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The Oregon Argus.

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The Crime Without a Parallel. MURDER OF A FATHER AND MOTHER BY A DRUNKEN SON.

From The Utica Herald, Jan. 13. That our readers might be fully posted in all the particulars of the recent horrible parricide at Poolville, Madison County, one of the editors of the Herald yesterday visited the scene of the murder for the purpose of giving an authentic account of the awful affair. It is a crime without a precedent in its enormity, and without a parallel in its terrible and unnatural details. History furnishes no instance of a similar act of inhumanity, and no conception of horror has, perhaps, ever reached the standard of this dread reality. A son murdering his own father and mother, with most remorseless frenzy and cruelty, then cutting out their hearts, and roasting and eating their flesh, is an instance of depravity never before recorded, not even in cannibal countries. What adds to its dread horror is the full conviction of its reality. There is no doubt as to the truthfulness of the picture. It can scarcely be drawn accurate enough. Words will hardly suit themselves to such a recital as the facts justify. But to the incidents themselves we found them.

THE COMSTOCK FAMILY.

Jared Comstock and Clarissa Comstock, the two victims, were among the oldest residents of Hamilton. For nearly half a century they have lived in Madison County, and, although in moderate circumstances, were much respected. They have four children, two sons and two daughters. The oldest of the children is William, by whose hand they received their death wound. Their second son is married and lives near the homestead, and one of the daughters is married to a gentleman in East Hamilton, and is a lady of marked respect and esteem. The old people had attained the age of nearly three score years and ten, and were living in a little cottage with their oldest son. The house is about 2 1/2 miles south of Poolville, and fifty rods east of Thompson's Mills. It is a story and a half building, boarded up with rough boards. Here Mr. Comstock and his wife have lived for the past four years. There is but one room on the ground floor, and here the horrid deed was committed. The room is about 16x23 feet, and is not plastered. The walls are papered with Baptist Registers and New York Ledgers. There were five chairs, a stand containing crockery, an old-fashioned clock, and other household utensils in the room.

APPEARANCE OF THE ROOM.

The first person who discovered the awful crime was a neighbor, who looked through the window of the house and saw the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Comstock lying upon the floor, and the parricide sitting quietly between them. The old gentleman lay upon his back. On his left breast was a wound over six inches in length; his heart had been torn from his body. Mrs. Comstock lay a short distance from the body of her husband, on her right side, with a horrid wound over twelve inches in length on her left breast, from which the parricide had torn out her heart also; her clothes were much torn indicating a scuffle. The broken skillet, the knife with which the hearts were cut out, and the bloody ax were all remaining in the room. In the stove were the two paternal hearts, partially roasted, and portions of each gnawed off, which had evidently been eaten by the murderer.

The wounds upon both the deceased were of the most terrible description. The heads of both were crushed and mutilated. Near the left kidney of Mrs. Comstock was another terrible gash, as if inflicted by the ax. The floor was covered with blood. Before the person at the window left the spot, the son, William, left the chair, and laid down on the lounge on the opposite side of the room. An alarm was immediately given, and the neighbors gathered in force and secured his arrest. The gentleman who first went to the house was attracted there by a remark that the parricide made to his brother that there were "lots of fresh meat in the house," and other expressions which excited suspicion. The discovery was made about 10 o'clock on Sunday evening. The awful deed was committed at about 8 o'clock on Sabbath evening.

WILLIAM COMSTOCK.

The parricide is a man 37 years old, about five feet seven inches in height. He had on, when arrested, a very coarse brown coat, plain cassimere pants and an old Kousuth hat. His pants were bespattered with blood. He has always resided at Hamilton, and has made his home at his father's. He is unmarried. He has worked for many of the farmers in the neighborhood, and when sober, is universally represented as a man of mild disposition and placid temper. He has been drinking hard for some weeks past, and is evidently laboring under the effects of mania's pots. He conversed coolly in relation to the awful deed—manifesting no

concern for himself—speaking of the manner in which he deprived his poor old father and mother of life as if he had been butchering hogs. He gave to Mr. James, Editor of the Hamilton Republican, the following

CONFESSION OF THE TRAGEDY.

