W. D. Haywood

THE RALEIGH REGISTER

IS PUBLISHED SEMI-WEEKLY AND WEEKLY,

BY SEATON GALES,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS.

For the Semi-Weekly Paper, $5 per annum.

For the Weekly Paper, $3 per annum.

THE RALEIGH REGISTER.

VOLUME LI. RALEIGH, N. C., OCTOBER 31, 1849. NUMBER 87.

POETRY.

SLANDER.

BY FRANCES S. OSGOOD.

A whisper woke the air—
A soft, light tone, and low,
Yet barbed with shame and wo;
Now, might it only perish there,
Nor farther go!

Ah me! a quick and eager ear
Caught up the little-meaning sound!
Another voice has breathed it clear,
And so it wanders round
From ear to lip—from lip to ear—
Until it reached a gentle heart,
And *that—it broke.*

It was the only heart it found—
The only heart 'twas meant to find,
When first its accents woke;
It reached that tender heart at last,
And *that—it broke.*

Low as it seemed to *other's* ears,
It came a thunder-crash to hers—
That fragile girl, so fair and gay—
That guileless girl so pure and true!

'Tis said a little humming bird,
That in a fragrant lily lay,
And dreamed the summer morn away,
Was killed but by the gun's report
Some idle boy had fired in sport!
The very sound a death blow came.

And thus her happy heart that beat
With love and hope, so fast and sweet,
Shrined in its *Lily* too—
(For who the maid that knew
But owned the delicate, flower like grace
Of her young form and face?)
When first that word,
Her light heart heard,
It fluttered like a frightened bird,
Then shut its wings and sighed,
And with a silent shudder—*died.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Cincinnati Gazette.

OVERLAND JOURNEY TO CALIFORNIA.

BY M. POWELL.

Our party was composed of ten persons—a very small number, when compared to the many mammoth companies forming when we left the States, who were to undertake the same journey. The belief was then quite prevalent that it would be unsafe to set out on the perilous, and, I may add, arduous task of crossing the plains, unless in large bodies. Experience, the lamp that guides the shrewd, has ere this taught many the fallacy of the idea. Large companies, composed of a heterogeneous mass of insubordinate spirits, seemingly, were organized upon the principle that numbers, with the capital that numbers would command, was the all-important object to be attained for protection and success. On the contrary, joint stock companies have all the disadvantages without any of the real benefits that tend to insure a pleasant and speedy expedition. The restless spirit natural to adventurous men soon breaks out in complaints against the officers for some real or fancied neglect of duty, while others lament that they have to bear more than their proportion of the hardships of the journey; and there is another class that find fault with everything that is done, without their views being first consulted, or else the idea originated with them; and lastly, there are those who are soon disheartened, and lag behind, and in this way keep the more enterprising back, like the lazy student at college, until he is dragged on by his class, and put through by main force. These causes for disagreement generally result, before the company reaches the second fort, in a disorganization, and adoption of the motto, "Every one for himself," or, the formation of small parties, and in this way they are more likely to succeed.

We left St. Joseph early in June. It was a beautiful day. Beneath the brilliant and cloudless sky, all nature seemed to wear a countenance of cheerfulness, and the resplendant rays of a morning sun made the large drops of dew, that hung from each leaf and twig, sparkle like a thousand diamonds. The clouds of dapple gray, that in the east first denote the approach of morning, had no sooner faded away, than the green trees sung their song in the notes of the feathered tribe that everywhere filled their branches. All turned to take a parting look at the last white settlement that we should see before reaching the end of our journey.—There it calmly lay, as if asleep, with its neat white houses shining out from the dark green foliage, while the diversified face of nature, in hill, valley, and plain, rendered the view extremely beautiful. It seemed to disappear behind us upon the verge of two immensities—civilization upon the one hand, and barbarism upon the other.

We crossed the Missouri, and pursued the well-worn road, winding our way with sad hearts, for our thoughts were far off with those at home, whom we might never again behold—all before us seemed enveloped in the dark pall of uncertainty; all behind us was the translucent sunshine of happiness and prosperity. Every one of the party became oppressed with thoughts peculiar to himself, and lost in reflection, each one preserved a moody silence. The scorching rays of a hot sun beat down upon us with intolerable oppression; but as we entered the woods through which our road lay, we consoled ourselves with the thought that the sunny part of the road was a kind of probationary state, to fit us for the enjoyment of the groves, with the pleasant air and cool shade incident to them. The first day's journey was rather monotonous. One of our party, Mr. Green, had for several days previous been suffering with premonitory symptoms of cholera, and he concluded to return. Reports from Rumor with her many tongues, that

From the orient to the drooping west,
Makes the wind her post-horse,

brought to our ears accounts that the cholera had broken out with fearful violence among those who had preceded us, and strange stories were told of those who, being seized, were deserted by their company, and left to die uncared for and alone on the plains. One of the propensities of the human mind is to exaggerate, and circumstances of a simple nature need only distance and mystery to be attached to them, and the imagination will complete the story, and make marvellously cruel things out of trifles. We parted from our comrade with many regrets, but have not yet had any reason to believe these fearful stories that rumor blew in every eye, until tears did drown the wind.

