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BY WILLIAM L. ADAMS.

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For the Argus.

State Government.

Mr. Editor—DEAR SIR: So much confidence is placed by the advocates of a State government in the conclusiveness of the land argument that I desire to give a still farther answer, although I believe my first to be a complete refutation. I propose to admit, for the sake of argument, that the State of Oregon could locate this grant, when our title to it is perfected, on valuable lands. It is proposed, in order to swell the revenue arising from the sale of these lands, to hold them up to the highest price that can be extorted from purchasers. Is it reasonable to suppose that emigrants will perform a journey, perilous in itself, of over two thousand miles, simply for the purpose of purchasing lands from the State of Oregon, and that too at exorbitant rates, when the public domain can be had in any of the Territories at the simple rates of settlement and cultivation? None but the rich could come and secure a farm, and and they are the very persons who have no inducements to come. There is a class of meritorious persons, with limited means, who have strong inducements to change their residence, hoping thereby to improve their condition. These persons by the operation of this beautiful scheme would be expelled the country! and Oregon would be a State of landed aristocrats. Could there be a measure adopted replete with more consummate folly, fraught with more mischievous consequences than this!—Was not the policy good that granted donations to actual settlers in this Territory? Why then abnegate this policy in regard to lands which the future State may possess? To do it is to disregard the warnings of eminent statesmen, and to act heedless of past experience. Gen. Jackson recommended that as soon as the public debt was paid, to the payment of which these lands were pledged, that they should cease 'to be a source of revenue,' and that they should be disposed of chiefly with reference to settlement and cultivation. This is high authority, and it is sustained by the lustre of names equally as great. Edmud Burke recommended the application of this policy to the Crown lands of England, and sustained the recommendation with arguments sound, rational, and unanswerable. Thos. H. Benton is now and always has been a distinguished advocate of this policy. Mr. King, the late Vice President of the United States, while chairman of the committee on public lands, in a masterly report made by him A.D. 1832, showed that the gross proceeds arising from the sale of the public lands from the time of their cession to the Government to that time had not equaled the expenditures with reference to those lands, the expenditures being $49,701,280 17, the gross receipts arising from the sale of lands being $38,386,624 13, leaving a balance of expenditures over receipts of eleven millions and upwards. In the light of these official facts, what becomes of the splendid revenue that the future State of Oregon expects to derive from the sale of 500,000 acres?

Again, the sale of lands is but a single operation connected with an expensive *absorbing* machinery, and the proceeds if any are liable to be carried off by defaulters or spent in the various schemes of folly and extravagance, and gives no assurance of cultivation, or increase of population, the the only sure basis of wealth and power in a republic; while on the other hand settlement brings population, and cultivation wealth, and wealth gives the ability to pay taxes and to support the complicated machinery of government. Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee early adopted this principle, and disposed of their lands in donations, pre-emptions, and *sales* at *two cents* per acre. And to this wise policy they owe much of their present greatness, prosperity, and wealth. Where would they be now, had they conceived the luminous idea of making a fortune off their fellow-citizens by selling lands to them at exorbitant rates?

O. J.

The Oregon Argus.

W. L. ADAMS, Editor and Proprietor. | AMERICA—"Knows nought of golden promises of Kings, Knows nought of Coronets, and Stars, and Strings." | SUBSCRIPTION, Five Dollars a Year.

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For the Argus.

Temperance.

Mr. Editor—As a member of the Order just established in our city I thought it perhaps not entirely inappropriate that some expression be given as to our principles, and the motives inducing us to support by all our influence this (without doubt) laudable enterprise. The platform on which we stand is the mutual agreement not to make, buy, sell, or use in any form, as a beverage, anything that will intoxicate. This pledge is simple, and needs no explanation. In examining our list of membership, perhaps the query will naturally arise, why all these strictly temperate men need take this pledge and join this society? Surely no selfish motives urge them to this course. They need indulge no fear that they will fall victims to this great scourge of our race, intemperance. They are animated alone by the desire to aid suffering humanity. If they, by the sacrifice of time and means, can rescue one victim who otherwise would fill a drunkard's grave, will they not be richly rewarded? None need consider this institution as a disparagement to other efforts now being made for the same end. Like the Apostle Paul, becoming all things to all men, if by any means we may save some. We have the testimony of the past that this society, with the influences it has brought to bear, has reclaimed those who seemed utterly lost, and when all other means had failed.—Knowing this, we ask is it not the duty of all who favor the cause of temperance to lend the measure of their influence to strengthen the bands of love which are to save their fellow men—while all who desire purity of heart and life should rally under our standard, for our watchword is purity, supported by love for each other and fidelity to our principles. The ladies are expected to co-operate with us in this great work, for assuredly their influence is powerful, and their presence and encouragement will go far toward carrying this cause forward triumphantly. Here rises from the depths of memory a stanza of an old song heard in childhood, which, though somewhat unpolished, I will quote:

