget Sound. That is a better country than the Willamette Valley. All the good land is taken up there; but in the Sound region you can have the pick of the best. The settlers on Puget Sound have cut a road through Natchess Pass, and you can go direct from the Columbia through the Cascade Mountains, and thus avoid the wearisome trip through the mountains over the Barlow route to Portland, and then down the Columbia to Cowlitz River, and then over a [Pg 162] miserable road to Puget Sound.'

"A word about the Sargents. Asher Sargent and his son Nelson left Indiana in 1849 for California. The next year they drifted northward to the northern part of Oregon—Puget Sound. Some time late in 1850 Nelson and a number of others were shipwrecked on Queen Charlotte Island, and remained among the savages for several months. The father, not hearing from the son, supposed he was lost, and in 1851 returned to Indiana. Being rescued in time, Nelson wrote home that he was safe; so in the spring of 1853 the Sargents, Longmire, Van Ogle, and possibly some others from Indiana, started for Oregon. Somewhere on the Platte the Biles (two families), Bakers (two families), Downeys, Kinkaids, my father's family (Tyrus Himes), John Dodge and family—John Dodge did the stone work on the original Territorial university building at Seattle; Tyrus Himes was the first boot and shoemaker north of the Columbia River; James Biles was the first tanner, and a lady, Mrs. Frazier, was the first milliner and dressmaker—all met and journeyed westward peaceably together, all bound for Willamette Valley. The effect of Nelson Sargent's presence and portrayal of the magnificent future of Puget Sound caused most members of this company of 140 or more persons—or the leaders thereof, James Biles being the most conspicuous—to follow his (Sargent's) leadership. At length the Umatilla campground was reached, which was situated about three miles below the present city of Pendleton. From that point the company headed for old Fort Walla Walla (Wallula of today), on the Columbia River. It was understood that there would be no difficulty in crossing, but no boat was found. Hence a flatboat was made by whip-sawing lumber out of driftwood. Then we went up the Yakima River, crossing it eight times. Then to the Natchess River, through the sage brush, frequently as high as a covered wagon, which had to be cut down before we could pass through it. On September 15th we reached the mountains and found that there was no road, nothing but an Indian [Pg 163] trail to follow. Indeed, there was no road whatever after leaving the Columbia, and nothing but a trail from the Umatilla to the Columbia; but being an open country, we had no particular difficulty in making headway. But I remember all hands felt quite serious the night we camped in the edge of the timber—the first of any consequence that we had seen—on the night of the 15th of September. Sargent said he knew the settlers had started to make a road, and could not understand why it was not completed; and since his parents, brothers and sisters were in the company, most of us believed that he did not intend to deceive. However, there was no course to pursue but to go forward. So we pushed on as best we could, following the bed of the stream part of the time, first on one bank and then on the other. Every little ways we would reach a point too difficult to pass; then we would go to the high ground and cut our way through the timber, frequently not making more than two or three miles a day. Altogether, the Natchess was crossed sixty-eight times. On this journey there was a stretch of fifty miles without a blade of grass—the sole subsistence of cattle and horses being browse from young maple and alder trees, which was not very filling, to say the least. In making the road every person from ten years old up lent a hand, and there is where your humble servant had his first lessons in trail making, barefooted to boot, but not much, if any, worse off than many others. It was certainly a strenuous time for the women, and many were the forebodings indulged in as to the probability of getting safely through. One woman, 'Aunt Pop', as she was called—one of the Woolery women—would break down and shed tears now and then; but in the midst of her weeping she would rally and by some quaint remark or funny story would cause everybody in her vicinity to forget their troubles.

"In due time the summit of the Cascades was reached. Here there was a small prairie—really, it was an old burn that had not grown up to timber of any size. Now it was October, about the 8th of the month, and [Pg 164] bitter cold to the youth with bare feet and fringed pants extending half way down from knees to feet. My father and the teams had left camp and gone across the little burn, where most of the company was assembled, apparently debating about the next movement to make. And no wonder, for as we came across we saw the cause of the delay. For a sheer thirty feet or more there was an almost perpendicular bluff, and the only way to go forward was by that way, as was demonstrated by an examination all about the vicinity. Heavy timber at all other points precluded the possibility of getting on by any other route. So the longest rope in the company was stretched down the cliff, leaving just enough to be used twice around a small tree which stood on the brink of the precipice; but it was found to be altogether too short. Then James Biles said: 'Kill one of the poorest of my steers and make his hide into a rope and attach it to the

one you have.' Three animals were slaughtered before a rope could be secured long enough to let the wagons down to a point where they would stand up. There one yoke of oxen was hitched to a wagon, and by locking all wheels and hitching on small logs with projecting limbs, it was taken down to a stream then known as 'Greenwater.' It took the best part of two days to make this descent. There were thirty-six wagons belonging to the company, but two of them, with a small quantity of provisions, were wrecked on this hill. The wagons could have been dispensed with without much loss. Not so the provisions, scanty as they were, as the company came to be in sore straits for food before the White River prairie was reached, probably South Prairie [11] of today, where food supplies were first obtained, consisting of potatoes without salt for the first meal. Another trying experience was the ascent of Mud Mountain in a drenching rain, with the strength of a dozen yoke of oxen attached to one wagon, with scarcely anything in it save camp equipment, and taxing the strength of the teams to the utmost. But all trials came to an end when the company reached a point six miles from Steilacoom, about October 17th, and got some good, fat beef and plenty of potatoes, and even flour, mainly through the kindness of Dr. W. F. Tolmie. The change from salmon skins was gratifying.

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"And now a word about the wagon road. That had been cut through to Greenwater. There, it seems, according to a statement made to me a number of years ago by James Longmire, and confirmed by W. O. Bush, one of the workers, an Indian from the east side of the mountains, met the road workers, who inquired of him whether there were any 'Boston men' coming through. He replied, 'Wake'—no. Further inquiry satisfied the road builders that the Indian was truthful, hence they at once returned to the settlement, only to be greatly astonished two weeks later to find a weary, bedraggled, forlorn, hungry and footsore company of people of both sexes, from the babe in arms—my sister was perhaps the youngest, eleven months old, when we ceased traveling—to the man of 55 years, but all rejoicing to think that after trials indescribable they had at last reached the 'Promised Land.'

"Mrs. James Longmire says that soon after descending the big hill from the summit, perhaps early the next day, as she was a few hundred yards in advance of the teams, leading her little girl, three years and two months old, and carrying her baby boy, then fifteen months old, that she remembers meeting a man coming towards the immigrants leading a pack animal, who said to her: 'Good God almighty, woman, where did you come from? Is there any more? Why, you can never get through this way. You will have to turn back. There is not a blade of grass for fifty miles.'

"She replied: 'We can't go back; we've got to go forward.'

"Soon he ascended the hill by a long detour and gave supplies to the immigrants. Mrs. Longmire says she remembers hearing this man called 'Andy', and is of the opinion that it was Andy Burge.

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"When the immigrant party got to a point supposed to be about six miles from Steilacoom, or possibly near the cabin of John Lackey, it camped. Vegetables were given them by Lackey, and also by a man named Mahon. Dr. Tolmie gave a beef. When that was sent to the camp the doctor gave it in charge of Mrs. Mary Ann Woolery—'Aunt Pop'—and instructed her to keep it intact until the two oldest men in the company came in, and that they were to divide it evenly. Soon a man came with a knife and said he was going to have some meat. Mrs. Woolery said: 'No, sir.' He replied: 'I am hungry, and I am going to have some of it.' In response she said: 'So are the rest of us hungry; but that man said I was not to allow anyone to touch it until the two oldest men came into camp, and they would divide it evenly.' He said: 'I can't wait for that.' She said: 'You will have to.' He then said: 'By what authority?' 'There is my authority,' holding up her fist—she weighed a hundred pounds then—and she said: 'You touch that meat and I'll take that oxbow to you,' grabbing hold of one. The man then subsided. Soon the two oldest men came into camp. The meat was divided according to Dr. Tolmie's directions, and, with the vegetables that had been given, by the settlers, all hands had an old-fashioned boiled supper—the first for many a day."

I know from experience just what such a supper meant to that camp and how it tasted. God bless that company. I came to know nearly all of them personally, and a bigger hearted set never lived. They earned the right to be called pioneers in the true sense of the word, but a large percentage have gone on to pleasant paths, where the remainder of us are soon to be joined in enduring fellowship.

"In the list following are the names of the Natchess Pass immigrants of 1853. The names followed by other names in parentheses are those of young ladies who subsequently married men bearing the names within the parentheses:

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"James Biles, [12] Mrs. Nancy M. Biles, [12] Geo. W. Biles, James D. Biles, [12] Kate Biles (Sargent), Susan B. Biles (Drew), Clark Biles, [12] Margaret Biles, [12] Ephemia Biles (Knapp), Rev. Chas. Byles, [12] Mrs. Sarah W. Byles, [12] David F. Byles, [12] Mary Jane Hill (Byles), Rebecca E. Byles (Goodell), [12] Chas. N. Byles, [12] Sarah I. Byles (Ward), John W. Woodward, [12] Bartholomew C. Baker, [12] Mrs. Fanny Baker, [12] James E. Baker, [12] John W. Baker, Leander H. Baker, Elijah Baker, [12] Mrs. Olive Baker, [12] Joseph N. Baker, Wm. LeRoy Baker, Martha Brooks (Young),[12] Newton West, William R. Downey, [12] Mrs. W. R. Downey, [12] Christopher C. Downey, [12] Geo. W. Downey, [12] James H. Downey, [12] R. W. Downey, John M. Downey, Louise Downey (Guess), [12] Janes Downey (Clark), [12] Susan Downey (Latham), [12] Laura B. Downey (Bartlett), Mason F. Guess, [12] Wilson Guess, [12] Austin E. Young, Henry C. Finch, [12] Varine Davis, [12] James Aiken, John Aiken, Glenn Aiken, Wesley Clinton, J. Wilson Hampton, John Bowers, William M. Kincaid, [12] Mrs. W. M. Kincaid, [12] Susannah Kincaid (Thompson), Joseph C. Kincaid, Laura Kincaid (Meade), [12] James Kincaid, John Kincaid, [12] James Gant, Mrs. James Gant, Harris Gant, Mrs. Harris Gant. All of the foregoing were from Kentucky. Isaac Woolery, [12] Mrs. Isaac Woolery, Robert Lamuel Woolery, James Henderson Woolery, Sarah Jane Woolery (Ward) (born on Little Sunday), Abraham Woolery, [12] Mrs. Abraham Woolery (Aunt Pop), Jacob Francis Woolery, [12] Daniel Henry Woolery, Agnes Woolery (Lamon), Erastus A. Light, [12] Mrs. E. A. Light, [12] Henry Light, George Melville, [12] Mrs. George Melville, [12] Kate Melville

(Thompson), [12] Robert Melville, [12] Isaac H. Wright, [12] Mrs. I. H. Wright, [12] Benjamin Franklin Wright, [12] Mrs. B. F. Wright, James Wright, Eliza Wright (Bell), Rebecca Wright (Moore), William Wright, Byrd Wright, [12] Grandfather—Wright, Grandmother—Wright, Jas. Bell, Annis Wright (Downey). The foregoing were from Missouri. Tyrus Himes, [12] Mrs. Tyrus Himes, [12] George H. Himes, Helen L. Himes (Ruddell), Judson W. Himes, Lestina Z. Himes (Eaton), [12] Joel Risdon, [12] Henry Risdon, Chas. R. Fitch, [12] Frederick Burnett, [12] James Longmire, [12] Mrs. James Longmire, Elcaine Longmire, David Longmire, John A. Longmire, Tillathi Longmire (Kandle), Asher Sargent, [12] Mrs. A. Sargent, [12] E. Nelson Sargent, Wilson Sargent, [12] F. M. Sargent, [12] Matilda Sargent (Saylor), Rebecca Sargent (Kellet), Van Ogle, John Lane, Mrs. John Lane, Joseph Day, Elizabeth Whitesel (Lane), Wm. Whitesel, Mrs. Wm. Whitesel, William Henry Whitesel, Nancy Whitesel (Leach), Clark N. Greenman, Daniel E. Lane, [12] Mrs. D. E. Lane, [12] Edward Lane, William Lane, Timothy Lane, Albert Lane, Margaret Whitesel, Alexander Whitesel, Cal Whitesel. The foregoing were from Indiana. Widow Gordon, Mary Frances Gordon, or McCullough, Mrs. Mary Ann McCullough Porter,——McCullough,——Frazier, [12] Mrs. Elizabeth Frazier, [12] Peter Judson, [12] Mrs. Peter Judson, [12] Stephen Judson, John Paul Judson, Gertrude Shoren Judson (Delin), John Neisan. [12] The foregoing were from Illinois. In addition to the above were William H. Mitchell and John Stewart, [13] from States unknown."

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This makes a total of 148 of the immigrants who completed the road—that is, all but Melville. He refused to assist in making the road and kept about a half day behind, notwithstanding James Biles asked him to lend a hand.

Accompanying the party of road makers was Quiemuth, a half-brother of Leschi, who acted as guide and led the horse upon which were packed the blankets and provisions of Parker and Allen.

FOOTNOTES:

[11] It was Connell's Prairie. The route has been viewed at the outset through South Prairie, but afterwards it was discovered that a road had previously been opened to White River through Connell's Prairie, and the latter route was adopted and the old road cleared by Allen's party.

[12] Dead.

[13] Dead.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

BUILDING OF THE NATCHESS PASS ROAD.

We have seen with what travail the first immigrants passed through the Natchess Pass. We will now tell about that other struggle to construct any kind of a road at all, and so we must need go back a little in our story.

While I had been struggling to get the little wife and baby over from the Columbia River to the Sound, and a roof over their heads, the sturdy pioneers of this latter region set resolutely to work building a wagon road through this pass, to enable the immigration of 1853, and later years, to come direct to Puget Sound.

For unknown ages the Indians had traveled a well-worn but crooked and difficult trail through this pass, followed by the Hudson Bay people later in their intercourse with the over-mountain tribes, but it remained for the resolute pioneers of 1853 to open a wagon road over the formidable Cascade range of mountains to connect the two sections of the Territory, otherwise so completely separated from each other.

Congress had appropriated twenty thousand dollars for the construction of a military road from Fort Steilacoom to Wallula on the Columbia River, but it was patent to all the appropriation could not be made available in time for the incoming immigration known to be on the way.

This knowledge impelled the settlers to make extraordinary efforts to open the road, as related in this and succeeding chapters.

Meetings had been held at various points to forward the scheme and popular subscription lists circulated for prosecuting this laudable enterprise. It was a great undertaking for the scattered pioneers, particularly where so many were newcomers with scant provision yet made for food or shelter for the coming winter.

But everyone felt this all important enterprise must be attended to, to the end that they might divert a part of the expected immigration which would otherwise go down the Columbia or through passes south of that river, and thence into Oregon, and be lost to the new but yet unorganized territory of Washington. [Pg 170]

And yet in the face of all the sacrifices endured and the universal public spirit manifested, there are men who would belittle the efforts of the citizens of that day and malign their memories by accusing them of stirring up discontent among the Indians. "A lot of white men who were living with Indian women, and who were interested in seeing that the country remained common pasture as long as possible." A more outrageous libel was never penned against the living or dead. In this case but few of the actors are left, but there are records, now fifty years old that it is a pleasure to perpetuate for the purpose of setting this matter aright, and also of correcting some errors that have crept into the treacherous memories of the living, and likewise to pay a tribute to the dead. Later in life I knew nearly all these sixty-nine men, subscribers to this fund, and so far as I know now all are dead but eight, and I know the underlying motive that prompted this strenuous action; they wanted to see the country settled up with the sturdy stock of the overland immigrants.

The same remark applies to the intrepid road workers, some of whom it will be seen camped on the trail for the whole summer, and labored without money and without price to that end.

It is difficult to abridge the long quotation following, illustrating so vividly as it does the rough and ready pioneer life as Winthrop saw and so sparklingly described. Such tributes ought to be perpetuated, and I willingly give up space for it from his work, "The Canoe and the Saddle," which will repay the reader for careful perusal. Winthrop gives this account as he saw the road-workers the last week of August, 1853, in that famous trip from Nisqually to The Danes. Belated and a little after nightfall, he suddenly emerged from the surrounding darkness where, quoting his words:

> "A score of men were grouped about a fire. Several had sprung up, alert at our approach. Others reposed untroubled. Others tended viands odoriferous and frizzing. Others stirred the flame. Around, the forest rose, black as Erebus, and the men moved in the glare against the gloom like pitmen in the blackest coal mines. [Pg 171]
>
> "I must not dally on the brink, half hid in the obscure thicket, lest the alert ones below should suspect an ambush and point toward me open-mouthed rifles from their stack near at hand. I was enough out of the woods to halloo, as I did heartily. Klale sprang forward at shout and spur. Antipodes obeyed a comprehensive hint from the whip of Loolowean. We dashed down into the crimson pathway, and across among the astonished road makers—astonished at the sudden alighting down from Nowhere of a pair of cavaliers, Pasaiook and Siwash. What meant this incursion of a strange couple? I became at once the center of a red-flannel-shirted circle. The recumbents stood on end. The cooks let their frying pans bubble over, while, in response to looks of expectation, I hung out my handbill and told the society my brief and simple tale. I was not running away from any fact in my history. A harmless person, asking no favors, with plenty of pork and spongy biscuit in his bags—only going home across the continent, if may be, and glad, gentlemen pioneers, of this unexpected pleasure.
>
> "My quality thus announced, the boss of the road makers, without any dissenting voice, offered me the freedom of their fireside. He called for the fattest pork, that I might be entertained right republicanly. Every cook proclaimed supper ready. I followed my representative host to the windward side of the greenwood pyre, lest smoke wafting toward my eyes should compel me to disfigure the banquet with

lachrymose countenance.

"Fronting the coals, and basking in their embrowning beams, were certain diminutive targets, well known to me as defensive armor against darts of cruel hunger—cakes of unleavened bread, light flapjacks in the vernacular, confected of flour and the saline juices of fire-ripened pork, and kneaded well with [Pg 172] drops of the living stream. Baked then in frying pan, they stood now, each nodding forward and resting its edge upon a planted twig, toast-crustily till crunching time should come. And now to every man his target! Let supper assail us! No dastards with trencher are we.

"In such a platonic republic as this a man found his place according to his powers. The cooks were no base scullions; they were brothers, whom conscious ability, sustained by universal suffrage, had endowed with the frying pan. Each man's target of flapjacks served him for platter and edible table. Coffee, also, for beverage, the fraternal cooks set before us in infrangible tin pots—coffee ripened in its red husk by Brazilian suns thousands of leagues away, that we, in cool Northern forests, might feel the restorative power of its concentrated sunshine, feeding vitality with fresh fuel.

"But for my gramniverous steeds, gallopers all day long, unflinching steeplechase, what had nature done here in the way of provender? Alas! little or naught. This camp of plenty for me was a starvation camp for them.

"My hosts were a stalwart gang. I had truly divined them from their cleavings on the hooihut (road). It was but play for any one of these to whittle down a cedar five feet in diameter. In the morning this compact knot of comrades would explode into a mitraille of men wielding keen axes, and down would go the dumb, stolid files of the forest. Their talk was as muscular as their arms. When these laughed, as only men fresh and hearty and in the open air can laugh, the world became mainly grotesque; it seemed at once a comic thing to live—a subject for chuckling, that we were bipeds with noses—a thing to roar at; that we had all met there from the wide world to hobnob by a frolicsome fire with tin pots of coffee, and partake of crisped bacon and toasted doughboys in ridiculous abundance. Easy laughter infected the atmosphere. Echoes ceased to be pensive and became jocose. A rattling humor pervaded the feast, and [Pg 173] Green River [14] rippled with noise of fantastic jollity. Civilization and its dilettante diners-out sneer when Clodpole at Dive's table doubles his soup, knifes his fish, tilts his plate into his lap, puts muscle into the crushing of his meringue, and tosses off the warm beaker in his finger bowl. Camps by Tacoma sneer not at all, but candidly roar at parallel accidents. Gawkey makes a cushion of his flapjack. Butterfingers drops his red-hot rasher into his bosom, or lets slip his mug of coffee into his boot drying by the fire—a boot henceforth saccharine. A mule, slipping his halter, steps forward unnoticed, puts his nose in the circle and brays resonant. These are the jocular boons of life, and at these the woodsmen guffaw with lusty good nature. Coarse and rude the jokes may be, but not nasty, like the innuendoes of pseudo-refined cockneys. If the woodsmen are guilty of uncleanly wit, it differs from the uncleanly wit of cities as the mud of a road differs from the sticky slime of slums.

"It is a stout sensation to meet masculine, muscular men at the brave point of a penetrating Boston hooihut—men who are mates—men to whom technical culture means naught—men to whom myself am naught, unless I can saddle, lasso, cook, sing and chop; unless I am a man of nerve and pluck, and a brother in generosity and heartiness. It is restoration to play at cudgels of jocoseness with a circle of friendly roughs, not one of whom ever heard the word bore—with pioneers who must think and act and wrench their living from the closed hand of nature.

"* * * While fantastic flashes were leaping up and illuminating the black circuit of forest, every man made his bed, laid his blankets in starry bivouac and slept like a mummy. The camp became vocal with snores; nasal with snores of various calibre was the forest. Some in triumphant tones announced that dreams of conflict and victory were theirs; some sighed in dulcet strains that told of lovers' dreams; some [Pg 174] strew shrill whistles through cavernous straits; some wheezed grotesquely and gasped piteously; and from some who lay supine, snoring up at the fretted roof of forest, sound gushed in spasms, leaked in snorts, bubbled in puffs, as steam gushes, leaks and bubbles from yawning valves in degraded steamboats. They died away into the music of my dreams; a few moments seemed to pass, and it was day.

"* * * If horses were breakfastless, not so were their masters. The road makers had insisted that I should be their guest, partaking not only of the fire, air, earth and water of their bivouacs, but an honorable share at their feast. Hardly had the snoring ceased when the frying of the fryers began. In the pearly-gray mist of dawn, purple shirts were seen busy about the kindling pile; in the golden haze of sunrise cooks brandished pans over fierce coals raked from the red-hot jaws of flame that champed their breakfast of fir logs. Rashers, doughboys, not without molasses, and coffee—a bill of fare identical with last night's—were our morning meal. * * *

"And so adieu, gentlemen pioneers, and thanks for your frank, manly hospitality! Adieu, 'Boston tilicum,' far better types of robust Americanism than some of those selected as its representatives by Boston of the Orient, where is too much worship of what is, and not too much uplifting of hopeful looks of what ought to be.

"As I started, the woodsmen gave me a salute. Down, to echo my shout of farewell, went a fir of fifty years' standing. It cracked sharp, like the report of a howitzer, and crashed downward, filling the woods with shattered branches. Under cover of this first shot, I dashed at the woods. I could ride more boldly forward into savageness, knowing that the front ranks of my nation were following close behind."

The men who were in that camp of road workers were E. J. Allen, A. J. Burge, Thomas Dixon, Ephraim Allen, James Henry Allen, George Githers, John Walker, John H. Mills, R. S. More, R. [Pg 175] Foreman, Ed. Crofts, Jas. Boise, Robert Patterson, Edward Miller, Edward Wallace, Lewis Wallace, Jas. R. Smith, John Burrows, and Jas. Mix.

The names of the workers on the east slope of the mountains are as follows: Whitfield Kirtley, Edwin Marsh, Nelson Sargent, Paul Ruddell, Edward Miller, J. W. Fonts, John L. Perkins, Isaac M. Brown, James Alverson, Nathaniel G. Stewart, William Carpenter, and Mr. Clyne.

The Pioneer and Democrat, published at Olympia, in its issue of September 30th, 1854, contains the following self-explanatory letter and account that will revive the memory of many almost forgotten names and set at rest this calumny cast upon the fame of deserving men.

"Friend Wiley: Enclosed I send you for publication the statement of the cash account of the Puget Sound emigrant road, which has been delayed until this time, partly on account of a portion of the business being unsettled, and partly because you could not, during the session of the last legislature, find room in your columns for its insertion. As you have now kindly offered, and as it is due the citizens of the Territory that they should receive a statement of the disposition of the money entrusted to me, I send it to you, and in so doing close up my connection with the Cascade road, and would respectfully express my gratitude to the citizens for the confidence they have reposed in me, and congratulate them upon the successful completion of the road."

"JAMES K. HURD."

RECEIPTS.

By subscription of John M. Swan, $10.00; S. W. Percival, $5.00; Jos. Cushman, $5.00; Milas Galliher, $5.00; C. Eaton, $5.00; Chips Ethridge, $5.00; Wm. Berry, $5.00; J. C. Patton, $5.00; T. F. McElroy, $5.00; James Taylor, $5.00; George Gallagher, $5.00; J. Blanchard, $5.00; Weed & Hurd, $100.00; Kendall Co., $50.00; G. A. Barnes, $50.00; Parker, Colter & Co., $30.00; Brand & Bettman, $25.00; J. & C. E. Williams, $25.00; Waterman & Goldman, $25.00; Lightner, Rosenthal & Co., $10.00; A. J. Moses, $10.00; Wm. W. Plumb, $10.00; Isaac Wood & Son, $15.00; D. J. Chambers, $20.00; John Chambers, $5.00; McLain Chambers, $10.00; J. H. Conner, $5.00; H. G. Parsons, $5.00; Thomas J. Chambers, $20.00; Puget Sound Agricultural Co., $100.00; Wells, McAllister & Co., $30.00; Henry Murray, $25.00; L. A. Smith, $25.00; Chas. Wren, $25.00; James E. Williamson, $10.00; H. C. Mosely, $5.00; J. M. Bachelder, $5.00; Lemuel Bills, $25.00; W. Boatman, $15.00; W. M. Sherwood, $5.00; James Barron, $5.00; S. W. Woodruff, $5.00; R. S. More, $5.00: John D. Press, $5.00; Samuel McCaw, $5.00; Philip Keach, $10.00; Abner Martin, $20.00; George Brail, $10.00; T. W. Glasgow, $10.00; McGomery, $10.00; Thos. Tallentire, $10.00; [Pg 176] Garwin Hamilton, $5.00; John McLeod, $25.00; Richard Philander, $5.00; W. Gregg, $5.00; David Pattee, $20.00; Thomas Chambers, $50.00; W. A. Slaughter, $10.00; W. Hardin, $15.00; L. Balch, $50.00; W. W. Miller, $10.00; J. B. Webber, $25.00; J. W. Goodell, $10.00;——Kline, $10.00; A. Benton Moses, $5.00;——Parsons, $5.00; H. Hill, $5.00; by amount received for horse, $35.00; by amount received for horse (Woods), $35.00; by subscription of Nelson Barnes, $30.00. Total, $1,220.00. Deduct amount note from Lemuel Bills, $25.00. Whole amount received as per subscription paper, $1,195.00.

This list of subscribers to the road fund will revive memories of almost forgotten names of old-time friends and neighbors, and also will serve to show the interest taken by all classes. It must not for a moment be taken this comprises the whole list of contributors to this enterprise, for it is not half of it, as the labor subscription far exceeded the cash receipts represented by this published statement. Unfortunately, we are unable to obtain a complete list of those who gave their time far beyond what they originally had agreed upon, but were not paid for their labor.

The Columbian, published under date of July 30th, 1853, says:

"Captain Lafayette Balch, the enterprising proprietor of Steilacoom, has contributed one hundred dollars in money towards the road to Walla Walla. To each and every man who started from that neighborhood to work on the road, Captain Balch gives a lot in the town of Steilacoom. He is security to the United States Government for a number of mules, pack saddles and other articles needed by the men. He furnished the outfit for the company who started from that place with Mr. E. J. Allen, at just what the articles cost in San Francisco."

Mr. Hurd's expenditure is set out in his published report, but none of it is for labor, except for Indian hire, a small sum. We know there were thirty men at work at one time, and that at least twelve of them spent most of the summer on the work and that at least fifty laborers in all donated their time, and that the value of the labor was far in excess of the cash outlay.

By scanning the list the "Old Timer" will readily see the cash subscribers and road workers were by no means confined to Olympia, and that many of the old settlers of Pierce County are [Pg 177] represented, and even the foreign corporation, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, came down with a heavy subscription. Everybody was in favor of the road. Such can also pick out the names of those "white men who were living with Indian women" among the liberal subscribers to the fund for opening the road.

Nor were the Indians lacking in interest in the enterprise. A. J. Baldwin, then and for many years afterwards a citizen of Olympia, and whom it may be said was known as a truthful man, in a recent interview, said:

"We all put our shoulders to the wheel to make the thing go. I helped to pack out grub to the working party myself. It seemed to be difficult to get the stuff out; entirely more so than to get it contributed. I was short of pack animals one trip, and got twelve horses from Leschi, and I believe Leschi went himself also." [15]

"Do you remember how much you paid Leschi for his horses?"

"Why, nothing. He said if the whites were working without pay and were giving provisions, it was as little as he could do to let his horses go and help. He said if I was giving my time and use of horses then he would do the same, and if I received pay then he wanted the same pay I got. Neither of us received anything."

These were the Indians who were actually driven from their farms into the war camp, leaving the plow and unfinished furrow in the field and stock running at large, to be confiscated by the volunteers, at the outbreak of the Indian war of 1855.

And such were the road workers in the Natchess Pass in the fall of 1853, and such were the pioneers of that day. Fortunate it is we have the testimony of such a gifted and unbiased writer as Winthrop to delineate the character of the sturdy men who gave their strenuous efforts and substance that their chosen commonwealth might prosper.

FOOTNOTES:

[14] This should read Green Water. This camp was far up in the mountains and the stream referred to came from the main range and not from the glaciers of the great mountain, and hence was a sparkling, dancing rivulet of clearest water. Green River is forty miles or more farther down the mountain.

[15] Baldwin is mistaken. Queimuth, Leschi's brother, went as guide and packer, but Leschi doubtless supplied the horses.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BUILDING THE NATCHESS PASS ROAD—[CONCLUDED.]

Allen's party left Steilacoom for this work July 30th, (1853), and was still at work on the 26th of September, when he wrote: "We will be through this week, having completed the western portion of the road." With twenty men in sixty days and over sixty miles to cut, he could not be expected to build much of a road.

The other party, under Kirtley, left Olympia, thirteen strong, July 19th, and was back again August 20th, and so could not have done very effective work on the east slope, as it would take at least a third of the time to make the trip out and back from their field of labor.

With a view of trying to settle the disputed points, I wrote to my old time friend, A. J. Burge, one of the Allen party, to get information from first hands, and have this characteristic reply:

"Wenass, December 8th, 1904.

"Friend Meeker.—Sir: Your letter dated Nov. 26, 1904, at hand. Sir, I am quite sick. I will try to sit up long enough to scratch an answer to your questions. Kirtley's men fell out among themselves. I well remember Jack Perkins had a black eye. Kirtley, as I understood, was to go (to) Wenass creek, thence cut a wagon road from Wenass to the Natchess River, thence up the Natchess River until they met Allen's party. It is my opinion they did commence at Wenass. There were three notches cut in many of the large trees (logs). I can find some of these trees yet where these notches show. Allen did not know Kirtley and his party had abandoned the enterprise until Ehformer told him. He expressed much surprise and regret. I packed the provisions for Allen's party. The last trip I made I found Allen and his party six or eight miles down the Natchess River. I was sent back to the summit of the mountain to search for a pack mule and a pack horse. These two animals were used by the working party to move their camp outfit, and their provisions. When they returned they told me that they cut the road down to where Kirtley's party left off. Of my own knowledge I can safely say Allen's party cut the road from John Montgomery's [16] to some six or maybe eight miles down the Natchess River, and it was four days after that before they came to the summit on their return.

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"It is possible Kirtley's party slighted their work to the extent that made it necessary for the immigrants to take their axes in hand. I consider Kirtley a dead failure at anything. Kirtley's party came home more than a month before we came in. If Van Ogle is not insane he ought to remember.

"Allen's party cut the road out from six to eight miles down the Natchess River from John Montgomery's. The valley on the Natchess River is too narrow for any mistake to occur.

"The first men that came through came with James and his brother, Charles Biles, Sargent, Downey, James Longmire, Van Ogle, two Atkins, Lane, a brother-in-law of Sargent, Kincaid, two Woolery's, Lane of Puyallup, E. A. Light, John Eagan (Reagan), Charley Fitch. Meeker, I am quite sick; when I get well I will write more detailed account; it is as much as I can do to sit up."

"Yours in haste, as ever,

"A. J. BURGE."

This man I have known for over fifty years, and it touched me to think at the age bordering on eighty, he should get up out of a sick bed to comply with my request. He has written the truth, and some of the information we could get in no other way.

It seems that some people live a charmed life. Burge was shot by a would-be assassin a few miles out from Steilacoom over forty years ago, the bullet going through his neck, just missing the jugular vein.

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While it is a complete digression, nevertheless, just as interesting here as elsewhere, so I will tell the story of this shooting to further illustrate conditions of early settlement on the Nisqually plains. The man with the thirteen cows and thirty calves mentioned elsewhere, lived near Burge. The most desperate character I ever knew, Charles McDaniel, also was a near neighbor, but a friend of Andy, as we used to call Burge. Both lost stock that could be traced directly to their neighbor, Wren, the man with the extra calves, but it was no use to prosecute him as a jury could not be procured that would convict. I had myself tried it in our court with the direct evidence of the branded hide taken from him, but a bribed juryman refused to convict. For a few years and for this district and with the class previously described as occupying the country adjacent to Steilacoom, there seemed to be no redress through our courts. Finally Burge and McDaniel waylaid their neighbor a few miles out from Steilacoom, tied him to a tree, and whipped him most unmercifully. I have never yet given my approval to mob law and never will, believing that it is better to suffer awhile, bide one's time until laws can be enforced, rather than to join in actions that will breed contempt for law and lead to anarchy; but, if ever there was a justifiable case of men taking the law in their own hands, this was one of them, and is introduced here to illustrate a condition of affairs that had grown up which seemed well nigh intolerable. After the whipping Wren was warned to leave the country, which he could not well do, tied to a tree as he was until third parties discovered and released him, but which he speedily did, although the wealthiest man in the county. No prosecutions followed, but in the lapse of time a colored man appeared at Steilacoom and spent much time hunting herbs on the prairies, until one day Burge was going home from Steilacoom in his wagon, when this centre shot was fired with the result as related. The colored man disappeared as mysteriously as he came, but everyone believed he had been hired to assassinate Burge and McDaniel, and as afterwards proven was the case.

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But the trouble was not ended here. The lawless neighbor had gone, but not lawlessness. The

old story that lawlessness begets lawlessness was again proven. McDaniel and others concluded that as Wren was gone, they could prey upon his land holdings, which for twenty-five years in Pierce County was no more than squatter's rights, in consequence of that intolerable claim of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, mentioned elsewhere. At this, most of the community rebelled and warned McDaniel, but to no purpose, until finally he was shot down on the streets of Steilacoom, or rather a vacant lot in a public place, and lay for hours in his death struggles uncared for, and his pal murdered in the wagon that was carrying him to a scaffold. The two had been waylaid, but had escaped, only to meet their fate in a more public manner. Burge narrowly escaped a like fate at the hands of the mob, because of his near neighborship with McDaniel and of his participation with him in the first instance that had led up to the final catastrophe. But Burge was an honorable man, though rough in manner, yet just in his dealings, while McDaniel was a gambler and a blackleg of the very worst imaginable type. The Indian war had brought to the front many vicious characters, and the actions of some officials in high places had encouraged lawlessness, so, as a community, the nearby country round and about Steilacoom was scourged almost beyond belief.

And yet there were genuine pioneer settlements in not very far off regions of this storm center of lawlessness, where the law was as cheerfully obeyed as in any old and well settled community, where crime was scarcely known, and where family ties were held as sacred as any place on earth, and where finally the influence spread over the whole land and the whole community leavened.

By these incidents related it will be seen that pioneers were neither all saints nor all sinners, but like the older communities had their trials other than the supposed discomforts incident to pioneer life.

The reader may not have noticed that Burge in his letter mentions that there are still trees (he means logs), yet to be seen with the three notches cut in them, where the immigrant road had been cut. I had forgotten the third notch, but it all comes back to me now that he has mentioned it. These logs that we bridged up to and cut the notches in for the wheels in most cases had to have the third notch in the center to save the coupling pole or reach from catching on the log, especially where the bridging did not extend out far from the log to be crossed. Oftentimes the wagon would be unloaded, the wagon box taken off, the wagon uncoupled and taken over the obstruction or down or up it, as the case might be, to be loaded again beyond. [Pg 182]

It will be noticed by Mr. Himes' letter that their party came all the way up the canyon and crossed the Natchess River 68 times while I crossed it but thirty odd times. At or near the 32d crossing, the road workers took to the table land and abandoned the lower stretch of the canyon, and through that portion the train which Mr. Himes refers to was compelled to cut their own road for a long stretch. But that part reported cut was certainly a hard road to travel, and we had to work more or less all the way down the mountain; as Colonel E. J. Allen, who is yet alive, quaintly put it in a recent letter: "Assuredly the road was not sandpapered." I should say not. I think the Colonel was not much of a teamster and had never handled the goad stick over the road or elsewhere, as I did, else he would be more sympathetic in responses to outcries against the "execrable shadow of a road."

Nelson Sargent, mentioned by Mr. Himes, still lives and is a respected, truthful citizen, but he certainly did take great risks in leading that first train of immigrants into that trap of an uncut road up the Natchess River. The whole party narrowly escaped starvation in the mountains and Sargent a greater risk of his neck at the hands of indignant immigrants while in the mountains, if we may believe the reports that came out at the time from the rescued train. However, I never believed that Sargent intended to deceive, but was over-sanguine and was himself deceived, and that Kirtley's failure to continue in the field was the cause of the suffering that followed. [Pg 183]

Allen sent 300 pounds of flour to Wenass and a courier came to Olympia, whereupon "Old Mike Simmons," Bush, Jones, and others, forthwith started with half a ton of flour, onions, potatoes, etc., and met them beyond the outskirts of the settlement. All that was necessary those days for a person to get help was to let it become known that some one was in distress and there would always be willing hands without delay; in fact, conditions almost approached the socialistic order of common property as to food, by the voluntary actions of the great, big hearted early settlers, as shown in other instances related, as well as in this. God bless those early settlers, the real pioneers of that day.

The Indian Leschi, who we have seen contributed to the work, utilized the road to make his escape with seventy of his people, after his disastrous defeat at the hands of the volunteers and United States troops in March, 1856, to cross the summit on the snow, so that after all, in a way, he received a benefit from his liberality in times of peace.

Two years after the opening of the road, the Hudson Bay Company sent a train of three hundred horses loaded with furs, from the interior country to Fort Nisqually, with a return of merchandise through the same pass, but never repeated the experiment.

FOOTNOTE:

[16] Nisqually Plains.

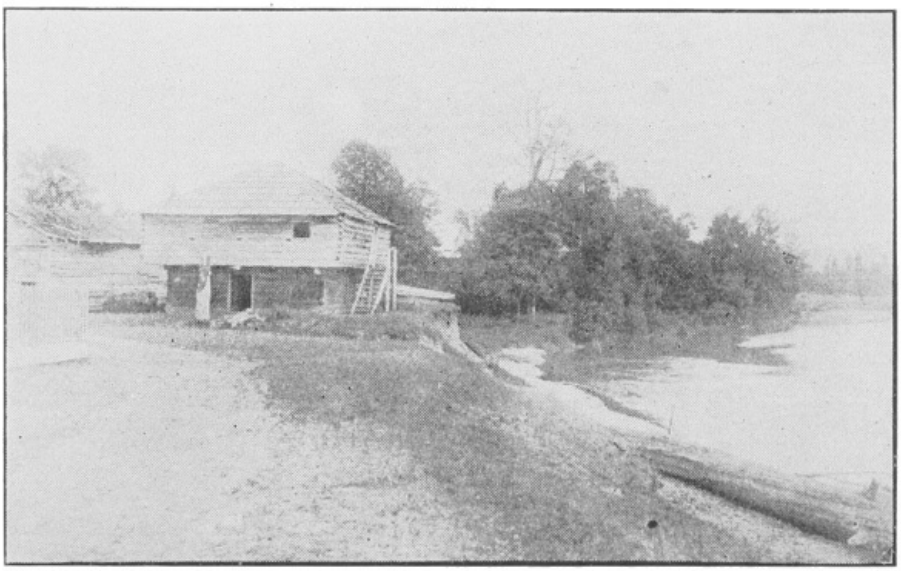
CHAPTER XXVIII.

ABOUT INDIANS.

The outbreak of an Indian war, soon followed the first treaty making. The Indians had been outrageously cheated and deceived and war followed.

"October 28th, 1855, nine persons were massacred on White River, about twenty miles South of Seattle." Such is the record of that bloody day's work, eighteen miles distant from where I was living, six miles east of Fort Steilacoom. [17] [Pg 185]

"The Indians have broken out," was passed from one settler's cabin to another by rumors, so quickly that by the morning of the 29th all were on the move towards the fort, which in fact was no fort at all—simply a few cabins and some thin board houses.



Type of Blockhouse of Which Seventy-five Were Built at the Outbreak of the Indian War.

I had lived in peace with these Indians and they had gained my confidence, and as the sequel subsequently showed, I held their friendship and confidence, for in after-times, during the war, a war party held me harmless within their power, as they had said they would of those who had advocated their cause at the time the treaties were made.

Soon after the outbreak noted, I disregarded the earnest entreaties of many, went back to my stock and to the cabin and cared for the abandoned dairy and young stock. I did not believe the Indians would molest me, but took the precaution of having my rifle in a convenient place. But I did not need to use it. When nightfall came, however, I did withdraw from my cabin, not in fear of war parties, but as against individual outlaws.

As the sole military record of my life consisted in my experience with a company of 17 settlers to make a raid to the Puyallup valley soon after the outbreak described, I thought to "save" my prestige and tell about it.

The settlers of Puyallup had left their homes the next day after the massacre in such haste, that they were almost absolutely destitute of clothing, bedding and food, as well as shelter. A strong military force had penetrated the Indian country:—the upper Puyallup valley and beyond, we knew, but did not know they had retreated by another road,—virtually driven out—the very day we went in armed with all sorts of guns and with scarcely any organization. We had, however, not gone into the Indian stronghold to fight Indians, but to recover property, nevertheless, there would have been hot work if attacked. The settlers knew the country as well as the Indians, and were prepared to meet them on their own grounds and in their own way—by couples or singly if need be. The Indians were in great force but a few miles distant, and had their scouts on our tracks, but did not molest us while we visited every settler's cabin, secured their belongings not destroyed and on the sixth day came away with great loads of "plunder," all the while in blissful ignorance that the troops had been withdrawn, and no protection lay between us and the Indian forces. [Pg 186]

This was the beginning of the discrimination of the Indians in favor of non-combatants, which became so pronounced as the war progressed.

FOOTNOTE:

[17] Fully told in my "Tragedy of Leschi," to which the reader is referred who may wish to acquaint themselves of the early history of the Northwest and Indian Warfare: 575 pages, 6×9, silk cloth binding, $3.00 postpaid. Address Ezra Meeker, 1120 38th Ave. N., Seattle, Wash.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FRASER RIVER STAMPEDE.

On the 21st day of March, 1858, the schooner Wild Pidgeon arrived at Steilacoom and brought the news that the Indians had discovered gold on Fraser River; had traded several pounds of the precious metal with the Hudson Bay Company, and that three hundred people had left Victoria and vicinity for the new eldorado. And, further, the report ran, the mines were exceedingly rich.

The next day there came further reports from the north, that the Bellingham Bay Company's coal mines had been compelled to suspend work, as all their operatives but three had started for the mines, that many of the logging camps had shut down, and all the mills were running on short time from the same cause.

The wave of excitement that ran through the little town upon the receipt of this news was repeated in every town and hamlet of the whole Pacific Coast, and continued around the world, sending thither adventurous spirits from all civilized countries of the earth.

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But when the word came the next week that one hundred and ten pounds of gold had actually been received in Victoria, and that hundreds of men were outfitting, the virulence of the gold fever knew no bounds, and everybody, women folks and all, wanted to go, and would have started pell-mell had there not been that restraining influence of the second sober thought of people who had just gone through the mill of adversity. My family was still in the block house we had built during the war in the town of Steilacoom. Our cattle were peacefully grazing on the plains a few miles distant, but there remained a spirit of unrest that one could not fail to observe. There had been no Indian depredations for two years west of the Cascade Mountains, but some atrocious murders had been committed by a few renegade white men, besides the murder of Leschi under the forms of law that had but recently taken place. The Indians just over the mountains were in a threatening mood, and in fact soon again broke out into open warfare and inflicted heavy punishment on Steptoe's command, and came very near annihilating that whole detachment.

The close of the Indian war of 1855-6 had engendered a reckless spirit among what may be called the unsettled class that to many of the more sober minded was looked upon as more dangerous than the Indians among us. In the wake of the United States army paymaster came a vile set of gamblers and blacklegs that preyed upon the soldiers, officers and men alike, who became a menace to the peace of the community, and, like a veritable bedlam turned loose, often made night hideous with their carousals. The reader need not feel this is an overdrawn picture, for it is not. We must remember the common soldiers of the United States army fifty years ago were very different from our army of the present time. At least such was the case with the forces stationed at Fort Steilacoom at the time of which I am writing.

