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MY FIRST NIGHT IN MONTANA.

The Experiences of a Miner in the Early Days of Montana. A Close Call From the Vigilantes.

The first night which I spent in Montana Territory came so near being my last one on earth, that to this day the recollection of it sends a thrill along my nerves. It was sixteen years ago, in 1869, and I was by no means a "leanderfoot" even then.

Why was I going there? Gold, and as a miner and an honest one; I can honestly claim so much; in fact, I was rather too "innocent" for that place, as my story will show.

Such rude acts of justice are apt to make eastern people shudder. But really, Montana could never have been settled without its "vigilantes" and the aid of lynch law.

From 1867 to 1880 the vigilantes sometimes had a peculiar symbol which a rogue sometimes found affixed to his cabin door on a morning, or otherwise posted where he could not fail to see it.

As this my first night in Montana, I will speak of it in that connection. On the afternoon in question I was jogging forward, perched on a mule, with my outfit lashed and cinched to the back of another, expecting to get to Bannack by sunset; and I should have done so but for taking a wrong trail, eight miles back, and going off to the east of the town.

A bank, quick-eyed man of twenty-two or three appeared at the door as I came through the willows, and I noticed that he seemed to regard my approach very sharply, not to say suspiciously. But I did not much wonder at that, for all strangers are suspicious characters in these settlements.

I noticed, too, what did arouse in me a certain queer feeling of curiosity, namely, a placard of white paper, about seven inches square, pinned to the trunk of a cottonwood ten or twelve feet from the cabin door. On this placard, roughly drawn with a very black pencil, was most prominently grinning skull with crossbones, underneath which were the large figures "3-7-77."

"Well, you have missed your way," replied the man, in exceptionally good English; not at all of the frontier sort, nor were his tone and inflection what we usually heard in those parts at that time.

"You are a matter of eleven miles out of the city," he continued, regarding me closely as he spoke. "I doubt if you could get there to-night. The trail is a blind one. But" (he went on in a tone that seemed to convey to me some occult significance) "I am rather looking for a party of old acquaintances over to-night, after the moon rises, and I may go back with them. You are welcome to stop and go along with us, if you like. We have half a buffalo hump roasting inside, and there is grass for your mules along the creek."

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Something in the man's manner and the way in which his eyes sized me up, gave me a sinister impression. Yet the offer was hardly one to be refused in my present situation. So I expressed my thanks, dismounted, and hobbling on my two mules, took my pack inside the shanty and began conversation.

Like myself, my host was a young man and of about my own size, build and complexion. He told me that he had been in Montana three months "prospecting" and elk hunting; that he managed to get a living by the sale of buffalo and elk hides. In a general way he talked of the prospects of finding gold; and told me one or two anecdotes of his experience hunting buffaloes, and also his name, Albert Fairbanks.

The squaw soon prepared dinner, and gave us a fine roast of buffalo meat, along with a sauce from some kind of wild plants which she had gathered. We partook bountifully. But once, as we sat eating, I noticed that a slight noise outside the cabin, made by one of my mules, caused my host to start uneasily, and that he went hastily to the door for a look about.

As soon as we had fairly finished eating, he observed to me, confidentially, that he had promised "Maggy," the squaw, to set her on her way to her "folks" that evening, she being desirous of returning to her tribe; and he asked me if I would mind "sitting by" in the shanty to look out for things, for an hour and a half, possibly, while he started the Indian woman on her way.

Such a request, involving no service or trouble on my part, was not easily refused to a man who had just furnished me with a good dinner. I assented, made myself comfortable before the fire in the shanty, for the night was rather chilly; and immediately Fairbanks, accompanied by the squaw, set out on foot.

An hour passed, perhaps more; night had fallen, and it was quite dark outside, the moon not having risen yet. I had hitched my mules to a tree outside, when my ear caught the gallop of horses' feet coming momentarily nearer, evidently a numerous party. "It's Fairbanks' friends," I thought to myself, getting up and walking to open the door.

There, by the wavering reflections cast out from the fire in the wood fire in the fireplace inside, I saw ten or twelve men on horseback facing me, each with a revolver pointed straight at my head.

"Throw up your hands!" cried a stern voice from behind one of the pistols.

I obeyed instinctively, resistance was out of the question; I had, I concluded, fallen into the clutches of road agents.

"We've unpleasant business with you my friend," the leader continued, "you probably know what's coming, since you've paid no heed to our warning," and he pointed to the placard on the tree by the shanty.

