



### Interesting Odds and Ends Concerning the Early Days in Old Oregon.

Under the title of "Women Pioneering in Oregon," a "pioneeress," who crossed the plains as a girl of thirteen years and was married at the age of fifteen, tells of the outfit with which she and her husband set up housekeeping. They had one stew kettle, in which they made coffee, baked bread and cooked meat. They had no stove. They had three butcher knives, which, with the kettle, made up the cooking utensils. A "bed with a few feathers" is listed, and two sheets, which last, however, were made up into shirts when the young husband went off to fight Indians. She avers that seventy-five cents was all the money they had for two or three years, that amount being lavished on sugar. The son of this pioneer mother is now postmaster of Portland.

An interesting volume could be made up on the comments made by the pioneers upon Dr. John McLoughlin which invariably refer to him in terms of profound respect, admiration and love. He was apparently such a many-sided man that a true estimate of him is hard to give. Many little incidents are related illustrative of his somewhat "spontaneous" temperament. One contributor says he was taking dinner one day with the old doctor. When the latter was saying grace, he stopped and swore at his dog which made an untimely interruption, then turning, resumed his act of devotion, asking God to forgive him for swearing!

At one time however quite a strong sentiment was worked up among certain of the settlers against the good doctor, which was joined in and augmented by the irresponsible ne'er-do-wells—the kind generally ready even to turn and snarl at a benefactor of whom they are jealous. Judge J. Quinn Thornton took up Dr. McLoughlin's case when the latter resorted to legal proceedings to protect his interests, and for so doing was rather cordially hated by some of his distinguished client's enemies. One day on the street in Oregon City some one pointed Thornton out to a man, who replied: "D— rascal—I don't want anything to do with him." Thornton heard him and turning to him, said, "I do not know who you are, but from the manner of your speaking to me, I take it that you are one of our men in whose worthless body Dr. McLoughlin has some time or other been instrumental in keeping life." And thus it proved to be.

One day last week there turned up unexpectedly in the mass of yet unsorted material in the Bancroft Library an old unbound manuscript history of Oregon which was turned over to my care by the curator. There were 165 loose, written sheets tied up together in a bundle, and the work was both undated and unsigned. The handwriting, however looks like that of Mr. Bancroft himself, though I have never seen anything like it in print. It gives first, an historical sketch, followed by a running description of the state by counties, treating briefly the principal towns in each. The hotels of the large places were named. Portland is given as a town of about 4,000 people. Its hotels are—the Howard House, the Metropolitan, the Columbian, the Pioneer and the What Cheer. Portland, Salem, Oregon City and La Fayette were named in the same sentence as being places of particular importance! Turn-

ing to Yamhill county I found Dayton, La Fayette and McMinnville exploited. The latter was described as "a pleasant, quiet little village of about 200 inhabitants." How hard it is for a town to break away from its early traditions!

In December, 1848, was opened the first school in Yamhill county, near where Dayton now stands, by J. Q. Thornton, who with his wife had shortly before arrived in the new country, having lost all their possessions on the way. And having been in the newspaper business in "the states" his loss was doubtless heavy. Before the first term had expired however he was chosen judge of the Supreme Court! Rather a prompt and decided promotion for a country school teacher even in this fast age.

It was with much satisfaction that I found last week a copy of the address delivered on behalf of Oregon in Philadelphia at the Centennial Exposition in 1876. It was delivered by a well known Oregonian who was commissioned for the purpose by Governor Grover. The address is lengthy and largely descriptive, picturing the conditions, products and resources of the state. But apart from the realization of the changes which the thirty years wrought, which came to me on glancing through the pages, the paper appealed to me particularly from its artistic standpoint. For instance, the speaker introduced his commonwealth as "Oregon, the sunset sister of the Union," which is certainly all that could be desired for euphemism. In fact, I imagined for a moment that I was reading from some of the dizzy rhetoric of a mid-winter number of some Southern California daily, which editions always abound with this and similar flights, which are removed from cold storage once every year to do the same old stunt. Such for instance as "land of the sun-down sea," "land of the afternoon," "land of the sun-kissed waves," etc., etc., ad nauseam. But pretty soon the orator swung in on a verse from "Beautiful Willamette," which made me think longingly of home and mother. And when I came to the moving, heart-lifting conclusion, then, certainly nothing but "circumstances over which I have no control," and savoring very little of poetry, prevented me from taking the first train home. The speaker labeled his poetic flight as the "reflections of a resident, who when a small boy went to that land of the setting sun." And this is the way it affected him. "I am here—here in this matchless land. Matchless in soil; matchless in climate; matchless in its dark and immeasurable mountain forests; matchless in its peerless peaks of everlasting snow; matchless in its pure, limpid, perennial waters; matchless in its cool, pleasant, sweet-sleeping nights; matchless in its life-giving breezes, born on the bosom of the Pacific and wafted here; matchless in all that God and nature could bestow in fitting it as a home for man." Hooray!