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An illustration: Having drifted into a small business conducted in our block house at Steilacoom, in an unguarded moment I let a half dozen of the blue-coats (as the soldiers were then universally called) have a few articles on credit. These men told their comrades, who came soliciting credit but were refused, when some drunken members of the party swore they would come strong enough to take the goods anyway, and actually did come at night thirty strong, and having been refused admission, began breaking down the door. A shot through the door that scattered splinters among the assembled crowd served as a warning that caused them to desist, and no damage was done, but the incident serves to illustrate the conditions prevailing at the time the gold discovery was reported. Pierce County contributed its contingent of gold seekers, some of the desperadoes and some of the best citizens. One Charles McDaniel, who killed his man while gone, returned to plague us; another, one of our merchants, Samuel McCaw, bundled up a few goods, made a flying trip up Fraser River, came back with fifty ounces of gold dust and with the news the mines were all that had been reported, and more, too, which of course added fuel to the burning flame of the all-prevalent gold fever. We all then believed a new era had dawned upon us, similar to that of ten years before in California that changed the world's history. High hopes were built, most of them to end in disappointment. Not but there were extensive mines, and that they were rich, and that they were easily worked, but, how to get there was the puzzling question. The early voyagers had slipped up the Fraser before the freshets that came from the melting snows to swell the torrents of that river. Those going later either failed altogether and gave up the unequal contest, or lost an average of one canoe or boat out of three in the persistent attempt. How many lives were lost never will be known.

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"Beginning at a stump in the bank of said creek (Squalecum), about 20 feet above the bridge near the mouth of said creek; thence running due west 240 feet; thence due south 60 feet; thence due east 240 feet; thence due north 60 feet to the place of beginning." Such is the description of a tract of land as recorded on the book of records of deeds for the county of Whatcom, bearing date of June 25th, 1858. On that date I was in Whatcom, and saw the sights and acted my part as one of the wild men of the north country, received a deed for the land as described from Edward Eldridge, who then resided on his claim adjoining the town of Whatcom, and where he continued until his death. No public surveys had up to that time been made, and so, to describe a lot I was purchasing of Mr. Eldridge, what more durable monument could we select than the big stump of one of those giants of the monster forests fronting on Bellingham Bay.

Going back a little in my story to the receipt of the news of the discovery on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, each succeeding installment of news that came to Steilacoom more than confirmed the original report. Contingents began to arrive in Steilacoom from Oregon, from

California, and finally from "the States," as all of our country east of the Rocky Mountains was designated by pioneers. Steamers great and small began to appear with more or less cargo and passenger lists, which we heard were as nothing compared to what was going on less than a hundred miles to the north of us. These people landing in Whatcom in such great numbers must be fed, we agreed, and if the multitude would not come to us to drink the milk of our dairies and eat the butter, what better could we do than to take our cows to the multitude where we were told people did not hesitate to pay a dollar a gallon for milk and any price one might ask for fresh butter.

But, how to get even to Whatcom was the "rub". All space on the steamers was taken from week to week for freight and passengers, and no room left for cattle. In fact, the movement of provisions was so great that at one time we were almost threatened with a veritable famine, so close had the stock of food been shipped. Finally, our cattle, mostly cows, were loaded in an open scow and taken in tow along side of the steamer (Sea Bird, I think it was), where all went smoothly enough until we arrived off the head of Whidby Island, where a chopped sea from a [Pg 190] light wind began slopping over into the scow and evidently would sink us despite our utmost efforts at bailing. When the captain would slow down the speed of his steamer all was well, but the moment greater power was applied, over the gunwales would come the water. The dialogue that ensued between myself and the captain was more emphatic than elegant and perhaps would not look well in print, but he dare not risk let go of us or run us under without incurring the risk of heavy damages and probable loss of life. But I stood by my guns (figuratively), and would not consent to be landed, and so about the 20th of June, tired and sleepy, we were set adrift in Bellingham Bay, and landed near the big stump described as the starting point for the land purchased later.

But our cows must have feed, must be milked, and the milk marketed, and so there was no rest nor sleep for us for another thirty-six hours. In fact, there was but little sleep for anybody on that beach at the time. Several ocean steamers had just dumped three thousand people on the beach, and the scramble still continued to find a place to build a house or stretch a tent, or even to spread a blanket, for there were great numbers already on hand landed by previous steamers. The staking of lots on the tide flats at night, when the tide was out, seemed to be a staple industry. Driving of piles or planting of posts as permanent as possible often preceded and accompanied by high words between contestants came to be a commonplace occurrence. The belief among these people seemed to be that if they could get stakes or posts to stand on end, and a six-inch strip nailed to them to encompass a given spot of the flats, that they would thereby become the owner, and so the merry war went on until the bubble burst.

A few days after my arrival four steamers came with an aggregate of over two thousand passengers, many of whom, however, did not leave the steamer and took passage either to their port of departure, San Francisco, Victoria, or points on the Sound. The ebb tide had set in, and [Pg 191] although many steamers came later and landed passengers, their return lists soon became large and the population began to diminish.

Taking my little dory that we had with us on the scow, I rowed out to the largest steamer lying at anchor surrounded by small boats so numerous that in common parlance the number was measured by the acre, "an acre of boats." Whether or not an acre of space was covered by these craft striving to reach the steamer I will not pretend to say, but can say that I certainly could not get within a hundred feet of the steamer. All sorts of craft filled the intervening space, from the smallest Indian canoe to large barges, the owners of each either striving to secure a customer from a hapless passenger, or, having secured one, of transferring his belongings to the craft.

There were but a few women in this crowd, but ashore, quite too many, a large majority of whom (those on the ground will remember) were too much like their arch representative, "Old Mother Damnable," well and truly named. But I draw the veil.

"Where's DeLacy?" became a byword after weeks of earnest inquiry of the uninitiated as to what was transpiring out at the front, where supposed work was going on to construct a trail leading through the Cascade Mountains to the mouth of Thompson River, that emptied into the Fraser one hundred and fifty miles easterly from Whatcom. If a trail could be constructed through the mountains from Whatcom, then the town would at once bloom into a city, and the fortunes of townsite proprietors would be made, and all might go to the mines whose spirit moved them. It all looked very feasible on paper, but several obstacles not taken into account by the impatient crowd defeated all their hopes. A fund had been raised by subscription at the inception of the excitement to send out parties to search for a pass, and W. W. DeLacy, an engineer of considerable note, started out early in the season, and so far as I know never came back to Whatcom.

Directly this party was sent out to search for a pass through the mountains another party was [Pg 192] set to work to follow and cut the trail. All seemingly went well for awhile, and until there came no word to the public from DeLacy. The trail workers were yet at work, but did not know what was ahead of them. DeLacy had to them become a sort of myth. The fact was he had failed to find a pass, and when he arrived at a point that he thought was the summit, he had yet fifty miles or more of the worst of the mountains ahead of him. Meanwhile, the trail out from Whatcom for forty or fifty miles became well worn by men and animals going and returning. I saw sixty men with heavy packs on their backs start out in one company, everyone of whom had to come back after floundering in the mountains for weeks. So long as there could be kept up a hope that the trail would be cut through, just so long a complete collapse of the townsite boom might be

averted, and so DeLacy was kept in the mountains searching for a pass which was never found.

About the time I landed in Whatcom, H. L. Yesler and Arthur A. Denny headed a party to go through the Snoqualmie Pass, but they did not reach the open country. W. H. Pearson, the intrepid scout, who won such laurels with Governor Stevens in his famous ride from the Blackfeet country, conducted a party of eighty-two persons, sixty-seven of whom packed their bedding and food on their backs, through the Snoqualmie Pass to the Wenatchee, where they were met by the Indians in such numbers and threatening mood that nearly all beat a hasty retreat.

Simultaneous with the movement through the Snoqualmie Pass, like action was set on foot to utilize the Natchess Pass, and large numbers must have gotten through, as on August 7th the report was published that fourteen hundred miners were at work on the Natchess and Wenatchee. This report we know to be untrue, although it is possible that many prospectors were on those rivers, and we know also some gold was taken out, and more for many years afterwards. [Pg 193] But the mines on these rivers did not prove to be rich nor extensive.

At the same time efforts were made to reach the mines by crossing the mountains further south. The people of Oregon were sure the best way was to go up the Columbia River to The Dalles, and thence north through the open country, and more than a thousand men were congregated at The Dalles at one time preparing to make the trip northward.

All this while the authorities of British Columbia were not asleep, but fully awake to their own interests. Soon Governor Douglass put a quietus upon parties going direct from Puget Sound ports into the Fraser River, and several outfits of merchandise were confiscated, among which was one of McCaw and Rogers from Steilacoom. Another effectual barrier was the prohibition from entering the country without a miner's license, which could be obtained only at Victoria. In this way the Whatcom game was blocked, with or without a trail, and the population disappeared nearly as rapidly and more mysteriously than it had come, and the houses that had been built were left tenantless, the stakes that had been set were left to be swept away by tides or to decay, and Whatcom for a time became only a memory to its once great population.

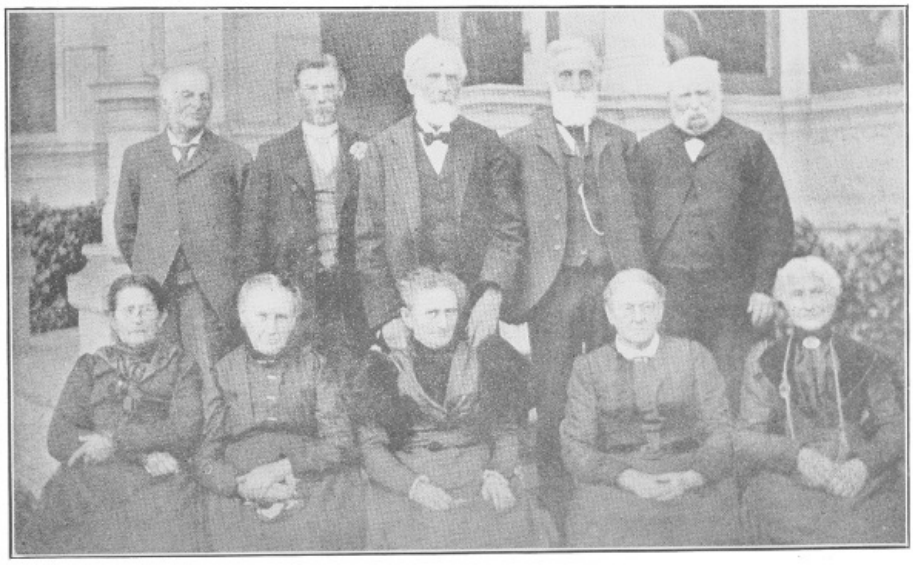
It is doubtful if a stampede of such dimensions ever occurred where the suffering was so great, the prizes so few and the loss of life proportionately greater, than that to the Fraser in 1858. Probably not one in ten that made the effort reached the mines, and of those who did the usual percentage of blanks were drawn incident to such stampedes. And yet the mines were immensely rich, and many millions of dollars of gold value came from the find in the lapse of years, and is still coming, though now nearly fifty years have passed.

While the losses to the people of the Puget Sound country were great, nevertheless, good came out of the great stampede in the large accession of population that remained after the return tide was over. Many had become stranded and could not leave the country, but went to work with a will, of whom not a few are still honored citizens of the State that has been carved out of the Territory of that day. [Pg 195]

CHAPTER XXX.

AN OLD SETTLERS' MEETING.

The fact that the generation that participated in the Indian war in this State (then Territory) will soon pass, an attempt was made to hold a reunion of all the adults who were in Pierce County at the outbreak of the Indian war in 1855, who are still living in the county.



An Old Settlers' Meeting.

Naturally, the incidents of the war coming under personal observation formed a never-ending topic of conversation. Mrs. Boatman related the incident of her boy "Johnny" (John Boatman, who now lives in Puyallup), two years and a half old, who was carried off by the Indians, as she firmly believes, but was found under an oak tree the following day. The whole garrison at Steilacoom turned out, together with a great many citizens, and scoured the prairie all night. Colonel Casey, the commandant, threatened vengeance against the Indians if the child was not returned. The theory was that the Indians had taken him for a ransom of their own people held by the whites.

A romantic incident was recalled of Kate Melville, the lady deputy sheriff. Her father was the first sheriff of Pierce County, and during his term of office was imprisoned for contempt of court. Kate was a beautiful girl, in ideal health, and a superb equestrienne, but withal was a modest, retiring woman. When her father was incarcerated she was aroused to action and accepted the appointment of deputy sheriff with a resolute spirit, determined to take the responsibility of enforcing the law.

"Yes, I saw Kate coming down from the garrison one day with some prisoners with a pistol strapped to her person, " said Willis Boatman, "but I do not remember what her father was imprisoned for." [Pg 196]

Scarcely one present but remembered the incident "that seemed like a dream almost," in the lapse of forty-five years.

I remember seeing Kate on horseback, while acting as deputy sheriff during those troublous times, and had often thought to write up this romantic incident of real stern pioneer life, but space will not permit it here, further than to say that the responsibilities of the office were undertaken from a sense of duty and under intense loyalty to her father. Both now lie peacefully under the sod in the county in which their lot was cast.

"We moved out to my father's place about two months after the outbreak of the war," said George Dougherty. "The Indians sent us word not to be afraid—that they would not harm us. I had lived among the Indians from childhood, and in fact had learned to talk the Indian language before I could speak my mother tongue. At that time I believe there were twenty Indians to where there is one now. Most of the Indians were friendly. Had it been otherwise they could have wiped out the white settlement completely, in spite of the military volunteers."

"Yes, and not left a grease spot of them," said Mr. Rogers. "But the fact is, the Indians did not want to fight the whites, but were dissatisfied with their treatment by the government. They wanted their land back, and got it, too, after they whipped the whites, which they did this side of the mountains. If it had not been that a majority of the Indians were in favor of peace with the whites, they could have held this country for a number of years. In fact, there were fifty or sixty Indians who fought on the side of the whites. There were a lot of whites who intended to stay out on their ranches, as they had perfect confidence in the Indians. The result of the war was that the Indians got all that they contended for. The good bottom lands had been taken away from the Indians and they had been given the woods. This was done to open up the bottom lands for settlement. Notwithstanding this, many of the Indians were not hostile enough to go to war. The Indians east of the mountains initiated the war when they came over here and insisted that these Indians drive out the whites. In the meantime the Indians were given their lands back again. The Indians killed as many whites as the whites killed Indians. They had been living at peace with the [Pg 197]

whites and would have continued to do so had it not been for the Indians east of the mountains. I think that a mean advantage of the Indians was taken at that treaty."

"I think there were as many whites killed this side of the mountains as Indians," said Mr. Dougherty, resuming; "and there would have been no war had the Indians been properly treated. I remember Leschi and his band passed down through the prairie nearby father's house, but did not stop to disturb us, but moved on to Muckleshoot and Green River."

"Yes, I remember considerable about the early condition of the Indian and their supply of food, for many and many is the time that I have enjoyed their hospitality and partaken of the various forms of what may be termed their land food as distinguished from fish. This was varied and abundant. I have seen trainloads of dried camas and sunflower roots carried by their ponies, and sometimes by the squaws on their backs. The Indians called the sunflower roots 'kalse.' It has now become almost extinct, except in small fields where it is protected. Kalse is a small root, about the size of an ordinary carrot, and has a yellow flower resembling the sunflower. The Indians would dig it with a crooked staff of ironwood stick, by twisting the stick around the roots and using it as a lever to pull up the roots. After getting a sufficient quantity of this sunflower root together the tops of the roots would be nipped off, then the bark would be beaten off and a baking place arranged in a hollow in the ground, with sallal berry twigs, leaves and hemlock boughs. The roots would be piled up rounding, and covered over with the sallal and other [Pg 198] material, and the whole covered with earth. A fire would be made over the ground and the roasting would occupy three or four days, depending upon the size of the pile. After the end of three or four days the remaining coals and hot ashes would be removed from the top of the pile, and there would be exposed the steaming sunflower roots. The roots are very delicious in taste, though I cannot compare it to anything now in use. They also made a liquor from its roots by soaking, which was very exhilarating and strengthening. I have often partaken of this food when a child. There was another food gathered from the prairie, which the Indians called 'la-camas' or 'camas'. It is a small root, about the size of the end of your thumb, and has a stalk that shows itself early in the spring. It comes up as two leaves folded together, and as it progresses in growth it spreads. From this appears a stem on the top of which is a blue flower. It is very nutritious. It was generally prepared in large quantities and could be kept until the following year. I have always thought that it would be a great addition to our garden products, and would be beneficial to us as a health diet generally. The Indians who used it were generally very healthy. There is another article of food that I know the Indian name for, but not the white man's. The Indian name is 'squelebs'. It grows in low, marshy places and in creeks that run cold, clear water. It has the appearance of the wild parsnip, and probably is a species of it. It grows in joints. It is very delicious to the taste in its season and is eaten raw. It is the finest nervine that I ever used. Then comes 'kinnikinnick' berries, or the Indian tobacco. The Indians will take 'kinnikinnick' leaves, roast them until brown, and then mix half and half with tobacco, when it makes very fine smoking, and the odor is fragrant and very acceptable. It has an influence over the smoker like opium or ether. Some Indians that I have seen using it would keel over in a trance. It is very highly prized by them. The berries that grow and ripen on the 'kinnikinnick' when ripe are used as food by the Indians by mixing them with dried salmon eggs, and have the [Pg 199] property of strengthening to an abnormal degree. They also used the young sprouts of the wild raspberry and salmon berry, which were very useful in cooling the system and very acceptable to the palate. There was another food product that the Indians called 'charlaque'. It throws out a broad, dark green leaf on one side of the stem, and on the end of the stem there is a bell-shaped flower of a brownish cast on the outside, and on the inside the color is orange, mottled with brown specks. It produces a flat root about the size of an ordinary walnut and is good either raw or roasted. It grows in shady places and near oak bushes. The root is white. There is also a species of the dandelion which has a very delicate-tasting root, which was eaten either raw or roasted. It is something similar to the wild parsnip, and the root is also white. When the root is broken it exudes a milk which is an excellent cure for warts. Another food plant was the 'wapato'. It grows in swampy places and sends its roots into the water. It grows luxuriantly in such places, and the tubers of the 'wapato' were highly prized by the Indians and could be eaten either raw or cooked. It had a delicate and pungent taste that was very acceptable to the palate. By this you will see that the Indians had a variety of food, when one takes into consideration the wild fruits, fish and game in which the country abounded."

Peter Smith said: "We were crossing the plains in 1852 when Spotted Tail with about thirty warriors, fresh from the Crow war, rode up to our camp early one morning. I was cooking breakfast for our party, and I tell you I was pretty well scared, but I thought to offer them something to eat and after several attempts, made them understand what I wanted, and finally gave them all a breakfast of bread and sugar and coffee. When they first came they sat on their horses with feathers in their hair, and said nothing to me and nothing to each other, and I really thought my time had come. After they had eaten their breakfast they went on up the Platte River toward Fort Laramie. After we had traveled about three hundred miles we camped in the vicinity [Pg 200] of a large Indian force under the control of Spotted Tail. I was with a group of men that had gathered when I felt a tug at my coat tail. I looked around quickly but saw no one, so I went on speaking to the man that I had been talking to. Pretty soon I felt another tug, and looking around saw an Indian, whom I recognized as the leader of the band that had eaten breakfast at our camp a few days before. The Indian told me that his name was Spotted Tail, and that he wanted me to come to his camp a few miles away. I told him I would go. Although the others in our party tried to dissuade me from the undertaking, I went. The chief treated me with great kindness and hospitality. He was a tall, athletic Indian, and his daughters were very pretty, having regular features and black hair. I returned to the train well pleased with my visit. Forty years after, while

at the world's fair, I met a young man who had some office at Fort Laramie, which post Spotted Tail often visited. He told me that Spotted Tail often inquired about me, said that he had never been so well treated by a white man in his life, and expressed a desire to have me come and see him. I was very sorry that I never went through the reservation where Spotted Tail lived to stop off and see him."

"The Indians have massacred all the white settlers on White River and are coming down on us here in Puyallup," was passed from house to house on that fateful October day of 1855. Mrs. Woolery and Mrs. Boatman were the only survivors present at the reunion who witnessed the scenes that followed. Some had wagons; some had none. Strive as best they could, they only got across the river the first day. Two canoes were lashed together and the wagons ferried across, after being first taken apart. The trip out the next day was made on foot, the women carrying the young children on their backs. Then came the volunteer company a week later to rescue the provisions, stock, clothing and other property that had been abandoned. This party consisted of the settlers of the valley, with a few others—nineteen in all. The author was one of the "others," [Pg 201] not having yet settled in the valley. As we went in by the "lower" road the column of United States troops and volunteers abandoned the field and withdrew by the "upper" road, leaving our little band in utter ignorance of our danger for four days, when we crossed the trail of the retreating column, which we afterwards learned had halted at Montgomery's, at the edge of the prairie. Our women folks were disturbed at our long stay, and the troops were under orders to advance to our rescue, when lo! and behold! at nightfall on the sixth day we returned, loaded with property and provisions, in most cases being all the possessions of the owners who formed a part of the company, and there was great joy in camp. Not an Indian had been seen nor a shot fired, except to empty our guns to make sure that they would "go," as some of the men quaintly expressed it.

After looking back over the vista of years, none of the party could say that life had been a failure; there was the lady bordering close on eighty years; the gentleman eighty-four and past (Peter Smith), with the "kids" of the party past the sixty-eighth mark, yet one would scarcely ever meet a more cheerful and merry party than this of the reunion of the old settlers of 1855. [18]

FOOTNOTE:

[18] Since this meeting in June, 1904, all of the ten pioneers that comprised the party have died, prior to the writing of this note, except the author and one other.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CHAPTER ON NAMES.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century that intrepid American traveler, Jonathan Carver, wrote these immortal words:

> "From the intelligence I gained from the Naudowessie Indians, among whom I arrived on the 7th of December (1776), and whose language I perfectly acquired during a residence of five months, and also from the accounts I afterwards obtained from the Assinipoils, who speak the same tongue, being a revolted band of the Naudowessies; and from the Killistinoes, neighbors of the Assinipoils, who speak the Chipeway language and inhabit the heads of the River Bourbon; I say from these natives, together with my own observations, I have learned that the four most capital rivers on the continent of North America, viz.: the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the River Bourbon and the Oregon, or the River of the West (as I hinted in my introduction), have their sources in the same neighborhood. The waters of the three former are within thirty miles of each other; the latter, however, is further west."

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All students of history acknowledge this is the first mention of the word Oregon in English literature. The narrative quoted was inspired by his observations on the upper Mississippi, and particularly upon the event of reaching his farthest point, sixty miles above the Falls of St. Anthony, November 17th, 1776. This was the farthest up the Mississippi that the white man had ever penetrated, "So that we are obliged solely to the Indians for all the intelligence we are able to give relative to the more northern parts," and yet this man, seemingly with prophetic sight, discovered the great river of the West, attempted to name it, and coined a word for the purpose. While Carver missed his mark and did not succeed in affixing the new-born name to the great river he saw in his vision, yet the word became immortal through the mighty empire for which it afterwards stood. Carver made no explanation as to where the word Oregon came from, but wrote as though it was well known like the other rivers mentioned. Probably for all time the origin of this name with be a mystery.

We have a like curious phenomenon in the case of Winthrop first writing the word Tacoma, in September, 1853. None of the old settlers had heard that name, either through the Indians or otherwise, until after the publication of Winthrop's work ten years later, "The Canoe and the Saddle," when it became common knowledge and was locally applied in Olympia as early as 1866, said to have been suggested by Edward Giddings of that place.

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However, as Winthrop distinctly claimed to have obtained the word from the Indians, the fact was accepted by the reading public, and the Indians soon took their cue from their white neighbors.

It is an interesting coincident that almost within a stone's throw of where Winthrop coined the name that we find it applied to the locality that has grown to be the great city of Tacoma.

On the 26th of October, 1868, John W. Ackerson located a mill site on Commencement Bay, within the present limits of the city of Tacoma, and applied the name to his mill. He said he had gotten it from Chief Spot of the Puyallup tribe, who claimed it was the Indian name for the mountain, Rainier.

The word or name Seattle was unknown when the founders of this city first began to canvass the question of selecting a site for the town, and some time elapsed before a name was coined out of the word se-alth.

Se-alth, or Seattle, as he was afterwards known, was reported to be the chief of six tribes or bands, but at best his control was like most all the chiefs on the Sound, but shadowy.

Arthur Denny says that "we (meaning himself, Boren and Bell) canvassed the question as to a name and agreed to call the place Seattle, after the old chief" (Se-alth), but we have no definite information as to when the change in the old chief's name took place. Se-alth was quite disturbed to have his name trifled with and appropriated by the whites, and was quite willing to levy a tribute by persuasion upon the good people of the embryo city.

I have another historic name to write about, Puyallup, that we know is of Indian origin—as old as the memory of the white man runs. But such a name! I consider it no honor to the man who named the town (now city) of Puyallup. I accept the odium attached to inflicting that name on suffering succeeding generations by first platting a few blocks of land into village lots and recording them under the name Puyallup. I have been ashamed of the act ever since. The first time I went East after the town was named and said to a friend in New York that our town was named Puyallup he seemed startled.

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"Named what?"

"Puyallup," I said, emphasizing the word.

"That's a jaw breaker," came the response. "How do you spell it?"

"P-u-y-a-l-l-u-p," I said.

"Let me see—how did you say you pronounced it?"

Pouting out my lips like a veritable Siwash, and emphasizing every letter and syllable so as to bring out the Peuw for Puy, and the strong emphasis on the al, and cracking my lips together to

cut off the lup, I finally drilled my friend so he could pronounce the word, yet fell short of the elegance of the scientific pronunciation.

Then when I crossed the Atlantic and across the old London bridge to the Borough, and there encountered the factors of the hop trade on that historic ground, the haunts of Dickens in his day; and when we were bid to be seated to partake of the viands of an elegant dinner; and when I saw the troubled look of my friend, whose lot it was to introduce me to the assembled hop merchants, and knew what was weighing on his mind, my sympathy went out to him but remained helpless to aid him.

"I say—I say—let me introduce to you my American friend—my American friend from—my American friend from—from—from—"

And when, with an imploring look he visibly appealed to me for help, and finally blurted out:

"I say, Meeker, I cawn't remember that blarsted name—what is it?"

And when the explosion of mirth came with:

"All the same, he's a jolly good fellow—a jolly good fellow."

I say, when all this had happened, and much more besides, I could yet feel resigned to my fate.

Then when at Dawson I could hear the shrill whistle from the would-be wag, and hear: [Pg 205]

"He's all the way from Puy-al-lup," I could yet remain in composure.

Then when, at night at the theaters, the jesters would say:

"Whar was it, stranger, you said you was from?"

"*Puy-al-lup!*"

"Oh, you did?" followed by roars of laughter all over the house. And all this I could hear with seeming equanimity.

But when letters began to come addressed "Pew-lupe," "Polly-pup," "Pull-all-up," "Pewl-a-loop," and finally "Pay-all-up," then my cup of sorrow was full and I was ready to put on sackcloth and ashes.

The name for the town, however, came about in this way: In the early days we had a postoffice, Franklin. Sometimes it was on one side of the river and then again on the other; sometimes way to one side of the settlement and then again to the other. It was not much trouble those days to move a postoffice. One could almost carry the whole outfit in one's pocket.

We were all tired of the name Franklin, for there were so many Franklins that our mail was continually being sent astray. We agreed there never would be but one Puyallup; and in that we were unquestionably right, for surely there will never be another.

Nevertheless, people would come and settle with us. Where the big stumps and trees stood and occupied the ground, we now have brick blocks and solid streets. Where the cabins stood, now quite pretentious residences have arisen. The old log-cabin school house has given way to three large houses, where now near twelve hundred scholars are in attendance, instead of but eleven, as at first. And still the people came and built a hundred houses last year, each contributing their mite to perpetuating the name Puyallup. Puyallup has been my home for forty years, and it is but natural I should love the place, even if I cannot revere the name.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

PIONEER RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES AND INCIDENTS.

If we were to confine the word religion to its strict construction as to meaning, we would cut off the pioneer actions under this heading to a great extent; but, if we will think of the definition as applied to morality, the duties of man to man, to character building—then the field is rich. Many of the pioneers, necessarily cut loose from church organizations, were not eager to enter again into their old affiliations, though their conduct showed a truly religious spirit. There were many who were outside the fold before they left their homes, and such, as a class, remained as they were; but many showed a sincere purpose to do right according to the light that was in them, and who shall say that if the spirit that prompted them was their duty to man, that such were not as truly religious as if the higher spiritual motives moved them?

We had, though, many earnest workers, whose zeal never abated, who felt it a duty to save souls, and who preached to others incessantly, in season and out of season, and whose work, be it said, exercised a good influence over the minds of the people.

One instance I have in mind—Father Weston, who came at irregular intervals to Puyallup, whose energy would make amends for his lack of eloquence, and whose example would add weight to his precepts. He was a good man. Almost everyone would go to hear him, although it was in everybody's mouth that he could not preach. He would make up in noise and fervency what he lacked in logic and eloquence. Positively, one could often hear him across a ten-acre lot when he would preach in a grove, and would pound his improvised pulpit with as much vigor as he would his weld on his anvil week days.

One time the old man came to the valley, made his headquarters near where the town of Sumner now is, induced other ministers to join him, and entered on a crusade, a protracted union [Pg 207] meeting, with the old-time mourners' bench, amen corner and shouting members. When the second Sunday came the crowd was so great that the windows were taken out of the little school house, and more than half the people sat or reclined on the ground, or wagons drawn nearby, to listen to the noisy scene inside the house.

A peculiar couple, whom I knew well, had attended from a distance, the husband, a frail, little old man, intensely and fervently religious, while the wife, who was a specimen of strong womanhood, had never been able to see her way clear to join the church. Aunt Ann (she is still living), either from excitement or to please the husband, went to the mourners' bench and made some profession that led Uncle John, the husband, to believe the wife had at last got religion. Upon their return home the good lady soon began wavering, despite the urgent appeals from the husband, and finally blurted out:

"Well, John, I don't believe there is such a place as hell, anyhow."

This was too much for the husband, who, in a fit of sheer desperation, said:

"Well, well, Ann, you wait and you'll see." And the good lady, now past eighty-four, is waiting yet, but the good little husband has long since gone to spy out the unknown land.

I have known this lady now for fifty years, and although she has never made a profession of religion or joined a church, yet there has been none more ready to help a neighbor or to minister to the sick, or open the door of genuine hospitality than this same uncouth, rough-spoken pioneer woman.

I recall one couple, man and wife, who came among us of the true and faithful, to preach and practice the Baptist Christian religion. I purposely add "Christian," for if ever in these later years two people embodied the true Christ-like spirit, Mr. and Mrs. Wickser did—lived their religion and made their professions manifest by their work.

Mrs. Wickser was a very tall lady of ordinary appearance as to features, while the husband was [Pg 208] short and actually deformed. The disparity in their heights was so great that as they stood or walked side by side he could have gone beneath her outstretched arm. Added to this peculiar appearance, like a woman and a boy of ten years parading as man and wife, the features of the little man riveted one's attention. With a low forehead, flattened nose, and swarthy complexion, one could not determine whether he was white or part red and black, Chinaman or what not; as Dr. Weed said to me in a whisper when he first caught sight of his features: "What, is that the missing link?" In truth, the doctor was so surprised that he was only half in jest, not at the time knowing the "creature," as he said, was the Baptist minister of the place.

But, as time went on, the strangeness of his features wore off, and the beauty of his character began to shine more and more, until there were none more respected and loved than this couple, by those who had come to know them.

A small factory had been established not far from the schoolhouse, where we had our Christmas tree. Some of the men from the factory took it into their heads to play what they called a joke on Mr. and Mrs. W. by placing on the tree a large bundle purporting to be a present, but which they innocently opened and found to contain a direct insult.

The little man, it could be seen, was deeply mortified, yet made no sign of resentment, although it soon became known who the parties were, but treated them with such forbearance and

kindness that they became so ashamed of themselves as to inspire better conduct, and so that night the most substantial contribution of the season was quietly deposited at the good missionary's door, and ever after that all alike treated them with the greatest respect.

I have known this couple to walk through storm as well as sunshine, on roads or on trails, for miles around, visiting the pioneers as regularly as the week came, ministering to the wants of the [Pg 209] sick, if perchance there were such, cheering the discouraged or lending a helping hand where needed, veritable good Samaritans as they were, a credit to our race by the exhibition of the spirit within them.

Take the case of George Bush, the negro, who refused to sell his crop to speculators for cash, yet distributed it freely to the immigrants who had come later, without money and without price. Also Sidney Ford, another early, rugged settler, although neither of them church members. Who will dare say theirs were not religious acts?

In response to a letter, the following characteristic reply from one of the McAuley sisters will be read with interest, as showing "the other sort" of pioneer religious experience, and following this, the brother's response about the "mining camp brand." She writes:

> "And now as to your question in a former letter, in regard to religious experiences of pioneers. Tom had written me just before your letter came, asking me if I had heard from friend Meeker and wife. I told him of your letter and asked him if he ever heard of such a thing as religious experience among pioneers. I enclose his answer, which is characteristic of him. The first church service I attended in California was in a saloon, and the congregation, comprising nearly all the inhabitants of the place, was attentive and orderly. I think the religion of the pioneers was carried in their hearts, and bore its fruit in honesty and charity rather than in outward forms and ceremonies. I remember an instance on the plains. Your brother, O. P., had a deck of cards in his vest pocket. Sister Margaret smiled and said: 'Your pocket betrays you.' 'Do you think it a betrayal?' said he. 'If I thought it was wrong I would not use them.' Here is Brother Tom's letter:
>
> "'Why, of course, I have seen as well as heard of pioneer religious experiences. But I expect the California mining camp brand differed some from the Washington brand for agricultural use, because the mining camp was liable to lose at short notice all its inhabitants on discovery of new diggings.' [Pg 210]
>
> "So, of course, large church buildings for exclusively church purposes were out of the question as impossible. And the only public buildings available were the saloons and gambling halls, whose doors, like the gates of perdition, were always open, day and night alike, to all, saint or sinner, who chose to enter, and having entered, had his rights as well as his duties well understood, and, if need be, promptly enforced."

John McLeod used to almost invariably get gloriously drunk whenever he came to Steilacoom, which was quite often, and generally would take a gallon keg home with him full of the vile stuff. And yet this man was a regular reader of his Bible, and, I am told by those who knew his habits best, read his chapter as regularly as he drank his gill of whisky, or perhaps more regularly, as the keg would at times become dry, while his Bible never failed him. I have his old, well-thumbed Gaelic Bible, with its title page of 1828, which he brought with him to this country in 1833, and used until his failing sight compelled the use of another of coarser print.

I am loth to close this (to me) interesting chapter, but my volume is full and overflowing and I am admonished not to pursue the subject further. A full volume might be written and yet not exhaust this interesting subject.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WILD ANIMALS.

I will write this chapter for the youngsters and the elderly wise-heads who wear specs may turn over the leaves without reading it, if they choose.

Wild animals in early days were very much more plentiful than now, particularly deer and black bear. The black bear troubled us a good deal and would come near the houses and kill our pigs; [Pg 211] but it did not take many years to thin them out. They were very cowardly and would run away from us in the thick brush except when the young cubs were with them, and then we had to be more careful.

There was one animal, the cougar, we felt might be dangerous, but I never saw but one in the woods. Before I tell you about it I will relate an adventure one of my own little girls had with one of these creatures nearby our own home in the Puyallup Valley.

I have written elsewhere about our little log cabin schoolhouse, but have not told how our children got to it. From our house to the schoolhouse the trail led through very heavy timber and very heavy underbrush—so dense that most all the way one could not see, in the summer time when the leaves were on, as far as across the kitchen of the house.

One day little Carrie, now an elderly lady (I won't say how old), now living in Seattle, started to go to school, but soon came running back out of breath.

"Mamma! Mamma! I saw a great big cat sharpening his claws on a great big tree, just like pussy does," she said as soon as she could catch her breath. Sure enough, upon examination, there were the marks as high up on the tree as I could reach. It must have been a big one to reach up the tree that far. But the incident soon dropped out of mind and the children went to school on the trail just the same as if nothing had happened.

The way I happened to see the cougar was this: Lew. McMillan bought one hundred and sixty-one cattle and drove them from Oregon to what we then used to call Upper White River, but it was the present site of Auburn. He had to swim his cattle over all the rivers, and his horses, too, and then at the last day's drive brought them on the divide between Stuck River and the Sound. The cattle were all very tame when he took them into the White River valley, for they were tired and hungry. At that time White River valley was covered with brush and timber, except here and [Pg 212] there a small prairie. The upper part of the valley was grown up with tall, coarse rushes that remained green all winter, and so he didn't have to feed his cattle, but they got nice and fat long before spring. We bought them and agreed to take twenty head at a time. By this time the cattle were nearly as wild as deer. So Lew built a very strong corral on the bank of the river, near where Auburn is now, and then made a brush fence from one corner down river way, which made it a sort of lane, with the fence on one side and the river on the other, and gradually widened out as he got further from the corral.

I used to go over from Steilacoom and stay all night so we could make a drive into the corral early, but this time I was belated and had to camp on the road, so that we did not get an early start for the next day's drive. The cattle seemed unruly that day, and when we let them out of the corral up river way, they scattered and we could do nothing with them. The upshot of the matter was that I had to go home without cattle. We had worked with the cattle so long that it was very late before I got started and had to go on foot. At that time the valley above Auburn near the Stuck River crossing was filled with a dense forest of monster fir and cedar trees, and a good deal of underbrush besides. That forest was so dense in places that it was difficult to see the road, even on a bright, sunshiny day, while on a cloudy day it seemed almost like night, though I could see well enough to keep on the crooked trail all right.

Well, just before I got to Stuck River crossing I came to a turn in the trail where it crossed the top of a big fir which had been turned up by the roots and had fallen nearly parallel with the trail. The big roots held the butt of the tree up from the ground, and I think the tree was four feet in diameter a hundred feet from the butt, and the whole body, from root to top, was eighty-four steps long, or about two hundred and fifty feet. I have seen longer trees, though, and bigger [Pg 213] ones, but there were a great many like this one standing all around about me.

I didn't stop to step it then, but you may be sure I took some pretty long strides about that time. Just as I stepped over the fallen tree near the top I saw something move on the big body near the roots, and sure enough the thing was coming right toward me. In an instant I realized what it was. It was a tremendous, great big cougar. He was very pretty, but did not look very nice to me. I had just received a letter from a man living near the Chehalis telling me of three lank, lean cougars coming into his clearing where he was at work, and when he started to go to his cabin to get his gun the brutes started to follow him, and he just only escaped into his house, with barely time to slam the door shut. He wrote that his dogs had gotten them on the run by the time he was ready with his gun, and he finally killed all three of them. He found they were literally starving and had, he thought, recently robbed an Indian grave, or rather an Indian canoe that hung in the trees with their dead in it. That is the way the Indians used to dispose of their dead, but I haven't time to tell about that now. This man found bits of cloth, some hair, and a piece of bone in the stomach of one of them, so he felt sure he was right in his surmise, and I think he was, too. I sent this man's letter to the paper, the Olympia Transcript, and it was printed at the time, but I have forgotten his name.

Well, I didn't know what to do. I had no gun with me, and I knew perfectly well there was no use to run. I knew, too, that I could not do as Mr. Stocking did, grapple with it and kick it to death. This one confronting me was a monstrous big one—at least it looked so to me. I expect it looked bigger than it really was. Was I scared, did you say? Did you ever have creepers run up your back and right to the roots of your hair, and nearly to the top of your head? Yes, I'll warrant you have, though a good many fellows won't acknowledge it and say it's only cowards that feel that way. Maybe; but, anyway, I don't want to meet wild cougars in the timber. [Pg 214]

Mr. Stocking, whom I spoke about, lived about ten miles from Olympia at Glasgow's place. He was walking on the prairie and had a stout young dog with him, and came suddenly upon a cougar lying in a corner of the fence. His dog tackled the brute at once, but was no match for him, and would soon have killed him if Stocking had not interfered. Mr. Stocking gathered on to a big club and struck the cougar one heavy blow over the back, but the stick broke and the cougar left the dog and attacked his master. And so it was a life and death struggle. Mr. Stocking was a very powerful man. It was said that he was double-jointed. He was full six feet high and heavy in proportion. He was a typical pioneer in health, strength and power of endurance. He said he felt as though his time had come, but there was one chance in a thousand and he was going to take that chance. As soon as the cougar let go of the dog to tackle Stocking, the cur sneaked off to let his master fight it out alone. He had had enough fight for one day. As the cougar raised on his hind legs Stocking luckily grasped him by the throat and began kicking him in the stomach. Stocking said he thought if he could get one good kick in the region of the heart he felt that he might settle him. I guess, boys, no football player ever kicked as hard as Stocking did that day. The difference was that he was literally kicking for dear life, while the player kicks only for fun. All this happened in less time that it takes to tell it. Meanwhile the cougar was not idle, but was clawing away at Stocking's arms and shoulders, and once he hit him a clip on the nose. The dog finally returned to the strife and between the two they laid Mr. Cougar low and took off his skin the next day. Mr. Stocking took it to Olympia, where it was used for a base purpose. It was stuffed and put into a saloon and kept there a long time to attract people into the saloon.

Did my cougar hurt me, did you say? I hadn't any cougar and hadn't lost one, and if I had been hurt I wouldn't have been here to tell you this story. The fun of it was that the cougar hadn't seen me yet, but just as soon as he did he scampered off like the Old Harry himself was after him, and I strode off down the trail as if old Beelzebub was after me. [Pg 215]

Now, youngsters, before you go to bed, just bear in mind there is no danger here now from wild animals, and there was not much then, for in all the time I have been here, now over fifty years, I have known of but two persons killed by them.

And now I will tell you one more true story and then quit for this time. Aunt Abbie Sumner one evening heard Gus Johnson hallooing at the top of his voice, a little way out from the house. Her father said Gus was just driving up the cows, but Aunt Abbie said she never knew him to make such a noise as that before, and went out within speaking distance and where she could see him at times pounding vigorously on a tree for awhile and then turn and strike out toward the brush and yell so loud she said she believed he could be heard for more than a mile away. She soon saw something moving in the brush. It was a bear. Gus had suddenly come upon a bear and her cubs and run one of the cubs up a tree. He pounded on the tree to keep it there, but had to turn at times to fight the bear away from him. As soon as he could find time to speak he told her to go to the house and bring the gun, which she did, and that woman went right up to the tree and handed Gus the gun while the bear was nearby. Gus made a bad shot the first time and wounded the bear, but the next time killed her. But lo and behold! he hadn't any more bullets and the cub was still up the tree. So away went Aunt Abbie two miles to a neighbor to get lead to mold some bullets. But by this time it was dark, and Gus stayed all night at the butt of the tree and kept a fire burning, and next morning killed the cub. So he got the hides of both of them. This occurred about three miles east of Bucoda, Washington.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MORNING SCHOOL.

Soon after the Indian war we moved to our donation claim. We had but three neighbors, the nearest nearly two miles away, and two of them kept bachelor's hall and were of no account for schools. Of course, we could not see any of our neighbors' houses, and could reach but one by a road and the others by a trail. Under such conditions we could not have a public school. I can best tell about our morning school by relating an incident that happened a few months after it was started.

One day one of our farther-off neighbors, who lived over four miles away, came to visit us. Naturally, the children flocked around him to hear his stories in Scotch brogue, and began to ply questions, to which he soon responded by asking other questions, one of which was when they expected to go to school.

"Why, we have school now," responded a chorus of voices. "We have school every day."

"And, pray, who is your teacher, and where is your schoolhouse?" came the prompt inquiry.

"Father teaches us at home every morning before breakfast. He hears the lessons then, but mother help us, too."

Peter Smith, the neighbor, never tires telling the story, and maybe has added a little as memory fails, for he is eighty-four years old now.

"Your father told me awhile ago that you had your breakfast at six o'clock. What time do you get up?"

"Why, father sets the clock for half-past four, and that gives us an hour while mother gets breakfast, you know."

You boys and girls who read this chapter may have a feeling almost akin to pity for those poor pioneer children who had to get up so early, but you may as well dismiss such thoughts from your minds, for they were happy and cheerful and healthy, worked some during the day, besides [Pg 217] studying their lessons, but they went to bed earlier than some boys and girls do these days.

It was not long until we moved to the Puyallup Valley, where there were more neighbors—two families to the square mile, but not one of them in sight, because the timber and underbrush were so thick we could scarcely see two rods from the edge of our clearing. Now we could have a real school; but first I will tell about the schoolhouse.

