

AN ALPINE PICTURE.

BY T. B. ALDRICH.

Stand here and look, and softly hold your breath
 Lest the vast avalanche come crashing down!
 How many miles away is yonder town
 That nestles in the valley? Far beneath—
 A scimitar half drawn from out 'tis sheath—
 The river curves through meadows newly mown;
 The ancient water-courses are all strown
 With drifts of snow, fantastic wreath on wreath;
 And peak on peak against the turquoise blue
 The Alps like towering campanili stand,
 Wondrous, with pinnacles of frozen rain,
 Silvery, crystal, like the prism in hue.
 O tell me, Love, if this be Switzerland—
 Or is it but the frost-work on the pane?
 —From the "Midsummer Holiday Number" of Scribner.

MY FIRST INDIAN ENGAGEMENT.

A YARN OF 1868.

I.

Well, boys, if you insist on it I'll give you one of my experiences of frontier life on the plains. But you must allow me to tell the story in my own way. The condition I shall exact is that you'll be kind enough to leave me a taste of that excellent beer, and don't smoke all the tobacco out in the meantime. If you have not yet come to the conclusion that truth is stranger than fiction, I trust that out of respect for my feelings you'll lose no time in thinking so, for faith, gentlemen, is a virtue you will be expected to exercise largely in the present instance. After taking a long pull, for the evening was hot and dry, I proceeded.

In July, 1868, it was my fortune to accompany a quarter-master's supply train on its way from Santa Fé to Fort Dodge, Kansas. At that time the Union Pacific Railway had not reached that famous post. It was no uncommon thing in those days to find a "city" mainly composed of a barber shop, a saloon, a clothing store, and a "wholesale grocery," in which the staple articles consisted chiefly of condemned army supplies in the shape of pork, flour, tobacco and an extensive assortment of keno and faro apparatus, with a few kegs of adulterated whiskey in which the principal ingredient was plugs of tobacco just to give it a color and to add to the original flavor of the illegitimate Bourbon. The Bourbon family has passed through several vicissitudes, but none more humiliating to its dignity than this. The joke may be obscure, gentlemen, but I'll pledge you my word the humorism is rich compared with the quality of that same whiskey. It was the practice then for the mercantile community to shift its quarters as the track progressed. One week you would see Solomon City thriving and teeming with adventurers, miners, cut-throats, horse-thieves and army contractors. The saloon would be called the "New York House," the barber shop, the "Washington Hair Dressing Saloon," the wholesale grocery, "The Metropolitan Mart," or the clothing store, "The Boston Emporium of Fashion." The signboards did duty over extensive territory until their grandeur was faded and almost gone, and to add to their interesting character you'd find a few bullet holes clear through the two "O's" in "Mart" or in the upper arm of the T in "Boston Emporium." These were indications of the frequent and untiring energy of revolver practice on the part of the professional sportsmen of the boundless prairie. In consequence of these advances of civilization to the west, the post office addresses of the enterprising merchants were liable to sudden and frequent change. The traveller unused to this abrupt shifting would be occasionally perplexed in finding that Mr. Rosenheller's Boston Emporium of Fashion was eight or ten miles west of where it was last week; or the weary army officer from Leavenworth begrimed with dust, who had been anticipating the comfort he would receive from a delicious "shampoo," would behold with amazement on arriving at Solomon City that it was a cheerless and abandoned waste; nothing remaining of its former splendour save patches of broken shingles, a dirty worn out tin of clubs or ace of hearts, numerous empty metallic cartridges, old garments blown here and there by the wind, and a profuse assortment of old fruit cans, cracker boxes and empty bottles. But he would soon get used to this sort of thing, and take his bath in the dirty stream, half alkali and half mud which had been partly dried up by the hot sun. Cleanliness was a necessity unless you made up your mind to be devoured by the myriads of insect life whose chief sustenance was human blood.

I have just touched upon these details to show you the kind of gentlemen who upheld the dignity of United States law in these regions in the official capacities of Deputy Sheriffs, amateur Judges, and self-constituted Coroners. Our party consisted of about twelve merchants who had come from New Mexico, taking advantage of the government supply train and the protection of the seven cavalymen who formed our escort. Most of the civilians were bound to some point on the line of the Union Pacific Railway, and each of them had a four or a six-mule team laden with stores for sale either to the Government or any other person who could be found to purchase. In addition to the traders we had about a dozen teamsters making in all about thirty-five persons. About one-third of the number were Mexicans and Dutchmen, men who would not scruple to cut your throat for a twenty-five dollar bill provided the chances for escape was a hundred per cent in their favor. Their passion was *aguardiente*, (whiskey) and gambling. If they hadn't any

