

THE GASTONIA GAZETTE.

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MR. BONNER'S STORY OF THE LEDGER.

Famous Editor's Own Version of the Beginning and Rise of His Paper.—Wonders of Advertising.—How He Engaged Noted Persons as Contributors and Great Sums He Paid.

New York Herald.

The Ledger Monthly was sold last Saturday to the Every Month Publishing Company for \$6,000 cash, exclusive of outstanding accounts. Creditors will receive about twenty-five cents on the dollar and the scholarships will be continued by the purchasers. So passes to the journalistic boueyard the paper that has made millions for its founder and which became a wreck with his death. A poor Irish boy, with only \$5 in his pocket, Robert Bonner landed in New York and commenced his newspaper career on the Hartford Courant, at Hartford, Conn., where he drifted to New York.

In an interview with Frank G. Carpenter some six years ago he told the story of how he came to start the Ledger. This story is now reproduced in the current number of the Journalist of this city.

"The New York Ledger," said Mr. Bonner, was in 1850 a little financial sheet known as the Merchants' Ledger. At this time I was working in the printing office. We had an advertising solicitor who liked the way in which I displayed his advertisements. He left the paper a little later on and became connected with the Merchants' Ledger. He told the proprietor he could get a great many more advertisements if I were to set them up, and it was in this way that I got an offer of a better salary from the Merchants' Ledger. I took it. It was a small sheet, devoted to mercantile affairs, and it had less than three thousand circulation. Soon after I became employed upon it the proprietor wanted to sell and I bought him out. I ran the paper for a short time as a mercantile paper, and gradually turned it into a family one.

GOT FANNY FERN.

"One day I decided that if it had the best reading matter a paper of that class could have it would get a very large circulation, and I concluded to get it. I began at once to get the best of contributors, and, among others secured Miss Fanny Fern. Miss Fanny Fern was the most popular woman writer of that time, but she had never written for the newspapers. A book of hers had just had a circulation of something like 5,000 copies, and I think she looked down upon newspaper work. I first offered her \$25 a column for a story. She refused it. I wrote her again and made the offer \$50 a column.

"This she also declined, when the return mail brought her another offer from me of \$75 a column. Upon this she said to a friend, 'I like the spirit of that man Bonner, and I wish you would go down and see him.' Her friend came and we eventually got together.

"I then proposed to give her \$100 a column, but said I did not want the story to run over ten columns. She replied that she would write the story for \$1,000 provided I would take it whether it ran nine columns or eleven columns, as she could not tell just how much it would run out.

"I agreed to this, and the story was published. The circumstances of the engagement were told, and nearly every newspaper in the country published my extravagance in paying \$100 a column for a story. I got \$50,000 worth of advertising out of the arrangement, and the people began to ask for the Ledger. Before this I had had trouble in getting the news stands to take the Ledger. After this they were glad to get it."

Speaking of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's connection with the paper, Mr. Bonner said that he became acquainted with him through a poem of one of his lady friends.

RECALLS MR. BEECHER.

"He sent me the manuscript, stating that if I used it a check would be very acceptable to the lady. I wrote back at once that I had plenty of poetry, but that I wanted himself. I told him that if he would give me from a half to three quarters of a column a week I would pay him \$2,000 a year. I sent a check for \$2,000 with the letter as the advance salary for the first year. He accepted it, and from that time until his death he wrote for the Ledger. He wrote editorials chiefly. Many of them were published under the heading of 'Thoughts as They Occur by One Who Keeps His Eyes Open.' The first article, I remember, was entitled 'A Cannon Ball in a Hat.' It gave the experience of a

man who attempted to carry a cannon ball in his hat. It described how the cannon ball grew heavier and heavier, and how the fear of detection ate into the soul of the thief. A personal moral was brought out from this which struck home to every reader.

"A great deal of the matter written by Mr. Beecher was not published over his own signature and this was also the case with the articles of Harriet Beecher Stowe. It was during the years just preceding the war. We had then a large circulation in the South, and the name of Mr. Beecher as one of the contributors would have lost thousands of subscribers."

"Was not \$30,000 a great deal to pay for a novel?" "Yes," replied Mr. Bonner, "it was. But I think the venture was a good business investment. The way I came to pay just this amount was rather curious. I had made an arrangement with Edward Everett to write a series of articles for the Ledger."

