

HOW BENTON WON LIFE'S BATTLE

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FORMER GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
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OUTSIDE Missouri the home of Thomas H. Benton, United States senator from 1821 to 1851, is known only to the student of history. Webster, Clay and Calhoun are familiar words everywhere, yet Benton served in the United States senate longer than any of these, and was responsible for more sound legislation than all of them together. His name was never prominently connected with the presidency, yet he accomplished more for his country than have the majority of the presidents.

This remarkable man came into the world in 1782, six years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and departed in 1858, three years before the Civil war. Thus his life covered the formative epoch of a government by the people in the making, and ended just before the outbreak that shook the foundations of the republic and bathed the nation in blood. For many years he ignored the mutterings in the political sky and preferred to believe the talk of war between the states over the question of slavery mere idle chatter. When he realized that the sentiment of disunion was real he took an uncompromising stand in favor of the union and refused to alter his position or trim his sails to meet the breezes from Missouri that were blowing the other way. Though entering public life as an advocate of the admission of Missouri into the union unrestricted as to slavery, he left the public service in the evening of life because he would not consent to vote for the extension of slavery into territory that had before been free. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of state rights, which was, as he understood it, the right of the states to govern themselves as to all matters except those delegated to the federal government. His theory of the republic was an "indissoluble union of self-governing states"—a federated republic.

His education, that is the school part of it, was limited to the grammar schools and a short time in the University of North Carolina. In a larger sense he continued his studies until the day of his death, and was one of the best informed men of his time. While other statesmen were indulging in the dissipation common to that period among public men, he devoted his spare moments to investigation and study, and his knowledge of the details of public matters was vastly superior to that of any of his contemporaries.

Benton's high moral character was blemished by his pugnacious disposition. In his early days he was involved in many "affairs of honor" as duels were termed then. He had not been in St. Louis long when the most unfortunate event in his career occurred. In the trial of a law suit some trivial dispute arose between him and a young attorney named Charles Lucas, a highly esteemed and most estimable young man. Lucas won the case and Benton challenged him. Lucas declined the challenge at first, but Benton persisted and offered deliberate insults. Lucas then accepted. They fought a first duel and no one being injured a second meeting was insisted upon by both parties. In the second duel Lucas fell, mortally wounded. Before dying he took Benton's hand and forgave him, but Benton never forgave himself, and the shadow of this tragedy went with him through the years to his grave. The code-duello as resorted to in those days often for insignificant things, and every public man of consequence had figured in such an affair either as principal or second. This duel was fought the year after Benton arrived in St. Louis. Four years later the father of the lamented victim of the duelling custom was one of the unsuccessful candidates for senator against Benton.

His Fight With "Old Hickory."
Benton, like Andrew Jackson, was of North Carolina birth, and, like Old Hickory, moved to Tennessee when a youth just entering upon manhood's estate. He became Jackson's friend while they both lived in Nashville and co-operated with Jackson in raising the brigade of militia which became the nucleus of the army that was to annihilate the British at New Orleans and make January 8, 1815, a red-letter day in American annals. It was on Benton's advice that the brigade was formed and offered to the government by Jackson, and for a time he was on Jackson's staff. Their friendly relations were, however, interrupted by a disgraceful brawl. Jesse Benton, a brother of Thomas Benton, had fought a duel and Jackson had seconded the antagonist. An angry dispute arose, Benton espousing his brother's cause. Jackson struck Benton with a horse-whip; and in return was shot in the shoulder by Benton. Jackson carried Benton's bullet in his shoulder until the close of his presidential term, and the wound gave him some physical distress to the end of his days. The feeling between them ran high after this episode, and not to subside until the hand of fate

was to bring them together again, one a senator from another state, and the other as a candidate for the presidency of the United States. A year or so after the fight Benton moved to St. Louis, where he opened a law office in connection with a newspaper of which he became editor. He became prominent at once in the discussion of public questions, and took a leading part in securing the admission of Missouri into the union. After a five years' residence in Missouri he was elected by the legislature one of the state's first two United States senators.

Declined Money Profit from Public Service.

Immediately upon his election, with scrupulous regard for his official integrity, Benton called all of his clients to his office and told them that he could not further serve them, as there might be a conflict between their interest and the public welfare. For some of his clients he had litigation over land grants, and as senator he was in a position, through the enactment of laws, to make them and himself wealthy in the settlement of disputed titles. He refused even to recommend an attorney to them, lest this might embarrass him in his public duty. His idea of public office was that an official had no more right to use his public functions to aid personal friends or to advance his own fortune than he would have to put his hand into the public treasury and take money therefrom to pay a private debt. Through all his official career Benton was true to this ideal and was incorruptible and above reproach from any venal standpoint.