For about four or five days, somebody seemed to tell me that he must have a number of hearts. This was repeated to me many times during the day. He seemed to live in Sherburne, and a wire came over the hill connecting with the side of the room, which seemed to say, "I now have a lot of hearts." Some one who lived in Sherburne seemed to telegraph for them. I would place my ear to the side of the room, and then I would be told by this voice to get some hearts. Three or four days ago, I first attempted to kill my brother to get his heart. Yesterday I went again, and placed an ax in the room, intending if I could find my brother and his wife sitting down, I would kill them both at once. It seemed as though I must have their hearts, but I did not find them so situated. About dark I went over to my father's. I found my mother sewing, walked round to the stove, took a spider and struck her over the head with it, and broke it. She reeled and fell to the floor. My father then sprang toward me, and we had a scuffle. The old man for a time was enough for me, but after striking him three or four times over the head with the remains of the broken spider, I got hold of the ax and killed him. He said he got the old man's heart out before he had done kicking. The old woman he said he got along with pretty easily, but the old man's hide was as tough as the d—l. After knocking father down, I got the ax and cut out their hearts, and put them in the stove and burned them. This same voice seemed to tell me that the hearts must be burned.

After the deed I washed my hands, and after remaining in the house a short time, left and went down to Alpheus Gusting. When I arrived I found my brother there visiting. I told him that I had some fresh meat up to father's. After remaining there a short time, I went down to the house of Harmon Gusting, and told them to get me a quart of cider and a bottle, and after obtaining it, left for my father's house without mentioning anything concerning the deed; upon arriving, I lay down upon the lounge near my father and mother, and slept for some time. During the night after the deed, I attempted to find a razor to end my own life, and thus close the tragedy; afterward I went to my brother's house to kill my brother and his wife. I kicked the panels of the door in, but they had gone away. I went and searched for him. Went home and slept until near morning. On awaking, I left the house and met several persons coming toward the house. I do not recollect who I had informed of the deed previous to this. As they approached me some said, "There is Bill!"—this was about eight rods west of my father's. They asked me what I had been doing. I told them it was none of their business. Part of the company held me, while a couple of them went to the house and returned, and afterward they took me to Potter's, where I was arrested by the constable.

A DIVISION OF TEXAS.

A subdivision of Texas into two or more States, is warmly advocated by some of the leading public journals. No State in the Union has increased in population and wealth more rapidly within the last few years, than Texas. Her estimated population at this time amounts to more than half a million, and when the next census is taken, it will be found sufficient to entitle the State to six or seven Representatives in Congress. Several reasons are given for a division. "The great size of the State, the great dissimilarity of its parts, and the difficulty of constant communication between all parts, and one centre of government, are among the chief of them. The general political reason is the importance of increasing the strength of the South in the United States Senate. By the addition of more Senators, to check the increasing predominance of the non-slaveholding States, in the North-west. The subdivision of Texas into not more than four States is provided for by the articles of annexation, and the work will no doubt be consummated in the course of a few years.

Clomet, one of Walker's men, who committed suicide at Richmond, Va., last week, after being discharged from the Saratoga, left an explanatory letter, in which the following occurs: "When a man commits suicide, the world wishes to know why he did it. The answer in my case lies in a nutshell—I am tired of living! Life is a farce, happiness a humbug, and the cares, trials and tribulations which I see before me, offer no inducement for a prolongation of this earthly sorrow. With a good heart and calm mind, I plunge in medias res and try the realities of an unknown world."

A Thrilling Adventure with the Mormons.

C. G. Langdon, formerly connected with the United States Surveyor's office in Utah, was engaged in his official duties at the time the U. S. Court was broken up, and witnessed the stampede of Uncle Sam's officers. Brigham Young having declared that no United States official should again set foot in the Valley, Langdon was prompted to visit Salt Lake City, and see what preparations the Mormons were making. He saw them casting cannon shot, and manufacturing grape and conister in great abundance, and some fifty men making Colt's dragon-size revolvers. He was detected, however, and "spotted" for destruction. He says:

"Accordingly, on the 25th day of July, when crossing the street, I was assailed by a party of ruffians, was knocked down, and most shamefully beaten with clubs and stones. I was literally cut and bruised, and mangled all over my head, face, breast, hands, and arms. I was taken home unconscious, and had it not been for some emigrants there who interposed, I should have been brutally murdered in the streets, and without the least possible chance to defend myself.