ODD ADVERTISING. "Mr. Everett was at that time the leading statesman of the country along certain lines. He was anxious that Mount Vernon should be bought and preserved, and he was giving lectures over the country for the purpose of raising money for what was called the 'Mount Vernon fund.' I proposed to him that I would give \$10,000 to the fund if he would write a series of articles for the Ledger. He accepted it. His articles were widely read, and the Ledger again was the most talked of paper in the country. I afterward paid him \$14,000 additional for other articles. This was done some time before I asked Mr. Beecher to write a novel. When I did write I first offered to pay him \$24,000 for the story, or as much as I had paid Mr. Everett for his writing. Later on I increased the amount to \$30,000.

"MUST CLEAR MY HEAD."

"Here is what he answered in reply to my first proposition:— 'Plymouth Rock at a Council. DEAR MR. BONNER—I am almost dumb after reading your proposition and must clear my head before I say a word. Signed, 'HENRY WARD BEECHER.'"

"When it was announced that Mr. Beecher was to write the story there was a decided sensation in literary and religious circles. Some preachers, and especially a Rev. Mr. Seeley, criticised Mr. Beecher's actions in making money in that way. I wrote an editorial on the subject which was rather facetious and sent the proof of it to Mr. Beecher, suggesting that if he thought well of it he might give me a recommendation whereby I could get a place on the London Punch. Within an hour after my boy had left the office he came back with the following notes:—

"MY DEAR MR. BONNER—I think you like to gobble up a minister or two every year to aid your digestion, just as hens swallow gravel stones. You have swallowed me in one way and Mr. Seeley in another. I like my way best. (Signed) 'HENRY WARD BEECHER.'"

"Then on the other side of the sheet he had written this recommendation:—

"To the London Punch:— 'Robert Bonner desires an engagement on your paper. It gives me pleasure to testify to his good character. No other man made me laugh so much. Just to look at him would make one feel good natured and therefore I suggest that his picture be published. Should he begin contributing to the Punch he would in less than two years own and edit it, but otherwise he may be trusted. (Signed) 'HENRY WARD BEECHER.'"

"That letter gives you some idea of how quick Beecher was. The most of the two hours was taken up in the boy's going from my office to Mr. Beecher's house and back, and Mr. Beecher must have dashed the letter off within five minutes. He was very quick, and was always full of ideas."

"What kind of a man was Edward Everett?" I asked.

"THAT POLISHED ICICLE."

"He was a much misunderstood man," replied Mr. Bonner. "You remember what Wendell Phillips once said of him. It was when Mr. Everett was in the Senate. Said Mr. Phillips:

"Was he a good writer?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Mr. Bonner. "He was the first scholar of the land, and still he was very careful of his work. He made no mistakes in punctuation and some of his articles he wrote and rewrote before he sent them to me. He was glad to get suggestions and sometimes asked my advice as to the publication of certain paragraphs."

The conversation here drifted to advertising matters and I asked Mr. Bonner to tell me the secret of his success in advertising. He replied:—

"I can hardly remember when I was not studying the advantages of different advertising features. When I was a boy the New York Herald was very much criticised by the other newspapers of the country. I saw that the more the Herald was talked about the more the people bought it, and when I took the Ledger I saw that I must get the paper talked about. I must not only have a good paper, but the people must know it. I would not borrow, but I spent all my surplus in advertising. One time I spent \$2,000 for a single advertisement in the New York Herald. At another I offered the New York Tribune \$3,000 for one insertion in the daily, weekly and tri-weekly. I paid during one week \$27,000 for advertising and in one year \$150,000.

"These sums in those days were as big as ten times the same amounts now, and many of my friends thought I was going crazy. At one time I paid \$25,000 to the papers for publishing instalments of a certain story which ended with the words, 'Continued next week in the New York Ledger.' I did this once in the Herald, publishing two instalments, so that the readers thought they were going to get the whole story in the Herald, and then at the close of the second instalment stated that they must look for its continuation in the Ledger. All of this rapidly increased my circulation."

