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OREGON PIONEER HISTORY.

SKETCHES OF EARLY DAYS.—MEN AND TIMES IN THE FORTIES.

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NUMBER XXII.

The Journey of Judge Thornton from Oregon to Washington.

Thornton's reply to the menace contained in the sneer of the President's private secretary was that he intended to preserve his own self-respect until his return to Oregon. But he was not done with the matter yet by any means, for a few days only passed when he was met by Major Walker again. He had a copy of the New York Herald in his hand, which he held out in an excited manner and begged to know why Thornton had communicated to a public newspaper of such extensive circulation the particulars of his interview with Sanders. The Oregonian assured him he had not done so, and further that he had not even mentioned the subject to even his most intimate friend. Walker tried to look fierce, and said with vehemence: "You did, sir, for here it all is in the New York Herald." Thornton's temper gave out at this and he replied: "I did not sir, and if you repeat it I will knock you down with my cane." His tone then changed and he said quietly: "Well, here it is in the Herald, the whole story substantially as Sanders told it to me at the White House when he came from you to my room. How could it be there?" Thornton's reply was that he had not seen the Herald, but if it got the story at all it must have been through Walker or Sanders himself.

"Well," said Walker, "I never told it." Recollecting suddenly, he said: "Yes, I did, too."

"Who was it to?" asked Thornton.

"Why, you know Joe Meek has a free and easy access to the White House. Well, he came there the same afternoon and I told him, under strict promise of privacy, what occurred between you and Sanders."

Thornton told him Joe Meek holding a secret was like a sieve holding water. Jo, it seems, told the story before night to half a dozen members of Congress, every time under injunctions of the strictest secrecy. To cap the climax of his folly, late in the afternoon he took into his most sacred confidence Dr. Wallace, who was Washington correspondent of the New York Herald. Wallace generously shared his confidence with the world at large, who paid liberally for Washington items. The same day that Walker saw Thornton he was met by Benton, Herald in hand, who asked if the story was true as there told. Several other Senators made the same inquiry, including Mr. Douglas of Illinois and Hale of New Hampshire. His answer was to all that while he had not told the story, it was substantially correct as told.

The conclusion of this affair was matter of current gossip on the streets of Washington. What occurs in executive session is supposed never to transpire, but nevertheless it often leaks out and the current belief at the capital was that the treaty in question was officially negotiated, approved by the president and majority of the cabinet, and sent to the senate for their confirmation, and was by that body rejected. The New York Herald's article killed it, and Jo Meek's want of consideration rendered the national treasury a great service. It is probable the members of the senate would have consulted Thornton before taking action had not the Herald's exposure served the purpose.

Congress had adjourned, the Oregon bill had surmounted an opposition and was a law, Thornton was out of funds, and in a situation to worry the mind of the best man living. He had lost the favor of the president, to whom he had to look for assistance, as Congress had

just placed \$10,000 at his disposal for the purpose of paying him and other Oregon messengers. Mr. Polk was master of the situation, and though not in the least to blame for the unfortunate publicity that had reflected unpleasantly upon his administration, Thornton was the unwitting cause.

Robert Smith, member of Congress from the Alton, Ill., district, went to President Polk on behalf of Thornton, and received a preemptory refusal to all requests and suggestions. Thornton might stay there penniless, and he should not have a penny of the fund Congress had placed in the hands of the President of the United States almost exclusively for his use and benefit.

Thornton went to Benton, but "Old Bullion" was too proud, under any circumstances, to ask a favor of Polk, so sent him, (Thornton) to Douglas. The latter called on the President and received a resolute and unqualified "no" to every request for aid to be given to Thornton. Every possible plea was urged, and met with an unreasoning negative. Douglas called again and took Robert Smith with him, but "no" was all the response they could get until Mr. Douglas, as he arose to retire, said: "It only remains, then, Mr. President, for me to do what will be very unpleasant for me, and you must judge if it will be pleasant to you. I shall furnish Mr. Thornton with means to remain here until the next session convenes, and shall then move for a committee of inquiry to investigate certain matters in which he is concerned." This proved a home thrust that brought the executive to terms. He said: "Come again, this afternoon. You come, Mr. Smith, and we may agree upon something that will be satisfactory." He did not care to discuss that question any further with the "Little Giant," of Illinois.

That afternoon the three friends—Douglas, Thornton and Smith—walked down Pennsylvania avenue together, to Willard's hotel, where the two first remained, while Mr. Smith went on to the White House to keep his appointment with Mr. Polk. And as they waited there for his return, the conversation went back to old times and the days of their first acquaintance. Douglas recalled a circumstance which, he said, had always caused him to take a peculiar interest in Thornton. Many years before, when Thornton was beginning the practice of law, at Quincy, Illinois, where he had just removed, a friend, an attorney of distinction, invited him to go to the court house and hear Judge Douglas deliver a charge to the grand jury. They went, and when returning the elder friend asked: "Well, what do you think of the judge before we hereafter will have to practice?" The reply of Thornton was: "That was the grandest effort I ever heard made from the bench. If Judge Douglas lives and is ambitious, and has no faults of life to mar his success, he will become president of the United States." That same evening, when a group of distinguished lawyers were conversing in the parlors of the Quincy hotel, his friend took Thornton up and introduced him to Judge Douglas, reciting the anecdote here told, to the confusion of each of them. They afterward became better acquainted as Thornton practiced in his court up to leaving for Oregon.

