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Quaint Form of Oath.
 Reginald Farrant, who has been appointed stipendiary of Douglas and Castletown, Isle of Man, was recently sworn in the quaint form which has prevailed in the island for centuries. He swore to do justice between party and party "as indifferently as the hering's backbone doth lie in the midst of the fish."

REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS OF AN EX-CONTRABAND
 By Cyrus Bell.

My first appearance at Omaha occurred about the middle of October, 1865. I made the trip on the steamboat Yellowstone, from St. Louis, Mo. I was employed as porter on the boat, and since I had never thought of remaining here I spent no time in observations. The town was quite small, with hardly more than two or three thousand population, and as yet nothing more than the mere dream of a railroad.



By Cyrus D. Bell

low water, for a considerable part of our time was spent on sand bars, particularly on our upward trip. Something more than two and a half years intervened between my first and second advent to Omaha, much of which interval having been spent "Way down South" among the scenes of my childhood. I returned here on the 24th day of March, 1868, on the steamer Glasgow, from St. Louis. We met with little if any trouble from sand bars or shallow water on this trip, but we had hard sailing against the ponderous flows of ice that so frequently obstructed the way. I have never spent as much as thirty consecutive days of absence from these shores since I made that second landing here more than half a century ago.

In the meantime Omaha had made decided progress in every way. There was more than a doubling of population, with positive indication that all lines of business were sharing equal good fortune. Nebraska had, a full year before this second arrival of mine, discarded its territorial habiliments in exchange for the paraphernalia of statehood. The fond dream which had so long been indulged of the coming of a railroad was now almost at the point of actual realization. Indeed, by congressional enactment the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railroad had been fixed at Omaha, and the process of construction had already been vigorously entered upon. Prior to the war of the rebellion, Nebraska is common with all other territories, had been under the constant domination of the Democratic party; which is equivalent to saying that it was always under the absolute control of the slave-holding oligarchy of the South, in cooperation with their hardly more patriotic confederates of the north. It had required extraordinary activity and exertion on the part of the loyal inhabitants to put things in proper shape for the drastic reconstruction which was so soon to dawn, but "the brave boys in blue," fresh from their glorious triumph over secessionism on the gory fields of the Southland, had in large numbers selected new homes upon the fertile soil of the prospective new commonwealth. It is a safe calculation that ninety-five per cent of this element of citizenship invariably voted in perfect consistency with its former shooting.

On March 1, 1867, Nebraska was admitted to the Union as the 37th state. The State Constitution invested all male persons of twenty-one years or more, whether natives or naturalized, with the right of the elective franchise. Thus it may be seen that I reached here just in time to enter the lists as a full-fledged devotee of free and fair government. There were hardly more than a hundred colored people living in the town at that time, and the greater part of these like myself, had been attracted here by the glowing reports of ready employment at liberal wages. The fact I found to be in keeping with the report. Those who came in earnest search of employment always found opportunities open for them. For a good many years few hotels employed any other but colored help, and the supply of suitable women and girls for domestic service rarely equalled the demand. Those who followed the rougher kinds of manual labor received \$2.50 or \$3.00 a day of ten hours, but living expenses today are easily double those of that period by comparison. Hence, the greater pay that one receives today for his labor leaves him with less "to the good" than his daddy could show in those earlier times.

In due time, after beginning work, I received notice of date for registration to which I properly responded. After answering the various questions put to me, and signing my name to the registry, a young fellow standing by remarked quite audibly: "We've got you, my boy." I was completely puzzled in attempting to interpret his meaning, but did not think it worth while to question him about it. A little while before election time a drunken constable called upon me with a warrant for my arrest on the charge

of illegal registration. When the case was called there was "a car-load" of able attorneys on hand to defend me gratis, and a laughing stock was made of the prosecution for its poor showing. It was a complete "knock-out" blow to them when the International and Cozzens' hotels both presented their books containing the dates on which I entered their service. Very naturally, every Negro was expected to vote the Republican ticket, if allowed to vote at all, and hence it was a reasonable expectation that every Democrat would do his best to prevent Negroes from voting. This consideration, I doubt not, impelled the action of our friends, the enemy in the case above narrated. As had been anticipated, the result of the election proved a veritable Waterloo for "the untrifled Confederates," both locally and nationally. Of course, it would be superfluous to add the remark here, that the Colored troops on that occasion, as on all prior and subsequent occasions, stood by Old Glory with practical unanimity.

And so in respect to the matter of education. Illiteracy was practically universal among Negroes at the time Father Abraham issued his death-dealing document against the Rebellion. Today our per cent of illiteracy is possibly as much as forty probably not more than thirty-five.

As Ye Reap.
 Interviewer—"And did you work your way through college?" Prominent Old Party—"No. I didn't; but I'm working my son's way through. Maybe the Lord will forgive me."—Life

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