

SOMETHING ABOUT AN OYSTER.

Look at an oyster! It is of vitality and quiet body lies a whole sea of stillness...

Invisible to human eye, unless aided, by the wonderful inventions of human science...

But the life of a shell-fish is not one of unvarying rest. Observe the phases of an individual oyster from the moment of its earliest embryonic life...

I think this expresses the just idea of the passage. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

A few years ago a meeting of ministers of the Methodist denomination was held in this city, and the constitutionality of a recent law of Congress was discussed.

"Brethren, I have not directed my studies specially to the constitution of the United States and am not qualified to give an opinion in a question like this."

Mr. Webster's Opinion of Byron.—In a letter to a friend, Hon. Daniel Webster gave this estimate of Lord Byron:

I have read Tom Moore's first volume of Byron's life. Whatever human imagination shall hereafter picture of a human being, I shall believe it all within the bounds of credibility.

A newspaper, appearing regularly before the people, and sustaining a character for promptness in the diffusion of news and unprejudiced fairness in expressing its views, makes for itself, and is entitled to hold a separate entity—a distinct existence.

The Manufacture of Bonnets.—What becomes of all the pins? is a question often asked and seldom answered. Some facts that we learned the other day led us to ask, What becomes of all the bonnets?

Beauties of Going to Law.—In the Worcester County Court of Common Pleas, a Mr. Dudley sued a Mr. Tiff, to recover \$125, the price of a pair of boots.

The gentleman who "fired at random" did not hit it; and, in disgust, he lent his rifle to the youth who determined to "aim at immortality."

THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE'S EYE.

St. Mathew, xix-24. St. Mark, x-26. St. Luke, xviii-25.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I can scarcely remember the time in my early youth when this text did not excite my curiosity and wonder.

The camel is a beast of burden much used in Eastern countries. It is about the size of the largest ox, with one or two humps on his back, with long neck and legs, and with feet adapted to the hot and sandy desert.

Some have supposed that a slightly varied reading in the original word, which is translated "camel," might be adopted, by which the phrase would be made to mean a "cable," such as is used in anchoring ships in the roadstead.

But I have met with another explanation of the striking figure, which, to say the least, adds to its beauty and force. All the important cities of the East, in ancient times, were surrounded by high and massive walls, and so they are, as the modern traveler informs us, at the present day.

Prominence, popularity and exalted station are no shields against sorrow,—no insurance against the strokes of adversity, although they may, perhaps, distract the mind from dwelling too intently on its private griefs.

Amiability of the Irish Character.—Dr. Dixon, the talented editor of the Scalpel, told the following anecdote in a recent lecture. "The drunken Irishman is always ready for a murdering row."

A few years ago a meeting of ministers of the Methodist denomination was held in this city, and the constitutionality of a recent law of Congress was discussed.

"Well, Dennis, are ye satisfied?" "Terry, I am perfectly satisfied."

Aeneas of a Georgia Judge.—In 185—there was tried in the Circuit of Georgia, a case of involuntary manslaughter. In the expressive language of a witness, the accused, while drunk, pulled out his knife, and "sloshing it about" struck the deceased in the abdomen.

And both parties walked amicably out of the alley to the grog shop. What the cause of the quarrel was I never knew, and I think it doubtful if they did.

The doctor has since studiously avoided the use of technicalities in the presence of the uninstructed.

Abernethy was sent for by an innkeeper, who had a quarrel with his wife, who had scored his face with her nails, so that the poor man was bleeding and much disfigured.

In a little town on the upper Mississippi river, a clergyman recently married a young couple, and after the ceremony was over, wished the bride a pleasant journey down the "stream of life."

The following lines upon the death, in rapid succession, of all the three children of a family, are beautiful:

THEODORE, CHARLIE, AND GRACE. Died, at Brooklyn, January 9th, THEODORE SWAN, aged 5 months and 10 days; March 5th, CHARLES HADDOCK, aged 7 years and 4 months; March 23d, GRACE WEBSTER, aged 2 years and 7 months, only children of Theodore and Grace W. Hinsdale.