money to gamble with they would play for pork and tobacco, and having lost, they'd put up the mules as a stake in a game of *monté*, and losing them, they'd arrive at the next settlement "dead broke," where they'd endeavour to retrieve their shattered fortune by "going through" some drunken gambler who had made a pile of money off somebody else. Experienced gamblers, who made the business a profession, however, were seldom at a loss for money. They always knew, somehow, where to borrow it, and, as a rule, seldom failed to pay it back. The man who was known to be lucky at play was always an object of respect and admiration. His opinions were asked for and he was treated with that deference worthy of a person occupying so important a position in society. His opinion was law and his decision on any question was accepted as final. He was always regarded as an acquisition to the settlement, and his death was viewed in the light of a public calamity. Every since Morrissey was elected to Congress, the gambler has always held a high position in public estimation out west. Having given you a description of the company with which I had the honor to be associated for the time being, let me say it is important in view of the facts which were to follow.

Among our number was just such a man as I have described. He was a tall, well-built fellow, and had it not been for the prominent marks which dissipation had made on his otherwise comely features, he would have been a handsome man. His name was Johnny Mulenoe, and he it is to whom I am indebted for my life.

At half-past seven o'clock we had reached Wheeler's ranche, some fifteen miles from Fort Dodge. Wheeler's ranche was an *adobe* trading station for buffalo robes, bad whiskey and tobacco. Joe Wheeler was popular. He had made a good deal of money one way and another. Perhaps it will not be well to inquire too closely how Joe had made his money; but if rumour was worthy of credence Joe had made a goodly pile of ducats.

He was a smooth-faced man about 6 feet high, scrupulously neat in his attire, and was an out-and-out Vermont Yank. Joe could tell a good yarn, sing a good song, was ready to fight a rough-and-tumble with any man who wanted to pick a quarrel; was an unfailing marksman and a devoted adherent of the Methodist Church. The only library which Joe possessed was some half dozen coverless dime novels and a well-thumbed volume of Watts' hymns. Joe never swore, but when he got drunk he'd turn up a hymn to suit any occasion. It was a rich treat to hear Joe's rough, though naturally rich baritone voice full of old-fashioned shakes and quavers, sending forth upon the cool evening air some favorite stanza of that popular author. Perhaps to a critically musical ear there might have been too much of the *adagio* movement in some of those cadences. But they were nevertheless very sweet to hear then, notwithstanding the pronunciation was a trifle faulty and nasal. And yet nobody ever accused Joe of being a hypocrite. I honestly believe the man was as passionately fond of Watts' poems as any refined member of that denomination. Most of us have our hobbies, and Joe's hobby was Watts' hymns. Joe's ranche was excavated at the base of a bluff, which rose to a height of some two hundred feet above the prairie level. The exterior was well and substantially built of rough timbers, the entrance to which was strongly secured by a door of double two-inch planks, firmly secured by large iron hinges and staple. The sides of the ranche had been tapered down to a thickness of about two feet through which loop holes had been cut about six inches square strongly secured by iron bars. There were two of these windows on each side. The ranche was fitted after the usual manner of a western store, particular care having been taken to guard against attacks from hostile Indians. But Joe was seldom troubled by them. He was ready to give them what they wanted, first having received in return something worth ten times as much. So you see, Joe could, occasionally, afford to give the poor Indian a little from his bounteous store; but Joe invariably made it a rule to make the next Indian pay for it.

We had corralled our animals for the night, and after supper some of the party gathered around the ranche to play poker.

It was a curious sight to see that motley crowd scattered here and there in picturesque groups. Their huge sombreros gave a peculiar cast to their features, half shadowed and repulsive as they were. The open prairie in front, fragrant with its long green grass, declined into space. Not a tree could be seen. The air was soft and sweet, while in the distance the peculiarly mournful cry of some hungry coyote seemed to bewail its exile from the rest of the race. Fireflies danced in the gloaming, and the low chirruping of the crickets formed a miniature *obbligato* to Joe's voice, which reverberated in a thousand echoes over the apparently endless space of solitude. To a stranger new to the country as I was, the scene was full of a fascinating interest. The rattlesnake and prairie dog had retired for the night, and as if guarding the peace of tenants within, the owl perched and gazed reflectively on the little hillock raised by the dwellers of adjacent "prairie dog towns" as they were called. A short distance from the ranche the tall figure of a cavalymen on night duty, guarding the corral, appeared to assume gigantic proportions. As the moon rose over the scene the polished barrel of his carbine caught its reflections. The shadows brightened, and for a moment the voices were still, while Joe went inside his dwelling to look for a couple

of decks of *monté* cards to satisfy the speculative tendencies of his Mexican customers. The beauty of the aspect lay in its extreme stillness, and it is a fact, gentlemen, you could hear distinctly the voices of the teamsters, who had been dispatched for water, on the banks of the Arkansas three hundred yards away.

