

Out of a Pioneer's Trunk.

(By Bret Harte.)

It was a slightly cynical, but fairly good-humored crowd that had gathered before a warehouse on Long Wharf, in San Francisco, one afternoon in the summer of '61. Although the occasion was an auction, the bidders' chances more than usually hazardous, and the season and locality famous for reckless speculation, there was scarcely any excitement among the bystanders, and a lazy, half-humorous curiosity seemed to have taken the place of any zeal for gain.

It was an auction of unclaimed trunks and boxes—the personal baggage of early emigrants—which had been left on storage in bulk or warehouse at San Francisco, while the owner was seeking his fortune in the mines. The difficulty and expense of transport, often obliging the gold seeker to make part of his journey on foot, restricted him to the smallest impedimenta, and that of a kind not often found in the luggage of ordinary civilization. As a consequence, during the emigration of '49, he was apt on landing to avail himself of the invitation usually displayed on the doors of the rude hostleries on the shore: "Rest for the Wreny and Storage for Trunks." In a majority of cases he never returned to claim his stored property. Enforced absence, protracted equally by good or evil fortune, accumulated the high storage charges until they usually far exceeded the actual value of the goods; sickness, further emigration, or death also reduced the number of possible claimants, and that more wonderful human frailty—absolute forgetfulness of deposited possessions—combined together to leave the bulk of the property in the custodian's hands. Under an understood agreement they were always sold at public auction after a given time. Although the contents of some of the trunks were exposed, it was found more in keeping with the public sentiment to sell the trunks unlocked and unopened. The element of curiosity was kept up from time to time by the incautious disclosures of the lucky or unlucky purchaser, and general bidding thus encouraged, except when the speculator, with the true gambler's instinct, gave no indication in his face of what was drawn in this lottery. Generally, however, some suggestion on the exterior of the trunk, a label of initials, some conjectured knowledge of the former owner, or the idea that he might be secretly present in the hope of getting his property back at less than the accumulated dues, kept up the bidding and interest.

And for the present he could fairly accept his good luck and trust to later fortune to justify himself. Transformed in his new garb, he left his lodgings to present himself once more to his possible employer. His way led past one of the large gambling saloons. It was yet too early to find the dry goods dealer disengaged; perhaps the consciousness of more decent, civilized garb emboldened him to mingle more freely with strangers, and he entered the saloon. He was scarcely abreast of one of the faro tables when a man suddenly leaped up with an oath and discharged a revolver full in his face. The shot missed. Before his unknown assailant could fire again, the astonished Flint had closed with him, and instinctively clutched the weapon. A brief but violent struggle ensued. Flint felt his strength falling him, when suddenly a look of astonishment came into the furious eyes of his adversary, and the man's grasp mechanically relaxed. The half-freed pistol, thrown upward by this movement, was accidentally discharged point blank in his temple, and he fell dead. No one in the crowd had stirred or interfered.

"You've done for French Pete this time, Mr. Fowler!" said a voice at his elbow. He turned gaspingly, and recognized his strange benefactor, Flynn. "I call you all to witness, gentlemen," continued the gambler, turning dictatorially to the crowd, "that this man was first attacked and was unarmed." He lifted Flint's limp and empty hands, and then pointed to the dead man, who was still grasping the weapon. "Come!" He caught the half-paralyzed arm of Flint and dragged him into the street. "But," stammered the horrified Flint, as he was borne along, "what does it all mean? What made that man attack me?" "I reckon it was a case of shooting on sight, Mr. Fowler; but he missed it by not waiting to see if you were armed. It wasn't the square thing, and you're all right with the crowd now, whatever he might have had agin you."

"But," protested the unhappy Flint, "I never laid eyes on the man before, and my name isn't Fowler." Flynn halted, and dragged him in a doorway. "Who the devil are you?" he asked, roughly. Briefly, passionately, almost hysterically, Flint told him his scant story. An odd expression came into the gambler's face. "Look here," he said abruptly, "I have passed my word to the crowd yonder that you are a dead-broke miner called Fowler. I allowed that you might have had some row with that Sydney duck, Australian Pete, in the mines. That satisfied them. If I go back and say it's a lie, that your name ain't Fowler, and you never knew who Pete was, they'll just pass you over to the police to deal with you, and wash their hands of it altogether. You may prove to the police who you are, but it will give you trouble. And who is there here who knows who you really are?" "No one," said Flint, with sudden hopelessness. "And you say you're an orphan, and ain't got any relations livin' that you're beholden to?" "No one."

"Then take my advice and be Fowler, and stick to it! Be Fowler until Fowler turns up and thanks you for it, for you saved Fowler's life, as Pete would never have funked and lost his grit over Fowler as he did with you, and you've a right to his name." He stopped, and the same odd, superstitious look came into his dark eyes. "Don't you see what it all means? Well, I'll tell you. You're in the biggest streak of luck a man ever had. You've got the cards in your hand! They spell 'Fowler!' Play Fowler first, last and all the time. Good night, and good luck, Mr. Fowler!"

The next morning's journal contained an account of the justifiable killing of the notorious desperado and ex-convict, Australian Pete, by a courageous young miner by the name of Fowler. "An act of firmness and daring," said the Pioneer, "which will go far to counteract the terrorism produced by those lawless ruffians." In his new suit of clothes, and with the paper in his hand, Flint sought the dry goods proprietor—the latter was satisfied and convinced. That morning Harry Flint began his career as salesman and as "Shelby Fowler."