And first of all the Baby went, sweet messenger! to throw Wide open heaven's golden gates through which they all must go!

And he, the Boy of noble brow, and earnest, manly ways, For whom, with nameless hope and pride, we hailed the coming days,

And Grace, sweet Grace, the pensive, the quiet little girl, (They should have called her Margaret, her mother's purest pearl),

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FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

THE PUBLIC LANDS.

The immense donations of public land made of late years by Congress to corporations within the new States have awakened the attention of the people of the old States to the subject, and of Virginia especially, where the burden of taxation for internal improvements has been greatly increased.

At the commencement of the Revolutionary war there belonged to some of the States large tracts of wild and unappropriated lands, whilst in others none such existed. The States possessing no such lands claimed that, as the war was waged with united means and equal sacrifices, the waste lands which might be conquered from the enemy should become common property, and, under the recommendations of Congress, 10th October, 1780, "that the unappropriated lands which might be ceded to the United States by any particular State, pursuant to the recommendation of Congress of the 6th of September last, shall be disposed of for the common benefit of the United States."

Virginia promptly made a cession of her vast domain north of the river Ohio, out of which six States have since been formed. The condition of her cession, (adopted substantially by the other States) was, that all the lands conveyed "shall be considered as a common fund for the use and benefit of such of the United States as have become or shall become members of the confederacy or federal alliance of the said States, Virginia inclusive, according to their usual respective proportions in the general charge and expenditure, and shall be faithfully and bona fide disposed of for that purpose, and for no other use or purpose whatever."

In disregard of the plain obligations of the trust, President Jackson, in the early days of his administration, proposed to cede the lands thus acquired, and all subsequently purchased, to the States in which they lie, gratuitously or for a nominal price.

To counteract this movement, which at that time met with no favor in Congress, but which has since been substantially adopted in the system of partial grants, Mr. Clay introduced his well-known distribution bill, which was passed by Congress on the 2d day of March, 1833, by a vote of 24 to 20 in the Senate, and 96 to 40 in the House of Representatives.

The whole amount of money which would have gone into the Treasury of Virginia, under the provisions of Mr. Clay's land bill, from 1832 to 1839, a period of seven years, would have been four million three hundred and sixty-nine thousand one hundred and sixty-nine dollars, or for each year seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand one hundred and ninety-four dollars.

On September 4, 1841, an act was passed to appropriate the proceeds of the sales of the public lands amongst the several States. The first section provided that from and after the 31st December, 1841, there should "be allowed and paid to each of the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Alabama, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Michigan, over and above what each of the said States is entitled to by the terms of the compact entered into between them and the United States, upon their admission into the Union, the sum of ten per centum upon the net proceeds of the sales of the public lands, which, subsequent to the day aforesaid, shall be made within the limits of each of said States respectively."

After deducting the said per centum, the residue of the net proceeds was to be divided amongst the then twenty-six States of the Union and the District of Columbia, and the Territories of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Florida, according to their respective federal representative population, as ascertained by the last census, (1840), to be applied by the Legislatures of the said States to such purposes as the said Legislatures might direct, provided that the distributive share to which the District of Columbia shall be entitled should be applied to free schools or education in some other form, as Congress might direct.

The proceeds were thus divided for one year, and accepted by all the States, we believe, except Virginia. The Legislature of that State, refused to receive the forty thousand dollars for that year, (a much smaller sum than the average would have been had the law been continued), on the ground that it was an attempt on the part of Congress to corrupt the people of the State by gifts from the Federal Treasury.

By the operation of the act of August 4, 1842, to provide revenue from imports, &c., the distribution of the net proceeds of the public lands among the States was suspended. The proceeds of the lands up to and including the 1st of January, 1839, amounted to the sum of \$57,227,520. The following sums have since been received:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Amount. Rows include 1839 (\$8,076,447), 1840 (\$3,292,683), 1841 (\$1,365,627), 1842 (\$1,385,797), 1843 (\$897,818), 1844 (\$2,059,939), 1845 (\$2,077,022), 1846 (\$2,694,452), 1847 (\$2,498,355), 1848 (\$3,328,042), 1849 (\$1,688,959), 1850 (\$1,859,894), 1851 (\$2,352,305), 1852 (\$2,043,259), 1853 (\$1,667,084), 1854 (\$4,470,798), 1855 (\$11,497,049), 1856 (\$8,917,044).

