

Letter from Puget Sound.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]

OLYMPIA, W. T., January 25, 1863.

Cold Blooded Murder at Steilacoom.

Our neighboring town of Steilacoom has been the theatre of a fearful tragedy during the past week. On Wednesday, the 21st instant, Andrew J. Byrd, a universally respected citizen of Pierce county, was shot by John Bates. Byrd lived within a few miles of Steilacoom, and is the owner of a flouring mill and farm adjacent. He is also a cattle dealer. Bates was the owner of a farm in the neighborhood. The parties had a slight difficulty about a cow belonging to Bates having got into a band of beef cattle owned by Byrd. Bates went into Steilacoom on Monday and quartered himself in the postoffice and stopped there the entire day. He did the same thing on Tuesday, and was at his post early on Wednesday morning. About 10 o'clock on that day, Byrd stepped into the office to get his mail matter; Bates rose from his seat, and without saying a word, drew a revolver and commenced firing on Byrd. The first shot took effect in the lower part of the abdomen, passing through the bladder, and the second in the leg just above the knee. Byrd ran into the street, but got only a few steps when he fell. He was carried into the hotel and examined by the surgeons of the place, who pronounced the wound mortal. Bates was immediately arrested and disarmed. He said he desired to kill one other man, and then he would be ready for the gallows. A preliminary examination was had before a justice of the peace and Bates was committed to take his trial for murder in the first degree. Byrd died on Thursday night.

Vengeance of the People—The Murderer Hanged on a Tree.

On Friday the excitement ran high—the people were exasperated at the murder of so peaceable,

quiet and inoffensive a citizen as Mr. Byrd. The news of the shooting spread rapidly through the country, and Bird's neighbors and friends began to pour into town. About noon the crowd determined to take the prisoner from the jail and hang him. They accordingly proceeded to the jail with axes, sledge-hammers, battering ram, etc., and commenced to work upon the door. An ax was driven in the door which cut off the bolt of the lock; but still the door would not open. The sheriff was inside, nobly performing his duty in protecting the prisoner, single-handed and alone. He had previously summoned a *posse* to assist him, but no one could be found to answer the call. An immense battering ram was brought to bear upon the door without effect. It was found that the sheriff had a brace against the door which could not be overcome. The crowd then dug and cut around the door frame, which soon gave way under the pressure of the brace inside, and out tumbled the door together with the sheriff. A dozen men pounced upon him and disarmed him, and hurried him off to another part of the town. The prisoner was at once seized, bound, and a rope placed about his neck. The culprit begged for time, averring that he wanted a fair trial. He was told that ten minutes would be granted. He desired to see his father-in-law, Mr. Meeker, and also a minister. Mr. Meeker was requested to take charge of his body, and have it decently buried, and to dispose of his farm and effects, and after paying funeral expenses, to remit the amount to his mother, who resides somewhere in the Atlantic States. The Rev. G. W. Sloan, was then requested by the prisoner to pray for him, at the conclusion of which he was marched to the place of execution. The rope was thrown over the limb of a tree and Bates was drawn up by the hands of perhaps 50 men. The body was left hanging more than an hour.

Mr. Byrd was a man beloved by all who knew him. He leaves a wife and three children. Bates was a widower.

Doings of the Territorial Legislature.

The Legislature has done but little as yet for the benefit of the Territory at large. Buying, selling and corruption seem to be the order of the day. The election of public printer was good capital to trade upon. The members from some of the counties east of the mountains were extremely anxious to get an Apportionment bill through, which was very unjust to the permanently settled counties on the Sound. The Radical Republicans were willing to sell out the Sound counties and their constituents in order to secure the election of their candidate for printer. So a trade was made accordingly. G. A. Barnes, proprietor of the *Washington Standard*, was elected printer. After securing the election of their candidate, the radical gentlemen turned the tables on their allies and

decreased the Apportionment bill:

The bill for the removal of the Capital to Vancouver was indefinitely postponed in the House yesterday.

Over 150 charters for ferries and franchises for water-ditches, bridges, trail, etc., have been granted to parties to be put in operation in the mining region east of the Cascades during the next season.

The vexed Secretary of the Territory question has not yet been settled. L. J. S. Tarney still claims to be Secretary, and occasionally sends a bomb-shell into the Legislature. He still holds on to the "traps" pertaining to the office, although it is generally believed he has been ordered by the Department to turn over. The Legislature has, by resolution, recognized Elwood Evans as the Secretary.

Arrest of a Murderer.

A desperate character named Boon Helm was arrested here last week. He had been swaggering about town for several days, threatening to kill somebody before he left. After his arrest a number of parties appeared against him, and he was proved to be the man who murdered "Dutch Fred" at Florence City last spring. He escaped and turned up at Cariboo, where he shot another man. He managed to escape from the British officials. He is said to have been a party to the Mountain Meadows massacre in Utah Territory.

The weather continues mild and pleasant. The U. S. revenue cutter continues in the mail service between this place and Victoria.

JUNO.