"All was quiet until the night of the 27th of July. I was disturbed by loud rapping at the back door of the office (I lived next door), and also heard voices at the front door. I heard Mr. Wilson raise the window above, and ask what was wanted. He was ordered to come down and deliver himself up, under arrest, by the authority of Gov. Brigham Young. He asked what charge they had against him. 'Come down, and we'll d—n soon show you,' was the reply.

"The next heard, was the door being broken open, and the voice of Mr. W. in expostulation with them. The entreaties of his wife, begging for them to spare her husband, mingled with their oaths and obscene expressions, rendered the scene perfectly heart-sickening. I lay almost powerless with the pain of my wounds and conflicting thoughts and emotions, until suddenly I was thoroughly aroused by hearing them beneath my window and at the back door. I told my wife not to make a noise, or even cry; she did not cry, but her last words were, 'For God's sake, George, fly! Go, go, if you can; I—I cannot see you murdered! Oh, go, go, I will do the best I can to detain them.'

"I had time to put on a pair of pantaloons and one stocking, when without any ceremony the door was burst open, and a posse of midnight assassins entered below. I motioned to my wife to extinguish the light, which she did. They immediately made a rush for the stairs, expecting no doubt that I was preparing for flight, but I could not have killed a mouse then. I stopped and kissed my infant boy (perhaps for the last time on earth), then barely had time to leap from the window, and in doing so I cut my foot very badly. It seemed the fates were against me. But suddenly the thought struck my mind, that if I could possibly make my escape, I might probably be the means of saving Wilson—thinking the fates not execute their bloody purpose on one alone, as the other would be too formidable a witness against them. For I thought of my wife and child—yes, I might yet like to rescue them from the blighting influence of their teachings—from a life of poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness. Thus, with renewed energy, I pursued my way through the corn fields and thickets, barefooted and bare-headed, and nearly nude; but at last I found a friend who relieved me, all that lay in his power, by giving me a pair of moccasins and an old hat. Thanks, my friends; may you never want relief.

"I was hotly pursued several days. The next morning after I started for California I had the satisfaction of seeing seven of my pursuers, mounted and armed to the teeth, pass me within twenty yards, while I was secreted behind a sage bush. I could not refrain from a smile, even then, in my critical position, to see their knives and pistols hang to their belts, while I had not even a penknife.

"I have not yet heard from Salt Lake, and know not the fate of Wilson. I entertain but little fears for the safety of my wife and child. The Mormons seldom molest or harm a woman, except to coerce her into measures that are sometimes very disagreeable. I rely entirely on the well known fortitude and firmness of my wife, and do not think I shall be disappointed."

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL'S REPORT.

From this document we learn that during the past year 1,725 new offices have been established and 704 discontinued, leaving a net gain of 1,021. The number of postmasters appointed during the year was 1,680.

The present number of offices is 27,148, of which 369 of the incumbents are of the class denominated Presidential appointments. As to the mode of the conveyance of mails, 22,530 miles are run by railroad, 15,245 by steamboat, 49,329 by coaches and 155,497 on horseback and by sulkies. The total transportation of the mails was 74,906,067, at a cost of \$6,822,046.

The postage system has fallen short of sustaining itself during the past fiscal year, in the sum of \$1,469,173, which of course will have to be appropriated from the Treasury by act of Congress.

Ex-Gov. Lazarus W. Powell has been elected to the U. S. Senate from Kentucky, for six years from the 4th of March, 1859. Gov. Powell is the first regularly elected Democratic U. S. Senator from Kentucky for a quarter of a century.

ARTESIAN WELLS.