Of this grand total, if now distributed under Mr. Clay's land bill, the State of Virginia would receive the handsome sum of NINE MILLIONS SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE DOLLARS, (omitting fractions.) This sum, divided by thirteen, would give for each Congressional district in Virginia seven hundred and eighteen thousand two hundred and ninety dollars.

Good old Virginia,—is great on "principle,"—

but bitter, very bitter, on "interest,"—as we shall soon see.

On "principle," her Democratic organs are pushing her people to go to Kansas,—when Virginia itself is full of Kansas fields,—unploughed, unincorporated, unenclosed, unshorn of old grass, &c. There is a "Kansas" all the way from Richmond to Accomac.

On "principle,"—her organs are also urging her not to touch nor take her share of the public lands, for public improvements in the State, or for other purposes. True, her State debt is large. True, her taxes are enormous, to pay the interest on it! True, also, the Federal Government has given away to Railroad Companies in Illinois, Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Michigan, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa and Wisconsin, 20,787,959 acres, worth \$51,259,282, at \$2 50 per acre,—but Virginia scorns "the interest," and clings to the "principle."

Virginia Democracy, we fear, however, is a little behind the age, both on "principle" and "interest." There is very little "principle" in hurrying a Virginia People into Kansas, when there is not half enough of them at home, and less in an old State's refusing her share of public lands, on a general division, and more especially when Virginia contributed to the Union that vast North-Western domain.

Nevertheless, while we in other States pluck the old Virginia goose, not only of her feathers,—but even of her golden egg,—if she is willing,—what is that to us?

The President of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Company, we see, has issued a circular, in which he alludes to a rumor, that the proprietors of the steamer Great Eastern have expressed a desire to send her to Norfolk, Va., if any assurance could be given, that she would be freighted back from that port. He proposes, therefore, that a Convention be held at Bristol, Tennessee, on the 15th of April next, by all the Internal Improvement Companies of the South and that Delegates be appointed by that Convention to proceed to England, and make the necessary representations on the subject.

But, in the meantime, Congress has given in public lands over \$50,000,000 to build Western and other Railroads, which concentrate upon New York the trade and commerce of these States,—and hence, thus helped by Uncle Sam, we can transport to Europe Virginia tobacco, breadstuffs, &c. cheaper via New York, than any great "Eastern steamer" in the direct trade.

New York, it is very true, is as badly off as Virginia in the direct participation in the State plunder of the public lands, but when Congress would give them away,—we looked and smiled,—invested in Illinois, and everywhere,—and rejoiced that the commissions in all the trade was to be ours,—in our own port. If Virginia would only have helped us,—our State itself would have a hand in common picking.—N. Y. Express.

The Public Lands.—The People of Alabama and their Representatives in Congress do not seem to be afflicted with the strict construction scruples in regard to land distribution which weigh so heavily upon our more immediate neighbors, the good people of the Old Dominion. The former take more practical, and, as we think, wiser views of the subject of land grants, and the rights of the States to an equal participation. Accordingly, when the bill making a donation of land for railroad purposes to the Territory of Minnesota was pending, a sensible member from Alabama moved to add a clause to grant lands in his own State for the benefit of railroads there, and it went through without a word of opposition.

Novel Trial.—A correspondent of the Petersburg Express, attending the Superior Court held at Plymouth last week, Judge Ellis presiding, writes that among the crowd attending court were many drawn thither to witness the trial of a suit between certain parties from the county of Hertford. The political cast of the case was what had given it interest. It seems that a gentleman who had been a member of the Know-Nothing order had withdrawn from the fraternity; whereupon, the lodge expelled him and published him as unworthy of trust or credence. The action is brought by the ejected member for slander, against the publishing committee, claiming \$125,000 damages.—Wil. Herald.