Championed "Missouri Compromise."

Benton's career of constructive statesmanship was the greatest Missouri or the west has produced. He came upon the stage of public activity with the enactment of the Missouri compromise, which was largely his work. He left public life coincident with the repeal of that measure. Under this compromise Missouri was admitted into the Union (though it was some years later before the state was formally recognized) as a slave state, with the provision that no state created out of the Louisiana purchase, north of the southern boundary of Missouri, should be admitted with slavery. It hushed slavery agitation for a decade, and any attack upon it for a time was resisted by south as well as north. Benton was 39 years old when he took his seat and had lived exactly half the years given to him. Monroe was just beginning his second term as president, Calhoun was secretary of war, Henry Clay was speaker of the house of representatives. In the next presidential contest Benton supported Clay against Jackson, but ever after that he was Clay's political enemy and Jackson's warmest and strongest supporter.

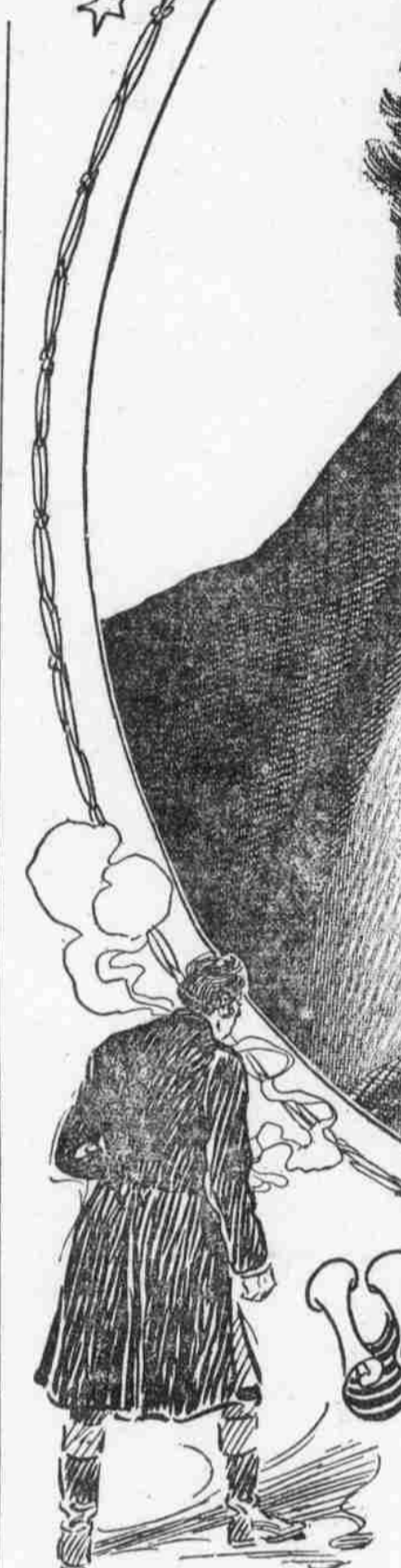
Father of Homestead Law.

To Benton more than any other man is due the fact that there is no frontier in the United States today. What was a wilderness west of the Rocky mountains fifty years ago is now settled by happy and prosperous men and women by reason of his effort in securing the enactment of the homestead law. Benton established the policy of selling public land at a maximum of \$1.25 an acre, giving preference to actual settlers and securing to settlers the right of preemption. This made settlement easy and streams of sturdy men and women began at once to move westward.

Benton looked into the future further than any other statesman of his time. In answer to the taunts that the western country, particularly Oregon, would never be anything more than a hunting ground, he prophesied that the time would come when there would be more people west of the Rockies than east. He advocated the construction of a military road to New Mexico, and was so earnest in his support of the idea of a transcontinental railroad that his enemies charged him with being mentally unbalanced on the subject, and even his friends feared he was too enthusiastic. In one of his first speeches he prophesied that the Pacific coast would soon become the door of Asia and advised sending ministers to China and Japan—a proposal at that time considered extremely humorous.

Brought About Specie Payments.

It was through Benton's effort that specie payments were established and that all our money became based on gold and silver. So earnest was he in the demand for a specie basis that he was nicknamed "Old Bullion," of which he became very proud, and in his speeches often referred to himself by that term. He was at first inclined to favor a protective tariff system, but later strongly opposed protection merely for the sake of protection. He stated his position thus: "The fine effects of the tariff upon the prosperity of the west have been celebrated on this floor. With how much reason let facts respond and people judge. I do not think we are indebted to the high tariff for our fertile lands and navigable rivers, and I am certain we are indebted to those blessings for the prosperity we enjoy." While he opposed the protective system he voted



for a protective duty on lead, which was largely produced in Missouri. In this he made the mistake that has been made by so many senators and congressmen of this day, who say they oppose protection, but vote for protection on the products of their own states, thereby placing themselves in the position of not being able to successfully question the justice of the demand of those in other states for a larger share of protection for themselves.

