

# WAGON-BOSS AND MULE-MECHANIC

## Incidents of My Experience and Observation in the Late Civil War.

By R. M. PECK.

Copyright, 1904, by THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE COMPANY.

As Blunt with his handful of men, kept of running away as others had done, kept persistently hovering about the field, Quantrell seems to have concluded that the General certainly must have a large command near in his rear; and for fear of being overtaken by a superior force, the rebel chief hurriedly ordered that the animals struck out down the military road from Texas, which would take him near Fort Gibson, which is 100 miles south of Baxter Springs; seeing which Blunt determined to send a messenger to Col. Phillips, commanding officer at that post, informing him of his (Blunt's) misfortune, and ordering him to try to head off the rebels. This messenger would have to go down the road right behind Quantrell and ahead of him, so as to beat the rebels to Gibson.

**QUANTRELL'S BRAVADO.**  
With singular backwardness none of Bill Tuft's brave "Buckskin Scouts" seemed to want this job. An independent, not one of the bearded and befringed gentlemen that ornamented Blunt's headquarters, but a "for-see" scout—volunteered to take the message, and without any preparation struck out behind the rebels before they were out of sight, and dodging through them in the following night, succeeded in getting through to Fort Gibson and delivering the messenger's message. Through some one's mismanagement Quantrell was allowed to slip by Gibson and go on to Sherman, Tex., unintercepted; where it was said he dressed himself in Blunt's uniform, that he had killed the General with his own hand.

This is probably a mistake, for Quantrell, being a slim-built man, could not well have worn Blunt's clothes, as the General was rather portly. It is possible, however, that Quantrell may have mistaken Maj. Curtis, whom he killed, for Blunt, and that he wore the Major's uniform, as that would have been the uniform of a Major and that of a Major-General.

Some months afterward I met at Fort Gibson a Lieutenant (Miller, I think, was his name), who told me that not long after the Baxter Springs massacre, and while Blunt was in command at Fort Smith, he (the lieutenant) was captured by Quantrell's men, while he was out with a foraging party near Fort Smith; and when brought into Quantrell's presence, the guerrilla chief, among other questions, asked: "How do the Federals like it, since I killed Gen. Blunt at Baxter Springs?" To which the lieutenant replied: "Kill Blunt? You must be mistaken. You didn't kill Blunt. I saw him, and talked to him day before yesterday, and he was a remarkably lively corps at that time, say way."

When they got out in the bushes they stripped him of his uniform coat, pants and other best clothing, before killing him, to prevent their being shot full of holes or soiled with blood, and in the division of the spoils they found some money in greenbacks in his pocket. While they were quarreling over the money the lieutenant made a dive into the brush, in his shirt and drawers, and succeeded in getting away, and subsequently rejoined his command at Fort Smith.

Tom Atkins told me afterward that when he reached Rock Creek, seven miles below Baxter, on his way to Fort Gibson with Blunt's message, he found the remains of a number of men who Quantrell had just caused to be shot—prisoners whom the rebels had taken with them that far on their retreat—and near where they were lying he took a piece of paper pinned to a tree, on which was written the following:

"Blunt, see the result of your damnable policy. See the vengeance Quantrell takes for the death of our men. My name was signed to this paper."  
I think Tom said there were 11 of the bodies. I have seen it stated in some published accounts of this slaughter that Quantrell got the bodies of his men killed at Baxter, but those who gathered and buried the dead said that there was but one dead rebel found, while of Blunt's party there were 123 buried in a huge grave in the center of the timber, near where Lieut. Pond's camp was then located. I lived several years at and near Baxter Springs, after the war, and often saw this big grave. About the middle of the following night, they had to halt where Lieut. Pond's camp was then located. I lived several years at and near Baxter Springs, after the war, and often saw this big grave. About the middle of the following night, they had to halt where Lieut. Pond's camp was then located.