Some of the neighbors took their axes to cut the logs, some their oxen to haul them, others their saws and frows to make the clapboards for the roof, while again others, more handy with tools, made the benches out of split logs, or, as we called them, puncheons. With a good many willing hands, the house soon received the finishing touches. The side walls were scarcely high enough for the door, and one was cut in the end and a door hung on wooden hinges that squeaked a good deal when the door was opened or shut; but the children did not mind that. The roof answered well for the ceiling overhead, and a log cut out on each side made two long, narrow windows for light. The larger children sat with their faces to the walls, with long shelves in front of them, while the smaller tots sat on low benches near the middle of the room. When the weather would permit the teacher left the door open to admit more light, but had no need for more fresh air as the roof was quite open and the cracks between the logs let in plenty.

Sometimes we had a lady teacher, and then her salary was smaller, as she boarded around. That meant some discomfort part of the time, where the surroundings were not pleasant.

Some of those scholars are dead, some have wandered to parts unknown, while those that are left are nearly all married and are grandfathers or grandmothers, but all living remember the old log schoolhouse with affection. This is a true picture, as I recollect, of the early school days in the [Pg 218] Puyallup Valley, when, as the unknown poet has said:

"And children did a half day's work
Before they went to school."

Not quite so hard as that, but very near it, as we were always up early and the children did a lot of work before and after school time.

When Carrie was afterwards sent to Portland to the high school she took her place in the class just the same as if she had been taught in a grand brick schoolhouse. "Where there is a will there is a way."

You must not conclude that we had no recreation and that we were a sorrowful set devoid of enjoyment, for there never was a happier lot of people than these same hard-working pioneers and their families. I will now tell you something about their home life, their amusements as well as their labor.

Before the clearings were large we sometimes got pinched for both food and clothing, though I will not say we suffered much for either, though I know of some families at times who lived on potatoes "straight". Usually fish could be had in abundance, and considerable game—some bear and plenty of deer. The clothing gave us the most trouble, as but little money came to us for the

small quantity of produce we had to spare. I remember one winter we were at our wits' end for shoes. We just could not get money to buy shoes enough to go around, but managed to get leather to make each member of the family one pair. We killed a pig to get bristles for the wax-ends, cut the pegs from green alder log and seasoned them in the oven, and made the lasts out of the same timber. Those shoes were clumsy, to be sure, but kept our feet dry and warm, and we felt thankful for the comforts vouchsafed to us and sorry for some neighbors' children, who had to go barefooted even in quite cold weather.

Music was our greatest pleasure and we never tired of it. "Uncle John," as everyone called him, the old teacher, never tired teaching the children music, and so it soon came about they could [Pg 219] read their music as readily as they could their school books. No Christmas ever went by without a Christmas tree, in which the whole neighborhood joined, or a Fourth of July passed without a celebration. We made the presents for the tree if we could not buy them, and supplied the musicians, reader and orator for the celebration. Everybody had something to do and a voice in saying what should be done, and that very fact made all happy.

We had sixteen miles to go to our market town, Steilacoom, over the roughest kind of a road. Nobody had horse teams at the start, and so we had to go with ox teams. We could not make the trip out and back in one day, and did not have money to pay hotel bills, and so we would drive out part of the way and camp and the next morning drive into town very early, do our trading, and, if possible, reach home the same day. If not able to do this, we camped again on the road; but if the night was not too dark would reach home in the night. And oh! what an appetite we would have, and how cheery the fire would be, and how welcome the reception in the cabin home.

One of the "youngsters," sixty years old now, after reading "The Morning School," writes:

"Yes, father, your story of the morning school is just as it was. I can see in my mind's eye yet us children reciting and standing up in a row to spell, and Auntie and mother getting breakfast, and can remember the little bed room; of rising early and of reading 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' as a dessert to the work."

Near where the old log cabin schoolhouse stood our high school building now stands, large enough to accommodate four hundred pupils. In the district where we could count nineteen children of school age, with eleven in attendance, now we have twelve hundred boys and girls of school age, three large schoolhouses and seventeen teachers.

The trees and stumps are all gone and brick buildings and other good houses occupy much of the land, and as many people now live in that school district as lived both east and west of the [Pg 220] mountains when the Territory was created in March, 1853. Instead of ox teams, and some at that with sleds, the people have buggies and carriages, or automobiles, or they can travel on any of the eighteen passenger trains that pass daily through Puyallup, or on street cars to Tacoma, and also on some of the twenty to twenty-four freight trains, some of which are a third of a mile long. Such are some of the changes wrought in fifty years since pioneer life began in the Puyallup Valley.

Now, just try your hand on this song that follows, one that our dear old teacher has sung so often for us, in company with one of those scholars of the old log cabin, Mrs. Frances Bean, now of Tacoma, who has kindly supplied the words and music:

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

How wondrous are the changes
Since fifty years ago,
When girls wore woolen dresses
And boys wore pants of tow;
And shoes were made of cowhide
And socks of homespun wool;
And children did a half-day's work
Before they went to school.

CHORUS.

Some fifty years ago;
Some fifty years ago;
The men and the boys
And the girls and the toys;
The work and the play,
And the night and the day,
The world and its ways
Are all turned around
Since fifty years ago.

The girls took music lessons
Upon the spinning wheel,
And practiced late and early
On spindle swift and reel.
The boy would ride the horse to mill,
A dozen miles or so,
And hurry off before 'twas day
Some fifty years ago.

The people rode to meeting
In sleds instead of sleighs,
And wagons rode as easy
As buggies nowadays;
And oxen answered well for teams,
Though now they'd be too slow;
For people lived not half so fast
Some fifty years ago.

Ah! well do I remember [Pg 221]
That Wilson's patent stove,
That father bought and paid for
In cloth our girls had wove;
And how the people wondered
When we got the thing to go,
And said 'twould burst and kill us all,
Some fifty years ago.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN EARLY SURVEY.

On the night of the 27th of November, 1866, a party of four young men, Ransom Bonney, Jacob Woolery, Edward Ross, and Marion Meeker, none of whom were nineteen years old, together with a middle-aged man, the author, whom they called "Dad", and an Indian named "Skyuck", or Jim Meeker, camped in a small shack of a house, standing on the spot now described as the foot of Thirty-third Street, Tacoma.

We were tired and hungry when this camp was reached at dusk of evening, and drenched to the skin by the copious rainfall between times of gusts of wind such as is common on November days of a Puget Sound climate. The cabin was open, with a small fireplace with a low cat-and-clay chimney that did not reach high enough to prevent the smoke from being blown freely into the cabin.

"Golly, Dad, that's been a tough old day," said Ransom Bonney, who was the wag of the party and always cheerful (his father, a pioneer of 1853, still lives at the advanced age of 92 years), as he drew off his socks to wring them before preparing supper. [19] "Just please deliver me from surveying on tide flats," he added, as the water ran in streams from the socks in his hands. "But it's all right when one gets used to it."

"Yes, but the d—l of it is, to get used to it," came as a quick response from the lips of Jacob Woolery, who had shed most of his clothing preparatory to drying. At the same time he was doing [Pg 222] justice to the boiled potatoes and ash cake, baked before the open fire in the frying-pan. Edward Ross, the third lad of the party, said nothing. He had been the flagman that day and frequently over boot-top deep in mud and water without any murmur, but it was plain to me that he did not want any more of such work.

Jacob, Edward and the Indian have long since passed away; Marion and Ransom, the surviving members of the lads, are yet alive. At present, only three of the whole party are left to tell the story of subdividing the land for the Government where now the great city of Tacoma is building. The day following the experience on the tide flat we ran the line between sections T. 20, N., R. 3 E. Willamette, meridian almost parallel with Pacific Avenue to a point near Seventh Street.

That day also gave a sample of what a rainy, stormy day could bring forth in the dense forest of heavy timber and underbrush charged with the accumulated raindrops in the intervals between the gusts of wind and rainfall that prevailed all day.

"Dad, I believe this is worse than the tide flats," said Jake, as he almost slid down the steep bluff just north of the Tacoma Hotel while retracing the fifth standard parallel, to search for the bearing trees in the meander line of Commencement Bay.

And so it was, the further the work progressed, the harder the task seemed, and that second night's camp in the cabin found us if possible with less comfort than the first. But we stuck to the job through thick and thin, rain or wind, till the work was finished and the township surveyed. Positively, if at that time one could have offered me the land represented by that survey in lieu of the ten dollars per mile in greenbacks (then worth seventy-five cents on the dollar) I would have taken the greenbacks instead of the land.

Now, in the near vicinity, lots with twenty-five foot front and a hundred foot depth have sold for twenty-five thousand dollars; sixteen-story buildings occupy the land not three blocks away and a [Pg 223] city of over a hundred thousand people has grown up on the land thus surveyed, that was then a dense virgin forest of giant timber.

FOOTNOTE:

[19] Since died at the age of 97.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I come now to a period of my life, as one might say, on the border land between pioneer days of the old Oregon country and of the later development of the younger territory and this giant State bearing the great name of the father of our country.

An account of these ventures follows in the order of their occurrence.

MY HOP VENTURE.

The public, generally, give me the credit of introducing hop culture into the Northwest.

As this business created such a stir in the world's market, and made the Puyallup Valley famous, and as my name has become so prominently connected with hop culture, I can hardly pass this episode of my life by without notice. As I say elsewhere, this should not properly be called a venture, although the violent fluctuations of prices made it hazardous. But I can truly say, that for twenty-two years' successive crops, I did not raise a single crop upon which I lost money, and that for that many years I added each year some acreage to my holdings. But few hop-growers, however, can say so much as to losses incurred.

A history of the establishment and destruction of the business follows:

About the fifteenth of March, 1865, Chas. Wood, of Olympia, sent about three pecks of hop roots to Steilacoom for my father, Jacob R. Meeker, who then lived on his claim nearby where Sumner was afterwards built in the Puyallup Valley. John V. Meeker, my brother, carried this sack of roots on his back from Steilacoom to my father's home, a distance of about twenty miles, [Pg 225] passing by my cabin (the remains of which are still standing in Pioneer Park, Puyallup) with his precious burden. I fingered out of the sack roots sufficient to plant six hills of hops, and so far as I know those were the first hops planted in the Puyallup Valley. My father planted the remainder in four rows of about six rods in length, and in the following September harvested the equivalent of one bale of hops, 180 pounds, and sold them to Mr. Wood for 85 cents per pound, receiving a little over $150.00.

One Group of Five of Ezra Meeker's Hop Houses.

This was the beginning of the hop business in the Puyallup Valley, and the Territory of Washington.

This was more money than had been received by any settler in the Puyallup Valley, excepting perhaps two, from the products of their farm for that year. My father's nearby neighbors, Messrs. E. C. Mead and L. F. Thompson, obtained a barrel of hop roots from California the next year, and planted them the following spring—four acres. I obtained what roots I could get that year, but not enough to plant an acre. The following year (1867) I planted four acres, and for twenty-six successive years thereafter added to this plantation until our holdings reached past the five-hundred-acre mark, and our production over four hundred tons a year.

After having produced his third crop my father died (1869), but not until after he had shipped his hops to Portland, Oregon. In settling up his affairs I found it necessary for me to go to Portland, and there met Henry Winehard, who had purchased some of the hops. Mr. Winehard, was the largest brewer in Oregon. After closing up the business with Mr. Winehard, he abruptly said, "I want your hops next year." I answered that I did not know what the price would be. He said, "I will pay you as much as anybody else," and then frankly told me of their value. He said they were the finest hops he had ever used, and that with them he had no need to use either foreign or New York hops, but with the hops raised in the hotter climate of California, he could not use them alone. I told him he should have them, and the result was that for fourteen years, [Pg 226] with the exception of one year, Mr. Winehard used the hops grown on my place, some years 200

bales, some years more. My meeting with him gave me such confidence in the business that I did not hesitate to add to my yards as rapidly as I could get the land cleared, for I had at first planted right among the stumps. There came a depression in this business in 1869 and 1870, and my neighbors, Messrs. Mead and Thompson, made the mistake of shipping their hops to Australia, and finally lost their entire crop—not selling for much, if anything, above the cost of the freight, while Mr. Winehard paid me 25 cents a pound for my crop. Under the discouragement of the loss of their crop, Messrs. Mead and Thompson concluded to plow up a part of their plantation—two acres and a half—whereupon I leased that portion of their yard for a year, paying them $10.00 an acre in advance, and harvested from those two acres and a half over four thousand pounds of hops, and sold them to Henry Winehard for 50 cents a pound. This was for the crop of 1871.

None of us knew anything about the hop business, and it was totally accidental that we engaged in it, but seeing that there were possibilities of great gain, I took extra pains to study up the question, and found that by allowing our hops to mature thoroughly and curing them at a low temperature, and baling them while hot, we could produce a hop that would compete with any product in the world. Others of my neighbors planted, and also many in Oregon, until there soon became a field for purchasing and shipping hops.

But the fluctuations were so great that in a few years many became discouraged and lost their holdings, until finally, during the world's hop crop failure of the year 1882, there came to be unheard-of prices for hops, and fully one-third of the crop of the Puyallup Valley was sold for $1.00 per pound. I had that year nearly 100,000 pounds, which averaged me 70 cents per pound.

About this time I had come to realize that the important market for hops was in England, and began sending trial shipments, first, seven bales, then the following year 500 bales, then 1,500 bales, until finally our annual shipments reached 11,000 bales a year, or the equivalent in value of £100,000—half million dollars—said to be at that time the largest export hop trade by any one concern in the United States. [Pg 227]

This business could not properly be called a venture; it was simply a growth. The conditions were favorable in that we could produce the choicest hops in the world's market at the lowest price of any kind, and we actually did press the English growers so closely that over fifteen thousand acres of hops were destroyed in that country.

My first hop house was built in 1868—a log house—and stands in Pioneer Park, Puyallup, to this day, and is carefully preserved by the city authorities and doubtless will be until it perishes by the hand of time. We frequently employed from a thousand to twelve hundred people during the harvest time. Until the beginning of the decline of the business, the result of that little start of hop roots had brought over twenty million dollars into the Territory of Washington.

I spent four winters in London on the hop market, and became acquainted with all the leading hop men of the metropolis.

One evening as I stepped out of my office, and cast my eyes towards one group of our hop houses, I thought I could see that the hop foliage of a field nearby was off color—did not look natural. Calling one of my clerks from the office he said the same thing—they did not look natural. I walked down to the yards, a quarter of a mile distant, and there first saw the hop-louse. The yard was literally alive with lice, and were destroying—at least the quality. At that time I issued a hop circular, sending it to over 600 correspondents all along the coast in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, and before the week was out. I began to receive samples and letters from them, and inquiries asking what was the matter with the hops. [Pg 228]

It transpired that the attack of lice was simultaneous in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, extending over a distance coastwise of more than 500 miles, and even inland up the Skagit River, where there was an isolated yard.

It came like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, so unexpected was it.

I sent my second son, Fred Meeker, to London to study the question and to get their methods of fighting the pest, and to import some spraying machinery. We found, however, in the lapse of years, to our cost, that the conditions here were different, that while we could kill the louse, the foliage was so dense that we had to use so much spraying material that, in killing the louse, we virtually destroyed the hops, and instead of being able to sell our hops at the top price of the market, our product fell to the foot of the list, the last crop I raised costing me eleven cents per pound, and selling for three under the hammer at sheriff's sale.

At that time I had more than $100,000.00 advanced to my neighbors and others upon their hop crops, which was lost. These people simply could not pay, and I forgave the debt, taking no judgments against them, and have never regretted the action.

All of my accumulations were swept away, and I quit the business, or, rather, the business quit me.

The result was that finally, after a long struggle, nearly all of the hops were plowed up and the land used for dairy, fruit and general crops and is actually now of a higher value than when bearing hops.

A curious episode occurred during the height of our struggle to save the hop business from impending destruction. The Post-Intelligencer of Seattle published the following self-explanatory correspondence on the date shown and while the Methodist conferences were yet in session:

Puyallup, Sept. 6, 1895.

To the Editor:

In this morning's report of the Methodist conference I notice under the heading "A Curse on the Hop Crop", that Preacher Hanson, of Puyallup, reported he had some good news from that great hop country—the hop crop, the main support of the people, was a failure; the crop had been cursed by God. Whereupon Bishop Bowman said "Good" and from all over the room voices could be heard giving utterance to the fervent ejaculation, "Thank God."

For the edification of the reverend fathers and fervent brethren I wish to publish to them and to the world that I have beat God, for I have 500 acres of hops at Puyallup and Kent that are free from lice, the "curse of God," and that I believe it was the work of an emulsion of whale oil soap and quassie sprayed on the vines that thwarted God's purpose to "curse" me and others who exterminated the lice.

One is almost ready to ask if this is indeed the nineteenth century of enlightenment, to hear such utterances gravely made by men supposed to be expounders of that great religion of love as promulgated by the Great Teacher.

I want to recall to the memory of the Rev. Mr. Hanson that the church in which he has been preaching for a year past was built in great part by money contributed from gains of this business "cursed by God." For myself I can inform him that, as a citizen of Puyallup, I contributed $400, to buy the ground upon which that church edifice is built, every cent of which came from this same hop business "cursed by God." I would "thank God" if they would return the money and thus ease their guilty consciences.

E. MEEKER.

When this letter appeared, vigorous protests came thick and fast and compelled the good fathers to give Mr. Hanson another charge. But my vainglorious boasting was not justified as the [Pg 230] sequel shows; our hops were finally destroyed—whether under a curse or not must be decided by the reader, each for himself or herself. But I never got my $400.00 back, and, in fact, did not want it, and doubtless wrote the letter in a pettish mood.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BEET SUGAR VENTURE.

A more proper heading, I think, would be "Sugar Beet Raising," but everybody at the time spoke of it the other way, and so it shall be. I did raise hundreds of tons of sugar beets, and fed them to the dairy, but had only enough of them manufactured to get half a ton of sugar, which was exhibited at the New Orleans exposition—the second year of the exposition—and probably the first sugar ever made from Washington grown beets.

The first winter I spent on the London hop market (1884) my attention was called to the remarkably cheap German made beet sugar, selling then at "tuppence" a pound, as the English people expressed it—four cents a pound, our currency. If beet sugar could be produced so cheaply, why could we not make it, I queried, knowing as I did what enormous yields of beets could be obtained in the rich soils of the Puyallup and White River valleys. So I hied me off to the German sugar district, and visited several of the factories, taking only a hasty view of their works, but much impressed with the importance of the subject.

The following spring I planted two acres on one of my White River farms, and Thomas Alvord planted two acres. I harvested forty-seven tons from my two acres and at different times during their later growth sent a dozen samples or more to the beet sugar factory at Alvarado, California, to be tested. The report came back highly favorable—rich and pure, and if figures would not lie, here was a field better than hops—better than any crop any of the farmers were raising at the [Pg 231] time. So Mr. Alvord and myself organized a beet sugar company, and the next year increased our acreage to further test the cost of raising and of their sugar producing qualities. I raised over a hundred tons that year, and we sent ten tons to the Alvarado factory to extract the sugar—meanwhile had sent about a hundred samples at different times, to be tested. Not all of the reports came back favorable, and the conclusion was reached to test farther another year, and accordingly a still larger acreage was planted. That year I sent my second son, Fred Meeker, to a school of chemistry in San Francisco, and when the factory started up in Alvarado, to the factory, for what was termed the campaign, to work and to learn the business. Our samples were again sent with the same result, some were exceedingly rich and pure, while others would yield nothing. Fred wrote that the beets that had taken a second growth were worthless for producing sugar.

That letter settled the whole question as our open, moist autumn weather would surely at times destroy the crop, and would make it extremely hazardous to enter into the business and so the whole matter was dropped as well as $2,500.00 of expenses incurred. Subsequently, however, the business has been successfully established in the drier climate of the eastern part of Washington and Oregon.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE HISTORY OF A HISTORY.

Before giving an account of the adventure incident to marking the Oregon Trail given in detail in chapters to follow in this volume, I will write of one more adventure following my return from the Klondike; that is, of my writing a book. The simple act of writing a book was in no sense either a venture or an adventure, though it took me over three years to do it. But when I undertook to have it printed (an afterthought), then a real venture confronted me. No local works [Pg 232] so far had paid printers' bills and I was admonished by friends that a loss would undoubtedly occur if I printed the work. But their fears were not well founded, the work was printed, [20] the sales were made and the printer paid.

Four years ago today I arrived at the ripe age of three score years and ten, supposed to be the limit of life. Finding that I possessed more ambition than strength, and that my disposition for a strenuous life was greater than my power of physical endurance, I naturally turned to other fields of work, that condition of life so necessary for the welfare and happiness of the human race.

Many years before it had been my ambition to write our earlier experiences of pioneer life on Puget Sound, and not necessarily for the printer, but because I wanted to, but never could find time; and so when the change came and my usual occupation was gone, what else would I be more likely to do than to turn to my long delayed work, the more particularly being admonished that it must be done soon or not at all. And so, in a cheerful, happy mood, I entered again into the domain of pioneer life, and began writing. But this is not history, you will say. True, but we will come to that by and by.

I had, during the summer of 1853, with an inexperienced companion, in an open boat—a frail skiff built with our own hands—crossed the path of Theodore Winthrop, spending more than a month on a cruise from Olympia to the Straits and return, while that adventurous traveler and delightful writer had with a crew of Indians made the trip from Port Townsend to Fort Nisqually in a canoe. I had followed Winthrop a year later through the Natchess Pass to the Columbia River and beyond, alone, except a companion pony that carried my sack of hard bread for food, the saddle blanket for my bed and myself across the turbulent rivers, and on easy grades. If Winthrop could write such a beautiful book, "The Canoe and the Saddle," based upon such a trip, with [Pg 233] Indians to paddle his canoe on the Sound, and with an attendant and three horses through the mountains, why should not my own experience of such a trip be interesting to my own children and their children's children? And so I wrote these trips.

Did you ever, when hungry, taste of a dish of fruit, a luscious, ripe, highly flavored apple for instance, that seemed only to whet but not satisfy your appetite? I know you have, and so can appreciate my feelings when these stories were written. I craved more of pioneer life experience, and so I went back to the earlier scenes, a little earlier only—to the trip in a flat boat down the Columbia. River from The Dalles to the first cabin, where Kalama town now stands; to the pack on our backs from the Columbia to the Sound; to the three times passing the road to and fro to get the wife and baby to tidewater—what a charm that word tidewater had for me with a vision of the greatness of opportunities of the seaboard—and I may say it has never lost its charm—of the great world opened up before me, and so we were soon again housed in the little cabin with its puncheon floor, "cat-and-clay" chimney, and clapboard roof; its surroundings of scenery; of magnificent forests and of constantly moving life, the Indians with their happy song and fishing parties.

All this and more, too, I wrote, every now and then getting over to the Indian question. How could I help it? We had been treated civilly, and I may say, kindly, by them from the very outset, when we, almost alone, were their white neighbors. I had been treated generously by some, and had always found them ready to reciprocate in acts of kindness, and so we had come to respect our untutored neighbors and to sympathize with them in their troubles. Deep troubles came to them when the treaty-making period arrived, and a little later upon all of us, when war came, to break up all our plans and amicable relations. As I began to write more about the Indians and their ways, a step further brought me to the consideration of our Territorial government and the [Pg 234] government officials and their acts. It gradually dawned upon me this was a more important work than writing of humble individuals; that the history of our commonwealth was by far a more interesting theme, and more profitable to the generations to follow than recording of private achievements of the pioneer. It was but a step further until I realized that I was fairly launched upon the domain of history, and that I must need be more painstaking and more certain of my facts, and so then came a long rest for my pen and a long search of the records, of old musty letters, of no less old musty books, of forgetful minds of the pioneers left, and again I was carried away into the almost forgotten past.

An authoress once told me that she never named her book until after it was written. I could not then understand why, but I now do. While writing of pioneer life I could think of no other title than something like this: "Pioneer Life on Puget Sound Fifty Years Ago," a pretty long title, but that was what the writing treated of. But when I got on the Indian question and came to realize what a splendid true story was wrapped up in the darkness of impending oblivion; how the Indians had been wronged; how they had fought for their homes and won them; how the chief actors had been sacrificed, but the tribes had profited—I again became enthusiastic over my theme and over my ready-made heroes, and before I realized it, lo! a new name took possession

of my mind and rang in it until there was born the title, "The Tragedy of Leschi."

When I come to think of it, that here were tribes that had never shed white men's blood until grim war came, and that then they refused to make war on their old neighbors, and that but one non-combatant settler had lost his life after the first day of frenzy of the Muckleshoot band at the massacre of White River, that here were men we called savages, fighting for a cause, but threw themselves on the track of the military arm of the government and not against helpless settlers. I had myself been in their power and remained unharmed. I knew other of my neighbors also that had been exposed and remained unmolested; surely to tell the truth about such people is no more than justice and I said to myself, I will write it down and prove what I write by the records and the best obtainable witnesses alive, and having done so, will print it, two books in one, two titles, yet but one volume, "Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound; The Tragedy of Leschi." [Pg 235]

It is natural that in the stirring times of early days opinions would differ; that neighbors, and even members of families, would look upon events from different points of view, and so out of this maze I have tried to state exact facts and draw just conclusions. The chapter of this history begins with the creation of the Territory and ends with Governor Stevens' official life in the Territory in the period concerned. During that period, treaties were made with the Indians, the war with them was fought; massacres horrid to contemplate were perpetrated by the Indians and whites—by the Indians at the outbreak, and the whites later—murders were committed; martial law proclaimed, our courts invaded with armed men, judges dragged from the bench; our governor in turn brought before the courts, fined and reprieved by himself, and many other happenings unique in history are related, and so, when my labor was finished and my pen laid aside, my only regret was that the work had not been undertaken earlier in life when memory served more accurately, and my contemporaries were more numerous.

FOOTNOTE:

[20] Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound, The Tragedy of Leschi.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BANKING.

My connection with the banking business in Puyallup was neither a venture nor an adventure, in the common acceptance of the meaning of these words, and to this day I can scarcely account for my action. I am sure that I was not "cut out" for a banker, and the business had no attraction [Pg 236] for me. I did want to see a national bank established in Puyallup, and so took $10,000.00 of the stock, became a member of the directory, and committed the grave indiscretion of letting others "run the bank" without giving it personal attention.

In the lapse of time parties controlling a majority of the stock "run it into the ground," to use a western phrase, that is, loaned to their cousins and their aunts, to themselves indirectly, and to others indiscreetly, until matters looked shaky. Suddenly "business" called these parties to other and more attractive fields, and lo, and behold, I became a bank president.

This was just before the time of the panic, and the question of what was to become of the bank became one of the utmost concern. The notes were nearly all hypothecated to secure loans from other banks, while the tightening times caused the deposits to run down; the securities could not be realized upon, and the banks holding them called for their loans. The depositors, about one hundred in number, were all my neighbors, and men and women of small means. One thing was certain—could not continue to receive deposits with the knowledge I had of the affairs of the bank, either with safety to myself or the depositors. So one day when the deposits had run to a very low ebb, and the cash balance correspondingly low, and a threatening demand had been made by one of the secured banks, it was evident the time had come when the bank must go into the hands of a receiver and what money was on hand to be frittered away in receiver's fees, or pay out the money on hand to the depositors, and let the creditor banks collect on their collaterals. It was impracticable to pay depositors in part, or part of them in full. October 16th, 1895, on my own responsibility I obtained enough, with the funds of the bank in hand, to pay the depositors in full. An attorney for one of the secured creditors of the bank suspected what was going on, and believing the money was on my person undertook to detain me in an office in [Pg 237] Tacoma until papers could be gotten out and served. But he was too late, as A. R. Herlig, my attorney, was already in Puyallup with the funds, with directions to take all the funds of the bank at nightfall, and with the cashier, George Macklin, now of Portland, go to each depositor, and without explanation insist on their taking the money due them. Charles Hood, of Puyallup, and, I think, John P. Hartman, now of Seattle, was of the party. Two trusted men with guns were sent along to guard the funds. In fact, all carried guns, and so the story went out that the bank had sent each depositor what was due him, and sent men along with guns to make him take it. This became an alleged witticism for a long time in Puyallup, but finally wore itself out. The result was that before four o'clock next morning all the depositors were paid, except four, who could not be found, and the next day the bank was open just the same as if nothing had happened, but all deposits were refused. The attempted holdup in Tacoma, resulted in nothing more serious than a scuffle, the loss of a collar button or two, with plenty of threats, but no action.

I took the train for Puyallup, went to bed at the usual hour, and slept soundly, as I always do.

As expected, in a few days a bank examiner came to take possession of the bank, having received direct orders from Washington from Mr. Eckles, the comptroller. In a week he was willing to quit, and asked that the bank should be turned over to the directors, and was ordered to do so. The affairs of the bank were closed up without litigation, but the capital was gone, and all that was left was the furniture and the charter, which is held to be valid to this day, and so it would seem I am yet the president of the First National Bank of Puyallup, and have been for nearly twenty years.

A few years ago the late Charles Fogg, of Tacoma, acting as an attorney for a group of capitalists, undertook to marshal the scattered and really worthless stock with a view to rehabilitate the bank and save the name, but were met by some obstinate stockholders who [Pg 238] refused to either co-operate or dispose of their holdings and so the bank sleeps though not dead. Possibly when the "Rip Van Winkle sleep" has lapsed and when the little city of Puyallup has reached the twenty-thousand mark of inhabitants and one or two more of the recalcitrant stockholders die (one of the chief obstructionists died since the attempt was made), the bank may reappear as one of the institutions of the rising city of Puyallup.

CHAPTER XL.

THE KLONDIKE VENTURE.

After the failure of the hop business, I undertook a venture to the mines of the north. This resulted in a real live adventure of exciting experience.

I had lived in the old Oregon country forty-four years and had never seen a mine. Mining had no attraction for me, any more than corner lots in new, embryo cities. I did not understand the value of either, and left both severely alone. But when my accumulations had all been swallowed up, the land I had previously owned gone into other hands, and, in fact, my occupation gone, I concluded to take a chance in a mining country; matters could not well be much worse, and probably could be made better, and so in the spring of 1898 I made my first trip over the Chilcoot Pass, and then down the Yukon River to Dawson in a flatboat, and ran the famous White Horse Rapids with my load of vegetables for the Klondike miners.

One may read of the Chilcoot Pass the most graphic descriptions written, and yet when he is up against the experience of crossing, he will find the difficulties more formidable than his wildest fancy or expectation had pictured. I started in with fifteen tons of freight, and got through with nine. On one stretch of 2,000 feet I paid forty dollars a ton freight, and I knew of others paying more. The trip for a part of the way reminded me of the scenes on the Plains in 1852—such crowds that they jostled each other on the several parallel trails where there was room for more than one track. At the pass, most of the travel came upon one track, and so steep that the ascent could only be made by cutting steps in the ice and snow—1,500 in all. [Pg 239]

Frequently every step would be full, while crowds jostled each other at the foot of the ascent to get into the single file, each man carrying from one hundred (it was said) to two hundred pounds pack on his back. Nevertheless, after all sorts of experiences, I arrived in Dawson, with nine tons of my outfit, sold my fresh potatoes at $36.00 a bushel and other things in like proportionate prices and in two weeks started up the river, homeward bound, with two hundred ounces of Klondike gold in my belt. But four round trips in two years satisfied me that I did not want any more of like experience. Then was when my mind would run on this last venture, the monument expedition, while writing the Reminiscences, [21] a part of which are elsewhere to be found in this volume. Had it not been for the loss of my business, it is doubtful if I ever would have settled down to this work, and so, maybe, the loss was a blessing in disguise. Anyway, no happier years of my life were passed than while engaged in writing it.

As I have said, the trips to the Klondike became real adventures. Fortunately detained for a couple of days, I escaped the avalanche that buried fifty-two people in the snow, and passed by the morgue the second day after the catastrophe on my way to the summit, and doubtless over the bodies of many unknown dead, imbedded so deeply in the snow that it was utterly impossible to recover them.

The Klondike Team.

I received a good ducking in my first passage through the White Horse Rapids, and vowed I would not go through there again, but I did, the very next trip that same year, and came out of it dry; then when going down the thirty-mile river, it did seem as though we could not escape being dashed upon the rocks, but somehow or another got through safely while the bank of that river was strewed with wrecks, and the waters had swallowed up many victims. When the Yukon proper was reached, the current was not so swift but the shoals were numerous, and more than once we were "hung up" on the bar, and always with an uncertainty as to how we would get off. In all of this experience of the two trips by the scows no damage resulted, except once when a hole was jammed into the scow, and we thought we were "goners" certain, but effected a landing so quickly as to unload our cargo dry. I now blame myself for taking such risks, but curiously enough I must admit that I enjoyed it, sustained, no doubt, with the high hopes of coming out [Pg 241]

with "my pile." But fate or something else was against me, for the after mining experience swept all the accumulation away "slick as a mitten," as the old saying goes, and I came out over the rotten ice of the Yukon in April of 1901 to stay, and to vow I never wanted to see another mine, or visit another mining country. Small wonder, you may say, when I write, that in two weeks' time after arriving home I was able to, and did celebrate our golden wedding with the wife of fifty years and enjoyed the joys of a welcome home even if I did not have my pockets filled with gold. I had then passed the seventy-year mark, and thought my "pet project," as some people call it, of marking the old Oregon Trail, was hung up indefinitely, but the sequel is shown in what followed and is the answer to my foreboding. I am now at this writing past the eighty-fifth year mark, and cannot see but I am as strong as when I floated down the Yukon in a flatboat, or packed my goods over the Chilcoot Pass, or drove my ox team over the summit of the Rocky Mountains on my recent trip to mark the historic Oregon Trail.

THE DREAM OF THE STAR.

[A song of the Oregon Trail. Dedicated to Ezra Meeker, Pioneer.]

I

A song for the men who blazed the way!
With hearts that would not quail;
They made brave quest of the wild Northwest,
They cut the Oregon trail.

Back of them beckoned their kith and kin
And all that they held their own;
Front of them spread the wilderness dread,
And ever the vast unknown.

But ever they kept their forward course!
And never they thought to lag,
For over them flew the Red, White and Blue
And the dream of a star for the flag!

II

A cheer for the men who cut the trail!
With souls as firm as steel
And fiery as wrath they hewed the path
For the coming Commonweal.

And close on the heels of the pioneers
The eager throng closed in
And followed the road to a far abode.
An Empire new to win.

And so they wrought at the end of the trail,
As ever must brave men do,
Till out of the dark there gleamed a spark,
And the dream of the star came true.

III

A toast to the men who made the road!
And a health to the men who dwell
In the great new land by the heroes planned,
Who have builded it wide and well!

The temple stands where the pine tree stood,
And dim is the ancient trail,
But many and wide are the roads that guide
And staunch are the ships that sail!

For the land is a grand and goodly land,
And its fruitful fields are tilled
By the sons who see on the flag of the free
The dream of the star fulfilled!

ROBERTUS LOVE.

FOOTNOTE:

[21] "Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound," 600 pages, $3.00. Address Ezra Meeker, 1201 38th Ave. N., Seattle, Wash.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE OX.

The ox is passing; in fact, has passed. Like the old-time spinning-wheel and the hand loom, that are only to be seen as mementos of the past, or the quaint old cobbler's bench with its hand-made lasts and shoe pegs, or the heavy iron bubbling mush pots on the crane in the chimney corner; like the fast vanishing of the old-time men and women of sixty years or more ago—all are passing, to be laid aside for the new ways, and the new actors on the scenes of life. While these ways and these scenes and these actors have had their day, yet their experiences and the lesson taught are not lost to the world, although at times almost forgotten.

The difference between a civilized and an untutored people lies in the application of these experiences; while the one builds upon the foundations of the past, which engenders hope and ambition for the future, the other has no past, nor aspirations for the future. As reverence for the past dies out in the breasts of a generation, so likewise patriotism wanes. In the measure that the love of the history of the past dies, so likewise do the higher aspirations for the future. To keep the flame of patriotism alive we must keep the memory of the past vividly in mind.

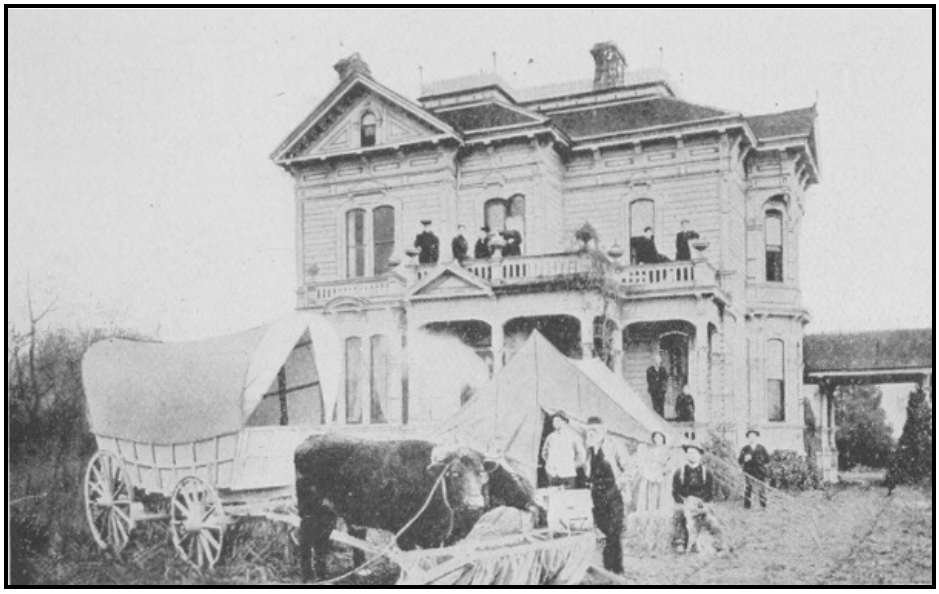
Bearing these thoughts in mind, this expedition to perpetuate the memory of the old Oregon Trail was undertaken. And there was this further thought, that here was this class of heroic men and women who fought a veritable battle—a battle of peace, to be sure, yet as brave a battle as any ever fought by those who faced the cannon's mouth—a battle that was fraught with as momentous results as any of the great battles of grim war—a battle that wrested half a continent from the native race and from a mighty nation contending for mastery in the unknown regions of [Pg 244] the West—whose fame was scantily acknowledged, whose name was already almost forgotten, and whose track, the battle-ground of peace, was on the verge of impending oblivion. Shall this become an established fact? The answer to this is this expedition, to perpetuate the memory of the old Oregon Trail, and to honor the intrepid pioneers who made it and saved this great region —the "Old Oregon Country"—for American rule.

The ox team was chosen as a typical reminder of pioneer days, and as an effective instrument to attract attention, arouse enthusiasm, and as a help to secure aid to forward the work of marking the old Trail, and erecting monuments in centers of population.

The team consisted of one seven-year-old ox, Twist, and one unbroken range five-year-old steer, Dave. When we were ready to start, Twist weighed 1,470 and Dave 1,560 pounds, respectively. This order of weight was soon changed. In three months' time Twist gained 130 and Dave lost 10 pounds. All this time I fed with a lavish hand all the rolled barley I dare and all the hay they would eat. During that time thirty-three days lapsed in which we did not travel, being engaged either arranging for the erection or dedication of monuments.

The wagon is new woodwork throughout except one hub, which did service across the plains in 1853. The hub bands, boxes and other irons are from two old-time wagons that crossed the plains in 1853, and differ some in size and shape; hence the fore and hind wheel hubs do not match. The axles are wood, with the old-time linch pins and steel skeins, involving the use of tar and the tar bucket. The bed is of the old style "prairie schooner," so called, fashioned as a boat, like those of "ye olden times." I crossed Snake River in two places in 1852, with all I possessed (except the oxen and cows), including the running gear of the wagon, in a wagon-box not as good as this one shown in the illustration.

In one respect the object was attained, that of attracting attention, with results in part wholly unexpected. I had scarcely driven the outfit away from my own dooryard till the work of defacing [Pg 245] the wagon and wagon cover, and even the nice map of the old Trail, began. First, I noticed a name or two written on the wagon-bed, then a dozen or more, all stealthily placed there, until the whole was so closely covered there was no room for more. Finally the vandals began carving initials on the wagon bed, cutting off pieces to carry away. Eventually I put a stop to it by employing a special police, posting notices, and nabbing some in the very act.



Ezra Meeker's Homestead, Puyallup, Washington; Camp No. 1, the Oregon Trail Monument Expedition.

Give me Indians on the plain to contend with, give me fleas—ah, yes, the detested sage brush ticks to burrow in your flesh—but deliver me from the degenerates who are cheap notoriety seekers.

Many good people have thought there was some organization behind this work, or that there had been Government aid secured. To all of this class, and to those who may read these lines, I will quote from the cards issued at the outset: "The expense of this expedition to perpetuate the memory of the old Oregon Trail, by erecting stone monuments is borne by myself except such voluntary aid as may be given by those taking an interest in the work, and you are respectfully solicited to contribute such sum as may be convenient." The use of these cards was soon discontinued, however. After leaving Portland no more contributions were solicited or in fact received for the general expense of the expedition, and only donations for local monuments, to be expended by local committees were taken. I found this course necessary to disarm criticism of the inveterate croakers, more interested in searching some form of criticism than in lending a helping hand.

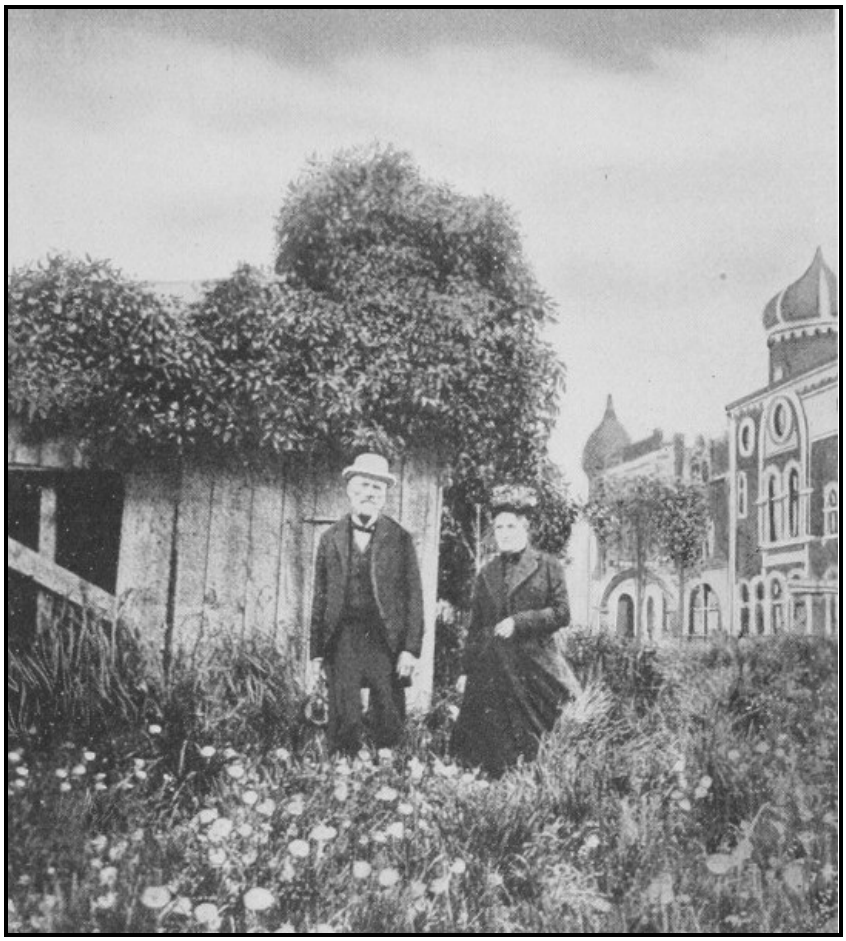
[Pg 246]

To my appeal a generous response has been made, however, as attested by the line of monuments between Puget Sound and the Missouri River, a brief account of which, with incidents of the trip made by me with an ox team, will follow.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE START.

Camp No. 1 was in my front dooryard at Puyallup, Washington, a town established on my own homestead nearly forty years ago, on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, nine miles southeast of Tacoma, and thirty miles south of Seattle, Washington. In platting the town I dedicated a park and called it Pioneer Park, and in it are the remains of our ivy-covered cabin, where the wife of fifty-eight years and I, with our growing family, spent so many happy hours. In this same town I named the principal thoroughfare Pioneer Avenue, and a short street abutting the park Pioneer Way, hence the reader may note it is not a new idea to perpetuate the memory of the pioneers.

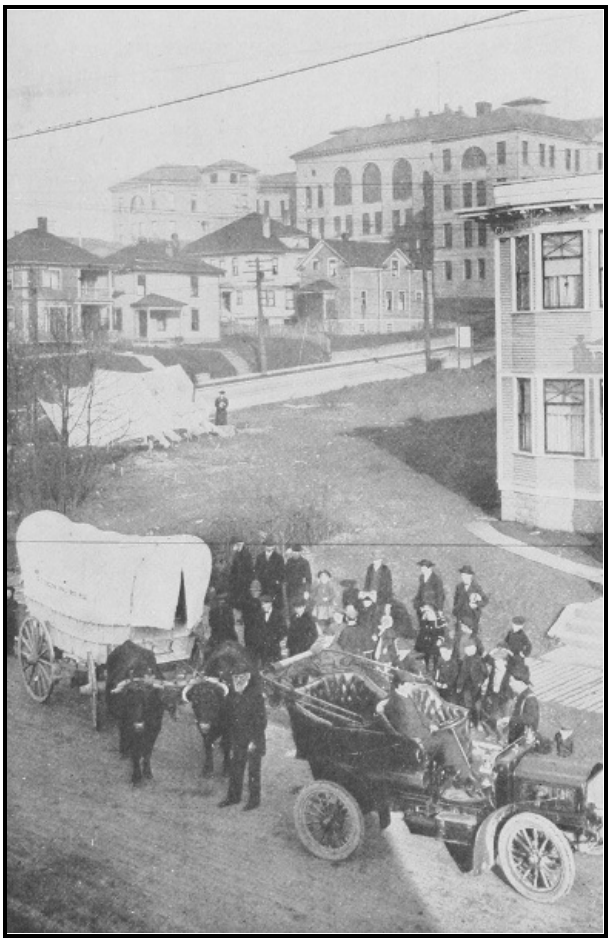


The Ivy-Covered Cabin, the First House in Puyallup; the Early Home of Ezra Meeker.