"The ladies, too, God bless them all,
Will help roll on the temperance ball,
For whether 'tis temperance, love, or song,
Their motto is, 'we'll go it strong.'"

Should these few disconnected thoughts awaken in any a desire to understand this matter more fully, or lead to an expression from some one capable of treating it properly, I am content. JOS. D. LOCEY.

Oregon City, March 20, 1856.

Telegraphic communication between North America and Europe.

The subject of establishing a sub-marine telegraph line between the new and old world, has been a favorite topic of interest on both sides of the ocean since the successful working of this medium of communication over immense distances, has established its complete practicability and usefulness. Several sub-marine telegraphic wires are in constant use, connecting parts of Europe. The first of these was under the British Channel, between France and England; then followed others on portions of the European shores of the Mediterranean, but the longest of them at present is the line under the waters of the Black Sea, which leads from the Allied Camp in the Crimea, a distance of some three hundred miles, across the Black Sea to Varna, in Bulgaria, a European province of Turkey. It will be remembered that the first attempt at connecting the eastern and western hemispheres by the telegraphic wire was made by an expedition from New York, late in the past summer, and that this work, soon after its commencement, was forced to suspension, owing to the breaking of the cable which contained the wire, before any considerable distance had been laid. This project contemplated the connection of the two continents at their nearest point of approach, about latitude fifty, which are at Newfoundland and the west coast of Ireland, a distance of 1800 miles. Since the first attempt has passed, the attention of scientific men has been attracted to this subject, in regard not only to the risk attending the laying down of so long a stretch without a point of rest above the surface of the ocean, but to the immense importance of establishing an independent line, subject to control this side, and also to make it the means of connection with other parts of the continent of Europe.

There have been three routes proposed for a line. The first reached along the northwesternmost portions of this continent, touching the projecting points of the icy regions of the North Atlantic from Labrador to Norway. Much shorter sea distances would occur by this route than by any other, but there were other impediments peculiar to that Arctic region which might obstruct the good working of such a route. The next plan was the one essayed the last autumn, from Cape Race, the southernmost point of Newfoundland, to a point on the southwest coast of Ireland. The ocean stretch, as above stated, by this line would be 1800 miles. One feature favorable to the route from Cape Race is found in the conviction which prevails that the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, or a similar sub-marine elevation, extends across the Atlantic from this point to the coast of Ireland; but even this feature, if admitted to be the case, is considered by some scientific people as of doubtful advantage, inasmuch as it is believed there is no special utility in the shallowness of water for the purpose of laying down and protecting the telegraphic cable.

The third line, and one which thoroughly recommends itself on many accounts, and to which no practical objections have yet been started, is the route from Cape Race to Flores, the westernmost of the Azores, or Western Islands, distant 1080 miles. From this point to St. Michaels, the easternmost of those islands, it is 300 miles, and from thence to leading points on the western coast of Europe, it would be less than a thousand miles; to the mouths of the Tagus, the distance is only 800 miles. These islands belong to Portugal, so that for all practical purposes they might be considered, in almost every contingency, as a neutral spot. In addition to the other advantages of this line over any other, is the opportunity which so central a point, as the Azores are in mid Atlantic, would afford of laying down radiating independent telegraphic lines to different prominent points in Europe, the length of which would not be more than one-half as long as the proposed route from Cape Race to Ireland.

The permanent benefit, under all circumstances, to this country of an independent line with Europe, resting as it were on neutral ground, for its halfway station, cannot be too strongly urged.

