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Poetry.

THE WORLD'S WORKERS.

The grandest battles that have yet been won
Were hymn'd not 'mid the awful roll of arms,
Nor traced in notes of blood whose solemn stave
Filled the whole earth with tears;
But silently the pale soldier works,
Who clears the path that leads to human good;
Alone he reads the open book of Heaven,
Learning therein its full divinity;
Alone he sees the unfading sun go down,
And all its laws and systems wheel before his mind
In august, simple order;
He traverses through the silent arch of night
With on the gleaming banner of the stars,
And learns the power that gives Arcturus rule,
Or spans the baleful light that Sirius flames around;
He roams, with the white canvas for a battlefield
To every sea that rounds a headland bold,
And from the daring cruise brings blessings to our doors;
With his own hand he digs into the earth
And heaves from the chaotic mass of clay,
Treasures that are glorious as the heavens themselves.
Thus patiently he works, the soldier brave,
Asking but room to think, and freedom to pursue
Unchecked to feel the brotherhood of souls
The recognition with loud-throated praise
Solace fills his hearty heart with blissful pride.

"ETOILE."

"When I'm a man," the stripling cries,
"And strives the coming years to scan—
"Oh, then I shall be strong and wise,
When I'm a man!"

"When I was young," the old man sighs,
"Bravely the dark and lonely sea
Their road under sunny skies,
When I was young!"

"When I'm a man, I shall be free
To guard the right, the truth uphold."
"When I was young I bent no knee
To power or gold."

"Then shall I satisfy my soul
With yonder prize, when I'm a man,"
"To fate I found how vain the goal
To which I ran."

"When I'm a man these idle toys
Aside forever shall be flung."
"There was no poison in my joys
When I was young."

The boy's bright dream is all before,
The man's romance lies far behind.
Had we the present and no more,
Fate were unkind.

But, brother, toiling in the night,
Still count yourself not all unblest
If in the east there gleams a light,
Or in the west.

Two trembling culprits, sad and pale,
Before His Honor stood;
One said: "Mine is a thrilling tale;
I shot my neighbor's blood;
But then he tempted me to shoot,
Because he practiced on a flute."

Then the lowly dropped his head:
"Mine is a crimson crime;
I took a pistol and shot dead
A young man in his prime;
But then I freely shed his gore
Because I could not stand his snore."

His Honor then, sedate and wise,
His chin upon his palm,
In deep reflection closed his eyes
As solemn as a clam;
Then softly said to each: "Go free!
There is no law for such as thee."

O watcher by the wet and wimpling waves,
O sitter by the solemn, salty sea,
O fisherman forlorn,
Fishing from night to morn,
Can't you catch a crimson crab for me?

But the fisher sorely glared like one in a trance.
"O no!" he howled, "I'll dance a minuet,
And if that to please you fail,
I'll practice on the scale,
And play an air upon my cast a net."

Then this funny fisher fishing by the sea,
In plaintive numbers angle little round,
And, spinning on his heel,
Dances a real fisher's reel,
While a hungry crab bait all his crab-land down.

Original Story.

FRONTIER SKETCHES.

By J. J. HEALY.

A Bloody Battle.

The Missouri valley and adjacent bluffs and plains, from Benton to Fort Buford, have been the theatre of some of the most remarkable incidents recorded in border history. Far removed from the settled and advanced out-posts of civilization, and liberally provided by nature with all the requirements of a wild and savage life, this still sparsely settled region became at early day the favorite haunt of Indian tribes.

It was not, however, until after the Minnesota massacre, in 1862, that the Sioux, who have made this region so notorious, left their first trail of blood along the banks of the crooked stream; but from that time on, down to the present day, this extensive tract of country has been the scene of more blood-shed than perhaps any other section upon the American continent.

The comparatively few murders and wholesale butcheries by the Sioux recorded since the days of Lewis & Clark, form but a small portion of the crimes committed by this blood-thirsty race, and afford little idea of the numberless victims who have been killed in open warfare, or slaughtered in cold blood. For a time after their first appearance along the river they spared nothing human that had the misfortune to cross their path; men, women and children, whether of the white race or of some Indian tribe not their own, were slaughtered without cause or provocation, and for no other purpose than to gratify their insatiable thirst for blood. It was not until years later that these fiends were checked in their brutal career and made to fear and respect superior skill and force.

In the early days, the vocations chiefly followed by the white inhabitants—they could not properly be called settlers, as few, if any, were permanently located along the river, made them an attractive and too often an easy prey to the Sioux. The profits of the fur trade were then the principal and nearly the only inducement for white men to seek this dangerous country, and remain in constant peril of their lives, though doubtless many were led hither through pure love of adventure or by romantic ideas of border life. The fur trade, and especially the traffic in robes, was conducted chiefly with the Indians. White hunters and trappers also furnished a supply of furs and peltries, and the traders frequently employed white men to hunt or catch the fur-producing animals, but the main supply came directly or indirectly from the Indians, from whom even the hunters frequently purchased robes and furs, which they afterwards sold to the regular fur companies or traders. One of the peculiar features of this traffic is that hostile Indians, if not always the most desirable customers, are usually the most profitable to traders. A war-party of hostiles will usually accept with haughty indifference whatever price or goods the trader chooses to give them in return, while the peaceably-disposed red-skin will drive the hardest bargain possible, and will usually demand, beg or steal more than his stock in trade is worth.

