

Rocky Mountain Husbandman.

R. N. SUTHERLIN, Editor.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 1877.

A FEW weeks ago the country was in a fever of excitement from Idaho to Baltimore. The Railroad strikes, the destruction of property by the mobs and their collisions with the authorities, was no less exciting than the Indian war in the West. Now a change has been wrought; the Railroad strikes have about subsided, the Indian war has been transferred from Idaho to Montana, and is quite inactive. But from across the ocean comes intelligence of hard fought battles. The Russians, 60,000 strong, attacked an entrenched army of 40,000 Turks. The Cossacks charged again and again across the plain upon the Turkish works, led by as brave commanders as ever cheered men on to death, but were as often repulsed, for the Turks, too, were brave, and stood in defence of their homes. Once the the Russians gained the outwork, but were finally dislodged and defeated. This defeat of the Russians will probably prove disastrous to their summer campaign. It has at least taught them that the task of subduing Turkey is not so easy a one as they had anticipated, and that their way to the City of the Golden Horn must be over a road paved with human skulls and crimsoned with blood, every inch of which will be closely contested by the stubborn Turks.

The great danger which threatened Missoula county one week ago has somewhat subsided, but the position is anything but secure. The latest dispatches from the Bitter Root indicate that the Indians are still there, and although they profess friendship for the people of that section and have thus far kept their pledges, their attitude is very menacing, and we know not what hour may bring us the startling news of a massacre.

After having learned the position of affairs, we believe the Indians should not have been allowed to enter the Bitter Root valley, but since they have gained an entrance peaceably, and have given pledges that they will not molest the citizens, we believe it would be unwise for the people to bring on a fight, for such would necessarily result in the loss of life and the destruction of many homes. The regular troops are marching after the Indians, and should they succeed in overtaking them the latter would doubtless commence to pillage the country. But we need not be at all uneasy about this matter, as the regulars are not in sufficient force, and do not move rapidly enough to compel the Indians to fight unless they choose. Under the circumstances, we think the citizens of Bitter Root justified in their peace policy. We also think Governor Potts acted the part of wisdom in disbanding the volunteers, the failure of the government to recognize or listen to his entreaties warranting this disposition. The rising of Deer Lodge and Missoula counties is evidence that the people are brave and resolute, and should the Indians begin hostilities it will require but a moment's warning to reassemble the little army for action.

The thanks of the farmers of Bitter Root are especially due to the miners of Deer Lodge county for the promptness with which they responded to their appeal for help, and we feel that we can assure them, in behalf of these farmers, that had they reached them there was not a farm house on the valley but would have been thrown open and its store shared with them.

The country has already sustained a great loss, even should the matter rest as it is. The grain fields of Missoula county, already ripe, have been neglected. The mills and mines of Phillipsburg and Butte were stopped, the revenue of that section cut off for the time being, and business almost entirely suspended. The farmers of Deer Lodge have also lost heavily; their horses, which were furnished gratuitously, have many of them been ruined and some killed, for in the rush to the front horse flesh was not spared. Not a man who volunteered but is out from \$40 to \$50 cash, and many are out much more. Governor Potts and Secretary Mills have been lavish in the expenditure of their private means, and while it is to be regretted that nothing has been done, they deserve the thanks of the people all the same. A government that is deaf to the interests of its people is unbecomingly of such faithful servants.

FROM MADISON VALLEY.

EDITOR HUSBANDMAN:

It has been some time since I have seen anything in your paper from this part of the Territory. Crops on this valley are good, and promise a large return to the farmers, though the late heavy rains, accompanied by wind storms, have caused the grain to lodge in some places. As yet there are no grasshoppers on this valley, although we hear of them as near as Willow creek, where they are destroying the crops, and the sky has been full of them here for several days, but none of them have come down.

Mr. Hunter, cattle dealer, of Illinois, has paid our valley his annual visit, and has driven off a fine herd of four year old steers for the Eastern market, for which he paid on an average \$24.00 a head.

Many reports of hostile Indian demonstrations to the west and southwest of us are being circulated, and a few farmers on the lower Ruby river and on Beaverhead and Jefferson valleys have taken their families to Virginia City for safety, but up to the present time we know of no depredations being committed. A company has been organized on the Madison and 80 names enrolled, with A. N. Bull as Captain; they are now receiving arms from the Virginia arsenal, and if poor Lo comes this way he will receive a warm reception. U No.

Madison Valley, August 1.

FROM FISH CREEK.