Various conjectures have been made as to the source of the water which comes from the artesian wells. It was long believed that the water of the sea must necessarily penetrate by infiltrations into the interior of the continent, and at length form large bodies of subterranean waters, which, excepting from capillary influences, would not rise above the general level of the ocean. Another opinion was that the subterranean water, from which the sources of rivers and springs are supplied, is the product of the condensation of aqueous vapors ascending from the interior parts of the earth, in consequence of the central heat. But these hypotheses are purely visionary. The simplest and most natural explanation is, that the water of ordinary wells, of artesian fountains and rivers, is supplied by the rains which fall on the surface at a higher elevation, and which penetrate through the pores and fissures of the ground till they meet with some impermeable stratum, or are collected in subterranean reservoirs. It has been objected that springs are sometimes situated on or near the summits of mountains, which could not be supplied in this way; but on attentive examination of all the circumstances—that is to say, on measuring accurately the extent of surface at a greater elevation than the spring, and comparing it with the quantity of rain that falls annually in the same climate, it has been found in every instance, that the aqueous deposition from the atmosphere greatly exceeds the supply from the spring. It is computed that not more than a third part of the rain which falls in the valley of the Seine is conveyed to the sea by the river.

Thrilling Account of the Relief of Lucknow.

From Le Pays, of Paris. CALCUTTA, Thursday, Oct. 8, 1857. I give you the following account of the relief of Lucknow, as described by a lady, one of the rescued party:—On every side death stared us in the face; no human skill could avert it any longer. We saw the moment approach when we must bid farewell to earth, yet without feeling that unutterable horror which must have been experienced by the unhappy victims at Cawnpore. We were resolved rather to die than to yield, and were fully persuaded that in twenty-four hours all would be over. The engineers had said so, and all knew the worst. We women strove to encourage each other, and to perform the light duties which had been assigned to us, such as conveying orders to the batteries, and supplying the men with provisions, especially cups of coffee, which we prepared day and night. I had gone out to try and make myself useful, in company with Jessie Brown, the wife of a corporal in my husband's regiment. Poor Jessie had been in a state of restless excitement all through the siege, and had fallen away visibly within the last few days. A constant fever consumed her, and her mind wandered occasionally, especially that day, when the recollections of home seemed powerfully present to her. At last, overcome with fatigue, she lay down on the ground, wrapped in her plaid. I sat beside her, promising to awaken her when, as she said, "her father should return from the plowing." She fell at length into a profound slumber, motionless and, apparently, breathless, her head resting in my lap. I myself could no longer resist the inclination to sleep, in spite of the continual roar of the cannon. Suddenly I was aroused by a wild unearthly scream close to my ear; my companion stood upright beside me, her arms raised, and her head bent forward in the attitude of listening. A look of intense delight broke over her countenance, she grasped my hand, drew me towards her, and exclaimed—"Dinna ye hear it! dinna ye hear it! Ay, I'm no dreamin', it's the slogan of the Highlanders! We're saved, we're saved!" Then, flinging herself on her knees, she thanked God with passionate fervor. I felt utterly bewildered; my English ears heard only the roar of artillery, and I thought my poor Jessie was still raving; but she darted to the batteries, and I heard her cry incessantly to the men, "Courage! courage! hark to the slogan—to the Macgregor, the grandest of them a'. Here's help at last!" To describe the effect of these words upon the soldiers would be impossible. For a moment they ceased firing, and every soul listened with intense anxiety. Gradually however there arose a murmur of bitter disappointment, and the wailing of the women who had flocked to the spot burst out anew as the Colonel shook his head. Our dull lowland ears heard nothing but the rattle of the musketry. A few minutes more of this death-like suspense, of this agonizing hope, and Jessie, who had sunk on the ground, sprang to her feet, and cried, in a voice so clear and piercing that was heard along the whole line—"Will ye no believe it noo! The slogan has ceased indeed, but the Campbells are comin'! D'ye hear, d'ye hear!" At that