"One of the secrets of good advertising is to have your advertisements unlike those of any other man. If all advertisements in a paper are displayed this is equal to no display. My advertisements were always original; they attracted attention, and the publishers of the papers who were adverse to a display objected to them. Once the elder Bennett sent word that I must use less capitals. I answered that I would not use any, and repeated one sentence announcing a new story over and over again to the extent of several columns without a break."

"The letters were continued out to the edge of the column line without regard to the finishing of the words, and the next day I had several columns of solid type in the Herald. The advertisement was about the most striking the Herald had ever had, and after that Mr. Bennett told me that I could do as I pleased. At one time the Tribune refused to give me a page in the weekly. Mr. Bennett heard of this, and sent word that the Herald would send words give me all the space I wanted. I replied that I would take the whole paper on the next Saturday. Mr. Bennett said all right. And he published an additional sheet, giving me a page opposite each page of reading matter. I could give you fifty other instances of advertisements which attracted attention, but this is enough. One of the great secrets of success I believe, is to first have a good thing, and then to advertise it so that the people cannot help knowing that you have it."

Utah has adopted amazingly drastic legislation with regard to tobacco and opium. A law has been passed providing for a fine of \$5 or five days' imprisonment for any one under 18 years of age who even has in his or her possession a cigarette, a cigar or any other kind of tobacco, or any opium.

THE POSTAL INVESTIGATION.

Raise the Curtain and Let the People Have a Chance to See Baltimore American.

A few years ago, when the Cuban postal frauds were first brought to light, the question on every lip was, "What will they do about it?" It was on the eve of a Presidential campaign, and the public was in doubt as to whether the thing would be hushed up and smoothed over or ventilated and the guilty punished. But the answer to the question was not long in coming. President McKinley and his advisers determined at once that the best way to end a scandal was to let the people know the whole truth, keeping nothing back nor trying to shield anybody. The result was that for not one single moment did the administration have to bear blame for what was done in Cuba. With that unerring power of discernment which is theirs, and that innate sense of justice and fair play for which they are famous, the people saw immediately that the fault was individual; that certain officials, acting upon their own responsibility, were alone guilty, and the smell of smoke never reached the administration.

Things are slightly different now. The scandal in the Post-office Department is of long standing, and the public's acquaintance with it dates back several months. It drags along with an occasional outburst, but keeping almost constantly behind the curtain officials of the department seem anxious to keep drawn. Vague and indefinite rumors are about as to the conduct of this division chief and that some strange things have happened, and still the public knows nothing. Charges and counter charges are made and nothing seems ever to come of them. This official and that is under investigation, and still there is no action. Incidents are specified, but the proof is presented, but the department sits in ease and comfort, while all of the officers involved, with one or two exceptions, continue to occupy their positions, having full access to all documents and the files of their offices in which irregularities are alleged.

It is a strange proceeding to say the least. It may be that the rumors of scandals, even criminal conduct in the various offices have been greatly exaggerated. It may even be that there is no ground whatever for scandal. But certainly the attitude of the department is not calculated to encourage this belief. Things appear to go upon the assumption that there is something to be covered up, and meanwhile the public's idea of the scandal grows apace. It would be infinitely better for all concerned if the curtain should be raised and the people be given a chance to see what is really in the Post-office Department.

Storage and Demurrage Charges to Govern Railroads in This State.

Kaleigh Special, 8th.

The corporation commission to-day made the rules to govern storage and demurrage charges to go into effect July 1st, next. The rules allow railroad companies to charge \$1 per day on all car loads not unloaded within 48 hours after notification and 1 per cent. per 100 pounds per day on less than carload shipments. The rule further requires the railroads to place loaded cars in 48 hours after their arrival; otherwise the shippers are to be paid \$1 per day in excess of that time. It is further provided that when shippers make application for unloaded cars the railroads shall furnish the same within four days, otherwise the penalty of \$1 per day in excess of this time is imposed.

The Charlotte Observer says: There are at present 17 cotton mills in Charlotte operating 115,000 spindles and 2,000 looms. The new factories under contract to be built this year will increase the number of spindles by 80,000 spindles and 1,300 looms, giving Charlotte nearly 200,000 spindles and 3,300 looms. And this does not include a new silk mill of 70,000 spindle capacity, which, it is said, is to be built here this year.

FORCE

THE OLD RELIABLE

ROYAL BAKING POWDER
Absolutely Pure
THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE

THE MEDICOS MEET.