**MRS. THOMAS'S EXPERIENCE.**  
In her escape from the field of slaughter for a lady who had never encountered such a danger or hardship, pretty severe. She was quite a young woman—the Captain's second wife—and this was probably her first sight of rebels. Compelled by the suddenness of the attack to leave her comfortable carriage at a moment's notice, without any preparation for such a trip, on the advice of her rescuer, Mr. Bridges, she promptly mounted the horse of a dead soldier which Bridges had caught and brought to her, and, guided by him, hurried away from the scene of disaster. Fortunately they were not noticed by the rebels as they left the field, and alone they made the best time their horses were capable of in the direction of Fort Scott, 60 miles to the north. Getting lost on the big prairie for a few days, they were at last rescued, and made the best camp possible. In the morning, in order to find the proper course, having no means of making a fire, nothing to eat, no bedding, and the night being cold and windy, they were in a state of discomfort. Their situation may be faintly imagined. Unsaddling and picking out their horses, they wrapped themselves in blankets, and lay down to rest. The next day they succeeded in reaching Fort Scott, the lady very much exhausted.

variety of negroes, while my new coat was of very light color and freckle-faced, and also possessed—what is very rare in one having even a little African blood in his veins—red, though kinky hair; on account of which peculiarities my black boys spoke of him contemptuously as "that bogus nigger," from which we all soon got to calling him "Bogus," and I don't think I ever knew his other name.

As a prospectively useful accomplishment I occasionally gave my wife lessons in shooting at a mark with a Colt's navy, when in camp, and at first was perfectly safe to set up my hat (of the broad-rimmed variety) for a target, and to shoot at it; but after a little practice I found she improved so rapidly that my hat began to look like a sifter, and I had to find her some other kind of a target.

As there were plenty of farms and orchards along this route, I foraged freely for apples, chickens, turkeys, etc., keeping a good supply in our wagon at all times. Walnuts, hickory nuts and persimmons were picked and planted in the timber; these the boys procured in abundance; and by the aid of my shotgun I was able to add such auxiliaries as wild pigeons, wild ducks, prairie chickens and quail to the list. We were very fortunate. Gen. Blunt's table could have been much better supplied than mine.

**RUNNING THE GANTLET OF BUSHWHACKERS.**  
While foraging away from the road, of course, I had to run the risk of being picked off by bushwhackers, who were always skulking along the border, but fortunately I was never shot at, and my acquaintance with these gentry, though some of our foragers didn't get off so lucky, I was chased and shot at by a party of them on one occasion, which will relate further on.

I fear that I might fail to get back some day while out foraging I had acquired the habit, when leaving my family on any such trip, to always toss my pocket-book (which was usually packed with greenbacks) to my wife before leaving, so that she would at least have money enough to last her for awhile, and as I often jokingly remarked, "to give her second husband a start." She often cautioned me against taking what seemed to be needless risks, but I would try to reassure her and allay her fears.

"Don't you worry about me, I've been in many a tight place, and don't you know, I always wiggle through, somehow?"  
"Yes," she would reply, "but you know the pitcher that goes too often to the well gets broken at last."  
But I had escaped by good fortune so often that I think she had more faith in my good luck than my good sense.

At daybreak a little town in the northwest corner of Arkansas, on the line of the Nation, were joined by my boss, Capt. Thomas, who, accompanied by Lieut. William Gallaher, Col. Phillip's adjutant (of the Indian Brigade), and scout, had come a-horseback from Fort Gibson to meet us. Following on down the line to Cincinnati, Ark., we separated from Blunt's command at that point, he being bound for a little town in the northwest corner of Arkansas, on the line of the Nation, were joined by my boss, Capt. Thomas, who, accompanied by Lieut. William Gallaher, Col. Phillip's adjutant (of the Indian Brigade), and scout, had come a-horseback from Fort Gibson to meet us.

**STARTING BACK FOR FORT GIBSON.**  
In detailing these incidents of the "Blunt affair," I have drifted away from my own story, and will now return to Fort Scott, where I had arrived from Leavenworth with my little family in a six-mule wagon ready to fall in with the next train going to Fort Gibson.