PAUL FORD.

Montreal.

THE "GRIEVANCES" OF THE PRESS.

Much has been said lately about the position of the newspaper men of this city, and their relations to their employers; of a want of social harmony which should exist between the members of the press, irrespective of the tendencies of the journals to which they belong, and also a great deal about the social status of the reporter in public estimation.

Of course a subject of this character cannot be treated exhaustively in a single paper. There have been many valuable suggestions made, as well as several utterly impracticable ones.

But the subject is sufficiently important to bear discussion, and if it leads to the elevation of the general tone of journalists and journalism it will have accomplished a great good.

I do not propose, however, nor am I desirous of creating a general controversy for the sake of factious argument; but I am anxious as a member of the profession to see some improvement in the direction of elevation. But claiming the same right to my own opinions on the subject as I would accord to others, I trust that my voice will not be the only one raised upon this very important matter.

With reference to the relationship of the journalist towards his employer, a great deal of stress has been laid upon the poor pay and hard work which devolves upon the reporter. Will you kindly bear with me a moment in this regard. The work no doubt is very severe and exerts a great strain upon the physical and mental faculties of the reporter. But I contend, that, so far as remuneration is concerned, it is purely a business matter between employer and employe, in which no third party has the right to interfere. If Mr. A. pays Mr. B. a certain salary agreed upon per week, and if Mr. B. thinks he is underpaid he has the same right to resign his position as Mr. A. has to discharge him, if he should prove incompetent. If B. whom we will suppose is a married man, thinks his salary will not support him, it is scarcely fair or reasonable to suppose that his employer A. is responsible because B happens to be a married man. Giving B credit for good, honest, newspaper work, it may be that his services are actually worth more than he receives; but, surely Mr. A. is the better judge as to whether he can afford to pay him a larger salary, even admitting that his services are worth a couple of hundred dollars a year more. It is in the interest of the employer to pay the best salary he can afford in exchange for the best services he can get. You cannot gauge newspaper work on the same level with the compositor or pressman. And I, for one, should be very sorry to see principles of a Trades Union character introduced into the newspaper profession. But there is another argument which should not be overlooked. Let us suppose that "B" has a grievance; that he is both underpaid and overworked; that he has proved himself a competent journalist, and so far, as he is concerned, that he has good grounds for complaint. But he says "I must submit to this, because I'm a married man (or perhaps a single one) I cannot give up my situation, because if I did, I should not know where to get another." A test of three months would prove whether B knows his profession thoroughly, and in those three months he could, and should, save enough money—more especially if he is single—to be able to take him to the next best market where he may consider that his services would be better paid. He would be perfectly justified in taking this course, and if he jumped out of the frying pan into the fire he would only have himself to blame. It seems to me, therefore, that from whatever standpoint you look at the question, the result must necessarily be the same. A steady, capable newspaper man should always be in a position to be able to have something laid aside for a rainy day. If he is not, through uncontrollable circumstances or otherwise, the next best thing he must do is to accept the situation with as good a grace as he can muster. The cases are very few, and I have only seen but one where a newspaper proprietor has not taken faithful service into consideration in times of sickness. What other peoples' experiences may have been I cannot say.

With regard to the social harmony which should exist between the staffs of the journals of this city, the fault lies in a measure among the gentlemen themselves. There is no doubt but that the incessant duties of the profession prevents them meeting socially as often as could be desired; and being thus hindered they are prevented, by this reason, from studying each others characteristics an acquaintance with which would probably lead to the dissipation of small bickerings and weaknesses, which, it must be confessed, at present predominate more or less. I do not see why a united understanding between the proprietors and employeés of the journals in this city to this end could not be brought about. I believe it would be, if systematically carried out, one of the best things that ever happened to the profession. Heaven knows the work is hard enough without making

it more disagreeable by useless and silly contentions. Probably some other newspaper man could suggest, better than I, how this desirable end could be put into practical shape. However, it will bear thinking over.

Touching the status of the reporter in public estimation, we all know there are a good many snobs in the world who deem themselves immeasurably superior to everybody around them; who cannot see any good in anyone but themselves, and who are looked upon by everyone except those of their own class as the quaint essence of asinine perfection. It doesn't matter much what people of this calibre think of the newspaper profession, because they are very apt to similarly regard those of other occupations. But I honestly believe, and a pleasant experience enables me so to speak, that every respectable citizen, as a rule, appreciates the work of the newspaper man whose labours have so materially contributed to the development of this Dominion. The exceptions, however, can be easily dealt with by the reporters themselves when the opportunities offer.