SINGULAR ARITHMETICAL FACT.—Any number of figures you may wish to multiply by 5, will give the same result if divided by 2, a much quicker operation; but you must remember to annex a cipher to the answer when there is no remainder; whatever the remainder may be, annex a 5 to the answer. Multiply 464 by 5, and the answer will be 2320; divide the same number by 2, and you have 232, and, as there is no remainder, you add a cipher. Now take 357 and multiply by 5, the answer is, 1785. On dividing this by 2, there is a 178 and a remainder, you therefore place a 5 at the end of the line, and the resnlt is again 1785. It is a quicker way, however, to affix a cipher to the number to be multiplied when you commence and divide by 2. Multiplying by 5 is multiplying by the half of 10. The same is already multiplied by 10 by affixing a cipher, then divde by 2 gives half of the multiplication of the sum by 10, which is, of course, the multiplication by 5.

☞ They are trying to burst some big guns at Richmond. The *Whig* says: "The large guns made at the Tredegar Works in this city for two of the new steam frigates, have been tested by Uncle Sam's officers, and proved satisfactory. Not one has burst during the trial, although subjected to every test known to the most experienced gunners. For a day or two past, they have been firing two formidable pieces recently cast by order of Government. They design firing each of these guns 1,000 times successively with the usual charge, and if they stand that test, they will increase the charge and continue firing until they burst. The object of this experiment is to ascertain in which part of the gun the explosion is most likely to occur, the metal having been graduated in thickness upon a new plan."

☞ Usual Knapp, the last of Washington's Life Guard, died at Newburg, N. Y., lately, age 99 years. He was buried with military honors.

☞ The number of the venerable and patriotic band of revolutionary pensioners grows less and less. It is now reduced to 726. The number of revolutionary widows receiving pensions is 5,552.

IRIS HILL, March 8th, 1856.

Mr. Adams—SIR: I send you some lines written by a friend. I think them too good to lose. They were written rather as a continuation of the subject of the last piece I sent you. VIOLA.

The author headed them

All True Beauty is from and will Return to Heaven.

I love the flowers that breathe their sweets on air,
And laugh in sunshine with their smiling eyes,
For in their breath there's something so like prayer,
The flower may die, but still its odors rise
Like the pure orison from rapt soul given—
The knee that bent may molder, but the prayer's in heaven.

Look at the flower faded, crushed, and fallen,
Its withered leaflets scattered to the wind,
And all its beauty fled; can this be all, on
Which to fix the imperishable mind?
Would memory's gems be treasured with such care,
If all the light she has is but from things that were?

Look at the chain—how beautiful! On earth
The flower fades, but lives in memory—
Takes root—springs up—behold another birth!
Whose life's coequal with eternity.
The flower before imperfect lifts its fragrant head,
And that's immortal now, that perished o'er the dead.

'Tis but the germ of beauty which we see below,
And 'twill not germinate in earth's foul airs;
'Tis only where celestial breezes blow
That its development perfection bears.
You search earth's fairest grounds, but ever search in vain,
Some favored spot to find untarnished by a stain.

When Eden bloomed fresh from its Maker's hand,
No flower was there but symbolized its source;
Since sin stretched forth its desolating wand,
No flower remains but testifies the curse.
All, ALL must die! Thus thundered the divine decree,
And mingling dust, and tears, confirm its certainty.

And is there nothing beautiful on earth?
The sunlight, music, fragrance, what are these?
Is there no excellence in moral worth?
Most truly, all possess a power to please.
The affection, when 'tis sanctified by heavenly grace,
Is *truly* beautiful, but earth is not its place.

Like the pure beam proceeding from the sun,
Awhile it smiles o'er hill and flowery plain,
Makes earth look glad this moment—then is gone,
Returning quickly to its source again:
So lingers beauty here a moment, and then flies
With lifting sunbeams upward to its native skies.

J. G. C.

Who Murdered Richard Downie?

About the end of the eighteenth century, whenever a student of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, Scotland, incurred the displeasure of the humbler citizens, he was assailed with the question, "*Who murdered Downie?*" Reply and rejoinder generally brought on a collision between "Town and Gown," although the young gentlemen were accused of what was chronologically impossible. People have a right to be angry at being stigmatized as murderers, when their accusers have probability on their side; but the "taking off" of Downie occurred when the gownsmen, so maligned, were in their swaddling-clothes.

But there was a time when to be branded as an accomplice in the slaughter of Richard Downie, made his blood run to the cheek of many a youth, and sent him home to his books thoughtful and subdued.

