

RAMBLING NOTES ON OLDEN TIMES.

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With most people there is a charm that hangs about old time scenes, and bygone events. There are ten bipeds that are always looking back, while there is one, who, like Paul, forgets the past and keeps his eye on a goal far in the future. Some like Sternvogel oblivious to the past, strain both optics to descry honors, palaces, bliss, and most any thing a man wants, coming down from the opened heavens on a "Sheet knit at the four corners" all for them—seen in a trance, while their weary bones struggle with a twin sister of nightmare on a very poor straw bed. Others, like Patrick Henry, use one eye in outlining coming events, and the other in comparing waymarks left behind, with the dim outlines of something ahead which, according to popular opinion, is either a good thing, a scourge, a ghost a devil, an angel, a windmill, or a log enjoying a bath in a mud hole.

Then there is another class, who make life a trip through life as Shem, and Japheth, approached Noah on a certain occasion before he joined the temperance society with their backs to the future, eyes ever fixed on the past, gloating over and glorifying even the dead branches, that in memory are still green and loaded with luscious fruit. To laud the past, and decry the present is not peculiar to men of this age. Poets, and rhapsodists, of all ages, have deified the dead sire at the expense of the "degenerate son."

"Those fifty slaughtered in the gloomy vale,
We spared but one to bear the dreadful tale.
Such Tydides was, and such his martial fire,
Odds! how the son degenerates from the sire!"
—Homer—

We once heard a Rhode Islander extolling the early settlers of his state as a race of giants, who reached their god-like greatness by living on "Johnny cake," and closed their dying eyes on degenerate sons who had injudiciously forsaken corn, and taken to wheat. But Homer tells of even greater giants than our Johnny cake Jonathan of Rhode Island.

A ponderous stone bold Hector heaved to throw,
Pointed above and rough and gross below:
Not two strong men the enormous weight could raise.

Such men as live in these degenerate days:
Yet this, as easy as a swan could bear
The snowy fleece, he tossed, and shook in air,
Thus arm'd before the fabled gates he came,
Of massy substance, and stupendous frame,
With iron bars and brazen hinges strong.
On fifty beams of solid timber hung
Then thundering through the planks with forceful sway,
Drives the sharp rock, the solid beams give way,
The folds are splintered, from the crackling door
Leap the resounding bars, the flying hinges roar.
Now rushing in, the furious chief appears,
Throned as might! and shakes two shining spears,
A dreadful gleam from his bright armour came,
And from his eye-balls flashed a living flame.
Hencever a god, restless in his course
And seems a match for more than mortal force.
The Greeks behold, they tremble and they fly,
The shore is heaped with death, and tumult rends
The sky."

The Rhode Islander's ideas on the effects of corn meal, with the perusal about that time of several volumes on hygiene, which recommended a purely vegetable diet, especially greens (young fern the best) boiled without salt or fat, in clear water (rain water preferred, as spring water is liable to be impregnated with mineral salts) led me to turn to Homer again to see what manner of men they raised before this degenerate race invented cannon.

"Then fierce Tydides stoops and, from the fields,
Heaved with vast force, a rocky fragment wide.
Not two strong men the enormous weight could raise,
Such men as live in these degenerate days
Heaving it round, and, gathering strength to throw,
Discharged the ponderous ruin at the foe.
Where to the hip the inserted thigh unites,
Full as the bone the pointed marble lights,
Through both the tendons broke the rugged stone,
And stripp'd the skin, and crack'd the solid bone."

And also whether they dined on vegetables just before a heavy draft on physical force was about to be made.

"The fires are kindled, and the smokes ascend:
With hasty feasts they sacrifice, and pray
To avert the dangers of the doubtful day.
A steer of five years' age, large limb'd and fed,
To Jove's high altars Agamemnon led.
Their prayers performed, the chiefs the rite pursue,
The barley sprinkled and the victim slow,
The limbs they sever from the inclosing hide,
The thighs, selected to the gods divide.
On these, in double cauls involved with art,
The choicest morsels lie from every part
From the delf wood the crackling flames aspire,
While the fat victims feed the sacred fire.
The thighs thus sacrificed and entrails dress'd:
The assistants part, transfuse, and roast the rest:
Then spread the tables, the repast prepare,
Each takes his seat, and each receives his share."

