

FOR THE WEST SHORE.

CROSSING THE PLAINS.

BY DAVID NEWSOME.

This text brings to the minds of thousands of persons in Oregon the scenes, dangers, toils, friendships or dislikes on that memorable journey across a broad expanse of the North American continent. One association or society of pioneers was organized in this State of those who came here prior to January 1st, 1851. Another was formed of those prior to December, 1853. The Pioneer and Historical Society aims to accomplish a noble purpose—to collect, collate and finally publish a concise history of Oregon. The writer was, four years ago, elected a corresponding member of this society; but, having arrived in Oregon in October, 1851, he could not be an active member. The Pioneer Association includes all up to 1853. This association aims mainly at the same results as the other, and the two should assuredly merge into one.

One thing seems strange to many persons, and that is the wonderful growth and development of Oregon and Washington Territories—for these should yet be one—for the last thirty-three years. Cut off from the outside world to a great extent, crowded to the extreme northwest corner of the United States possessions—the broad Pacific Ocean washing our Western border, the British possessions on the north, California on the south, and the great North American mountain chain on the east; but, made up of such men and women as those were who crossed the great American desert between the Missouri and Burnt rivers in ox wagons, living in tents like the sons of Israel, and enduring what those immigrants did, it is no wonder that they should build up a country as we see it to-day. We may talk about military campaigns, hardships and toils; hair-breadth escapes, bravery and endurance; but if a title of all that those immigrants saw and endured during their long six-months' journey were written out, it would exceed in interest any story of fiction.

At Springfield, Ill., I procured a six-square blank book, a leather valise, pens and ink; and kept an accurate journal of the trip. I have that book yet, and from its pages I may draw data which may be of some interest to my pioneer friends and others.

Twenty-five years ago our train left Council Bluffs and entered the great Indian territory—then almost undefined and unknown to the whites. The first white persons we saw—except a few renegades from prisons and matrimonial chains who had taken up their abodes with the Indians—were at Fort Laramie, about 500 miles west. These were officers and soldiers of the U. S. barracks there. At Soda Springs, on Bear river, seventy-five miles northeast from Salt Lake City, were a parcel of the saints and a lot of Indians—their allies. At old Fort Hall were a score or more of Hudson Bay Company's agents and employees (whites), and next was the Indian agent of the United States and his family at the Umatilla agency, ten miles east of Butler Creek. Next were the soldiers and some settlers at The Dalles. At the Cascade Falls were some traders and sundry sharpers who had come there to buy stock, wagons and carriages of us at less than half their worth at Portland. At old Fort Vancouver was a small start of a town and barracks for soldiers. At Portland were about 800 inhabitants. The third street from the river was full of big fir stumps. My family were now sick, and I had hard work to find a shelter for them. At last Skidmore & Ruggles took us in, and we paid six bits a meal each for five of us, and the same for cots, until we could pass up the valley.

We had traveled 2,575 miles in ox wagons, and been on our way full six months. The Indians were hostile that season, as the number of immigrants that

year was not sufficiently large to deter them from their depredations upon us and our stock. Every murder, theft and raid upon us from Fort Laramie to Grande Ronde we could trace to Mormon influence and plans. I recorded very many instances in my journal of thefts, robberies and murder on the journey. For the first 500 miles west of the Missouri river the Mormons had no scapegoats upon which to place their outrages. Since 1851 what changes in that vast district through which we passed have occurred! All the way up the splendid bottoms of the Big Platte river solitude reigned, broken only by the howling of the wolves or the low, rumbling sounds of vast herds of affrighted buffaloes stampeding from the trains. What fine districts we passed on Powder river, Grande Ronde, Umatilla and the highlands east of The Dalles. There was no thought that much of the country from Fort Laramie to the Grande Ronde was underlain with gold, silver, iron, coal, copper, lead and cinnamon. Could the pen of the ready writer have traced out the changes since that time on that long route—the new States and Territories formed in it, the population, public and private improvements, discoveries of mines, the building of the Union Pacific railroad, and the telegraph lines, by which thought flashes from New York, London or Petersburg to Portland in an instant—"Wonderful!" would have been our ejaculations.

