

My Motto: "Never to be Undersold."

A. NATHAN

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THE PROSPECTOR.

Written for the Tribune:

Yes, there he is, in the store there. No mistaking him in any country and especially in a mining country. His half-cowboy white hat, limber as to its brim; his face unshaven, open-necked shirt, the pistol belt which don't hold up his overalls half tucked into the heavy boots, proclaim him to be a man of the mountains. If there's a mining camp, or ever has been one on this broad continent, from British Columbia down to Mexico, or from California to Colorado and New Mexico, just mention it and from out of the treasures of his memory—or imagination, he will tell of wondrous finds made there by him or his partner.

It may be that as regards the formation and country rock his version may not exactly agree with perhaps your experience and knowledge of it, but that don't matter much to him. Possibly the claims on Otter creek were worked by flume sluices according to his story, though miners who took out the golden nuggets declare it was ground sluicing, but great men will differ in opinion, you know. And then, a man who has climbed untold numbers of mountains, who has followed croppings for hundreds of miles, who has traced veins from one territory into another, to whom a trail on a dark night is as familiar as the street your house is on may be to you, who can give you day and date for every place he has been in during his gold and silver hunting career, it is not at all strange that occasionally he will get things a little mixed.

Any time you have from three to ten hours to spare, just take him aside—well, a back room, or at a side table in a saloon, order the drinks, casually mention some well known mine or camp and then you have him started. Be careful not to attempt to tell anything yourself, simply suggest an occasional name of a mine or a miner, and once in a while—a long while, remark, "Yes, I believe I've seen something like it." Don't forget that you are in a saloon, and that the proprietor has to pay license, rent, etc. A few drinks partaken of at judiciously chosen intervals, and at such places in the course of his remarks as are fitting, and before the first half hour is gone, you have him—or rather he has you. Now, if you are an attentive and much interested listener, you may prospect him as fully and fairly as did ever he, a vein, ledge, lode or deposit. If during his stay in town he has possessed himself of any filthy lucre, and has any left, you will see some of it in sight pretty soon. The barkeeper will be called, and with a wink and a leetle of the same, you will be asked, "What's yours?" From this time he will likely go turn about with you on the drinks as long as his cash holds out. As he warms to his subject, with ready day and date, condition of the weather, and most accurate estimate of distances, he will proceed to unfold most startling and wholly unexpected incidents which have occurred in his travels. His discourse will in time assume the manner and tone of an expert. Your ears will be forced to give attention to every known and some till now, unknown formations. Cleavages will form one chapter. Ores in veins, fissures, contracts, seams, lodes and deposits will successively form other chapters. Chlorides, sulphides, carbonates, sulphurets, quartz, horn, wire and native forms, will each in turn receive a glowing tribute from his tongue. From gold to silver, from lead to iron, from copper to tin, will he leap with the agility of his mountain friend, the goat. As he talks, his fore finger will trace upon the table top the direction of veins, from which in like imaginary and uncertain manner will be drawn dips, spurs and angles. Repeated libations will render him confidential, and as the fellow feeling makes him wondrous kind, he will, in strictest secrecy, impart to you his latest discovery, in which untold bonanzas lie hidden, needing but the magic touch of capital for development. When, as you, upon plea of urgent business or appointed engagement, take your leave of him,

he will with unfeigned anxiety, beg that "you won't breathe it."

Poor fellow! he may be a fraud and sometimes is, but really he's an honest one. His lonely life and all consuming mania to find a bonanza have made him a visionary being. On the steep mountain side, in the deep canyon, along the water courses, on the high divides, with silent nature for company, he has built his castles in the air, has founded them on precious formations, built them of rich ores, adorned them with gold, embellished them with silver, ornamented them with jewels for so long and so often, that when back among the haunts of men, telling his visions so real to him, though to us extravagant, he should be treated with that clarity of spirit which is our duty to all men and especially to that hardy pioneer of civilization, the prospector.

