

# Highland Messenger.

LIFE IS ONLY TO BE VALUED AS IT IS USEFULLY EMPLOYED.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

(From Silliman's Journal.)

### CAPTURE AND DEATH OF A MAMMOTH ALLIGATOR.

In the course of the year 1811, the proprietor of Halahala informed me that he frequently lost horses and cows in a remote part of the plantation, and that the natives assured him that they were taken by an enormous alligator, who frequented one of the streams which ran into the lake. Their descriptions were so highly wrought that they were attributed to the madness of exaggeration, to which the inhabitants of that country are particularly addicted, and very little credit was given to their repeated relations. All doubts as to the existence of the animal were at last dispelled, by the destruction of an Indian, who attempted to ford the river on horseback, although entreated to desist, by his companions, who crossed to a shallow place, higher up. He reached the centre of the stream, and was laughing at others for their prudence, when the alligator came upon him. His teeth encircled the saddle, which he tore from the horse, while the rider tumbled on the other side, into the water, and made for the shore. The horse, too terrified to move, stood trembling where the attack was made. The alligator, disregarding him, pursued the man, who safely reached the bank, which he could easily have ascended, but rendered fool-hardy by his escape, he plunged himself behind a tree, which had fallen early into the water, and drawing his heavy knife, leaned over the tree, and on the approach of the enemy, struck him on the side. The animal repeated his assault and the Indian his blows, until the former,asperated at the resistance, rushed on the bank, and seizing him by the middle of the body, which was at once enclosed and rushed in his capacious jaws, swam into the lake. His friends hastened to the rescue, but the alligator slowly left the shore, like the poor wretch, writhing and shrieking in his agony, with his knife uplifted in his clasped hands, seemed as the others expressed it "held out as a man would carry torch." His sufferings were not long continued, for the monster sunk to the bottom, and soon after re-appearing alone on the surface, and calmly basking in the sun, gave to the horror-stricken spectators the illest confirmation of the death of their oppressor.

A short time after this event, I made a visit to Halahala, and expressed a strong desire to capture or destroy the alligator, by host readily offered his assistance. The animal had been seen, a few days before, with his head and one of his forefeet resting on the bank, and his eyes following the motion of some cows who were grazing near. Our informant likened his appearance to that of a cat watching a mouse, and in the attitude to spring upon his prey when it should come within his reach.

Hearing that the alligator had killed a cow, we proceeded to the place, about a mile from the house. It was a tranquil spot, and one of singular beauty, even in that land. The stream which a few hundred feet from the lake narrowed to a brook with its green banks fringed with the graceful bamboo, and all the alternate glory of shade and forest, spreading far and wide, seemed fitted for other purposes than the military hunt of the huge creature that had appropriated it to himself. A few canoes were situated a short distance from the river, and we procured from them what we contained, who were ready to assist in freeing themselves from their dangerous neighbor. The terror which he had inspired, especially since the death of their companion, had hitherto prevented them from making an effort to get rid of him; they gladly availed themselves of our operations, and with the usual dependance their character, were willing to do whatever example should dictate to them. Having reason to believe that the alligator was the river, we commenced operations by sinking nets, upright, across its mouth, deep, at intervals of several feet. The nets, which were of great strength, and intended for the capture of the wild alligator, were fastened to trees, on the banks, making a complete fence to the communication with the lake.

My companion and myself placed ourselves with our guns on either side of the stream, while the Indians, with long bamboo poles, felt for the animal. For some time he refused to be disturbed, and we began to fear that he was not within our limits, when a spiral motion of the water, under a spot where I was standing, led me to seek the natives to it, and the creature slowly moved on the bottom towards the nets, which he no sooner touched, than he setly turned back and proceeded up the stream. This movement was several times repeated, till, having no rest in the enclosure, he attempted to climb up the bank, receiving a ball in the body, he uttered growl like that of an angry dog, plunging into the water, crossed to the other side, where he was received with a similar

salutation, discharged directly into his mouth. Finding himself attacked on every side, he renewed his attempts to ascend the banks; but whatever part of him appeared was bored with bullets, and feeling that he was hunted, he forgot his own formidable means of attack, and sought only safety from the troubles which surrounded him.