I found that Blunt and the few survivors of the massacre had returned to Fort Scott, where the General was making up a large train and commanding to go to Fort Smith, where he was to assume command of the Department of the Frontier; and as Fort Gibson was but little out of the way, a supply train was also going with him for his post.

At Fort Scott I reported to Capt. John G. Haskell, Blunt's Chief Quartermaster, for rations, forage and other supplies for the trip; after receiving which I was ordered to roll out for Dry Wood Creek, 12 miles south, where the trains and soldiers were to rendezvous before starting. This time we were to go down the old "military road," which was the boundary between Missouri and Arkansas, as the foraging is better on that route than along the "military road," via Baxter Springs, farther west through the Indian Nation.

# SHOWING COON SKINS BEST DOCTORS FAIL



An old Arkansas hunter, who was in the habit of taking his dogs and gun out for a solitary coon hunt almost every evening, weather permitting, also took himself to the cross-roads store each following morning, and to the neighbors assembled there related miscellaneous stories of the still more miraculous numbers of coons he had annihilated the night before. These honest friends, with true Southern good nature, passively submitted to these wild tales from day to day, until the number grew to such magnitude as to surpass all belief, and then, rising in their righteous indignation, as one body, gave vent to their feelings in the following:

**"LOOK HERE, NEIGHBOR,**  
This talking of killing coons is all well and good. There are coons and coons, and powder and shot can kill them, but if you must believe that you are such a mighty hunter, you have just got to show us those coon skins."

And that is just what Vite-Ore does every time. We want to show coon skins; and only an opportunity to produce them before you. We don't ask you to believe, don't ask you to swallow our claim, we just want you to INVESTIGATE BY SENDING FOR A COON SKIN. This coon skin we will show you will be the IMPROVEMENT, THE BENEFIT, THE CURE, for your own case—a coon skin that you will quickly recognize as proving our case and claims. If you do not, it won't cost you a penny. We take all the risk. You are to be the judge.

Medicine have come and gone, have sprung up in the night like mushrooms, have made broad claims and told of remarkable cures and cures, but Vite-Ore is the only one that has stood the test of time and people, and has fully proven and substantiated its right to the title of THE NATIONAL TRIUMPH. The fullness of VITE-ORE is such that they could not show the "coon skins," and passed out into the night, to be heard of no more.

Not with Vite-Ore! It has stood the test of over a generation of time and people, and has fully proven and substantiated its right to the title of THE NATIONAL TRIUMPH. The fullness of VITE-ORE is such that they could not show the "coon skins," and passed out into the night, to be heard of no more.

What Vite-Ore is: Vite-Ore is a natural, hard, adamantine, rock-like substance—mineral—Ore—mined from the ground like gold and silver in its neighborhood of a once powerful, but now extinct mineral spring. It requires years of preparation by evaporation, and when it is finally ready, it is then of medicinal value. It contains free iron, free sulphur, free phosphorus, free calcium, and is most essential for the retention of health in the human system, and is the most powerful mineral water drunk fresh from the springs. It is a geological discovery, in which there is nothing added or taken from it. It is the marvel of the century for curing such disease as

**Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Blood Poisoning, Heart Trouble, Dropsy, Catarrh and Throat Affections, Liver, Kidney and Bladder Ailments, Stomach and Female Disorders, La Grippe, Malarial Fever, Nervous Prostration and General Debility.**

As thousands testify, and as no one, answering this, writing for a package will deny after using, VITE-ORE has cured more chronic, obstinate, incurable cases than any other known medicine, and will reach such cases with a more rapid and powerful curative action than any other medicine, or doctors' prescriptions which it is possible to procure.