I utterly failed to understand, or gain so much as a hint of their meaning. Even as their leader spoke, they all sprang off their horses, which two of their number took hold; two others, stepping determinedly forward, seized my upraised arms, one on each side, while the fifth, whipping a lariat from beneath his coat, threw a noose over my head, which drew rather uncomfortably tight and held so.

I now saw that it was a case of prospective lynching, and that I was probably mistaken for some other man—Fairbanks, most likely. I immediately and most vigorously remonstrated with them.

"Whom do you take me for?" I exclaimed, with great heat. "What are you hanging me for?" etc.

"Forward!" the leader ordered, and in the midst of my remonstrant outcries, I was forced along, out through the willows to the trail and thence onward to a crag beside it, where two cedars grew, overhanging the path below.

My shouts, my frantic denials of having been guilty of any crime, and vehement assertions that my name was Fairbanks, made not the least impression on my captors, and were received with nothing more than an incredulous laugh.

The leader now spoke again. "Al Fairbanks, alias Henry Dothan, alias Charles Campbell," he said slowly, implacably, "we know all about you. Montana's no further use for ye. We gave you a fair chance; and if you had been disposed to be a decent man none of your old record would have been dug up, though you were a double-dyed criminal when you came here. You robbed sluices at Deadwood and Silver Gulch. We knew all about ye when ye first came here; but we gave ye a chance for yourself. You would go on the old road though. Last week you broke into a camp at Bannack; and not a month ago you shot and robbed a miner not two miles from here. Fact, we've let you run altogether too long. If you've any remarks to make, we will listen—two minutes."

Again I protested that I was not the man, that my name was Stuart, that I had just arrived at Fairbanks cabin; and for a moment or two I hoped that my frantic asseverations had produced some effect. The leader took a lantern which one of the party carried and held it close to my face. They looked at me searchingly.

"This is Fairbanks' fast enough," one said; the others agreed with him. "Don't waste your breath in useless lies about yourself," said the leader of the committee.

I thought of home, and of my sister, the only living relative whom I now had. "If you will murder me," I exclaimed, "send my watch and my pocket book to my sister, Miss T. R. S., Pennsylvania."

"Give that address again, please," said the leader, taking out a note-book and pencil. I repeated it and he wrote it down, saying, "All right; they shall go as you direct."

While he spoke two others of the party seized my arms. Suddenly they stopped and spoke to the leader, who stood in front of me. He went round; I felt that they were examining my wrists. By why?

"W. S. on both of them," one said. Then I recollected the initials on my wrists, in Indian ink, with which, when a boy at school, I had been pricked on each arm, and along with them an anchor.

"Those are my initials—for William Stuart!" I exclaimed. "They were put there years ago. That is my name."

"It is just possible," the leader said to the others. "We will keep him till to-morrow."

Fortwith I was hurried back to the shanty, mounted on a horse and thence taken closely guarded, across the country, by moonlight, to Bannack City. Here I thrust into a cellar, and left in darkness till the following evening, when three men came to the door and bade me come up.

With some natural anxiety I responded to the call, when a brief apology was made me for the "inconvenience" to which I had been subjected. I was, moreover, advised to keep a close mouth as to what had occurred, and also to be more cautious in whose company I was found in future.

Fairbanks, alias Campbell, I never saw nor heard of afterwards. It is quite apparent that having received a "permit to travel" from the vigilantes, he had seen fit to do so and leave me to explain to these summary gentlemen as best I could.

I found the law of keeping one's self among good associations was the way of safety even in a new country, and I was glad enough afterwards to follow the advice of my new friends, and "to be more cautious in whose company I was found."

CLOSE CALL FOR MAJ. WHIPPLE.

A Poplar River, Montana, dispatch, July 11, says: A man was this week arrested in Miles City and confessed being an outlaw of the notorious Dock Middleton's gang, and on interrogation gave numerous particulars of their operations and projects. He told of a contemplated robbery on Paymaster Whipple, to take place between Fort Buford, Dak., and Glendive, Mont., on Wednesday last. The plan of attack had been elaborately arranged, but on learning this five civil officers in the guise of soldiers were dispatched to join the military escort, then nearing Glendive. From there the paymaster, accompanied by eleven men, started Wednesday morning en route to Buford, all heavily armed, expecting at any moment a deadly conflict. But the cunning road agents were not to be thus deceived, and abandoned their scheme on seeing the augmented defense of the army treasury.

INDIAN TROUBLES.