The first night out our tent was pitched, and mules picketed in the forest with supplies of wood and water close at hand. Soon after dark the sentinel was stationed, and we lay down, but did not get to sleep until "far ayont the twa'." Our thoughts were of golden dreams in future, and we were talking of plans to ensure success to our enterprise.—Now, we would think of the novelty of our situation, of the restlessness peculiar to American character, and of the similarity of these expeditions to those that preceded us, by a few hundred years, from the old world, which history has clothed in the garb of chivalry. The expedition of De Soto was for the express purpose of discovering the land of gold: he did not continue far enough west, and failed in his enterprise. Yet he found that which has immortalized his name, and his burial-place continues to have a monumental mark that will remain unchanged by age, and still roll on in its petty pace, from day to day, until the last syllable of recorded time.

Thus we lay in the silent forest of the far West, ruminating on the present and the past, as

Thought on thought, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,

until gradually we fell into drowsy slumbers, from which we were aroused by the sharp crack of a rifle, close by our tent.—All sprang to our feet, and hurried out to inquire the cause. Our guard, the veritable Jim Cobb, had fired the shot, as he said, at a thief who was among the mules. Upon examination, two of our best mules were gone. All immediately gave chase in various directions, but it turned out to no purpose. When morning dawned, we could distinctly trace them from the pickets, and determined to follow. Lawrence, Cobb, Davis, Taylor, and myself, composed the party, and we proceeded on the trail of them for over thirty miles, when we met a party of Osage Indians, who told us, in answer to our inquiries, that they had met a white man with our identical mules, making all speed towards Fort Leavenworth. He was an expert thief, and probably had watched our party for the express purpose of making us part company with our invaluable property. We gave up the chase and returned, being compelled by the loss to abandon one of our wagons. From this encamping ground to the mission or agency station of the Sacs and Foxes, we found the roads almost impassable. The cholera seized Dr. Charles Duncomb, of New York, another of our party, and, at his urgent request, we left him in the care of the kind and gentlemanly Colonel Vaughan, commander of the station.

On the 18th of June, crossed the Neinhaw river, and entered upon the plains. We experienced much annoyance from the mules; they are stubborn animals, and very hard to control; sometimes, in their freaks, it is impossible to move them forward an inch; the more you beat them the more obstinate they become, until they are at last pacified by being coaxed into a forward locomotion. The one I ride has thrown me twice, but without doing me any more injury than a severe knock on the head. He headed me, by planting his fore-feet firmly out at angle of forty five degrees, and with his head pretty well down, he gave a sudden rear with his hind legs, that sent me over his head in a hurry. This kind of ground and lofty tumbling is very common, I understand, among novitiates in the mule-riding business.

We pursued our way through the sun all day long, and on the afternoon of the 10th of June, we were, to allow the Hibernianism, out of sight of land; the eye searching in vain for a tree or bush, on the broad expansive prairies; nothing was visible but its coat of green stretching far and wide, a continuous grassy bed, until its color melted away into the tints of the sky. When night closed in we had very little water and no wood. Being exceedingly tired, we were soon in a sound sleep, although the wolves kept up a fearful howling close about our ears. We were awakened at daybreak by the braying of the mules, and the lowing of the oxen, which formed quite a concert; one that probably would not be quite fashionable in the States as Biscaccianti's or Brienti's, but to us the signal for gearing up, and to breakfast; and as the sun rides from his green bed, we are on the road for our day's journey.—Have passed a large number of graves, a fearful mark of the ravages of the epidemic among the emigrants who preceded us. On one of them we could distinctly read the name of "William Chapman, of Cincinati, died May 19th." It was traced on a rude board for a headstone, and also, "Dr. Ryan, of Ohio, died May 23d." Many other newly-made graves were along the roadside, and some of them were torn up by wolves, and the bones were scattered around bleaching in the sun. It was a sad sight to behold them, and one well calculated to fill us with gloomy bodings of the future. At one place the bones and skulls were so numerous, torn from the graves and strewn over the prairies, that it resembled a field months after battle, where

Foe and friend mingle in the dust alike;
But not 't is o'er, like the wave sunk down.
Mean the winds a requiem song,
To spirits of the bones that bleach the ground.

