

OREGON SPECTATOR

D. J. SCHNEELY, EDITOR.

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way."

Vol. 5.

Correspondence.

PORLAND, NOV. 8, 1850.
To Maj. G. at Puget's Sound.

My Dear Sir—Agreeable to your request I hasten to give to you some little account of our really pleasant trip.

We reached this place last evening, having spent just one month and 4 days, in our expected two weeks' trip. Reviewing those prairies and forest lands on our return to Mr. Ford's from your section of country, convinced us of their fertility and ease of cultivation. The soil though gravelly is composed of a rich vegetable mould, not seen on the surface, but turned up in a thousand places by the moles, or gophers as they are called. The grass, the prairies are covered with, and the fine fat condition of the cattle feeding about, evidence the goodness of the soil.

After a delightful ride of three or four hours from Mr. Simmons', we reached Mr. Ford's place of bountiful hospitality. Mrs. F. relieved my tooth-ache and swelled face at once by a drop or two of laudanum—a great relief and gain, to one with so keen an appetite as this healthy country never fails to give. One cannot praise enough the milk and cream, butter, cheese and plenty of provision her shelves are loaded with. We were immediately at home again, not much regretting to wait a day or two for Dr. F. and our good friend and leader W. chief trader at the Cowlitz. They duly arrived, the latter having his small Indian pony completely loaded with items for our trip down the Chehalis river. (This is Mr. F.'s spelling of the name, who is particular and correct in his knowledge of the Indian language). The Indians here speak in a more serious manner, and more well defined accent than is usual.—Mrs. F. having provided us plenty of almost every thing for a months journey, we arose, as usual at the house, very early on Monday morning, but it was eleven o'clock before all five of us, with two Indians, were all fairly stowed and balanced in the canoe. Mr. F. engaged the Indians and prepared all in his usual quiet and efficient way, and with pieces all loaded we shoved off into the clear running waters of the Chehalis, and were soon cracking at the ducks and partridges on the river and shore. Big salmon leaped and shot in all directions about our canoe, especially in the shallows. With a spear we could have selected red, silver, mottled or dark colored salmon as we preferred, but we lost no time in this way—we bought for a quarter apiece, as fine ones as could be desired; choosing those of blood red color as now the best. These fish had east up many large beds to deposit their spawn, in the gravelly bottom of the more rapid and shallow parts of the river, thus giving some annoyance to boat navigation. A batteau could ply from 10 miles above Mr. Ford's to the raft of drift some 15 miles below, even at the present low stage of the river. Here at the cross timber a little bit of portage is necessary. For our canoe and load (and we had a months provision for 5 men and our bedding and ammunition), Mr. F. had quite an off hand original mode of proceeding. Placing the cargo on the bank at a place where only one large log lay over the water a few inches from it, to sink the canoe and pass it under. The Indians quickly and skilfully rolled all the water out at the sides leaving scarcely any in. We soon had everything replaced and stowed, and gaily drifted on. The ascent of the river is performed in about the same time as the descent, so listlessly do they seem to paddle along, merely steering into the deep parts of the rapids. These are frequent, but not violent, the descent being gradual and the course of the river very winding. We encamped about 5 miles below the place mentioned above, and prepared a feast of game, butter, bread, cheese, a cup of tea, and all very much to our liking. By the light of the bright fire, under the covering of boughs, we laid on our blankets * * * * * or telling stories till we got to sleep. Our Indians were content with plenty of salmon, but we gave them some of our food. They dropped asleep alongside the fire as usual as soon as they had eaten enough, but they replenished the fire during the night, and made us more than comfortable. After breakfast the day following, we proceeded on—and found the river much the same as above, only increased by the addition of many small streams—but the scenery changed. The country has a more uniform and level appearance than it has higher up, varied by the spur of a mountain range extending toward Puget's Sound, very similar to part of a range along the river near to Mr. Ford's place—and varied too, by a new kind of evergreen forest tree called Spruce, which it most resembles. No firs are found, and not so many cedars, but more perhaps of the hard-wood growth.

