

Saturday until the usual hour of adjournment in skirmishing in force, as if feeling the strength of their opponents. When the motion was made at the usual time in the afternoon for adjournment, the friends of the bill came pouring out of the retiring rooms, and on coming inside the bar, they voted "No" with marked emphasis. * * * This state of affairs continued until after midnight. [Here ensued a series of filibustering tactics, during which a personal altercation between Judge Butler and Senator Benton came near resulting in blows]. General Foote, the colleague of Jeff Davis, then rose, and in a drawling tone assumed for the occasion, said his powers of endurance, he believed, would enable him to continue his address to the senate until Monday, 12:00 o'clock m., and although he could not promise to say much on the subject of the Oregon bill, he could not doubt that he would be able to interest and greatly edify senators. The friends of the bill, seeing what was before them, posted a page in the doorway opening into one of the retiring rooms, and then, after detailing a few of their number to keep watch and ward on the floor of the senate, withdrew into the room of which I have spoken, to chat and tell anecdotes, and to drink wine, or perhaps something even much stronger, and thus to wear away the slowly and heavily passing hours of that memorable Saturday night. Soon great clouds of smoke filled the room, and from it issued the sound of the chink of glasses, and of loud conversation, almost drowning the eloquence of the Mississippi senator, as he repeated the bible story of the cosmogony of the world, the creation of man, the taking from his side of the rib from which Eve was made, her talking with the 'snake,' as he called the evil one, the fall of man, etc., etc. The galleries were soon deserted. Many of the aged senators prostrated themselves upon the sofas in one of the retiring rooms and slumbered soundly, while 'thoughts that breathed and words that burned' fell in glowing eloquence from the lips of the Mississippi senator, as he continued thus to instruct and edify the few watching friends of the bill, who, notwithstanding the weight of seventy years pressed heavily upon some of them, were as wide awake as the youngest; and they sat firm and erect in their seats, watching with lynx eyes every movement of the adversaries of the bill.

"At intervals of about an hour the speaker would yield the floor to a motion for adjournment, coming from the opposition. Then the sentinel page would give the notice to the waking senators in the retiring room, and these would immediately arouse the slumbering senators, and all would then rush pell mell through the doorway, and when the inside of the bar was reached, would vote 'No' with a great emphasis.

"It happened, however, on more occasions than one, that a sleeping senator, not yet quite awake, even after getting inside the bar, voted 'aye,' then, 'nay,' and then 'aye,' and finally 'nay' again, to the great amusement of those who were sufficiently wide awake to see where the laugh came in.

"Occasionally Southern senators, toward Sunday morning, relieved General Foote by short, dull speeches, to which the friends of the bill vouchsafed no answers; so that Mr. Calhoun and his pro-slavery subordinates had things, for the most part, all their own way until Sabbath morning, August 13, 1848, at about 8:00 o'clock, when the leading opponents of the bill collected together in a knot, and after conversing together a short time in an undertone, the Mississippi senator, who had been so very edifying and entertaining during the night, said that no further opposition would be made to taking a vote on the bill. The ayes and nays were then called and the bill passed."

Not alone to Mr. Thornton is due the honor of representing Oregon and Washington during that long struggle for justice. Another delegate, one with even better credentials than the first, was there to aid in the work. This was Joseph L. Meek, the mountaineer, whose name is indelibly inscribed upon the early annals of the Pacific coast. When the massacre of the martyred Whitman and his associates, at Waiilatpu, plunged the settlers into a state of mingled grief and alarm, it was thought necessary to dispatch a messenger at once to Washington, to impart the intelligence, impress the authorities with the precarious situation of the colony, and appeal for protection.

Winter had set in with all its rigors in the mountains. The terrible journey made at that season six years before by Dr. Whitman, on his patriotic mission, the same person whose martyrdom now rendered a second journey necessary, was fresh in the minds of all, and appalled the stoutest heart. Mr. Thornton had taken the longer, but safer, route by sea; but time was too precious, too much was at stake, to admit of the delay such a journey would impose, even if the vessel were at hand to afford the means. Nothing but a trip across the thousands of miles of snow-bound mountains, plains and deserts, would be of any avail. In the emergency, all turned to Joseph L. Meek as the one man in their midst, whose intrepid courage, great powers of physical endurance, long experience in mountain life, and familiarity with the routes of travel and Indian tribes to be encountered, rendered him capable of undertaking the task with a good prospect of success. Unhesitatingly, he accepted the mission, resigned his seat in the legislature, received his credentials as a delegate from that body, and set out, on the fourth of January, for Washington, accompanied by John Owen and George Ebbert