

OREGON SPECTATOR.

OREGON CITY, (OREGON TERRITORY,) FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1853.

AND PROPRIETOR: NO. 32.

THE OREGON SPECTATOR.

COL. BERTON'S HISTORY

From Col. Berton's "Thirty Years in the West," published by the Oregon Spectator.

From Col. Berton's "Thirty Years in the West," published by the Oregon Spectator.

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Saturday, the 9th of April—the day for the duel had come, and almost the hour. It was noon, and the meeting was to take place at 4 o'clock. I had gone to see Mr. Randolph before the hour, and for a purpose; and, besides, it was so far on the way, as he lived half way to Georgetown, and we had to pass through that place to cross the Potomac into Virginia at the Little Falls bridge. I had heard nothing from him on the point of not returning the fire since the first communication to that effect, eight days before. I had no reason to doubt the steadiness of his determination, but I felt a desire to have some fresh assurance of it after so many days delay, and on near approach of the trying moment. I knew it would not do to ask him the question—any question that would imply a doubt of his word. His sensitive feelings would be hurt and annoyed at it. So I fell upon a scheme to get at the inquiry with out seeming to make it. I told him of my visit to Mr. Clay the night before—the date sitting—the child sleeping—the unconscious tranquility of Mrs. Clay; and added, I could not help reflecting how different all that might be the next night. He understood me perfectly, and immediately said, with a quiver of lip and expression which seemed to rebuke an unworthy doubt, "I shall do nothing to disturb the sleep of the child or the repose of the mother, and went on with his employment—his seconds being engaged in their preparations in a different room—which was making cordials to his will, all in the way of remembrance to friends; the bequests slight in value, but invaluable in tenderness of feeling and beauty of expression, and always appropriate to the occasion. To Mr. Macon he gave some English shillings, to keep the game which he played whist. His name, John Randolph Bryan, then at school in Baltimore, and since married to his niece, was sent for to see him but went off before the hour of going out, to save the boy from a possible shock at seeing him brought back.

He delivered to me a sealed paper which I was to open if he was killed—give back to him if he was not; also an open slip, which I was to read before I got to the ground. This slip was a request to feel in his breeches pocket, if he was killed, and find so many pieces of gold—I believe nine—take three for myself, and give the same number to Tattall and Hamilton each, to make seals to wear in remembrance of him. We were all three at Mr. Randolph's lodgings then, and soon set out. Mr. Randolph and his seconds in a carriage, I following him on horseback.

The place was a thick forest, and in the middle of it a little depression, or basin in which the parties stood. The principals saluted each other courteously as they took their stands. Col. Tattall had won the choice of position, which gave to Gen. Jessup the delivery of the word. They stood on a line east and west—a small stump just behind Mr. Clay; a low gravelly bank rose just behind Mr. Randolph. The latter asked Gen. Jessup to repeat the word as he would give it; and while in the act of doing so, and Mr. Randolph adjusting the butt of his pistol to his hand, the muzzle pointing downwards, it fired. Instantly Mr. Randolph turned to Col. Tattall and said: "I protested against that hair trigger." Col. Tattall took blame to himself for having sprung the hair. Mr. Clay had not received his pistol. Mr. Johnson, (Joshua,) one of his seconds, was carrying it to him, and still several steps from him. This untimely fire, though clearly an accident, necessarily gave rise to some remarks, and a species of inquiry, which was conducted with the utmost delicacy, but which, in itself, was of a nature to be inseparably painful to a gentleman's feelings. Mr. Clay stopped it with the generous remark that the fire was clearly an accident, and it was so unanimously declared. Another pistol was immediately furnished; an exchange of shots took place, and happily, without effect upon the persons. Mr. Randolph's bullet struck the ottery behind Mr. Clay, and Mr. Clay's knocked up the earth and gravel behind Mr. Randolph, in a line with the level of his hips, both bullets having gone so true and close that it was a marvel how they missed. The moment had come for me to interpose, I went in among the parties and offered my mediation, but nothing could be done. Mr. Clay said, with that wave of the hand which he was accustomed to put away a trifle, "This is child's play," and required another fire. The seconds were directed to re-load. While this was doing I prevailed on Mr. Randolph to walk away from his post, and received to him, more pressing than ever, my importunities to yield to some accommodation; but I found him more determined than I had ever seen him, and for the first time impatient and seemingly annoyed, and dissatisfied at what I was doing. He was, indeed, annoyed and dissatisfied. The accidental fire of his pistol preyed upon his feelings. He was doubly chagrined at it, both as a circumstance susceptible in itself of an unfair interpretation, and as having been the immediate and controlling cause of his firing at Mr. Clay. He regretted the fire the instant it was over. He felt that it had subjected him to imputations from which he knew himself to be free—a desire to kill Mr. Clay, and a contempt for

the laws of his beloved State; and the annoyances he felt at those vexatious circumstances revived his original determination, and decided him irrevocably to carry it out.