Y. H. T.

Ice.

In enumerating the business enterprises represented here, we inadvertently omitted the ice dealers, who will furnish us with so much of congealed blessing next summer. Mr. Will Schamps has erected a large ice-house just above Myer's mill, and Mr. Jos. Herring has another just this side of the lower ferry. There will be no danger of an ice famine here again.

A Notable Event.

Last Monday evening at Helena, H. O. Chowen Esq. was united in marriage with Miss Agnes M. Ball. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. F. D. Kelsey, pastor of the Congregational church, at the residence of the bride's uncle, Mr. Ringwald. Only a few of the relatives and friends of the contracting parties were present on this interesting occasion. Few marriages have promised more happiness and prosperity than this. Mr. Chowen is well known in Northern Montana, and highly esteemed for his ability and manly character. As Agent of the Townsite company, secretary and manager of the Cataract mill, vice-president of the First National bank and an extensive real estate owner, he is one of the most prominent men in Great Falls. The bride has been at Great Falls for some months a guest of her uncle, Stephen Spitzley, and during her stay formed a large circle of admiring friends who will unite with the TRIBUNE in extending to Mr. and Mrs. Chowen their sincere congratulations and heartfelt wishes for their continual joy and success in life's journey. After an eastern tour of six weeks they will return to Great Falls and commence housekeeping in their new and beautiful residence now building.

Sun River Valley.

This valley is one of the beautiful, as well as one of the most fertile in the territory. The river after which it is named reaching as it does from the Rocky mountains to the Missouri river opposite Great Falls, a distance of nearly one hundred miles, will give some idea of its extent. In width it varies from two to ten miles, being widest at its head, and narrowing gradually until within a few miles of Great Falls, when it again widens out, forming one of the prettiest spots in all Montana. The soil differs to some extent at different points, but is all very rich and will produce all kinds of cereals and vegetables. The lower benches on either side of the valley are also very rich, and will ere long be eagerly sought after. The valley is well settled its entire length by a thrifty class of people.

Sun River Crossing is the principal town in the valley and is located about twenty miles above this place. It has a population of perhaps two hundred. It is the trading point for the lower end of the valley, and has a good store, and a newspaper.

Fort Shaw, is also located in this valley, twenty-five miles above Great Falls, and is one of the prettiest posts in the United States. Three companies of the Third Infantry are situated here under command of Col. Brooke.

Augusta near the head of the valley, is quite an important trading point, and in time will be the best town in the valley.

THE ROCKIES.

It will be remembered that the Frenchmen who discovered the Rocky mountains in 1749 gave them that name in commemoration of their disappointment in not finding them glistening with gold as reputed by the Indians whom they encountered on their voyage, and who called them the "Shining mountains." It seems however that they have borne the more poetic if less-pronounceable, appellation of the "Chippewyan mountains" as appears from Irving's beautiful description of them, which will no doubt be interesting for our readers to review in these columns. Mr. Irving says, in substance. The mountain which now towered above them (the Astor party) was one of the Big Horn Chain, bordered by a river of the same name, and extending for a long distance rather east of north and west of south. It is a part of the great system of Granite mountains which forms one of the most important and striking features of North America, stretching parallel with the coast of the Pacific from the Isthmus of Panama almost to the Arctic ocean, and presenting a corresponding chain to that of the Andes in the Southern Hemisphere. This vast range has acquired from its rugged and broken character, and its summits of naked granite, the appellation of the Rocky mountains, a name by no means distinctive, as all elevated ranges are rocky. Among the early explorers it was known as the range of Chippewyan mountains, and this Indian name is the one it is likely to retain in poetic usage. Rising from the midst of vast plains and prairies, traversing several degrees of latitude, dividing the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific, and seeming to bind, with diverging ridges, the level regions on its flanks, it has been figuratively termed the backbone of the Northern Continent. The Rocky mountains do not present a range of uniform elevation, but rather groups and occasionally detached peaks. Though some of these rise to the region of perpetual snows, and are upward of 11,000 feet in real altitude, yet their height from their immediate basis is not so great as might be imagined, as they swell up from elevated plains, several thousand feet above the level of the ocean. These plains are often of a desolate sterility, but extensive plains likewise occur among the higher regions of the mountains, of considerable fertility. Indeed, these lofty plateaus of table land seem to form a peculiar feature in the American Continent. Some occur among the Cordilleras of the Andes, where cities and towns and cultivated farms are to be seen 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. The Rocky mountains, as we have already observed, occur singly or in groups, and occasionally in collateral ridges. Between these are deep valleys, with small streams winding through them, which find their way into the lower plains, augmenting as they proceed, and ultimately discharging themselves into those vast rivers which traverse the prairies like great arteries and drain the continent.