EDITOR HUSBANDMAN:

The people here are at present somewhat alarmed over the Nez Perce Indian news, and to guard against any surprise from them have organized themselves into a company, with Hon. H. Jordan as Captain, and Jos. Bunby, 1st Lieutenant, and have constructed a stockade by setting heavy timbers on end and sodding it some five feet high. Forty guns were distributed to-day, with 40 rounds of ammunition to each gun. The boys here are in earnest, and will make it warm work for Mr. Indian. LIVE AND LET LIVE. Fish Creek, M. T., August 2d.

THE INDIAN EXCITEMENT—INCIDENTS OF THE MARCH TO THE FRONT.

A few minutes after closing my letter last week, I was anchored in my saddle, face toward Missoula, and going at double-quick speed. Since then a week has passed by, taking with it the war clouds of the West, and I am back again in the quiet Queen city with a hour of leisure, in which to tell the HUSBANDMAN readers of what promised to be an interesting drama, but which has ended in a humiliating farce.

When it was known that the Nez Perce Indians were approaching the Bitter Root valley by the Lo Lo trail, Capt. Rawn, commander of the military post at Missoula, with two companies of infantry and a part of Co. A., of the Missoula volunteers, marched to the canyon on the Lo Lo creek. Here he commenced digging entrenchments. Daily his messengers were sent into Missoula announcing the position of the hostiles and asking for more men. Governor Potts who had arrived at Missoula called upon all citizens who had been furnished government arms to report for service, to which there was a liberal response, some 200 citizens of the county having joined Rawn's command in less than thirty-six hours after the issuing of the Governor's proclamation.

On the 27th, Capt. Rawn informed the Governor that he had a sufficient number of volunteers to hold his position; that the Governor should take command of the other volunteers. Later in the afternoon of the same day, intelligence reached the Governor to the effect that communication between Rawn's camp and Missoula had been cut off by the movement of the Indians. The Governor immediately dispatched a messenger to Deer Lodge, urging that every man who could be furnished with arms, be sent forward to the front with all possible haste, hoping to get a sufficient number by morning to open the communication. The messenger hurried up the road at a gallop speed, using Gilmer & Salisbury's stage horses, changing to a fresh horse at every station, never halting, but hurrying the startling news to every one as he passed, "all but fifty of our men are surrounded—hurry forward," etc. Before this news reached Deer Lodge, the whole valley was armed and moving towards the front. W. A. Clarke, of Butte, who had received the

Governor's proclamation in the forenoon of that day, had rode on horseback to Butte, shut down his mills and mines, organized and mounted a company of miners and returned to Deer Lodge. Another company of Butte men had organized, choosing E. T. Owens as captain, and were nearing Deer Lodge on their march toward the front.

The fading light of the day was growing dim upon the mountains, when the half deserted town of Missoula was made glad by the arrival of the first company of Deer Lodge volunteers, under Capt. Thomas Stuart. It is not difficult to imagine the relief this little band of forty men was to his Excellency, who had vainly exerted every effort to secure enough men in the place to go with him to the field. But, had he known how prompt the miners of Butte and Pioneer and the farmers of Deer Lodge valley had been in responding to his call, and with what speed Captains Clarke, Owens, Turner and the 200 brave men were moving to his rescue, his troubled mind could have rested in peace.

Soon after sunrise, Stuart's company who had taken a good night's rest at Missoula, were mounted, and, in company with the Governor, were moving towards the Indian rendezvous, but before they had traveled four miles, a courier from Capt. Rawn proved that the alarm of yesterday was false; that communication was still open. The intelligence he bore caused the move which proved fatal to the whole affair. Rawn's order to the Governor was "hold the Bitter Root bridge and guard the O'Brien trail." Capt. Stuart and 10 men halted at the bridge, and Thos. L. Napton, 1st lieutenant, with 30 men went to the O'Brien trail, where they spent the day in a tramp of 30 miles over mountains, 20 miles from the camp of the hostiles. It was near 10 a. m. when Capt. Rawn was informed by citizens in his command that the Indians were escaping from the canyon by passing over the Mountain on the north side of the Lo Lo, but it was not until several hours had passed that he gave credit to this statement. He then ordered out a detachment of 45 men under Lieut. Andrews, to do skirmish duty. A member of this party says their leader was a military man of merit; that the first order received was to take the charges from their guns, and advance two abreast. This order was followed by a number of others which may possibly be found in Rawn and Andrew's tactics, but in no others. Prominent among them was "halt—take a drink, reload guns, advance single file ten feet apart." The company had scarcely got in line for the last order when the front halted, and a detachment was sent to Rawn for reinforcements, to which a reply was received, that the men would be furnished in a half hour. Here was the climax. The company was in gun shot of the red skins who were quietly passing out. A quick retreat returned Lieut. A. and his command to Rawn's headquarters. About this time a company of 14 men from Phillipsburg, who had crossed the Rock Creek trail, traveling night and day, with Capt. McLean and Lieut. Purdea in command, ran the gauntlet, passing near and between the Indians, reached Rawn's camp. The captain of the Phillipsburg company pointed out the hostiles to the commander and begged of him to allow them to open fire, but was baffled and awestruck by the orders, "don't shoot! don't shoot!" Of Andrews' company, however, there were three men, whose names my informant does not remember, who were brave enough to advance in speaking distance of the Indians. Looking-Glass stated to them that he did not wish to molest the citizens or their property, and would pass through peaceably if allowed; but would fight the soldiers at any time. When this became known, the citizens in Rawn's camp, (about 50 out of the 200 volunteers,) expressed their willingness to accept the proposition; and when it had been fully demonstrated that under their present commander they could have no opportunity to avenge the blood of their Idaho friends by subduing the enemy, who, at that time, had escaped from their position, and were then en route between the citizens and their homes, a more efficient commander, and more perfect organizations being necessary, neither of which could be had, they reluctantly accepted the terms as dictated by the redskins, as the lesser of the two evils.