What poet is yet to be born who will sing of the heroes who a quarter of a century ago crossed the Rocky mountain, built log cabins in the Willamette valley, "Christianized the Indians," wore buckskin, built school houses, and laid the corner stone of a yet to be great state on the Columbia River.

Poets we may never have, but orators we have already, among some of our old veterans who left Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana, before they had even seen a telegraph wire, a railroad, printing press, or even an abolitionist, orators who are always decrying every thing new, and sighing for good old times. They were satisfied to do all their freighting on prairie schooners drawn by oxen. They neither sighed for railroads or steamboats. A good wagon road was the acme of their ambition so far as commercial facilities went.

We all desired, however, to see cities built up, where wagoned produce could be bartered for Yankee notions.

To be sure we had some advantages over the Indians in farming, for we had plows, through the mold boards were hewn out of wood, and carried enough dirt to require an extra yoke of cattle to haul it. One man in Yamhill, had a fanning mill, with raw-hide sieves, which, by waiting our turn we could get by paying every tenth-bushel of wheat we ran through it, after we had finished tramping it out on the ground, with cattle, or Indian ponies.

When the mill was slow in coming around, or the toll was thought to be too high, a scaffold was fixed up on four posts, some ten or fifteen feet high, on which the honest yeoman perched himself on a windy day, and hauled up a basketful of chaff as fast as his wife filled it from the threshing floor, to be poured out on the ground below, whenever it breezed up enough to carry away the chaff from the wheat. This man was a model, honest, independent Oregon farmer, and is to-day of course a live stranger. That fellow's image, just as he looked to us when we saw him more than a quarter of a century ago, mounted on his platform away up on the banks of the Luckamite, tagging away at his *baric* that brought up the basket, has never got out of our mind. His barefoot wife, clad in common unbleached sheeting, using her dress for an apron in filling the basket with chaff, his six flaxen-haired children, rolling with nearly as many dogs in the chaff pile, the "piggin" of water and a gourd from which they slaked their thirst, made up a picture that made me sit on the fence for a long time and review my philosophy as

to what really constitutes human happiness. The conclusion reached then and there was, that the position in which any given person can be the happiest, depends entirely on his education, and the amount and shape of his brain. Perhaps the body has something to do with it—come to think, I rather believe it has; for that night my brain felt satisfied when my landlord, instead of asking me if I had any blankets with me, as I had nearly always been asked all over Oregon before, told me he could accommodate me and my fellow traveler with a bed. The cotton rag burnt low in the saucer that held the lard that night, before our *travars* on knotty theological problems was over, and we retired to bed. Now I always had a horror for sleeping on a hard floor, even with a blanket under me, and as I sat on the fence that afternoon and gazed at the declining sun, I thought of the coming darkness and wished I could roll up in my blankets and crawl into that glorious, clean, soft straw pile to spend the night. So when my host announced the bed, visions of angelic dreams on a well-stuffed tick of clean straw, flitted through my brain. Just then something whispered—"Pike." I thought of Gribble's hard shell discourse in which Christ was said to have been born in Bethlehem, Pike County, Missouri; and of the Dutchman's correcting him by saying—"Pig

was dare he vash crucified." Visions of straw piles ascending to heaven in smoke and flame, illuminating the prairies for miles around of cattle drying for the want of it in an extra hard winter, and of blankets spread on rawhide, in the absence of straw that had been burnt as the easiest way to get rid of it—all flashed upon my mind. My heart palpitated and weakened as I doubted. But I said, hush! It cannot be. If *he* is a descendant of men, who the Dutchman thought crucified Christ, he certainly would save, or have the children save enough straw to nicely fill all the beds. If he should fail to do it his wife would have it done. Woman, God bless her, always has an eye to the comfort of her family and to the comfort of strangers who may happen along. I will not lose faith in woman till I lose faith in God. Oh! yes she has had the bed filled with nice, clean straw. It will be elastic, sweet, glorious. My poor, tired bones will rest, rest sweetly.

