

Concluded.

THE HISTORY OF THE PRISONER.

When the Americans, he began, had possession of Fort Washington, on the North River—it being the only post they held at that time on York Island—I belonged to a company of light infantry, stationed there on duty. The American army having retreated from New York, Sir William Howe determined to reduce that garrison to the subjection of the British if possible. Our detachment at that time was short of provisions, and as Gen. Washington was at Fort Lee, it was a difficult matter to supply ourselves from the distance without the hazard of interception from the enemy. There lived on the turnpike, within a mile of our post, a Mr. J. B. This man kept a store well supplied with provisions and groceries, and contrived to keep himself neutral, selling to both parties; but he was strongly suspected of favoring the British, by giving them information, &c.

Some of our officers resolved to satisfy themselves; and if they found their suspicions just, they thought it would be no harm to make a prize of his stores, especially as the troops were much in need of them. From prisoners, and clothes stripped from the slain, we had always a supply of British uniforms for officers and privates. Accordingly three of our officers put on red coats, and walked to friend B's, where they soon found the color of their uniforms was a passport to his best wines. As the glass went round his loyal ideas began to shoot forth in loyal toasts and sentiments. Our officers being now sure of their man, I was one of a party who went with wagons, and every thing necessary to ease him of his stores.

On the following evening, that matters might pass quietly, we put on the British uniforms. Arriving at the house, we informed Mr. B. that the army were in want of all his store, but we had no time to make an inventory, being afraid we might be intercepted by the Americans; but he must make out his bill from memory, carry it to the commissary at New York and get his pay. The landlord looked rather serious at this wholesale mode of doing business, but, as the wagons were loading up he found remonstrance would be in vain. In less than an hour his whole stock of eatables and drinkables were on the road to Fort Washington. By the direction we took he suspected the trick, and alarmed the outposts of the British army. In fifteen minutes we heard the sound of their horses' hoofs thundering along behind us; but they were too late, and we got in safe. He got his revenge, however; for in three days thereafter our fortress was stormed by Gen. Kniphausen on the North, Gen. Matthews and Lord Cornwallis on the East, and Lords Percy and Sterling on the South. So fierce and successful was the attack, that twenty-seven hundred of us were taken prisoners, and numbers of them, with myself, marched to New York, and lodged in Crown street [now Liberty street] sugar house.

It is impossible, he continued, to describe the horrors of that prison. It was like a healthy man being tied to a putrid carcass. I made several attempts to escape, but always failed, and at last began to yield to despair. I caught the jail fever, and was nigh unto death. At this time I became acquainted with a young man among the prisoners, the wretchedness of whose lot tended by comparison to alleviate my own. He was brave, intelligent and kind. Many a long and weary night he sat by the side of my bed of straw, consoling my sorrows, and beguiling the dreary hours with his interesting history. He was the only child of his wealthy and doting parents, and had received a liberal education; but despite their cries and tears, he ran to the help of his country against the mighty. He had never heard from his parents since the day he left their roof. They lay near his heart, but there was one whose image was graven there as with the point of a diamond. He, too, had the fever in his turn; and I then, as much as in me lay, paid back to him my debt of gratitude. My friend, he would say to me, if you survive this deadly hole, promise me you will go to the town of H—. Tell my parents and Eliza, I perished here a captive, breathing the most fervent prayers for her happiness. I tried to cheer him by hope, feeble as it was. Tell me not, he would add, of the hopes of reunion; there is only

Oregon Spectator.

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way."

Vol. I. Oregon City, (Oregon Ter.) Thursday, December 24, 1846. No. 24.

one world where the ties of affection will never break; and there, through the merits of Him who was taken from prison into judgment, for sins, I hope to meet them."

This crisis over, he began to revive, and in a few days was able to walk, by leaning on my arm. We were standing by one of the narrow windows, inhaling the fresh air, on a certain day, when we espied a young woman trying to gain admittance. After parleying for some time, and placing something in the hand of the sentinel, she was like an angel among the dead. After gazing eagerly around for a moment, she flew to the arms of her recognized lover, pale and altered as he was. It was Eliza. The scene was affecting in the extreme. And while they wept, clasped in each other's arms, the prisoner within, and even the iron hearted Hessian at the door, caught the infection. She told him she received his letter, and informed his parents of its contents; but not knowing how to return an answer with safety, she had traveled through perils by land and water to see her Henry.