No piece of machinery ever runs at the start as well as after trial; therefore Camp No. 1 was maintained several days to mend up the weak points, and so after a few days of trial everything was pronounced in order, and Camp No. 2 was pitched in the street in front of the Methodist church of the town, and a lecture was delivered in the church for the benefit of the expedition. [Pg 248]

I drove to Seattle, passing through the towns of Sumner, Auburn and Kent, lecturing in each place, with indifferent success, as the people seemed to pay more attention to the ox team than they did to me, and cared more to be in the open, asking trivial questions, than to be listening to the story of the Oregon Trail. However, when I came to count the results I found ninety-two dollars in my pocket, but also found out that I could not lecture and make any headway in the work of getting monuments erected; that I must remain in the open, where I could meet all the people and not merely a small minority, and so the lecture scheme was soon after abandoned.

Then I thought to arouse an interest and secure some aid in Seattle, where I had hosts of friends and acquaintances, but nothing came out of the effort—my closest friends trying to dissuade me from going—and, I may say, actually tried to convince others that it would not be an act of friendship to lend any aid to the enterprise. What, for lack of a better name, I might call a benign humor underlay all this solicitude. I knew, or thought I knew, my powers of physical endurance to warrant undertaking the ordeal; that I could successfully make the trip, but my closest friends were the most obdurate, and so after spending two weeks in Seattle I shipped my outfit by steamer to Tacoma. Conditions there were much the same as at Seattle. A pleasant incident, however, broke the monotony. Henry Hewitt, of Tacoma, drove up alongside my team, then standing on Pacific Avenue, and said, "Meeker, if you get broke out there on the Plains, just telegraph me for money to come back on." I said no, "I would rather hear you say to telegraph for money to go on with." "All right," came the response, "have it that way then," and drove off, perhaps not afterwards giving the conversation a second thought until he received my telegram, telling him I had lost an ox and that I wanted him to send me two hundred dollars. As related elsewhere, the response came quick, for the next day I received the money. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." [Pg 250]



The Old and the New; Camp in Seattle in Background; High School Building in the Farther Background.

Somehow no serious thought ever entered my mind to turn back after once started, no more than when the first trip of 1852 was made.

Almost everyone has just such an experience in life, and, after looking back over the vista of years, wonder why. In this case I knew it was a case of persistence only, to succeed in making the trip, but of course could not know as to the results; but there was more than this: I simply wanted to do it, and having once resolved to do it, nothing but utter physical disability could deter me.

From Tacoma I shipped by steamer to Olympia.

The terminus of the old Trail is but two miles distant from Olympia, at Tumwater, the extreme southern point of Puget Sound, and where the waters of the Des Chutes River mingles with the salt waters of the Pacific through the channels of Puget Sound, Admiralty Inlet and Straits of Fuca, 150 miles distant. Here was where the first American party of home builders rested and settled in 1845 and became the end of the Trail, where land and water travel meet. At this point I set a post, and subsequently arranged for an inscribed stone to be planted to permanently mark the spot.

I quote from my journal: "Olympia, February 19th, 1906.—Spent the day canvassing for funds for the monument, giving tickets for the lecture in the evening in return; what with the receipts at the door and collections, found I had $42.00—$21.00 of which was given to Allen Weir for benefit of monument fund."

OUT ON THE TRAIL.

"Camp 10, Tenino, Feb. 20th.—Went to Tenino on train to arrange for meeting and for monument; hired horse team to take outfit to Tenino, 16 miles, and drove oxen under the yoke; went into camp near site of the monument to be erected about 3 p. m."

"21st.—A red-letter day; drove over to the stone quarry and hauled monument over to site, where workman followed and put same in place. This monument was donated by the Tenino Quarry Company and is inscribed, 'Old Oregon Trail, 1845-53.' At 2 o'clock the stores were closed, the school children in a body came over and nearly the whole population turned out to the dedication of the first monument on the Trail. Lectured in the evening to a good house—had splendid vocal music. Receipts $16.00." [Pg 251]

The reader will note quotation from my journal, "hired horse team to take outfit to Tenino," and wonder why I hired a team. I will tell you. Dave, the so-called ox, was not an ox but simply an unruly Montana five-year-old steer and as mean a brute as ever walked on four legs. I dare not entrust the driving to other hands, and must go ahead to arrange for the monument and the lecture. Dave would hook and kick and do anything and all things one would not want him to do, but to behave himself was not a part of his disposition. Besides, he would stick his tongue out

from the smallest kind of exertion. At one time I became very nearly discouraged with him. He had just been shipped in off the Montana cattle range and had never had a rope on him—unless it was when he was branded—and like a great big overgrown booby of a boy, his flesh was flabby and he could not endure any sort of exertion without discomfort. This is the ox that finally made the round trip and that bore his end of the yoke from the tide waters of the Pacific to the tide waters of the Atlantic, at the Battery, New York City, and to Washington City to meet the President. He finally became subdued, though not conquered; to this day I do not trust his heels, though he now seldom threatens with his horns. He weighed in Washington City when viewed by the President 1,900 pounds—330 pounds more than he did when I first put him under the yoke twenty-two months before. [22] The ox "Twist," also shown in the illustration, suddenly died [Pg 253] August 9, 1906, and was buried within a few rods of the Trail, as told in another chapter. It took two months to a day before I could find a mate for the Dave ox, and then had to take another five-year-old steer off the cattle range of Nebraska. This steer, Dandy, evidently had never been handled, but he came of good stock and, with the exception of awkwardness, gave me no serious trouble. Dandy was purchased out of the stock yards of Omaha, weighed 1,470 pounds, and the day before he went to see the President tipped the scales at the 1,760-pound notch and has proven to be a faithful, serviceable ox.

Dedicating Monument at Tenino, Washington.

CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON.

At Chehalis a point was selected in the center of the street at the park, and a post set to mark the spot where the monument is to stand. The Commercial Club undertook the work, but were not ready to erect and dedicate, as a more expensive monument than one that could be speedily obtained would be provided as an ornament to the park.

I vividly recollected this section of the old Trail, having, in company with a brother, packed my blankets and "grub" on my back over it in May, 1853, and camped on it nearby over night, under the sheltering, drooping branches of a friendly cedar tree. We did not carry tents on such a trip, but slept out under the open canopy of heaven, obtaining such shelter as we could from day to day.

It is permissible to note the liberality of H. C. Davis, of Claquato, who provided a fund of $50.00 to purchase one ox for the expedition, the now famous ox Dave that made the round trip to the Atlantic and return.

JACKSONS.

John R. Jackson was the first American citizen to settle north of the Columbia River. One of the daughters, Mrs. Ware, accompanied by her husband, indicated the spot where the monument [Pg 254] should be erected, and a post was planted. A touching incident was that Mrs. Ware was requested to put the post in place and hold it while her husband tamped the earth around it, which she did with tears streaming from her eyes at the thought that at last her pioneer father's place in history was to be recognized. A stone was ordered at once, to soon take the place of the post.

TOLEDO, WASHINGTON.

Toledo, the last place to be reached on the old Trail in Washington, is on the Cowlitz, a mile from the landing where the pioneers left the river on the overland trail to the Sound. Here, later, the citizens erected a suitable monument.

PORTLAND, OREGON.

From Toledo I shipped by river steamer the whole outfit, and took passage with my assistants to Portland, thus reversing the order of travel in 1853, accepting the use of steam instead of the brawn of stalwart men and Indians to propel the canoe, and arrived on the evening of March 1, and on the morning of the 2nd pitched my tent in the heart of the city on a beautiful vacant lot, the property of Jacob Kamm. I remained in camp here until the morning of March 9, to test the question of securing aid for the expedition.

Except for the efforts of that indefatigable worker, George H. Himes, secretary of the Oregon Pioneer Association since 1886, and assistant secretary of the Oregon Historical Society, with headquarters in Portland, no helping hand was extended. Not but that the citizens took a lively interest in the "novel undertaking" in this "unique outfit," yet the fact became evident that only the few believed the work could be successfully done by individual effort, and that Government aid should be invoked. The prevailing opinion was voiced by a prominent citizen, a trustee of a church, who voted against allowing the use of the church for a lecture for the benefit of the expedition, when he said that he "did not want to do anything to encourage that old man to go out on the Plains to die." Notwithstanding this sentiment, through Mr. Himes' efforts nearly $200 was contributed. [Pg 255]

March 10, at 7:00 a. m., embarked at Portland on the steamer Bailey Gatzert for The Dalles, which place was reached at night, but enlivened by a warm reception from the citizens awaiting my arrival, who conducted us to a camping place that had been selected.

Upon this steamer one can enjoy all the luxuries of civilized life, a continuous trip now being made through the Government locks at the Cascades. The tables are supplied with all the delicacies the season affords, with clean linen for the beds, and obsequious attendants to supply the wants of travelers.

"What changes time has wrought," I exclaimed. "Can it be the same Columbia River which I traversed fifty-four years ago? Yes, there are the mighty mountains, the wonderful waterfalls, the sunken forests, each attesting the identity of the spot, but what about the conditions? The answer can be found in the chapter elsewhere in this work, "Floating Down the River," illustrating the mighty changes of fifty-six years, when as an emigrant I passed through this gap of the Cascades in a flatboat, on the waters of the great river."

FOOTNOTE:

[22] Finally 2,375 pounds at the age of 14, when he was mounted for preservation in history.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE DALLES, OREGON.

I quote from my journal:

"The Dalles, Oregon, Camp No. 16, March 10.—Arrived last night all in a muss, with load out of the wagon, but the mate had his men put the bed on, and a number of the willing boys helped to tumble all loose articles into the wagon while Goebel arranged them, leaving the boxes for a second load. Drove nearly three-quarters of a mile to a camping ground near the park, selected by the citizens; surprised to find the streets muddy. Cattle impatient and walked very fast, necessitating my tramping through the mud at their heads. Made second load while Goebel put up the tent, and went to bed at 10:00 o'clock, which was as soon as things were arranged for the night. No supper or even tea, as we did not build a fire. It was clear last night, but raining this morning, which turned to sleet and snow at 9:00 o'clock.

[Pg 256]

"March 11.—Heavy wind last night that threatened to bring cold weather; ice formed in the camp half an inch thick; damper of stove out of order, which, with the wind, drove the smoke out of the stove and filled the tent full of smoke, making life miserable. In consequence of the weather, the dedication ceremonies were postponed."

Prior to leaving home I had written to the ladies of the landmark committee that upon my arrival at The Dalles I would be pleased to have their co-operation to secure funds to erect a monument in their city. What should they do but put their heads together and provide one already inscribed and in place and notify me that I had been selected to deliver the dedicatory address, and that it was expected the whole city would turn out to witness the ceremonies. But, alas, the fierce cold wind spoiled all their well-laid plans, for the dedication had to be postponed. Finally, upon short notice, the stone was duly dedicated on the 12th of March, with a few hundred people in attendance with their wraps and overcoats.

Before leaving Seattle I had the oxen shod, for which I was charged the unmerciful price of $15, but they did such a poor job that by the time I arrived at The Dalles all the shoes but one were off the Dave ox, and several lost off Twist, and the remainder loose, and so I was compelled to have the whole of the work done over again at The Dalles.

This time the work was well done, all the shoes but one staying on for a distance of 600 miles, when we threw the Dave ox to replace the lost shoe, there being no stocks at hand. The charge at The Dalles was $10, thus making quite an inroad upon the scant funds for the expedition. I felt compelled to have them again shod at Kemmerer, Wyoming, 848 miles out from The Dalles, but soon lost several shoes, and finally at Pacific Springs had the missing shoes replaced by inexperienced hands, who did a good job, though, for the shoes stayed on until well worn.

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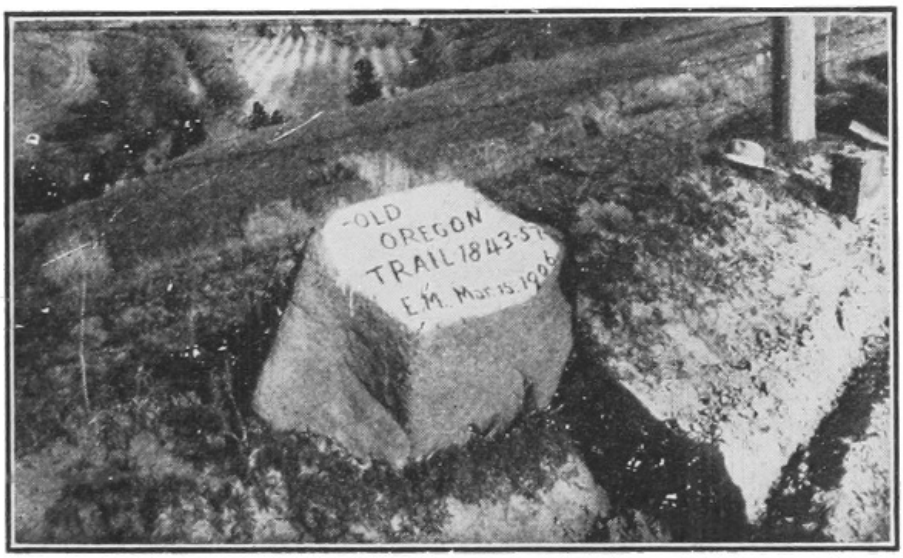
OUT FROM THE DALLES.

At 3:30 p. m. on March 14 I drove out from The Dalles. I have always felt that here was the real starting point, as from here there could be no more shipping, but all driving. By rail, it is 1,734 miles from The Dalles to Omaha, where our work on the old Trail ends. By wagon road the distance is greater, but not much, probably 1,800 miles. The load was heavy as well as the roads. With a team untrained to the road, and one ox unbroken, and no experienced ox driver, and the grades heavy, small wonder if a feeling of depression crept over me. On some long hills we could move up but one or two lengths of the wagon and team at a time, and on level roads, with the least warm sun, the unbroken ox would poke out his tongue. He was like the young sprig just out of school, with muscles soft and breath short.



The First Boulder Marked.

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CAMP 27—MARCH 27.

As we drew into camp a young man with eight horses approached the creek. "What do you do with so many horses, lad?" I queried, as the drove passed with their heads down and traces dangling around their bodies. "Why, I have been harrowing in wheat today, up on the hill; it's pretty tough work at that." "No, you see our horses are not large," responding to an inquiry about eight horses to one harrow, "and besides you see they are not in very good condition; the fact is, our feed has run short and we have put them on short rations," and the horses looked it, with their heads down as they came away from the creek. "Why, we usually harrow 35 acres for a full day's work, sometimes; but 40 acres is called a big day's run." "Yes, I can plow seven acres a day, which is a fair day's work—too much, perhaps, with this team, but with a good, strong team one can easily turn over eight acres." "Let me see," he continued, in response to further inquiries; "let me see. I think with what winter wheat we have in there'll be over 400 acres; we expect a yield of 20 bushels an acre, but some have got as high as 30." "Why, we got a dollar last year right here," this in response to a question as to price.

A nearby neighbor who had 600 acres in wheat said they expected a good yield this year as there "had been 14 inches rainfall already for the season, while the average was but 10."

"Well, of course it's a pretty good business with wheat at a dollar," which was in evidence at the next camp where a new fifteen hundred dollar automobile was snugly housed ready for use. This man had 1,200 acres of land. "Why, yes, of course we have neighbors; Neighbor R—— lives but two miles off and then there's Neighbor B—— not three."

When reminded that when I was a boy anyone living three miles away was considered out of the neighborhood: "Yes, but things is different in Oregon," which I readily admitted, having just passed a schoolhouse with but seven scholars, and remembered the six hundred or eight hundred and twelve hundred acre farms we had passed. [Pg 259]

I was also reminded of my boyhood days when father spoke approvingly if I plowed two acres a day, and to harrow ten acres was the biggest kind of a day's work. I queried in my mind which was the best condition of things, the big farms and farming a business proposition, or the small farms with the home surroundings. I had been told that "that man over there has been there twenty-six years and don't raise fruit enough for his own use." Money-making was his object and he had no time to "fool with fruit trees or garden truck." Then I was reminded of the time we cut the wheat with a sickle, or maybe with the hand cradle, and thresh it out with horses on the barn floor. Sometimes we had a fanning mill, and how it would make my arms ache to turn the crank; then at other times if a stiff breeze sprung up the wheat and chaff would be shaken loosely from an elevation and the chaff would be blown away, or if all other means failed two stout arms at either end of a blanket or a sheet would move it as a fan to "clean" the wheat.

Now we not only see the gang plows with eight horses plowing eight acres a day and hear that the gasoline traction engine is doing even better than that, and not only see the harrow cover 40 acres a day instead of 10, but see the great combination harvester garner thirty acres a day and instead of the flail, thresh it as well and sack it ready for the mill or warehouse—no shocking, no stacking or housing—all in one operation, preparing the grain ready for market. What a change this, in three-quarters of a century, the span of one life.

As we traveled eastward and the Blue Mountains came in distant view and half a day's brisk travel brought us within close proximity of wheat fields well up to approaching the snow line, the country became less broken, the soil seemed better, the rainfall, we were told, being better, the yield of wheat greater and fifty bushels is reported as not an unusual crop. We began to see the red barns, the comfortable farmhouse (wide apart though, for the farms are large) and ten horses to the team the rule and oftentime three teams in a field each turning three furrows instead of one as in the olden times. Finally as we approached the Walla Walla Valley the scene changed, the large farms disappeared, the small holdings became the rule and orchards were to be seen everywhere as we pass that historic point, the site of the tragedy of Whitman, and are soon in camp in the very heart of the thriving city of Walla Walla. [Pg 260]

PENDLETON, OREGON.

A fourteen days' drive to Pendleton, Oregon, 138½ miles, without meeting any success in interesting people to help in the work, was not inspiring. On this stretch, with two assistants, the Trail was marked with boulders and cedar posts at intersections with traveled roads, river crossings and noted camping places, but no center of population was encountered until I reached the town of Pendleton. Here the Commercial Club took hold with a will, provided the funds to inscribe a stone monument, which was installed, and on the 31st of March dedicated it, with over a thousand people present. Here one assistant was discharged, the camera and photo supplies stored, a small kodak purchased, and the load otherwise lightened by shipping tent, stove, stereopticon and other et ceteras over the Blue Mountains to La Grande.

On that evening I drove out six miles to the Indian school in a fierce wind and rain storm that set in soon after the dedication ceremonies, on my way over the Blue Mountains.

A night in the wagon without fire in cold weather and with scant supper was enough to cool one's ardor; but zero was reached when the next morning information was given out that eighteen inches of snow had fallen on the mountains. However, with the morning sun came a warm reception from the authorities of the school, a room with a stove in it allotted us, and a

command to help ourselves to fuel.

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THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

Before this last fall of snow some had said it would be impossible for me to cross, while others said it could be done, but that it would be a "hard job." So I thought best to go myself, investigate on the spot, and "not run my neck into a halter" (whatever that may mean) for lack of knowing at first hands. So that evening Meacham was reached by rail, and I was dumped off in the snow near midnight, no visible light in hotel nor track beaten to it, and again the ardor was cold—cool, cooler, cold.

Morning confirmed the story; twenty inches of snow had fallen, but was settling fast. A sturdy mountaineer, and one of long experience and an owner of a team, in response to my query if he could help me across with his team said, "Yes, it's possible to make it, but I warn you it's a hard job," and so the arrangement was at once made that the second morning after our meeting his team would leave Meacham on the way to meet me.

"But what about a monument, Mr. Burns?" I said. "Meacham is a historic place with Lee's [23] encampment in sight."

"We have no money," came the quick reply, "but plenty of brawn. Send us a stone and I'll warrant you the foundation will be built and the monument put in place."

A belated train gave opportunity to return at once to Pendleton. An appeal for aid to provide an inscribed stone for Meacham was responded to with alacrity, the stone ordered, and a sound night's sleep followed—ardor rising.

MEACHAM, OREGON.

I quote from my journal: "Camp No. 31, April 4 (1906).—We are now on the snow line of the Blue Mountains (8:00 p. m.), and am writing this by our first real out-of-door campfire, under the spreading boughs of a friendly pine tree. We estimate have driven twelve miles; started from the school at 7:00 (a. m.); the first three or four miles over a beautiful farming country, and then began climbing the foothills, up, up, up, four miles, and soon up again, reaching first snow at 3:00 o'clock. The long uphill pull fagged the ox Dave, so we had to wait on him, although I had given him an inch the advantage on the yoke."

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True to promise, the team met us, but not till we had reached the snow, axle deep, and had the shovel in use to clear the way. But by 3:00 p. m. we were safely encamped at Meacham, with the cheering news that the monument had arrived and could be dedicated the next day, and so the snowfall had proven a blessing in disguise, as otherwise there would not have been a monument provided for Meacham. Ardor warming.

But the summit had not been reached. The worst tug lay ahead of us. Casting all thoughts of this from mind, all hands turned to the monument, which by 11:00 o'clock was in place, the team hitched up, standing near it, and ready for the start as soon as the order was given. Everybody was out, the little school in a body, a neat speech was made by the orator from Pendleton, and the two teams to the one wagon moved on to the front to battle with the snow. And it was a battle. We read of the "last straw that broke the camel's back." I said, after we had gotten through, "I wonder if another flake of snow would have balked us?" But no one answered, and I took it for granted they didn't know. And so we went into camp on the hither side of the summit. Ardor warmer.

LA GRANDE, OREGON.

The sunshine that was let into our hearts at La Grande (Oregon) was refreshing. "Yes, we will have a monument," the response came, and they did, too, and dedicated it while I tarried. Ardor normal.

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LADD'S CANYON.

I again quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 34, April 11.—We left La Grande at 7:30 (a. m.) and brought an inscribed stone with us to set up at an intersection near the mouth of Ladd's Canyon, eight miles out of La Grande. At 1:00 o'clock the school nearby came in a body and several residents to see and hear. The children sang "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," after which I talked to them for a few moments. The exercises closed with all singing "America." We photographed the scene. Each child brought a stone and cast it upon the pile surrounding the base of the monument."

CAMP No. 34.

At this camp, on April 12, the Twist ox kicked me and almost totally disabled my right leg for a month, and probably has resulted in permanent injury. Much had to be left undone that otherwise would have been accomplished, but I am rejoiced that it was no worse and thankful to the kind

friends that worked so ardently to accomplish what has been done, an account of which follows.

BAKER CITY, OREGON.

The citizens of Baker City lent a willing ear to the suggestion to erect a monument on the high school ground to perpetuate the memory of the old Trail and to honor the pioneers who made it, although the trail is off to the north six miles. A fine granite shaft was provided and dedicated while I tarried, and an inscribed stone marker set in the Trail. Eight hundred school children contributed an aggregate of $60 to place a children's bronze tablet on this shaft. The money for this work was placed in the hands of the school directors. Two thousand people participated in the ceremony of dedication on the 19th, and all were proud of the work. A wave of genuine enthusiasm prevailed, and many of the audience lingered long after the exercises were over.

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OREGON TRAIL MONUMENTS.
Center, Baker City, Ore.; Upper Left, Boise, Idaho; Lower Left, Boulder Mark; Right, Ezra Meeker.

A photograph of the Old Timer was taken after the ceremonies of the dedication, and many a moistened eye attested the interest taken in the impromptu reunion. [Pg 265]

OLD MOUNT PLEASANT, OREGON.

Sixteen miles out from Baker City at Straw Ranch, set an inscribed stone at an important intersection. At Old Mount Pleasant I met the owner of the place where I wanted to plant the stone (always, though, in the public highway) and asked him to contribute, but he refused and treated me with scant courtesy. Thirteen young men and one lady, hearing of the occurrence, contributed the cost of the stone and $6 extra. The tent was filled with people until 9:00 o'clock at night. The next day while planting the stone, five young lads came along, stripped off their coats, and labored with earnestness until the work was finished. I note these incidents to show the interest taken by the people at large, of all classes.

DURKEE, OREGON.

The people of Durkee had "heard what was going on down the line," and said they were ready to provide the funds for a monument. One was ordered from the granite works at Baker City, and in due time was dedicated, but unfortunately I have no photograph of it. The stone was planted in the old Trail on the principal street of the village.

HUNTINGTON.

Huntington came next in the track where the Trail ran, and here a granite monument was erected and dedicated while I tarried, for which the citizens willingly contributed. Here seventy-six school children contributed their dimes and half-dimes, aggregating over $4.

After the experience in Baker City, Oregon, where, as already related, 800 children contributed, and at Boise, Idaho, to be related later, over a thousand laid down their offerings, I am convinced that this feature of the work is destined to give great results. It is not the financial aid I refer to, but the effect it has upon children's minds to set them to thinking of this subject of patriotic sentiment that will endure in after life. Each child in Baker City, or in Huntington, or Boise, or other places where these contributions have been made, feel they have a part ownership in the shaft they helped to pay for, and a tender care for it, that will grow stronger as the child grows older. [Pg 266]

It was not a question at Vale, Oregon, as to whether they would erect a monument, but as to what kind, that is, what kind of stone. Local pride prevailed, and a shaft was erected out of local material, which was not so suitable as granite, but the spirit of the people was manifested. Exactly seventy children contributed to the fund for erecting this monument (which was placed on the court house grounds) and participated in the exercises of dedication on April 30.

FOOTNOTE:

[23] Jason Lee, the first missionary to the Oregon country with four assistants, camped here in September, 1834, at, as he supposed, the summit of the Blue Mountains, and ever after the little opening in the forests of the mountains has been known as Lee's encampment.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OLD FORT BOISE.

Erecting a monument in Vale, as related in the last chapter, finished the work in Oregon, as we soon crossed Snake River just below the mouth of Boise, and were landed on the historic spot of Old Fort Boise, established by the Hudson Bay Company in September, 1834. This fort was established for the purpose of preventing the success of the American venture at Fort Hall, a post established earlier in 1834 by Nathaniel J. Wyethe. Wyethe's venture proved disastrous, and the fort soon passed into his rival's hands, the Hudson Bay Company, thus for the time being securing undisputed British rule for the whole of that vast region later known as the Inland Empire, then, the Oregon Country.

Some relics of the old fort at Boise were secured, arrangements made for planting a double inscribed stone to mark the site of the fort and the Trail, and afterwards, through the liberality of the citizens of Boise City, a stone was ordered and doubtless before this put in place. [Pg 267]

PARMA, IDAHO.

The first town encountered in Idaho was Parma, where the contributions warranted shipping an inscribed stone from Boise City, which was done, and is doubtless ere this in place, but no photograph of it is at hand.

BOISE, IDAHO.

At Boise, the capital city of Idaho, there were nearly 1,200 contributions to the monument fund by the pupils of the public schools, each child signing his or her name to the roll, showing the school and grade to which the child belonged. These rolls with printed headlines were collected, bound together, and deposited with the archives of the Pioneer Society historical collection for future reference and as a part of the history of the monument. Each child was given a signed certificate showing the amount of the contribution. The monument stands on the state house grounds and is inscribed as the children's offering to the memory of the pioneers. Over three thousand people attended the dedication service.

The citizens of Boise also paid for the stone planted on the site of the old fort and also for one planted on the Trail, near the South Boise school buildings, all of which were native granite shafts, of which there is a large supply in the quarries of Idaho very suitable for such work.

TWIN FALLS, IDAHO.

At Twin Falls, 537 miles out from The Dalles, funds were contributed to place an inscribed stone in the track of the old Trail a mile from the city, and a granite shaft was accordingly ordered.

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AMERICAN FALLS, IDAHO.

Upon my arrival at American Falls, Idaho, 649 miles out from The Dalles, a combination was quickly formed to erect a cement shaft twelve feet high to plant in the track of the Trail, and a park was to be dedicated where the monument is to stand and a section of the old Trail preserved.

POCATELLO, IDAHO.

The Ladies' Study Club has undertaken the work of erecting a monument at Pocatello, Idaho, 676 miles out from The Dalles. I made twenty-three addresses to the school children on behalf of the work before leaving, and have the satisfaction of knowing the undertaking has been vigorously prosecuted, and that a fine monument has been placed on the high school grounds.

SODA SPRINGS, IDAHO.

At Soda Springs, 739 miles from The Dalles, the next place where an attempt was made to erect a monument, a committee of citizens undertook the work, collected the funds to erect a monument by one of those beautiful bubbling soda springs, which is in the park and on the Trail.

MONTPELIER, IDAHO.

Montpelier proved no exception to what apparently had become the rule. A committee of three was appointed by the Commercial Club to take charge of the work of erecting a monument, a contribution from members and citizens solicited, nearly $30 collected and paid into the bank, and arrangements for increasing the contributions and completing the monument were made before the team arrived. A pleasant feature of the occasion was the calling of a meeting of the Woman's Club at the Hunter Hotel, where I was stopping, and a resolution passed to thoroughly canvass the town for aid in the work, and to interest the school children.

I quote from my journal:

"June 7.—Up at 4:30; started at 5:30; arrived at Montpelier 11:00 a. m. * * * A dangerous and exciting incident occurred this forenoon when a vicious bull attacked the team, first from one side and then the other, getting in between the oxen and causing them to nearly upset the wagon. I was finally thrown down in the melee, but escaped unharmed," and it was a narrow escape from being run over both by team and wagon.

THE WOUNDED BUFFALO.

This incident reminded me of a "scrape" one of our neighboring trains got into on the Platte in 1852 with a wounded buffalo. The train had encountered a large herd feeding and traveling at right angles to the road. The older heads of the party, fearing a stampede of their teams, had given orders not to molest the buffaloes, but to give their whole attention to the care of the teams. But one impulsive young fellow would not be restrained, and fired into the herd and wounded a large bull. Either in anger or from confusion, the mad bull charged upon a wagon filled with women and children and drawn by a team of mules. He became entangled in the harness and on the tongue between the mules. An eye-witness described the scene as "exciting for a while." It would be natural for the women to scream, the children to cry, and the men to halloa, but the practical question was how to dispatch the bull without shooting the mules as well. What, with multiplicity of counsel, the independent action of everyone, each having a plan of his own, there seemed certain to be some fatalities from the gun-shots of the large crowd of trainmen who had forgotten their own teams and rushed to the wagon in trouble. As in this incident of my own, just related, nothing was harmed, but when it was over all agreed it was past understanding how it came about there was no loss of life or bodily injury.

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The Old Oregon Trail.

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COKEVILLE, WYOMING.

Cokeville, 800¼ miles out on the Trail from The Dalles, and near the junction of the Sublette cut-off with the more southerly trail, resolved to have a monument, and arrangements were completed for erecting one of stone from a nearby quarry that will bear witness for many centuries.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

From Cokeville to Pacific Springs, just west of the summit, of the Rocky Mountains at South Pass, by the road and trail we traveled, is 158 miles. Ninety miles of this stretch is away from the sound of the locomotive, the click of the telegraph or the hello girl. It is a great extension of that grand mountain range, the Rockies, from six to seven thousand feet above sea level, with scant vegetable growth, and almost a solitude as to habitation, save as here and there a sheep-herder or his typical wagon might be discovered. The bold coyote, the simple antelope, and the cunning sage hen still hold their sway as they did sixty-three years before, when I first traversed the country. The old Trail is there in all its grandeur.

"Why mark that Trail!" I exclaim. Miles and miles of it worn so deep that centuries of storm will not efface it; generations may pass and the origin of the Trail become a legend, but the marks will be there to perplex the wondering eyes of those who people the continent centuries hence, aye, a hundred centuries, I am ready to say. We wonder to see it worn fifty feet wide and three feet deep, and hasten to take snap shots at it with kodak and camera. But what about it later, after we are over the crest of the mountain? We see it a hundred feet wide and fifteen feet deep, where the tramp of thousands upon thousands of men and women, and the hoofs of millions of animals and the wheels of untold numbers of vehicles have loosened the soil and the fierce winds [Pg 272] have carried it away, and finally we find ruts a foot deep worn into the solid rock.

"What a mighty movement, this, over the Old Oregon Trail!" we exclaim time and again, each time with greater wonderment at the marvels yet to be seen, and hear the stories of the few yet left of those who suffered on this great highway.

Nor do we escape from this solitude of the western slope till we have traveled 150 miles east from the summit, when the welcome black smoke of the locomotive is seen in the distance, at Caspar, a stretch of 250 miles of primitive life of "ye olden times" of fifty years ago.

Nature's freaks in the Rocky Mountains are beyond my power of description. We catch sight of one a few miles west of the Little Sandy, without name. We venture to call it Tortoise Rock, from the resemblance to that reptile, with head erect and extended. Farther on, as night approaches, we are in the presence of animals unused to the sight of man. I quote from my journal:

PACIFIC SPRINGS.

"Pacific Springs, Wyoming, Camp No. 79, June 20, 1906.—Odometer 958 (miles from The Dalles, Oregon). Arrived at 6:00 p. m., and camped near Halter's store and the P. O.; ice formed in camp during the night.

"Camp No. 79, June 21.—Remained in camp all day and got down to solid work on my new book, the title of which is not yet developed in my mind.

"Camp No. 79, June 22.—Remained in camp all day at Pacific Springs and searched for a suitable stone for a monument to be placed on the summit. After almost despairing, came to exactly what was wanted, and, although alone on the mountain side, exclaimed, 'That is what I want; that's it.' So a little later, after procuring help, we turned it over to find the both sides flat; with 26 inches face and 15 inches thick at one end and 14 inches wide and 12 inches thick at the other, one of Nature's own handiwork, as if made for this very purpose, to stand on the top of the [Pg 273] mountains for the centuries to come to perpetuate the memory of the generations that have passed. I think it is granite formation, but is mixed with quartz at large end and very hard. Replaced three shoes on the Twist ox and one on Dave immediately after dinner, and hitched the oxen to Mr. Halter's wagon, and with the help of four men loaded the stone, after having dragged it on the ground and rocks a hundred yards or so down the mountain side; estimated weight, 1,000 pounds."

Summit Monument in South Pass, Rocky Mountains.

"Camp No. 79, June 23.—Remained here in camp while inscribing the monument. There being no stone cutter here, the clerk of the store formed the letters on stiff past-boards and then cut them out to make a paper stencil, after which the shape of the letters was transferred to the stone by crayon marks. The letters were then cut out with the cold chisel deep enough to make a permanent inscription. The stone is so very hard that it required steady work all day to cut the twenty letters and figures, 'The Old Oregon Trail, 1843-47.' [Pg 274]

"Camp 80, June 24.—Odometer 970½. At 3:00 o'clock this afternoon erected the monument described on the summit of the south pass at a point on the Trail described by John Linn, civil engineer, at 42.21 north latitude, 108.53 west longitude, bearing N. 47, E. 240 feet from the ¼ corner between sections 4 and 5, T. 27 N., R. 101 W. of the 6th P. M. Elevation as determined by aneroid reading June 24, 1906, is 7,450.

"Mr. Linn informs me the survey for an irrigation ditch to take the waters of the Sweetwater River from the east slope of the range, through the south pass, to the west side, runs within a hundred feet of the monument.

"We drove out of Pacific Springs at 12:30, stopped at the summit to dedicate the monument, and at 3:40 left the summit and drove twelve miles to this point, called Oregon Slough, and put up the tent after dark."

The reader may think of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains as a precipitous defile through narrow canyons and deep gorges, but nothing is farther from the fact than such imagined conditions. One can drive through this pass for several miles without realizing he has passed the dividing line between the waters of the Pacific on the one side and of the Gulf of Mexico on the other, while traveling over a broad, open, undulating prairie the approach is by easy grades and the descent (going east) scarcely noticeable.

Certainly, if my memory is worth anything, in 1852 some of our party left the road but a short distance to find banks of drifted snow in low places in July, but none was in sight on the level of the road as we came along in June of 1906. This was one of the landmarks that looked familiar, as [Pg 275] all who were toiling west looked upon this spot as the turning point in their journey, and that they had left the worst of the trip behind them, poor, innocent souls as we were, not realizing that our mountain climbing in the way of rough roads only began a long way out west of the summit of the Rockies.

SWEETWATER.

The sight of Sweetwater River, twenty miles out from the pass, revived many pleasant memories and some that were sad. I could remember the sparkling, clear water, the green skirt of undergrowth along the banks and the restful camps as we trudged along up the streams so many years ago. And now I see the same channel, the same hills, and apparently the same waters swiftly passing; but where are the campfires; where the herd of gaunt cattle; where the sound of the din of bells; the hallowing for lost children; the cursing of irate ox drivers; the pleading for

mercy from some humane dame for the half-famished dumb brute; the harsh sounds from some violin in camp; the merry shouts of children; or the little groups off on the hillside to bury the dead? All gone. An oppressive silence prevailed as we drove down to the river and pitched our camp within a few feet of the bank where we could hear the rippling waters passing and see the fish leaping in the eddies. We had our choice of a camping place just by the skirt of refreshing green brush with an opening to give full view of the river. Not so in '52 with hundreds of camps ahead of you. One must take what he could get, and that in many cases would be far back from the water and removed from other conveniences.

The sight and smell of the carrion so common in camping places in our first trip was gone; no bleached bones even showed where the exhausted dumb brute had died; the graves of the dead emigrants had all been leveled by the hoofs of stock and the lapse of time. "What a mighty change!" I exclaimed. We had been following the old Trail for nearly 150 miles on the west slope of the mountains with scarce a vestige of civilization. Out of sight and hearing of railroads, [Pg 276] telegraphs, or telephones and nearly a hundred miles without a postoffice. It is a misnomer to call it a "slope." It is nearly as high an altitude a hundred miles west of the summit as the summit itself. The country remains as it was fifty-four years before. The Trail is there to be seen miles and miles ahead, worn bare and deep, with but one narrow track where there used to be a dozen, and with the beaten path so solid that vegetation has not yet recovered from the scourge of passing hoofs and tires of wagons years ago.

As in 1852 when the summit was passed, I felt that my task was much more than half done, though the distance was scarcely compassed. I felt we were entitled to a rest even though it was a solitude, and so our preparations were made for two days' rest if not recreation. The two days passed and we saw but three persons. We traveled a week on this stretch, to encounter five persons only, and to see but one wagon, but our guide to point the way was at hand all the time—a pioneer way a hundred feet wide and in places ten feet deep, we could not mistake. Our way from this Camp 81 on Sweetwater led us from the river and over hills for fifty miles before we were back to the river again. Not so my Trail of '52, for then we followed the river closer and crossed it several times, while part of the people went over the hills and made the second trail. It was on this last stretch we set our 1,000-mile post as we reached the summit of a very long hill, eighteen miles west of where we again encountered the river, saw a telegraph line, and a road where more than one wagon a week passed as like that we had been following so long.

SPLIT ROCK.

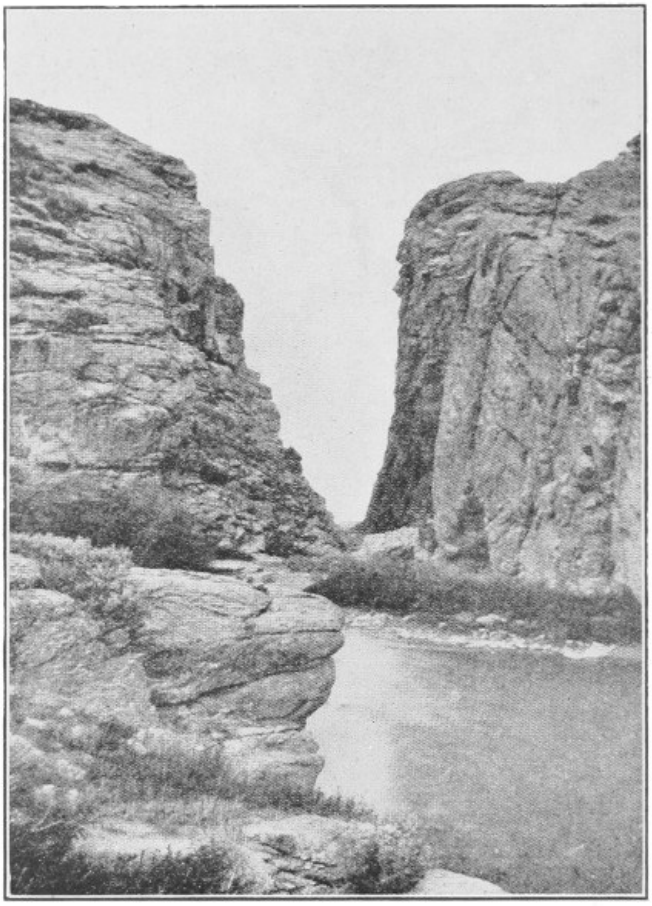
I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 85, June 30.—Odometer 1,044. About ten o'clock encountered a large number of big flies that ran the cattle nearly wild. We fought them off as best we could. I stood on the wagon tongue for miles so I could reach them with the whip-stock. The cattle were so excited, we did not [Pg 277] stop at noon, finding water on the way, but drove on through by two-thirty and camped at a farmhouse, the Split Rock postoffice, the first we had found since leaving Pacific Springs, the other side of the summit of South Pass and eighty-five miles distant."

"Split Rock" postoffice derives its name from a rift in the mountain a thousand feet or more high, as though a part of the range had been bodily moved a rod or so, leaving this perpendicular chasm through the range, which was narrow.

THE DEVIL'S GATE.

The Devil's Gate and Independence Rock, a few miles distant, are probably the two best known landmarks on the Trail—the one for its grotesque and striking scenic effect. Here, as at Split Rock, the mountain seems as if it had been split apart, leaving an opening a few rods wide, through which the Sweetwater River pours a veritable torrent. The river first approaches to within a few hundred feet of the gap, and then suddenly curves away from it, and after winding though the valley for a half a mile or so, a quarter of a mile distant, it takes a straight shot and makes the plunge through the canyon. Those who have had the impression they drove their teams through this gap are mistaken, for it's a feat no mortal man has done or can do, any more than they could drive up the falls of the Niagara.



Devil's Gate, Sweetwater.

This year, on my 1906 trip, I did clamber through on the left bank, over boulders head high, under shelving rocks where the sparrows' nests were in full possession, and ate some ripe gooseberries from the bushes growing on the border of the river, and plucked some beautiful wild roses—this on the second day of July, A. D. 1906. I wonder why those wild roses grow there where nobody will see them? Why these sparrows' nests? Why did this river go through this gorge instead of breaking the barrier a little to the south where the easy road runs? These questions run through my mind, and why I know not. The gap through the mountains looked [Pg 279] familiar as I spied it from the distance, but the roadbed to the right I had forgotten. I longed to see this place, for here, somewhere under the sands, lies all that was mortal of a brother, Clark Meeker, drowned in the Sweetwater in 1854 while attempting to cross the Plains; would I be able to see and identify the grave? No.

I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 85, July 2.—Odometer 1,059. This camp is at Tom Sun's place, the Sun postoffice, Wyoming, and is in Sec. 35, T. 29 N. R. 97, 6 P. M., and it is one-half mile to the upper end of the Devil's Gate, through which the Sweetwater runs. The passage is not more than 100 feet wide and is 1,300 feet through with walls 483 feet at highest point. The altitude is 5860.27, according to the United States geological survey marks. It is one of nature's marvels, this rift in the mountain to let the waters of the Sweetwater through. Mr. Tom Sun, or Thompson, has lived here thirty odd years and says there are numerous graves of the dead pioneers, but all have been leveled by the tramp of stock, 225,000 head of cattle alone having passed over the Trail in 1882 and in some single years over a half million sheep. But the Trail is deserted now, and scarcely five wagons pass in a week, with part of the roadbed grown up in grass. That mighty movement—tide shall we call it—of suffering humanity first going west, accompanied and afterwards followed by hundreds of thousands of stock, with the mightier ebb of millions upon millions of returning cattle and sheep going east, has all ceased, and now the road is a solitude save a few straggling wagons, or here and there a local flock driven to pasture. No wonder that we looked in vain for the graves of the dead with this great throng passing and repassing."

A pleasant little anecdote is told by his neighbors of the odd name of "Tom Sun," borne by that sturdy yeoman (a Swede, I think), and of whose fame for fair dealing and liberality I could hear [Pg 280] upon all sides. The story runs that when he first went to the bank, then and now sixty miles away, to deposit, the cashier asked his name and received the reply Thompson, emphasizing the last syllable pronounced with so much emphasis, that it was written Tom Sun, and from necessity a check had to be so signed, thus making that form of spelling generally known, and finally it was adopted as the name of the postoffice.