Downie was sacrist or janitor at Marischal College. One of his duties consisted in securing the gate by a certain hour, previous to which all the students had to assemble in the common hall, where a Latin prayer was delivered by the principal. Whether in discharging this function, Downie was more rigid than his predecessors in office, or whether he became stricter in the performance of it at one time than another, cannot now be ascertained; but there can be no doubt he closed the gate with austere punctuality, and that those who were not in the common hall within a minute of the prescribed time, were shut out and were afterwards reprimanded and fined by the principal and professors. The students became irritated at this strictness, and took every petty means of annoying the sacrist; he, in his turn, applied the screw at other points of academic routine, and a fierce war soon began to rage between the collegians and the humble functionary. Downie took care that in all his proceedings he kept within the strict letter of the law; but his opponents were not so careful, and the decisions of the rulers were uniformly against them, and in favor of Downie. Reprimands and fines having failed in producing due subordination, rustication, suspension, and even the extreme sentence of expulsion had to be put in force, and in the end law and order prevailed. But a secret and deadly grudge continued to be entertained against Downie. Various schemes of revenge were thought of.

Downie was, in common with the teachers and the taught, enjoying the leisure of the short New Year's vacation: the pleasure being, no doubt, gently enhanced by the annoyances to which he had been subject during the recent bickerings; when, as he was one evening seated with his family in his official residence at the gate, a messenger informed him that a gentleman at a neighboring hotel wished to speak to him. Downie obeyed the summons, and was ushured from one room to another, till at length he found himself in a large apartment hung with black, and lighted by a solitary candle. After waiting for some time in this strange place, about fifty figures, also dressed in black, *and with black masks on their faces*, presented themselves. They arranged themselves in the form of a court, and Downie was given to understand that he was about to be put upon his trial.

A judge took his seat on the bench; a clerk a public prosecutor sat below; a jury was empanelled; and witnesses and spectators stood around. Downie at first set down the whole affair as a joke; but the proceedings were conducted with such persistent gravity, that, in spite of himself, he began to believe in the genuine mission of the awful tribunal. The clerk read an indictment, charging him with conspiring against the liberties of the students; witnesses were examined in due form; the public prosecutor addressed the jury; and the judge summed up.

"Gentlemen," said Downie, "the joke has been carried far enough: it is getting late, and my wife and family will be anxious about me. If I have been too strict with you in times past, I am sorry for it; and I assure you I will take more care in future."

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, without paying the slightest attention to this appeal, "consider your verdict: if you wish to retire, do so."

The jury retired. During their absence, the most profound silence was observed; and except renewing the solitary candle that burnt beside the judge, there was not the slighest movement.

The jury returned and recorded a verdict of "Guilty!"

The judge solemnly assumed a large black cap, and addressed the prisoner:

"Richard Downie! The jury have unanimously found you guilty of conspiring against the just liberty and immunities of the students of Marischal College. You have wantonly provoked and insulted those inoffensive lieges for some months, and your punishment will assuredly be condign. You must prepare for death! In fifteen minutes the sentence of the court will be carried into effect."

The judge placed his watch on the bench. A block, an axe, and a bag of saw dust were brought in the centre of the room.—A figure more terrible than any that had yet appeared, came forward, and prepared to act the part of doomster.

"It was now past midnight. There was no sound audible save the ominous ticking of the judge's watch. Downie became more and more alarmed.

"For God's sake! gentlemen!" said the terrified man, "let me go home. I promise that you never again shall have cause for complaint.

"Richard Downie," remarked the judge, "you are vainly wasting the few moments that are left you on earth. You are in the hands of those who demand your life. No human power can save you. Attempt to utter one cry, you are seized, and your doom is completed before you can utter another! Every one here present has sworn a solemn oath never to reveal the proceedings of this night; they are known to none but ourselves; and when the object for which we have met is accomplished, we shall disperse, unknown to any one. Prepare, then, for death: other five minutes will be allowed you—but no more!"

The unfortunate man, in an agony of deadly terror, raved and shrieked for mercy; but the avengers paid no heed to his cries. His fevered trembling lips then moved as if in silent prayer; for he felt that the brief space between him and eternity was but a few more tickings of that omnious watch.

"*Now!*" exclaimed the judge.