We had a little while before discharged both rifles, killing a couple of partridges, when we discovered two fawns feeding on the bank, not minding our approach. Mr. F., our best marksman had to load in sight of them, yet we came quite near, and by a careful sight he put the ball in the right spot, securing a young buck, fat, and of good size—we could easily have killed the other, if our pieces had been in order—and a third one, the mother was seen near by. We encamped the second night under one of the large Spruces—which

protected us from the rain—with our beds close together in front of the blazing fire, after feasting on our game, we made the woods wake to new life with our laugh and song. Some Indian whoop would now and then greet us, answered by our own 'Sowashes,' and some new natives would visit us to wonder and talk. The vine maple grew thick on the high bank, and the soil is of great richness—no gravel, but clayey. The soil all along we could observe very distinctly, as we drifted by, especially where the banks were broken by the current, is of a rich mould of 1 to 3 feet in thickness often gravelly at the surface, which makes it very easy to plow and break up. It yields as large crops as the clayey land, especially is it adapted to the culture of grain and grapes. Below the top soil was generally a deep layer of clay—near the river usually grow thick forest of evergreens, ash, maple, and vine maple, with very large cotton wood trees and alders near the water.—Sometimes the open prairies come to the river sides, and were often visible beyond a narrow growth of underwood on the brink. Very little poor land was passed on the river—only a few places seemed liable to overflow, and they had not the slimy character usual in such cases, but were covered with a sturdy growth of willow. The overflow of this river is in the winter, and perhaps sometimes early in the spring, and serves to fertilize the soil by moisture for the long summer season. Showers are more frequent in the Chehalis valley during the summer, the cold in winter is not so severe, and but little snow falls. There are no mosquitoes nor fever and ague. Grasses of the best kind are growing spontaneously on the prairies, starting up afresh like as in the spring.—The next day we passed the Latop and other rivers above and below. This is a very rapid stream entering the Chehalis on the north side, and is about the head of tide water. Five miles below on the same side, the Wananchie enters. It was low tide when we passed, and very favorable for sounding. We found 12 feet water below the Latop, and from 15 to 18 feet below the Wananchie or Black river, a very large stream—on its bar only 9 to 12 feet. The Chehalis becomes from this point very wide, straight, and deep—easily navigable. We ascended the Wananchie about half a mile to procure a larger canoe, to go to the Saltwater with, but learning from our Indians that old Karowan lived on the Chehalis a few miles below, we turned back. We reached his ranch early in the evening, and encamped just above. The old man welcomed us with a cheerful face, very glad to see Mr. Ford, who is very well and favorably known among all the Indians. These here are pleased to see white men, and desires they should live in the country. Some wished to engage to stay with us, when we should come back to live there. One young fellow who had been out with other parties in sounding the river and bay, we hired for our pilot, and found he had quite a good knowledge of the depth of the water. Karowan furnished a fine large Chinook canoe gratuitously, with a good sized square sail. He showed his confidence and friendship by a request, early in the morning, just before we started. His sister died the night previous, and not having a sufficient number of males of his own people to bear the corpse, he requested us to perform this duty. Four of us, accordingly, having by request laid the body on its face on a wide plank, and on going to our canoe at 12 o'clock, we found it suspended almost perpendicular from the place where it was tied. We noticed thus the rise of the tide to be about 11 feet at this point, which is about 35 miles from the ocean. By the aid of roots and branches, we dropped ourselves into the canoe once more, and by a clear moonlight we proceeded on our way. The Wananchie's waters looked blacker than ever in the dimness of daylight. We had hard paddling and poleing to reach the Latop, where we breakfasted on the ducks and salmon, of which the Indians brought us great numbers. Our venison lasted us to this place. The course of the river the day previous, we found, as I mentioned previously, was nearly straight from the Wananchie to Chehalis point, above it is generally very crooked, but has the general course west by north, while the general course of the lower part is west by south. The Chehalis point runs almost exactly north and south, and the inner side has deep water near to the shore. We passed many places on the river where once were Indian villages, now overgrown with brush wood, generally at a landing in the midst of a large tract of fertile country. Most of the people have died off, only a few small ranches remain here and there on the river bank. Here they stay at this season to catch and dry salmon for the winter. Our canoe, a very shabby one at the best, being broken at both ends, was heavily loaded and one of our two Indians was sick, so that we were a few hours longer returning than in going down the river. There is a very good chance where the rapids occur, to pull or to push the boat over them. We got out and walked over the gravelly bars, to relieve our Indians, in the very shallow and rapid parts, but the long stretches of still water we generally staid in. In three or four places, we got ahead of our canoe by taking a prairie to walk across, cutting off a large bend in the river of 10 or 12 miles, by a walk of 4 or 5 miles. We had thus an opportunity to see the country. It was exactly what a farmer would like—he need not ask for more. We passed over prairies on either side of the river, and others just as fertile and of much greater extent lay inland beyond these. Mr. F. gave us information of these, and indeed of all parts of the country, both while staying at his house and by the way. He has lived in the Willamette valley and that of Chehalis, and much prefers the latter for soil and climate. He is a great walker and huntsman, and has traversed the country in almost every part. We had expected a great deal from what he and Mr. Jackson had told, but the reality far exceeded our expectation. The prairies are equal in fertility to almost any land, and are girted with timber. Along the river bank it would be oak, ash, and maple, growing in rich bottom land, farther in would be more of the evergreen trees. In one large prairie, the bottom is itself prairie thickly covered with grass, acres not to say miles in extent. Our

