



# THE SPECTATOR.

Oregon City, January 21, 1847.

GEO. L. CURRY, EDITOR.—N. W. COLWELL, PRINTER.

## RESOLUTIONS

Passed by the Board of Directors at their meeting on Tuesday evening, Dec. 2d, and ordered to be inserted in the "Spectator," till the end of the present volume.

Resolved, That the paper will be continued to all subscribers who have paid, unless they signify to the contrary.

Resolved, That the names of all subscribers to the "Oregon Spectator" who, by the close of this volume, shall not have paid their subscriptions, be stricken from the list and the sending of the paper discontinued.

JNO. P. BROOKS,  
Sec'y Board Directors.

Oregon City, Dec. 2d, 1846.

To CORRESPONDENTS.—Z. is welcome to the use of our columns. His articles will be read with pleasure, for they are upon a most interesting subject.

M. shall appear in our next number. Something less of vindictiveness, and a little more of the "milk of human kindness," in our friend M's articles, would give them greater force.

"Religious Orders," we must decline in consequence of an article in the Constitution of the Oregon Printing Association, forbidding the use of this press, "for the purpose of propagating sectarian principles or doctrines." We sincerely regret that any article published in the Spectator, should be thought by any of our readers "altogether unreasonable," and "rash, ungenerous and ill-grounded in its application." The article complained of, "The Iron Collar," we selected ourself, and published it simply to illustrate a phase of the feudal times. There are numerous events of every day life, which it becomes the duty of public journalists to record, however unpleasant the nature of those events may be. And it were folly to question intention or imagine any special application therein.

NEW VOLUME.—With the present number closes the first volume of the Oregon Spectator. Notwithstanding the difficulties of its commencement, it has grown into a vigorous existence with a fair prospect of future success. It would be a hard matter to expect that the manner in which it has been conducted, has given satisfaction to every one; it were next to impossible, in a mixed community like our own, to gratify all interests; it is an achievement to have held a straight and undeviating course amid national prejudices. However, be the satisfaction great or little, we have endeavored to do our duty, with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of our fellow citizens generally.

The next number being the commencement of another volume, an excellent opportunity will be afforded subscribers to send in their names. We shall endeavor to make "The Spectator" more acceptable to our readers than it has heretofore been, possibly, by sketches of the country and scenery, and interesting statistical information, with an agreeable miscellany, which, we think, will make it deserving of their patronage.

Some of our subscribers are negligent about paying their subscriptions, and we have been hinting about it till we are tired, and they ought not to oblige us to give them the "kick." They must bear in mind that they will not receive the paper hereafter, until they have settled up.

THE WEATHER.—We have had remarkably cold weather, for Oregon, during the last week, and a considerable fall of snow. The mercury in the thermometer fell to two degrees above zero, on Monday morning last; indeed, we have not had such severe weather since the winter of 1842 and '43. The Clackamas river is frozen over near the Indian village so strongly as to permit a common thoroughfare to be established across it. The navigation of the upper Willamette is obstructed in consequence of ice in the vicinity of Rock Island. We understand that the Columbia river is likewise fastened with the fetters of the "ice king." Information comes to us of a great mortality existing among cattle, chiefly among those that were brought in with the last immigration; but apprehensions are entertained for the welfare of live stock generally, should the severe weather continue, as no provision has been made for feeding them, and there is so much snow on the ground as to preclude, almost, the possibility of their obtaining sufficient subsistence from the grass.

ET We would beg the attention of our readers to the advertisement of a Female Academy, to be conducted by Mrs. N. M. Thornton, a lady eminently qualified for the undertaking.

## COLUMBIA RIVER MOUTH, ONCE MORE.

In another column will be found a communication from "A Friend to Truth," in which, of course, we are completely "used up." When we took up this subject, 'Mouth of the Columbia River,' we were well aware of what we were doing, and expected that opposition would be arrayed against us, from the fact that there are those whose interests are subserved in magnifying the difficulties at the entrance of our river. Albeit, "A Friend to Truth" shall learn, that we do not take back one jot or tittle of what we have said—that our confidence is unshaken—that we fall not back one inch from the position we have taken. And ere he is done with us, he shall likewise learn, notwithstanding the modest innuendo given in the assumption of his signature, that we are emphatically a friend to truth. We feel highly flattered by the "left handed" compliment paid to our mental acquirements in the supposition that we were ignorant of the history of the discovery of the Columbia, and that remarkable "chain of events" connected therewith; indeed, we ought to feel grateful to "A Friend to Truth," for the pains and labor he has taken to inform us of facts which we dare not presume, every school boy's mind is familiar with, although they may be irrelevant to the subject matter of dispute. The commerce of Oregon has hitherto been stunted in its growth—kept so conveniently small, as to suit the avaricious desires of a few monopolists, who, by their far and wide published stories of shipwreck and disaster attending the entrance of that "nest of dangers," the six fathomed mouth of the Columbia, have managed, up to the present time, to drive away and stave off competition in trade, the only safeguard the people have against extortion. It was with a view of endeavoring to counteract the evil influences that have gone abroad to the injury of our commerce, and the suffering of our country, that we undertook to speak upon this subject, and the truth might be known and appreciated; and we are well satisfied, well satisfied are we that it will tend to an enlargement of our commercial operations, and the consequent prosperity of the country generally.