# SENT ON THIRTY DAYS' TRIAL

READ THIS SPECIAL OFFER:

WE WILL SEND to every worthy sick and ailing person who writes us, mentioning THE NATIONAL TRIUMPH, full name, address, and name of the doctor, if any, by mail, POSTPAID, sufficient for one month's treatment, to be paid for within one month after receipt. If the receiver can truthfully say that he has done him or her more good than all the drugs and quacks of good doctors or patent medicines he or she has ever used, then this offer is for him or her. If not, we will refund the money. If you have no excuse, one month's treatment will convince you. It will not cost you a penny unless you are sure you are benefited. We know. We are sure. We are willing to take the risk. READ OUR SPECIAL OFFER.

What Vite-Ore is: Vite-Ore is a natural, hard, adamantine, rock-like substance—mineral—Ore—mined from the ground like gold and silver in its neighborhood of a once powerful, but now extinct mineral spring. It requires years of preparation by evaporation, and when it is finally ready, it is then of medicinal value. It contains free iron, free sulphur, free phosphorus, free calcium, and is most essential for the retention of health in the human system, and is the most powerful mineral water drunk fresh from the springs. It is a geological discovery, in which there is nothing added or taken from it. It is the marvel of the century for curing such disease as

**Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Blood Poisoning, Heart Trouble, Dropsy, Catarrh and Throat Affections, Liver, Kidney and Bladder Ailments, Stomach and Female Disorders, La Grippe, Malarial Fever, Nervous Prostration and General Debility.**

As thousands testify, and as no one, answering this, writing for a package will deny after using, VITE-ORE has cured more chronic, obstinate, incurable cases than any other known medicine, and will reach such cases with a more rapid and powerful curative action than any other medicine, or doctors' prescriptions which it is possible to procure.

What Vite-Ore is: Vite-Ore is a natural, hard, adamantine, rock-like substance—mineral—Ore—mined from the ground like gold and silver in its neighborhood of a once powerful, but now extinct mineral spring. It requires years of preparation by evaporation, and when it is finally ready, it is then of medicinal value. It contains free iron, free sulphur, free phosphorus, free calcium, and is most essential for the retention of health in the human system, and is the most powerful mineral water drunk fresh from the springs. It is a geological discovery, in which there is nothing added or taken from it. It is the marvel of the century for curing such disease as

**Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Blood Poisoning, Heart Trouble, Dropsy, Catarrh and Throat Affections, Liver, Kidney and Bladder Ailments, Stomach and Female Disorders, La Grippe, Malarial Fever, Nervous Prostration and General Debility.**

As thousands testify, and as no one, answering this, writing for a package will deny after using, VITE-ORE has cured more chronic, obstinate, incurable cases than any other known medicine, and will reach such cases with a more rapid and powerful curative action than any other medicine, or doctors' prescriptions which it is possible to procure.

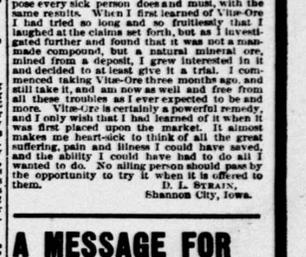
What Vite-Ore is: Vite-Ore is a natural, hard, adamantine, rock-like substance—mineral—Ore—mined from the ground like gold and silver in its neighborhood of a once powerful, but now extinct mineral spring. It requires years of preparation by evaporation, and when it is finally ready, it is then of medicinal value. It contains free iron, free sulphur, free phosphorus, free calcium, and is most essential for the retention of health in the human system, and is the most powerful mineral water drunk fresh from the springs. It is a geological discovery, in which there is nothing added or taken from it. It is the marvel of the century for curing such disease as

**Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Blood Poisoning, Heart Trouble, Dropsy, Catarrh and Throat Affections, Liver, Kidney and Bladder Ailments, Stomach and Female Disorders, La Grippe, Malarial Fever, Nervous Prostration and General Debility.**

# BEST DOCTORS FAIL

Had Kidney Trouble for 30 Years, Dropsy 20 Years, and Rheumatism 12 Years.

Vite-Ore Triumphs Astonishingly After All These Long Years of Sickness.



