

Oregonian

VOL. XLV.—NO. 13,803.

PORTLAND, OREGON, MONDAY, MARCH 13, 1905.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

WIVES ALL DEAD

Branton Has Been Thrice Married.

TWO WERE INSURED

Third Refused and Tried to Leave Him.

SEIZED WITH CONVULSIONS

Cottage-Grove Man Now Enjoys Property She Left

THEN FLETCHER WAS SHOT

Wounded Man Declares Man He Believed His Friend Did This, and Denounces as Forgery the Letter Signed With His Name.

COTTAGE GROVE, Or., March 12.—(Staff Correspondence.)—Is Lane County going to give to the criminal world another Johann Hoch? This is the question that the good citizens of Cottage Grove and a host of people living in Lane County have been asking themselves since John Branton was arrested for the attempted shooting of John Fletcher, on the morning of March 9. Whether Branton will prove to be a Hoch on a small scale depends upon the investigation that is being conducted now by District Attorney George M. Brown.

Along the McKenzie River, in the jail at Eugene, has been married three times. Three different times he has had a blushing bride to the marriage altar, and three times he has seen the girl tumble into the grave that resulted from the murder of those three women.

Along the McKenzie River, and at the little town of Wallerville, where Branton married two of his wives, the people believe that Branton is guilty of having disposed of them. Here in Cottage Grove there is a strong suspicion that Branton had something to do with wife No. 3, a sudden death, which occurred during the Christmas holidays.

Coils Are Tightening.

All this, however, is merely suspicion. The man may be innocent, as he declares he is. If he is, he is a victim of that monster thing called circumstantial evidence, now that he is in the toils of the law, it will take the skill of Medley & Johnson, of Cottage Grove, and Lark Briley, of Eugene, in their utmost, in order to extricate him from the deadly coil that District Attorney Brown is weaving about him.

The history of John Branton and that of his family is an interesting one. It may be that he is innocent. His friends, and they are many, believe that John Branton is suffering for the sins of his brother, Claud Branton, who was hanged in Eugene several years ago. This may be true. If he is a victim of the stigma cast upon a family because a renegade son brutally murdered an old man and burned him up, then the wind that was tempered for the shorn lamb should temper the ugly suspicions that have been cast upon Branton.

Since the death of his first wife, years ago now, Branton has lived under a cloud. This cloud grew black and sadder when his second wife died. It became a sinister thing when he became involved in trouble in the collection of \$2000 worth of life insurance held by this wife. There was insurance on both wives. The first wife held a policy for \$1000, and the second wife was worth more, or would have been, at least, if Branton had not been forced into a settlement, so it is alleged, to save of an investigation.

There was no insurance on the third wife, but Branton is said to have tried to persuade her to take out some insurance. Mrs. Branton, the third, refused because of the ugly rumors and suspicions that were afloat over the deaths of the former spouses.

By the death of the third woman, however, Branton becomes possessor of a large estate, and he is said to have lived in Cottage Grove. This house and lot, so the story goes, has been mortgaged by Branton since the death of wife No. 2.

Shooting of John Fletcher.

What has brought the storm that has fallen on John Branton's shoulders is the shooting of John Fletcher. The talk which sprang up last December, when the third Mrs. Branton died, resulted in a warrant being sworn out against him. The Sheriff from Eugene came to Cottage Grove to serve it, but it was never served. There was a reason for this, which will come out later.

It was first given out that Fletcher had committed suicide. This was because the morning of March 9, Marshal H. E. Underwood received a letter purporting to have been written by Fletcher, stating that his body would be found on the trail between Cottage Grove and the Branton ranch. The Marshal was just getting ready to make an investigation, when Dr. J. E. Corpron, who had been summoned to the Branton ranch to attend Fletcher, who was wounded, returned. The physician had been sent for by John Branton, who explained to the doctor that Fletcher had attempted suicide.

Fletcher told a different story to the

COATED WITH TAR

Holy Roller at Goldendale Suppressed.

ORDERED TO LEAVE TOWN

Former Portland Dentist Rouses Wrath of Public.

WOMEN DRIVEN TO FRENZY

Wild Exhortations of the Free Lance Preacher Had Also Attracted Many Prominent Citizens to His Meetings.