moment we seemed indeed to hear the voice of God in the distance, when the pibroch of the Highlanders brought us tidings of deliverance, for now there was no longer any doubt of the fact. That shrill, penetrating, ceaseless sound, which rose above all other sounds, could come neither from the advance of the enemy nor from the work of the Sappers. No, it was indeed the blast of the Scottish bagpipes, now shrill and harsh, as threatening vengeance on the foe, then in softer tones seeming to promise succor to their friends in need. Never surely was there such a scene as that which followed. Not a heart in the residency of Lucknow but bowed itself before God. All, by one simultaneous impulse, fell upon their knees, and nothing was heard but bursting sobs and the murmured voice of prayer. Then all arose, and there rang out from a thousand lips a great shout of joy, which resounded far and wide, and lent new vigor to that blessed pibroch. To our cheer of "God save the Queen," they replied in the well-known strain that moves every Scot to tears—"Should auld acquaintance be forgot," &c. After that, nothing else made any impression on me. I scarcely remember what followed. Jessie was presented to the General on his entrance into the fort, and as the officers' banquet her health was drunk by all present, while the pipers marched round the table playing once more the familiar air of "Auld lang syne."

THE DISTINGUISHED DEAD OF 1857.

The necrology of the past year contains an unusual number of eminent names. Among the departed men of science may be mentioned Hugh Miller, Dr. Kane, Dr. Ure, Dr. Conybeare, and Redfield, the meteorologist. In the list of authors and scholars are Beranger, Douglas Jerrold, Eugene Sue, Dr. Dick, Dr. Griswold, and Mr. Giddon. Of sculptors there are Thomas Crawford and Christian Rauch. Among the statesmen are Gov. Marcy, Andrew Stevenson, James Hamilton, Louis McLane, Ex-Secretary Dubbin, and Senator Rusk. In the military department are Sir Henry Lawrence, General Wheeler, Naill, Nicholson, Anson, and others, in India, Gen. Cavaignac in France, and Gen. Gulea at Constantinople.

Col. Lehmannowaki, the illustrious Pole, who served under Napoleon during the times of the Republic and the Empire, died lately near Hamburg, Clark county, Indiana, aged eighty-eight years. He was among the first to rally to the standard of the Little Corporal, and never betrayed his trust or his master, from the siege of Toulon to the final overthrow and exile. For his devotedness, he suffered imprisonment in the lathouse dungeons of Paris, and at last exile. He was buried with Masonic honors, and, while he lived, could boast of being one of the officers that initiated the great Napoleon into the mysteries of that ancient and honorable order.

THE GREATEST CURIOSITY OF THE AGE.

The Mobile Mercury says, without question, the greatest natural living curiosity of this or any other country, is now on exhibition on Royal street, opposite Odd Fellows' Hall. It is a living negro child, with two heads, four arms and four legs. It is six years old, very intelligent, speaks with both mouths, sings well, waltzes and keeps time. This much the bill says, but the beholder cannot dismiss from his mind that he has before him two children, tho' strictly speaking there is but one. The connection is with the spine, and the best physiologists of Europe and this country have pronounced it one individual child.

Cincinnati, according to an estimate of the Gazette, has a population of 244,000 inhabitants, an increase in ten years of over 87,000. The value of manufactures and industry is set down at \$20,000,000.

Commerce of Boston.—The value of foreign goods imported at Boston in 1856 was \$48,826,034, and in 1857, \$52,033,908, thus showing an increase of \$3,207,874 for the year just closed over the preceding year.

Best for Newspapers.—The sum of \$15,000,000 is supposed to be spent for newspapers by the people of the Union.—Boston issues 113 papers with an annual circulation of 51,000,000; New York 104 paper, circulation 79,000,000; Philadelphia 51 papers; circulation 40,000,000.

The St. Louis Democrat says: "The free soil element in the South is mostly quiet and silent. It is a latent heat pervading the frontier States and the commercial cities, and awaiting but the favorable moment to break forth in light and glory."

The sole survivor of the Wyoming Massacre, is Mr. Asa A. Gore; now living in the town of Prentiss, Cois.; at the age of 79 years.

Adventy brings to light many a hidden beauty. It is like a handsome leg revealed for the first time on a rainy day.

THE SCHOOLMASTER OF OUR REPUBLIC.