Every sick person does not know, with the same result. When I first learned of Vite-Ore I had tried so long and so fruitlessly that I laughed at the claims set forth, but as I investigated further and found that it was not a made-up concoction, but a natural mineral water, mined from a deposit, I grew interested in it and decided to try it. To do so I had to discontinue taking Vite-Ore three months ago, and I had to discontinue taking it for three months. I had all these troubles as I ever expected to be cured. Vite-Ore is certainly a powerful remedy, and I wish I had started taking it at once. I was first placed upon the market. It almost makes me hesitate to think of all the great suffering, pain and illness I could have saved, and the ability I could have had to do all I wanted to do. I wish I had started taking it at once. I had the opportunity to try it when it was offered to them.

When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.

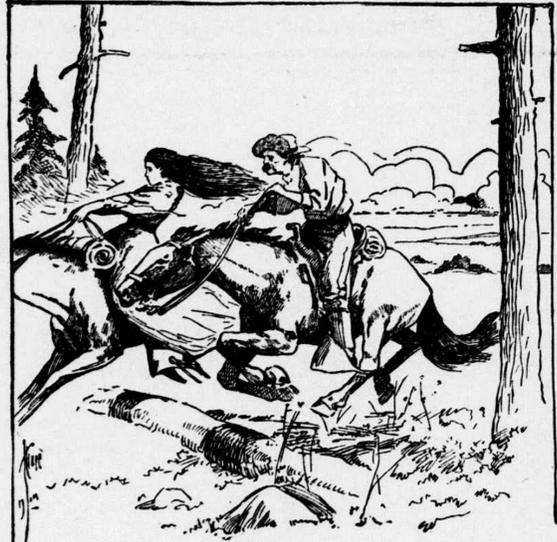
When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.

When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.

When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.

When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.

When I sent for a trial package of Vite-Ore I was told it was old and approaching, although I am only thirty-three years old; another said it was caused by a fall which I experienced many years ago. I had been told that it was a natural mineral water, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy. I had heard that it was a powerful remedy, and I had heard that it was a powerful remedy.



**"THEY MADE THE BEST TIME THEIR HORSES WERE CAPABLE OF."**  
Jeff Batsford, who was "Chief Mucky-muck" (Brigade Wagon Master) of the whole outfit, and he assigned me to a position in the rear of the column, to be in the march, which would be in the lead and would consequently give me more comfortable traveling; but in camping I always selected my own ground and located as much as possible for my wife and little one; and having the negro boys along to do the rough work and wait on us, the trip was by no means an unpleasant one, though we had some bad weather—cold rain and snow—before we got through. We all had robust health and hearty appetites, and enjoyed our grub amazingly. Although my wife was a good cook herself, and I much preferred her cooking to any other, to save her the labor I hired a mulatto man at Scott, to cook for us, who boasted that he had formerly been a cook for Gen. Curtis. My teamster and two mule-drivers were of the genuine black

# NOT A PENNY UNLESS BENEFITED!

This offer will challenge the attention and consideration, and afterward the gratitude of every living person who desires better health or who suffers pains, ills and diseases which have defied the medical world and grown worse with age. We care not for your skepticism, but ask only your investigation, and at our expense, regardless of what ills you have, by sending us for a package. Address,

**THEO. NOEL CO., National Dept., Vite-Ore Bldg., Chicago.**

"Wonder what the devil's become of our trail and soldiers? For we didn't meet them, as expected."  
The Captain and Gallaher were not going to abandon me to my fate, however, but decided that the only chance to save me was to wait till I came up to the horses, and then have me to abandon my mule, mount behind one of them, and then we could outrun the rebels, as they did not seem to be following the tracks of our command, found it would not be necessary to abandon my mule; and, as we conjectured, the chase ended at the forks of the road, and some of the soldiers proposed to go back with us and chase the rebels awhile; but we concluded this would not be the wisest thing to do, and we continued on to that place, and then followed the prairie road over to Park Hill, three miles southwest, where we camped, the rebels having ramrodded.