Calmly and dispassionately, and after "maturely deliberating upon all the facts," we arrive at the conclusions which we have already given the public, that the difficulties at the mouth of the Columbia may be overcome, if a proper degree of prudence is exercised, that the entrance of this river is not what lying rumor has made it—that it is comparatively easy, if that practical wisdom, which every master of a vessel ought to possess, is but permitted to have controlling influence. The time is at hand, when the master-spirit of experience will abundantly confirm our declarations. The masters of American merchantmen are becoming acquainted with the Columbia river trade, and it will not be long before they will avail themselves of the profits to be realized by engaging in it. Where ever there is a profitable trade to be carried on, there you will find them, and they are made of sterner stuff than to be intimidated by the roar of the breakers, or the dash of the surf. And what if they have been sometimes "critically situated," and have anchors and cables "corroding on the middle sands," or any where else, where duty called them to navigate? Their profession is one of risk and danger, and they have the heart for the first, and the knowledge to triumph over the other. It were certainly better that every anchor and cable of the ship should be left to the corrosion of the sea, than that the ship herself should be lost.

In our remarks upon the matter, we have had to do with the mouth *only* of the Columbia river, and we defy any of our observations so to be construed as to have a tendency to diminish the necessity of steam tow boats in facilitating commerce. As we remarked in a previous article—"The currents of the Columbia are strong and swift, and the winds are not always to be depended upon, nor are they always available. Hence the importance—the necessity of steam tugs," &c. &c.

"With that portion of your editorial approving the creation of pilots and the employment of tug steamers, I most heartily concur," says 'A Friend to Truth.' We are really much obliged for the condescension, but no body asked for such concurrence, and we shall cease our editorials when they require any one's stamp to make them pass current. We will conclude by saying, that we are also of the opinion, that "Oregon needs no tawdry ornament, or false gloss to set off her charms," and fancy that the observation is quite as superfluous, as it was gratuitous in 'A Friend to Truth' to make it.

ELEMENTARY SPELLING BOOK.—The Association's edition of Webster's Elementary Spelling Book, will be ready for all who may be in want thereof, by the first of next month. It is excellently well gotten up, and we think will prove highly satisfactory. Stitched copies may be obtained for twenty five cents, and bound ones for the additional tax of the binding, which is certainly very cheap, as the volume will comprise ninety six pages of actual matter. Let each town and precinct be preparing its orders.

For the Oregon Spectator

## THE ROAD TO OREGON.—No. I.

From the great length of the journey from the United States to the Willamette valley, the many rivers to cross and mountains to climb, it is but reasonable to suppose that emigrants would meet with many accidents, and suffer many losses in its accomplishment. To lessen these casualties to those who follow them, should therefore be the wish, as it is the interest of every citizen of this valley.

To show the necessity of improvements upon the route, and the means adopted to effect them, I shall briefly refer to the time and manner in which the three preceding emigrations have accomplished the journey; and as the latter part of the road is much the most difficult, as well as most susceptible of improvement, all improvements worthy of notice, have been made or attempted west of the Rocky mountains.

The emigrants of 1843 were the first who traveled with wagons below Fort Hall—of these a part reached the Dalles of the Columbia in the month of November—others left their wagons and animals at Wallawalla, and a few remained at Dr. Whitman's Mission through the winter.

When we consider the scarcity of grass and water along most of the route, the dangerous crossings of Snake river, and the making of the road for so great a distance, over wide plains of sage and sand, and almost impassable mountains, that they arrived on the Columbia at all, is a proof of energy and perseverance not often equalled by those who have followed them.

The obstacles so formidable had not been surmounted without much labor and loss, both of life and property; yet, though so near the end of their journey, they experienced by far, more losses, hardship and sufferings in descending from the Dalles to the Willamette, than in all the rest of the journey together; and almost in sight of the great object of their wishes, many were relieved from perishing by the benevolence of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the timely and gratuitous assistance of Capt. James Waters, a fellow emigrant.

The emigrants of 1844 fared even worse than those of the preceding year; arriving late in the season, when, by reason of the snow, the trail by Mount Hood was thought to be impassable; the greater part of their worn-down animals were swum to the north side of the Columbia, which is nearly a mile wide, driven down on that side and re-crossed in boats at Vancouver; a route of great danger, fatigue and exposure to the owners, and in which more than half the animals were lost. The rear of this emigration also, got no further than Dr. Whitman's Mission. Most of the citizens having experienced these calamities, and seeing their friends arrive in this distant country, shorn of the means of their comfort, or of becoming useful citizens, a desire to remedy these evils became universal.