After endeavoring to learn the names of the unfortunates, without success, we continued on, passing over these graveyards as quickly as possible.

On the afternoon of the 20th of June, reached the banks of the Little Blue river, after a journey of nearly a month. What a change has come over us! so altered in appearance that we should scarcely be recognized by our most intimate friends.

Imagine to yourself, far out on the prairie, surrounded by teams and live-stock, a picturesque group, eight in number, with complexions tanned to a color partaking of a glowing twilight tinge, between a white and black, or a shade between night and day, all with long shaggy beards and moustache, broad-brimmed hats, and red flannel shirts on—one washing clothes, another making bread, others shoeing the mules, and doing the blacksmithing in general for the company, the rest of the group carrying wood and water, and feeding the stock, and you complete the picture. We have no idlers, no loungers; all are busy at something while there is light to see. The transition from our luxurious home fare, and easy manner of living, to pickled pork and salt bacon, and the hardships incident to an overland journey, are so great, as not easily to be conceived, except by those who are able to contrast the difference between them by experience. There is much excitement, and sometimes real enjoyment, in a border life, notwithstanding the hardships; something is turning up continually to give spirit to the party, and our fare we look upon in a matter-of-course way, until it is occasionally varied, when fortune smiles upon us, by a change to fresh, delicious game.

As we were toiling along one day, we were overtaken by a son of the Emerald Isle, all alone and on foot. He was not overloaded; his baggage consisted of a small bundle, hung on a stout cudgel, swung over his shoulder, the end of which rested in a huge fist, not unlike a brown loaf in resemblance. His walk was fast and steady; as he came up opposite to me, humming an Irish tune, I inquired where he was bound. "To California, sir," he replied, with a peculiar twinkle of his small grey eyes. The idea was so novel, to think that he would attempt a three months' journey, solitary and alone, across a country totally unknown to him, without friends, acquaintances, or provisions to last him any length of time, that I at first began to doubt his sincerity. But on he was going, and would soon have left our party behind, if it had not been proposed to him that he join our company. He accepted, and is now one of us. He has turned out to be an original genius, and witty, as you may well suppose. We have given him the name of "Tall Walker," although he disavows any claim to it, but says he was christened Pierce Flemming, in county Mayo.

Numbers of deer and antelope are to be seen, but too far off to get a shot at them.—The huntsman of our company is Joseph Taylor. Who is there that has visited, for a few years past, the well-known place of resort called Sportsman's Hall, near Cincinnati, and not heard of the soul of good company and marksmen, Joe Taylor? He still continues with his shot gun, or rifle, to be equal to any emergency with a possibility of success. Wild turkies, ducks, and snipe are frequently brought in by him, after an absence of but an hour or two.

STORM ON THE PRAIRIE.

On the 25th of June, encamped upon the open plain without wood or water. We are compelled to drink from the stagnant pools in the holes on the prairie, so intense is our thirst. The air is hot and oppressive.—Dark clouds were looming up in the southwest, indicating the approach of supply in the stormy clouds. A thunder storm on the prairie is a fearful sight. All was rendered snug at our quarters, like any ship at sea, at the first distant sound of Vulcan's anvil, who is still forging the Ægian shield for Jupiter, not unlike the noise of

Armorers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

The wagons were arranged to form a hollow square, with the tent erected in the centre; the mules were picketed at a short distance on the outside. The clouds rolled up, and drifted across the sky with fearful velocity. Various-sized birds went crying through the air, now flying almost out of sight, now coming down again nearly touching the surface of the earth, and then again disappearing in the distance, as if in search of shelter, or fleeing from the impending wrath of the elements. The atmosphere became agitated; a light breeze blew into a gale. At short intervals the wind would lull, and then an eddy-wind would sweep over the plain, as if beat back from some far off mountain, shucking up the dust and smaller objects that lay in its path. The mules and other animals pulled away at the ropes, as if they, too, saw something in the appearance of inanimate nature, that warned them to flee from approaching danger. All becomes calm. It is too sudden to be of long duration. The cloud banks become more dense and darker—they seem to lie but a few yards above the surface of the earth. It grows dark as night. Of a sudden, the atmosphere is in a blaze; and, with awful rapidity, peal after peal of thunder makes the very ground tremble.—As the first sheet of limpid fire illumes the darkness, instantly followed by a crash like the sound of falling towers—the terror-stricken animals burst their fastenings and run wildly before the storm. The flood-gates of the sky are opened, and everything is deluged with water. The ocean itself seemed lifted from its bed, and borne in a volume through the air; it burst, and poured down the whole of its contents on our devoted heads, in the far distant plains of the Anahuac. The violence of the tempest soon passed by. Long and difficult was the task of recovering our mules again, and it was not till after a race of some miles. Our quarters were rendered most uncomfortable, everything wet through—tent blown down, wagons upset, trunks burst open, and, what to me was a more serious loss than any inconvenience I felt, my writing materals were entirely destroyed. The storm was over almost as sudden as it rose.