As they waited there that August day at Willard's, almost in sight of the White House, Douglas said: "Thornton, I have always felt a special interest in you, because you were the first person who ever mentioned my name in connection with the presidency." After a moment's pause, he added, with prophetic force: "I have left too many tracks behind me ever to attain that high position"—a remark that was the unsealing of the deepest feelings of the heart of a great man and a statesman, who intellectually has outranked most of our presidents, but who, like Clay, Webster and a great

many more, was grieved because he could not reach the highest place.

When Hon. Robert Smith returned to Willard's and joined his waiting companions, it was with a smiling visage and satisfied expression. The president was able to see things in a different light. He could not see any good to come from a resolution of inquiry and with Thornton kept over as a witness. It is almost beyond a reasonable doubt that the President of the United States, through the mediumship of his private secretary, was in sympathy with the prodigious steal, and it would be reasonable to suppose that he was so far compromised without he had some reliable inducement for bestowing his sympathy. Jo Meek was utilized to give the affair plausibility, but something more of character was required to secure for this bold-faced fraud the entire support of the cabinet and the confirming vote of the Senate. What was finally received by the Hudson's Bay Company was only a small fraction of what was demanded. Of the \$10,000 appropriated for this purpose, to be used at the president's discretion, Judge Thornton, who came on an important mission and secured important results by his coming, received \$2,750, enough to make him easy on the score of expenditure, but not enough to compensate him for all expenses incurred and pay him anything like what such service would be worth under ordinary circumstances. He was about nineteen months and ten days from Oregon and that was small compensation.

The following incident occurred not long before he left Washington. Passing one day down Pennsylvania avenue, he saw a lady in a doorway who wore a hesitating look, and said as he was opposite:

"Is this Judge Thornton or Oregon?"

"It is, madam," was the reply.

"Will you be kind enough to step into the parlor a moment," said she.

Thornton entered, and the embarrassed lady proceeded to state her case. She had a sister who was the object of admiration of a gentleman from Oregon. She liked him so well that she was inclined to accept his proposals of marriage, but the sister said: "Wait till I can question Judge Thornton, who passes every day." Pleading the importance of the case, she asked questions and received brief replies.

"Do you know Mr. —?"

"I do, madam."

"Is he sober and temperate?"

"He has been intemperate, but has since joined a temperance society."

"Have you seen him drink since?"

"I have."

"Do you know any good reasons why he should not marry my sister?"

"One madam."

"And will you please state it?"

"He has a lawful wife and several half-grown children already."

Exit Thornton. So an Oregonian did not marry a Washington lady, as intended. This was one of the rather unpleasant incidents that attended a momentous journey fraught with much that was important for Oregon.

Before closing we must say that Jo Meek was the favored recipient of the President's bounty to a degree that might be styled nepotism in view of the slight existing relationship. It was said that he received the remainder of the \$10,000 put by Congress at the disposal of Mr. Polk. If by any means Thornton could have been shoved aside probably Meek would have had the round ten thousand.

The menacing remark of Knox Walker: "There's, many a slip twixt the cup and the lip," was partly verified, as Thornton failed of the promised judgeship. Meek, who was merely a messenger, got the lion's share of the money in sight but Thornton can justly, in his old age, point to his services rendered so long ago and claim a goodly

share of the glorious common school fund of Oregon as his lasting monument. The secretary of war furnished him transportation home, as far as San Francisco, in the bark Sylvia de Grace, that was under a government charter. Some time after that she made a trip to Oregon and got aground off Tongue Point, near Astoria, where her bare ribs have rotted for over a third of a century. He received the best of accommodations and the kindest of treatment on the voyage and needed it. The months of tension and nervous excitement, in Washington, incapacitated him for making the tedious journey overland. On the voyage, he suffered much from nervous prostration and was bleeding at the lungs when the vessel he was on entered the Columbia river. All the way from Valparaiso home he was very low, and at times his life was despaired of. One time the ship's doctor assured him he had not over a half hour to live.

From San Francisco he came up to Oregon on the bark Mary and Ellen, on board of which was Judge O. C. Pratt, who received the appointment Polk promised to Thornton. They formed a pleasant acquaintance then and Thornton recognized always this appointment was "fit to be made." Also, there were on board 300 men from Oregon returning from the mines with well-filled purses, for Oregonians were proverbially fortunate as miners in that early day.