rolled and broke upon the long sand beach with immense fury, curving and lessening beautifully as they came upon and around the point. A grander sight is hardly afforded oven at Niagara. We at once stripped ourselves and bathed with real joy, among these regular rolling and retreating breakers—a most refreshing and exciting exercise. The Indians resort here part of the year. We saw old Karowan's ranch, and a number of horses feeding in the meadows around. A great number of large crab and clam shells showed the attractions of the place. The ground in many parts is covered with strawberry vines, very thrifty, and no other herbs near them. We all rose at day break the next morning, and took another view of the breakers, and the new rolling country around us. Toward the point the ground is sandy and bare, with a few salt meadows, farther in, the soil is good and the grass very high. There are pine trees scattered among the knolls—and the more woody parts were literally stamped with deer tracks. Mr. F. shot a fine large buck, breaking his shoulder or foreleg, but could not get near him again. Elk come here in herds at certain seasons.—We found a well of fresh water, dug by the Indians, only four feet below the surface of the sand. The tide beginning to flow at 12 o'clock, and a fair wind blowing, we left the point on our return. So strong was the breeze, we could easily have reached the head of tide water 45 miles distant, before sunset or 5 o'clock, but we stopped to shoot some ducks. We had no shot, and the young fellow who was our pilot, was so determined to get out and try to kill some, we let him. He asked for two bullets, of these he made, with a knife and his teeth, a dozen shot, and putting half of them into each barrel of the fowling piece, he killed three large fat ducks at one shot; one barrel missed fire. These partly atoned for the loss of an hour, while the wind was blowing strongest. We reached Karowan's the same evening, and encamped about a mile above, after exchanging canoes again.—Here is a rich country, abounding in berries, the salal and the beautiful mountain currant. The water now at full tide, was within 2 or 3 feet of the edge of the bank. The Indians had soon taken out every thing from the canoe, and tied it to a branch near the water. We arranged to start at midnight at jurn of tide to help us on. On going to our canoe at 12 o'clock, we found it suspended almost perpendicular from the place where it was tied. We noticed thus the rise of the tide to be about 11 feet at this point, which is about 35 miles from the ocean. By the aid of roots and branches, we dropped ourselves into the canoe once more, and by a clear moonlight we proceeded on our way. The Chehalis springs and streams, left forsaken by the Indians who once lived populous along its shores, and now at this late day, almost unvisited by civilized man. One almost has the heart ache to see it so deserted. The rocks of the country are sand stone and soap stone, and we passed many appearing to be lime stone and slate. We made good inquiry for coal, and learned of stone coal and its locality. The Indians we employed furnished us many specimens. They are pronounced equal if not superior to any yet found. Should it prove, as is quite likely, very abundant, the Chehalis will not be left long unexplored, both outward and inland—we prefer waiting further explorations now making, before using this powerful recommendation. We know well that the country is fertile and rich, and desirable aside from anything else.