A low spot, which separated the river from the lake, a little above the nets, was unguarded, and we feared that he would succeed in escaping over it. It was here necessary to stand firmly against him; and in several attempts which he made to cross it, we turned him back with spears, bamboo, or whatever first came to hand. He once seemed determined to force his way, and foaming with rage, rushed with open jaws, and gnashing his teeth, with a sound too ominous to be despised, appeared to have his full energies aroused, when his career was stopped by a large bamboo thrust violently into his mouth, which he ground to pieces, and the fingers of the holder were so paralyzed that, for some minutes, he was incapable of resuming his gun.

The natives had now become so excited as to forget all prudence, and the women and children of the little hamlet had come down to the shore, to share in the general enthusiasm. They crowded to the opening, and were so unmindful of their danger that it was necessary to drive them back, with some violence. Had the monster known his own strength, and dared to have used it, he would have gone over that spot with a force which no human power could have withstood, and would have crushed, or carried with him into the lake, about the whole population of the place.

It is not strange that personal safety was forgotten in the excitement of the scene. The tremendous brute, galled with wounds and repeated defeat, tore his way through the foaming water, glancing from side to side, in the vain attempt to avoid his foes, and then rapidly plunging up the stream, he grounded on the shallows, and turned back, frantic and bewildered at his circumscribed position. At length maddened with suffering, and desperate from continued persecution, he rushed furiously to the mouth of the stream, burst through two of the nets; and I threw down my gun in despair, for it looked as though his way, at last, was clear to the wide lake. But the third net stopped him, and his teeth and legs had got entangled in all. This gave us a chance of closer warfare with lances, such as are used against the wild buffalo. We had sent for this weapon, at the commencement of the attack, and found it much more effectual than guns. Entering a canoe, we plunged lance after lance into the alligator, as he was struggling under the water, till a wood seemed to be growing from him, which moved violently above while his body was concealed below. His endeavors to extricate himself, lashed the water into foam, mingled with blood; and there seemed no end to his vitality, or decrease to his resistance, till a lance struck him directly through the middle of the back, which an Indian, with a heavy piece of wood, hammered into him, as he could catch an opportunity. My companion, on the other side, now tried to haul him to the shore by the nets to which he had fastened himself, but had not sufficient assistance with him. As I had more force with me, we managed, with the aid of the women and children, to drag his head and part of his body on to the little beach, where the river joined the lake, and giving him the "coup de grace," left him to gasp out the remnant of his life on the sand.

I regret to say that the measurement of the length of this animal was imperfect. It was night when the struggle ended, and our examination of him was made by torchlight. I measured the circumference, as did also my companion, and it was eleven feet immediately behind the fore legs. It was thirteen feet at the belly, which was distended by the immoderate meal made on the horse. As he was only part out of the water, I stood with a line, at his head, giving the other end to an Indian, with directions to take it to the extremity of the tail. The length so measured was twenty-two feet; but at the time, I doubted the good faith of my assistant, from the reluctance he manifested to enter the water, and the fears he expressed that the mate of the alligator might be in the vicinity. From the diameter of the animal, and the representations of those who examined him afterwards, we believed the length to have been about thirty feet. As we intended to preserve the entire skeleton, with the skin, we were less particular than we otherwise should have been. On opening him, we found, with other parts of the horse, three legs entire, torn off at the haunch and shoulder, which he had swallowed whole, besides a large quantity of stones, some of them of several pounds weight.

