



HUMANITY. TEMPERANCE. PROGRESS.

VOL. III.

TORONTO, C. W., TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1853.

NO. 31.

INDIAN TRIUMPH-SONG

The shore, the shore,
The pebbly sand,
The birchen door,
The leafy land,
The carved canoe,
The wigwam fire,
The wavet-blue,
The pine-tree spire,
Ho! ho! my home again,
Dripped the plashing oar in vain!

The sun, the sun,
The mountain cone,
The snake-wreath dun,
The oak o'erthrow,
The ripple dance,
The hemlock shade,
The wildering glance
Of dark-eyed maid!
Ho! ho! my home again,
Fest the warrior forth in vain!

He came, he came,
The hunter pale,
With flag and flame
And fearless gait,
With gleaming trail
Cold bayonet,
And plume upon
His helm of jet!
Ho! ho! my home again!
Huron knives rang not in vain!

I fled, I fled
My battle train,
With serpent tread,
O'er hill and plain
My battle-band,
Soft moosehide,
When flowers were faded
By evening's wind;
Ho! ho! my home again!
Ho! ho! the bow in vain!

Shirker Magazine.

We met, we met,
At set of sun,
And red and wet
Were knife and gun
Oh! red and wet,
And dotted o'er
With locks of jet
And drops of gore!
Ho, ho! my forest home again!
The hatchet did not drop in vain!

It rang, it rang,
The deadly thud,
With vigorous sweep,
From toe to toe
And dark the cloud
As path of bear,
And fierce and loud
The battle's curse!
Ho, ho! my wigwam home again!
They clutched the Indian's tassel in vain!

'Twas done, 'twas done,
Mild crimson stain,
The conflict won,
The lance and spear,
And homeward bent,
With captive pale,
We rode the trail,
And rode the trail!
Ho, ho! my birch horse again!
We did not track the wolf in vain!

Ho, ho! ho, ho!
Let you and see
Make mid-light glow
With fagot-rod;
Lustre of the bow,
When harvest bright
The captive foe
Shall turn to-night:
Ho, ho! my home again!
The Huron does not fight in vain!

COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES.

BY WILLIAM C. BREYER.

away toward the Rocky Mountains and the setting sun, our vast 'Western Plains'—range alike of the red man and the buffalo. But, alas for poetry and romance! the spirit of love has penetrated even here; and now, where once reigned supreme, or at best the Indian pursued his game and 'lucky loves' unmolested, and a few hardy mountaineers and traders bartered their trinket-wares for furs and pelts, the prairie-merchant yearly freights his immense trains of costly and merchandise, destined for the far-distant settlements in the valley of the Salt Lake, California, and New Mexico. Traders, trappers, and voyageurs, who have passed the part of their lives alternately trapping and trading in these wilds, and in his 'fancy rig,' equipped with 'Col.' and 'now abouts buffalo on the plains with as much as what though he were killing quail on his own preserves at our great western plains and mountains are no longer a boogyma. They are points of commerce and of trade, grounds for amateur sportsmen, and trails for the gold of California and Oregon-bound emigrants.

The immense trade and commerce of the prairie St. Joseph, Independence, on the Missouri river, form the principal and well deserve the name of 'prairie-ports.' With the first traces of grass the prairie-merchant is ready to take up the march, having laid in during the winter months of goods, etc. Those destined for New-Mexico rendezvous at Independence, while St. Joseph is the starting-point for those bound for Salt Lake, California, and Oregon. Such of our traders as never been at either of these points during the months of May, can form no adequate idea of the scene there held at such a season. All then is life, stir, bustle, and confusion. Strange scenes, sights, and sounds strike the eye and every turn. Once across the Missouri river, and then commences the organization of companies; and then, too, the earnest camp-life, and with all its stern duties as well as pleasures. Corral have to be formed at night, and guard-

stationed. Streams are to be bridged, and ferries established. And thus rolling slowly along, at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles a day, at length arrive at their several destinations the prairie-merchants. Their stocks usually consist of cloths and domestics, sugar and coffee, together with a sprinkling of liquors, and a pretty general assortment of 'hardwares.' These are soon sold out, sometimes for double and treble first cost, and again, before winter sets in, the prairie-merchant retraces his steps to the States to lay in a new stock, and so off again in the spring. If he returns with a large amount of dollars, he is 'in luck,' if not, he hopes to do better next time. He is a bold and hardy adventurer, shrewd in a trade, and keen as the blade in his belt.