Four persons stepped forward and seized Downie, on whose features a cold, clammy sweat had burst forth. They bared his neck, and made him kneel before the block.

"*Strike!*" exclaimed the judge.

The executioner struck the axe on the floor; an assistant on the opposite side lifted at the same moment a wet towel, and struck it violently across the neck of the recumbent criminal. A loud laugh announced that the joke had at last come to an end.

But Downie responded not to the uproarious merriment.

They laughed again; but still he moved not. They lifted him, and Downie was dead!

Fright had killed him as effectually as if the axe of a real headsman had severed his head from his body.

It was a tragedy to all. The medical students tried to open a vein, but all was over; and the conspirators had now to bethink *themselves* of safety. They now in *reality* swore an oath among themselves; and the affrighted young men, carrying their disguises with them, left the body of Downie lying in the hotel.

One of their number told the landlord that their entertainment was not yet quite over, and that they did not wish the individual who was left in the room to be disturbed for some hours. This was to give them all time to escape.

Next morning, the body was found.—Judicial inquiry was instituted, but no satisfactory result could be arrived at. The corpse of poor Downie exhibited no marks of violence internal or external. The ill-will between him and the students was known; it was also known that the students had hired apartments in the hotel for a theatrical representation: Downie had been sent for by them; but beyond this, nothing was known. No noise had been heard, and no proof of murder could be adduced. Of two hundred students of the college, *who* could point out the guilty or suspected fifty? Moreover, the students scattered over the city, and *the magistrates themselves* had many of their own families among the number, and it was not *desirable* to go into the affair too minutely.

Downie's widow and family were provided for, and his death remained a mystery; until, about fifteen years after its occurrence, a gentleman on his death bed disclosed the whole particulars, and avowed himself to have belonged to the obnoxious class who murdered Downie.

The Union of the Atlantic and Pacific—Inter-Oceanic Ship Canal.

An able article in relation to the inter-oceanic ship canal, intended to unite the Atlantic and Pacific at the Isthmus of Darien, is given in the *United States Nautical Magazine*. It is from the pen of Mr. Geo. W. Serrell, Civil Engineer. It has been ascertained by elaborate surveys, that the Atrato is a broad and deep river, having for seventy miles from its mouth an average depth of forty-seven feet, while its channel-way for the same distance is from eight hundred to twelve hundred feet in width. It empties into the Gulf of Darien by nine estuaries, where there are bars formed of sedimentary deposits and the water is only four or five feet deep. The bay itself is very ample, and deep enough for the largest vessels. The line of the contemplated connexion between the two oceans must ascend the Atrato for sixty-three miles and then enters the valley of a tributary known as the Truando, which is followed for thirty-six miles. This is not navigable for vessels drawing twelve feet of water, for thirty-eight miles from its confluence with the Atrato; and for thirty-six miles of this distance it is intended to deepen and widen the Truando, and then to make an open cut through rock to the Pacific Ocean. This cut will averege ninety-six feet deep, excepting a tunnel three and a quarter miles in length, and the canal is projected to be two hundred feet wide and thirty feet deep at extreme low tide. At the point of junction with the Truando, the Atrato is 152, about the mean level of the two oceans, and when the cut is complete, it will have two mouths, one emptying into the Atlantic and the other into the Pacific. The river flows at the rate of two miles and a half per hour, and this rate will not be materially changed by the construction of the canal.

It is stated also, that all the materials necessary for the work may be found in the adjacent country, except metals, while an excellent harbor already exists at the Atlantic terminus, and on the Pacific but little is required to make the harbor there equal to any on the coast for safety and accessibility. The distinctive features of this route, says Mr. Serrell, are an inter-oceanic connexion, having depth and width sufficient to pass abreast the largest vessels now afloat, and upon which no locks or other obstructions of any kind will occur, and that there are good harbors at either end. The country through which the line passes, were the constructions and deepening of the Truando have to be done, is very healthy and productive; while on the Atrato, the only unhealthy part of the route, there is no work to be done, except at the bars of the mouth, and here the climate is comparatively salubrious, from the constant sea breeze. Mr. Serrell estimates the cost of the work, predicated on the survey of Capt. William Kennish, at one hundred and forty-seven millions of dollars, which is concurred in by several of the most eminent engineers in the country.