The night, which had become very dark and stormy, prevented us from being minute in our investigation; and leaving directions to preserve the bones and skin, we took the head with us, and returned home. The precaution was induced by the anxiety of the natives to secure the teeth; and I afterwards found that they attribute to them miraculous power in the cure or prevention of diseases. The head weighed nearly three hundred pounds; and so well was it covered with flesh and muscle, that we found balls quite flattened, which had been discharged into the mouth, and at the back of the head, at

only the distance of a few feet, and yet the bones had not a single mark to show that they had been touched.

**THE SICK ROOM.**—If any place in this world calls for wise and well-dieted benevolence, it is the chamber of sickness and death. I am aware that the subject before the reader is one of great delicacy, but it is one on which some plain hints are called for. The writer has had much opportunity for observation, and has been painfully taught by personal experience. It is earnestly hoped that what may be said will be kindly received, and it is devoutly desired that the reader never will forget the admonition.

A sick room is no place for curiosity. What have I said? Curiosity in a sick and dying chamber! Yes, reader, you may have gazed upon an emaciated and suffering fellow being, and used up a portion of the vital air needed by a gasping mortal, when nothing but curiosity led you to that scene of suffering. Stop and inquire if it be not so. If no good word is to be said, or kind services to be rendered in a sick and dying room, it is the last place to which one should go as a mere spectator. Every new face, the tread of every uncalled foot, the demands upon the air for every breath, the breathings of such as must be in attendance, is an injury in sickness, and especially where debility is great. All the protestations of physicians, and the anxiety of family relatives, cannot control this evil or cure it. Nine out of ten feel as if it was an act of rude neglect, if they are not invited into a sick room, and sit hour after hour with eyes fixed on the sick person, occasionally whispering to some equally indiscreet one that may be chance to be nigh. This is absolutely intolerable. We cannot endure the fixed gaze of half a dozen persons when well, and what must it be to one sinking and dying? Others will hang about the door and peep at the sufferer, as they would steal a look at some show. I have seen this so much, that I can scarcely write and possess my soul in patience.

Another practice where the patient is very sick, is that of feeling the pulse, looking at the finger nails, examining the feet, with sundry other acts, all which are accompanied with a very wise look, a sign, and a whisper. Those things are generally done by persons who very poorly understand their own tests of approaching death, and alike mistake the good and comfort of the dying. Think not that I would have the fact of approaching death kept from any friend or any fellow being; far from this; but let the matter be wisely, kindly, and distinctly stated to the patient, and not by such untimely, and I must say, unkind hints and insinuations.

A sad mistake common in a dying chamber, is that the dying person has lost perception and sensibility, because unable to speak. I seriously believe that often, if not in general, the perceptions are more keen and delicate than when in health. I have been in circumstances which I shall never forget. For four hours I was speechless. I supposed, and all supposed, I was dying. Never, never shall I forget what was said and done around me. Always let it be remembered, in a dying room, that the departing friend may hear all, and see all, when the persons present will little suspect it. I remember to have said once in a dying room, where the person had not spoken for thirty-six hours, I did wish I could know it state of the dying individual's mind, not supposing my remark would be noticed by her who was scarcely this side of death. To my surprise she whispered in an ear by her pillow, "Tell Mr. —, that Jesus is as precious as ever." As I have been in hundreds of dying rooms, I might give many examples to show that persons do notice and understand, when it is not suspected. How important that every thing in a dying room should be made what it ought to be, for the salvation and quiet of one who is breaking away from all dear on earth, and approaching all that is serious in eternity. Most generally, persons in this situation are much inclined to commune with their own hearts, and the scenes about to open upon them. The sacredness and stillness of the scene should be disturbed with great care and caution.

The only thing I have to say in addition, is that a very great mistake is often made in the length of prayers, and loud speaking in prayer, in the sick room. This is an error too common, and often the occasion of great suffering to the sick and dying. Let none understand the above remarks as intended to keep any away from the house of sickness and distress. No, reader, go to such places, and show your kindness to the afflicted members of the family, governed by the Christian tenderness which will ever keep in mind and reduce to practice the above caution.

**METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.**—It appears from a Baltimore letter in the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser, that the increase of the Methodist Episcopal Church, during the four years ending in September last, was 515 ministers, and 89,731 church members. Since the accounts were made up in September the ascertained increase is 14,000, making a total increase of one hundred thousand members. At the general conference in 1835 the number of ministers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church was 2,781, and of members, 650,678. In September, 1838, 3,290 ministers, and 740,450 members.

## POLITICAL.

### THE HOMAGE OF JUSTICE.

We have compiled from various sources, the following disinterested testimonials, which were commended from their several authors by the lofty patriotism, valor, talents, and success of General Harrison, long before he was named for the Presidency, and in times which ought to give them weight sufficient to bear down all the petty calumnies and quibbling objections which party malignity may now presume to forge against the war-worn and time-honored patriot and soldier.

The authorities we present against the attacks of loco federalism, and which we have stereotyped as an impregnable barricade against all opposition, are no less than the Congress of the United States, the Legislatures of Indiana and Kentucky; James Madison, James Monroe, Col. R. M. Johnson, Anthony Wayne, Langdon Cheves, Simon Snider, Governor Shelby, Commodore Perry, Col. Crogan, Col. Davies, and others, including in the illustrious catalogue even Thomas Ritchie, Isaac Hill, John M. Niles, and Moses Dawson!

Col. Richard M. Johnson, now Vice President of the United States, said (in Congress):

"Who is Gen. Harrison? The son of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who spent the greater part of his large fortune in redeeming the pledge he then gave of his 'fortune, life and sacred honor,' to secure the liberties of his country.

"Of the career of Gen. Harrison I need not speak—the history of the West is his history. For forty years he has been identified with its interests, its perils and its hopes. Universally beloved in the walks of peace, and distinguished by his ability in the councils of his country, he has been yet more illustriously distinguished in the field.

"During the late war, he was longer in active service than any other General officer he was, perhaps, often in action than any one of them, and never sustained a defeat."

James Madison, in a special message to Congress, Dec. 18, 1811, said:

"While it is deeply lamented that so many valuable lives have been lost in the action which took place on 7th ultimo, Congress will see with satisfaction the dauntless spirit of fortitude victoriously displayed by every description of troops engaged, as well as the collected firmness which distinguished their commander on an occasion requiring the utmost exertions of valor and discipline."

James Madison in his message to Congress, Nov. 1812, said:

"An ample force from the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, is placed, with the addition of a few regulars, under the command of Brigadier General Harrison, who possesses the entire confidence of his fellow soldiers, among whom are citizens, some of them volunteers in the ranks, not less distinguished by their political stations, than by their personal merits."

In Mr. Madison's message of Dec. 1813, the compliment was extended, as follows:

"The success on Lake Erie having opened a passage to the territory of the enemy, the officer commanding the North Western arms, transferred the war thither and rapidly pursuing the hostile troops, fleeing with their savage associate, forced a general action which quickly terminated in the capture of the British, and dispersion of the savage force."

"This result is signally honorable to Major General Harrison, by whose military talents it was prepared."

The following tribute of praise was paid to General Harrison, in 1811, by eleven of the officers who fought under his banner at the battle of Tippecanoe:

"Should our country again require our services to oppose a civilized or a savage foe, we should march under General Harrison with the most perfect confidence of victory and fame.

Joel Cook, R. B. Burton,  
Nathan Adams, A. Hawkins,  
H. Burchstead, Hosea Blood,  
Josiah Snelling, O. G. Burton,  
C. Fuller, G. Gooding,  
J. D. Foster.

behalf of our country, not only the consummate abilities of the general, but of the heroism of the man; and when we take into view the benefits which must result to that country from those exertions, we cannot for a moment, withhold our meed of applause."