While the granitic summits of the Rocky mountains are bleak and bare, many of the inferior ridges are clothed with scrubbed pine, oaks, cedar, and burze. Various parts of the mountains also bear traces of volcanic action. Some of the interior valleys are strewed with scoria and broken stones, evidently of volcanic origin; the surrounding rocks bear the like character, and vestiges of extinguished craters are to be seen on the elevated heights. This immense range of mountains, which divides all that the Indians know of the world and which gives birth to such mighty rivers, is to them an object of awe and veneration. They call it the "crest of the world," and think that Wacandah, or the master of life as they designate the Supreme Being, has his residence among the aerial heights. The tribes on the eastern prairies call them the mountains of the setting sun. Some of them place the "happy hunting-grounds," their ideal paradise, among the recesses of these mountains; but say they are invisible to living men. Here also is the "Land of Souls," in which are the "towns of the free and generous spirits,"

where those who have pleased the master of life while living, enjoy after death all manner of delights. Wonders are told of these mountains by the distant tribes, whose warriors or hunters have ever wandered in their neighborhood. It is thought by some that after death, they will have to travel to these mountains and ascend one of their highest and most rugged peaks, among rocks, and snows, and tumbling torrents. After many moons of painful toil they all reach the summit, from whence they will have a view over the land of souls. There they will see the happy hunting-grounds, with the souls of the brave and good living in tents in green meadows, by bright running streams, or hunting the herds of buffalo, and elk and deer, which have been slain on earth. There, too, they will see the villages or towns of the free and generous spirits brightened in the midst of delicious prairies. If they have acquitted themselves well while living, they will be permitted to descend and enjoy the happy country; if otherwise, they will but be tantalized with this prospect of it, and then hurled back from the mountain to wander about the sandy plains, and endure the eternal pangs of unsatisfied thirst and hunger.

THE MANITOBA RAILROAD.

From all indications we feel justified in the prediction that we will have railroad communication with the east by the first of next October. We learn from the Devil's Lake Inter-Ocean and other sources that material for next year's work has already gone forward. Rails were laid by ordinary process, last season to the new town of Minot, 130 miles west of Devil's Lake, and the grade has been completed 100 miles further. The distance from Minot, the present temporary terminus, to Great Falls, is about 400 miles. That makes 400 miles of steel to lay and 300 miles of grade to build. It is stated that the company will employ 5,000 men on the grade and a sufficient number to run a steam tracklayer, which is to be operated day and night, and will be capable of laying from five to seven miles a day. Surveying parties are now in the field between Buford and Great Falls, and will complete the survey before being withdrawn. Fortunately, the grade is easy throughout almost the entire distance between Minot to this point and the building thereof can therefore be accomplished with facility. The grade between Helena and Great Falls is completed, with the exception of a small portion of rock-work which will require about three months longer. There is every prospect that the bill granting the right-of-way across the reservation to the Manitoba will pass and receive the sanction of the president. The development of Northern Montana and consequent growth of Great Falls, which will be inaugurated by the advent of the R. R., will be unprecedented in any country. Thousands of people in the Western, Central and even the Eastern states, are watching with great interest, this point, and are ready to rush in here on the first train. Certainly no greater rewards of industry were ever offered than appear in prospect, at Great Falls.