Fought United States Bank.

Jackson's greatest battle was against the United States bank, which he declared must either be put out of business or it would run the government. Benton led this fight in the senate. He brought up the question in 1831 by submitting a resolution to the effect that it was not expedient to re-charter the bank. The war against the bank raged fiercely for years. It had many powerful adherents and obtained the support of a number of members of congress, as was shown later by investigation, through what amounted to brazen bribery in the way of favoritism on loans. In the midst of the fight the presidential election of 1832 took place and Jackson was triumphantly re-elected. Shortly after this Jackson made an order withdrawing the public funds from the bank. This precipitated a tremendous public uproar and the senate adopted a resolution censuring Jackson for the act. Benton immediately began a fight to expunge this resolution from the record, and finally, in the last days of the Jackson administration, the motion prevailed amidst great excitement and the resolution of censure was expunged by having a black border drawn around it and across its face the words: "Expunged by order of the senate, January 16, 1837." Jackson deeply appreciated the value of Benton's support and years later, on his deathbed, said to a friend: "Tell Col. Benton I am grateful."

Benton was the supporter of Jackson's successors to the presidency, particularly of Van Buren and Polk, but after Andrew Jackson, the presidents up to the Civil war wielded little influence compared with those before, and were largely engaged in a game of hide-and-seek on the slavery question.

In 1848 the anti-Bentonites carried a majority of the Missouri legislature, and a resolution was passed demanding that slavery be permitted to exist in territory north of the Missouri compromise boundary and instructing the senators to vote accordingly. Benton denounced this resolution as treasonable and refused to obey it. He said it did not represent the sentiment of the people of the state and he appealed from the Missouri legislature to the Missouri people. The struggle was bitter and intense. As Benton was up for re-election, it being the close of his fifth term as senator, the effort was to control the legislature which was to elect the senator for the following term. Neither side obtained a majority of the members and a deadlock resulted to be broken by the anti-Benton Democrats combining with the Whigs and bringing about Benton's defeat.

The old warrior was not dismayed and kept up the fight. In 1852 he was sent to the lower house of congress from St. Louis as a Union Democrat. For thirty years he had been absolute dictator in the politics of Missouri. His word was final, and his wishes law, but the tide had turned, and for the remaining years of his life he stood steadily against him. Yet at no time in his career does Benton present a more inspiring figure than when, with his back to the wall, crowded on every side by foes, he continued to battle for the principles he believed in. By compromising and by truckling to the public sentiment of his state he could have regained his seat in the senate, but he would have lost the love and admiration due the brave man who prefers defeat with the right to victory with what he considers wrong.

Benton's mannerisms were marked and did not tend to make him popular with the masses. He seemed egotistical to the point of absurdity, yet in him it was merely exaggerated self-respect. To the casual observer stern and pompous, he was gentle and tender-hearted to those who knew him well. His public and private life were above reproach. His high sense of honor as a public servant, his incorruptible integrity, his unwavering adherence to whatever cost to the principles he believed in, his powerful intellect and his aggressive energy combined to make him a fighter eminently qualified to lead and represent the militant people of the West in the first half of the last century.

He was defeated for re-election to the house in 1854, and in 1856 became the candidate of the Union Democrats for governor, and ran third in the race. He was now 74 years old, but as vigorous and robust as ever. Without lamenting his fate or the people's ingratitude, he cheerfully took up the completion of his "Thirty Years' View," giving a mental picture of the important events in the history of our country with which he had been connected. In 1858 he died in Washington, undismayed by the storm of public misunderstanding that had wrecked his political life. He looked into

the future and saw the approval of coming generations whose views would not be obscured by the passions and excitement of the moment. When the news of his death reached Missouri there was an entire change of sentiment and all classes united to do honor to his memory. They then realized that the mightiest man of Missouri was dead, the man who towered above friends and foes. All the state was in mourning and his funeral at St. Louis was attended by more than forty thousand people.

Saved Missouri to Union.

It was the fight Benton made that enabled others, when the war came, to keep Missouri in the Union. If Missouri had seceded there probably would have been a different story to tell than that which came from Appomattox.

So Benton won life's battle by simple honesty, by perseverance, by having ideals and remaining true to them in sunshine and in shadow. His influence will be felt for good as long as this republic lasts, and the failure to secure political preferment at the end of his life by giving up the fight accentuates the grandeur of his character. He lost for the moment, but in losing he gained for all time. For him there was victory in defeat. The lesson of his life is—it is not essential always to win, but it is essential to keep the faith.