Wayon Road to the Pacific.—Letter writers from Washington state that the three Departments of the Interior, War, and of the Post office are uniting to hurry forward the construction of a wagon road from the Mississippi to the Pacific. Such a road is an indispensable prerequisite for Pacific Railroad. The Department of War appropriates \$100,000, the "Interior" half a million, and the Post Office Department contracts to pay \$600,000 per annum for carrying the mails over the new route.

A Comet.—There is—says the National Intelligencer—a telescopic comet now in the north-western part of the sky, moving eastward. It was observed through the large equatorial of the National Observatory on Friday night. This comet was discovered in Leipzig February 22, by Prof. d'Arrest, and on the 26th March at Newark, New Jersey, by Mr. Van Arsdale.

The Prospective Sugar Crop in Illinois.—Mr. E. S. Baker, of Rochester Mills, Washburn county, Ill., writes to the Bellevue Advocate that he shall plant twenty-five acres with the Chinese sugar cane the present season. "I am convinced," he says, "that the State of Illinois will in five years make her own sugar, and if I have luck I shall make this season enough sugar, and certainly will make this season, to supply my little town. At all events I shall try." Mr. Kroh, of Washburn county, who some months ago made a statement of the result of his experiment with the sugar cane last year, offers to bet the skeptical editor of the Charleston Courier \$500 that he will manufacture from one acre, "planted with the Chinese seed," five hundred gallons of molasses, a superior article to any manufactured in the South, and sold by the merchants in Coles county in 1856, for 75 cents per gallon; and further, that he will manufacture it at the cost of ten cents per gallon.

A Noble Servant Girl.—Mary Nugent, a hired girl of Pittsburg, was horribly burned by the explosion of a camphine lamp on Monday night. She first attempted to extinguish the flames by throwing herself into a tub of water, but failing in this, started to reach the street. At the back gate, however, she fell exhausted, and when the neighbors, attracted by the light, reached her she had only strength enough to say, "save the children, for God's sake, don't let the children burn." Such disinterested thoughtfulness in the midst of death agonies more merits a monument than all the deeds of Cæsar.

A Hint to Planters.—The Mississippi Chronicle very pertinently remarks:—The planter who raises an abundance of corn this blessed year of '57 will make money largely. All the agricultural world is perfectly wild on the subject of cotton, and the largest crop ever known will be planted. If the season prove favorable, it would not astonish us if the next crop was greatly over four millions—perhaps four millions five hundred thousand bales. The prices will fall—money will be tight—provisions scarce, and big corn-cribs exceedingly valuable.

COMMUNICATION.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

MARCH 28th, 1857. Editors of the Observer: GENTLEMEN: The Observer of Thursday March 26th comes to me with two and a half columns of Editorial criticism and personal abuse, which you say is "some required notice from you of a long and laborious handbill signed Another tax payer."

I am held up first to the surprise of the Observer as the last man from whom such a production should come! Now if the Observer will publish my answer entire, I will try to relieve it of some of its surprise, and show how a plain straightforward way has marked my course, as well as put myself right before the public.

And first I say that I have not changed from what I have declared about any road, nor acted absurdly or inconsistently. Mind if another horse does not wear that saddle or the cap fit someone else better, before we get through, than me.

I am the author of the article in question. I told a number of gentlemen in Fayetteville that I should both vote against the County subscription and write against it. Though other gentlemen agreed to pay for the printing, I am responsible for every line of it.

I have no idea, sirs, of being compelled to pay a dollar to a Rail Road which the community live in and myself are to be deprived of the benefit of, by a systematic effort of duplicity and treachery! I expect to put what little I can spare where it will help to carry out what I have advocated for the last seven years, viz: the great Central line,—not where it is to be used against it. I am where I was, you, sirs, or 90-100ths of all Fayetteville, have set yourselves against your solemn pledges in the Conventions of Fayetteville, Kenansville and Salisbury, as steel I deplore this thing, have deplored it since it began, and did all I could to avert it! But you would have it so. You have made a high wall and ditch between your pledged faith and the country you have followed, and your Rail Road friends in the East, in the West, in the North and in the South, are few and far between. If, therefore, sirs, Fayetteville does not always get what she expects, let her blame herself, instead of abusing those who look out for themselves. So much for my course, and then to your abuse.