It was in this interval that he told me what he had heard since we parted, and to which he alluded when he spoke to me from the window of the carriage. It was to this effect: That he had been informed by Col. Tattall that it was proposed to give out the words with more deliberation so as to prolong the time for taking aim. This information grated harshly upon his feelings. It unsettled his purpose and brought his mind to the inquiry, (as he now told me, and as I found it expressed in the note which he had immediately written in pencil to apprise me of his possible change) whether, under these circumstances, he might not "disable" his adversary. This note is so characteristic, and such an essential part of this affair, that I here give us very words so far as relates this point. It ran thus:

"Information received from Col. Tattall since I got into the carriage may induce me to change my mind, of not returning Mr. Clay's fire. I seek not his death. I would not have his blood upon my hands (it will not be upon my soul if used in self defence) for the world. He has determined by the use of a long preparatory exhortation by words to get time to kill me." May I not, then, disable him? Yes, if I please.

It has been seen by the statement of Gen. Jessup, already given, that this "information" was a misapprehension; that Mr. Clay had not applied for a prolongation of time for the purpose of getting sure aim, but only to enable his unused hand, long unfamiliar with the pistol, to fire within the limited time; that there was no prolongation, in fact, either granted or insisted upon, but he was in doubt, and Gen. Jessup having won the word he was having him repeat it in the way he was to give it out when his finger touched the hair trigger. How unfortunate that I did not know of this in time to speak to Gen. Jessup, when one word from him would have set all right, and saved the momentous risk incurred. This inquiry, "May I not disable him?" was still on Mr. Randolph's mind, and dependent for its solution on the rising accident of the moment, when the accidental fire of his pistol gave the turn to his feelings which solved the doubt. But he declared to me that he had not aimed at the life of Mr. Clay; that he did not level as high as his knees—not higher than the knee band; "for it was no mercy to shoot a man in the knee;" that his only object was to disable him and spoil his aim. And then added, with a beauty of expression and a depth of feeling which no studied oratory can ever attain, and which I shall never forget, these impressive words: "I would not have seen his fall mortally, or even doubtfully wounded, for all the land that is watered by the King of Floods, and all his tributary streams." He left me to resume his post, utterly refusing to explain out of the Senate anything that he had said in it, and with the positive declaration that he would not return the next fire.

I withdrew a little into the woods, and kept my eyes fixed upon Mr. Randolph who I then knew to be the only one in danger. I saw him receive the fire of Mr. Clay, saw the gravel knocked up in the same place, saw Mr. Randolph raise his pistol—discharge it in the air, heard his cry, "I do not fire at you, Mr. Clay," and immediately advancing and offered his hand. He was met in the same spirit. They met half way, shook hands, Mr. Randolph saying jokingly, "You owe me a new coat, Mr. Clay," (the bullet had passed through the skirt of the coat, very near the hip) to which Mr. Clay promptly and happily replied, "I am glad the debt is no greater." I had come up, and was prompt to proclaim what I had been obliged to keep secret for eight days. The joy of all was extreme at this happy termination of a most critical affair, and we immediately left with lighter hearts than we had brought. I stopped to sup with Mr. Randolph and his friends—some of us had washed dinner that day—and had a characteristic time of it.

He asked for the sealed paper he had given me, opened it, took out a check for one thousand dollars, drawn in my favor, and with which I was requested to have him carried, if killed, to Virginia, and buried under his paternal oak—not far from his barracks at Washington, with an hundred bucks after him. He took the gold from his left breeches pocket, and said to us, (Hamilton, Tattall, and I,) "Gentlemen, Clay's had shooting shan't rob you of your souls. I am going to London and will have them made for you," which he did, and most characteristically, so far as mine was concerned.