This same Hessian sentinel had served us our rations for months past, and from long intimacy with the prisoners was almost considered a friend. Eliza, who made her home with a relative in the city, was daily admitted by the management of this kind hearted man; and the small nourishing notions she brought in her pockets, together with the light of her countenance, which caused his to brighten whenever she appeared, wrought a cure as if by miracle. His parents arrived, but were not admitted inside. In a few days thereafter, however, by the help of an ounce or two of gold and the good feelings of our Hessian friend, a plan was concerted for meeting them. His turn of duty was from twelve till two o'clock that night. The signal was to lock and unlock a certain door twice, being given, Henry and myself slipped out, and crept on our hands and knees along the back wall of the Middle Dutch Church, meeting the parents and Eliza by the Scotch Church in Cedar street. As quick as thought, we were on board a boat, with two men and four oars, on the North River. Henry pulled for love, I for life, and the men for a purse; so that in thirty minutes after leaving the sugar house we stood on Jersey shore.

In less than a month, Eliza was rewarded for all her trials with the heart and hand of Henry. They now live not far from Elizabethtown, comfortable and happy, with a flock of olive plants around their table. I spent a day and night at their house last week, recounting our past sorrows and present joys."

Thus the old man concluded; simply adding that he himself now enjoyed a full share of earthly blessings, with a grateful heart to the Giver of all good.

It is well to snatch from oblivion a spot so interesting in revolutionary tradition as was the sugar house prison in Liberty street. Within fifty feet to the eastward of the Middle Dutch Church is the spot on which stood this bastille, into which many entered, but from whence few returned. The bell which now calls you to church is the same by which those prisoners took their note of time. Many, very many, counted twelve as they lay on their bed of straw. It was the knell of their departing hour. Before the bell again tolled for one, they had gone to happier climes.

Since writing the above, the religious services in this church have come to a final close. The workmen are now engaged in fitting it up for a post office. The walls will probably not be altered; and from their thickness and the durable nature of the stone with which they are built, under the fostering care of the government, the building may yet stand many centuries, as a landmark wherein the English cavalry kept a riding school, and within fifty feet of which

once stood the sugar house prison of revolutionary memory.

MEMORIAL

Of the Representatives of the People of Oregon in Legislature Assembled, December, 1846.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

Your memorialists, the Representatives of the people of Oregon in Legislature assembled, do respectfully solicit, that the following subjects herein contained may claim the attention and sympathy of your honorable body.

Oregon is so situated that it will, ere long, occupy an enviable position amongst the civilized portions of the world; in proof of which, permit us to refer your honorable body to the report of committee in the United States' Congress, on Post Offices and Post Roads, April the 20th, 1846, wherein are fully set forth the salubrity of its climate and the fertility of its soil, as well as the many other advantages bestowed by nature's God on this favored portion of his earth, which, although three thousand miles distant from the United States, seems destined soon to become a central point of commerce and happiness.

We here beg to insert the following statement, representing the eligibility of the Columbia river, as a quarter from whence supplies could be furnished for the navy cruising in the Pacific.

Bread stuffs could be supplied in large quantity and on the shortest notice, say five thousand barrels of flour, or part in biscuit if preferred. Salt beef and pork, should a demand arise, could also be prepared—say by the 1st May, 1848, three thousand barrels salt beef, and two thousand barrels salt pork.

The above estimates, of flour particularly, are guardedly moderate: let but markets open and our productive powers would rapidly increase. Lumber can always be supplied in abundance, and tar and pitch could soon be manufactured if such should be required by the Navy. In connection with this subject, it will be proper to mention that flax and hemp have been successfully cultivated in small quantities, and could be made articles of export were encouragement offered.