CHAPTER XLVI.

INDEPENDENCE ROCK.

"Camp No. 87, July 3, 1906.—Odometer 1,065, Independence Rock. We drove over to the 'Rock,' from the 'Devil's Gate,' a distance of six miles, and camped at 10:00 o'clock for the day."

Not being conversant with the work done by others to perpetuate their names on this famous boulder that covers about thirty acres, we groped our way among the inscriptions to find some of them nearly obliterated and many legible only in part, showing how impotent the efforts of individuals to perpetuate the memory of their own names, and, may I add, how foolish it is, in most cases, forgetting, as these individuals have, that it is actions, not words, even if engraved upon stone, that carry one's name down to future generations. We walked all the way around the stone, which was nearly a mile around, of irregular shape, and over a hundred feet high, the walls being so precipitous as to prevent ascending to the top except in two vantage points. Unfortunately, we missed the Fremont inscription made in 1842.

Of this inscription Fremont writes in his journal: "August 23 (1842). Yesterday evening we reached our encampment at Rock Independence, where I took some astronomical observations. Here, not unmindful of the custom of early travelers and explorers in our country, I engraved on [Pg 281] this rock of the Far West a symbol of the Christian faith. Among the thickly inscribed names, I made on the hard granite the impression of a large cross, which I covered with a black preparation of India rubber, well calculated to resist the influences of the wind and rain. It stands amidst the names of many who have long since found their way to the grave and for whom the huge rock is a giant gravestone.

"One George Weymouth was sent out to Maine by the Earl of Southampton, Lord Arundel, and others; and in the narrative of their discoveries he says: 'The next day we ascended in our pinnace that part of the river which lies more to the westward, carrying with us a cross—a thing never omitted by any Christian traveler—which we erected at the ultimate end of our route.' This was in the year 1605; and in 1842 I obeyed the feeling of early travelers, and I left the impression of the cross deeply engraved on the vast rock 1,000 miles beyond the Mississippi, to which discoverers have given the national name of Rock Independence."

The reader will note that Fremont writes in 1842 of the name, "to which discoverers have given the national name of Independence Rock," showing that the name of the rock long antedated his visit, as he had inscribed the cross "amidst the names of many."

Of recent years the traveled road leads to the left of the rock, going eastward, instead of to the right and nearer the left bank of the Sweetwater as in early years; and so I selected a spot on the westward sloping face of the stone for the inscription, "Old Oregon Trail, 1843-57," near the present traveled road, where people can see it, as shown in the illustration, and inscribed it with as deep cut letters as we could make with a dulled cold chisel, and painted the sunken letters with the best sign writer's paint in oil. On this expedition, where possible, I have in like manner inscribed a number of boulders, with paint only, which it is to be hoped, before the life of the paint has gone out, may find loving hands to inscribe deep into the stone; but here on this huge [Pg 282] boulder I hope the inscription may last for centuries, though not as deeply cut as I would have liked had we but had suitable tools.

FISH CREEK.

Eleven miles out from Independence Rock we nooned on the bank of a small stream, well named Fish Creek, for it literally swarmed with fish of suitable size for the pan, but they would not bite, and we had no appliances for catching with a net, and so consoled ourselves with the exclamation that they were suckers only, and we didn't care, but I came away with the feeling that maybe we were "suckers" ourselves for having wet a blanket in an attempt to seine them, getting into the water over boot top deep, and working all the noon hour instead of resting like an elderly person should, and as the oxen did.

NORTH PLATTE RIVER.

Our next camp brought us to the North Platte River, fifteen miles above the town of Casper.

I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 89, North Platte River, July 5, 1906.—Odometer 1,104, distance traveled twenty-two miles.

"We followed the old Trail till nearly 4:00 p. m., and then came to the forks of the traveled road, with the Trail untraveled by anyone going straight ahead between the two roads. I took the right-hand road, fearing the other led off north, and anyway the one taken would lead us to the North Platte River; and on the old Trail there would be no water, as we were informed, until we reached Casper. We did not arrive at the Platte River until after dark, and then found there was no feed; got some musty alfalfa hay the cattle would not eat; had a little cracked corn we had hauled nearly 300 miles from Kemmerer, and had fed them the last of it in the afternoon; went to bed in the wagon, first watering the cattle, after dark, from the North Platte, which I had not seen for over fifty-four years, as I had passed fifteen miles below here the last of June, 1852.

"Several times during the afternoon there were threatening clouds, accompanied by distant lightning, and at one time a black cloud in the center, with rapid moving clouds around it, made me think of a tornado, but finally disappeared without striking us. Heavy wind at night. [Pg 283]

"This afternoon as we were driving, with both in the wagon, William heard the rattles of a snake, and jumped out of the wagon, and thoughtlessly called the dog. I stopped the wagon and called the dog away from the reptile until it was killed. When stretched out it measured four feet eight inches, and had eight rattles."

CASPER, WYOMING.

I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 90, odometer 1,117½, Casper, Wyoming, July 6.—At the noon hour, while eating dinner, seven miles out, we heard the whistle of the locomotive, something we had not seen nor heard for nearly 300 miles. As soon as lunch was over I left the wagon and walked in ahead of the team to select camping ground, secure feed, and get the mail. Received twenty letters, several from home.

"Fortunately a special meeting of the commercial club held this evening, and I laid the matter of building a monument before them, with the usual result; they resolved to build one; opened the subscription at once, and appointed a committee to carry the work forward. I am assured by several prominent citizens that a $500 monument will be erected, as the city council will join with the club to provide for a fountain as well, and place it on the most public street crossing in the city." [24]

Glen Rock was the next place in our itinerary, which we reached at dark, after having driven twenty-five and one-fourth miles. This is the longest drive we have made on the whole trip.

[Pg 284]

As an Old Scout.

[Pg 285]

GLEN ROCK.

Glen Rock is a small village, but the ladies met and resolved they "would have as nice a monument as Casper," even if it did not cost as much, because there was a stone quarry out but six miles from town. One enthusiastic lady said: "We will inscribe it ourselves, if no stonecutter can be had." "'Where there's a will there's a way,' as the old adage runs," I remarked as we left the nice little burg and said good-bye to the energetic ladies in it. God bless the women, anyhow; I don't see how the world could get along without them; and anyhow I don't see what life would have been without that little faithful companion that came over this very same ground with me fifty-four years ago and still lives to rejoice for the many, many blessings vouchsafed to us and our descendants.

DOUGLAS, WYOMING.

At Douglas, Wyoming, 1,177½ miles out from The Dalles, the people at first seemed reluctant to assume the responsibility of erecting a monument, everybody being "too busy" to give up any time to it, but were willing to contribute. After a short canvass, $52 was contributed, a local committee appointed, and an organized effort to erect a monument was well in hand before we drove out of the town.

I here witnessed one of those heavy downpours like some I remember in '52, where, as in this case, the water came down in veritable sheets, and in an incredibly short time turned all the slopes into roaring torrents and level places into lakes; the water ran six inches deep in the streets in this case, on a very heavy grade the whole width of the street.

I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 95, July 12.—Odometer 1,192. We are camped under a group of balm trees in the Platte bottom near the bridge at the farm of a company, Dr. J. M. Wilson in charge, where we found a good vegetable garden and were bidden to help ourselves, which I did, with a liberal hand, to a feast of young onions, radishes, beets and lettuce enough for several days." [Pg 286]

PUYALLUP-TACOMA-SEATTLE.

This refreshing shade and these spreading balms carried me back to the little cabin home in the Puyallup Valley, 1,500 miles away, where we had for so long a period enjoyed the cool shades of the native forests, enlivened by the charms of songsters at peep of day, with the dew dripping off the leaves like as if a shower had fallen over the forest. Having now passed the 1,200-mile mark out from The Dalles with scarcely the vestige of timber life except in the snows of the Blue Mountains, one can not wonder that my mind should run back to not only the little cabin home as well as to the more pretentious residence nearby; to the time when our homestead of 160 acres, granted to us by the Government, was a dense forest—when the little clearing was so isolated we could see naught else but walls of timber around us—timber that required the labor of one man twelve years to remove from a quarter-section of land—of the time when trails only reached the spot; when, as the poet wrote:

"Oxen answered well for team,
Though now they'd be too slow—";

when the semi-monthly mail was eagerly looked for; when the Tribune would be re-read again and again before the new supply came; when the morning hours before breakfast were our only school hours for the children; when the home-made shoe pegs and the home-shaped shoe lasts answered for making and mending the shoes, and the home-saved bristle for the waxen end; when the Indians, if not our nearest neighbors, I had liked to have said our best; when the meat in the barrel and the flour in the box, in spite of the most strenuous efforts, would at times run low; when the time for labor would be much nearer eighteen than eight hours a day.

"SUPPER." Supper is ready; and when repeated in more imperative tones, I at last awake to inhale the fragrant flavors of that most delicious beverage, camp coffee, from the Mocha and Java mixed grain that had "just come to a boil," and to realize there was something else in the air when the bill of fare was scanned. [Pg 287]

Menu.
Calf's liver, fried crisp, with bacon.
Coffee, with cream, and a lump of butter added.
Lettuce, with vinegar and sugar.
Young onions.
Boiled young carrots.
Radishes.
Beets, covered with vinegar.
Cornmeal mush, cooked forty minutes, in reserve and for a breakfast fry.

These "delicacies of the season," coupled with the—what shall I call it?—delicious appetite incident to a strenuous day's travel and a late supper hour, without a dinner padding in the stomach, aroused me to a sense of the necessities of the inner man, and to that keen relish incident to prolonged exertion and to open-air life, and justice was meted out to the second meal of the day following a 5:00 o'clock breakfast.

I awoke also to the fact that I was on the spot near where I camped fifty-four years ago in this same Platte Valley, then apparently almost a desert. Now what do I see? As we drew into camp, two mowing machines cutting the alfalfa; two or more teams raking the cured hay to the rick, and a huge fork or rake at intervals climbing the steep incline of fenders to above the top of the rick, and depositing its equivalent to a wagon-load at a time. To my right, as we drove through the gate, the large garden looked temptingly near, as did some rows of small fruit. Hay ricks dotted the field, and outhouses, barns and dwellings at the home. We are in the midst of plenty and the guests, we may almost say, of friends, instead of feeling we must deposit the trusted rifle in convenient place while we eat. Yes, we will exclaim again, "What wondrous changes time has wrought!" [Pg 288]

But my mind will go back to the little ivy-covered cabin now so carefully preserved in Pioneer Park in the little pretentious city of Puyallup, that was once our homestead, and so long our

home, and where the residence still stands nearby. The timber is all gone and in its place brick blocks and pleasant, modest homes are found, where the roots and stumps once occupied the ground now smiling fruit gardens adorn the landscape and fill the purses of 1,400 fruit growers, and supply the wants of 6,000 people. Instead of the slow trudging ox team, driven to the market town sixteen miles distant, with a day in camp on the way, I see fifty-four railroad trains a day thundering through the town. I see electric lines with crowded cars carrying passengers to tide water and to the rising city of Tacoma, but seven miles distant. I see a quarter of a million people within a radius of thirty miles, where solitude reigned supreme fifty-four years ago, save the song of the Indian, the thump of his canoe paddle, or the din of his gambling revels. When I go down to the Sound I see miles of shipping docks where before the waters rippled over a pebbly beach filled with shell-fish. I look farther, and see hundreds of steamers plying thither and yon on the great inland sea, where fifty-four years ago the Indian's canoe only noiselessly skimmed the water. I see hundreds of sail vessels that whiten every sea of the globe, being either towed here and there or at dock, receiving or discharging cargo, where before scarce a dozen had in a year ventured the voyage. At the docks in Seattle I see the 28,000-ton steamers receiving their monster cargoes for the Orient, and am reminded that these monsters can enter any of the numerous harbors of Puget Sound and are supplemented by a great array of other steam tonnage contending for that vast across-sea trade, and again exclaim with greater wonderment than ever, "What wondrous changes time has wrought!" If I look through the channels of Puget Sound, I yet see the forty islands or more; its sixteen hundred miles of shore line; its schools of fish, and at intervals the seal; its myriads of sea gulls; the hawking crow; the clam beds; the ebb and flow of the tide—still there. But many happy homes dot the shore line where the dense forests stood; the wild fruits have given way to the cultivated; trainloads of fruit go out to distant markets; and what we once looked upon as barren land now gives plenteous crops; and we again exclaim, "What wondrous changes time has wrought," or shall we not say, "What wondrous changes the hand of man has wrought!"

But I am admonished I have wandered and must needs go back to our narrative of "Out on the Trail."

FOOTNOTE:

[24] A monument 25 feet high has since been erected, that cost $1,500.00.

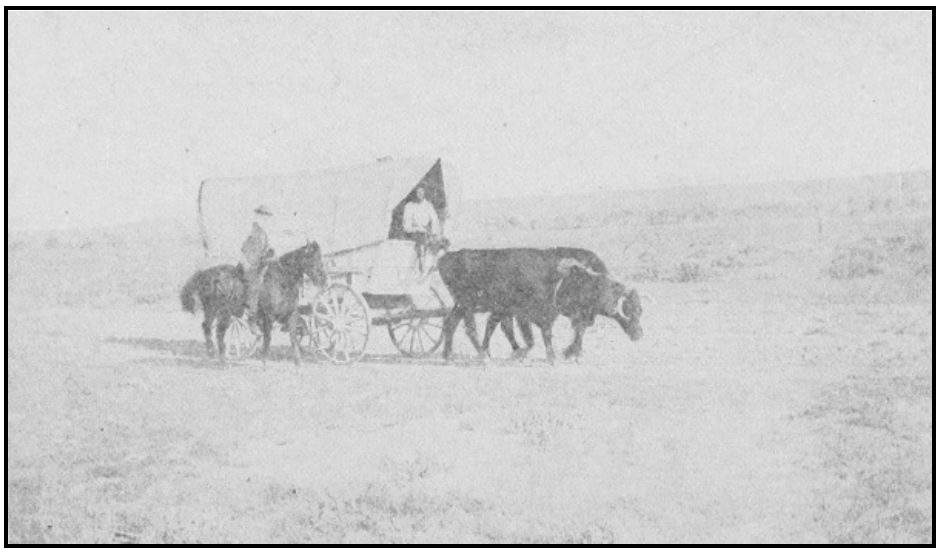
CHAPTER XLVII.

FORT LARAMIE, WYOMING.

I quote from my journal:

"Camp No. 99, July 16, Fort Laramie, odometer 1,247.—From the time we crossed the Missouri in May, 1852, until we arrived opposite this place on the north bank of the Platte, no place or name was so universally in the minds of the emigrants as old Fort Laramie; here, we eagerly looked for letters that never came—maybe our friends and relatives had not written; maybe they had and the letter lost or dumped somewhere in 'The States'; but now all hope vanished, regarding the prospect of hearing from home and we must patiently wait until the long journey has ended and a missive might reach us by the Isthmus or maybe by a sail vessel around Cape Horn. Now, as I write, I know my letter written in the morning will at night be on the banks of the great river, and so for each day of the year. One never ceases to exclaim, 'What changes time has wrought!' What wondrous changes in these fifty-four years, since I first set foot on the banks of the Platte and looked longingly across the river for the letter that never came."

[Pg 290]



A Snap Shot; Out on the Trail.

[Pg 291]

"This morning at 4:30 the alarm sounded, but in spite of our strenuous efforts the start was delayed till 6:15. Conditions were such as to give us a hot day, but the cattle would not travel without eating the grass in the road, having for some cause not liked the grass they were on during the night; and so, after driving a couple of miles and finding splendid feed, we turned them out to fill up, which they speedily did, and thereafter became laggards, too lazy for anything. So after all we did not arrive here till 4:00, and with dinner at six, it is not strange that we had good appetites.

"Locally, it is difficult to get accurate information. All agree there is no vestige of the old Traders' Camp or the first United States fort left, but disagree as to its location. The new fort (not a fort, but an encampment) covers a space of thirty or forty acres with all sorts of buildings and ruins, from the old barracks, three hundred feet long, in good preservation and occupied by the present owner, Joseph Wild, as a store, postoffice, saloon, hotel and family residence, to the old guard house with its grim iron door and twenty-inch concrete walls. One frame building, two stories, we are told, was transported by ox team from Kansas City at a cost of $100 per ton freight. There seems to be no plan either in the arrangement of the buildings or of the buildings themselves. I noticed one building, part stone, part concrete, part adobe, and part burnt brick. The concrete walls of one building measured twenty-two inches thick and there is evidence of the use of lime with a lavish hand, and I think all of them are alike massive.

"The location of the barracks is in Sec. 28, T. 26 N., R. 64 W. of 6th P. M., United States survey."

SCOTT'S BLUFF.

July 20th, odometer 1,308¼ miles.—We drove out from the town of Scott's Bluff to the left bank of the North Platte, less than a mile from the town, to a point nearly opposite that noted landmark, Scott's Bluff, on the right bank, looming up near eight hundred feet above the river and adjoining green fields, and photographed the bluffs and section of the river.

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Probably all emigrants of early days remember Scott's Bluff, which could be seen for so long a distance, and yet apparently so near for days and days, till it finally sank out of sight as we passed on, and new objects came into view. As with Tortoise Rock, the formation is sand and clay cemented, yet soft enough to cut easily, and is constantly changing in smaller details.

We certainly saw Scott's Bluff while near the junction of the two rivers, near a hundred miles distant, in that illusive phenomenon, the mirage, as plainly as when within a few miles of it.

Speaking of this deceptive manifestation of one natural law, I am led to wonder why, on the trip of 1906, I have seen nothing of those sheets of water so real as to be almost within our grasp, yet never reached, those hills and valleys we never traversed, beautiful pictures on the horizon and sometimes above, while traversing the valley in 1852—all gone, perhaps to be seen no more, as climatic changes come to destroy the conditions that caused them. Perhaps this may in part be caused by the added humidity of the atmosphere, or it may be also in part because of the numerous groves of timber that now adorn the landscape. Whatever the cause, the fact remains that in the year 1852 the mirage was of common occurrence and now, if seen at all, is rare.

The origin of the name of Scott's Bluff is not definitely known, but as tradition runs "a trader named Scott, while returning to the States, was robbed and stripped by the Indians. He crawled to these bluffs and there famished and his bones were afterwards found and buried," these quoted words having been written by a passing emigrant on the spot, June 11, 1852.

Another version of his fate is that Scott fell sick and was abandoned by his traveling companions, and after having crawled near forty miles finally died near the "Bluffs" ever after bearing his name. This occurred prior to 1830.

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THE DEAD OF THE PLAINS.

From the "Bluffs" we drove as direct as possible to that historic grave, two miles out from the town and on the railroad right of way, of Mrs. Rebecca Winters, who died August 15, 1852, nearly six weeks after I had passed over the ground.

The Lone Grave.

But for the handiwork of some unknown friend or relative this grave, like thousands and thousands of others who fell by the wayside in those strenuous days, would have passed out of sight and mind and nestled in solitude and unknown for all ages to come.

As far back as the memory of the oldest inhabitant runs, a half-sunken wagon tire bore this simple inscription, "Rebecca Winters, aged 50 years." The hoofs of stock trampled the sunken grave and trod it into dust, but the arch of the tire remained to defy the strength of thoughtless hands who would have removed it, and of the ravages of time that seem not to have affected it. Finally, in "the lapse of time" that usual non-respecter of persons—the railroad survey, and afterwards the rails—came along and would have run the track over the lonely grave but for the tender care of the man who wielded the compass and changed the line, that the resting place of the pioneer should not be disturbed, followed by the noble impulse of him who held the power to control the "soulless corporation," and the grave was protected and enclosed. Then came the press correspondent and the press to herald to the world the pathos of the lone grave, to in time reach the eyes and touch the hearts of the descendants of the dead, who had almost passed out of mind and to quicken the interest in the memory of one once dear to them, till in time there arose a beautiful monument lovingly inscribed, just one hundred years after the birth of the inmate of the grave.

As I looked upon this grave, now surrounded by green fields and happy homes, my mind ran back to the time it was first occupied in the desert (as all believed the country through which we were passing to be), and the awful calamity that overtook so many to carry them to their untimely and unknown graves.

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The ravages of cholera carried off thousands. One family of seven a little further down the Platte, lie all in one grave; forty-one persons of one train dead in one day and two nights tells but part of the dreadful story. The count of fifty-three freshly made graves in one camp ground left a vivid impress upon my mind that has never been effaced; but where now are those graves? They are irrevocably lost. I can recall to mind one point where seventy were buried in one little group, not one of the graves now to be seen—trampled out of sight by the hoofs of the millions of stock later passing over the Trail.

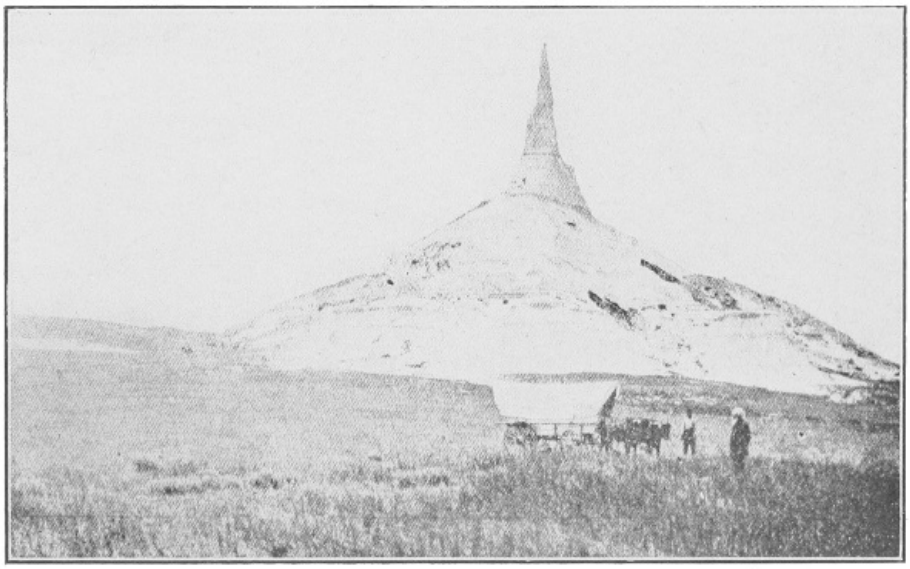
Bearing this in mind, how precious this thought that even one grave has been rescued from oblivion, and how precious will become the memory of the deeds of those who have so freely dedicated their part to recall the events of the past and to honor those sturdy pioneers who survived those trying experiences as well as the dead, by erecting those monuments that now line the Trail for nearly two thousand miles. To these, one and all, I bow my head in grateful appreciation of their aid in this work to perpetuate the memory of the pioneers, and especially

the 5,000 school children who have each contributed their mite that the memory of the dead pioneers might remain fresh in their minds and the minds of generations to follow.

A drive of seventeen miles brought us to the town of Bayard, 1,338 miles on the way from The Dalles, Oregon, where our continuous drive began.

CHIMNEY ROCK.

Chimney Rock is six miles southwesterly, in full view, a curious freak of nature we all remembered while passing in '52.



Chimney Rock, Platte Valley.

The base reminds one of an umbrella standing on the ground, covering perhaps twelve acres and running, cone-shaped, 200 feet to the base of the spire resting upon it. The spire (chimney) points to the heavens, which would entitle the pile to a more appropriate name, as like a church spire, tall and slim, the wonder of all—how it comes that the hand of time has not leveled it, long ago and mingled its crumbling substance with that lying at its base. The whole pile, like that at Scott's Bluff and Court House Rock, further down, is a sort of soft sandstone, or cement and clay, gradually crumbling away and destined to be leveled to the earth in centuries to come. [Pg 297]

A local story runs that an army officer trained artillery on this spire, shot off about thirty feet from the top, and was afterwards court-martialed and discharged in disgrace from the army; but I could get no definite information, though the story was repeated again and again. It would seem incredible that an intelligent man, such as an army officer, would do such an act, and if he did he deserved severe condemnation and punishment.

I noticed that at Soda Springs the hand of the vandal has been at work and that interesting phenomenon, the Steamboat Spring, the wonderment of all in 1852, with its intermittent spouting, had been tampered with and ceased to act. It would seem the degenerates are not all dead yet.

NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA.

At North Platte the ladies of the W. C. T. U. appointed a committee to undertake to erect a monument, the business men all refusing to give up any time. However, W. C. Ritner, a respected citizen of North Platte, offered to donate a handsome monument with a cement base, marble cap, stone and cement column, five and a half feet high, which will be accepted by the ladies and erected in a suitable place.

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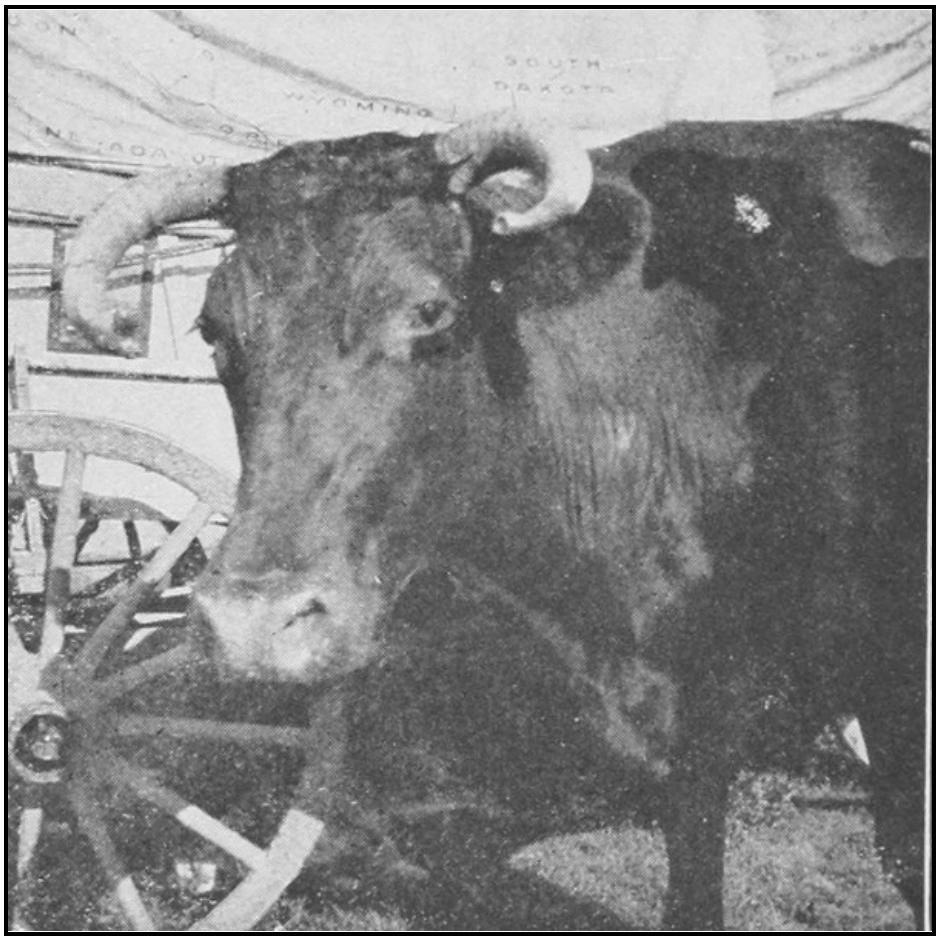
CHAPTER XLVIII.

DEATH OF TWIST.



Twist.

"Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition, Brady Island, Nebraska, August 9, 1906, Camp No. 120, odometer, 1,536⅝.—Yesterday morning Twist ate his grain as usual and showed no signs of sickness until we were on the road two or three miles, when he began to put his tongue out and his breathing became heavy. But he leaned on the yoke heavier than usual and seemed determined to pull the whole load. I finally stopped, put him on the off side, gave him the long end of the yoke, and tied his head back with the halter strap to the chain; but to no purpose, for he pulled by the head very heavy. I finally unyoked, gave him a quart of lard, a gill of vinegar and a handful of sugar, but all to no purpose, for he soon fell down and in two hours was dead." [Pg 299]

Such is the record in my journal telling of the death of this noble animal, which I think died from eating some poisonous plant.

When we started from Camp No. 1, January 29, Puyallup, Washington, Twist weighed 1,470 pounds. After we crossed two ranges of mountains, had wallowed in the snows of the Blue Mountains, followed the tortuous, rocky canyons of Burnt River, up the deep sand of the Snake, this ox had gained in weight 137 pounds, and weighed 1,607 pounds. While laboring under the short end of the yoke that gave him fifty-five per cent. of the draft and an increased burden he would keep his end of the yoke a little ahead, no matter how much the mate might be urged to keep up.

There are striking individualities in animals as well as in men, and I had liked to have said virtues as well; and why not? If an animal always does his duty, is faithful to your interest, industrious—why not recognize it, even if he was "nothing but an ox"?

We are wont to extol the virtues of the dead, and to forget their shortcomings, but here a plain statement of facts will suffice to revive the memories of the almost forgotten past of an animal so dear to the pioneers who struggled across plains and over mountains in the long ago.

To understand the achievements of this ox it is necessary to state the burden he carried. The wagon weighed 1,430 pounds, is a wooden axle and wide track and had an average load of 800 pounds. He had, with an unbroken four-year old steer—a natural-born shirk—with the short end of the yoke before mentioned, hauled this wagon 1,776 miles and was in better working trim when he died than when the trip began. And yet am I sure that at some points I did not abuse him? What about coming up out of Little Canyon or rather up the steep, rocky steps of stones like veritable stairs, when I used the goad, and he pulled a shoe off and his feet from under him? Was I merciful then, or did I exact more than I ought? I can see him yet in my mind, while on his knees [Pg 300] holding the wagon from rolling back into the canyon till the wheel could be blocked and the brakes set. Then, when bade to start the load, he did not flinch. He was the best ox I ever saw,

without exception, and his loss has nearly broken up the expedition, and it is one case where his like can not be obtained. He has had a decent burial and a head-board will mark his grave and recite his achievements in the valuable aid rendered in this expedition to perpetuate the memory of the Old Oregon Trail and for which he has given up his life.

What shall I do? Abandon the work? No. But I can not go on with one ox, and can not remain here. And so a horse team was hired to take us to the next town, Gothenburg—thirteen miles distant—and the lone ox led behind the wagon.

GOTHENBURG, NEBRASKA.

"Gothenburg, Nebraska, August 10, 1906. Camp No. 121, odometer 1,549.—The people here resolved to erect a monument, appointed a committee, and a contribution of some fifteen dollars was secured."

LEXINGTON.

Again hired a horse team to haul the wagon to Lexington. At Lexington I thought the loss of the ox could be repaired by buying a pair of heavy cows and breaking them in to work, and so purchased two out of a band of 200 cattle nearby. "Why, yes, of course they will work," I said, when a bystander had asked the question. "Why, I have seen whole teams of cows on the Plains in '52, and they would trip along so merrily one would be tempted to turn the oxen out and get cows. Yes, we will soon have a team," I said, "only we can't go very far in a day with a raw team, especially in this hot weather." But one of the cows wouldn't go at all; we could not lead or drive her. Put her in the yoke and she would stand stock still just like a stubborn mule. Hitch the yoke [Pg 301] by a strong rope behind the wagon with a horse team to pull, she would brace her feet and actually slide along, but wouldn't lift a foot. I never saw such a brute before, and hope I never will again. I have broken wild, fighting, kicking steers to the yoke and enjoyed the sport, but from a sullen, tame cow deliver me.

"Won't you take her back and give me another?" I asked. "Yes, I will give you that red cow (one I had rejected as unfit), but not one of the others." "Then, what is this cow worth to you?" Back came the response, "Thirty dollars," and so I dropped ten dollars (having paid him forty), lost the better part of a day, experienced a good deal of vexation. "Oh, if I could only have Twist back again."

The fact gradually dawned upon me that the loss of that fine ox was almost irreparable. I could not get track of an ox anywhere, nor of even a steer large enough to mate the Dave ox. Besides, Dave always was a fool. I could scarcely teach him anything. He did learn to haw, by the word when on the off side, but wouldn't mind the word a bit if on the near side. Then he would hold his head way up while in the yoke as if he disdained to work, and poke his tongue out at the least bit of warm weather or serious work. Then he didn't have the stamina of Twist. Although given the long end of the yoke, so that Twist would pull fifty-five per cent. of the load, Dave would always lag behind. Here was a case where the individuality of the ox was as marked as ever between man and man. Twist would watch my every motion and mind by the wave of the hand, but Dave never minded anything except to shirk hard work, while Twist always seemed to love his work and would go freely all day. And so it was brought home to me more forcibly than ever that in the loss of the Twist ox I had almost lost the whole team.

Now if this had occurred in 1852 the loss could have been easily remedied, where there were so many "broke" cattle, and where there were always several yoke to the wagon. So when I drove [Pg 302] out with a hired horse team that day with the Dave ox tagging on behind and sometimes pulling on his halter, and an unbroken cow, it may easily be guessed the pride of anticipated success went out, and a feeling akin to despair seized upon me. Here I had two yokes, one a heavy ox yoke and the other a light cow's yoke, but the cow, I thought, could not be worked alongside the ox in the ox yoke, nor the ox with the cow in the cow yoke, and so there I was without a team but with a double encumbrance.

Yes, the ox has passed—has had his day—for in all this State I have been unable to find even one yoke. So I trudged along, sometimes behind the led cattle, wondering in my mind whether or no I had been foolish to undertake this expedition to perpetuate the memory of the Old Oregon Trail. Had I not been rebuffed by a number of business men who pushed the subject aside with, "I have no time to look into it"? Hadn't I been compelled to pass several towns where even three persons could not be found to act on the committee? And then there was the experience of the constant suspicion and watch to see if some graft could not be discovered—some lurking speculation. All this could be borne in patience, but when coupled with it came the virtual loss of the team, is it strange that my spirits went down below a normal condition?

But then came the compensatory thought as to what had been accomplished; how three States had responded cordially and a fourth as well, considering the sparse population. How could I account for the difference in the reception? It was the press. In the first place the newspapers took up the work in advance of my coming, while in the latter case the notices and commendation followed my presence in a town. And so I queried in my mind as we trudged along—after all, I am sowing the seed that will bring the harvest later. Then my mind would run back along the line of over 1,500 miles, where stand nineteen sentinels, mostly granite, to proclaim for the centuries to [Pg 303] come that the hand of communities had been at work and planted these shafts that the memory

of the dead pioneers might live; where a dozen boulders, including the great Independence Rock, also bear this testimony, and where a hundred wooden posts mark the Trail, when stone was unobtainable. I recalled the cordial reception in so many places; the outpouring of contributions from 5,000 school children; the liberal hand of the people that built these monuments; the more than 20,000 people attending the dedication ceremonies. And while I trudged along and thought of the encouragement that I had received, I forgot all about the loss of Twist, the recalcitrant cow, the dilemma that confronted me, only to awaken from my reverie in a more cheerful mood. "Do the best you can," I said almost in an audible tone, "and be not cast down," and my spirits rose almost to the point of exultation.

CHAPTER XLIX.

KEARNEY, NEBRASKA.

At that beautiful city of Kearney we were accorded a fine camping place in the center of the town under the spreading boughs of the shade trees that line the streets, and a nice green, fresh-cut sward upon which to pitch our tents. The people came in great numbers to visit the camp and express their approval as to the object of the trip. I said, "Here we will surely get a splendid monument," but when I came to consult with the business men not one could be found to give up any time to the work, though many seemed interested. The president of the commercial club even refused to call a meeting of the club to consider the subject, because he said he had no time to attend the meeting and thought most of the members would be the same. I did not take it this man was opposed to the proposed work, but honestly felt there were more important matters pressing upon the time of business men, and said the subject could be taken up at their regular [Pg 304] meeting in the near future. As I left this man's office, who, I doubted not, had spoken the truth, I wondered to myself if these busy men would ever find time to die. How did they find time to eat? or to sleep? and I queried, Is a business man's life worth the living, if all his wakeful moments are absorbed in grasping for gains? But I am admonished that this query must be answered each for himself, and I reluctantly came away from Kearney without accomplishing the object of my visit, and wondering whether my mission was ended and results finished.

The reader will readily see that I would be the more willing listener to such an inner suggestion, in view of my crippled condition to carry on the work. And might not that condition have a bearing to bring about such results? No. For the people seemed to be greatly interested and sympathetic. The press was particularly kind in their notices, commending the work, but it takes time to arouse the business men to action, as one remarked to me, "You can't hurry us to do anything; we are not that kind of a set." This was said in a tone bordering on the offensive, though perhaps expressing only a truth.

GRAND ISLAND.

I did not, however, feel willing to give up the work after having accomplished so much on the 1,700 miles traveled, and with less than 200 miles ahead of me, and so I said, "I will try again at Grand Island," the next place where there was a center of population, that an effort would probably succeed. Here I found there was a decided public sentiment in favor of taking action, but at a later date—next year—jointly to honor the local pioneers upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the settlement around and about the city; and so, this dividing the attention of the people, it was not thought best to undertake the work now, and again I bordered on the slough of despondency.

I could not repeat the famous words, I would "fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," for [Pg 305] here it is the 30th of August, and in one day more summer will be gone. Neither could I see how to accomplish more than prepare the way, and that now the press is doing, and sowing seed upon kindly ground that will in the future bring forth abundant harvest.

Gradually the fact became uppermost in my mind that I was powerless to move; that my team was gone. No response came to the extensive advertisements for an ox or a yoke of oxen, showing clearly there were none in the country, and that the only way to repair the damage was to get unbroken steers or cows and break them in. This could not be done in hot weather, or at least cattle unused to work could not go under the yoke and render effective service while seasoning, and so, for the time being, the work on the Trail was suspended.

As I write in this beautiful grove of the old court house grounds, in the heart of this embryo city of Grand Island, with its stately rows of shade trees, its modest, elegant homes, the bustle and stir on its business streets, with the constant passing of trains, shrieking of whistles, ringing of bells, the reminder of a great change in conditions, my mind reverts back to that June day in 1852 when I passed over the ground near where the city stands. Vast herds of buffalo then grazed on the hills or leisurely crossed our track and at times obstructed our way. Flocks of antelope frisked on the outskirts or watched from vantage points. The prairie dogs reared their heads in comical attitude, burrowing, it was said, with the rattlesnake and the badger.

But now these dog colonies are gone; the buffalo has gone; the antelope has disappeared; as likewise the Indian. Now all is changed. Instead of the parched plain we saw in 1852, with its fierce clouds of dust rolling up the valley and engulfing whole trains until not a vestige of them could be seen, we see the landscape of smiling, fruitful fields, of contented homes, of inviting clumps of trees dotting the landscape. The hand of man has changed what we looked upon as a [Pg 306] barren plain to that of a fruitful land. Where then there were only stretches of buffalo grass, now waving fields of grain and great fields of corn send forth abundant harvests. Yes, we may again exclaim, "What wondrous changes time has wrought."

At Grand Island I shipped to Fremont, Neb., to head the procession celebrating the semi-centennial of founding that city, working the ox and cow together; thence to Lincoln, where the first edition of "The Ox Team" was printed, all the while searching for an ox or a steer large enough to mate the Dave ox, but without avail. Finally, after looking over a thousand head of cattle in the stock yards of Omaha, a five-year-old steer was found and broken in on the way to Indianapolis, where I arrived January 5, 1907, eleven months and seven days from date of

departure from my home at Puyallup, 2,600 miles distant.

CHAPTER L.

FROM INDIANAPOLIS TO WASHINGTON.

Upon my arrival in Indianapolis, people began to ask me about the Trail, and to say they had never heard that the Oregon Trail ran through that city, to which I replied I never had heard that it did. A quizzical look sometimes would bring out an explanation that the intent of the expedition was as much to work upon the hearts of the people as to work upon the Trail itself; that what we wanted was to fire the imagination of the people and get them first to know there was such a thing as the Oregon Trail and then to know what it meant in history.

After passing the Missouri, and leaving the Trail behind me, I somehow had a foreboding that I might be mistaken for a faker and looked upon either as an adventurer or a sort of a "wandering Jew" and shrank from the ordeal. My hair had grown long on the trip across; my boots were some the worse for wear and my old-fashioned suit (understood well enough by pioneers along the [Pg 307] Trail) that showed dilapidation all combined, made me not the most presentable in every sort of company. Coupled with that had I not already been compelled to say that I was not a "corn doctor" or any kind of a doctor; that I did not have patent medicine or any other sort of medicine to sell, and that I was neither soliciting or receiving contributions to support the expedition? I had early in the trip realized the importance of disarming criticism or suspicion that there was graft or speculation in the work. And yet, day after day, there would come questions, pointed or otherwise, evidently to probe to the bottom to find out if there was lurking somewhere or somehow an ulterior object not appearing on the surface. There being none, the doubters would be disarmed only to make way for a new crop, maybe the very next hour.

But the press, with but one exception, had been exceedingly kind, and understood the work. It remained for one man [25] of the thousand or more who wrote of the work, at a later date to write of his "suspicions." I wrote that gentleman that "suspicions as to one's motives were of the same cloth as the 'breath of scandal' against a fair lady's character, leaving the victim helpless without amende honorable from the party himself," and gave him full information, but he did not respond nor so far as I know publish any explanation of the article in his paper.

March 1st, 1907, found me on the road going eastward from Indianapolis. I had made up my mind that Washington City should be the objective point, and that Congress would be a better field to work in than out on the hopelessly wide stretch of the Trail where one man's span of life would certainly run before the work could be accomplished.

But, before reaching Congress, it was well to spend a season or campaign of education or manage somehow to get the work before the general public so that the Congress might know about it, or at least that many members might have heard about it. So a route was laid out to [Pg 308] occupy the time until the first of December, just before Congress would again assemble, and be with them "in the beginning." The route lay from Indianapolis, through Hamilton, Ohio; Dayton, Columbus, Buffalo, then Syracuse, Albany, New York City, Trenton, N. J.; Philadelphia., Pa.; Baltimore, Md., thence to Washington, visiting intermediate points along the route outlined. This would seem to be quite a formidable undertaking with one yoke of oxen and a big "prairie schooner" wagon that weighed 1,400 pounds, a wooden axle, that would speak at times if not watched closely with tar bucket in hand; and a load of a thousand pounds or more of camp equipage, etc. And so it was, but the reader may recall the fable of the "tortoise and the hare" and find the lesson of persistence that gave the race, not to the swiftest afoot. Suffice it to say that on the 29th of November, 1907, twenty-two months to a day after leaving home at Puyallup, I drew up in front of the White House in Washington City, was kindly received by President Roosevelt, and encouraged to believe my labor had not been lost.

The general reader may not be interested in the details of my varied experiences in the numerous towns and cities through which I passed, nevertheless there were incidents in some of the cities well worth recording.

As noted before, the press, from the beginning, seemed to understand the object, and enter into the spirit of the work. It remained for one paper during the whole trip (Hamilton, Ohio) to solicit pay for a notice. My look of astonishment or something, it seems, wrought a change, and the notice appeared, and I am able to record that not one cent was paid to the press during the whole trip, and I think fully a thousand articles have been published outlining and commending the work. Had it not been for the press, no such progress as has been made could have been accomplished, and if the appropriation be made by Congress to mark the Trail, the press did it, not, however, forgetting the patient oxen who did their part so well.

An interesting incident, to me at least, occurred in passing through the little town of Huntsville, [Pg 309] ten miles east of Hamilton, Ohio, where I was born, and had not seen for more than seventy years. A snap shot of the old house where I was born did me no good, for at Dayton some vandal stole my kodak, film and all, containing the precious impression.

Dayton treated me nicely, bought a goodly number of my books and sent me on my way rejoicing with no further feeling of solicitude toward financing the expedition. I had had particularly bad luck in the loss of my fine ox; then when the cows were bought and one of them wouldn't go at all, and I was compelled to ship the outfit to Omaha, more than a hundred miles; and was finally forced to buy the unbroken steer Dandy, out of the stockyards at Omaha, and, what was more, pay out all the money I could rake and scrape, save seven dollars. Small wonder I

should leave Dayton with a feeling of relief brought about by the presence in my pocket of some money not drawn from home. I had had other experiences of discouragement as well: when I first put the "Ox Team" in print, it was almost "with fear and trembling"—would the public buy it? I could not know without trying, and so a thousand copies only were printed, which of course brought them up to a high price per copy. But these sold, and two thousand more copies printed and sold, and I was about even on the expense, when, lo and behold, my plates and cuts were burned and a new beginning had to be made.

Mayor Badger of Columbus wrote, giving me the "freedom of the city," and Mayor Tom Johnson wrote to his chief of police to "treat Mr. Meeker as the guest of the city of Cleveland," which he did.

At Buffalo, N. Y., though, the mayor would have none of it, unless I would pay one hundred dollars license fee, which of course I would not. Fortunately, though, a camping ground was found in the very heart of the city, and I received a hearty welcome from the citizens, and a good hearing as well. A pleasant episode occurred here to while away the time as well as to create a [Pg 310] good feeling. The upper 400 of Buffalo were preparing to give a benefit to one of the hospitals in the shape of a circus. Elaborate preparations had been made and a part of the program was an attack by Indians on an emigrant train, the Indians being the well mounted young representatives of the city's elite. At this juncture I arrived in the city, and was besieged to go and represent the emigrant train, for which they would pay me, but I said, "No, not for pay, but I will go." And so there was quite a realistic show in the "ring" that afternoon and evening, and the hospital received over a thousand dollars benefit.