Legislature of Kentucky, Jan. 7, 1812. "Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Kentucky, in the late campaign against the Indians upon the Wauhatch, Gov. William Henry Harrison has behaved like a hero, a patriot, and a General and that for his cool, deliberate, skillful and gallant conduct in the battle of Tippecanoe, he well deserves the warmest thanks of his country and his nation."

Gen. Anthony Wayne, in his letter to the Secretary of War, giving an official account of his sanguinary Indian battle, in 1792, said:

"My faithful and gallant Lieutenant Harrison, rendered the most essential service, by communicating my orders in every direction, and by his conduct and bravery, exciting the troops to press for victory."

Resolutions directing medals to be struck, and together with the thanks of Congress, presented to Major Gen. Harrison, and Governor Shelby, and for other purposes.

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, "That the thanks of Congress be, and they are hereby presented to Major General William Henry Harrison, and Isaac Shelby, late Governor of Kentucky, and through them, to the officers and men under their command, for their gallantry and good conduct in defeating the combined British and Indian forces under Major General Proctor on the Thames, in Upper Canada, on the 15th day of October, one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, capturing the British army, with their baggage, camp equipage, and artillery; and that the President of the United States be requested to cause two gold medals to be struck, emblematical of this triumph, and presented to General Harrison and Isaac Shelby, late Governor of Kentucky."

H. CLAY, Speaker of the House of Representatives, JOHN GAILLIARD, President of the Senate, pro tempore. April 4, 1818.—Approved, JAMES MONROE.

Gov. Shelby to Mr. Madison, May 18, 1814, says:

"I feel no hesitation to declare to you that I believe Gen. Harrison to be one of the first military characters I ever knew."

Col. Richard M. Johnson to Gen. Harrison, July 4, 1813, says:

"We did not want to serve under cowards or traitors: but under one (Harrison) who had proved himself to be wise, prudent and brave."

Commodore Perry to Gen. Harrison, August 18, 1817, says:

"The prompt change made by you in the order of battle on discovering the position of the enemy, has always appeared to me to have evinced a high degree of military talent. I concur with the venerable Shelby in his general approbation of your conduct in that campaign."

Hon. Langdon Cheves, on the battle of the Thames.

"The victory of Harrison, was such as would have secured to a Roman General in the best days of the Republic, the honors of a triumph! He put an end to the war in the Uppermost Canada."

Sentiments of the Hero of Fort Stephenson, Col. Crogan.

"I desire no plaudits which are bestowed upon me at the expense of Gen. Harrison. I have felt the warmest attachment for him as a man, and my confidence in him as an able commander remains unshaken. I feel every assurance that he will at all times do me ample justice; and nothing could give me more pain than to see his enemies seize upon this occasion to deal out their unfriendly feelings and acrimonious dislike; and as long as he continues (as in my humble opinion he has hitherto done) to make the wisest arrangements, and the most judicious disposition, which the forces under his command will justify, I shall not hesitate to unite with the army in bestowing upon him that confidence which he so richly merits, and which has on no occasion been withheld."

The Richmond Enquirer said:

"Gen. Harrison's letter tells us every thing that we wish to know about the officers, except himself. He does justice to every one but Harrison—and the world must therefore do justice to the man who was too modest to be just to himself."

From Gen. Harrison's Report of the Battle of the Thames:

"We have suffered greatly for the want of provisions, and the whole army has subsisted for the last three days, on raw beef without salt."

"In all ages, and in all countries, it has been observed, that the cultivators of the soil are those who are the least willing to part with their rights and submit themselves to the will of a master."

WM. H. HARRISON.

"The People of the United States—May they ever remember that to preserve their liberties they must do their own voting and their own fighting."

WM. H. HARRISON.

"Gen. Harrison has done more for his country, with less compensation for it, than any man living."

