

An Anecdote of Governor Stephen Hempstead

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NEW PUBLICATIONS.

McDonald of Oregon, A Tale of Two Shores, by Eva Emery Dye, Author of "The Conquest," "McLoughlin and Old Oregon." A. C. McClurg & Co. 1906. pp. 395.

The hero of this book was born at Astoria; the son of a Scotch Highlander, his mother a Chinook squaw. She died while he was an infant, and the care of him fell into other hands, so that he was reared not as a "Flathead," but with an oval face, and a fair countenance, and he was trained in the ways of civilization. His life of seventy years, 1824-94, covered those great events which transformed a vast and savage wilderness into the large and prosperous States of Oregon and Washington, with their enormous wealth of forests and mines and the fish industry and wheat-fields and orchards, and such cities as Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane. He did a good part in the transformation, and also led the way in carrying the honor and fame of the United States to Japan, so that the book is "a tale of two shores," the western shore of America and the eastern shore of Asia.

The author tells the story of various Indian tribes, their manners, customs, and cruel wars, of the downfall of the Hudson Bay Company, the rush of American immigration, the building of wagon-roads and of the railroad over the mountains, of the establishment of civil government, of McDonald's going with a crew of shipwrecked Japanese to their country, establishing a school there, and preparing the way for the expedition of Commodore Perry, in the graphic and vivid style of her earlier books, noticed in *The Annals* (iv. 624, vi. 74). Accounts are given of the Indian chiefs, Seattle and Spokane, whose names remain in the cities which bear them. Romantic stories of love and adventure, pleasing and tragic, are interwoven in rapid sketches. Mrs. Dye had the opportunity of obtaining from McDonald his personal reminiscences, and has taken pains to verify everything that she has recorded. The history itself is more wonderful than any romance. It should be familiar to every American who feels a just pride in the honor and growth of his country.

w. s.

AN ANECDOTE OF GOVERNOR STEPHEN HEMPSTEAD.

It is an amiable, pleasant face that looks out from one of the portrait frames in the Iowa Historical Art Gallery which bears the name of Stephen Hempstead, second Governor of the State of Iowa. He held this position four years, following Governor Briggs, first Governor of the State, and preceding James W. Grimes, the third. In the days when Governor Hempstead flourished there were no railroads west of the Mississippi and even stage coaches had reached no very remarkable development. The good Governor resided in Dubuque and whenever he visited Iowa City, the then capital, he was accustomed to make the journey on horseback. On one of these journeys he stopped for the night at the little village of Cascade, some twenty miles from Dubuque. When he arose in the morning the very unwelcome intelligence was communicated to him that his horse had been stolen in the night. This was a great disappointment to Governor Hempstead, for good saddle horses were not very plentiful in that region. The legend does not tell how he

succeeded in reaching Iowa City, but he some way or other made his way. Soon after the executive office was opened the following morning a lady dressed in deep black sought and obtained admission to the Governor's room. He received her very kindly as was his wont, for his was a polite and genial personality. After she had taken the proffered seat, she removed her veil and commenced her story of grief and woe. She told the Governor that she had called to make a request for the pardon of her husband who was then languishing in the penitentiary at Ft. Madison. "Of what offense was your husband convicted?" queried the Governor. "He was charged," said the lady, "with stealing a horse." The Governor's countenance changed on the instant from a smile to as near a frown as he was ever capable of putting on. "Madam," said he, "I cannot pardon horse thieves. I know too much of those gentlemen myself," and while he listened to her story he was incorrigible as to letting the man out of prison.

This story shows the meager means of transportation in those days and how a Governor could not avail himself of an automobile, or even of a stage coach, much less of transportation by railroad.

AN OLD POLITICAL LETTER.

An interesting letter was recently presented to the Historical Department by Mr. John M. McPherrin of Polk county, Iowa. The writer was an active whig of wide influence. The Knapp to whom he refers was Judge Joseph C. Knapp. Steele was a merchant and joint manager with Knapp. The addressees were the Van Buren county members of the Iowa House of Representatives, and Senate, respectively. E. R. H.

KEOSAUQUA, IOWA, January 18, 1847.

MESSRS: I have nothing more important to write than that the Dodge faction has got up a large petition instructing you to vote for Dodge. If you want anything more than the last election we will get up a petition to the reverse. There may be some Whigs on the petition who signed under false representations. I am of the opinion they can not get more than half of the Democrats in Farmington (Sanford's) township. Knapp informs us that the Democrats propose that if the Whigs will resign that they will and then come home and have another election. I have no objection for I have no fears of Old Van Buren. I made the proposition to Steele and Knapp that if they would make the issue Dodge and anti-Dodge and then head their ticket Dodge, we would head ours anti-Dodge and instruct you to come home. They would not agree.

We have eight Mormons in jail at this time for stealing at a considerable expense to the county and no doubt we will have more in a few days. If it would be possible to have a call court to try them it would suit the wishes of the people. But if that can not be done you must pass a law giving two or three weeks court at the next term.

JAMES JOHNSTON.

To Messrs. McPherrin and Sanford.

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