GOLDENDALE, Wash., March 12.—

Special.—Dr. Kaywood, said to formerly have been a dentist at Portland, Or., now a Holy-Roller preacher, who has been holding meetings at the Free Methodist Church, was the recipient of a liberal outpouring of tar and feathers this evening at 7 o'clock. Just after services had commenced a crowd of about ten young men entered the little church on Broadway street and took the minister out of his pulpit and hauled him out into the street.

TIMBER ON RAILS

Attempt to Wreck an Electric Car.

FOUR OBSTRUCTIONS MET

Motorman Sees First One Just in Time to Stop.

HAPPENS NEAR OREGON CITY

Southern Pacific Tender of Freight Train is Derailed Near the Same Place by Logs Across the Roadway.

SITUATION AT THE FRONT.

While General Kurapatkin has apparently succeeded in saving more of his artillery than seemed possible, his losses in men, ammunition and commissariat supplies in the battle of Mukden are

DEAD IN HEAPS

Over 26,000 Russians Lie on Battlefield.

LOSS ABOUT 100,000

Oyama Reports the Capture of 40,000 Men.

SIXTY GUNS AMONG SPOILS

Much Other Plunder From Battle of Mukden.

50,000 NOT AT ROLL-CALL

Kuropatkin Confirms in Some Degree the Statement Given by the Field Marshal to the Japanese Emperor.

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Other Men Who Have Accepted Portfolio in British Cabinet.

LONDON, March 12.—Official announcement is made of the appointment of Walter Hume Long, president of the local government board, to succeed Mr. Wyndham as Chief Secretary for Ireland.

WRAPPED IN STARS AND BARS

Body of General Bate Lies in State at Nashville.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., March 12.—Under the shot-vent, powder-stained battle flag of the Second Tennessee Confederate Regiment, the remains of General Bate, late of the House of Representatives, were passed by the bier. Tomorrow afternoon the funeral will be held at the tabernacle.

Three Men Want the Place.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., March 12.—A Democratic caucus of the Legislature will meet on Wednesday night to nominate a successor to the late General Bate. It is generally believed that J. M. Miller and R. L. Taylor will be in the fight.

GOVERNMENT MEN MAY JOIN

Union Officers Permitted to Solicit Workmen at Employment.

PITTSBURG, Pa., March 12.—Permission has been granted labor leaders to organize all Government workmen who may wish to become members of labor unions.

VALENCIA RESIGNS HIS OFFICE

Prospects Bright for Reyes Government in Colombia.

BOGOTA, Colombia, March 12.—General Gonzalez Valencia has resigned the Vice-Presidency. This action creates general satisfaction, as it anticipates action by the National Assembly, which will meet next Wednesday.

ST. PETERSBURG, March 12.—The explosion in the Hotel Bristol Saturday has been followed by many arrests, both in St. Petersburg and in the Baltic provinces. The papers found in the room included numerous revolutionary papers and pamphlets, drawings of internal machines and other devices completely establishing the connection of McCullough with the terrorists.

ST. GOTHARD HOSPICE BURNED

Famous House of Refuge in the Alps is Destroyed.

GENEVA, Switzerland, March 12.—The famous Hospice of St. Gothard has been destroyed by fire.

CONTENTS OF TODAY'S PAPER

The Weather.

The War in the East.

ST. LOUIS AWARDS GO FOR CASH

Utah Legislature Committee Scores Exposition Management.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, March 12.—The special committee recently sent to St. Louis by the lower House of the Utah Legislature to investigate irregularities in the accounts of Utah's commission to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, has presented a report that is severe in its criticism of the management of the Exposition. The report says:

Palace for American Ambassador.

ST. PETERSBURG, March 12.—George von L. Meyer has leased the famous Kleimelner Palace for his residence during his term as American Ambassa-

UTAH LAND FRAUDS DISCLOSED

Great Tracts of Coal Land Filed on as Farm Land by Syndicate.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, March 12.—Special agents of the Federal Government are reported to have been engaged for some time past in investigating public land frauds in Utah. The Salt Lake Herald today states that hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable coal lands have been acquired by corporations by questionable methods.

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