And the firmament now glowed
With livid sapphire. Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon
Rising in the clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Without light, or fire, other than the light of heaven, we lay down upon the wet mattrasses, and forgot our troubles, as sleep, the universal leveller, stole o'er our brows with leaden legs and batty wings.

There are many things to cheer the emigrants while on their long march, and not the least of these is the news occasionally received by telegraph. Be not astonished when I tell you that the telegraph is extended along the road to California. I do not mean the great Lightning King, O'Riley's, but a line established by the emigrants themselves, for their own convenience. I will explain. At different points along the road, there are sheets of writing paper nailed up high on the trees by those who have gone on before. They are generally headed with the name of the officers of each company, and from what State they came, and then commence a detail of events occurring among them on the way up to this point, with the date of the time when they passed this telegraphic post. One day, Taylor had been gone longer than usual on a hunting excursion, when it was determined to call a halt, and as it was growing towards five o'clock, we concluded to pitch our tent and go no further that night. He had gone on before us, and we supposed probably turned off the road to follow an antelope or wolf, to get a shot, and in that way had fallen behind us. We thought it best to await his coming up. About an hour afterwards we heard him coming down the road, he being still ahead of us. His mule was loaded with game; and the first words we had from him, as he galloped within hailing distance, were 'More news by Telegraph!' 'What is it?' returned some half dozen voices at once. 'Dupuy, of St. Louis, died of cholera yesterday; his company are six or eight hours ahead of us. I learned the news at the telegraphic station (an oak tree) about two miles up the road.'

On the 28th of June, at morning's dawn, our little train pursued its way along the margin of the Little Blue river, and as the road turned to the left leaving the prairie far behind, I turned to take a last look at its broad green surface, and, with a sigh, involuntarily repeated the lines,

Oh! the prairie lea is the home for me,
For there I am lord of all I see;
The chase, the chase, o'er the boundless waste,
And its grassy course for me.

We are now entering the Pawnee region. The vicious habits of the Indian tribe from which it takes its name are such, that all the emigrants are doubly vigilant while in their country, and it is customary to increase the number of the guard at night. Their thieving propensities are such, that a white man will lose the very coat from his back and the boots from his feet, between sleeping and waking, scarcely being aware of it until fairly aroused, and then he becomes sensible of the fact that they have been stolen from him. The Arabian tale of the three sharpers that stole from the countrymen, who was taking a goat to the Bagdad market, his goat, his mule, and his clothes from his back, without he suspecting it until too late, is a mere nothing to the stories I hear of these Indians. Some of them I will transfer to paper at the earliest opportunity. From the Little Blue river, the road stretches across the country a distance of twenty-eight miles to the Platte river. We passed through fine bottom lands, a dark luxuriant soil, covered for the space of a hundred yards with buffalo skulls. The picturesque scenery surrounding the entrance to this valley, brought to mind the romantic myth of the Northmen.—Imagination pictured among the bones, tall warriors drinking their fierry draught from the skulls of those whom they have killed in battle, and dancing their drunken war-dance in Odin's Halls, and on the mead of Valhallah.

Passing the low bottom lands, we reached the banks of the Platte river; pursuing its course a short distance over rolling lands and dry hard soil, we at length reached Fort Kearney. The idea associated with what is termed a fort would lead one to suppose it would comprise a block house, with loop-holes to fire through, out on the enemy, or four walls enclosing a certain number of feet of ground, either square or oblong, with bastions and cannon, and a sentinel or two to keep up a warlike appearance. Not so with Fort Kearny. It is nothing more than a few mud huts, apparently built for a temporary purpose. It is situated on the north bank of the Platte river, opposite to Grand Island, three hundred and twenty-eight miles from St. Joseph. We reached it on the 30th of June, about mid-day, and encamped on the low plat in front of it.—Found plenty of soldiers, and a blacksmith's shop. The latter we have had occasion to call pretty loudly for, considering the little experience each one of our party has had in that line of business. The venerable descendant of Vulcan, with his assistants, seems to be in great demand, as a large number of emigrants are waiting here to make repairs, and to give their mules time to recover from the effects of over-driving.