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TRUE TALES OF MONTANA.

BY CAVALIER.

A Princely Traveler on the Upper Missouri.

From the time of the famous expedition of Lewis and Clarke to the present day, the upper Missouri has been a favorite resort of men of science in the pursuit of their respective branches of study. Among those well known by their works, we may mention Nuttall the botanist, Audubon the ornithologist, and Hayden the geologist. But many more of less fame have successively ranged its banks, collecting specimens and making notes, which have contributed vastly to our general knowledge of the natural features of the country, and not a little to the cause of science.

Among the gentlemen of this class, whose researches brought them within the limits of the Territory of Montana, was a character who greatly interested the writer of this sketch—not by personal acquaintance, but through the medium of that well-known and excellent gentleman and prince of Montana frontiersmen, Major Alexander Culbertson—and thinking that the readers of the RECORD might find pleasure in sharing his acquaintance, the veil of forty-two years is now lifted, and the writer begs leave to present to him—Prince Maximilian, of Coblenz on the Rhine.

The Prince arrived at Fort Union, near the mouth of the Yellowstone, in the spring of 1833, having ascended the river from St. Louis, upon the steamer Assinaboin. He was then nearly seventy years of age, but well preserved and able to support considerable hardship. He was a man of medium height, rather slender, hollow-faced from loss of teeth, unostentatious, passionately fond of his pipe, and spoke English very brokenly. His favorite dress was a white slouch hat, a black velvet coat—rather rusty from long service—and probably the dirtiest, greasiest trousers that ever did service on princely legs. He was a bachelor and a man of science; and it was wholly in this latter capacity that he had roamed so far from his ancestral home upon the banks of the classic Rhine. His retinue was a modest one, consisting only of an artist named Boadman and his servant Tritupel. But these were enough, for between them they managed to keep their fussy princely master in a state of constant irritation and frequent passion, till there is scarcely a bluff upon the entire upper Missouri that has not re-echoed their names to the Prince's voice in an angry tone and with a strong Teutonic accent.

Upon his arrival at Fort Union, finding that a keel-boat was about to proceed to the recently established post above the mouth of the Maria's, he secured a passage for himself and party. As the boat slowly ascended the stream, the Prince engaged busily in increasing his collections, ranging the shores at every

opportunity in pursuit of small quadrupeds, birds, botanical specimens, and fossils; while he kept his artist as busy as the easy nature of the latter allowed in making sketches of the scenery on the route. Upon his arrival at Fort McKenzie, he was hospitably entertained by Mr. Mitchell, then in charge; and during the month that he remained there continued to pursue indefatigably his scientific researches, adding to them some observations on the Indian character, as exhibited in the Blackfoot trading parties that frequented the fort.

During his stay at Fort McKenzie, he enjoyed an opportunity to witness an Indian battle. In the latter part of August, a trading party of thirty lodges of Piegans, under Lame Bull, while encamped under the walls of the fort were suddenly attacked, at dawn of day, by about fifteen hundred Assinaboin warriors, led by the famous Long Hair. As the Assinaboins swarmed down the bluffs and across the valley it was supposed that they were attacking the fort, and its entire garrison of seventy men rushed to arms, manned the walls, and opened fire on the advancing swarms. The Prince, too, seized his gun, and posted himself at one of the portholes of the upper bastion. His piece was already loaded, but overlooking the fact in the excitement of the moment, he rammed down another charge of a size proportioned to the extreme gravity of the occasion. Then peering through the porthole he discovered an Assinaboin warrior within easy range of his weapon, and prepared to give him the warlike reception befitting a valiant German prince. Protruding his gun through the porthole, he covered the person of that miserable Assinaboin with a careful aim and pulled the trigger.

Bang! But what is the Prince about? Alas! the overloaded gun after the manner of overloaded guns, had recoiled with terrible force against the shoulder of the Prince, and reeling backward across the bastion he struck heavily against the opposite wall, and fell stunned and bewildered to the floor. Had the fight gone on, the Prince would not have been of much service in the subsequent defense; but, fortunately, by this time it was discovered that the Piegans were the real object of the attack, and Mitchell discontinued his fire, having inflicted on the Assinaboins the loss of one man—possibly, though not probably, the intended victim of the Prince.