Such is the prairie-merchant, and such the commerce of the prairie, giving occupation as it does to hundreds of men, consuming each year many thousand head of cattle and stock in its transportation, and bringing into our Western States annually a large amount of gold and silver. There are probably at the present time near ten thousand men directly engaged in this trade, while it requires more than fifty thousand head of cattle and mules yearly for the purpose of transportation. We have no statistics on which to base figures, but think we are considerably within the mark.

Little idea has the merchant doing business in any of our old settled cities of the trials and temptations of the dangers and privations which the prairie-merchant undergoes ere he realizes his hard-earned gains. The one orders his stock of goods by telegraph; in the twinkling of an eye a rail-car and steam-boat have deposited them at his door, ready to be packed upon his shelves. He has them insured, and in a few days they are replaced. Prices current inform him of the state of the market, of a rise or fall. But the other wagoner, over a long and almost interminable desert, over streams and by lonely trails through the country of Indians and predatory bands of Indians, guarding them with the rifle. His own vigilance and watchfulness must be his insurers—his own judgment his price-current.

To-day you may see the prairie-merchant lounging about the steps of 'The Planter's' at St. Louis—whether he has gone to lay in his stock of goods—expensively, and with carelessly dressed, and wearing a profusion of gold chains, rings, etc., he altogether devil-may-care air about him. When in the city, he spends his money freely, and goes in for 'seeing the town.' A few weeks later, go to St. Joseph or Independence, and you will find it difficult to recognize him in his prairie garb: broad beaver, red flannel shirt, fringed hunting-coat, an immense silk scarf bound about his waist, and in place of the gold chains and rings, wearing now any quantity of weather-worn, knives, etc. But a traveler you had him, there is still the same devil-may-care air about him, and he is ever the gentleman. There is something in the atmosphere of the broad prairie that gives to those who make it their home an air of boldness and independence. The wild musk of the plain has a stride and a step which the farm-bred man never acquires. So it is with the prairie man. You would know him by his bearing wherever he might be. 'Tis the same whether he watches by his solitary camp-fire on the plains, or reels and the pace of the fandango of Santa Fe.

There is a wide expanse of prairie-life, and few who have tasted it for any length of time ever give it up. Who ever heard of a man who had traded in the settlements to live? or who ever heard of a man who had traded in the settlements to leave his calling in the States? Each year a few get 'rubbed out' by the temptation of the trade, but the rest, or 'go under,' to adopt their own expressive vocabulary. But little care they; it is an one to them. St. Brain, the elder Bent, Black, Harris, Bill, Williams, Green, and others, are the names of the old set, in the last few years, gone with. But few, very few, of the old set now remain. Peter Ransom, the same old settler of that spruced look, that once saw the West, and he revisited the scene of his boyhood, would find it hard to see the old companions. He would find, however, that Kumbie and La Roche's camping in the territory. Bayou Sauter, the Bent, yet occupies his lot, Kit Carson still ranges about Santa Fe, a remnant of the Rodas yet trade on the Big Platte. Yet are these but some of the relics of the old set. A few years more, and none will be left to tell the tale.