Hopes were entertained that this could be effected by finding a nearer and better road into the Willamette valley, by a route formerly traveled by the Hudson's Bay Company, leaving the present road in the Malheur, or Powder river valley, and crossing the Cascade mountains by a pass near mount Jefferson. This was attempted by a party under the patronage of Dr. E. White, late Indian Agent of this Territory, in the summer of 1845. This party, after spending about a month in exploring the Cascade mountains up the Santiam river, and south of it, returned without accomplishing their object. As by this enterprise, Dr. White had been at considerable expense, the Legislature of Oregon passed a resolution recommending his claims to remuneration, "to the favorable consideration" of the Federal Government.

Two attempts have since been made to penetrate the Cascade mountains from the Willamette valley; and, as on one occasion, in case of success, the guide was to receive one thousand dollars, we have reason to believe they have been prosecuted, with due energy. Yet, I think these attempts should not be taken as final evidence that no pass can be found.

In support of this opinion, I would remark that their endeavors have been improperly directed; the great height of this range of mountains intercepting the ordinary rain clouds from the Pacific ocean, their western

Mount Washington, which cognomen ought to be maintained.—E. SPECTATOR.

sides, from their great moisture, produce so heavy a growth of timber and undergrowth, that in such forests, traveling is extremely slow and laborious, and starting from the foot of the mountain, it is difficult to keep a correct course, and almost impossible to decide with certainty, whether a valley or ridge will terminate at the summit of the main range, or some lateral spur.

But from the east side of the mountains, as the plain of the river DeChutes is much higher than that of the Willamette, and from the dryness of the country, the sides of the mountains are either bold, or sparsely timbered with pine without undergrowth, it is not difficult to reach the top. Once on the summit of the ridge, as the whole country below will be in view, and as every stream or valley will lead to the foot of the mountain, there can be little difficulty in choosing the most favorable descent. That a road may be found over the Cascade mountains, near mount Jefferson, is made still more probable from the observations of Capt. Fremont, in the winter of 1843, while traveling up the river DeChutes, (see his journal, p. 110) speaking of the Cascades, he says, "A small trail takes off through the prairie, towards a low point in the range, and perhaps there is here a pass into the Willamette valley." The same evening, he finds his camp to be in latitude, 45 deg. 2 min. 45 sec., and longitude, 125 deg. 2 min. 43 sec., being a due east course, and not exceeding 100 miles from the town of Salem. Taking into account the length of the valley of the Santiam, and the opposite branch of the river DeChutes, but a small part of this distance can be timber.

When we take into consideration the excellence of the mills at Salem, its literary institution, the cheapness and abundance of provisions in its vicinity, and its central position in regard to the rest of the Territory, its advantages to the emigrant as the terminus of the road from the United States, must be obvious.

The failure of Dr. White's enterprise left the large emigration of 1844, to find their way into the Willamette valley by the usual means; the supply of boats being wholly inadequate to their speedy conveyance down the Columbia, and the stock of provisions failing at the Dalles, famine, and a malignant disease at the same time raging amongst them, a scene of human misery ensued which scarcely has a parallel in history—the loss of life and property was enormous.

To the honor of the citizens of Oregon City and its vicinity, necessaries to the value of several hundred dollars were dispatched to their relief. To Mr. Cook, master of the Calapooia and the distributor of the above named benevolence, many indigent families have reason to be grateful.

The whole community were again aroused to the necessity of finding a remedy for an evil so distressing and calamitous. Two road companies were chartered by the Legislature, and a large amount raised by subscription, to encourage individual enterprise; and the year 1846 is not more an epoch to be remembered in the history of Oregon, for the quiet settlement of its boundary, than for the arrival of emigrants from the United States with their wagons, at both ends of the Willamette valley.

These improvements on the route, I propose examining in a future communication.

Z.

For the Oregon Spectator.

## COLUMBIA RIVER, AGAIN.

MR. EDITOR.—The two last numbers of the Spectator, 22 and 23, contain articles from your own pen, upon that very interesting subject, the navigation of the Columbia river. From the vital importance of this subject, it would have been naturally expected that no opinions would have been formed, much less published to the world, without maturely deliberating upon all the facts by which such opinion was to be established and supported; instead however of this calm review of facts, we find you hastening to conclusions from a few isolated items of testimony, which before an unprejudiced judgment, would weigh nothing against the chain of events, that I regret to say, stand recorded to oppose them. The writer of this would not concede that you, Mr. Editor, or any other man in Oregon, entertained a more earnest or sincere desire than himself, that the country should advance rapidly in its commercial prosperity; but he should feel that he interposed a his-