Near Oneida some one said I had better take to the towpath on the canal and save distance, besides avoid going over the hill, adding that while it was against the law, everybody did it and no one would object. So, when we came to the forks of the road, I followed the best beaten track and soon found ourselves traveling along on the level, hard but narrow way, the towpath. All went well, and just at evening on an elevated bridge across the canal, three mules were crossing and a canal-boat was seen on the opposite side, evidently preparing to "camp" for the night. With the kodak we were able to catch the last mule's ears as he was backed into the boat for the night, but not so fortunate the next day when the boat with three men, two women and three long-eared mules were squarely met, the latter on the towpath. The mules took fright, got into a regular mix-up, broke the harness and went up the towpath at a 2:40 gait and were with difficulty brought under control.

I had walked into Oneida the night before, and so did not see the sight or hear the war of words that followed. The men ordered W. to "take that outfit off the towpath." His answer was that he could not do it without upsetting the wagon. The men said if he would not, they would d—n quick, and started toward the wagon evidently intent to execute their threat, meanwhile swearing at the top of their voices and the women swearing in chorus, one of them fairly shrieking. My old and [Pg 311] trusted muzzle-loading rifle that we had carried across the Plains more than fifty-five years before lay handy by, and so when the men started toward him, W. picked up the rifle to show fight, and called on the dog Jim to take hold of the men. As he raised the gun to use as a club, one of the boatmen threw up his hands, bawling at the top of his voice, "Don't shoot, don't shoot," forgot to mix in oaths, and slunk out of sight behind the wagon; the others also drew back. Jim showed his teeth and a truce followed when one of the women became hysterical and the other called loudly for help. With but little inconvenience the mules were taken off the path and the team drove on, whereupon a volley of oaths was hurled at the object of all the trouble, in which the women joined at the top of their voices, continuing as long as they could be heard, one of them shrieking—drunk, W. thinks.

The fun of it was, the gun that had spread such consternation hadn't been loaded for more than twenty-five years, but the sight of it was enough for the three stalwart braves of the "raging canal".

I vowed then and there that we would travel no more on the towpath of the canal.

When I came to Albany, the mayor wouldn't talk to me after once taking a look at my long hair. He was an old man, and as I was afterwards told, a "broken-down politician" (whatever that may mean). At any rate, he treated me quite rudely I thought, though I presume, in his opinion, it was the best way to get rid of a nuisance, and so I passed on through the city.

But it took New York City to cap the climax—to bring me all sort of experiences, sometimes with the police, sometimes with the gaping crowds, and sometimes at the city hall.

Mayor McLellan was not in the city when I arrived, but the acting mayor said that while he could not grant a permit, to come on in—he would have the police commissioner instruct his men not to molest me. Either the instructions were not general enough or else the men paid no [Pg 312] attention, for when I got down as far as 161st Street on Amsterdam Avenue, a policeman interfered and ordered my driver to take the team to the police station, which he very properly refused to do. It was after dark and I had just gone around the corner to engage quarters for the night when this occurred; returning, I saw the young policeman attempt to move the team, but as he didn't know how, they wouldn't budge a peg, whereupon he arrested my driver, and took him away. Just then another police tried to coax me to drive the team down to the police station; I said, "No, sir, I will not." He said there were good stables down there, whereupon I told him I had already engaged a stable, and would drive to it unless prevented by force. The crowd had become large and began jeering the policeman. The situation was that he couldn't drive the team to the

station, and I wouldn't, and so there we were. To arrest me would make matters worse by leaving the team on the street without any one to care for it, and so finally the fellow got out of the way, and I drove the team to the stable, he, as well as a large crowd, following. As soon as I was in the stable he told me to come along with him to the police station; I told him I would go when I got the team attended to, but not before unless he wished to carry me. The upshot of the matter was that by this time the captain of the precinct arrived and called his man off, and ordered my driver released. He had had some word from the city hall but had not notified his men. It transpired there was an ordinance against allowing cattle to be driven on the streets of New York. Of course, this was intended to apply to loose cattle, but the police interpreted it to mean any cattle, and had the clubs to enforce their interpretation. I was in the city, and couldn't get out without subjecting myself to arrest according to their version of the laws, and in fact I didn't want to get out. I wanted to drive down Broadway from one end to the other, which I did, a month later, as will presently be related.

[Pg 313]

All hands said nothing short of an ordinance by the board of aldermen would clear the way; so I tackled the aldermen. The New York Tribune sent a man over to the city hall to intercede for me; the New York Herald did the same thing, and so it came about, the aldermen passed an ordinance granting me the right of way for thirty days, and also endorsed my work. I thought my trouble was over when that passed. Not so, the mayor was absent, and the acting mayor could not sign an ordinance until after ten days had elapsed. Then the city attorney came in and said the aldermen had exceeded their authority as they could not legally grant a special privilege. Then the acting mayor said he would not sign the ordinance, but if I would wait until the next meeting of the aldermen, if they did not rescind the ordinance, it would be certified as he would not veto it, and that as no one was likely to test the legality he thought I would be safe in acting as though it was legal, and so, just thirty days from the time I had the bother with the police, and had incurred $250.00 expense, I drove down Broadway from 161st Street to the Battery, without a slip or getting into any serious scrape of any kind except with one automobilist who became angered, but afterwards became "as good as pie," as the old saying goes. The rain fell in torrents as we neared the Battery. I had engaged quarters for the cattle nearby, but the stablemen went back on me, and wouldn't let me in, and so drove up Water Street a long way before finding a place and then was compelled to pay $4.00 for stable room and hay for the cattle over night.

Curb Stock Exchange, Broad Street, New York.

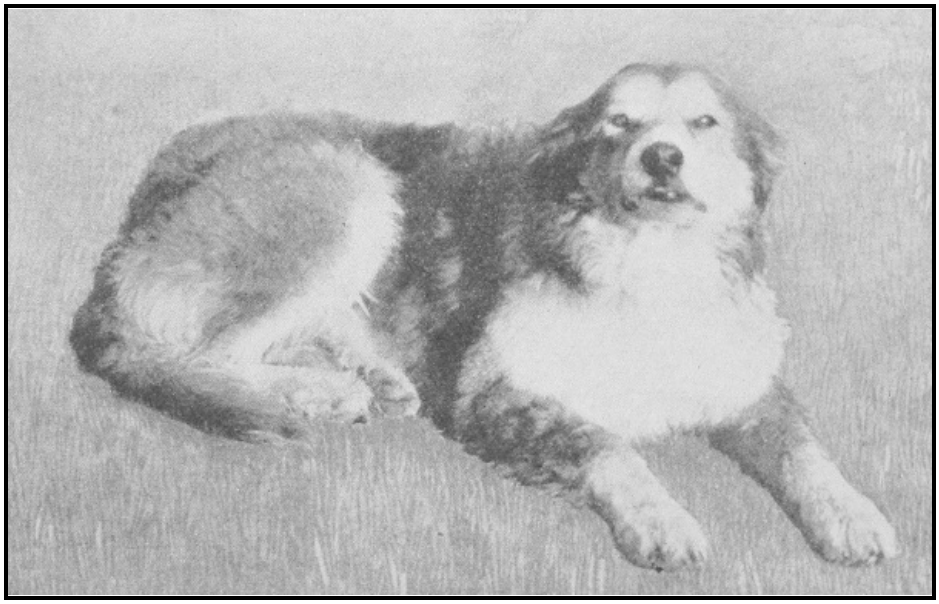
Thirty days satisfied me with New York. The fact was the crowds were so great that congestion of traffic always followed my presence, and I would be compelled to move. I went one day to the City Hall Park to get the Greeley statue photographed with my team, and could not get away without the help of the police, and even then with great difficulty.

[Pg 315]

A trip across Brooklyn Bridge to Brooklyn was made, but I found the congestion there almost as great as in the city proper. The month I was on the streets of New York was a month of anxiety, and I was glad enough to get out of the city on the 17th of October, just thirty days after the drive down Broadway, and sixty days after the holdup on 161st Street, and the very day the big run on the Knickerbocker Bank began.

I came near meeting a heavy loss two days before leaving the city. Somehow I got sandwiched in on the East Side above the Brooklyn bridge in the congested district of the foreign quarters and finally at nightfall drove into a stable, put the oxen in the stalls and, as usual, the dog Jim in the wagon. The next morning Jim was gone. The stablemen said he had left the wagon a few moments after I had and had been stolen. The police accused the stablemen of being a party to the theft, in which I think they were right. Anyway, the day wore off and no tidings. Money could not buy that dog. He was an integral part of the expedition; always on the alert; always watchful of the wagon during my absence and always willing to mind what I bid him to do. He had had more adventures than any other member of the work; first he had been tossed over a high brush by the ox Dave; then shortly after pitched headlong over a barbed wire fence by an irate cow; then came the fight with a wolf; following this came a narrow escape from the rattlesnake in the

road; after this a trolley car run over him, rolling him over and over again until he came out as dizzy as a drunken man—I thought he was a "goner" that time sure, but he soon straightened up, and finally in the streets of Kansas City was run over by a heavy truck while fighting another dog. The other dog was killed outright, while Jim came near having his neck broken, lost one of his best fighting teeth and had several others broken. I sent him to a veterinary surgeon and curiously enough he made no protest while having the broken teeth repaired and extracted. He could eat nothing but soup and milk for several days, and that poured down him, as he could neither lap nor swallow liquids. It came very near being "all day" with Jim, but he is here with me all right and seemingly good for a new adventure. [Pg 317]

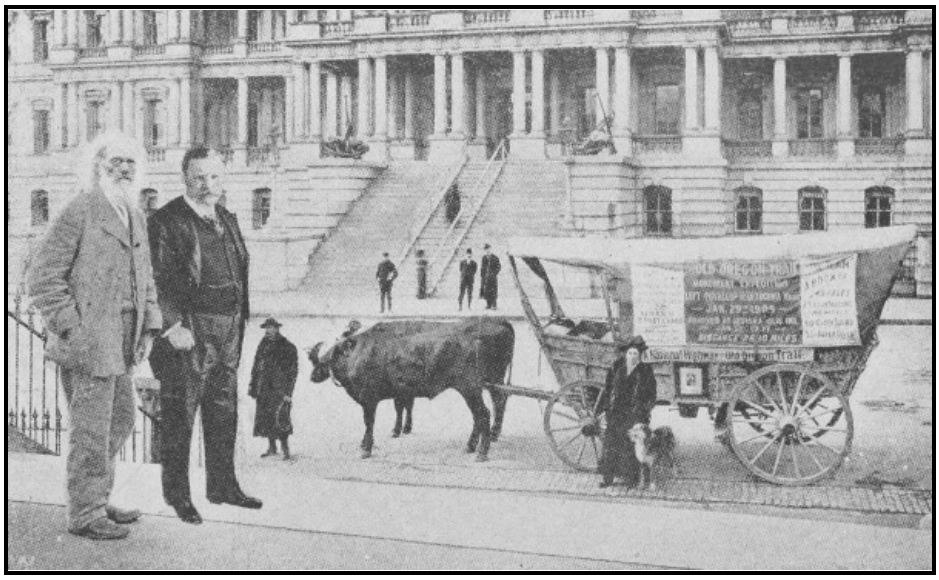


Jim.

No other method could disclose where to find him than to offer a reward, which I did, and feel sure I paid the twenty dollars to one of the fellow-parties to the theft who was brazen faced enough to demand pay for keeping him. Then was when I got up and talked pointedly, and was glad enough to get out of that part of the city.

Between Newark and Elizabeth City, New Jersey, at a point known as "Lyons Farm," the old "Meeker Homestead" stands, built in the year 1767. Here the "Meeker Tribe," as we called ourselves, came out to greet me near forty strong, as shown by the illustration. [26] Except in Philadelphia, I did not receive much recognition between Elizabeth City and Washington. Wilmington would have none of it, except for pay, and so I passed on, but at Philadelphia I was bid to go on Broad Street under the shadow of the great city hall where great crowds came and took a lot of my literature away during the four days I tarried; in Baltimore I got a "cold shoulder" and passed through the city without halting long. In parts of Maryland I found many lank oxen with long horns and light quarters, the drivers not being much interested in the outfit except to remark, "Them's mighty fine cattle, stranger; where do you come from?" and like passing remarks.

But when I reached Washington, the atmosphere, so to speak, changed—a little bother with the police a few days, but soon brushed aside. I had been just twenty-two months to a day in reaching Washington from the time I made my first day's drive from my home at Puyallup, January 29th, 1906. It took President Roosevelt to extend a royal welcome.



President Roosevelt on the Way to View the Team; War and Navy Building in the Background.

"Well, well, WELL, WELL," was the exclamation that fell from his lips as he came near enough the outfit to examine it critically, which he did. Senator Piles and Representative Cushman of the Washington State Congressional delegation had introduced me to the President in the cabinet room. Mr. Roosevelt showed a lively interest in the work from the start. He did not need to be told that the Trail was a battlefield, or that the Oregon pioneers who moved out and occupied the Oregon country while yet in dispute between Great Britain and the United States were heroes who fought a strenuous battle as "winners of the farther west," for he fairly snatched the words from my lips and went even farther than I had even dreamed of, let alone having hoped for, in invoking Government aid to carry on the work.

President Roosevelt Viewing the Team, November 29, 1907.

Addressing Senator Piles the President said with emphasis, "I am in favor of this work to mark this Trail and if you will bring before Congress a measure to accomplish it, I am with you, and will give it my support to do it thoroughly."

Mr. Roosevelt thought the suggestion of a memorial highway should first come from the states through which the Trail runs; anyway it would be possible to get congressional aid to mark the Trail, and that in any event, ought to be speedily done.

Apparently, on a sudden recollecting other engagements pressing, the President asked, "Where is your team? I want to see it." Upon being told that it was near by, without ceremony, and without his hat he was soon alongside, asking questions faster than they could be answered, not idle questions, but such as showed his intense desire to get real information—bottom facts—as the saying goes.

FOOTNOTES:

[25] William Allen White.

[26] See illustration, Chapter I.

CHAPTER LI.

THE RETURN TRIP.

I left Washington on the 8th of January, 1908, and shipped the outfit over the Alleghany Mountains to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, having been in Washington, as the reader will note, thirty-nine days. From McKeesport I drove to Pittsburg and there put the team into winter [Pg 321] quarters to remain until the 5th of March; thence shipped by boat on the Ohio River to Cincinnati, Ohio, stopping in that city but one day, and from there shipping by rail to St. Louis, Missouri. At Pittsburg and adjacent cities I was received cordially and encouraged greatly to believe the movement for a national highway had taken a deep hold in the minds of the people. The Pittsburg Automobile Club issued a circular letter to all the automobile clubs of Pennsylvania, and likewise to the congressional delegation of Pennsylvania, urging them to favor not only the bill then pending in Congress, appropriating $50,000 for marking the Oregon Trail, but also a measure looking to the joint action of the national government and the states, to build a national highway over the Oregon Trail as a memorial road. I was virtually given the freedom of the city of Pittsburg, and sold my literature without hindrance; but not so when I came to Cincinnati. The mayor treated me with scant courtesy, but the automobile clubs of Cincinnati took action at once similar to that of the Pittsburg club. Again when I arrived in St. Louis, I received at the city hall the same frigid reception that had been given me at Cincinnati, although strenuous efforts were made by prominent citizens to bring out a different result. However, the mayor was obdurate and so after tarrying for a few days, I drove out of the city, greatly disappointed at the results, but not until after the automobile club and the Daughters of the American Revolution had taken formal action endorsing the work. My greater disappointment was that here I had anticipated a warm reception. St. Louis, properly speaking, had been the head center of the movement that finally established the Oregon Trail. Here was where Weythe, Bonneyville, Whitman and others of the earlier movements out on the trail had outfitted; but there is now a commercial generation, many of whom that care but little about the subject. Nevertheless I found a goodly number of zealous advocates of the cause of marking the Trail.

The drive from St. Louis to Jefferson City, the capital of the State of Missouri, was tedious and without results other than reaching the point where actual driving began in early days. [Pg 322]

Governor Folk came out on the state house steps to have his photograph taken and otherwise signified his approval of the work, and I was accorded a cordial hearing by the citizens of that city. On the fourth of April I arrived at Independence, Missouri, which is generally understood to be the eastern terminus of the Trail.

I found, however, that many of the pioneers shipped father up the Missouri, some driving from Atchison, some from Leavenworth, others from St. Joseph and at a little later period, multitudes from Kainsville (now Council Bluffs), where Whitman and Parker made their final break from civilization and boldly turned their faces westerly for the unknown land of Oregon.

A peculiar condition of affairs existed at Independence. The nearby giant city of Kansas City had long ago overshadowed the embryo commercial mart of the early thirties and had taken even that early trade from Independence. However, the citizens of Independence manifested an interest in the work and took measures to raise a fund for a $5,000 monument. At a meeting of the commercial club it was resolved to raise the funds, but found to be "uphill work." Whether they will succeed is problematical. A novel scheme had been adopted to raise funds. A local author proposed to write a drama, "The Oregon Trail," and put it on the stage at Independence and Kansas City, for the benefit of the Monument fund. If he can succeed in carrying out successfully the plot as outlined, he ought to write a play that would be a monument to the thought as well as to provide funds for a monument to the Trail, for certainly here is a theme that would not only fire the imagination of an audience but likewise enlist their sympathies. I am so impressed with the importance of this work that I am tempted to outline the theme in the hope if his attempt does not succeed, that others may be prompted to undertake the work.

First, the visit of the four Flat Head Indians in search of the "white man's book of heaven," [Pg 323] entertained in St. Louis by Gen. George Rogers Clark, of Lewis and Clark fame, until two of them died; then the death of a third on the way home; the historic speech of one, telling of their disappointment, and final return home of the single survivor; then follows the two-thousand-mile bridal tour of Whitman and Spaulding, and this in turn by the historic movement of the early home builders to the Oregon country with its grand results; the fading memory of a forgetful generation until the recollections of the grand highway is recovered in a blaze of glory to be handed down to succeeding generations, by the homage of a nation.

At Kansas City, Mo., the thoughts of the people had been turned to the Santa Fe Trail by the active campaign in the border state of Kansas in erecting markers on that trail. To my utter surprise it seemed that the Oregon Trail had almost been forgotten; the sentiment and thought had all been centered on the Santa Fe Trail. I tarried with them exactly one month, spoke to numerous organized bodies, and came away with the feeling the seed had been planted that would revive the memory of the Oregon Trail and finally result in a monument in the greater city. In the lesser Kansas City, Kansas, I visited all the public schools, spoke to the eleven thousand school children of the city and came away with the satisfaction of having secured contributions from over 3,000 children to a fund for erecting a monument in that city.

To further interest the children of the State of Kansas, I placed $25.00 in the hands of their

state superintendent of schools, to be offered as a prize for the best essay on the Oregon Trail. This contest has been determined during the calendar year of 1908 and the award made.

Addressing Colored School, Kansas City, Kans.

All existing maps in the State of Kansas ignore the Oregon Trail. The "Santa Fe Trail" is shown; there is a "Fremont Trail," a "California Trail," a "Mormon Trail," but not one mile of an "Oregon Trail," although this great historic ancient trail traversed the state for fully two hundred miles. This incident shows how extremely important, that early action to mark the Oregon Trail should be taken before it is too late. [Pg 325]

The Santa Fe and Oregon trails from Independence and Kansas City are identical out to the town of Gardner, Kansas, forty miles or thereabouts. Here, the Santa Fe Trail bore on to the west and finally southwest, while the Oregon Trail bore steadily on to the northwest and encountered the Platte Valley below Grand Island in what is now Nebraska. At the "forks of the road," the historian Chittenden says, "a simple signboard was seen which carried the words 'Road to Oregon,' thus pointing the way for two thousand miles. No such signboard ever before pointed the road for so long a distance and probably another such never will. I determined to make an effort to at least recover the spot where this historic sign once stood, and if possible plant a marker there. Kind friends in Kansas City, one of whom I had not met for sixty years, took me in their automobile to Gardner, Kansas, where, after a search of two hours, the two survivors were found who were able to point out the spot—Mr. V. R. Ellis and William J. Ott, whose residence in the near vicinity dated back nearly fifty years; aged respectively, 77 and 82 years. The point is at the intersection of Washington and Central Street in the town of Gardner, Kansas. In this little town of a few hundred inhabitants stands a monument for the Santa Fe Trail, a credit to the sentimental feelings of the community, but, having expended their energies on that work, it was impossible to get them to undertake to erect another, although I returned a few days later, spoke to a meeting of the town council and citizens and offered to secure $250.00 elsewhere if the town would undertake to raise a like sum.

This last trip cost me over a hundred dollars. As I left the train at Kansas City on my return, my pocket was "picked" and all the money I had, save a few dollars, was gone. This is the first time in my life I have lost money in that way, and I want it to be the last.

I planned to drive up the Missouri and investigate the remaining five prongs of The Trail—Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph and Kanesville, the other, Independence and Westpoint (now Kansas City), considered as one—but first drove to Topeka, the capital city of the State of Kansas, where I arrived May 11th (1908). The "Trail" crosses the Kansas River under the very shadow of the state house—not three blocks away—yet only a few knew of its existence. The state had appropriated $1,000 to mark the Santa Fe Trail, and the Daughters of the Revolution had conducted a campaign of supplementing this fund and had actually procured the erection of 96 markers. While I received a respectful hearing by these ladies, yet they shrank from undertaking new work at the present time. The same conditions controlled at Leavenworth and likewise at Atchison, and hence, I did not tarry long at either place, but at all three, Topeka, Leavenworth and Atchison, a lively interest was manifested, as well as at Lawrence, and I am led to feel the drive was not lost, although no monument was secured, but certainly the people do now know there is an Oregon Trail. All the papers did splendid work and have carried on the work in a way that will leave a lasting impression. [Pg 326]

On the 23d of May the team arrived at St. Joseph, Missouri. At this point many pioneers had outfitted in early days and the sentiment was in hearty accord with the work, yet plainly there would be a hard "tug" to get the people together on a plan to erect a monument. "Times were very tight to undertake such a work" came the response from so many that no organized effort was made. By this time the fact became known that the committee in Congress having charge of the bill appropriating $50,000 to mark the Trail, had taken action and had made a favorable report, and which is universally held to be almost equivalent to the passage of the bill.

So, all things considered, the conclusion was reached to suspend operation, ship the team home and for the time being take a rest from the work. I had been out from home twenty-eight months, lacking but five days, hence it is small wonder if I should conclude to listen to the inner longings to get back to the home and home life. Put yourself in my place, reader, and see what you think you would have done. True, the Trail was not yet fully nor properly marked, yet something had been accomplished and with this, the thought, a good deal more might be expected from the seed planted.

[Pg 327]

May 26th I shipped the outfit to Portland, Oregon, where I arrived on the 6th day of June (1908), and went into camp on the same grounds I had camped on in March (1906) on my outward trip.

Words cannot express my deep feelings of gratitude for the royal, cordial reception given me by the citizens of Portland, from the mayor down to the humblest citizen, and for the joyous reunion with the 2,000 pioneers who had just assembled for their annual meeting.

The drive from Portland to Seattle is one long to be remembered, and while occupying a goodly number of days, yet not one moment of tedious time hung heavy on my shoulders, and on the 18th day of July, 1908, I drove into the city of Seattle and the long "trek" was ended.

It would be unbecoming in me to assume in a vainglorious mood that the manifestation of cordiality, and I may say joy, in the hearts of many at my homecoming was wholly due to the real merit of my work, knowing as I do that so many have magnified the difficulties of the trip, yet it would be less than human did I not feel, and unjust did I not express the pride, and I hope is pardonable, and openly acknowledge it, for the kindly words and generous actions of my friends and neighbors, and to all such I extend my kindest and heartfelt thanks.

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CHAPTER LII.

THE END.

Now that the trip has been made, and an account of stock, so to speak, taken, I have become surprised the work was undertaken. Not that I regret the act any more than I regret the first act of crossing the Plains in 1852, which to me now appears to be as incomprehensible as the later act. If one questions the motive prompting and governing the movements of the early pioneers, scarcely two of the survivors will tell the same story, or give the same reason. This wonderful movement was brought vividly home to my mind recently while traversing the great fertile plains of the Middle West, where most of the emigrants came from. Here was a vast expanse of unoccupied fertile land, beautiful as ever mortal man looked upon; great rivers traversed this belt, to carry the surplus crops to distant markets; smaller streams ramify all over the region to multiply the opportunities for choice locations to one's heart's content, and yet these Oregon emigrants passed all these opportunities and boldly struck out on the 2,000-mile stretch of what was then known as the Great American Desert, and braved the dangers of Indian warfare, of starvation, of sickness—in a word, of untold dangers,—to reach the almost totally unknown Oregon Country. Why did they do it? Can any man tell? I have been asked thousands of times while on this later trip what prompted me to make it? I can not answer that question satisfactorily to myself and have come to answering the question by asking another, or more accurately speaking, several, "Why do you decorate a grave?" or "Why do we as a people mark our battlefields?" or "Why do we erect monuments to the heroic dead of war?" It is the same sentiment, for instance, that prompted marking the Gettysburg battlefield.

Yes, as I recently returned home over the Oregon Short Line Railroad that in many places crossed the old Trail (with Dave and Dandy quietly chewing their cud in the car, and myself [Pg 329] supplied with all the luxuries of a great palatial overland train), and I began vividly to realize the wide expanse of country covered, and passed first one and then another of the camping places, I am led to wonder if, after all, I could have seen the Trail stretched out, as like a panorama, as seen from the car window, would I have undertaken the work? I sometimes think not. We all of us at times undertake things that look bigger after completion, than in our vision ahead of us, or in other words, go into ventures without fully counting the cost. Perhaps, to an extent this was the case in this venture; the work did look larger from the car window than from the camp. Nevertheless, I have no regrets to express nor exultation to proclaim. In one sense the expedition has been a failure, in that as yet the Trail is not sufficiently marked for all time and for all generations to come. We have made a beginning, and let us hope the end sought will in the near future become an accomplished fact, and not forget the splendid response from so many communities on the way in this, the beginning. And let the reader, too, remember he has an interest in this work, a duty to perform to aid in building up American citizenship, for "monumenting" the Oregon Trail means more than the mere preservation in memory of that great highway; it means the building up of loyalty, patriotism—of placing the American thought upon a higher plane, as well as of teaching history in a form never to be forgotten and always in view as an object lesson.

The financing of the expedition became at once a most difficult problem. A latent feeling existed favoring the work, but how to utilize it—concentrate it upon a plan that would succeed,—confronted the friends of the enterprise. Elsewhere the reader will find the reason given, why the ox team was chosen and the drive over the old Trail undertaken. But there did not exist a belief in the minds of many that the "plan would work," and so it came about that almost every one refused to contribute, and many tried to discourage the effort, sincerely believing that it would [Pg 330] result in failure.

I have elsewhere acknowledged the liberality of H. C. Davis of Claquato, Washington, sending his check for $50.00 with which to purchase an ox. Irving Alvord of Kent, Washington, contributed $25.00 for the purchase of a cow. Ladd of Portland gave a check for $100.00 at the instance of George H. Rimes, who also secured a like sum from others—$200.00 in all. Then when I lost the ox Twist and telegraphed to Henry Hewitt of Tacoma to send me two hundred dollars, the response came the next day to the bank at Gothenburg, Nebraska, to pay me that amount. But, notwithstanding the utmost effort and most rigid economy, there did seem at times that an impending financial failure was just ahead. In the midst of the enthusiasm manifested, I felt the need to put on a bold front and refuse contributions for financing the expedition, knowing full well that the cry of "graft" would be raised and that contributions to local committees for monuments would be lessened, if not stopped altogether. The outlay had reached the $1,400.00 mark when I had my first 1,000 copies of the "Ox Team" printed. Would the book sell, I queried? I had written it in camp, along the roadside; in the wagon—any place and at any time I could snatch an opportunity or a moment from other pressing work. These were days of anxieties. Knowing full well the imperfections of the work, small wonder if I did, in a figurative sense, put out the book "with fear and trembling,"—an edition of 1,000 copies. The response came quick, for the book sold and the expedition was saved from failure for lack of funds. Two thousand more were printed, and while these were selling, my cuts, plates and a part of a third reprint were all destroyed by fire in Chicago, and I had to begin at the bottom. New plates and new cuts were ordered, and this time 6,000 copies were printed, and later another reprint of 10,000 copies (19,000 in all), with less than 1,000 copies left unsold two months after arriving home. So the book saved the day. Nevertheless, there were times—until I reached Philadelphia—when the [Pg 331] question of where the next dollar of expense money would come from before an imperative

demand came for it bore heavily on my mind. Two months tied up in Indianapolis during the winter came near deciding the question adversely; then later, being shut out from selling at Buffalo, Albany and some other places, and finally the tie-up in New York, related elsewhere, nearly "broke the bank". New York did not yield a rich harvest for selling, as I had hoped for, as the crowds were too great to admit of my remaining long in one place, but when Philadelphia was reached and I was assigned a place on Broad Street near the city hall, the crowds came, the sales ran up to $247.00 in one day and $600.00 for four days, the financial question was settled, and there were no more anxious moments about where the next dollar was to come from, although the aggregate expenses of the expedition had reached the sum of nearly eight thousand dollars.

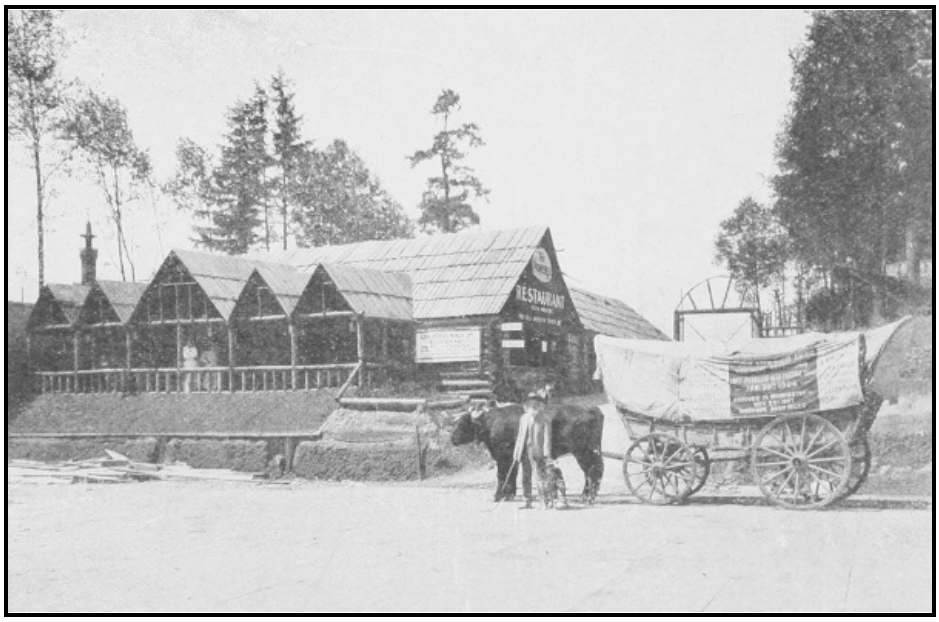
"All is well that ends well," as the old saying goes, and so I am rejoiced to be able to report so favorable a termination of the financial part of the expedition.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE INTERIM AND SECOND TRIP.

The preceding chapter, "The End", was written more than eight years ago. Readers will have noted the work of monumenting the Oregon Trail was left unfinished, that only a beginning had been made, that the seed had been planted from which greater results might reasonably have been expected to follow; that though in one sense the work had failed, nevertheless the effort had been fully justified by the results obtained.

A great change has come over the minds of the American people in this brief period of eight years. Numerous organizations have sprung into existence for the betterment of Good Roads, for the perpetuation of "The Old Trails" and the memory of those who wore them wide and deep. It is without the province of this writing to give a history of these various movements, and in any event space forbids undertaking the task. Suffice it to say the widespread interest in the good roads movement alone is shown by the introduction of sixty bills upon the subject during the first month of the Sixty-fourth Congress—more than double that introduced in any previous Congress. But we are now more concerned to record a brief history of what happened to the "Overland Outfit" since the so-called great trek ended. [Pg 333]



At the Yukon Exposition, 1909.

Dave and Dandy, after a few weeks of visiting, were put into winter quarters in Seattle, where the admonition of the Israelite law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn", was observed and both showed more fat on the ribs for the nearly three years of the strenuous life on the road. The dog "Jim" had likewise fattened up under a less strenuous life, but did not lose his watchful, faithful care of things surrounding him, that had seemed to have become a sort of second nature while on the trip. The owner of the "outfit", the writer, soon became restless under enforced idleness and arranged to participate in the Alaska Yukon Exposition held in Seattle during the summer of 1909, for illustrating pioneer life in the cabin and feeding the hungry multitude. Neither enterprise succeeded financially and the "multitude" soon ate him out of "house and home", demonstrating he had missed his calling by the disappearance of his accumulation, leaving him the experience only, to be vividly felt, though mysterious as the unseen air. To "lie down" and give up, to me was unthinkable. I had contemplated a second trip over the Trail to add to what had been done even if it was impossible to "finish up", but winter was approaching and so a trip to the sunny climate of California was made to remain until the winter 1909-10 had passed into history.

March 16, 1910, the start was made for a second trip over the old Trail from The Dalles, Oregon. "Dave" by this time had become a "seasoned ox" though had not yet worked out of him the unruly meanness that seemed to cling to him almost to the last. "Dandy" was not a whit behind him as an ox and kept his good nature for the whole trip before him (which lasted nearly two years) and to the end of his life. [Pg 334]

On this trip no effort was made to erect monuments, but more special attention paid toward locating the Trail. Tracings of the township survey through which the Trail was known to run were obtained at the state capitals at Boise, Idaho; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Topeka, Kansas. The United States deputy surveyors of public lands are instructed to note all roads or trails crossing section or township lines. Here came "confusion worse confounded" by the numerous notations, some appearing on several section lines in succession, others on one line and then not again for many miles and, of course, it was not known by the deputies which was the Oregon Trail, or which was a later road or which was simply an old buffalo trail, and later followed by the Indians.

If we could pick up a known point of the Oregon Trail noted on a section line crossing and

search for another even if many miles distant and find it and get the general direction, I don't recall a single failure to locate the intervening points. This, however, did not always result in finding the visible marks on the ground, but the memory of the old settlers would come in or an Indian might remember, and then sometimes we would stumble on it before we knew where the mysterious track lay. Once I remember finding two rods in length of the "old trough" in a fence road crossing, where the traces in fields on both sides had been cultivated, the road graded, and only this little spot left undisturbed. Other places out on the plains were left undisturbed by improvements. Nature had come in to it in parts and obliterated the marks. Then again at other places the marks remained so plain one might almost say it could be seen miles ahead, both wide and deep—200 feet wide in places where the sage had been killed out, and then again in sandy points so deep one hesitates to tell fearing lest he may be accused of exaggerating; but here goes: I did measure one point fifteen feet deep and seventy-five feet wide. [Pg 335]

In the sage lands there came points where one might say the Trail could be identified by its "countenance", that is by the shade of color of the sage growth, sometimes only a very light shade at that, yet unmistakable where one had become accustomed to see it, like a familiar face. To me this search became more and more interesting, and I may say fascinating, and will remain a pleasant memory as long as I live.

It is not my purpose to give a detailed account of this second trip beginning at The Dalles, Oregon, March 16, 1910, and ending at Puyallup, Washington, August 26, 1912, twenty-nine months and ten days, but only refer briefly, very briefly, to some experiences, a passing notice only.

At San Antonio, Texas, we camped in the Alamo, adjoining to that historic spot where David Crocket was killed. At Chicago the crowds "jostled" us almost like the experience in New York three years before. I crossed over the Loop Fork of Platte River, three-quarters of a mile wide, in the wagon box under a moving picture camera to illustrate the ways of the pioneers of the long ago. We encountered a veritable cloudburst in the Rocky Mountains in which we very nearly lost the outfit in the roaring torrent that followed, and did lose almost all of my books and other effects. Later Dandy pulled off one of his shoes in the mountain road and became so lame we were compelled to abandon farther driving, then we shipped home. Then came the great misfortune of losing Jim out of the car, and never got him back. Nevertheless, I have no regrets to express and have many pleasant memories to bear witness of the trip. All in all it was a more strenuous trip than the drive to Washington and all things considered it was prolific in results.

Part of the time I was alone; but I didn't mind that so much, except for the extra work thrown upon me. [Pg 336]

One more incident, this time a pleasant one:

One day as I was traveling leisurely along, suddenly there appeared above the horizon veritable castles—castles in the air. It was a mirage. I hadn't seen one for sixty years, but it flashed upon me instantly what it was—the reflection of some weird pile of rocks so common on the Plains. The shading changes constantly, reminding me of the almost invisible changes of the northern lights, and it so riveted my attention that I forgot all else until Jim's barking ahead of the oxen recalled me to consciousness, as one might say, to discover Dave and Dandy had wandered off the road, browsing and nipping a bit of grass here and there. Jim knew something was going wrong and gave the alarm. Verily the sagacity of the dog is akin to the intelligence of man.

As just recorded, the second trip was ended. I had long contemplated contributing the outfit for the perpetuation of history. It did not take long to obtain an agreement with the city authorities at Tacoma to take the ownership over and to provide a place for them. Before the whole agreement was consummated the State of Washington assumed the responsibility of preserving them in the State Historical Building, where by the time this writing is in print the whole outfit will be enclosed in a great glass case, fourteen feet by twenty-eight, in one of the rooms of the new State Historical Building. The oxen, from the hands of the taxidermist, look as natural as life, while standing with the yoke on in front of the wagon, as so often seen when just ready for a day's drive.

The wagon, typically a "Prairie Schooner" of "ye olden days" of the pioneers, with its wooden axle, the linch pin and old-fashioned "schooner bed", weather-beaten and scarred, would still be good for another trip without showing wobbling wheels or screeching axle, as when plenty of tar had not been used. Of this "screeching" the memory of pioneers hark back to the time when the tar gave out and the groaning inside the hub began with a voice comparable and as audible as of a braying donkey, or the sharper tone of the filing of a saw. Is it, or was it, worth while to preserve these old relics? Some say not. I think it was. Taxidermists tell us, barring accidents and if properly cared for, the oxen are virtually indestructible and that a thousand years hence they may be seen in this present form by the generation then inhabiting the earth, who may read a lesson as to what curious kind of people lived in this the twentieth century of the Christian era. [Pg 337]

A map of the old Trail nearly forty feet long has been made with painstaking care, an outline of which will be painted on the inside of the glass case. Nearly a hundred and fifty monuments, or thereabouts, have been erected along the old landmark. Photographs of most of these have been secured or eventually all will be. The plan is to number these and display them on the glass with a corresponding number at the particular point on the map where each belongs. These will doubtless be added to as time goes on to complete the record of the greatest trail of all history—where twenty thousand died in the conquering of a continent, aside from the unknown number

that fell by the resisting hand of the native uncivilized savages. It's a pathetic story and but few, very few, of the actors are left to tell the story.

THE OLD TRAILS.

I do not propose to write a history of the "Old Trails". That has been done by painstaking historians, though it may be truly said that by no means has the last word been written. There is, however, a field that is to be hoped will soon be occupied, for the assembling of already recorded facts in a "Child's History" in attractive form, to the end the younger generation as they come on the stage of action may learn to love the memory of the pioneers and the very tracks they trod. Nothing will more surely build up a healthy patriotism in the breasts of generations to follow than [Pg 338] a study of the deeds of their forbears that conquered the fair land they inhabit. Thus far, a brief history has been given of the effort to erect granite monuments along the old Trail. This of itself is a commendable, grand work, but by no means the last word. Simple sentinel monuments, if we may so designate them, have their value, but to be enduring should be of utility that will not only serve as a reminder of the past but likewise attract the attention of the greater number, the multitude that will become interested because of their utility and more willing to lend a hand to their preservation after once being created. This is why the pioneers have so persistently clung to the design of a highway along the lines of the trails—once a highway, say they, let them always be such as long as civilization continues.

And so an appeal was made to Congress for renewing the memory of the "Old Trails" by establishing a national highway from coast to coast, to be known as "Pioneer Way".

PIONEER WAY.

64th Congress, First Session.—H. R. 9137.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

January 15, 1916.

Mr. Humphrey of Washington introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

A BILL

To survey and locate a military and post road from Saint Louis, Missouri, to Olympia, Washington.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War be, and is hereby, directed, to appoint a board of two members, one of them being a United States Army engineer and the other a civilian, to make a preliminary survey for a military and post highway from Saint Louis, Missouri, to Olympia, Washington, said military highway to follow the following route as near as may be: From Saint Louis to Kansas City, Missouri, following as near [Pg 339] as may be the general route of what is commonly known as the "Old Trail." From Kansas City, following the joint Santa Fe and Oregon trails for about forty miles to the city of Gardner, Kansas; thence following the general route of the Oregon Trail to Topeka, Kansas, and from Topeka thence to the State line of Nebraska; thence, following said trail, to the Platte River, and thence along the most practical route near the right bank of the said Platte River to a point where, in the judgment of said board, they may decide as to the best point to cross said river, said crossing to be below or at the junction of the north and south forks of said river; thence, as near as may be, along the left river bank of said North Platte River to the State line of Wyoming; thence by the best general route to a point where the Old Trail diverges from said river to the left bank of the Sweetwater River near the landmark known as Independence Rock; thence up Sweetwater River to a point where said Old Trail leaves said river and ascends to the summit of the Rocky Mountains in the South Pass, and thence to the nearby point known as Pacific Springs; thence to Bear River Valley and the State line of Idaho; thence down said valley to Soda Springs and to Pocatello, Idaho; thence to American Falls, Idaho, and to the best crossing of the Snake River; thence to and down the Boise Valley to Boise City, Idaho; thence to recrossing of Snake River and to Huntington in the State of Oregon; thence to La Grande, Oregon; thence over the Blue Mountains to the city of The Dalles, Oregon; thence through the Columbia River Gap to Vancouver on the right bank of the Columbia River in the State of Washington; thence to the city of Olympia, Washington; following generally the Old Oregon Trail and other trails followed by the pioneers in going from Saint Louis to Puget Sound, utilizing, wherever practicable, roads and highways already existing.

Sec. 2. That said board shall report as to the cost, the location of said highway, and the character of construction that they deem advisable for such highway.

Sec. 3. That said board shall also take up with the State authorities in the States through which the said road shall pass and report what co-operation can be secured from such States in the construction and maintenance of such road.

Sec. 4. That the board shall also report on the advisability of employing the United States Army in the construction of any portion of said road.

Sec. 5. That the name of said road shall be "Pioneer Way."

See. 6. That the sum of $75,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of defraying the expense in connection with such survey.

"At the hearing before the House Committee on Military Affairs, H. R. 9137, A Bill 'To survey [Pg 340] and locate a Military and Post Road from Saint Louis, Missouri, to Olympia, Washington,' Ezra Meeker, of Seattle, Washington, was called before the Committee and made an oral plea favoring the passage of the bill and filed a statement, a copy of which appears below":

The bill before you authorizing the locating and survey of a great National Highway to be known as "Pioneer Way," as a tribute to the memory of the pioneers, has a deeper significance than that of sentiment, though fully justified from that motive alone.

It is well to remember that the possession of the Oregon country hung in the balance for many years; that a number of our statesmen of the Nineteenth Century, including Jefferson himself, did not believe we should attempt to incorporate this vast territory, the Oregon country, as a part of the United States, Jefferson even going so far as advocating an independent government in that, to him then, land of mystery.

Encouraged by these differences of opinion among our own people and prompted by the hunger for territorial aggrandizement and likewise spurred to action by the rich harvest of furs that poured millions of pounds sterling into the coffers of the London company, known as the Hudson Bay Company, the British government tenaciously held its grip on the country and refused to give it up until the pioneers, the home builders, boldly took possession, refused any sort of a compromise and presented the alternative of war or to be left in peaceable possession of their homes. It is simply a record of history that this vanguard of bold, great men and women hastened the final settlement of the contest and it is believed by many to have been the determining factor that compelled the British to withdraw.

It was a great event in the history of the United States, in fact of the world's history, as otherwise the "Stony Mountains," as Jefferson advocated, would have been the western limits of the United States, and it requires no stretch of the imagination to discern the far-reaching results that would have followed.

Although as I have said, justified in undertaking this great work from sentiment alone, there are other potent factors that to some may seem to be of greater importance and to which I wish to call your attention.

The last decade has wrought great changes in world affairs by the numerous discoveries and improvements; not the least of these is the wonderful advance in the use of the "trackless" car now progressing so rapidly. Pardon me for saying that in my belief that any of you gentlemen that may live to [Pg 341] be of my present age will see a far greater improvement than has already been made—one that staggers the imagination to grasp.