When S. R. Thurston, Oregon's first delegate to Congress, started home from Washington via Panama, accompanying him were eight pretty New England school ma'ams, sent out by Gov. Slade's educational society in Vermont, organized for the purpose of sending teachers to the West. But the young ladies in question found avenues of promotion opening up before them no less immediate and promising

than Supreme Judge Thornton, the country school teacher, had found. One of them married Governor Gaines, another Judge Wilson and others thus chose to limit their sphere of operations. But the educational society which sent them out wotted of the ways of ambitions and designing young school ma'ams, which time changeth not. Accordingly in each contract was inserted a clause to the effect that if "party of the first part" did not teach a certain length of time after arriving on the field, the cost of her transportation must be refunded to the society. But even this wise provision didn't furnish a substitute bona fide teacher and as the fair pedagogues persisted in marrying, the society, whose prime object was the advancement of education and not the running of a western matrimonial bureau, suspended operations.

Oregon had one pioneer citizen, M. M. McCarver, or General McCarver as he was called, who attained something of a reputation as a founder of cities. In this respect he is credited with Burlington, Iowa, Tacoma, Sacramento, partly, and Linton, Oregon! A good story is told on him after he had gone south and assisted in laying out Sacramento. His family remained in Oregon and naturally he still thought of Oregon as his home. But when the California Constitutional Convention was held McCarver was sent as a delegate from Sacramento to assist in the organization of the new state. One day a measure was introduced in the Convention looking toward the extension of the California line far enough northward to include the mines of Southern Oregon, as it was argued that Oregon was to be an agricultural state and not a mineral one, like her southern neighbor. In an instant McCarver was on his feet with the impulsive words—"As a citizen of Oregon I object to the segregation of any of her territory," not for the moment appreciating his laughable position. Thereafter he was known in the California convention as "the member from Oregon."

Almost as long ago as I can remember when Newberg as a town wasn't, I was accustomed to the sight of a wide, deep trench, with dirt thrown up on each side giving the appearance of huge earthworks. Every time we jolted from home to church or to the country store or to mill, in the big farm wagon, we crossed this big ditch. I was told that it was a railroad cut or grade, but I remember that I never could get an entirely satisfactory answer as to why the railroad didn't come. Even from my limited acquaintance with moving dirt in the family garden, I realized what an immense amount of work had been done in making way for the railroad. In fact it rather appalled me. And why, when with the road bed in readiness there remained nothing to do but lay the rails, the matter was allowed to rest for years, I couldn't understand. This was one of the ever present sub-conscious mysteries of my early boyhood.

A few days ago I was handling an unbound manuscript document of 81 pages, unsigned and undated. Its subject was "Projection, Organization and Construction of the Oregon & California Railway Co." Looking through it at first idly, I found it took up in detail the history of all the early railroad projects of the state and among them, that of the road for which my old ditch had been made, it being one of the first. The old ques-

tions came back, and here, after so many years in a musty old document, was the answer! I had also heard vaguely in my youth of the projected greatness of Dundee Junction—of a mystical railroad to run across from somewhere in Marion county and connect at the new hub of railroad activity. This and early other projects were elaborated in a way as if intended to answer my unexpressed queries. Moral—little boys shouldn't be impatient and despair of having their questions answered. "Some day we'll understand."

"Settlement of Sheridan," was the name of a paper found recently, and naturally I took a second look. The writer, a charter resident, vouchsafed the information that the town was named "about the time General Sheridan made his famous raid on the democrats at Winchester," from which naive remark a guess as to said writer's political bias might be hazarded. He also announces with a cheerful bravado that "no place on the North Pacific Coast can be compared with Sheridan for health," with which assurance he rests his case.


A few years after Mr. Bancroft interviewed the Oregon pioneers for material on Oregon history, he began on another line among Oregonians, not purely historical. He sent agents through the state getting little biographical sketches of citizens, ostensibly to be put in his works, but really as a bait to induce the citizen to subscribe for Bancroft's histories. The agent's business first and last was to take subscriptions. Within the past few days I have been looking through some of these little sketches, the subjects of many of which are known to me. And what I found particularly interesting was not the sketches themselves, but the agent's own comments, often written at the bottom of the sheet, as a memorandum for Mr. Bancroft's benefit. Being private, they were correspondingly frank and the expression often unvarnished. They appealed strongly to a newspaper man whose fingers have often itched to write the truth for just one week as it appealed to him.

Here is a typical comment, written of a man well known over Oregon. I found it on the back of the sketch sent in. "I can't find out any peculiarity of Mr. —. He is a conservative old cuss. He is fond of history and would like to have the volumes on Oregon very much but does not like to buy the whole set. Has bushels of money but is hard as flint; made a warm friend of the old man however and will tackle him after he gets your letter in reply to this. Lay yourself out on him."

In regard to another man he adds: "Not very intelligent, but tries to appear literary." And the subject of this remark didn't live a thousand miles from Newberg. Of another subject he notes: "Is kind of an eccentric old cuss—unmarried." Whether there is meant to be any connection between the two statements, cannot be stated. The following, in another subject, indicates that there may be. "Is an old bachelor and as ignorant as the d—, but likes to be called one of the pioneers of Oregon."

W. C. W.  
Berkeley, California.

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