The gates of the fort had been thrown open to admit the fleeing Piegans, but the attack had been so sudden that about twenty-five were killed before they could enter. The entire Piegan village of about five hundred lodges was pitched on the Missouri, near the Cracondunnez; and ere long its two thousand warriors were in motion. Rushing down toward the fort with whoops and yells they threw themselves upon the Assinaboin host, which retired slowly before them, contesting every inch of ground. Crossing the Maria's River, the Assinaboins

took post on the bluffs beyond. The foremost Piegans pressed on and passed the stream. When several hundred had crossed, and were beyond the support of their friends, the Assinaboins, with admirable military sagacity, descended with a yell from the bluffs, and fell upon them in an irresistible attack. The Piegans made no attempt to resist, but fled in wild confusion to the other shore, leaving about fifteen of their number dead upon the field.

For some time the fight was carried on across the stream, the combatants skulking in the bushes upon the opposite banks. At last the Piegans, mustering their entire forces, made a final charge. The Assinaboins resisted stubbornly, both at the stream and upon the bluffs, but the superior numbers of their foes forced them slowly back. Night at last put an end to the fight, and under cover of the darkness the Assinaboins withdrew, leaving six or eight scalps in the hands of the Piegans, and bearing away some fifty gained from their foes.

After a stay at Fort McKenzie of about a month, the Prince embarked in a small mackinaw, and descended to the Mandan village, where he passed the following winter. Here he had a severe attack of scurvy, but aided by the restorative qualities of wild onions was enabled to recover and return to Germany to write an account of his travels.

When he departed from Fort McKenzie, the Prince left behind a cordial invitation to both Mitchell and Culbertson to visit him in Europe, and promised to send the former a double-barrel rifle and the latter a fine meerschaum pipe. McKenzie, to whom a like invitation had been extended at Fort Union, subsequently visited him in his palace at Coblenz, where he lived in a style befitting a prince. He received McKenzie with great cordiality, and entertained him with lavish hospitality, inquiring whether the promised presents had reached their destination. He had remembered his promise, and forwarded them soon after his return to Europe; but it subsequently appeared that the vessel that bore them was lost, so that probably they now repose among the ill-gotten hoards of the Atlantic.

A RAILROAD FOR MONTANA.

On the 21st instant a Territorial convention will assemble in Helena to consider the question of a railroad for Montana. It is rather late for the RECORD to give expression to its views upon the subject, but this is to be attributed to unavoidable delays incident to establishing our office at Fort Benton, and not to any lack of zeal for the interests of the whole Territory, or the belief that our immediate section is not to be benefitted by either of the proposed schemes for bringing Montana into railroad communication with the East. We do not deem it necessary, however, to argue with much heat for a rail-

road, as we feel that we are sustained by the better judgment of the larger part of our community in the belief that Montana must have a railroad. Otherwise its resources will remain undeveloped, it will languish as it has languished, its population will decrease as it has decreased, and once more will be furnished as a poet's theme—not one "deserted village," but many that now within our borders look forward with hope and confidence to a career of expansion and prosperity.

We do not anticipate that there will be much diversion of opinion in the convention as to the necessity of a railroad. The question fruitful of discussion is the means by which we are to get one. It is upon this point, too, that a large number of our readers are divided, and it is the one, therefore, to which we shall confine this article. It is admitted that there are at present but two feasible plans for railroad communication—the completion of the Northern Pacific and a branch to the Union or Central Pacific. It is from one of these that our relief must come; let us therefore examine them with due attention.

A direct route to the East, such as the completion of the Northern Pacific would accomplish for us, is undoubtedly greatly to be preferred over the circuitous one that would be afforded by a branch to the Union or Central Pacific. The reasons of this are too obvious to require enumeration. In common, therefore, with all Montanians, we looked forward with pleasure to the early completion of the road, rejoiced when it attained the Missouri, at Bismarck, and lamented the recent apparent total collapse of the scheme, and the consequent ruin of some of its leading promoters. We have admired the earnestness with which the corporation has sought to retrieve their fallen fortunes, hoped for its speedy success, and again regretted that we could not escape the conclusion that their failure was complete. And if the company should ever become able to prosecute its efforts to the extent of threading the plains and valleys of Montana with their iron track, none will extend to it a heartier welcome, or rejoice more sincerely than the RECORD.

But while our good wishes still rest with the Northern Pacific, our confidence in its ability to do anything further for Montana for many years to come is greatly shaken. Instead of adding to its track and facilities for doing business, its time is expended in entreating Congress for further aid, in considering the means for appreciating its almost worthless bonds, in seeking extensive pecuniary assistance from the Territories it is to traverse, in pondering upon its desperate situation, and in spite of its enshrouding gloom, evolving therefrom the most hopeful promises.

It is possible that beneath all this there is an unseen ability that will yet and soon be developed to the convincing of the doubtful and the confusion of the skeptic and

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