In traversing the dreary, treeless, sandy wastes on the journey, we did not suppose for a moment that a railroad could ever be built across those wilds. When we arrived at the culminating point at the South Pass (July 16, 1851), and there turned our faces eastward and exclaimed, "My native land, adieu!" little did we think that by 1870 we could start from Portland, Oregon, and dine in Chicago in less than ten days. When I bade farewell to kind friends and relatives at Springfield, Ill., on the morning of April 3, 1851, and saw the cars move off towards Meridocca, forty-three miles west, the only railroad then in that State, my heart-sunk within me. I never expected to see steam cars again. Ten years ago I conversed with an ex-Governor of Oregon as to the possibility or probability of a railroad from Portland, south. He declared that that event was perhaps fifty years hence, if ever. But we have had a road, with the steam horse pulling along, for four years past for 200 miles south, and now a good assurance that it will tap the Central Pacific at Winnemucca before three years more.

I can hardly realize or accredit my own senses when I compare Portland, Oregon City, Salem, Albany, Eugene and Roseburg with what they were twenty-five years ago. Roseburg was not then in existence. A mighty empire is rising upon the western slope of this great continent. Our isolation will soon be ended. Before long we shall be in direct communication by land and sea with all the principal marts in the world. Thank God we are under the protection of the stars and stripes, and our hundredth anniversary as a nation witnesses us a united people. In conclusion, I give this toast for July 4, 1846:

"Oregon first, and then our great American Union, one and inseparable, now and forever."

SALEM, Oregon, February, 1876.

OREGON COAL.—Speaking of the coal mines near Uter City, Coos county, the *News* says: "The vast amount of coal which lies imbedded in these hills is almost incredible. The foreman and the miners say the crop of eight good workable veins are distinctly visible on the side of the mountain owned by Uter & Ojeda. Each one of these veins is a mine of itself, and can easily be made to produce 150 tons daily—the product of the eight veins thus aggregating a total of 1,200 tons per day."

THE HOTEL CLERK.

Mr. W. D. Howells' photographs the American hotel clerk, in "Their Wedding Journey," as follows: "It was with a sudden sinking of the heart that Basil beheld, presiding over the register, the conventional American hotel clerk. He was young; he had a neat mustache and well-brushed hair; jewelled studs sparkled in his shirt-front, and rings on his white hands; a gentle disdain of the travelling public breathed from his person in the mystical odors of *halang-inlang*. He did not lift his haughty head to look at the wayfarer who meekly wrote his name in the register; he did not answer him when he begged for a cool room; he turned to the board on which the keys hung, and, plucking one from it, slid it toward Basil on the marble counter, touched a bell for a call-boy, whistled a bar of Offenbach, and, as he wrote the number of the room against Basil's name, said to a friend lounging near him, as if resuming a conversation, 'Well, she's a mighty pooty gal, any way, Chawley!'"

"When I reflect that this was a type of the hotel clerk throughout the United States, that behind unnumbered registers at this moment he is snubbing travellers into the dust, and that they are suffering and perpetrating him, I am lost in wonder at the national meekness. Not that I am one to refuse the humble pie his jewelled fingers offer me. Abjectly I take my key, and creep up-stairs after the call-boy, and try to give myself the genteel air of one who has been stepped upon. But I think homicidal things, all the same, and I rejoice that, in the safety of print, I can cry out against the despot whom I have not the presence to defy. 'You vulgar and cruel little soul,' I say, and I imagine myself breathing the words to his teeth, 'why do you treat a weary stranger with this ignominy? I am to pay well for all I get, and I shall not complain of that. But look at me, and own my humanity; confess, by some civil action, by some decent phrase, that I have rights, and that they shall be respected. Answer my proper questions; respond to my fair demands. Do not slide my key at me; do not deny me the poor politeness of a nod as you give it in my hand. I am not your equal; few men are; but I shall not presume upon your clemency. Come, I also am human.'"