Having been born before the advent of railroads in the United States (1830); witnessing the strides in civilization made possible by this great factor, I can truly say that I believe there is a far greater impending change before you from the introduction of the trackless car than has followed the rail car. This one feature alone, the government ownership (State or National) of the road bed with private ownership of the car will foster enterprise, build up character, promote independence of spirit, change the tide of people from the cities "back to the farm", now so important to the continued welfare of the nation. The tremendous effect upon the development of the seven States, through which this proposed highway will pass, can not fail to serve as a great object lesson and encourage other great interstate highways so necessary to the commercial development of the country in time of peace and preparedness for defense in time of war.

As to the latter, preparedness for war, I will speak presently, but just now wish to call your attention to the influence upon the material developments of the country, which in fact is a measure of preparedness for defense or war. This measure, if you will notice, provides for state co-operation in the building and maintenance of this thoroughfare. This feature should not be lost sight of. It is important, of vital importance may I not say. If a given state will not join, the national government nevertheless should build the road and restrict its use to military and postal service, until such times as the state would enter into an equitable agreement as to its cost and upkeep (which would not be for long), for commercial use as well as for military and postal purposes.

Now, as to preparedness for defense or for war to follow the building of this great trunk line, military highway over the Oregon Trail which would soon be followed east by the extension on the old Cumberland road as such to Washington and, as originally, to Philadelphia, thus creating the world's greatest thoroughfare, is so patent, we need not occupy your time to discuss, except as to the general principles of such a measure. We can readily see how a small army may become more formidable than a larger one where the means are at hand for speedy mobilization. The great battle of the Marne, that saved Paris from the horrors of a siege and probable destruction, was won by the French by the sudden concentration of troops made possible by the use of thousands of automobiles.

This object lesson should not be lost sight of and it should be remembered that the road bed is the final word; in other words, the usefulness of the automobiles is measured by the road condition. It is without the province of this discussion to advocate the measures, that is the extent of preparedness this nation [Pg 342] should undertake. There are millions of honest citizens who believe there is no danger of an attack from a foreign foe and hence no measure of preparedness is necessary, forgetting that as far back as history records run, there has been war, wars of conquest, religious wars, wars from jealousies or towering ambitions, from causes so numerous, we tire to recite them and that what has happened in the history of the thousands of years that have passed, will happen in the cycle of time in the future.

Whatever may be the difference of opinion as to what measure of defense we adopt, whether it shall be a large army or a large navy, there should be none as to this proposed measure coupled as it is with such other manifest benefits to follow, alone sufficient to warrant the undertaking. I have been witness in my short span of life of 85 years to four wars this nation has been engaged in, all in measure without preparedness and all in consequence resulting in frightful loss. We can't forget the battle of Bladensburg, where over 8,000 raw troops, unprepared, gave way before 4,000 trained that marched to Washington and burned the Capitol and inflicted a humiliation that rancors to this day in the breast of any American citizen with red blood in his veins.

Shall we invite a like humiliation for the future? I say nay, nay, and bear with me if I repeat again, nay, nay. I feel deeply the solemnity of this duty that rests in your hands and pardon me if I do speak with deep feeling.

Mind you, I am addressing you as to this particular feature of preparedness.

Many of you gentlemen will doubtless remember that pathetic address of Hon. Lloyd George in the House of Commons last December, now known the world over as the "Too Late" appeal. After a million

lives had been lost and billions of pounds sterling expended, this address fell like a thunderbolt upon the ears of Parliament. He said, "Too late," emphasizing the words: "We have been too late in this, too late in that, too late in arriving at decision, too late in starting this enterprise or that adventure. The footsteps of the Allies have been dogged by the mocking spectre of too late."

Let not "Too late" be inscribed on the portals of our workshop.

It's a solemn warning this, that some day will come home in disaster to this nation if we fail to take heed and profit by the lessons from the experience of others as taught in these outspoken words of agony, shall we not say, almost presaging the downfall of a great nation.

I am not an alarmist, not a pessimist, but, gentlemen, we should not ignore plain facts. There is a disturbing question on the Pacific Coast that we should heed. A vast population to the West is clamoring to enter the United States whom we are unwilling to receive as citizens and who would refuse to accept citizenship. [Pg 343]

You will remember the tension of but a few months ago. Some day the bands of friendship will snap and light the flames of war. Do you remember the utter failure—breakdown shall I not say—of the railroads during the war with Spain? What if this condition covered 3,000 miles instead of but a few hundred? With bridges destroyed by spies, trains derailed, railroads blockaded, it requires no stretch of the imagination to know what would happen. Provide this roadbed, and hundreds of thousands of trackless cars would appear on the scene and supply transportation for the speedy transfer of troops and as like in the battle of the Marne referred to, would decide the fortune of the day.

Bear with me for a moment longer, please. I may have spoken with too much zeal, too much earnestness, too much feeling, but I look upon the action to be taken by this committee as of great importance. We pioneers yearn to have this work begun because of the intense desire to perpetuate the memory of the past and believe it of great importance to the rising generation in implanting this memory in the breasts of the future rulers of the nation and of sowing the seeds of patriotism, but of transcendant importance, as you will perceive from what I have said, is the beginning of this work and carrying it to a speedy finish, as a measure of preparedness for defense or war. Let not the responsibility of "Too late" rest upon your shoulders, but speedily pass this bill to the end a report may reach this Congress in time for action before the year ends.

CHAPTER LIV.

CONQUEST OF THE OREGON COUNTRY. [27]

I will not delay you long with a story relating the beginning of the conquest of the Oregon country through American valor. The first period, that of the exploration, can be told in very few words. Robert Gray, captain of the ship "Columbia", on May 7, 1792, discovered Grays Harbor, and on May 11th, entered the mouth of a great river and named it "Columbia" after the name of his ship.

The next great event to be recorded is the time when Lewis and Clark "on the 7th of November, 1805, heard the breakers roar, and saw, spreading and rolling before them, the waves of the western ocean, 'the object of our labors, the reward of our anxieties'," as they recorded in that wonderful journal of that wonderful trip. [Pg 344]

It is permissible to note that sixteen years before Gray sailed into the mouth of the great river, Jonathan Carver, an American explorer, on the 7th of December, 1776, sixty miles above St. Anthony Falls, from a point which we may very properly call the heart of the continent, wrote these immortal words: "The four most capital rivers on the continent of North America, viz., the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the River Bourbon, and the Oregon, or the River of the West, have their sources in the same neighborhood". While Carver did not explore the river, or any of its tributaries, yet with wonderful vision foretold of its existence, and gave it a name, the "Oregon", the first instance that word was written. It is beyond the wit of man to divine where the word came from other than from the imaginative brain of that noted traveler.

The second period, that of exploitation, began with the entrance of the ship "Tonquin" into the mouth of the Columbia on the 25th of March, 1811, sent out by John Jacob Astor as "planned for a brilliant trading project". The tragic fate of the ship in more northern waters is told by an Indian, of the massacre of the whole ship's crew save one who, wounded, had retreated to the hold of the ship near the magazine and blew up the ship and avenged the death of his comrades by destroying ten Indians to every white man of the crew that had been sacrificed.

Next on the scene came the Hunt party overland, to arrive at Astoria February 15, 1812. The suffering of this party, the danger incurred, with the risks taken, far and away eclipse any feat of record in exploration of the Oregon country.

Following close upon the heels of their arrival came Astor's second ship, "The Beaver", to cross the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River May 10, 1812. The American flag that had floated peacefully over the heads of the little colony at Astoria for fourteen months was doomed, a year and seven months later, to the humiliation of being hauled down to make way for the British flag, as a result of the fortunes of war, and was not restored until October 6, 1818. As a result of the joint occupancy treaty of October 20, 1818, the British continued to exploit the country and built Fort Vancouver in 1824, and remained in full control of all avenues of trade until challenged by the traders coming from the east, with St. Louis the head center. [Pg 345]

In 1822 General William H. Ashley's company sent out "bands of trappers to form camps in the best beaver districts, and trap out the streams one after another", much like the gold seekers who would wash out the gold of the different streams in succession. One of these Ashley parties discovered the South Pass (1822) and invaded the Oregon country, and a commercial war began and continued until the final overthrow of the British twenty-four years later.

In 1830 (the year I was born) the first wagon crossed the summit of the Rocky Mountains through the South Pass, that wonderful opening in the range, easy of access from either slope, and where the way is as safe, with no more obstacles to overcome than in a drive twenty miles south of Tacoma. William L. Sublette, reported to be the first man to invade the Oregon country through the South Pass for trapping, still lives, or did a year ago, at "Elk Mountain", a small place in Wyoming, high up on the west slope of the Rocky Mountains. He must be a very old man, but I am told is yet quite active.

I followed his "cut-off" west from the Big Sandy to Bear River, in the year 1852, and can testify it was then a hard road to travel. On my recent trip (1906) I avoided this short cut and followed more nearly the trail of 1843 further south, which led to near Fort Badger, below the forty-second parallel of latitude, and then Mexican territory.

We have now arrived at a period of impending change when the eccentric Bonneville drove through the South Pass (1832), closely followed by that adventurous Bostonian, Nathaniel J. Wythe. Both lost everything they had in these ventures, but they pointed the way, followed a little later by countless thousands of home builders to the Oregon country. A part of the Wythe party remained and became the first American home builders in the Oregon country. [Pg 346]

We are now arrived at what we may call the third period. The four Flathead or Nez Perces Indians, shall we not call them Pilgrims, had crossed over to St. Louis (1832) in search of the "White Man's Book of Heaven". General Clark, of Lewis and Clark fame, then Indian agent for the West, had received them kindly, and introduced them widely to the religious world and elsewhere. Their advent kindled a flame of missionary zeal not often excelled, with the result that in 1834 the Methodists sent Jason Lee and others, and in 1835 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, representing the Presbyterian and Congregationalists, sent Dr. Samuel Parker and Marcus Whitman as missionaries to the Oregon country. Parker

completed the trip during the year of 1835, but Whitman turned back at the rendezvous on Green River, west of the crest of the Rock Mountains, and retraced his trail to his home for the purpose of securing more aid to occupy the field, and the following year with his young wife, in company with H. H. Spaulding and wife, crossed over to Vancouver, where the party arrived in September, 1836. These two were the first ladies to pass over the Oregon Trail and deserve special mention here, not so much for this distinction as for their piety, coupled with heroism and courage, not popularly expected of their sex. I will venture to digress to pay a just tribute to the pioneer ladies, so often, and I may say so generally, misunderstood. Students of history are well aware that, but for the firm support of the Pilgrim mothers, the lot of the Pilgrims that landed on Plymouth Rock would have been infinitely harder. I have often thought that in thinking and speaking of the Pilgrims we ought always to speak of the Pilgrim fathers and mothers. It has fallen to my lot to [Pg 347] observe at close range the heroism of Pioneer mothers, and I wish to testify that, under stress of suffering or danger, they always became a bulwark of encouragement and support.

Let me relate one instance. Meeting one day nine wagons on the Oregon Trail returning, we discovered the teams were all driven by the women and children—the men were all dead. This was on the trail in the Platte Valley after that dreadful scourge of cholera had struck the columns.

While the missionaries were but few in number, their influence became widespread, and especially helpful to the later inrush of home builders, and even if not successful in saving men's souls, they were instrumental in saving men's lives, and deserve a tender spot in our hearts. I would not have you infer from the remark about "saving men's souls" that I wished to belittle the efforts of those sincere men, the missionaries. I simply record a fact acknowledged by the missionaries themselves.

We now approach the fourth period, that of the home builders. It is hardly fair to say this class exploited the country, developed is the better word. We have, in fact, come to the turning point as to the future of the country. If the English had been able to throw a strong colony into the Oregon country, no man can tell what the final result would have been. England was arrogant, and some at least, of her statesmen held the United States in contempt, and would have welcomed a war over the Oregon country. The joint occupancy treaty (fortunate for us) disarmed the war spirit, for did they not have control of the trade of the country? And could they not afford to wait?—forgetting that *exploiting* and *developing* a country are radically different.

When the American home builders began to arrive in great numbers it became impossible to again renew the pact for joint occupancy, and the treaty of 1846 quickly followed. As I have said, a few of the Wythe party of 1833 remained and joined the settlers' colony already begun by [Pg 348] discharged Hudson Bay servants, and trappers who had tired of nomadic life, less than a hundred all told, at the end of the year 1839. In May, 1840, the ship "Lusanne" arrived, bringing fifty men, women and children as a reinforcement to the Methodist Mission at Champoeg, but who soon became home builders. During the two following years, possibly a hundred more arrived direct from the east, having traversed the Oregon Trail from the Missouri River.

All of a sudden there came a widespread "Oregon fever" during the winter of 1842-3. A measure known as the Lynn bill had passed the Senate, granting land to actual settlers. Whitman had returned overland during the winter. Fremont had made his first trip as far as to the Rocky Mountains and returned to be commissioned to lead a large exploring party to the Oregon country. The "times" were not prosperous, nor health good in the Middle West, and besides, an unrest had taken possession of the minds of many people on account of the slavery question. The result was that more than a thousand people congregated nearby what is now Kansas City, preparing to start for Oregon as soon as time and seasonable weather would permit; some pushed out to Elm Grove, west of the Missouri, and camped; others passed on a little farther; finally a great company was formed, captains appointed, and all was to move with precision, and order, and the start was made. But the independent spirit of the frontiersmen would not brook control and soon there came a division into two parties, then, later, others broke away, until finally but little of the discipline was left, though there continued co-operation in the face of a common danger. Whitman joined, or rather overtook, the main body of the moving caravan, but he never led it, or attempted to lead it. His knowledge of the trail and his counsel was helpful. It was upon Whitman's advice that the great venture was made to open a wagon road from Ft. Hall west—over 600 miles—a wonderful feat. Thus, nearly a thousand people reached the Oregon [Pg 349] country in 1843, and news sent back that a wagon road had been opened the whole length of the Oregon Trail.

Life was at once infused into the dormant body of the Provisional Government that had been formed, and the absolute rule of the Hudson Bay Company ended.

During the year 1844, nearly fifteen hundred immigrants reached Oregon and yet, early in 1845, the British Government refused to accept the thrice made offer of a settlement of the boundary on the 49th parallel, but when 3,000 emigrants crossed over during the year 1845, and the Hudson Bay Company gave up the contest by formally, on the 15th of August, 1845, placing themselves under the protection of the Provisional Government, then the British Government of their own accord, offered to accept the line she had so long persistently refused. The Ashburton Treaty speedily followed, and the Oregon question was settled—the conquest was complete.

Of the subsequent migration, I cannot tarry to speak in detail. In 1850, the population of the whole of the old Oregon country was less than 15,000. The gold excitement had drawn large numbers to California, and turned much of the immigration from the east to that field. Not until

the great wave of 1852, when 50,000 people crossed the Missouri River, did Oregon make a new beginning in the race for population.

I had cast my fortune with that throng—a marching column 500 miles long—and like Sherman's army marching through Georgia 50,000 strong at the beginning, but leaving 5,000 dead on the way. At the parting of the ways at Bear River, many turned to the south, yet leaving a great throng to reach the Oregon country. And yet, when I rowed my little open boat, 18 feet long, into Commencement Bay on a June day of 1853, there were less than 4,000 inhabitants in all the territory within the boundary of this great State, and but *eleven* persons within the borders of the present city of Tacoma.

[Pg 350] And now, my friends, will this generation "let the dead bury the dead", and let the memory of those who made it possible for you to enjoy the blessings of this great commonwealth, sink into oblivion? Or will you join generously to perpetuate the memory of those who have gone before, to the end that you may profit by their examples?

A word now as to this institution, "The Washington State Historical Society". It was my fortune to be in at the beginning. More than twenty years have passed since the completed organization was formed by articles of incorporation. Thirty-six people participated in the organization—six only of the signers are now living. We are admonished that the generation of men that made the beginning will all soon have passed and gone into history. Shall the work thus begun languish and fail for lack of support? The time has arrived when there should be an emphatic answer to this question by liberal state aid appropriation. Much has already been lost because of the withholding of this help. The harvest has been ripe all these years and many of the precious relics have been lost or garnered elsewhere. Remember, this is a harvest that cannot be reproduced. If not gathered in time, it is lost forever.

A case in point: There is an opportunity now to secure a typical blockhouse built nearly sixty years ago, one of seventy-five built during the Indian war, all of which will disappear in a few years if left exposed to the elements. This society ought to be enabled to secure this relic, [28] erect it under the shelter of a great building, fill it with exhibits, and preserve the whole for future generations. I mention this as one instance only, but the country is rich in these relics that will become more and more precious as future generations come on the scene of action. This is not something we can leave for future generations to do, for then it will be too late; it is *NOW* this work ought to be prosecuted. I will repeat, *by state aid*.

[Pg 351] A word now as to the proposed memorial arch to the Pioneers to be erected in Tacoma, perhaps within less than a stone's throw of the home of the society, to add its beauty to what is to become the civic center of the city, with the magnificent structure of the High School building on the one part; the home of the Historical Society, may we not hope, in as impressive architectural structure, near by for another part; with that wonderful and unique structure—shall we call it the Stadium—as the central figure of attraction, the whole overlooked by this work of art, this record of history, as well as a tribute to those who contributed to the conquest of the Oregon country, this empire of which we all are so justly proud.

It is but little over a hundred years since this history began. Momentous changes have come in our national history within that short period of time, not the least of which is this great conquest, opening a gateway to the great "western" ocean, thus winning of the farther west, to found a nation spanning the continent from ocean to ocean, destined to be one of the greatest world powers of all history.

As before outlined, the march of events naturally divides into five periods. Provision is made for five large bronze tablets, or engraved in granite on the base of the arch, upon which to record a history of the conquest; one for a record of the explorers, giving names and dates; a second, a history of the exploitation during fur gathering period, and disclosure of the interior; a third might recite the efforts and achievements of the missionaries, giving names and dates; a fourth may show the Oregon Trail in relief, and recite the history of the home builders, and, finally, a fifth should show present day achievements, as for instance, who founded the city of Tacoma and when, and present day population; who founded Olympia, Seattle, Spokane; in a word, the cities of the State, thus reaching out to the borderland of pioneer days.

The groups of bronze statues to crown the arch will naturally represent these different periods and lend an enchanting scene the eye will never tire viewing. We will doubtless hear some one, [Pg 352] or more than one, say all this can't be done. Seven years ago I heard many say that the Oregon Trail could not be searched out, and found "with an old ox team", but it was done. I did not hear it, but heard of it, that "the man was crazy to go out with such a rig"; "that the people would laugh at him"; but they didn't laugh. Many came to the dedicatory services of monuments, and stood with tears in their eyes, instead of giving way to mirth. I tell you, friends, such work as here proposed reaches the hearts of men and makes better citizens of them—makes them love their country better, their flag, their homes, their own lives, when they participate and become conscious of having performed an altruistic act; it is farther reaching than we are at first thought willing to concede.

But I must have done. I sincerely thank you for the courtesy in extending this invitation to speak before you and for the respectful hearing accorded by the assembled audience.

FOOTNOTES:

[27] Note—An address by Ezra Meeker before Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington, 1912.

[28] Since has been secured by the society.

CHAPTER LV.

PIONEER LIFE IN PUYALLUP.

This account of pioneer life in the Puyallup would be incomplete without looking closer into their manner of living. The cabins were built under stress for immediate shelter, and so lacked completeness that otherwise would not have been had the builders had more time. All the early built cabins were of logs, rudely constructed, small, and without floors. Indeed, no lumber could at the time be obtained, and the pioneers did the best they could. Most of these cabins were burned during the Indian war. I will describe one built after the war that I am more familiar with than any other, as it became my home for twenty-four years and the remnants of which are still preserved in Pioneer Park, Puyallup. Jerry Stilly took a squatter's right on the quarter section of land that afterwards became my homestead and built the first section, or room, to which I [Pg 353] afterwards added. Stilly did not succeed in raising much of a crop, in fact did not stay long enough, but he did succeed in after life in raising a crop of ten children, all yet living I think in the State, but never succeeded in gathering much of the world's goods around him. In fact he moved too often to do so, but he did enrich his mind, drawn from the best store of literature. He was a dear lover of Shakespeare and a close student of the Bible. Gibbon also was one of his favorite authors. He could repeat almost verbatim the twentieth and twenty-first chapters of the "Decline and Fall," not that he had memorized it, but had grasped the whole meaning from repeated readings of that wonderfully comprehensive work. Stilly was a typical pioneer, made no pretension in dress, seldom went to church, but was exemplary in his habits, though inclined toward pessimism in his later life. The cabin that Stilly built was of inch board walls, eight feet high and sixteen feet square and covered with clapboard, or "shakes" as many designate them. Soon after coming into possession of the claim I built another of same dimensions, leaving a space of five feet between the two for a double fireplace and chimney. These fireplaces became a source of great comfort for many a long winter evening, furnishing both warmth and light. They were built of float lava rock that had been belched from the throat of the great mountain (Ranier) and brought to the lower level by the avalanches and later the mighty floods that had inundated the valley ages ago. They were so light in weight that an ordinary farm wagon box full was not a heavy load and so soft they could be shaped with an ordinary chopping ax without injuring, except dulling the sharp edge just a little. To have fireplaces with smooth faced stones, and a chimney that did not "smoke" seemed to be the very acme of elegance and comfort. The inside of the cabin was first covered with newspapers and a little later with real wall paper for warmth, and appearance as well, and really we felt as proud of the cabin home, "our home", as we afterwards did of the more pretentious homestead described elsewhere. An ivy vine [29] planted [Pg 355] next to the entry way between the two cabins, now nearly fifty years old, which yet marks the spot, soon climbed to the top of the roof and spread out, assuming the shape of the roof, ferreting out all niches and cracks, and finally invaded the sitting-room of the cabin as a cheerful reminder of what was above our heads. The last time I measured the main stalk at the ground it was found to be nine inches in diameter; overhead, what used to be in the loft, there are now main branches as big as a man's arm with the whole surface covered with a beautiful bright green mass of foliage.

PIONEER PARK, PUYALLUP, WASH.

In course of time the land upon which the cabin stood was dedicated by my wife and myself as Pioneer Park, Puyallup, and given over to the care of the city. The cabin walls in the lapse of years weakened and the roof fell in. Temporary props held the remnants of the ceiling in place, which in turn supported the over-spreading vine. Finally the ladies of the now grown up little city of six thousand people took a hand, placed six heavy cement columns to support overhead cement joists to in turn support the ivy vine.

A cement floor, a drinking fountain in the center of the cabin floor, the ivy bower, and a few cement seats attest the faithful efforts those lovers of the almost forgotten past have made to

preserve in perpetuity the identity of the spot where the first cabin of the now pretentious city was built. The last vestige of the old decaying walls were removed and placed overhead, but under the ivy vine, where in the lapse of years the roots of the vine that have taken firm hold of the decaying relics will absorb and transmit not only the memory of the cabin for all time to come, but the very substance of the cabin will be transformed into a new life of everlasting green.

A stone tablet inscribed "Site of Ezra Meeker's Cabin Home," completes the record to be read by the many generations to follow.

[Pg 356] Just who is the person that first conceived the idea to erect this memorial is unknown to the author. The organization known as the Puyallup Ladies' Club assumed the responsibility and carried the work to completion. A letter from the President reached me at Elm Creek, Neb., while on the last drive with the ox team homeward bound, informing me of the arrangement for dedicating the tablet and requesting if possible to be present and "make a short address." This was the first information I had of the contemplated work. I could not possibly leave my work on the Oregon Trail in time to reach home and be present, so I bethought myself to be present in spoken words and voice even if I could not be in person. My address was spoken into the wonderful "thing of life," shall I call it? No, not of life, "the spirit of life," that is named the "phonograph", that recorded the very tones of my voice that would be familiar to my friends at home, although at the time these words would be reproduced I would be nearly two thousand miles distant, climbing up the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, or more accurately speaking on the summit and above the clouds of the midsummer day. The records of the address reached the hands of the ladies in due time, when lo and behold, instead of a few friends as anticipated more than a thousand came to see and listen, and as all could not hear, the address was read in full after a part had been reproduced from the phonograph. As a part of the history of the cabin and of pioneer life it is here reproduced for the greater audience, the readers of this volume:

"This is Ezra Meeker talking, June 8th, 1912, Elm Creek, Neb., 211 miles west of Omaha. I am on my way home to the Pacific Coast. This is my fourth trip with an ox team over the Oregon Trail. I crossed the Missouri River ten miles below Kanesville, now Council Bluffs, Ia., and drove out from the river on my first trip, May 19th, 1852, and arrived at the straggling village of Portland, Ore., Oct. 1st of the same year. We encountered the buffalo before reaching Elm Creek, and did get some scourge of cholera, which also soon after that caused the death of thousands of pioneers. On my second trip I started from my home [Pg 357] at Puyallup, Wash., Jan. 29, 1906, and drove over the Trail getting people to erect granite monuments to perpetuate the memory of the Oregon pioneers, and to mark the Trail they had made, which has resulted in the erection of fifty of these monuments. [30] I then drove to Washington City to invoke the aid of the Government, where I arrived Nov. 29, 1907; met President Roosevelt, secured favorable committee report on a bill appropriating money to blaze and mark the Trail. I returned home during the summer of 1908, shipping most of the way. I made my third trip in 1910 to secure data to estimate the cost of the work, and now have 1,600 miles of the Trail platted showing the section line crossings."

I am 81 years old, 44 years a farmer in the one location where this cabin is.

THE ADDRESS.

"My mind harks back to the virgin forest surrounding the cabin; to the twilight concert of the bird songsters; to the dripping dews of the dense foliage of the trees; to the pleasant gathering within the cabin; to the old time music of the violin, flute, melodeon, and finally the piano, mingled with the voices of many now hushed and hidden from us; to the simple life of the pioneer; to the cheerful glow of the double open fires within the cabin; to the more cheerful glow of contentment notwithstanding the stern battle of life confronting the inmates of the cabin—all these visions vividly arise before me, and not only intensifies my interest in this occasion, but brings uppermost in mind the importance of this work.

"As we better understand each other or the ways of each generation we are sure to profit by their failures on the one hand, as well as by their successes on the other. The difference between a civilized and untutored people lies in the application of this principle, and we perhaps build better than we know [Pg 358] or can realize in the furtherance of such work consummated here today.

"May we not for a few moments indulge in some old time reminiscences? When we entered this cabin we were without a team, without a wagon, without money and with but scant supply of household goods and clothing; seven cows and a steer (Harry), a few pigs and a dozen or so of chickens comprising our worldly belongings, albeit the bears divided the pigs with us and the skunks took their share of the chickens. One cow traded to Robert Moore for a steer (Jack) to mate the one we had, gave us a team.

"The loss of the steamship Northerner had carried all our accumulations with it and also the revered brother, Oliver Meeker, who, had he lived, was destined to make his mark in the annals of the history of this great State.

"If the walls of this cabin had had ears and could speak, we could hear of the councils when the shoes gave out; of the trip to Steilacoom for two sides of leather, a shoe hammer, awls, thread and the like; of the lasts made from split alder blocks; of shoe pegs split with a case knife and seasoned in the oven; of how the oldest pig suffered and died that we might have bristles for the wax ends; of how, with a borrowed auger and our own axe a sled was made and work in earnest in the clearing began; of how in two years the transplanted orchard began to bear; of how the raspberries, blackberries and other small fruit came into full bearing and salmon berries were neglected and Siwash muck-a-muck had lost its attraction; of how the steamed ladyfinger potatoes would burst open just like popcorn and of how the meat of the baked kidney potatoes would open as white as the driven snow; small things to be sure, but we may well remember the sum of life's happiness is made up of small things and that as keen enjoyment of life exists within the walls of a cabin as in a palace.

"Shall we strive to look into the future a little way? When the spot we dedicate will have become an integral part of the greater Tacoma; when the name Puyallup, so troublesome for strangers to spell, pronounce or remember, will have disappeared; when the great ships passing through the completed [Pg 359]

Panama canal will ride at anchor in basins undisturbed by the tides in sight of this monument and almost within the present border limits of our city; when the trolley car shall have taken the place of the train and aviators are competing for passenger traffic; when the wireless telephone has replaced the present way and banished the hello girls, we may well exclaim in amazement: 'What wondrous change time has wrought since this cabin was built,' and safely predict greater changes will greet the generation to follow in the no distant future.

"That tremendous event approaching the completion of the Panama canal, thus giving direct, quick and cheap water carriage from our ports to the marts of trade of Europe, is destined to revolutionize conditions on the Pacific coast. Instead of sending trainloads of our fruit to Eastern ports and to Europe as now, ship loads will be dispatched in ever-increasing quantities as freight is cheapened and supplies increased and with this stream of traffic will come a vast throng of immigrants to aid in developing the land, build up our cities and bring in their train new problems to solve."

The song sung by Mrs. Montgomery was written to the tune of "Home, Sweet Home." The words, composed by Mrs. Mills, were:

"We welcome you gladly
To our Valley of Homes.
These trees are more stately
Than pillars and domes.
This park is the gift
Of a brave pioneer;
This stone marks the site
Of his old home so dear.

CHORUS—

All honor and praise
To our brave pioneers.
They have worked for the home
Through all the long years.
On memory's tablet
We'll carve each dear name,
For home is far sweeter
Than power, wealth or fame."

FOOTNOTES:

[29] See illustration on page 247.

[30] Now over a hundred and fifty.

CHAPTER LVI.

PIONEER LIFE IN PUYALLUP VALLEY.

The immigration of 1853 through the Natchess Pass settled in the Puyallup Valley. Although they had been on the Plains all summer and needed rest, imperative necessity compelled them to immediately make a road through the forest to the county town of Steilacoom, sixteen miles away and situated on the borders of Puget Sound.

Soon after the road was built one of them, John Carson, established a ferry and later built the first bridge across the Puyallup. He was an enterprising, intelligent man, yet nevertheless exceedingly careless in business as likewise of his person. Eighteen months before I moved to the valley, I crossed the river at his place and found him nailing on the third course of shingles to cover a new house that he had built. He came down off the roof and I remained with him for a couple of hours, most of the time in the orchard, for even at that early day we were both deeply interested in fruit culture. I willingly acknowledge that he could teach me a great deal on the subject. A year later I visited him again. The row of shingles, the nail bag and even the hatchet remained as he had left it on the occasion of my first visit, notwithstanding he and his family were living in the hovel of one room and a loft—the remains of a block house that had been erected in the Indian war times. The lower story was so low that his wife, who was a tall woman, could not stand up straight except between the rough hewed joists, as attested in numerous places by the red hair from the lady's head coming in contact with slivers from the rough-hewed logs. Not much difference existed between the two as to personal habits of cleanliness, or rather lack of cleanliness, and yet I never knew a more altruistic worker than this same Emma Darrow Carson. When, in early days, we established a Good Templars' Lodge, for the sake of the children, Mrs. Carson, rain or shine, would always attend and always do her part to make the meetings interesting. [Pg 361]

Nearby lived my neighbor, Walker, who though very strict in religious matters, nevertheless would not join in upbuilding the lodge for the reason he and his wife both were opposed to secret societies. One could readily see that Mrs. Walker believed "cleanliness was next to godliness" by a look into her house, where I often told her it would seem she was looking after the invisible dirt, so persistent she seemed in the care of her house. She was an industrious, religious, conscientious lady and was always welcomed in our own cabin, where she often came to spend an hour with another pioneer's wife who likewise practiced the time-honored proverb.

These two extreme cases will show to the reader that even in the cabins there can be as wide variance in habits as in the more pretentious homes. A goodly number of the pioneer women would become helpers in the field and gardens whether the men folks of the household thought it was just the proper thing to do or not. The flower gardens soon appeared in every dooryard to enliven the homes and spread contentment in the household.

For years the pioneers led a strenuous life with but little money return, so little it would seem almost incredible if given, and yet there was no "moping" or complaining, for there seemed to be a will to make the best of things possible and enjoy life as time passed. And, why not? The youngsters (and "greybeards" as well) soon began to look forward with anticipated pleasure to the coming of a holiday, Fourth of July, Christmas or what not, and make weeks of preparation for them, enjoy the occasion while passing and enjoy the memory of the experiences for weeks following.

Let us look in on a Fourth of July celebration. A grove has been selected and the "boys" in their "'teens" have cleared away the brush, built a speaker's stand, fixed up the tables and plenty of seats. The girls have baked the cakes and pies, picked the berries and flowers and provided other "nick-nacks" to fill in, while the mothers have baked the chickens, made the salads and provided the substantials until the tables fairly groaned under the load of bountiful supplies. It was the rule that everybody should have something to do. One of the older boys, or perhaps a girl, would be appointed to read the Declaration of Independence; another, to deliver the address; another to read an original essay, or a poem, with music sandwiched in between, sometimes with a chorus of the very young ones, or perhaps a solo—enough of these exercises to go round. The old melodion, now in the Washington State Historical Building at Tacoma, that has long ago lost its voice, was then thought to be a marvel of sweet tones and served to drown whatever discord might creep in from the flute and violin. When the evening came the small folks could have their dance "all by their lone", while the greater lords and ladies had naught to do but look on or organize somewhere else, which they often did. All this tended to build up a feeling of confidence in themselves in the minds of the youngsters and cultivate a social atmosphere that could not have been attained in any other way. All of these "youngsters" have grown up to manhood and womanhood or sleep beneath the sod of the valley. If perchance the eye of any one of them catches this writing they will for the moment say "give me back the Fourth of July celebration of Puyallup of fifty years ago." [Pg 362]

Seven years passed after the first settlement was made before we had a postoffice. All the trading was done at Steilacoom, which was sixteen miles distant from the river crossing. Any one going out to the market town (Steilacoom) was expected to bring the mail for everybody and leave it at the ferry or carry it on up the valley for those living beyond. Finally a postoffice was established and named Franklin, and my next door neighbor, J. P. Stewart, was appointed postmaster. He established the office near the ferry landing and brought in a stock of goods to trade on. The whole stock might easily have been hauled in one load of an ordinary farm wagon.

He came very near losing the postoffice, stock of goods and his life from a great freshet that [Pg 363] came, the like of which has not since been seen to this day. The headwaters of the Puyallup issue out from under a great glacier of Mount Rainier, probably no more than eight thousand feet above sea level and but forty miles distant from the present city of Puyallup. The avalanches from the great mountain are wonderful to contemplate. I saw the effect of one in British Columbia once where a swath of dense forest trees had been cut off close to the ground, where not uprooted, and carried to the lower lands, a mixture of timber, stone and snow, packed, apparently, as solid as a rock. In this particular instance the front mass had been carried beyond the bottom and up the slope of at least twenty-five degrees on the opposite side, several hundred feet on the mountain side, by the irresistible force of the mass behind. At the time of which I write, there undoubtedly had been a huge dam formed by an avalanche until a vast accumulation of water finally broke loose and came down the valley, seemingly carrying everything before it. A tremendous roar of water came, accompanied with a crash of timber not easily described. Mr. Walker, who stood on the bank of the river a mile above, told me he saw great balm trees caught with some obstructions under the roots and the timber lifted bodily by the force of the water and forced end over end with an indescribable crash to terrify the onlooker. Water running on the lower ground back of Stewart soon formed an island and left him alone without any means of escape, as the ferry had been carried away. A big, high balm stump furnished the only refuge of safety and there he stayed all night and part of the next day without food or sufficient clothing, chilled to the "marrow bone", for he was in his shirt sleeves when the crash came. When the water receded so he could, the postoffice, store and all were speedily removed to a place of safety. It was common remark that when Stewart moved the postoffice he simply put it on his back and walked off with it.

Those who have seen the glacier describe it as a wonder. The water issues out as from a great [Pg 364] cavern into which one can walk upright for quite a way. This is the first glacier discovered in the United States. Doctor Tolmie, then the chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Nisqually, ascended the Puyallup in 1833 and discovered the huge glacier and wrote in the fort journal an account of his trip. For sixty years since I first saw the Puyallup River, this great mill has been grinding away and sluicing out fine particles of the mountain, sufficient in quantity to whiten the water almost a milk-white color. When the glacier is most active, a glass of the water left standing over night will show sediment in the bottom thick as a sheet of writing paper. We are led to wonder how long this has been grinding, how long it will take to grind away the mountain. We are told the continual dropping of water will wear away a stone. Will not this grinding finally grind away the whole mountain? Can we guess how long it has taken to fill up this valley? We know the deposit off the mouth of the Puyallup River is fully six hundred feet deep; that the Puyallup Valley at its junction with the Stuck Valley was once an arm of the Sound; and the latter valley with the White River (so called because of the milky whiteness of its water coming from the same mountain), and Duwamish Valley to the salt waters of the Sound at Elliott Bay, where again it is met, the bay six hundred feet deep just off from the mouth of the river, was also once a part of the Sound. How long before Commencement Bay, Elliott Bay and Admiralty Inlet will have met the same fate as the Puyallup, Stuck and Duwamish valleys, and the cities of Tacoma and Seattle be dredging a channel through Admiralty Inlet?

But let us look to the story of Puyallup. The marvelous fertility of the soil has been told over and over again until the very name has become famous across the sea. I once measured a hop root eleven feet long that had been exposed by the cutting away of the river bank and thus leaving it exposed to view where it had reached a point seven feet under the surface of the land. The little band of pioneers had come into a heritage beyond their wildest dreams; the ages of [Pg 365] decaying leaves falling from the deciduous growth of the balm, alder and ash had mingled with the silt of the mountain until a soil not surpassed in richness was found—so rich we may cease to wonder that Walker might dig his bucket full of potatoes from one hill.

Let us look in on this little colony two years after their arrival in the autumn of 1853. Their clearing had widened sufficiently to let the sun in but not so wide as to afford a continuous view to see each other's cabins or see the great mountain. No money had come into the valley in return for their crops, for the double reason that as yet there was but little to spare, and even if there had been a surplus they could not have gotten it to the market because of the lack of a road over which a load could be hauled. I will tell one little incident that will illustrate. Anyone passing through the fir forest will remember the wonderful size of surface roots of the fir trees, in some places running out part above the surface and nearly as big as a man's body. One day when I was driving a cart over the road mentioned the pioneers had opened, the wheels passed over and left the cart bed resting solidly on the big root, and so, in the common expression of the county, I was "stuck". This will give a faint idea of what an early day road was like.

In places a glimpse of smoke from a neighbor's cabin might be seen or the sound of voices heard. All were busy in their clearing, "making hay while there was sun", before the winter rains set in. At nightfall of the evening of October 28, 1858, just two years after their arrival in the valley, the pioneers were startled by the news that in the neighboring valley of White River the settlers had all been massacred by the Indians. The scene of this massacre was no more than ten miles distant from the nearest cabin in the Puyallup—a ride, as the trail run, of less than two hours. Consternation seized every mind. It was natural to believe the Indians would be over on them when daylight came, even if not before. The pioneers were scattered, illy armed, [Pg 366] encumbered with their families and in no condition to resist an attack. The fort (Steilacoom) was fifteen miles distant from the nearest cabin and the river lay between with no means of crossing teams or wagons except by the long detour of what was known as the "upper road", that is, the

military road, and by fording the river. For most of the settlers the ford would not be reached before daylight of the next day, and even then it would be doubtful if the stage of the river would permit of crossing. The only alternative seemed to take the most direct route over the road they had themselves opened soon after their arrival in the valley. Without concert of action (for none was possible, scattered as they were in their cabins) the movement began in the night. Women, with children in their arms, almost immediately upon receipt of the dreadful news, started on the perilous trip, the men carrying their guns and such clothing or bedding as could hastily be selected and bundled up into packs. At Carson's two canoes and a small boat afforded all the means of crossing. The two canoes had been lashed together and finally a wagon gotten across and a team that swam across the river. By midnight many had crossed and had at once began the weary journey to the fort. Daylight overtook them, strung out for miles on the road or either crossing at the ferry or waiting their time when they could cross. The "upper settlement" in the forks of the river, the Lanes, Whitesels and others nearer the military road, fared better, for they could cross the south fork with their teams and wagons and take considerable of their belongings with them and some provisions as well, while the throng on the lower road could not. Such was the condition of affairs on the morning of the 29th. I had started with my family in the early morning, as fully told in "The Reminiscences—The Tragedy of Leschi", and reached the fort six or more hours before any of the Puyallup people from either settlement began to arrive.

But the Indians did not come to harass the fleeing settlers. They turned their guns on the small volunteer force that had just reached a camping place at the foot of the bluff on the military road [Pg 367] a mile east of the ford of the main river (Puyallup) that had been sent out by Acting-Governor Mason—Governor Stevens being absent negotiating the Blackfeet Indian treaty. The horses of this force had been run off and the men cooped up in a cabin by the Indians following the killing of Cornell and McAllister, preceding the massacre a day, all of which is given in detail in the "Tragedy" and will not be repeated here further than to give the context to the scenes that followed. Of the indescribable scenes of confusion that followed; the dilemma of the pioneers as to where to go for safety; how to subsist; the incursion of nineteen men to the Puyallup to rescue some of the abandoned property and provisions of the pioneers, is all told in "The Tragedy of Leschi."

Looking back over the vista of these fifty-eight years that have passed and which now again come so vividly in mind reviving old-time memories, I can truly say with General Sherman that "war is hell", whether between brothers of the same race or with the native race blindly wreaking vengeance upon innocent people who were their true friends.

The Indians held possession of the country adjacent to the Puyallup Valley for several months. Most of the settlers' cabins were burned, their fences destroyed, their stock run off or killed, crops appropriated, leaving the valley a scene of desolation and solitude as before the advent of the white man but little over two years before.

But what to do after arriving at the so-called fort (Steilacoom), which was no fort at all but merely an encampment in a few log huts and where neither comfort nor safety was vouchsafed, was the question confronting the pioneers. For myself, I will say that my brother Oliver and father, Jacob R. Meeker, with the three families, withdrew from the garrison, proceeded to the town of Steilacoom, built a strong log block house and took care of ourselves. That block house stands there in Steilacoom to this day, weather-boarded on the outside and ceiled inside so that [Pg 368] the passing visitor will not recognize it, and is almost forgotten by the generation now occupying the town.

In two years' time a majority of the settlers had returned to their homes while a few hesitated because of the fear of further outbreak of the Indians (which never came), but here and there one abandoned his claim and did not return. But the handicaps remained. Soon the clearings produced vastly more products than could be consumed at home; the market at Steilacoom was restricted and at best difficult to reach, and so certain crops became a burden to producers instead of a profit. A road could easily be opened down the valley to Commencement Bay to the point now known as the Tide Flats within the city limits of Tacoma, but there was then only a waste of waters confronting the pioneers, for this was long before Tacoma was thought of or even the name, except in the brain of that eccentric traveler and delightful writer, Winthrop, whose works disclosed his fine writing, after his death on the battlefield of Chantilly.

Ten long years elapsed before a change came, except as the clearings became larger and stock increased, for the dairy brought prosperity to the few and encouraged others to continue the strife. Within this period hops had been introduced and set a new standard of industry and wrought a marvelous change.

Finally a store was opened at the "Reservation" where the government agency had been established and a road opened to it from the up-river settlements, but the road extended no further, and all freight was carried out of the river in canoes, or later, in lighters to the mill wharf that had been built in 1869 and where a limited market had been found.

Opposite the point where the Indian school was later established a drift obstructed the river for more than a thousand feet so completely that a person could cross over the channel anywhere. Two more drifts further up, but not so extensive, completely blocked the channel. A theory gained [Pg 369] currency that the river could be navigated with small boats once the drifts were removed, and they were removed by the pioneers, but no navigation followed and the $1,500 put into the enterprise became a total loss, except for the timber logging camps that were established and thrived for a while.

We now pass over another ten years' period to the building of the Northern Pacific Railroad up the valley to the coal veins in the mountains, ending at the time at the point named Wilkeson. Twenty years before close observers noted the fact that float coal could be found on the bars of the Puyallup River. These small pieces, not bigger than a pea, became a matter of dispute as to whether the substance was coal or not. Finally, early in the seventies, a "chunk" as big as a man's fist was found imbedded in the gravel between the roots of a balm tree that had lodged, part of it burned, and all doubts removed as to the existence of coal on the headwaters of the river. John Gale prosecuted a diligent search and was rewarded by finding the vein to which the railroad was built.

