

# The Daily Astorian.

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No. 150.

## A BAD MAN FROM THE HEAD-WATERS.

Black Hills sporting men are a good deal interested just now in a new candidate for pugilistic glory, who hails from the headwaters of the Niobrara. He has been known by reputation here for a long time, but not until Saturday last would he consent to show himself in Deadwood. His name is John Zaccueus, but he calls himself the Niobrara Triplet, for reasons which will appear further on. He is what is termed a cow-boy. His whole life has been spent on the cattle ranges. He was born near the site of old Julesburg in 1850, and is about thirty-three years old. His father, a hunter and trapper, was a man of prodigious size and strength, of English descent, it is believed. His mother was a large and powerful woman. Some said she was a Mexican, and others that she was an Indian, but it is probable that she was neither, purely. The best judges pronounced her a half-breed. They lived for many years along the overland trail. Nobody knew much about them, and no one cared to question them much. The old woman had a pair of enormous hands, the flesh being as hard and rough as a bricklayer's. She was, perhaps, the uglier of the two, both in appearance and disposition. She was a great fighter herself. More than once at their ranch, on the Niobrara, when the cowboys became troublesome, she has been known to whip them into submission. A blow from one of her iron-clad fists was not necessarily fatal, but few of either sex who ever received one had any desire to continue the argument with her. She subdued the old man in the course of time, and during the last two or three years of his life she had no one to fight with at home except her only son. The father died very suddenly one day, and was quietly buried on the river bank. Travelers say that the old woman and John had many a bout after this, in which first one and then the other would get the worst of it. The boy was growing, however, and his mother was getting old. The end had to come. She never rallied. She keeps the old man company in his cold and lonely grave.

When the old folks were both gone John went on the cattle ranges. He was then a mere boy in years, but a giant in size. He early established his reputation as a fighter. His strength increased with great rapidity. The hardships which wreck the health of many men seemed only to give him new vigor and increased endurance. He became so powerful that his associates grew to like him. He had no enemies, for it did not pay to have his hostility. New men coming on the ranges sometimes had to be polished off, but, as a rule, fresh arrivals, after sizing him up, were willing to take the word of the old settlers as to his prowess. He was the chief. He was willing, and even anxious, to prove his right to the title at all times. He would have traveled the whole length of the Niobrara valley to accommodate a man, and on one or two occasions he is known to have gone forty or fifty miles on horseback to meet some body who, report said, had spoken contemptuously of him. His fame spread to Deadwood, and many attempts were made to get him to come up to the mining regions to show himself. These were at length successful. He came into town early on Saturday morning, accompanied by an old herder who has been expatiating to the sports of Deadwood unceasingly almost on the merits of his man. This herder's name is Piggott. Last night in the bar-room of the Golden Varieties, a correspondent found Piggott in rather a sociable frame of mind. The mercury outside had gone down into the bulb, but the genial warmth imparted by the cordwood stove and sundry glasses of ardent spirits was reflected on Piggott's weather-beaten face, and shown in his little round eyes.

"John Zaccueus," said Piggott, "is the best man in the world for money. He's a man killer, my son. He's done it afore, an' he kin do it again. You oughter been on the range and seen him paralyze a society for the prevention of cattle stealing. That's how he kin by the title of 'Triplet of the Niobrara.' Won't he was a modest sort of chap, but year arter year when there was no one to fight as could fight going by kinder made him egotistic. When the anti-cattle stealing association held its meetings John got to thinking that he orter count for two among 'em, for he rather despised the rest on 'em, yee see, an' he wanted to vote double on all big pints. The other fellers looked foolish, an' got off on one side and talked it over. Some wuz for giving him his way, while some others wuz dead set agin it. Arter a long debate they tuk a vote on it, an' the majority sez Jack wuz only a man, an' that he should vote only ez one man, same ez all the rest. The fellers who wuz in favor of 'lowing Jack to double up knew there wuz trouble ahead. Well, ez I wuz saying, when it kim to the next vote Jack said he would vote twice so an' so. The chairman said that proposition had been ruled out an' defeated by the society. 'By which?' sez Jack. 'By the majority of the association,' sez the chairman. 'Where's that majority?' hollered Jack. Well, then, about seven or eight of 'em sez, 'we iz the majority, Jack Zaccueus, right here.' I hope to die, sonny, if I kin give any straight account of what happened in the next four minits, but I'll try. The meetin' wuz in a log house with one door an' two windows. The men as wuz friends to Jack, an' some others, too, clim' out the winders, but there wuz six on 'em we staid in. No six men ez ever lived had quite such an exciting time, my boy. Jack you know, is almighty tall. Well, before the six could collect their ideas, so to speak, Jack had driv two on 'em into the ground, pretty nigh, by a hitting of 'em on the top of the head. Oh, that's a man killing blow, it kinder shatters 'em; it drives their scalps down over their eyes, sets their jaws, dislocates their necks, curves their spines and makes them bowlegged for life.