"It seems to be one of the laws of Providence that the founders of States shall never divide their glory with those who come after them. Moses, Solon, and Lycurgus; Romulus, Alfred, and Washington, have left none to dispute their fame. So it is with the fathers of learning. The name of Cadmus inspires to day the same veneration that was felt for him by Plato. No dramatic poet will dream of usurping the throne of Shakespeare—no future astronomer will lay a profane hand on the crown of Galileo. The world looks for no other liad—there will be no second Dante. Daniel Webster has interpreted the Constitution, and Noah Webster left us a standard of the English language which will guide all successive ages.

The pen is the only scepter which is never broken. The only real master is he who controls the thoughts of men. The maker of words is master of the thinker who only uses them. In this domain he has no rival. He stands at the fountain-head of thought, science, civilization. He is controller of all minds—to him, all who talk, think, write or print, pay ceaseless and involuntary tribute. In this sense, Noah Webster is the all-shaping, all-controlling mind of this hemisphere. He grew up with his country, and he molded the intellectual character of her people. Not a man has sprung from her soil on whom he has not laid his all-forming hand: His principles of language have tinged every sentence that is now, or ever will be, uttered by an American tongue. His genius has presided over every scene in the nation. It is universal, omnipotent, omnipresent. No man can breathe the air of the continent, and escape it.

The scepter which the great lexicographer wields so unquestionably, was most worthily won. It was not inherited—it was achieved. It cost a life-struggle for honest, brave, unflinching heart—a clear, serene intellect. No propitious accident favored his progress. The victory was won after a steady trial of sixty years.—Contemplate the indices of his progress; for science, like machinery, measures its revolutions. When the wheels of our ocean steamships have moved round a million times, the dial hand marks one. It was so with Galileo and Bacon—their books marked their progress through the unexplored seas of learning. It was so with Webster. When our Republic rose, he became its schoolmaster. There had never been a great nation with a universal language without dialects. The Yorkshirian can not now talk with a man from Cornwall. The peasant of the Ligurian Apennines drives his goats home at evening, over hills that look down on six provinces, none of whose dialects he can speak. Here, five thousand miles change not the sound of a word; Around every freidae, and from every tribune, in every field of labor and every factory of toil, is heard the same tongue. We owe it to Webster. He has done for us more than Alfred did for England, or Cadmus for Greece. His books have educated three generations.—They are forever multiplying his innumerable army of thinkers, who will transmit his name from age to age. Only two men have stood on the New World, whose fame is so sure to last—Columbus, its discoverer, and Washington, its savior. Webster is, and will be, its great teacher; and these three make our trinity of fame."—Gleanings at the Metropolis.

The people of Kansas have a queer way of voting, it appears. Here is the return of the vote on the Leocompton constitution at Leavenworth city:

For the constitution with slavery, 220 For the constitution without slavery, 27 To hell with the Leocompton constitution, 9

Dr. Stringfellow, of Kansas, denounces the Leocompton constitution, and condemns the attempt to force it on the people.

North and South.—The present Congress, it is said, presents the fact that among the Northern Democrats there are but left who have ever before sat in Congress. The South pursues a different practice. Of the Virginia delegation, for example, the average term of service in Congress, is eight years.

Mr. Garlington of South Carolina, estimates the loss sustained by the South from the depression of the market for cotton, in consequence of the late commercial crisis at more than \$70,000,000.

The New Orleans Picayune denies the statement now going the rounds of the press, that the new Custom House in that city had been greatly injured by the settling of its foundation. It admits that the building has settled considerably, as all heavy structures in that city do; but the settling has been so uniform that, in its whole length of over 300 feet, it is only a trifle out of line.

The Charleston (S. C.) Courier thus alludes to the emancipation of his slaves by the late G. W. P. Custis:—"It is high time Virginia had some law on her statute book against this destruction of property."

The annual report of the Registrar General of England discloses the interesting fact that the Smiths and Joneses of that island number over half a million; in fact every 73d person is a Smith, and every 78th a Jones. The Smiths are paramount in England and the Joneses in Wales.

Mr. Picken, of South Carolina, has been appointed Minister to Russia.