Twin-brother to the prairie-man is the mountaineer, the trader and trapper of the Rocky Mountains. As you ascend the Missouri river in the mouth of Isaac you may meet him with his Mackinac boat loaded with furs and peltries intended for the market of St. Louis. When the melting of snow and ice on the ap-

plains swells the various tributaries of the Missouri, which takes place generally in the month of June, from the various posts away up on the Big Platte and the Yellowstone, he shores into the rapid current with his frail bateau or Mackinac boat, seeking a market for his peltries. Down the Big Platte and the Yellowstone, and down the Missouri, over sand-bars and shallows, over snags and sawyers, he drifts with the rapid current. A little dried buffalo meat, a few pounds of flour, or hard bread, comprise his stock of provisions for the long and perilous journey. And thus for a thousand or fifteen hundred miles he floats along. The lofty cotton-wood trees wave their branches above him; the muddy waters of the Missouri, on whose bottom he floats, soothe, cool, and eddy beneath him. Amid all the hardships and perils of the journey he proceeds cheerfully and gaily, merrily chanting the Canadian boat-song as he goes. Perhaps for years he has not visited the finest settlements of the State. In such case, deep and long prosecuted are the organs on his arrival at the outposts of civilization. Liquor flows like water, and cards and dice are in huge requisition. Soon he is at the bottom of his purse, and knives and pistols, and even clothing, are pawned to secure his return outfit.

Yet, under the progressive spirit of the age, all these things are changing rapidly. Steamboats now ascend as far up as the Yellowstone, and return laden with the result of mountain traffic. The trade of the Far West becomes day by day of more importance. It has built up, in a measure, the great western emporium, the city of St. Louis. Twenty years ago, and St. Louis was an old French trading post and rendezvous for prairie and mountain men, containing only a few hundred houses. Now it is a city of more than eighty thousand inhabitants; lofty warehouses, and stately mansions have sprung up like magic; hundreds of noble steamers line her quays, her levee is instinct with life and business. Under its influence independence has grown to be a thriving place of several thousand inhabitants, while in half a dozen years St. Joseph has grown to be a prosperous city.

The telegraph wire will soon stretch from the Missouri river to the Rocky Mountains, bearing the lightning messenger quicker than thought, the steam-engine with its shrill whistle will ere long startle the buffalo from his range. Alas, then, to the poetry and romance of the prairie! Adieu, then, to the strange characters that now make them their home.

WILLIAM WIRT.

To turn from such a man (Bart) to William Wirt, is allowing for the figure, like getting out of Arabia into Palestine. The swooping sand-storm, and the red-glowing light are left behind, and beautiful vales welcome the hot feet of the traveler, and bright skies gracefully bend to mountain summits, to refresh the weary eye.

The image of William Wirt can never pass from the vision of those who know him. If envy or jealousy were to assail him, it would find itself in the predicament described by Dr. Johnson, when he remarked of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he was one of those men with whom, if a person desired to quarrel, he would have been most at a loss how to abuse him. There was in him such transparent honesty and integrity, such overflowing good nature, such quick sympathies with grace, beauty, and excellence, wherever seen, and such true magnanimity of purpose, all unclouded and unobscured by genuine truthfulness and benevolence, and all devoted to high and honorable ends, that his name stands out as a beacon light which every one can see and appreciate. The whole world can comprehend greatness whenever it is harmoniously developed. The multitude can readily respond to it. No art is necessary to rival it. Like the stars and sun, only look and it is seen. As real worth is not only self-assuring, but likewise world-assuring. The task of the sciences may be neglected. Genius and goodness tell their own story and authenticate their own mission.

The merits of Wirt are of various kinds, but they all combine in the extension of the character as well as in the formation of his history. As a jurist, he was extraordinary; as a writer, he was peculiarly graceful and elegant; as an orator, he was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries; as a man, he was deserving of all commendation; as a Christian, he advanced the doctrine of scriptural religion. Doctored in early childhood, he repaired the want of congenial training by laborious study, and so made himself a thorough scholar. Doctored to struggle on, entering the world with the advantages of poverty, he started with his ad-