I went to the Herald's office in London and inquired for the Benton family, of which I had often told him there was none, as we only dated on that side from my grandfather in North Carolina. But the name was found and with it a coat of arms. Among the quarterings a lion rampant. That is the family said he, and had the arms engraved on the seal, the same which I have since habitually worn, and added the motto, "Factis non verbis," of which he was afterwards accustomed to say the "non" should be changed into "est." But enough. I run into these details, not

merely to relate an event, but to show character, and if I have not done it, it is not for want of material, but of ability to use it.

On Monday the parties exchanged cards and social relations were formally and courteously restored. It was about the last high-toned duel that I have witnessed, and among the highest-toned that I have ever witnessed, and so rapidly conducted to a fortunate issue—a result due to the seconds as well as to the generous and heroic spirit of the principals.

Certainly duelling is bad, and has been put down, but not quite so bad as its substitute—revolvers, bowie-knives, mach-guards, and street assassinations under the pretext of self-defence.

New Printing Press.

We learn from the Milwaukee Sentinel that Mr. S. D. Carpenter, late of the Madison Democrat, who has been heard at work for some time past in getting up plans, &c., for a new Printing Press of his own invention, has at length successfully completed his labors, and packed up and shipped his working model to Cincinnati. Mr. Foster, a clever Cincinnati mechanic, who is interested in the patent, will build a press upon the new plan, and hopes to have it ready for exhibition, at the World's Fair, N. Y., in August next. There are three prominent features in it, however, that will strike every observer. First, it feeds itself, and does it perfectly. Second, it works both sides of the sheet, at once; the half-cylinder working to and fro, printing one side of the sheet, as the bed plate moves forward, and the other side as it comes back. The registry, too, is as accurate as machinery can make it. Third, the Press registers its own work; a clock face, with hands, on the sides, showing at each moment the number of sheets as well as the number of lines worked off. Being much less complicated than the Hoe Press, Mr. Carpenter expects to furnish them at greatly reduced prices. In running them, too, he saves expense, as one man can tend the press and the engine at the same time. Altogether, we think that Mr. Carpenter has "struck a good lead" in this invention, and we hope that he will do well with it.—Herald Cour.

The Newspaper.—The N. Y. Tribune remarks as follows about newspapers:

The measure of popular enlightenment is the excellence and wide diffusion of newspapers! We state this fact broadly, because the newspaper now occupies, in an unprecedented degree, the place of tutor, preacher, lecturer, historian, orator. It is a daily book, filled with facts upon every conceivable subject, and pointing also to every special source of information. The reader of books learns what to read from the newspaper equally with the buyer of wares where to purchase. It is the chief condenser of thought. We do not hesitate to say that the best writings now in England or America is in its newspapers and not in its books. The style is bolder, freer, fresher, and less diffuse in the one than in the other. There is less verbiage, less unnecessary expression on what should be taken for granted which disfigures more or less nearly every popular treatise. Journalism gets at facts without indirectness, and throws out generalizations and theories on them which are afterwards paraded in books as original. In the materials of laws it is more suggestive than the law makers. In the extent of its powers to do good a newspaper is equal often to five hundred or five thousand ordinary lecturers or declaimers.

JACKSON'S EPITAPH ON HIS WIFE.—The Richmond Enquirer says:

A lady in the West has been kind enough to send us a copy of Andrew Jackson's epitaph on his wife. It is known to have been his own composition, yet, although it has been read by thousands on her tomb in Tennessee, has never appeared in print before. This singular inscription runs thus:

"Here lie the remains of Mrs. Rachel Jackson, wife of President Jackson, who died on the 23d of December, 1829, aged 61. Her face was fair, her person pleasing, her temper amiable, and her heart kind. She delighted in relieving the wants of her fellow creatures, and cultivated that divine pleasure by the most liberal and unpretending methods. To the poor she was a benefactress; to the rich she was an example; to the wretched a comfort; to the prosperous an ornament. Her pity went hand in hand with her benevolence; and she thanked her Creator for being permitted to do good. A being so gentle and yet so virtuous, slander might attack, but could not dishonor. Even death when he tore her from the arms of her husband could but transplant her to the bosom of her God."