The Mystery of a Duel.

Having fought his duel and saved his honor by firing a shot in the air, the editor of a French provincial newspaper went back to his desk and the incident had quite left his mind when he felt something strange in his thigh. He looked and found that he was bleeding profusely.

A doctor was called, who discovered that a bullet was embedded in the editor's thigh some two inches deep and required extraction. "Why was this not taken notice of on the spot where the duel took place?" he asked. The editor was as much in the dark as the doctor. At the moment of the duel he had fired into the air and his adversary also took a distracted sort of aim. There had evidently been no intention of doing the slightest harm on either side. The editor felt nothing as he left the field and had shaken hands with his antagonist as a sign of reconciliation. How a bullet came to be lodged in his thigh was simply one of the mysteries of dueling.

Another Beam for the Crops.
"Not many delegates appeared at the Esperantist congress that met in Kansas."
"No. Most of them stopped off and hired out as harvest hands."

Strategy.
Bessie—But didn't you say if George tried to kiss you, why, you wouldn't stand for it?
Peggy—I didn't. I—I sat down in a hammock.

THE JUDICIAL
Sunday School
Specially Arranged

LESSON TEXT—
Memory verses 34:1-4
GOLDEN TEXT—
I have done it into these my brethren, and unto me." Matt. 23:23
TIME—Tuesday, April 13:30, Luke 21:32, and again in Matt. 16:28, "there are some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," when "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds."
PLACE—On the Mount of Olives.
Suggestion and Practice

That there is a day of judgment, and that it is difficult, but it is important, to decide the time or time of the coming of the judgment. It is said in Matt. 24:29 that "this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished," and it is repeated in Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32, and again in Matt. 16:28, "there are some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," when "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds."

This must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the old dispensation or age, and the coming of the gospel dispensation. But it does not exclude the great and final coming and judgment day at the end of that age.

There is really a judgment day at every great crisis of the nation or of our lives, at death, at the coming of rewards or punishments for our actions, at every time of decision. For instance, we have seen within the last few years many persons who have been for years growing rich by graft and dishonesty and have suddenly met their judgment day, while others have been reaping the rewards of faithful service. So young men who have been going on in course of drinking and rioting for a long time, suddenly find themselves drunkards, in ill health, incapacitated for their best work. They have been brought up at a judgment day; while those who have resisted temptation and been faithful and true are also reaping their rewards.

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand. The sheep, the righteous. Come. Draw near to your Elder Brother, to your Father, to your home, for here is the place for you. Ye blessed of my Father means exactly "my Father's blessed ones," denoting not simply that they have been blessed by him, but that they are his. Blessings innumerable had come to them through their being willing to become his children and accept the kind of blessings he had to bestow, such as his loving care, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the experiences of the gospel, the renewal of the heart, sanctification by the Spirit, the power to become children and heirs of God, the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, eternal life, the favor of God, the rest in the everlasting arms, the pavilion under the shadow of his wings.

Receive not by purchase, or by labors, but by becoming children of God, like God, and therefore heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Every one must be the heir of him whose child he is. He that is a child of sin is an heir of sin; a child of the devil inherits from the devil; a child of goodness and of God inherits from God. The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17), in which saints reign over infinite forces and powers to make them minister to happiness and good: "All things are yours," because "ye are Christ's."

Ye have done it unto me, the poor and needy and sick, and all the classes whom Jesus helped in Palestine are his representatives now on earth. The only visible expression of our love to him is through them. What a privilege this is to show our love to our Master. How it enriches our life if we keep in mind that we are not only helping the needy, but expressing our love to our Master.

The unconsciousness of the righteous shows that their virtues were sincere and true. Whosoever does good deeds for the sake of the reward deserves no reward, and will obtain none, for the soul of goodness is left out of such deeds.

The cause of the doom was the refusal to do the deeds that belong to the heavenly kingdom and to be ruled by its motive. They refused to be fit for heaven. They decided to live selfish lives. The plan of their lives was such that all the evils of society—graft, child labor, poverty, degradation, crime, oppression, drunkenness, disease, could go on without any effort on their part to put an end to them.

The punishment is like the sin: it omits heaven and joy and God and the companionship of the good from our lives, and adds the everlasting fire. This is a warning of love. It is a statement of the fact that by the nature of things sin leads to ruin, righteousness to heaven.

No evil can enter heaven, for heaven would not be heaven any longer.
President Eliot of Harvard addressed a medical meeting, and however people might believe in a future hell, it is their business to show that if they persisted in evil, they would find a hell here.
It is for each of us to decide, and start to lead where we wish to go forever.
The law of God is not more than you