I trust this subject may be continued in the same cordial spirit which I have endeavoured to preserve, and I hope too, that out of it may come a good which we newspaper men have not yet been able to realize. Let me hope that next week some other pen than mine, may have something to write upon the subject.

Yours obediently,

FRED. HAMILTON.

Montreal, July 18th, 1876.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

NILSSON is reported to be getting so stout, her friends in America would scarcely know her.

A NEW play by Robert Buchanan, entitled "Corinne," is a failure at the Lyceum Theatre, London.

THE opening of Wagner's Theatre at Bayreuth will be witnessed by the Emperor of Germany, King Louis of Bavaria, and a dozen German Princes.

ANTONIO BARILI, who was well known as a maestro and teacher of singing, died June 15th, at Naples, Italy. He was stepfather of the Patis.

MADAME SAINTON DOLBY, one of the notable concert and oratorio singers of England, has written a cantata on the legend of St. Dorothea, which was sung in St. James Hall, London, recently.

DURING his recent engagement at the Queen's Theatre, Salvini played Hamlet to a five pound house. On one occasion a solitary person paid for a stall, and on the night following there was not a person who offered to pay any money whatever.

MR. SOTHERN authorises the statement that he has resigned his share in the management of the Haymarket Theatre, though he purposes to fill an engagement there every year. Mr. Sothern will henceforward make his permanent home in the United States.

LORD FAULKNER, the author of the play called "The Marriage Night," was chosen very young to sit in Parliament, and when he was first elected some of the members opposed his admission, urging that he had not *soven his wild oats*. "Then," he replied, "it will be the best way to sow them in the House, when there are so many *geese to pick them up*."

IMMENSE preparations are being made for the Wagner festival, at Bayreuth. The stage will be illuminated by three thousand two hundred and forty-six jets. In addition to this, Wagner's work demands extraordinary scenic efforts, such as rising mists, gathering clouds, etc. For these, two large steam engines are placed at a short distance from the theatre, the steam from which is carried by pipes to a reservoir placed under the stage, from which it can be distributed by a network of tubes over the whole stage. By means of a special apparatus this vapor will be rendered as dry as possible. Every possible precaution has been taken against fire. In the corner towers of the theatre are two enormous cisterns, each holding about twelve hundred gallons, from which water can be obtained at a very high pressure in case of need.

AN unpublished composition by Rossini has just been brought to light at Pisa. There is an interesting story connected with it. Rossini was accustomed to work up to an advanced hour of the night, or even to dawn in bed. On one occasion as he was writing a duet for "Tancredi," the paper slipped from his hands and fell under the bed. Any one else would have picked it up. Not so Rossini, who quietly took another sheet of paper, and wrote another duet, totally dissimilar from the first. Some one knocked at the door. It was Rodella, then singing at the theatre. Rossini requested him to pick up the piece of paper which had fallen down. The artist did so. "I have written two duets," said Rossini; "which do you prefer?" Rodella considered that the first one was the more appropriate. Rossini was of the same opinion, and in a few minutes the matter was settled. The composer despatched the manuscript to the copyist of the theatre, and left, without more ado, to breakfast at the nearest *trattoria*. But Rodella treasured up the other duet. A few months since he died, and it has been found among his papers.

SCIENTIFIC.

A narrow ridge of gold quartz, thirty miles long, has been discovered in New South Wales. It contains an enormous percentage of gold.

A Berlin mechanic has invented a steam velocipede which is said to answer admirably. The engine is heated with petroleum, and being placed on the two back wheels does not interfere with the convenience of the driver.

THE manufacture of oil from peanuts is now a leading industry in some parts of the South. During the war, when olive oil could not be obtained, this substitute was first adopted. Peanut oil is cheaper than either almond or olive oil, and retains its color and sweetness longer than the latter.

A locomotive without furnace has commenced running in Paris on one of the tramways. It has a reservoir of superheated water, which furnishes a constant supply of steam for moving the vehicle. On another line of tramway an ordinary locomotive is at work. It is like a small omnibus in shape and size, containing a boiler. The furnace is out of sight, and fed with coke and charcoal. The draught of the furnace is kept up by a supply of compressed air.

AN electric pen has been invented. It consists of a small electric engine on the top of a holder which is used as a pen. The machine works a needle that pierces the paper, making 5,000 or 6,000 a minute, and in writing the needle moves so fast that it does not drag nor tear the paper. The piece of paper is placed in a frame, where the holes are filled with ink; then a sheet of paper is put under it, it is rolled, and a perfect fac simile of the writing is obtained. These fac similes can be produced at the rate of five or six a minute.