The building of the railroad opened up the valley and give encouragement to those who had bided their time so long. The time had arrived when there came to be a money value to land. So long as the country was not subdivided, settlers could not obtain title to their land and transfers would become confusing as each had surveyed his own claim under the donation act. This act gave the head of a family 160 acres, and the same to the wife in her own right. Such delays on the part of the Government that followed seemed now almost incredible. I did not receive the patent for my donation claim for thirteen years after my settlement was made, and others had a similar experience and even a longer period. But with the coming of the surveys and the advent of the hops, values rose and became established at a rate that pioneers had never dreamed of and yet had advanced from year to year, or rather for the whole period, to a point that would then have seemed unthinkable. The first subdivision surveys by the Government were made in [Pg 370] Puyallup during the year 1864. J. P. Stewart and George W. Sloan took the contract. Neither was well suited for the work, Stewart being too nervous and Sloan scarcely responsible for his acts. Up to the time of the survey all claims outside of the first taken under the donation act were mere squatters' claims upon the public land, but no recognition of any right could be had at the land office, then, as now, at Olympia. No serious trouble followed in adjusting the lines followed, as the donation claim lines were respected and had in fact for many years served as a guide to later claimants. As soon as the surveys were made, all parties made for the land office, the donation claimants to "prove up" the pre-emptions, and homesteaders to make application for their respective rights. I did not go with the rush for the reason that I wanted to take my claim under the homestead law, which required an outlay of sixteen dollars, and "for the life of me" I couldn't raise that much money. The fact was that, almost literally speaking, there was no money in the valley. Finally, becoming uneasy lest some one might "slip in" and pre-empt from under me, I walked to Olympia and pre-empted where the fee was but a dollar, and held under the entry for several months until money could be obtained, when a homestead was located upon the same land, thus expending both rights for the lack of $16.00. This to many would seem ludicrous, but the actors looked upon the serious side, and did not wish to take any chances of losing their homes. A few years later I sold one crop of hops for $75,000, which now looks as incredible as the other fact of inability to raise even so small an amount as $16.00. In the chapter on hops the reader will be told the whole story of the $75,000 hop crop. The reader may well wonder why I walked from Puyallup to Olympia, a distance of thirty-five miles, and back out of sympathy for conditions that would seem to call for such a "sacrifice" of personal comfort. To such, let me disabuse their minds, for it was indeed a pleasant day, if not of recreation—a day of self-communion with pleasant thoughts of the past and bright anticipations as to the future. [Pg 371] Fatigued? Yes, but just enough to enjoy rest. Can we enjoy rest without first experiencing fatigue and withal with good appetite for a frugal meal? I did not think of it then as anything out of the ordinary, and for that matter do not now, as it was only one of the strenuous day's experiences of the time, besides to me long walks are conducive to good health—not so long a walk as that to Olympia, but the one or two hours' brisk walk in communion with nature and oneself.

I remember another walk from Puyallup to Olympia in 1870, where I first met Judge Roger S. Greene, who was then on the bench as Chief Justice of the Territory. I remained some time in Olympia, overlooking my first stagger at book making, an 80-page pamphlet, "Washington Territory West of the Cascades", [31] of which I had 5,000 copies printed, all of which went into circulation in the Eastern States. When I got through with this work I walked back home.

I still love to walk. Leaving the house (1120 North Thirty-eighth Street, Seattle), a few days ago, the fresh air felt so good I continued my walk to First Avenue, at the foot of Madison, in an hour and five minutes—three miles and perhaps a little more; nothing very remarkable about these walks except I attribute my continued good health to this open air exercise and would like to encourage anyone, the young people in particular, to the end that they may do likewise. I have no doubt that I walked over two thousand miles on my recent trips across the continent with the ox-team, part of the time from necessity but often for a camping place, frequently four or six miles. The oxen usually would travel two miles an hour while my easy gait would be three, so that by timing myself I could easily tell how far I was ahead and how long it would take the oxen to catch up. But the long walk was across the Plains in 1852, after the teams weakened and the dust became intolerable in the wagon on the Plains in early days. Then is when the walking became [Pg 372] wearisome, so wearisome that I lost my weight rapidly, though apparently not any strength.

But as a forced walk, that is, one taken mechanically where one can see nothing except the road ahead of him and think of nothing but the mechanical action, soon becomes tiresome and will lose much of the benefit that comes from an exhilarating walk where one scarcely remembers the road and only sees nature if in the country or pleasant things if in the city, and then of the bright side of life, and casts unpleasant subjects from his mind; then is when the long walk becomes a "joy forever."

Of the social side of life in the early pioneer days, much can be truthfully written worthy of emulation by the present day generation. The reader will doubtless bear in mind that the author is of a generation nearly gone, and, measured with the average length of life, two whole generations have passed and a third nearly so, and hence will hesitate to accept the conclusions as coming from an unbiased source. We so often see pessimism manifested by unsuccessful elderly persons that the world is ready to accept as a fact that age brings with it a pessimistic spirit, and hence the writing by an old man of younger days is like looking where distance lends enchantment. I am not conscious of looking on life other than in my younger days—the bright, hopeful side, where right and honesty is the rule and wrong and dishonesty the exception. The isolation of the pioneers from the outside world had a tendency to draw them together as one great family. While of course a great disparity of habit, thrift, morals and intellectual attainments existed, yet the tendency undeniably was to look with a lenient eye upon the shortcomings of others as between brothers or parents and child. There were none too high not to associate with the least of his neighbors and none too low not to look with respect upon his more successful neighbor. I remember but one divorce case in the whole period under review, and this long after their family had been born to them and some of them married—sad case, that not only brought [Pg 373] universal condemnation to one of the parties but financial ruin to both, and although in affluent circumstances at the time, both finally died penniless and, as we might say, filled paupers' graves —a sorry but just retribution to one and a sad ending to the other. Cruel as it may appear to some of my readers, I am always ready to exclaim, "would that it were thus to all that seek to dissolve the sacred bonds of matrimony for light and trivial cause", as we see so prevalent in this day, that is sapping the very foundation of good morals from under later generations.

Without preaching the doctrine, there comes a feeling to pervade the minds of many that "he is my brother" and acted accordingly. There came very near being socialism at the outset, on the Plains, to help the weaker. Of course, I do not mean to be understood that selfishness, or that ill-feeling between individuals did not exist, but would have the reader understand that the great body of the pioneers were altruistic in their actions and forgiving in spirit. When this much is said, it would almost seem to cover the religious life as well as the social. Indeed, such to a great extent was the case. The pioneers at once built schoolhouses but no churches. Teachers were employed for the schools, but no preachers, except itinerants who came at times, prompted by the religious zeal that was in them. These were indeed strenuous times, but the experiences tended to the development of a better manhood and womanhood than to lead a life of affluence and idleness.

But two of the adults of that day remain—I mean of those with families: Willis Boatman and the author.

The following letter from my old time friend and pioneer, Edward J. Allen, now 86 years old, [32] so vividly portrays the ways of those early days, yet with cheerful optimism, that it brings to mind memories of the past, needs no comment at my hand other than to invite a careful reading:

"November 28, 1908. [Pg 374]

"My Dear Old Pioneer—I am glad to know that you have taken up the Pioneer branch of the Exposition, as it insures that it will be best presented.

"Someone else might take up the scheme and study out a fair presentation of the old days, but with you it will require no study, not even a test of memory, for you have kept the past in close and loving remembrance, while you have held an active interest in the ever changing present.

"You link together today and yesterday.

"Long may you wave.

"I want greatly to get out to the great show and am endeavoring to shape things that I may. It would be a delight in many ways, and maybe my last chance to see what is left of the Old Guard.

"And I would like to see my old friend Meeker, amid the surroundings that become him most, and in the impersonations of the old days that the next generation, nor those to come can ever know, for the waste places of the earth are being inhabited, and the old ways are lost ways, and may never be known again. We that were of them know that the world grows better and we do not wish the dial to now reflect only the shadows of the past, but there are times when the old simple ways are ways to regret, even though we accept the truth that progress means betterment. But in the betterment, we lose some things we miss greatly and would love to retain. There is nothing more humanizing, nothing more tending to the brotherhood of man, than much interdependence.

"In those days while there was of necessity great self-reliance, there was also much wholesome dependence upon our neighbors, in all the matters of daily life the need was felt, and the call was answered.

"The day, in the last extremity, when death invades the household doubtless the last rites are better cared for in the skilled hands of the "funeral director" than by the kindly neighbors who in the earlier times came with tender thought and kindly intention to you in your affliction. It brought you close [Pg 375]

together. If there were need to be tolerant to some blemishes in their general make up, you felt you were constrained to exercise such tolerance, for you had accepted their services in your need.

"You knew them at their best and always remembered they had such a best.

"We lose this in our larger life, and it is a serious loss, as are all things that separate us from our fellow man, when our need is to be brought closer together. In all large gains we have to accept some losses.

"It is the remembrance of this feature of primitive days that make them so dear to us."

"E. J. ALLEN."

FOOTNOTES:

[31] Now so rare that $25.00 has been paid for a copy in two instances.

[32] Since deceased at the age of 93.

CHAPTER LVII.

SKETCHES OF WESTERN LIFE.

"Occidental, Transcontinental, Oriental" McDonald.

In the early fifties of the 19th century, there appeared on the waters of Puget Sound an eccentric character answering to the name of Joe Lane McDonald. He was a corpulent man of low stature, short bowlegs, a fat neck, a "pug" bulldog nose, with small but very piercing eyes and withal a high forehead that otherwise softened the first unfavorable impression of him.

The writer is relating personal observations of this unique character as he frequently saw him at the new and then thriving town of Steilacoom, then the center of trade for all of Puget Sound and to the Straits of San Juan De Fuca.

McDonald enjoyed the distinction of being among the first, if not the very first, trader among the 6,000 Indians of Puget Sound, for at that early day, 1853-55, there were but few whites to be seen. His sloop, about the size of an ordinary whaleboat, was decked over fore and aft and along each side, leaving an oblong open oval space in the center from which the captain, as he was [Pg 376] frequently called, could stand at the helm and manage his sail, and eat a lunch easily reached from a locker nearby.

When once engaged in conversation, the unfavorable impression made by his physical deformities and unkempt condition disappeared, as he was glib of tongue and possessed a world of ideas far in advance of his compeers, and with knowledge to back up his theories. He would declaim almost by the hour portraying the grand future of Puget Sound, the "Occidental, Transcontinental, Oriental Trade", as he put it, that would certainly come in the near future and the grand possibilities for the embryo center of trade, the town of Steilacoom.

"Harping" upon the topic so much, McDonald came to be known more by the sobriquet of "Occidental, Transcontinental, Oriental" McDonald, rather than by his own given name.

The keep of his sloop was as neglected as that of his person, which of itself is saying a good deal. It was a fact that the odor from his boat (not to give it a worse name) could be detected, with favorable wind, a hundred paces away and from McDonald himself uncomfortably so in a close room.

Notwithstanding all this he was an interesting character, and always arrested attention when he spoke, though of course with differing views of his theories advanced.

McDonald clearly pointed out what was going to happen and what has happened, the building of a vast overland and oversea trade far beyond his greatest "flights of fancy," as so many of his pioneer friends were wont to call his teaching.

But the Indian war came, some white people were massacred, some Indians went on the warpath, the remainder of the six thousand went to the reservations and McDonald's occupation was gone, his sloop was taken over for Government use and he himself disappeared, doubtless to reach an early and unmarked grave.

These scenes were enacted now nearly sixty years ago. The then silent waters of Puget Sound, [Pg 377] save by the stroke of the paddle upon the waves and the song of the Indians, is now displaced by great steamers navigating these waters; the overseas tonnage is in excess of McDonald's prophecies.

The transcontinental traffic that McDonald so prophetically pointed out is now almost beyond computation and cared for by six great railroad systems; the "Oriental" trade has assumed vast proportions, cared for in part by the regular sailing of 20,000 ton steamers; the coast tonnage has grown far beyond the most optimistic prophecy; the "dream of the star" to the flag has come true for the great State of Washington, as depicted by the poet:

"For the land is a grand and goodly land,
And its fruitful fields are tilled
By the sons who see the flag of the free,
The dream of the star fulfilled."

CHAPTER LVIII.

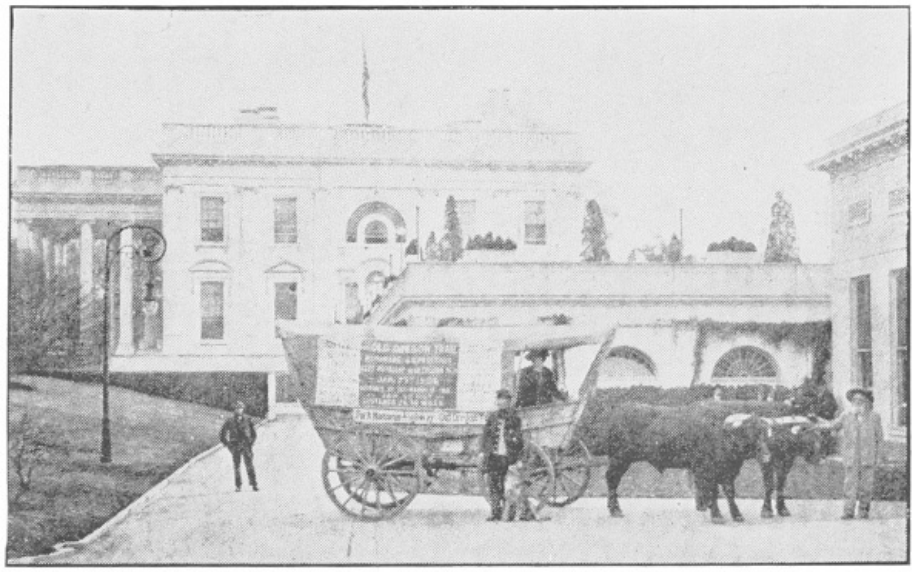
SKETCHES OF WESTERN LIFE.

"*The Prairie Schooner.*"

Just why the prairie schooner wagon body was built boat shape I have never been able to tell or see anybody else that could. That shape came in very handy when we crossed the plains in the early days, with which to cross the rivers, but we had the same kind on the farm in Indiana, where we had no thought to use them as a boat.

Their real history is, this type of wagon was introduced from England, and for a century this form was used because those that had gone before us had used it, and it took a long time to bring about a change.

These, though, as the Westerner would say, "came in mighty handy," when we came to a big river to cross as we were on the road to Oregon sixty-three years ago.



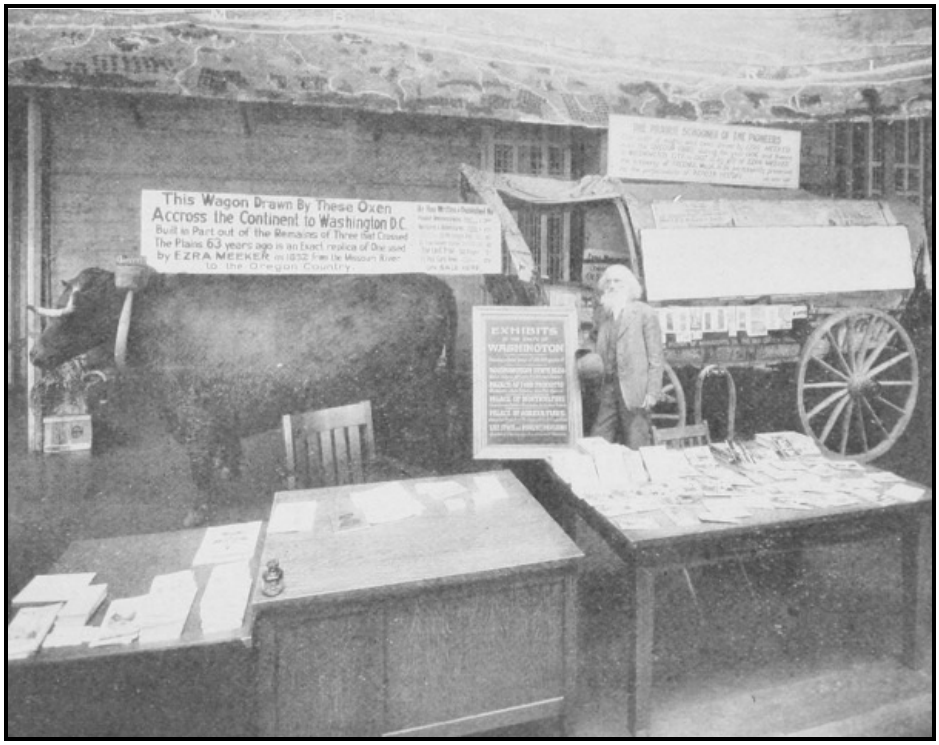
The Prairie Schooner on the White House Grounds, Washington, D. C., November 29, 1907. White House in Background.

[Pg 379]

I got into a scrape once in crossing Snake River when I foolishly put my whole running-gear on top of the bed and weighted it down to within an inch of the top; I escaped, as the saying goes, "by the skin of my teeth," but vowed I would never do so again, and I never did. Hundreds crossed over in their wagon beds in 1852, and I never knew of an accident, though when some foolish people started down Snake River they soon got into rapid water, lost all they had, and some their lives.

Just to be a "doing" as the saying goes, and to see how it would look, I concluded to cross a river in my wagon box on this last trip when I drove to Washington, and let the moving picture men take it. It was the Loop Fork of the Platte River and about three-quarters of a mile wide. I have the film and some days I showed it in the Washington State Building at the Panama Exposition at San Francisco and every day the oxen themselves could be seen.

Before I got through I was somewhat like the little boy that went out a hunting and got lost, who said he was sorry he come. We ran onto a sand bar and had to get out on to the quicksand to push off, and then, to cap the climax, the current carried us down past our landing and we had to tow up by main strength and awkwardness, so I concluded there wasn't so much fun in it as there might be and that I didn't want any more like experiences when past eighty years. We got a good picture, though, for when we got into the scrape we forgot to act and got "the real thing."



Dave and Dandy (mounted), with the Prairie Schooner in the Transportation Building, Panama-Pacific Exposition.

I have often been amused when asked how I got the oxen over, just as though they thought I could put a two thousand pound live ox into a wagon box. I didn't take these in the picture at all, but came back to the same side of the river from which we started. Not so in '52. We had to cross with the oxen also, and sometimes it was no small job, in fact, more than to cross the outfit and wagon. I was generally able to get all mine to swim over in a bunch, but I knew some that had to tow over each animal separate, and some were drowned on the way. Some streams had quicksand bottoms, and woe betide the wagon that once got stuck. To guard against this many [Pg 381] wagons were hitched together (a team though to each wagon) and it was a long, strong pull and a pull altogether. We had to keep moving, else there would be serious trouble.

Some places the sand would disappear so suddenly the wheels would come down with a jolt like as if passing over a rough corduroy road.

Verily the pioneers did have all sorts of experiences.

CHAPTER LIX.

HIGH COST OF LIVING.

I am going to tell you the story of a public market of Cincinnati, Ohio, nearly a hundred years ago, or more accurately speaking of incidents in which the farmer dispensed with the service of middlemen; where the producer and the consumer met and dealt face to face upon the sidewalks of that embryo city in the long ago.

I am reminded of the incidents referred to by a stroll through the public markets of Seattle. The "middleman", those who bought of the producer and sold to consumers, or those who established a place of deposit and for a commission would sell the products of producer to the retail merchants, who in turn would sell to the consumer, have been berated and charged with the crime of contributing to the high cost of living, hence the public markets were established to the end that producers and consumers might meet on common ground and drive their own bargains. Here is what I found in the Seattle markets:

Eggs from China; grapes from California and Spain; nuts from Brazil, California, Texas and Italy; lemons from California, and Italy; bananas from South America; tomatoes from Cuba; peanuts from Japan and Virginia; oranges from California and Florida; grapefruit from Florida; beef from Australia; butter from New Zealand; cranberries from New Jersey; cocoanuts from South America; oysters from Maryland, and so on down a long list, of various minor products not [Pg 382] necessary here to name, to illustrate the point, or rather two points, first that the producers and consumers could not come together and must be served by the "middleman"; and, second, that we are ransacking the world, even to the antipodes, for the products of the earth, in a great measure to satisfy the cravings of abnormal appetites incident to high living.

Any one, at a glance, can see this marshaling of products from the ends of the earth and transporting them for thousands of miles must increase the cost of living and must of necessity call for the offices of the hated "middlemen" with their resultant profits. Even the local products were sold to a great extent by dealers (middlemen) and but few producers were seen in the market. Things are different now from the prevailing condition of a hundred years ago, or even eighty-five years ago, when I was born. The application of steam power for propelling boats was unknown then, or known only as an experiment, and hence there were no steamships to cross the ocean and bring their cargoes of perishable freight; no cables to tap and with a flash to convey an order to the uttermost corners of the earth; no international postal service to carry and deliver written messages; in a word, no facilities to aid in and thus to increase the cost of living; hence, that generation of a hundred years ago, led the simple life. I am not here canvassing the question as to which is the better—simply record the fact. I will venture the opinion, however, the pioneers enjoyed their living with their keen appetites, incident to their out-of-door life, as much as the most tempting collection can give to the abnormal hunger following a gorge of dainties after a day of idleness.

It is well to note, however, the fact that not all the gatherings from foreign lands tend to increase the price of a particular article. Sometimes the opposite results and the cost is reduced, but the general rule is that the imported articles are simply luxuries and should be chargeable to the cost of high living rather than to the high cost of living.

When the tariff was recently revised and protection withdrawn or duties reduced on [Pg 383] agricultural articles produced in the United States, with trumpets from the housetops it was proclaimed the cost of living would be reduced. No such result has followed, as in fact it has advanced.

Take the article of beef for instance. The duty was removed, the great packing firms at once established agencies in all foreign meat producing countries, the foreign markets advanced a notch, the meat baron of the United States took up the remainder of the duty reduction, the government lost the revenue, meat at the block continued as high as ever to the consumer, the meat producing industry of our country was discouraged and the high cost of living remained. This foreign meat produced on cheap lands and with cheap labor is a constant menace to our own meat producing industry and will deter many from increasing their bands of cattle, so that we may see prices in the future advance instead of declining, because of the reduced home production.

Take the item of eggs. The duty was removed and immediately shipments came from China, where labor is twenty cents a day or less, where eggs can be produced at half the cost as here, but the consumer does not as yet reap any benefit, for the shipper fixes the price at what the market will bear; but, and here is the point, there is the menace to deter our home producers from reaching out to produce more eggs, knowing there will come a time when prices will seek a common level, governed by the shipments from China, our producers will be discouraged and go out of the business and up will go the price of eggs higher than ever.

The duty was lowered from six cents a pound to two and a half on butter; foreign canned milk is displacing our home production and the dairy interest begins to feel the depressing influence of the danger that hovers over it. Let the prices drop to a point that would cease to be profitable, our dairies would be depleted and the foreign products take possession and take all the market would bear. And so we find it in other agricultural products, to be considered hereafter. [Pg 384]

The point bearing on the high cost of living is that we need to encourage and not discourage

home production and labor and to get the producer and consumer closer together; also with our railroads, we should insist that they look inward and stop the waste before being granted an increase of rates, so with our consumers, before they outlaw the producers and kill the goose that lays the golden egg, they had better look inward and see if the remedy is not at least in part with themselves.

Let us now look into the scenes of the Cincinnati market of pioneer days. I will describe only one phase of it, as handed down to me by my mother, who was one of the actors. My grandfather Baker was a farmer and lived twenty-five miles away from Cincinnati as the road ran. He had settled a few miles east of Hamilton, Ohio, in 1801 or 1802, where my mother was born and near where I was born. In ten years time he had his flock of sheep, his cows, pigs, horses, colts and abundance of pasture on the land he had cleared. I never could understand why in all these years he didn't have a wagon, but such was the case. He never would go in debt for anything. When my mother was twelve years old she began making the trips on horseback with her father to the market at Cincinnati. They carried everything they had to sell on the horses they rode, or perhaps a loose horse or a two-year-old colt might be taken along. They carried butter, eggs, chickens (dressed and sometimes alive), smoked meat and sometimes fresh. Sometimes they would make lye hominy and then again sauerkraut; then again when hog killing time came around, sausage and head cheese would be added, and so we see quite a variety would make up their stock to offer on the market. Nor was this all. The family of four children were all girls. They were taught to card the wool raised on the farm, spin the yarn and weave the cloth all by hand in the cabin adjoining the living room and sometimes in the living room. I can remember the hum of the spinning-wheel and the "slam" of the loom as the filling of cloth was sent "home", also the rattle [Pg 385] of grandmother's knitting-needles to be heard often clear across the room, which is a precious memory. To the stock of products as enumerated would often be added a "bolt" of cloth, or perhaps a blanket or two or a few pairs of stockings and often a large bundle of "cuts" of yarn which always found a ready purchaser—wanted by the ladies of the city for their knitting parties.

The youngsters will ask, "What is a 'cut' of yarn?" I will tell you as near as I know. The yarn when spun was "reeled" off from the spool of the wheel into skeins of even lengths of yarn that could be used in the chain or warp for the cloth to be woven or wound off into balls for the knitting. These "cuts" were the skein, of even length of thread neatly twisted, doubled into shape as long as your hand and size of your wrist and securely fastened to remain in this shape. Sometimes the yarn would be "dyed" a butternut color and again would be taken to market in natural colors either white or black; sometimes a black sheep's wool would serve to make up the variety by doubling and twisting a black's and white's together.

The trip to Cincinnati would often be made by moon-light, so timed as to arrive at "peep of day" to be ready for the buyers that were sure to come to meet the country folks, for this was a real country market where no middlemen appeared, and for that matter were not allowed. My grandfather's "stuff", as they called it, would be displayed either on the sidewalk or in the street nearby where his horses were munching their grain or a bit of hay, and by 9:00 o'clock they would be off on their road home, to arrive by nightfall, hungry and tired, with the money safe in his deerskin sack.

It is needless to add that this household was thrifty and accumulated money. Later in life it was currently reported that he had a barrel of money (silver), and I can readily believe the story, as he spent but little and was always accumulating. I know that more than a peck of this silver came [Pg 386] over to Indianapolis to assist in buying the farm where I received my education in farming on the daily routine of farm work experience.

And so we can see that the so-called high cost of living is chargeable to the cost of "high living", to the abandonment of the simple life, to the change in habits of the later generation, not counting the extravagant wants now so prevalent that was unknown in pioneer days.

CHAPTER LX.

THE COST OF HIGH LIVING.

On the 16th day of December, 1873, the last spike was driven to complete the Northern Pacific Railway between Kalama and Tacoma.

This was then, and is yet, considered a great event in the history of the Northwest country, not because of completing railroad connection between the two towns, but because of the binding together with bands of steel the two great arteries of traffic, the Columbia River and Puget Sound.

Kalama, situated on the right bank of the Columbia forty miles below Portland, was then simply a construction town of railroad laborers, and has remained as a village to this day. Tacoma, which then could boast of four hundred inhabitants—mill hands, terminal seekers and railroad laborers—has now fully one hundred thousand permanent inhabitants, engaged in the usual avocations of industry incident to civilized life.

On the 16th day of December, 1913, the Tacoma Commercial Club celebrated "The Fortieth Anniversary of Train Operation to Tacoma," in the form of a railroad "Jubilee Dinner." In consideration of my having been a passenger on that first train, and "possibly the only survivor of that passenger list", the writer received a cordial invitation to be the guest of the club, which was accepted. He occupied a chair at the banquet table, sat as a mute spectator, and listened to the speeches that followed the banquet, and saw the many devices arranged for entertaining the company. [Pg 387]

It would appear unseemly for the writer, as a guest, to criticize his host, the Commercial Club, for the manner of his entertainment, particularly considering the cordiality of the invitation. "We hope that you can be here, but if you cannot there will be at least one vacant chair at the banquet table, and it will be held in memory of Ezra Meeker, the pioneer of the Puget Sound country", this following expressions of concern as to my health. So, whatever criticism may follow will be as a friend of a friend and not in a facetious spirit. Let us now consider the banquet, so intimately connected with the subject of the high cost of living, or perhaps in this case might I not better say, "cost of high living", or for what might be more appropriately known as the woeful waste cost of living. Covers were laid for 344 in the large banquet hall, and every seat was occupied. In addition a large number were fed in overflow, improvised dining halls, the participants coming into the main hall to hear the speeches after the feast was over. Seven courses came upon the board, including wine in profusion. Fully one-third of the viands of these seven courses was sent off the table and to the garbage cans, destined to soon reach the incinerator or sewers of the city, and later the deep sea waters of Puget Sound, save one item, the wine, all of which was consumed. As I sat and mused, to me it seemed a pity the wine did not follow the waste into the sea. The tables and hall were profusely decorated with flowers. In one corner of the hall soft strains of sweet music would issue from a band half hidden from view. Alternately with these, in a more central position, gifted singers would entertain the assemblage with appropriate songs.

In one angle of the room was a booth, "The Round House" of one of the transcontinental lines; at another point, "The Terminals", and so on through with the four transcontinental railroad lines centering in Tacoma, with "conductors" as ushers, dining and sleeping car porters as waiters, each appropriately decorated to point the line to which they belonged. [Pg 388]

As I sat and mused between courses, it gradually dawned upon my mind that this was in fact as well as in name a "railroad jubilee dinner" and celebration, and not an assemblage to commemorate pioneer deeds as pioneer days; that the "Anniversary" date had been seized upon to attract the widest possible attendance to accomplish another purpose—that the object of the meeting was to obtain a hearing for a "square deal" for the railroads, in a word, to build up a public sentiment favoring the increase of freight rates. This fact became more manifest and more apparent as the program was unfolded in the introduction of five railroad magnates as the principal speakers of the evening, followed by the young governors of the States of Oregon and Washington, but not a pioneer was called or heard. In fact, less than half a dozen of the pioneers of forty years ago were present—a whole generation had passed in these eventful years since 1873.

We come now to the consideration of the high cost of living as outlined by the railroad magnates in their plea for an advance in freight rates. The high cost of living had advanced wages; the cost of operating the railroad was greater, while the rates from time to time had been lowered until the receipts had almost reached the vanishing point where dividends might be declared; and to the point where more capital could not be enlisted for betterment and extension of the lines to keep pace with the vast increase of traffic. The burden of these speeches for an hour and a half was for a higher freight rate and a plea for a more friendly feeling on the part of the general public towards the railroads.

I had expected to hear something said about some method of reducing the cost of living, but nothing whatever was said on that point; or of economizing in the cost of operating the railroads, but on that point the speakers were silent. These five speakers were together probably drawing a hundred thousand dollars annual salary, but no hint was given of expecting to take less. However, many of the points were well taken, and ably stated by the speakers, and received the serious consideration of the four hundred business men who were present, and of thousands that [Pg 389]

read the account of the proceedings published in the current issues of the newspapers of the day. I mused. If because of the high cost of living wages advanced, and because wages advanced freight rates advanced, how long would it be until another advance for all hands round would be demanded? This in turn brings to the front the question of whither are we tending? Some honestly, while others with better knowledge insolently, charged the "Robber Tariff" as the cause of the high cost of living. The tariff has been revised downward and yet the cost of living advances. The demand for labor has lessened and bread lines for the unemployed threatened, and with it the cost of *low living* has become a vital question.

Referring again to the banquet room and to the woeful waste going into the sewers of Tacoma, may we not pause for the moment to ask, How many of these banquet rooms, great and small, hotels, kitchens of the idle rich as well as the improvident poor, are pouring like waste into the sewers and the deep sea in the United States? If all were collected in one great sewer, the volume would stagger the imagination. One authority would have it the volume would equal that of the water pouring through the channel of the Ohio River. Whatever the volume, all will realize that could this wilful waste of food be stopped, that food would become more abundant, the general public better fed while the cost of living would be lowered. The American people have this sin to answer for, and the question will remain with them until answered and atonement made.

May we not properly ask the railroad magnates to look inwardly and see if some methods of economy can not be introduced in their management that will reduce the cost of operating while [Pg 390] not lessening the efficiency of the services. Not one word was said by the speakers on this point. I do not allege that much can be accomplished in this direction, but I do say that it is incumbent upon railroad managers to search the way and come before the American people with clean hands and they will be met with hearty response for the square deal. Some of the speakers emphasized the fact that once the people eagerly welcomed the railroads until they got them, and then turned against them apparently as enemies. The speakers seemingly forgot the time when the railroad managers had become arrogant and acted, some of them, somewhat as expressed by that inelegant phrase, "the public be damned", and treated the railroads wholly as private property the same as a farm or a factory or the home. One might easily read between the lines of some of the speeches that this doctrine of ownership without restriction as to the duties due the public was still lurking in minds of the men making them.

These speeches and kindred efforts, however, will do a good work, will clear the way for a better understanding, and will in the end accomplish the coming together of the people and railroads. More than once in the banquet speeches, government ownership was spoken of as the result of present tendencies, and one might almost say welcomed by the speakers, anyway, flippantly spoken of as a possible if not probable event. I could not help but feel that there was a vein of insincerity running through these expressed opinions, and that the words were intended for effect to hasten the day of reconciliation as between the public and the railroads. To my mind such expressions coming from such a source were ill advised. One can scarcely imagine a so-called railroad man that in his heart would welcome government ownership of railroads in this great nation of freedom. These lines are penned by the hand of one born before the advent of railroads in the United States. Perhaps, to be exact, we might note that at that time (December 29, 1830) twenty-eight miles of a so-called railroad (a tramway) were in operation in the coal mining district. Now we are told there are over two hundred and sixty thousand miles, requiring [Pg 391] a tremendous army to operate and maintain. The day the policy of government ownership of railroads in the United States is adopted, that day will see the germ planted that will eventually grow to open the way for the "man on horseback" and the subversion of a free government. The reader may conclude this belief comes from the pessimistic mind of an old man, and not worthy of serious attention. The writer will cheerfully submit to be called elderly, but will emphatically disclaim being a pessimist and will claim this thought expressed as to government ownership of the railroads deserves very serious consideration as fraught with great danger. But this is a digression and now let us get back to the subject of the high cost of living.

A few weeks ago much was written and published about the high cost of eggs. Finally the ladies of Seattle hired a theater and more than a thousand of them assembled to listen to speeches made and to vote for resolutions presented denouncing alleged speculation in eggs by the cold storage people, forgetting the fact there was no surplus and that the law of supply and demand governed. As before written, I hesitated to criticise mine hosts, the Commercial Club, and how shall I dare brave the danger of the displeasure of this particular thousand ladies and of millions more of the same mind to be found in other parts of the land? Notwithstanding all these resolutions and denunciations, the hens refused to cackle and the price of eggs advanced. If these same ladies had, during the season of abundance and reasonable prices of eggs, provided themselves with suitable earthen jars and a small quantity of water glass they might have had a supply in their own larders so near in quality that only a connoisseur could tell the difference, just as healthful and at moderate price, and thus contribute one factor to keep down the high cost of living. God bless the fifteen million housewives of our nation. It is with diffidence I venture, even in a mild criticism, and so let me assume the role to question and leave conclusions [Pg 392] to the ladies themselves. How many of these ne'er-do-well housewives look closely to the garbage cans? I would ask, what percentage of the food that comes on to the table is carried off and not eaten—in a word, wasted? If this waste, even to a small degree, was stopped, the effect would be instantly felt, not only in each particular household, but likewise in the larger way to cut off a portion of the demand in the markets, and this would tend to lessen the general cost of living.

Again, we hear much charged against the "middlemen", as not only conducing to the high cost of living, but as being the real cause; that the producer gets scarcely fifty per cent. of the price paid by the consumer, hence a great wrong is being perpetrated upon a suffering public by a class who are unmercifully denounced for their alleged wrong conduct. Indeed, here is one factor that gives us most trouble, that is, I mean to say the gap between the consumer and the producer, not the middlemen.

As with the ladies and the eggs, where words had no effect, denunciation of middlemen is ineffectual. A sufficient answer to clear the middlemen's skirts is, that as a class they do not build up great fortunes, and in fact a large percentage of them either fail in business or barely make a reasonable living.

It is the system we must look to for the real cause of our trouble and not the instruments carrying out the mandates of the public demand. If we insist upon having the products of the farm in season and out of season, some of which must be transported for long distances, cared for, much of it in refrigerating cars and in cold storage, all of which costs money, of course we must expect an increase in the cost of living. I am not decrying against this so much as simply noting the fact, to point the way to one real cause of our complaint. A more real cause of this great disparity lies with the consumers who demand their supplies delivered in small portions, always wasteful and expensive, put up in attractive, costly packages—all of which must come out of the pockets of the consumers. If the good lady of the household telephones to her grocer to [Pg 393] send her a pound of some new named stuff (and which comes in a neat but expensive package), how can she expect to get the same value at the same cost as if bought in original form and at the counters? She must not only pay for the cost of delivering but often for the new name of an old-time material in a different dress. It is the demand of the consuming public that makes possible the waste of small purchasers and incidentally the additional cost of delivery.

There is another phase of this question of high cost of living that has so far received scant attention, which we may properly write as Fast Living. I do not mean this in the sense of the profligate spendthrifts, the joy-riders, the senseless wanderings of the idle rich traveling thousands of miles to drive away the ennui incident to the sin of indolence, although this has an appalling effect upon the vital question under consideration and of the welfare of the nation, and must be treated in another chapter. What I mean now is the legitimate fast living which adds so greatly to the general cost of living. If, for instance, the physician using an automobile can visit twenty patients where before he could only see ten; or the business man utilizing this rapid transit means for quick dispatch of business can transact as much business in a day as otherwise would take a week; travel thousands of miles where before he could make but hundreds, then he becomes a fast liver and with this a high cost liver. If a locomotive hauls a train but twelve miles an hour (the original standard of high speed) manifestly if the speed is increased to sixty miles for the same period of time, the cost of coal must be much more than at the lower speed. And so with the fast liver; his expenditures for a given time will be far greater than if content to move at lower speed. This principle as applied to individuals is equally applicable to communities, and becomes a factor in accounting for the high cost of living. We are as a nation fast livers, and to an extent high livers, and must needs suffer the penalty of higher cost of living than our forbears [Pg 394] who led the simple life and practiced frugality as a cardinal virtue.

Another factor we are apt to lose sight of, and it is a large one, that of withdrawing so many from the field of food production and moving them over to the side of consumers. Take the army of automobile builders as one instance; these men, with their dependent families become consumers, while engaged in an occupation that aids measurably in the opportunity for fast living, which, as we have seen, adds to the high cost as compared with the ordinary methods in life. Many such instances might be named, but this one must suffice.

Another far-reaching cause—in fact worldwide—is the vast increase in the volume of gold within recent years and consequent decline in purchasing power, which of course carries with it the high cost of commodities exchanged for it measured in dollars and cents. Space will not permit following this feature of the question further, but it is one of the things that must be reckoned with in reviewing the whole question. This, however, is more apparent than real and is entirely without our control.

And so, in summing up, we can see that high cost of living is with us to stay; that, as compared with the simple life, it is a thing of the past; that so long as we practice fast living we must expect a higher cost; so long as any part of a community insists on high living, the inevitable corollary follows that the average cost is advanced.

Are we then helpless to combat this upward tendency in the cost of living? By no means; but if we miss the mark in our effort we lessen the chance of success. We must discriminate and not be led astray by false prophets teaching false premises. When demagogues, for political effect, allege that the "Robber Tariff" is the cause, one can easily see the fallacy of the assertion; when honest people inveigh against the middlemen as the cause, instead of joining in the denunciation of a class, they should look inwardly to the system and try to correct the abuse within. If we are wasteful as alleged, then strive to stop the waste; if we are extravagant, then let us stop it; if we [Pg 395] are heedless in the method of making our purchases, then let us turn over a new leaf and begin anew and each do his or her part and the combined efforts will have effect. While we will not get back to all the old-time ways of the simple life (and it is not desirable that we should) yet the effort will correct some glaring defects in our present system. While we may not get the cost of living down to the old standard (and again it is not desirable we should), yet all will agree that a

combined popular effort would work a wonderful change for the better in the direction of reducing the cost of living.

CHAPTER LXI.

PREPAREDNESS.

In the eighty-five years of a busy life I have witnessed five wars in which this nation has been a party, not counting the numerous Indian wars.

One of these, the Mexican war of 1846, was clearly a war of conquest, brought on by the discordant element of the slave power, then so dominant and I may say domineering in our councils. Then followed the dreadful War of the Rebellion to settle the question whether the United States was a nation or a loose confederation of States.

I am one of the very few left that witnessed the war of aggression that despoiled Mexico of half her territory, which gave us California, extended our Pacific coast line to the 32° 30' parallel and made this nation a great world power, in fact as well as in name.

Who will dare say that great benefit to the cause of civilization and to the human race did not result from this war? Who, again, will dare assert that the Indian wars of the last century did not likewise result in the advancement of the cause of humanity and civilization? And, again, are there any now so bold as to say that the war prosecuted by the United States in suppressing the [Pg 396] rebellion did not result in the betterment of all parties engaged in the conflict? The why, as to these results I will not discuss now, but simply state the acknowledged fact, to the end that we may more clearly see that the pacificists' doctrine is a fallacy and utterly impracticable until after the advent of the millennium.

Suppose a thousand pacificists were gathered in a peace meeting and some one introduced a resolution condemning all wars, would they vote for it? If not, why not? If against preparedness—preparedness for defense—it follows they are against preparedness for war and prepared to sing: "I did not raise my boy to be a soldier".

If, on the other hand, it is admitted that some wars are righteous, the query arises, who would fight it? like the boy, when asked by a visitor if he didn't wish that one of his brothers was a sister, promptly responded, "Who'd a been her?"

Seriously, is there a pacificist with American red blood in his veins, who will condemn the war with Spain to put a stop to the atrocities right under our nose, in Cuba, or the wars with Aguinaldo in the Philippines, or with the pirates of Tripoli, or coming right home to the vital spot, the War of the Revolution that resulted in the birth of this nation? There is no middle ground, there can be none, any more than a given body can be moved in opposite directions at the same instant of time.

It follows, then, that we who oppose the pacificists are in favor of preparedness for defense or for war—for the two terms are synonymous. How great and how numerous the ships needed for our navy must of necessity be referred to experts, for the average citizen can not know. How numerous the army and what the formation, must necessarily be left to those who have made the subject a life study.

The average citizen will know the fundamentals and join to curb excesses, though he may not know the specials. He will know that if we are to meet an enemy with guns that will carry five miles it is useless to oppose them with guns that carry but four, though he may not know how to [Pg 397] construct the better arm. He will know that a small army, that can be speedily mobilized, is of greater efficiency than a large, unwieldy, scattered force that can not be quickly concentrated at vital points of danger, though he may not know how best to provide the means for speedy concentration.

How narrowly we escaped a third war with Great Britain over the Northwest boundary, now so nearly forgotten by this generation, I personally witnessed on the San Juan Island in the northern waters of Puget Sound. Again, how the Trent affair came so near plunging us into a desperate struggle of arms with this same power, we of this generation can read in history and a few vividly remember, and finally, how the fitting out of privateers in English ports to prey upon our commerce at last became so exasperating the war spirit of this nation rose to a demand that emboldened our ambassador to the court of St. James to utter those immortal words, "But, my Lordship, this is war," and it was.

And then again how near another war with England we came in the Venezuela affair, a direct result of the Monroe Doctrine, we are too prone to forget.

I happened to be in London when Cleveland's famous message was received and witnessed the excitement that followed, that with but a little more indiscretion would have lighted the spark for a worldwide conflagration. Again I am not assuming to say which party was right, or which was wrong, but simply to recite the fact and to point to the fact that preparedness—for England was prepared—did not result in war.

And may I not point to another instance where preparedness did not lead to war, but on the other hand averted war. I refer to the French in Mexico. At the close of the Rebellion this nation was fully prepared for the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, and notice to that effect was made manifest and the French troops were accordingly withdrawn without a struggle. Without this preparedness on our part the French troops would have tightened their grip upon Mexico, [Pg 398] and we would have been compelled to fight, or else abandon the Monroe Doctrine. If we cannot

assert our rights, no other nation will for us. If we are prepared, no nation will challenge us. Which do the American people want? Shall we submit to endure as a nation by sufferance or shall we by the strong arm maintain our rights?

We must, likewise, take note that we have championed the "open door" policy in China, and already one of the signatory parties has violated the compact. Shall we give up our trade with the Orient or shall we assert that we have the right to trade with China on terms with other nations. If we are not prepared how can we uphold a doctrine that disputed the right of European monarchies to seize and appropriate any portion of either Americas and extinguish the right of free government of the western hemisphere?

It is well to remember that this Monroe Doctrine—the doctrine that Europe must keep hands off all Americas—is still held by this nation and is still repudiated by all European nations except England.

It is also well to remember that this present war to determine the question of the divine right of kings to rule as the "vice-regents of God" is directly antagonistic to our theory of government "by the people and for the people", which becomes a platitude if we are not prepared to defend it.

Dating back to the dawn of history there has been war in all the centuries. Why, I will not undertake to say, but simply recite the fact—a condition and not a theory—and a fact the American people should bear in mind.

I do not believe preparedness or unpreparedness will avert war, but I do believe to be prepared will avert an appalling calamity in the no distant future for this nation if we neglect to provide the means of defense when attacked.

Preparedness of course lessens the danger of attack, but can not nor will not avert it. [Pg 399]

Another factor, the congestion of population of nations or likewise in vast cities breeds danger and eventually war.

CHAPTER LXII.

HOW TO LIVE TO BE A HUNDRED.

Eat to live, not live to eat.
Be temperate in all things.
Live the Simple Life.
Work.

THE END.

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- Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note.
- Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant form was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.
- Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.
- Mid-paragraph illustrations have been moved between paragraphs and some illustrations have been moved closer to the text that references them. The List of Illustrations pagination was changed accordingly.
- Footnotes were moved to the end of chapters.
- Errors uncorrected:
  - p. xi: "... inspired poem on next page,...." (on [the] next page.)
  - p. 70: "... and lived together ever after his marriage...." ([for]ever.)
  - p. 86: "Mount Regnier, Christians have dubbed it...." (Mount [Rainier],)
  - p.168: Quiemuth and 177: Queimuth.
  - p. 202: "... the origin of this name with be a mystery." ([will] be a mystery)
  - p. 299: "The wagon weighed 1,430 pounds, is a wooden axle...." ([has] a wooden axle)

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