In the chase they had given us I think could easily have overtaken me, or compelled me to take to the brush; but the road being somewhat crooked, and in many places having thickets of bushes on each side, our pursuers probably were reluctant to rush into me, for fear we might ambush them at some sharp turn of the road.

I would not have taken up so much space in relating this incident but for the following sequel, which gives it something more of interest.  
Just after the close of the war I was engaged in freighting with a four-mule team of my own, on the road between Fort Scott and Gibson, and on one trip loaded and traveled in company with a man by the name of Jasper Wilkinson, who had a four-horse team. My chance partner was a very pleasant traveling companion, who had been a Captain in the company of Arkansas bushwhackers in the rebel army, and many an hour we whiled away around our camp fires at night telling each other our war experiences.

**Swordfish Kills Two Whales.**  
(San Pedro correspondence Los Angeles Times.)  
Capt. Swenson, of the power launch Leone, which arrived last night from San Nicolas, reports a desperate battle between a swordfish and two whales, which occurred day before yesterday off that island and resulted in the death of both the whales, the bodies being later washed ashore by the tides and secured by Swenson.

When first seen by Swenson the battle was at its height, and as the swordfish was lashing the water into fury in their desperate conflict, the huge bodies of the whales rising many feet out of the water in their attempt to inflict damage on their enemy. The swordfish, which was an exceptionally large specimen, had the fight all its own way, and succeeded in killing both its adversaries.

The larger of the whales is about 70 feet in length and 20 feet in diameter, while the smaller is 55 feet in length and 15 feet in diameter. The sword of the swordfish had entirely penetrated the body of the larger whale, and there were numerous jets of water from the wound, and the bodies were washed upon the beach, and Capt. Swenson made an ineffectual attempt to pull the small specimen off the beach and tow it to San Pedro, but the weight was too much for his engines. He thereupon covered the bodies with sand and will make an attempt to bring them over, using a larger boat.

**Bos' Must Go.**  
(Pall Mall Gazette.)  
Among the changes now on the carpet is the abolition of the boatswain. So far as one can gather the idea is to make all boatswains of less than 15 years semi-gravely as gunners, and let this rank gradually grow out, as that of the old navigating officers has done. These alterations will remove one of the oldest warrant ranks in the navy. The "Bosun," as the boatswain was originally called, was in the earlier days a much more important individual than he is to-day—in fact, he seems to have ranked almost as high as the sailing master of the ship. Ropes and sails and masts and yards were always his special duties, and the disappearance of these from the fleet seems likely to be followed by his own. Not that there is any lack of work for him to do. Even in the modern iron-clad the boatswain has important duties to perform, but the authorities seem to think it is too old to run up and down on the rigging, and the duties are to be followed by the top line in everything, so much importance is there attached to the branch for which they specially qualify.

**What Old Men Have Done.**  
Doctor Johnson wrote his famous "Lives of the Poets" at 78. Galileo was 70 when he wrote on the "Laws of Motion." Bismarck ruled Germany at 75. Grant was unknown at 42. In the active affairs of the world, it is not a question of How Old Are You? but What Can You Do? It is true, "a man at 50 is too old to run up and down on the rigging," but a man with an active, productive brain, should be at his best. If he has profited by his opportunities, he should be even better off and more useful at 60 than at 50.

**A Thread-and-Needle Tree.**  
(Mexican Herald.)  
The wonders of botany are apparently inexhaustible. One of the most remarkable specimens is the Mexican mayague tree, which furnishes a needle and thread all ready for use.  
At the tip of each dark green leaf is a slender thread needle that must be carefully drawn from its sheath; at the same time it slowly unrolls the thread, a strong, smooth fiber attached to the needle and capable of being drawn out to a great length.  
**Rum and Mosquitoes.**  
"Good Heavens, Washington, how does your master live in such mosquitoy holes as Well, Sir, the fact am, at night Mrs. George am so intoxicated he don't give a cuss for the mosquitos, and in the morning de skeeters am so intoxicated, they don't give a cuss for Mrs. George."