The Cowlitz Farms are not far from the Chehalis river, a most enchanting land largely under cultivation. A few miles distant and nearer to the same waters, Mr. Roberts informed us, are prairies equally fertile and extensive. These lands, tho' perhaps nearer to the Cowlitz river, its rapid current hardly admits of boat navigation, and a seaport at Gray's Harbor, or a trading post at the head of tide water on the Chehalis, would be by far the easiest and most natural market, and place for supplies and shipments. The raft or drift, some 70 miles up the river, is the only obstruction to boat navigation for 100 miles to the ocean. This is mostly afloat and breaking off at the sides. A few days work of 7 or 8 men would remove it, indeed it may go off entirely at the first high water, but care is needed, that large parts shall not be caught further down. On Chehalis point (the Bay is at least twenty miles square), in addition to the fine twenty miles of the Ocean, towards the north-west a large snowy mountain is visible, and a range extending southerly from it, also snowy; but a high blue mountain nearer with several spurs, we took to be Mount Olympus; the other Mount Baker, and the Cascade range.

It is needless to speak of the Quinault country and natives, about 30 miles distant, and their famous fat salmon. The Chehalis has only to ask a fair chance to be known and heard, and the whole country north of the Columbia is bound to go ahead.

Excuse, dear Major, this long yarn, and the next time you ask one to sing, be sure the person has a good voice.

Yours truly,
G. S.

* * * * * He who fears not is to be feared.

NOVEMBER 1, 1850.

Editor of the Spectator:

In your last number I noticed an article under the heading of "Troubles in California," from which it would appear that the demon of dissension had raised its head on the Pacific. The letter of Mr. Freamer alluded to, was probably written some months since, as it alludes to difficulties which were to have been settled in the term of court held last May. And at the time it was written, he was not the only one who, from the clouds gathering on the horizon, presaged a coming storm.

This nineteenth century has been prolific of prophecies; and their prophetic shadows have creased over every field since the dissolution of the Union to the coming of the Savior. Every class of society seems to be seized with the desire to pierce the veil of futurity and to gaze upon the shadows which coming events will bring. But alas for the reputation of these self-styled seers, their predictions have all failed. Their prophetic shadows have all proved to be only the clouds of a disengaged fancy; and have fled before the light of maturity as the shadows of night before the rising sun. And such I hope and believe will be the fate of the predictions of Mr. Freamer, and of all others who forecast the accession of California from the Union.

When the news first arrived in California that Congress had delayed to admit her as a State, and would not permit her Representatives to take their seats in Congress, it created quite a murmur among a portion of the people which found voice in the press, while the larger portion of the population were almost entirely indifferent on the subject. From extensive acquaintance and observation in California, I have no hesitation in saying that the mass of her citizens are as loyal as any in the Union. I am aware that a set of politicians are there who would be willing to build up their fortunes through the foundations now laid on the ruins of their country. There are probably the "prominent men" of whom Mr. Freamer speaks.