A telegram received at the war department in Washington, July 10, indicates that Indian difficulties had occurred in a new place. This dispatch was from Gen. Terry, and read: Col. Brooke, Fort Shaw, commanding the district of Montana, has received information from Canadian authorities that twenty-five lodges of insurrectionary Canadians, under a son of Big Bear, are going towards the boundary line. They probably intend to go to the Crow Indian reserve in Montana. They would be a disturbing element if suffered to join the Indians who are now on the reservation.

A FATHERS LONG SEARCH.

A Man Who is Looking For an Heir to \$10,000,000.

He was a queer looking genius. Below the medium height, thin and emaciated; face brown and wrinkled; black beady eyes; scanty gray beard all over his face; bushy, black eyebrows; iron-gray hair, thin and long, with just the suspicion of a tuck at the ends. His clothes were black, shiny, seedy and ill-fitting. His hat was a relic of by-gone days—a cross between a bell-crown and a sawed-off derby. His shoes tumbled up at the toes and down at the heels. The queer looking old gentleman was "Professor" Richard Belvan, a gentleman who announces that he will give private instructions at night to persons who have not had the advantages of educational facilities.

"If it is as you say that you are making a good living out of your business, why is it, if a fair question, that you do not dress in better taste?"

"I have had that question often and as often have I refused to answer, but by giving my story publicly it may help me along, and I will tell it to you. I am saving my money to find my daughter."

"Where is she?"

"I have asked that question thousands of times. I feel assured that she isn't dead. I have searched the world over for her once, and will search it over again. I will find her yet. To make my story brief as possible, twenty years ago I was living in London, England, with my little girl who was then 5 years of age. Her mother died about a year before.

I was a bank clerk getting a very good salary, and was laying by a little for a rainy day. I had a brother in India immensely wealthy. He had promised to make my daughter his heiress when he died, and he kept word. I was ignored in the will, and such were its provisions that another person than myself was appointed to take care of her property until she became of age. I did not care much. I was making enough to support us.

"Well the whole thing in a nutshell is that my daughter was stolen and from that day to this I have been searching for her. I expended my savings in searching Europe. I went back to London, and worked until I had enough to search Asia, Africa and Australia, and did so.

"I returned to Europe. While in Milan, Italy, I went broke. Being a good linguist and having noticed an old man writing letters for the peasants, I set up in business for myself and made money enough to come to America. Since in this country I have supported myself in the business I am in now. By rigid economy I manage every two or three years to continue my search. I have been back to Europe five times since I came to America and will go back this month.

"Have you ever got any trace of your child?"

"Never. But I shall never give up the search. Something tells me she is yet alive. I don't know why she was stolen. Her money is untouched. There is upwards of \$2,000,000 to her credit in the Bank of England. No one can touch it, and if she is not found I suppose it will go to the crown.—Rocky Mountain News.

CURED OF "KNOCKING DOWN."

New York Herald: A Sixth avenue car was dodging falling spikes and oil drippings from the "L" road above on an uptown trip. A weary load of uncomfortable passengers was inside. Into the car at Varick street came a youth with light blue eyes and a hale of mildness and trustfulness all around him. He had a Brooklyn (E. D.) air about him that would seem to be easily imposed upon. The conductor had not these characteristics, for the ways of the "knocker down" were not unknown to his calluloid soul. The youth found two or three square inches of unoccupied space in which to stow himself, and while he stood by the side of a Herald reporter handed a dime to the conductor, who was edging his way through the crowd and playing a fitful melody with the register bell. He briskly pocketed the dime and passed on, apparently so absorbed with the multitude of his cares that he forgot to hand back the change.

The youth thought nothing of this at first, but presently he began to yearn for either his five cents or a "thank you." As block after block was left in the rear, he saw that he had been imposed upon, then the Long Island mind came to himself, and he set about "knocking down." The car had thinned out, and as he spread his arms in the corner, he took out a pencil. He made a y...

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object of it, and attracted everybody's attention, that of the conductor included. He took out his watch and noted down the time. Then came a long gaze at the number of the car, and that went down on the book. Another long gaze at the conductor, who was becoming interested in the proceedings, and the youth made no secret of the fact his number was being placed upon the paper. The street name upon a lamp post was copied the book closed with a slap, and along with the pencil, was put away. Then he touched the arm of the conductor and said:

"Are you about ready to give me my change?"

"Oh yes, yes. How much did you give me?" The red flag of guilt fluttered in an unmistakable way from the rumparts of his face.

"I gave you a silver dollar." The expression of guilelessness which accompanied this assertion would have done a Young Men's Christian association bookkeeper in a savings bank very proud. The conductor did not say anything, but he thought faster than Snowden can skate. He counted out the 95 cents in the youth's hand, and wondering what right a fellow had to look like a flat unless he was one.