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FIFTEENTH STREET GRADE NOTICE. Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Astoria propose to establish the grade of Fifteenth street, in the town (now city) of Astoria, Oregon, as laid out and recorded by J. M. Shively, from the north line of Commercial street, to a point 140 feet north of the said north line of Commercial street, at elevations above the base of grades for the streets as established by Ordinance No. 71, entitled "An Ordinance establishing a base of grades for the streets of the City of Astoria," as follows, to-wit: At the north line of said Commercial street, 19 feet.

At a point 140 feet north of the north line of Commercial street, 19 feet. The grade to be of even elevation throughout the width of the street at any one point and upon a straight line between the points above designated. And unless a remonstrance signed by the owners of three-fourths of the property fronting on said portion of said street be filed with the Auditor and Police Judge within ten days from the final publication of this notice, to-wit, on Tuesday, December 12th, 1894, the Common Council will establish said grade.

By order of the Common Council, (Attest) K. OSBURN, Auditor and Police Judge, Astoria, Oregon, November 15, 1894.

FRANKLIN AVENUE GRADE NOTICE. Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Astoria, Oregon, propose to establish the grade of Franklin avenue in the town (now city) of Astoria, Oregon, as laid out and recorded by John Adair, from a point 200 feet east of 34th street to the east line of 35th street, at elevations above the base of grades for the streets of Astoria, as established by Ordinance No. 71, entitled "An Ordinance establishing a base of grades for the streets of the City of Astoria," as follows, to-wit: At a point 200 feet east of 34th street, 34.4 feet.

At the west line of 35th street, 67.4 feet. At the east line of 35th street, 67.4 feet. The grade to be of even elevation throughout the width of the street at any given point, and upon a straight line or even slope between the above designated points. And unless a remonstrance signed by the owners of three-fourths of the property fronting on said portion of said street be filed with the Auditor and Police Judge within ten days from the final publication of this notice, to-wit, on Tuesday, December 12th, 1894, the Common Council will establish said grade.

By order of the Common Council, (Attest) K. OSBURN, Auditor and Police Judge, Astoria, Oregon, November 15th, 1894.

DUANE STREET IMPROVEMENT NOTICE. Notice is hereby given that the Common Council of the City of Astoria, Oregon, have determined to improve Duane street from the east side of 10th street to the west side of 12th street, (except the crossing of 11th street), all in the City of Astoria, as laid out and recorded by John McClure and extended by Cyrus Olney, by removing all defective piles, caps and stringers, and putting in new and sound fir piles, posts and sills wherever necessary, and new caps and stringers, and planking in same with new and sound fir plank four inches in thickness, and by building sidewalks on both sides thereof; all of the improvements to be made to the full width and established grade of said street, and to include railings where necessary, and to be done in accordance with plans and specifications and ordinances in relation thereto.

The lands and premises upon which the special assessment shall be levied to defray the cost and expense of such improvement and the district embracing said lands and premises, be and the same are designated as follows, to-wit: Commencing at the southwest corner of lot one (1) of Block numbered 44, thence easterly along center line of Blocks 44 and 44, to the eastern boundaries of Block numbered 64, thence northerly along eastern boundaries of Blocks 64 and 64, to the northeast corner of Lot 4, Block numbered 61, thence westerly along center line of Blocks 61 and 60, to the west boundary of Block numbered 60, thence southerly along western boundaries of Blocks 60 and 4, to point of beginning; containing Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, in Block 44; Lots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, in Block 61; and Lots 5, 6, 7, and 8, in Block 60, all in the Town (now city) of Astoria, as laid out and recorded by John McClure and extended by Cyrus Olney. Estimates of the expense of such improvements and plans and diagrams of such work or improvement and of the locality to be improved have been deposited by the City Surveyor with the Auditor and Police Judge for public examination, and may be inspected at the office of such officer.

At the next regular meeting of the Common Council, after ten days from the final publication of this notice, to-wit: On Tuesday, December 12th, 1894, at the hour of 7:30 p. m. at the City Hall, the said Council will consider any objections to such improvement being made, and if a remonstrance against such improvement, signed by persons owning more than one-half of the property in such district herein described, and in which the special assessment is to be levied shall be filed with the Auditor and Police Judge before the said time of meeting of the Common Council, no such improvement or work shall be ordered in any event. By order of the Common Council, (Attest) K. OSBURN, Auditor and Police Judge, Astoria, Oregon, November 16th, 1894.

Are You Going East? If so, drop a line to A. C. Sheldon, general agent of the "Burlington Route," 250 Washington St., Portland. He will mail you free of charge, maps, time tables, and advise you as to the through rates to any point, reserve sleeping car accommodations for you, and furnish you with through tickets via either the Northern, against Southern, Canadian Pacific, and Great Northern railroads at the very lowest rates obtainable.

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A POINTER M. Susman, 72 Main street, is now agent for Plutachek & Harris, the largest hide dealers in San Francisco, and Mr. Susman wishes those having hides to sell to bring them to him and he will pay the highest price in cash, on delivery.

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Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder. World's Fair Highest Medal and Diploma. By order of the Common Council, (Attest) K. OSBURN, Auditor and Police Judge, Astoria, Oregon, November 14, 1894.