I put in my claim as the projector of the great Central line of road from Beaufort Harbor through Fayetteville and West, after, I believe, it had been adopted by Fayetteville with resolutions as strong as plain English could make them; and based my claim on the following evidence: Some time during the canvass of '51 I believe I addressed a note to Col. A. Murphison, then candidate for the Senate, and Hon. J. C. Dabney, candidate for the Commons, for Cumberland Co., telling them that I should vote for them and hoped they would go for the great Central road from Beaufort Harbor through Fayetteville and West. This is what I claim as projecting. I never claimed the spectral ghost of a road 11 miles long, which should never cross the Cape Fear on the East and go 43 miles west, as advocated by the W. R. R. managers, and sustained, I am sorry to say, by Fayetteville and West. But, sirs, you then denied my claim! To Major Duncan G. McKee you then said the honor belonged. I let it go. But you are pressing it upon me, when a little capital is to be made. It seems you can give it to me or take it at pleasure. Truly others besides the Satyr can blow hot and cold with the same mouth!

I was the friend of the W. R. R., and worked as such with the hope of making it a part of the great line. And now I find I was deceived, we part company and I act as I please, with just the same freedom of speech and of the press as the Messrs. Hale act.

My name was used for the Presidency of the Company by my consent and request, and I could have had it by the controlling vote of Smith & Colby if I had not advised them to press the very course they did. I, sirs, would not hold an office against the wish of my acquaintances and at the will of strangers. I had entire control of the W. R. Co. at one time, did I do that, sirs, which the Co. would not approve in a single instance? Am I entitled to your ridicule for asking what you approved, or your respect?

I subscribed \$2000 at one time and \$500 at another, as stock to the W. R. R. If there is any part of your article which justly entitles me to be called a "fool," it was for making those subscriptions. Those officers who tell that I have not paid all my subscription, can tell you further that very few have paid all! Perhaps they have met with some such life as I have seen! That all men are liable to who own property. Perhaps they are unwilling to pay; or perhaps, like "Sisyphus," they have found it was an "Eternal stone uphill to roll."

But, sirs, I have helped Fayetteville to the amount of about \$8,000 in her Plank Road as the same officer can tell you, all of which I did pay in cash! Who out of Fayetteville, in his means, has done as much as I have, sirs, in time and money too? But soon as a day of adversity comes it is all forgotten.

You say I was wrong as to the number of Justices present, and careless as to facts. This is not so. There were present 38 Justices of the town roll-call, 21 of which were residents of the town. I was not there during the elections, nor did I count after the subscription business was done. I deny ever having asserted the 43 miles of R. R. would pay. My assertions have all been based on a continuation East and West. I give up no point made in figures till you show the reverse is true. If I have made a wrong statement and am convinced, I will make the amends honorable. But, sirs, I am told your \$5000 is paid of first subscription, and of course you have the stocks. Can you sell the \$5000 for \$100? I doubt it.

There are no mines in Cumberland Co., where then is the \$250,000 to come from, if not out of the soil and forest, and are not the men who own and work them called farmers?

I see no other point deserving notice in your criticism. You cannot be more surprised at what I have said and done, than the friends of the Road East have been at the course of the W. R. R. Co. to them! I say again I am sorry it is so. I did all I could to avert it. But they would have it so; let them take the consequences. You know the history of the whole matter; you have not lost your ordinary astuteness in the progress of this thing. How comes it that you denounce as fools so freely those who have stood by their pledge throughout, and uphold those who have not?

I, sirs, and my friends East, are not responsible for matters as they are. I will tell you in a future letter who is responsible, and what benefit the Road will be to the farmers of Cumberland Co., as you seem to be ignorant about it.

Yours, respectfully, THOMAS R. UNDERWOOD.

Alice Carey, in an essay on "insincerity," says: "If our neighbor kisses our cheek, we may infer in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that he will bite our back as we turn about." The Italian letters are ours. Seems to us, Alice, "ninety-nine cases" amount to a pretty extensive range of kissing for one woman—considering the sex of your "neighbors."