Here ends my imperfect sketch of the affair, taken from the statements of gentlemen who were with Rawn's command. As to who is to be blamed need not be stated here. The commander will doubtless, if spared a sober moment by the wine glass, report the volunteers in fault, but then the reader can judge.

There were many incidents connected with the march to the front which it would be pleasant to mention if space permitted, but which for this reason are omitted. It may be well, however, to mention that your correspondent was one of the baker's dozen of young men from Butte and Deer Lodge, who took breakfast at Deer Lodge and supper at Whiteside's, 45 miles away, and then turned back at the Governor's order four hours later, 30 miles further on, and but 20 miles from Rawn's camp. Ours was a somewhat mixed crowd, but good enough to do fair service and win laurels on the field. Our company was headed by a Kentuckian, an ex-Captain in the U. S. army, with a right clever Episcopalian minister for Lieutenant, while the next officer in rank was a professional barber of Butte city and an Indian fighter of western slope notoriety, and the high privates were miners, one surveyor, one dairyman and one scribbler. The names as they appeared on the roll are N. L. Turner, Captain; M. N. Gilbert, Lieutenant; Dennis Simpson, Sergeant; Privates Lin McFarland, Nat. Evans, Mike Callahan, Mace Warren, Chas. Whitford, Wm. Woodward, Ed. Stock, W. H. Sutherland, and two others. It will be seen that the list of officers was not complete. This was occasioned by the smallness of the company. It was our expectation, however, to have been joined by a party of fifteen brave miners from Pioneer, who were but a few miles behind us. With this addition to our little company we could have reached the field by 7 a. m. on Sunday, and made a respectable reinforcement to Stuart's company, while but a few hours could have intervened before the arrival of Capt. Clarke and Owens with their companies.

But now it is over; a humiliating disaster, such as has never before been placed upon record. A disaster, not only to the government, but to Governor Potts, Secretary Mills and many citizens of Deer Lodge county, who engaged in it, and who, though in all sincerity doing that which they thought was for the best, have not now the slightest show of being reimbursed in purse, or even of receiving the thanks of their neighbors. It is proper in this connection to state that Capt. Turner's company and many other volunteers tender their thanks to Mrs. Childs, of Pioneer, for the kind proffer of a dinner which they did not have time to stop for, and to Mr. Heron and other farmers of the valley along the route for like courtesies. These little manifestations of kindness and sympathy will always be remembered, especially when it is known that at many of the stations along the road, and even in the city of Missoula, men who had bought their own horses and outfits for the express purpose of giving assistance to the Missoula county people, men who eat in haste and for aught they knew their last meal in life, were required to shall out. Our readers must not think that the writer is an advocate of keeping open house for all travelers, but in this affair the high charges for necessities had at Missoula and on the road by men who went in sincerity to fight for their stranger friends was in striking contrast with the manner in which the men from Butte and elsewhere were treated in Deer Lodge, where the hotels, and especially the McBurney House, refused to accept pay from the brave men who were hurrying to the defence of Missoula. There are men in Deer Lodge county who have expended several hundred dollars in this affair, who would not regret it even though no good had been accomplished, had they and their representatives received a respectable welcome.

After all the turmoil and tramping of our West Side friends, it is consoling to know that not a gun has been fired, that though the hostile Nez Perce Indians camped on the Bitter Root valley acknowledge their guilt and exhibit the scalps of citizens of Idaho, they are peaceably disposed towards the people of Montana.

Deer Lodge, August 3d.

NOTWITHSTANDING the seat of war has been transferred to the Bitter Root, the Commander of the Army has gone to the Geysers.