Many of us have been induced to seek homes in this remote Territory, from promises held out by some action of your honorable body. Our population is of a character to be envied by older settled countries: but, we would not presume on the wisdom of Congress by saying, give us land. Those amongst us who have overcome the difficulties of the journey to Oregon, as well as those who first encouraged agriculture and civilization by their early settlements in this country, here conjointly submit to the impartial judgment of your honorable body, their claims on Government to secure them in their homes. We however, think we have some right to expect a grant of land, not only we ourselves, but those who may immigrate for the next few years. Many of us are settled under the provisions of the Organic Law, which provides that any person is entitled to hold six hundred and forty acres of land. The claims, as we call them, are taken up in accordance with the above named Law, either in a square or oblong form, and some portions of the country are entirely occupied. Should therefore your honorable body in its wisdom conclude to sanction our title to these claims, we hope we may be permitted to hold them as now located, otherwise great inconvenience and hardships must necessarily result.

On the subject of education, your memorialists would beg to present for your honor-

able consideration, that in this, as in the settlement of all new countries, insurmountable barriers present themselves to the general diffusion of education, that the unavoidable sparsity of settlements and the numerous pecuniary inconveniences offer but limited inducements to competent preceptors is a fact but too apparent. Upon the consideration therefore, that the general diffusion of knowledge is among the leading principles of a government founded upon republican principles like that of the United States, (which government we are prayerfully awaiting to be extended over us,) where the people not only in semblance, but in reality have the care of their political institutions; and as their ability to exercise that power in a manner that will be the most conducive to the prosperity and preservation thereof, depends materially upon the general diffusion of education—we say upon these considerations, and in view of the disadvantages under which we labor, your memorialists most respectfully beg to suggest the propriety of adopting some measures which shall have for their tendency the removal of those barriers above mentioned, and place a sound elementary education within the reach of all. Your memorialists will not pretend to devise ways and means, but presuming upon the known liberality of the enlightened government of the United States, we fondly cherish the hope that ere long we may receive that timely assistance which has invariably been afforded by liberal grants of land, and otherwise, in different portions of the Union.

The difficulty of sailing vessels navigating the "Columbia," on their upward passage during the winter season, and the dangers to be encountered by them in crossing the bar of that river, is another subject to which we would most respectfully solicit the attention of your honorable body.

No greater drawback has perhaps as yet presented itself to the welfare of our community, than the tardy movements of ship-owners in sending vessels to this river, whereby we might be enabled to dispose of the produce of our lands and prevent those unavoidably high prices on the part of the merchant, to which we are at present subject.

The reluctance on the part of merchants above alluded to, is doubtless caused in a great measure by the risk to which merchandise is subject in crossing the bar, and the loss of time and expense consequently incurred by sailing craft in arriving at their destination.

The causes of the difficulties to which we have reference, are as follows:—That with respect to crossing the bar, a vessel is under the necessity, from the intricacy of the passage, to await what is generally termed a fair wind, and also, in most cases, a particular stage of the tide. She is subject both to natural calms and calms caused by Cape Disappointment and the adjacent highlands; and also to the influence of numerous currents setting towards different points according to the stage of tide.

During five months of the year, we may say the wind almost universally blows down the river, so that an inward bound vessel usually takes from one to two months in advancing a distance of one hundred miles, or from the entrance of the Columbia to Portland on the Willamette river.

A more detailed description of the intricate navigation of this river, we presume would be superfluous, as the Journals of Commodore Wilkes, Captain Belcher and others have doubtless come under the observation of your honors. We have, during our present session, done our utmost for the safety of vessels in establishing a pilotage; but at the same time, are of the opinion that nothing but the aid of steam vessels will save that loss of labor, time and property of which we speak. We therefore, your memorialists, would most earnestly petition your honorable body for the use of a Steam Towboat, which might enable vessels either to enter or leave the river at all seasons, and be of infinite service in the navigation of the stream itself.

Before closing this our memorial, we cannot but express with mixed astonishment and admiration, our high estimation of a grand project, (the news of which has found its way to Oregon) by the memorial of George Wilkes, Esq., for a Railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. That such a thing should exist, cannot but be obvious to every person, particularly to those who have traveled from the United States to Oregon. And