Well, as I wuz saying, he gave two on 'em that kind of a prescription, and the other four were hollerin' for their lives before he hit 'em. He didn't let up though two or three on 'em drew their knives, but he never touched his'n. He just reach out and reached for 'em two at a time. Jack hez arms longer'n a lasso. No man kin git near enuff to Jack when he's movin' to break his skin with a knife. No, sir-ee, they can't. Well, my son, there wuz nobody in that cabin to fight in less time than it takes to tell it. Jack picked 'em up and corded 'em up in one corner of the ranch, one atop o' the other, and then he steps smiltu to the door, and sez to the gentlemen outen the snow: 'Will the majority kim in an' resume business?' Well, you betcher life they kim in. 'Hold on' sez Jack, as they were about to proceed to business, 'hold on, you fellers. Arter this I votes three in the association. Dy hear? They all said, kinder agreeable like, that it is perfectly proper that he should count three. An', sonny, count three he daz on the Niobrara. That's why he called himself the 'triplet.' D'ye see the p'int? But you orter see him put that pile driver of huz on top o' Beefer Ben's nut. The Beefer had been licked wunst by the man killer's old mother, but he never knew what trouble wuz until he met the boy. Jack didn't want ter fight. He never daz. But the Beefer kept lookin' at him ugly when they met, and Jack got tired. It gets tired o' some things awful easy, my son. Well, one time, when the boys wuz together, down near the Bad Lands, Beefer and Jack had a little

falling out, and Ben squared off for a fight. Some one in the crowd hollered to Ben that he was committing suicide, but Ben never heard it. He made a kind of a lunge and jump at Jack, but Jack's left stopped him so quick he saw all the stars at onst. The worst was to come. Before the Beefer could think what hit him, Jack got in his man killer on top o' the head. Ben was as hand-some a man as ever you see afore that. He was high six feet high, an' had a fine face. As the boys rushed in to pick him up, some one sings out, 'I thought the Beefer wuz a fighting' Jack.' 'It wuz the Beefer,' sez the crowd. It didn't seem so though. His feechers were all changed. His forehead had shrunk. His face had kinder broadened out, and his nose was not the same nose at all. His head seemed set down in his coat too much, and he looked kinder irreg'lar somehow. Well he hez always stayed just so. He's the quietest man in the valley now, with no more fun in him than there is in a graveyard. Oh, but—"

Piggott was about to relate another anecdote, when in walked the Niobrara Triplet himself, accompanied by a host of admiring friends. He had on a bear-skin cap, a buffalo robe coat, and a pair of enormous high-topped boots. He towered head and shoulders above every man in the room. He good naturedly answered questions and permitted the first citizens of the hills to inspect his hands and muscles. Zaccueus stands six feet seven inches in his stockings and weighs 290 pounds. His arms are of remarkable length, even for a man of his size, and his hands are as big and heavy as granite paving stones, and about as hard. He is full-chested, but his body is short when his height is taken into consideration. His legs are long and solid as adamant. His face is round and rather pleasant, but there is a hard look about the mouth when in repose. He says he has never had any training as a fighter, except that given him by his mother, who, he declared with a show of filial pride, had a good deal of science. He has never been away from home before, and is anxious to return to his ranch. He will be kept here a few days, however, if possible, until negotiations now in progress for his appearance in the east are brought to a close. He is not particularly anxious to go into the prize-ring, but, as he said last night, he didn't like to hear about the prize-fighters of the states without finding out what manner of men they are. In all his talk thus far he has not once suggested a fight with less than two of them at a time. Prominent miners who have seen him offer to bet any sum from \$1000 to \$10,000 that he can kill any bruiser in the states with one blow. One thing is certain, if he shall enter the prize ring two-thirds of all the real and personal property in the Black Hills will be at his back. It is reported that an eastern bruiser named Sullivan is the man with whom Zaccueus and his friends are negotiating.—Ez.

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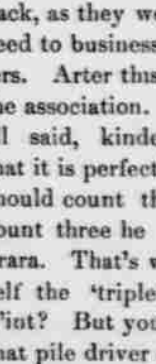
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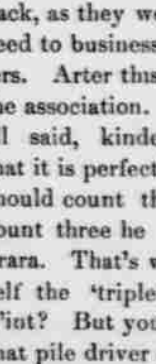
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