I have heard some of these "prominent men" sounding the public mind to see how their disunionist sentiments would be taken—stealing like a Tarquin to the accomplishment of their nefarious design of ravishing from our glorious Union one of her brightest gems—or tarnishing the honor of their country. They have gone so far as to declare that, in their mind's eye, they viewed a state of things which would exonerate the people from obedience to the laws, and would justify them in vindicating their rights, if need be, even with the right arm of power. But when they looked for applause, their sentiments were received with an ominous silence, and they were forced to close with that beautiful quotation—

"I love thee, O my country"—beautiful even in the mouth of a hypocrite. These "prominent men" have fixed on the eyes of others as prominent as themselves, and their first cry of "disunion" will be the dirge of their popularity; and the spark of rebellion will be kindled, only to be quenched with the blood of themselves and their adherents.

My observations convince me that Mr. Freamer is very much mistaken when he says, "I assure you that unless Congress does something for us very soon, a movement will be made for independence. Of one thing you may be sure that, on the subject of disunion, in case we are not admitted this session, there is no difference of opinion." About the time this was written, the California papers descended on the subject of their wrongs in a high strain, and assumed the same threatening tone of warning as Mr. Freamer. But when, in a few months, the mail brought files of papers from the east, in which they were charged with advocating disunion, they repelled the charge with a vehemence which, if it did not prove their sincerity, showed their opinion of public sentiment in California. The course of the California press in regard to the Gold mines, shows that it panders to public opinion, and is willing to sacrifice truth—everything—to popularity; and if they oppose disunion, it is a strong evidence that the doctrine is unpopular. There is a love of country natural to man which makes it cost a severe pang to sever the ties which bind us to our native land.

Man will suffer almost anything, before he will expatriate himself, and nothing but the greatest oppression will impel him to do so. The Highlander clings to want and his native hills rather than seek plenty in the valleys of a more pleasant but distant land; the Russian flies with eagerness from the sunny sky of lovely Italy, to his own barren and frozen north; and Pocahontas sighed in the palace of a king for the rippling streams and pathless wilds of her native land, and wept amid the pleasures of European luxury for the freedom of the forests of America. And if such be the fondness of man for his country, and the regret with which he leaves it, what can impel him to turn against her and raise his hand for her destruction? A man may leave his mother, but none but a monster could attempt her destruction.

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All have seen—under this heading—
All look with Southern eyes
Land of their forefathers, where
to the east with longing eyes
their mothers, and their wives,
and their sons—make them to thine
take up arms against the land of their
country, against their fathers and their
sons! No, I would be an American
born in America, raised in America,
always breathed American air, and
I die, I wish my bones to rest beneath
the soil of my country.

Land of my birth! what mortal land
Shall o'er rule the like land?
That bids me to thy rugged land?

ROMANCE

07-A city at this age of the world can
be built up and rendered prosperous
prosperous only by connecting it with
certain regions of the country, and others
industries of such character as will be
useful to business relations. It is reasonable
to expect prosperity to follow the
erection of splendid hotels, warehouses
and mansions, alone. The true policy
of an infant city is to expend its energies
mainly upon the construction of canals
which shall bring it a large increase of business. Because this
buildings necessary for its business
will follow of necessity.

07-A Scotch gentleman, living in the
country on the Sabbath, and having his
pocket hammer with him, went to work
was chipping the rock by the roadside
for examination. His proudest boast
escape the quick eye and ready tongue
of an old Scotch woman.

What are you doing there, man?

"Can't you see, I am breaking the road?"

"You're doing more than you ought to
breaking the Sabbath, man."

07-The best definition of the universe
is that given by Pascal: "The universe
is everywhere, and therefore has no
distance of it nowhere."

A son of the "Emigrants" has recently
over, stated that the Indians were
certain districts where no game
people did not eat at all.

How do they live, then? I have
listener.

"On the remembrance of persons we
last year," was the reply.

Population of California
city, by the last census, was
a population of 100,000
cent. In ten years,