"Fair Play and a Free Field in Medicine as in Theology."

Boston Globe.

The convention of the American Medical Association has been held in New Orleans this week. It was the largest convention ever held in that city, there having been several thousand physicians in session.

The Christian Scientists may probably find some significance in the fact that the speech of Dr. Billings was largely on the oversupply of medical men, which he attributed to the excess of medical colleges. The country needed about 2,500 medical graduates annually, he said, and it graduated from 10,000 to 12,500. He wanted the number of medical colleges reduced to twenty-five or thirty, and thought this work could be best accomplished by the medical departments of the State universities.

Much time was spent on the proposition to change the medical code, there having been practically no change since 1847. To a larger extent than perhaps ever before, it was stated that patent medicines were breaking in upon regular practice; physicians were advised not to take papers which printed medical advertisements, and it was suggested that articles be written to the papers on the use of quack medicines.

The American Medical Association is all right, so long as it does not attempt to interdict free competition in the preparation and sale of medicines. When its so-called ethical code presumes to count men out of the profession who are not "regulars," and to assume other functions which give it the character of an exclusive medical trust, the people are likely to vote it out of order.

Fair play and a free field in medicine, as in theology, would seem to be the correct idea.

Our Age.

John G. Whittier in the Outlook.

Nothing is clearer to my mind than the fact that the world is growing better. It is sweeter, tenderer; there is more love in it. A worthy deacon of the old time in New England once described a brother in the church as a very pious man Godward, but a rather hard one manward. It cannot be denied that very satisfactory steps in the latter direction had been taken in the century now drawing to its close. Our age is tolerant as regards creed and dogma, and practically recognizing the brotherhood of the race; it is quick and generous in its sympathies whenever and wherever a cry of suffering is heard. It cannot look on poverty or pain, without seeking to diminish its evil. It has abolished slavery; it is lifting woman to an equality with man before the law.

Our criminal codes no longer embody the maxim of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but have regard not only to the safety of the community, but also to the well-being of the criminal. All the more for this amiable tenderness do we need the counterpoise of a strong sense of justice. All the more for the sweet humanities and Christian liberalism which are drawing men nearer to each other and increasing the sum of social influence we need the bracing atmosphere of the old moralities.

It is well for us that we have learned to listen to the persuasions of the Beatitudes; but there are crises in all lives which require the emphatic "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue.

Rev. Theodore D. Bratton, rector of St. Mary's School, Raleigh, has announced his acceptance of the bishopric of Mississippi, to which he was recently elected.

ALL READY HATS FOR TO-MORROW'S CUSTOMERS

"It is a delight to the feminine fancy to see and to judge the finished, ready-to-wear hat. Women, misses, and children have taken so kindly to our prepared hats, that we have made ready for Saturday's buyers a specially attractive lot of very desirable creations. They have the individuality, the dash of style, the perfect finish, which have made the products of our work room popular and cause them to be admired wherever seen."

"Just a word of warning—we have a goodly lot of these hats, but there may not be enough to go around to Saturday's purchasers, they are popular offerings, our modest prices will move them rapidly, and yours—well, let us urge you to be among the day's early buyers."

JAS. F. YEAGER, LADIES' FURNISHINGS.

New line of Neckwear just arrived. Stock of Standard Patterns always on hand.

HORSES MOVING

We now have on hand only about 25 head of Horses and Mules. The last car load for this season has already arrived.

Twelve car loads is our record for this season! The choice stock we now have on hand is moving fast; come at once and make your selection.

NEW BUGGIES.

With the arrival of spring we have received a lot of nice new Buggies just out of the factory. We are going to sell them. Get one and enjoy that Easter ride you are planning for.

CRAIG & WILSON HAMMOCKS

Good Hammocks,
Better Hammocks,
Best Hammocks,
They Are All Here.

Our beautiful new line of hammocks is now on display. Here you will find the latest hammock goodness—the latest designs, the latest weaves, all rich and bright with the season's freshest newness.

We want you to see them. You cannot post yourself on Hammocks until you have seen what we are offering.

For your summer hammock come to hammock headquarters.

We sell the hammock, you do the rest.

MARSHALL'S BOOK STORE, ON THE CORNER.