This sketch of the organization of Oregon territory is of especial interest as connecting that event with the career of many of the most illustrious men who ever were in public life in our nation. Henry Clay had retired from the busy arena of politics, but his presence there would have insured one more great name recorded in favor of young and hopeful Oregon.

Wasco and its Future.

SALEM, Or., May 24, 1886.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

The present delightful weather here reminds me of the bright spring days of Wasco, and with it comes the remembrance of my promise to write up that country. My acquaintance of the country of which I shall write, namely, that portion of Wasco county lying between the Deschutes and John Day rivers, and south of the Columbia, began about six years ago, with the first settlement of the country by farmers. Previous to that time the country was but sparsely settled by stockmen, and the untamed broncho and "slick-ear" roamed around at will over the fertile bunch-grass prairies, then supposed to be desert, undisturbed, save by the dashing bucharo with his ever ready lasso and branding-iron. Since then many changes have taken place. The country has been settled by a thrifty and intelligent class of farmers, and the so-called "desert" has been made to "blossom as the rose." Home, school houses, churches and villages have sprung up on this prairie, as the result of the intelligence and enterprise of its citizens, and the fertility of its soil.

The country of which I write is a rolling, upland prairie, devoid of timber, extending for fifty miles south of the Columbia. The soil is chocolate color, free from stones, and exceptionally deep, and just sandy enough to be easily farmed, as the plow will scour there at any season. The soil has also the peculiarity of retaining moisture exceptionally well. In the driest seasons, wherever it is well cultivated the soil will be moist a few inches below the surface. All kinds of grain and garden does well here without irrigation. Wheat raising is the main occupation of the farmer, and the yields will compare favorably with the best portions of the State. Good water can be had by digging in most places at an average depth of not to exceed twenty-five feet.

Since the advent of the farmer the railroad has been built, and the amount

of grain shipped from the four stations between the Deschutes and John Day's rivers, of last year's crop, will approximate 250,000 bushels.

I will state here that there is still good government land to be taken up at a distance of from 35 to 50 miles south of the Columbia river.

The people of this country are temperate, wide awake, and alive to their interests, and what they need just now to add to their general prosperity is the repeal of the obnoxious fence law.

Yours truly, D. H. JORY.

Needing Bees—Foul Brood.

SILVERTON, Or., May 16, 1886.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

I wish to say that "winter before last" I only fed fifty pounds of sugar, made into syrup, and this to a few colonies that were transferred just as the drouth set in of that season, and those five or six colonies were the only ones I lost. I always reserve a good supply of honey for my bees to winter on, say from thirty to fifty pounds; last season I estimated that there was 4,000 pounds in the apiary after I had taken out the surplus of 7,200 pounds.

Just one hurrah, for the "Big Simplicity."

I have never fed one pound of California honey to my bees, the risk or for not doing so, had it been necessary to feed, is obvious. I learned a few years ago that the disease known as Foul Brood (mention of which is made by E. Y. Chase in the FARMER of May 7), was very prevalent in portions of that State. I also learned from reading works on bee-culture that this disease may be scattered broad-cast, as it were, by allowing bees access to honey from one of these affected colonies. I also learned that unscrupulous persons were sending out quantities of this affected honey, and as tons of California honey has been shipped to this State it will not be strange if this disease makes its appearance in Oregon, either from importing queens or honey from affected localities.

Bee-keepers! Look well to your bees; use every means to keep this thing from them, and be sure you are buying healthy bees when you buy, or queens from those who are known to be reliable men, in person or reputation.

E. S. BROOKS.

[NOTE.—This communication was mislaid or it would have appeared sooner. We wish others would give their experience in this or any other departments of agriculture. Remember, the value of an agricultural paper depends greatly upon the experiences its readers relate through its columns. An agricultural newspaper should be edited by and for the community it represents.—Ed.]

By a private letter we are informed that W. H. Woodruff, Veterinary Dentist of 221 Ellis street, San Francisco, Cal., will be in Salem on Monday, June 21st. He will be at the Fair Grounds, where he has the treatment of Mr. A. C. Brey's stable of trotting horses. He will only remain until Tuesday, as he has important engagements to meet in Portland. He says he can successfully treat all disorders arising from defective teeth, such as bit-lugging, tossing head, foaming at the mouth, etc. He has successfully operated on the best stock on the coast and guarantees satisfaction. He will be pleased to meet horsemen and stockmen generally. Leave orders with Dan McCarty, at the Fair Grounds, or call in person, Monday, or Tuesday forenoon, June 21st.

Burnett & Co.'s Imperial Lime Paint has after a trial of twenty years proven itself to be the best paint yet known for preserving roofs, and with its old moss-covered roofs can be made positively fire and water proof. Woodward Bros. are painting a number of roofs in the city and can warrant all of their work to be first-class in every respect, as their recommendations from former places plainly show, and the people of Salem are improving the opportunity of the fine weather and the low cost, and are having their roofs painted as fast as their turn comes.