**PRESIDENT MADISON.**

Ex-Governor Isaac Hill, Nov. 23, 1813, in the New Hampshire Patriot said: "What man lives, whose whole heart and soul is not British, that cannot sincerely rejoice in the late victories of Perry and Harrison, that does not feel a pride in the valor and patriotism of the West, who have freed a country large as the Empire of Alexander the Great, from the Indian tomahawk and scalping knife! If there be such an one, he is a traitor to his country—he possesses the spirit of a murderer."

John M. Niles, late Van Buren candidate for Governor in Connecticut, in his life of Perry, published in 1821, after giving a general biography of General Harrison, said:

"The defence at Fort Meigs, and the subsequent capture of the British army, may fairly be considered the most brilliant and extraordinary events of the late war."

In alluding to the battle of the Thames, he said:

"It must be conceded that this victory reflected great honor upon the national arms, and upon the troops by whom it was achieved."

"The action, and the movements which preceded it, afford ample testimony of the judgment and cool intrepidity of General Harrison; and indeed, all the events of the campaign support these characteristics; the disasters attending it having in no instance been imputable to him."

"There are, perhaps, on record, few instances of such cool and steady intrepidity, on the part of military, or a force of this description, as was displayed on this occasion."

"Harrison and Perry left Detroit in the Ariel, and arrived at Erie on the 22d of October.—Here they were received with every demonstration of joy and admiration; the discharge of cannon, illuminations, &c. They were hailed as the deliverers of the frontiers."

(From the National Intelligencer.)  
COPY  
Of a Letter from Gen. Harrison to James Lyons, Esq. of Richmond, Va.

NORTH BEND, June 1st, 1840.  
My Dear Sir:—When I received your letter of the 14th of April, I was very unwell with a violent cold in the head, which terminated in intermittent neuralgia, or sun pain, as it is commonly called, which was so much increased by writing that I was obliged for some time to do very little in that way. When I recovered, my unanswered letters had increased to so fearful a mass that I have not yet been able to get through it, even with the assistance of my conscience-keeping committee. And altho' I have adopted the method of getting rid of a large portion of them by committing them to the flames instead of the committee, such are the interruptions to which I am subjected by a constant stream of visitors, that I am able to make very little progress in lessening my file. You have in the above my apology for treating you with apparent neglect, which it was impossible that I should do, as well from your high standing in society, as from the regard I feel for you in consequence of the long and intimate friendship and connexion between our families. But for these reasons, candor induces me to say that I could never have brought myself to answer the political part of your letter at all. I am convinced that it was totally unnecessary, for I cannot suppose that my personal friends and connexions in my native State could think that I was less of a gentleman or an honest man than those ardent politicians further South—Stanly, Alford, Legare, Dawson, King, &c. &c. They take it for granted that I could not suffer my Vincennes speech and others to be quoted by my friends to show my opinions on the subject of Abolitionism, if I did not hold those opinions at this time; they have, therefore, treated with scorn and contempt the charge of my being an Abolitionist, and truly assert that I have done and suffered more to support Southern rights than any other persons north of Mason's and Dixon's line. I have had, indeed, a great number of applications from individuals (nine-tenths at least my opponents) requiring me to reiterate what I have said or written upon the subject of the United States Bank, Abolitionism, &c. I have declined to answer them of late at all; amongst other reasons, because it was physically impossible that I should do it; and as they required my opinions in manuscript, particularly addressed to the writers, they would not be satisfied with my writing one letter and sending a printed copy to each. I was determined, however, to avail myself of the first favorable opportunity, and, referring to the letters and speeches I had made on the subjects I have mentioned, to endorse them all. This I have recently done in a letter to a committee appointed by the Whig members of the Legislature of New York. You will probably see it published by the time this reaches you.

In relation to the discussion between Mr. Randolph and myself, in the Senate, of which a statement is annexed to the address, what better evidence could be given than that there is no possibility of satisfying my political enemies by any thing that I could write, than the garbled account which they have given of that discussion? If the charge made upon me by Mr. Randolph is authen-

WM. H. HARRISON.

WM. H. HARRISON.