The youth had gone as far as he wanted to, and when he stepped off the car there was an effervescent grin on his placid and mild features.

Then the conductor went to the front door and talked to the driver in a confidential style which, in all well-conducted family papers is represented by a series of dashes.—New York Herald.

RIEL'S DEFENSE.

A Winnipeg dispatch, July 12, says: Lemieux, Fitzpatrick and Greenshield, Riel's counsel, are here. They will plead justification in Riel's behalf, as well as on that of the other prisoners. They will seek to establish that the half-breeds had substantial grievances; that they petitioned the dominion government time and again to have them removed, and that they were forced to adopt it. They will use Hon. Edward Blake's recent speech in the house of commons on the half-breed troubles to establish their plea.

HOW BRONCHO RIDING WORKS.

Santa Fe (N. Mex.) Democrat: A broncho is a horse. He has four legs like the saw horse, but is decidedly more skittish. The broncho is of gentle deportment and modest mien, but there isn't a real safe place about him. There is nothing mean about the broncho, though; he is perfectly reasonable and acts on principle. All he asks is to be let alone, but he does ask this and insists on it. He is firm in this matter, and no kind of argument can shake his determination. There is a broncho that lives out some miles from this city. We know him right well. One day a man roped him in and tried to put a saddle on him. The broncho looked sadly at him, shook his head and begged the fellow as plain as could be to go away and not try to interfere with a broncho who was simply engaged in the pursuit of his own happiness; but the man came on with the saddle and continued to aggress. Then the broncho reached out with his right hind foot and expostulated with the man so that he died. When thoroughly aroused the broncho is quite fatal, and if you can get close enough to examine his cranial structure you will find a cavity just above the eye where the bump of remorse should be.

The broncho is what the cowboys call "high strung." If you want to know just how high he is strung, climb up onto his apex. We rode a broncho once. We didn't travel far, but the ride was mighty exhilarating while it lasted. We got on with great pomp and a derrick, but we didn't put on any unnecessary style when we went to get off. The beast evinced considerable surprise when we took our location upon his dorsal fin. He seemed to think a moment, and then he gathered up his loins and delivered a volley of heels and hardware, straight out from the shoulder. The recoil was fearful. We saw that our seat was going to be contested, and we began to make a motion to dismount, but the beast had got under way by this time, so we breathed a silent hymn and tightened our grip. He now went off into a spasm of tall stiff-legged bucks. He pitched us so high that every time we started down we would meet him coming on another trip. Finally he gave us one grand farewell boost and we clove the firmament and split up through the hushed ethereal until our toes ached from the

lowness of the temperature, and we could distinctly hear the music of the spheres. Then we came down and fell in a little heap about one hundred yards from the starting point. A kind Samaritan gathered up our remains in a cigar box, and carried us to the hospital. As they looked pityingly at us the attending surgeons marveled as to the nature of our mishap. One said it was a cyclone, another said it was a railroad smash-up; but we thought of the calico-hided pony that was grazing peacefully in the dewy meadow and held our peace.

SPECIAL PERMISSION ASKED.

A Washington dispatch, July 10, says: P. H. Kelly received a telegram to-day from General Manager Oakes, of the Northern Pacific, stating that the steamer Isabella, from China, would arrive in Tacoma about the 20th inst., and asking that Mr. Kelly apply to the secretary of the treasury for permission to have a cargo of teas, on board the Isabella, shipped over the Northern Pacific in bond. As the road is not a bonded route, special permission must be sought, and if it is secured, quite an important step will have been taken toward advancing the prospects of the route. The railroad company offer to give the bonds sufficient to have the teas brought to St. Paul, inspected there and duties paid on them at that point. Hitherto imported teas for St. Paul have had to be taken over the Union Pacific.

A BIG BUNCH OF CATTLE.

The largest cattle deal of the year, says a Cheyenne, Wyoming dispatch, of July 12, was consummated Friday. The Ogalalla Cattle company, embracing A. H. Swan of Cheyenne, Wm. A. Paxton of Omaha, and J. H. Bosler of Carlisle, Pa., bought 27,000 head of cattle, with three ranches, from Dennis Shedy of Colorado. The cattle range is on the north side of the North Platte river, in Nebraska and Wyoming. The amount involved is \$350,000.

Goldsmith Maid, at the height of her glory, for a joke, was taken from her quarters through a back street, led to public place and put up at auction, the spectators bidding in good faith until the price was run up to \$34, when some one connected with the stable bid \$35, the hammer fell and she was led away.

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