Old Sheppard slept on a good straw bed, and cursed it because it was not eider-down; but he slept well and dreamed pleasant dreams, for he saw in vision a palace with shining corridors, tessellated floors and ample halls for banqueting and revelry, with a great, strong vault full of gold—all his own. The old man, for once in his life was happy, perfectly so, for it seemed so real that he thought he lived in a palace and was rich.

He told his dream, and said:
"I was perfectly happy till I waked and found my d—d old carcass on a straw bed."
He sighed for down and got only straw, while I sighed for straw and got lude brush; for that was what my companion, who was an older Oregonian than I, said it

was next morning, as I related my night of horrors and showed him the long, red welts on my back and sides. I have had the back ache off and on ever since, just enough to remind me of my first visit to Luckamite, on an Indian horse that spiked every time he was turned out on grass two days at a time.

We had but little horse flesh in those days but such as we got of the Indians. They were small, wiry, wild and devilish. The missionaries who did a "great work" among the red men, seemed to have no influence over the Cayuse steeds on which the pious Indians rode to meeting. The Indian was passionately fond of blankets but it was dangerous to shake one before his pony even though a grey blanket sent out by the Missionary Society. It would be a cowardly Indian or even squaw that would quail at the sight of one. It is said they rather hankered after blankets, for a whole congregation of them who had been "happily converted" at the Dalles, refused to pray at a big "revival" unless the Missionary would "cultus pollatch," a few blankets. Some whites who were "skeptically inclined," stuck up their noses at such conversions. But this drawing invidious comparisons between the pale face and red skinned aborigines is not just to the Indian. *Justitia fat rut colum* ought to be our motto. The pale face who turns missionary to get a chance to break up a mission, sell the property and pocket the proceeds, or he who joins a church to get a standing in community, or to escape future torment, circumvents his object by means that blind the world, while the unsophisticated savage, honest, and intent on business, injudiciously "speaks out in meeting," and lets us all know what he is after, just as God knows the aims and purposes of his white skinned brother.

Pious people East, who threw in liberally when the hat was passed around to raise funds to convert Oregon savages, did it from good motives, having a great desire to "save souls" and never doubting for a moment that under the teaching and example of such as Raymond, *et id omne genus*, the untutored savage would soon "see God in every cloud." We old Oregonians only know what a great work was done by the untiring and disinterested labors of those "holy men of God" who operated in the Willamette Valley and laid the foundation for the "Dalles Claim," which it is expected will ere long add some much needed funds to the "Lord's treasury."

Those blind widows who knit socks and left them unfinished, with the knitting needles still in them, with the ostensible purpose of having Indian girls learn to knit, by finishing the work, will be comforted, if still alive, by the reflection that if these articles never reached the Indians, but were put in the store and sold, they did reach some poor Missouri girl, who also "had a soul to save," and who would probably never have learned to knit if some poor widow East had 'nt thrown those socks into the contribution box? "Skeptics," who are always unreasonable, and inconsistent, overlook the fact that missionary effort directed towards a Missourian is probably as acceptable to the Lord, and beneficial to the Pike, as though the pious artillery had been opened on a full blooded *Sicaris*. The old Oregonians can all bear witness to the happy results of early missionary labor among our Indians. For samples of their handiwork new immigrants are referred to the noble red men and women frequently seen on our streets in Portland.

THIRTY YEARS AGO.—With this issue of the West Shore, instead of our usual supplement of four pages of miscellaneous matter, we present our readers with a fac simile of the first paper printed in Oregon. We hope this will be much more satisfactory to them. By referring to its columns, and contrasting 1846 with the present time, they will be better able to see the growth of our State during the past thirty years than they could in any other way.



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