Bound to Come.

A Washington correspondent has this to say:—J. J. Hill, of the Manitoba, is in the city, looking after his interests in the northwest, and to urge a bill which Delegate Tool of Montana introduced, granting the above road right of way through the Fort Berthold Indian reservation in Dakota, and the Blackfeet reservation in Montana. The new line is to start from Minot, at which point the Devils Lake line makes its second crossing of the Mouse river, and cross the reservation on the line between townships 153 and 154, to follow the Missouri river by the most convenient route to the valley of the Milk river; through that valley to Fort Assin'aboine and thence southwesterly to the great falls of the Missouri. This will parallel the Northern Pacific to a considerable extent so far as the accessible and valuable portions of Dakota and Montana are concerned.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SETTLER.

The law gives the head of a family, male or female, the right to enter a quarter section, 160 acres, of vacant land, if he or she is a native born citizen of the United States, or, if foreign born, has taken out "first papers." A single person over 21 years of age, has the same privilege. If a homestead, the party must build a house on the land taken and commence living there within six months. If he lives on and farms it for five years, title is acquired by proving those facts and paying the land office fees which amount to \$8. If, after having lived upon the claim for six months and having cultivated five acres, the homesteader wants to "commute" he can get title by proving residence and paying \$1.25 per acre. Any soldier who served in the civil war more than ninety days gets the time he served (or, if discharged for disability, the whole time for which he enlisted) deducted from the five years. His army service, to the extent of four years, for instance, counts as so much residence. The original fees at the land-office, when application is made, are \$14.

The pre-emption law requires some act of improvement by the applicant himself, and a filing, costing \$2 as the first steps. Then actual residence for six months, cultivation of the soil (five acres) and payment of \$1.25 per acre. The payment is not required before thirty-three months. Any time, however, after six months' residence and cultivation, the payment can be made and title acquired.

The timber culture claim of 160 acres can be had by any citizen of the United States, or any person of foreign birth, who has taken out "first papers" by complying with the following requirements:

Payment of \$10 fees on application. Break five acres of the claim during the first year, and five acres more during the second year. The five acres broken the first year must be cultivated by raising a crop, or otherwise, during the second year and must be cultivated by planting timber, seeds or cuttings during the third year. In like manner the five acres broken during the second year must be cultivated during the third year and planted in timber, seeds or cuttings, during the fourth year. No final certificate will be given, or patent issued, until the expiration of eight years from the time of entry. At that time there must be not less than 675 living and thrifty trees to each of the ten acres planted as above stated.

Under the Desert Land act title to 640 acres may be acquired. At time of application twenty-five cents per acre must be paid. Three years are allowed in which to get water upon the land, in sufficient quantities to reclaim it. After making proof, at any time within three years, of having irrigated the desert land in accordance with requirements, title can be had by paying an additional \$1 per acre for the land.

Took a Tumble.

During the severe wind storm last Sunday night about a quarter of the brick veneering on the east side of Spurgin & Crowder's building was blown off. Had the wooden building occupied by Pontet & Mathews been three feet nearer the falling brick would have broken its roof in. James Burns and others who were sleeping in the second story of the damaged building, thought by the terrible racket that a wild tornado was on the rampage across the range. The storm was very violent, but fortunately did no other damage. Messrs. Spurgin & Crowder have had their building repaired so that it is better than ever.

Grand Right and Left.

Promenade all! Tra-la-la-la. Swing your partner! Don't forget the grand ball at Spitzley & Ringwald's Cascade restaurant, Christmas evening, December 25. Come everybody and have a good, jolly Christmas time. Good music, elaborate supper and excellent company. All ready, salute you partners!