As the profits of the fur trade were derived almost entirely from the Indians, the trader was not only compelled to dwell with the Indians, but among the most hostile and blood-thirsty tribes, and the reader can well imagine his perilous position, and the constant exertion and watchfulness necessary to secure the robes and furs, from the clutches of the surrounding tribes.

But notwithstanding surrounding dangers, the traders were scattered up and down the river, and for years they had been accustomed to see the Indians come and go, and had become familiar with their customs and habits, and had learned to place some confidence in their professions of friendship, and to believe that they would not molest the whites without provocation. The Indians, too, whose long familiarity with danger made them utterly fearless and almost invincible, these traders were enabled to hold their ground against the hordes of hostile Sioux who swarmed along the banks of the Missouri, and many of them in time realized fortunes from their dangerous calling, and lived to enjoy the fruits of their labors. It would be impossible, however, to estimate the numberless lives sacrificed in conducting this perilous traffic. The forts were at all times liable to attack, and hundreds upon hundreds of men are known to have perished in their defense, while as many more, perhaps, whose fate is uncertain, were butchered by the red fiends who now enjoy the protection of Her Majesty's Government.

The hunters, traders and other employees of the great fur companies were not, however, the only victims of Indian atrocity. After the Upper Missouri had been successfully navigated by steamers, wood-yards sprang up along the river, and the men engaged in supplying the steamers with fuel were frequently attacked and killed by the Sioux. The gold discoveries in Montana brought many new settlers to the country, and many of these also furnished food for the scalping knife and tomahawk.

"Eternal vigilance," however, soon made the whites equal to their foes in Indian strategy, and superior courage and intelligence gave them an advantage which in time brought the Sioux into complete subjection. Whisky was also a powerful agent in bringing about this desirable result. It demoralized the Indians and kept them poor, but it also broke their blood-thirsty spirit, or caused them to expend all their viciousness upon each other.

When the Mounted Police first took possession of the Northwest Territory, they found the Sioux and Assinaboines, a kindred tribe, completely subdued and entertaining a wholesome dread of the whole white race. And only since the abolition of the whisky traffic, and since the Northwest Territory became an asylum of refuge for the Sioux and other hostile tribes, has the necessity for military protection been felt by the settlers of northern Montana.

The subject of this sketch has been selected from numerous others of equal importance, for the purpose of showing the fearful odds with which the early settlers of our Territory were often obliged to contend, and because a contest of such magnitude deserves the publicity it has never yet obtained. It is truth, the reader will hardly entertain a doubt, when the fact is stated that nearly all the whites engaged in the bloody encounter are still residents of Montana, some of them living at Benton and other points along the Missouri.

During the winter of 1868-9, a company of what Montanians would call the "choicest band of prairie and mountain men" congregated at the mouth of the Musselshell river. They numbered in all about thirty-seven men, and one Indian [illegible]. Among these were the following, whose names will be readily recognized by old residents:

Wm. Clendinnin, Jr., Chas. Morrison, Jno. Hughes, Greenwood, Frenchy, Frank Smith, W. A. Thompson, James A. Weir, Dennis Halpin, Dan. Fitzpatrick, Bill Jessie, Johnnie Cochrane, Joe Beeshlo, Jno. McDonald, Fisher, Cash Nix, Bill Martin, Johnson, Geo. Grennel, James Brewer, Whitson, Cap. Andrews, Tom Davis, Tom Stuart, Cameron, [illegible] Gus Tyler, Henry [illegible] Gates and six others, names forgotten.

Wm. Clendinnin, Jr., and the Montana Trading Fallow Company, were permanently established at this place, and the remainder of the men had congregated from the neighboring wood-yards along the river to await the arrival of the first steamboat from below, which was expected at any day. The place had serious expectations of becoming a successful rival of Benton, and was already called Musselshell City.

The cabins were strongly built with a view to permanency, and for defense against Indians, and during the summer season quite a number of people of all classes and professions visited the town to purchase supplies and buy or sell robes and furs, but in the fall and winter but little business was transacted, and few persons cared to remain throughout the dull season.

The Indians had been remarkably successful in all their expeditions against the whites, and were daily becoming more and more audacious. Thirty-seven well-armed and experienced Indian-fighters in a few days, however, entertained little doubt meeting any force of red-skins they might have the temerity to attack them, and this party possessed all the elements indifferent to danger that then characterized the border settlers.