Our writers seem to be making a simultaneous assault on this insolent class, for Ralph Keeler, who is travelling in the South, cauterizes the clerk of a Mississippi steamer in this wise: "Then at the office we must confront that terrible autocrat, the chief clerk, who is, perhaps, a little better than the average wretch of the great hotel clerk the world over. He assigns us a room with a tone of outraged dignity in his voice, and we widge gradually out of his sight to deposit our valises on our beds and lock them in, lest that awful fellow should take it into his head to throw them overboard."

"It is an exploded theory," says one who speaks with knowledge, "that women dress to please the men. They dress to please or spite each other. Any girl of sense and experience knows that it is just as easy to break a man's heart in a two-dollar muslin, neatly made up, as it is in a five-hundred-dollar silk costume made by a man-dressmaker." It is, in fact, a great deal easier. The natural charm of a young girl is often utterly destroyed by excessive dressing. Men like tasteful and not extravagant toilets; and the rivalry in dress among women is not to catch a beau, but to mortify an enemy.

At Omaha, a few days ago, a red flag was placed in front of a house used for the reception of small-pox patients. A large crowd was attracted by it, who besieged the front door and wondered when "the auction was to begin." When informed of the real state of the case they scattered in double quick.

"THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET."—This beautiful and popular song or ballad is said to have had its origin under the following circumstances, which give it additional interest:

Some years ago when Woodworth, the printer, and several other "Old New Yorkers," were brother-typos in a printing-office which was situated at the corner of Chestnut and Chambers streets, there were few places in the city of New York where one could enjoy the luxury of a really "good drink." Among the few places most worthy of patronage was an establishment kept by Mallory, in Franklin street, on about the same spot where St. John's Hall recently stood. Woodworth, in company with several particular friends, had dropped in at this place one afternoon, for the purpose of taking some "brandy-and-water," which Mallory was famous for keeping. The liquor was superexcellent, and Woodworth was inspired by it; for, after taking a draught, he laid his glass upon the table, and, smacking his lips, declared that Mallory's *eau de vie* was superior to any he had ever tasted. "No," said M., "you are quite mistaken; there was one thing which, in both our estimations, far surpasses this in the way of drinking." "What was that?" asked Woodworth, dubiously. "The draught of pure fresh water that we used to drink from the old oaken bucket that hung in the well, after our return from the labors of the field on a sultry day in summer." The tear drops glistened for a moment in Woodworth's eyes. "True, true!" he replied; and soon after quitted the place. He returned to the office, grasped the pen, and in half an hour "The Old Oaken Bucket," one of the most delightful compositions in our language, was ready in manuscript, to be embalmed in the memory of succeeding generations.

LET IN THE SUNLIGHT.—We wish the importance of admitting the light of the sun, freely, as well as building these early and late fires, could be properly impressed upon our housekeepers. No article of furniture should ever be brought to our homes too good or too delicate for the sun to see all day long. His presence should never be excluded, except when so bright as to be uncomfortable to the eyes. And walks should be in bright sunlight, so that the eyes are protected by veil or parasol, when inconveniently intense. A sun-bath is of far more importance in preserving a healthful condition of the body than is generally understood. A sun-bath costs nothing, and that is a misfortune, for people are deluded with the idea that those things only can be good or useful which costs money. But remember that pure water, fresh air, sunlight, and homes kept free from dampness, will secure you from many heavy bills of the doctors, and give you health and vigor, which no money can procure. It is a well-established fact that people who live much in the sun are usually stronger and more healthy than those whose occupations deprive them of sunlight.

But few persons have any idea of the magnitude of the Texas cattle trade. It is stated that during the past year no less than 60,000 head of cattle have been driven from Texas into Arkansas, Nebraska, and the Western States. It requires about 20,000 head of cattle to feed the Indians, which are not included in the above estimate, but which are purchased by the Government from Texas traders.

An economical Iowan, who had a tooth-ache, determined to remove it in the Indian fashion. Accordingly, he bent down a sapling in the woods, lay down himself, and attached a stout cord to his tooth and the sapling. Then he touched the spring, and the next he knew he had jumped over a grove of about forty small trees, and was trying to get out of a small pond that he happened to alight in.