On the 2d of December, 1851, the ship Georgia was wrecked on Long Beach, N. J. and libeled for salvage, we presume by Thomas Bond. After eighteen months of litigation, the U. S. Court at Trenton closed the matter by distribution of the sale of said vessel to the libellant, Thomas Bond. The proceeds amounted to \$1,005, the whole of which was awarded up in the costs of the Court, except \$29, which the libellant received. His claim was \$1,282.37. About 8 per cent for justice, and 67 per cent for collecting!

From California.

Mr. Crocker, of St. Louis, in writing to the intelligence of that city, from San Francisco, gives some interesting information in regard to the people of California. We make the following extracts from his letter:

Among the recent arrivals to the bar of California, is the Hon. Edward Stanley, of N. Carolina, who has opened an office in this city. Every student adds to the list of distinguished men, who have come to reap a golden harvest in California; and the time is near at hand, when, in the learned professions, in mercantile and agricultural pursuits, and indeed every department of business, this State will boast an array of talent and energy, altogether without a parallel in any other newly settled country, and equaled by very few of the older States. Already some of the best mechanics and the most skillful artisans to be found in the whole Union are here; and the movements of California, taken as a class, are inferior to none, whilst the bar is crowded, even now, with distinguished men from all parts of the confederacy, and the number is rapidly increasing.

It is said that the annual income of Samuel Branson, Esq., is over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, whilst that of J. L. Folson, W. D. M. Howard, and several others, is but little if any less. These large estates have been made within the last three or four years, by the rapid rise of real estate in and about this city. In 1847 and 1849, lots were purchased here for fifteen or twenty dollars, which are now worth over a hundred thousand. All those who then bought lots and have had the sagacity to keep them, have grown rich. But prices are now so high, that there is no longer an opportunity for such immense speculations. On the chief business streets, in favorable locations, ground is worth from five hundred to a thousand dollars per front foot, exclusive of the improvements. But, though these prices appear exorbitantly high, yet when it is remembered that rents are more than five times as high as in St. Louis, the price of ground appears sufficiently reasonable.

I have conversed within a day or two, with an intelligent gentleman who has just returned from a tour among the mines. He gives the most encouraging account of the prospect of the mines, and thinks that at no period in the history of the State, have the mines been more prolific. It is idle, he thinks, to apprehend any material diminution of the products of the mines for many years to come. Indeed, he says that gold is being discovered almost daily in new localities, and oftentimes where there was not the least reason to suppose it existed. What are to be the effects of this golden flood upon the trade, civilization and the progress of the world, remains to be seen; but it is already apparent that California is exerting a tremendous influence upon the whole civilized portion of the earth.

YOUNG MAN SAVES DUNGEON.—Fifty-three years ago on the 4th of July, 1808, Daniel Webster then in his senior year in College delivered an oration at Manser, N. H. which is still preserved and has been re-published within the last year. Mr. Mason of Sumnerville, Ohio, who was in College with Mr. Webster, gives the following anecdote, described in the Congregational Journal.

"I was in his room when a deposition called upon Mr. Webster to ask him to accept the invitation, but there seemed to be an insurmountable difficulty in the way. He had no clothes suitable to the dignity of the occasion. There was a dilemma, but this was removed by a proposition made by one of the deposition present, a merchant of that village, who said: 'You deliver the oration, Mr. Webster; I will trust you for a suit of clothes from the best cloth I have in my store. Then we will have the oration printed and I will depend on the proceeds of the sales for my pay.' Mr. W. turned to me—'Josh' he said, 'what shall I do?' 'Prepare the oration,' I said. The oration was prepared and delivered; and as much were the citizens gratified that a copy was courteously requested for publication. From the sales, the debt due the merchant was paid and a considerable surplus left for Mr. Webster's own use."

A new way of getting a divorce is about being illustrated in the case of the Rev. Dr. Ives, who succeeded from the Episcopal Church, and embraced the Catholic faith. The Church Herald has been furnished with a letter, written by a member of the Episcopal church in North Carolina to Bishop Green, which states that "Mrs. Ives will return home with her brother, Dr. Hobart, he having received notice from the Pope, that Dr. Ives would be dained priest in the summer, and on no longer be considered her husband."

It is a little singular, at all the mourning over the Whig, as it is dead, is performed by the Low, as and Free is called. What business have they to be putting on black and their funeral?—Edinburgh Journal.

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