A band of 230 Sioux, camped at Fort Peck under the command of their chief, "Big Bear," had for some time calculated on attacking the Musselshell settlement, feeling confident that with such an overwhelming force there would be no difficulty in obtaining a speedy and complete victory without serious loss to themselves. But they deferred the attack until early spring, when the weather and roads would prove favorable, and the place was really to be defended by a large number of men. They left the vicinity of the fort about March and succeeded in reaching the vicinity of the fort without discovery, and after a little delay, it was not made until the morning of the 15th of November, they found the place encamped the point of the bluff.

At events, about 5 o'clock on the morning of the 15th, the squaw, who was with the whites, and the wife of "Crow Dave," went out of one of the cabins to gather wood and start a fire, and while in the act of picking up the wood, she was fired on by a small advance guard of the main body of the Indians, and shot through the breast, but not dangerously wounded. The report of a rifle in those days would arouse the soundest sleeper, and in a minute rifle in hand, every man was at his post. The yells of the wounded squaw were therefore unnecessary to warn the men resting within the cabins, hardly had the noise of the Indian rifles died away, when every man was at his cabin and ready for attack or defense. What was still better, there was no sleep or confusion. The situation was understood at a glance, and even the plan of attack and the number of Indians were correctly calculated. Col. Clendenin, in all his charge, as being the most unlikely place the Indians could expect from so small a party, it would be the surest means taking them at a disadvantage. The place was held upon without a moment's hesitation. Clendinnin, Leader, Morris, Martinds, Greenwood, Frenchy, Smith and several others, made up the charge party, while the others remained under arms as a reserve force. When all were ready, Leader took the advance and the charge was upon the enemy with a yell almost astonished the stout-hearted warrior in the band. Outnumbered in overwhelming numbers, the Indians had planned the attack, and expected from their usual skill and caution to find the whites divided into three bands—the strongest of those who had fired upon the squaw, acting as a decoy; while the other two were in the rear to charge with the extra weapons, etc. The full fighting party, numbered about one hundred warriors, and were concealed in the "cut coulee," which empties into Musselshell. When the charge came the decoy at once [illegible] the fighting party.

[illegible] the whites were taken by surprise, and were forced from the cabins, and were driven back to the river bank, where they were [illegible] the fight was here waged, from first to last, with the greatest determination and bravery, and for hours the issue was doubtful, the whites fighting as men fighting for their lives, and the Indians as men who had never before met with a check.

The fight had lasted from daylight until 9 o'clock, when the Indians had succeeded in driving the whites into the cabins, and had taken possession of the place, and were preparing to fire the cabins, when a fresh party of whites, who had been hunting in the vicinity, and who had heard the firing, and had come to the assistance of their friends, arrived on the ground, and opened a fire on the Indians from the hill-side, which so astonished the Indians, who had supposed the whole party had been killed, that they at once commenced a retreat, which soon became a rout, and they were pursued for a mile or more by the whites, who killed many of the fleeing Indians. The Indians had left their dead and wounded behind them, as well as their extra clothing, robes, blankets, etc., and the last red-skin had no sooner disappeared than the whites inaugurated a scalping carnival. Cap Andrews cut off the heads of all the prominent braves, gathering some fifty or more in all, and afterwards had them boiled down, cleaned, labeled and exhibited for the curiosity of tourists. It is said that the Captain afterwards took the skulls to the States, and delivered lectures on the subject of the poor Indians.

One of the wounded reds pleaded for mercy, claiming that he was "good Indian." But Johnson, who had been actively engaged in the fight all day, made a better one of him, by finishing him with his knife, cutting out his vitals, and going through the motion of eating his liver. The merciless hunter was ever afterwards called "Liver-eating Johnson."

In looking over the battle-field, trails of blood were found leading in almost every direction, and it was afterwards learned that about half of the unfortunate wretches who escaped from the coulee died of their wounds, or were left on the road before the remainder reached Fort Peck. Halpin and Wells discovered the cache of robes, war-bonnets, whips, ropes, dry meats, and even a grind-stone which the enemy had left behind them, and in another spot were found over two hundred valuable buffalo robes. These trophies were afterwards sold for the benefit of the wounded survivors, and Greenwood, who was shot through the lungs, received for his share enough to defray the cost of surgical attendance.

Thus ended one of the greatest victories ever won by white men on the Missouri river. It completely subdued for a time the whole Sioux tribe, and prevented serious depredations during the ensuing summer. The particulars of the engagement have been stated without the slightest attempt at exaggeration or embellishment, and all the credit accorded to the brave men who so successfully defended their lives and homes, is unquestionably well deserved; for it will be remembered that the Indians not only attacked in overpowering numbers, but completely surprised the whites, and until the skill and ingenuity of the latter turned the tide of battle in their favor, the chances were greatly in favor of the Indians. [illegible] Fort Peck, [illegible] Fort Buford, [illegible] Fort Benton, [illegible] Musselshell City, [illegible] Fort Benton, [illegible] Musselshell City, [illegible] Fort Benton, [illegible] Musselshell City