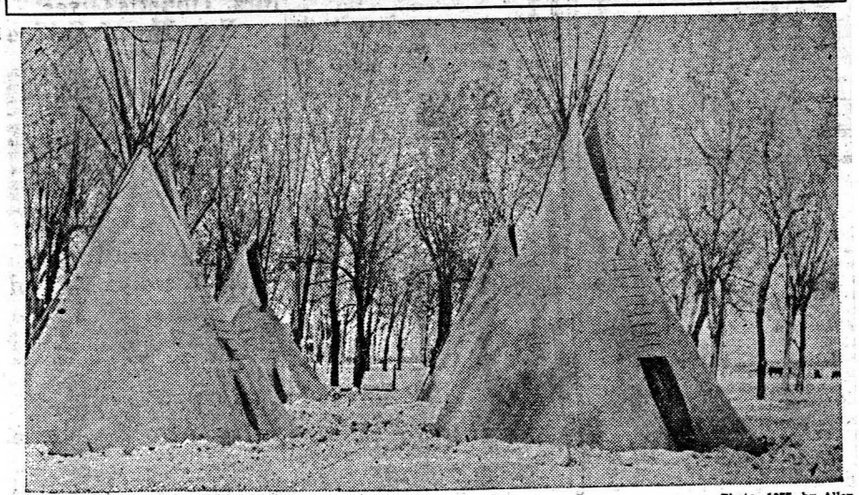
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R. H. Bemis, Pioneer Publisher, Wrote Impressions of Early West

Crow Indian Homes



Crow village on the Yellowstone —Photo, 1877, by Allen

days in Montana is taken from a previously unpublished interview with the late R. H. Nemis, early day newspaper man of Helt and Nelhart. The story has since remained in the files of this newspaper.

INSTALLMENT II
CHAPTER III
(Continued From Last Sunday)

He did not order me out of camp, so I simply stuck around, made myself useful and gradually I realized I was on the payroll and part of the crew, for when the boat finally arrived I sweated and tugged with the rest and fell in with John and Bert Cunningham, who drove the two lead teams of the 10-team outfit. When we finally pulled out across the flat toward Fort Keogh, it made a grand cavalcade, strung along for nearly a mile and kicking up a wonderful cloud of dust. I was right up in front with John and superlatively happy in the realization that I was a part of this splendid outfit. The wagon boss was on ahead, riding his strawberry roan cayuse and watching for bad spots in the trail or possibly for a place to get a drink. There was an occasional saloon along the trail, for there was great traffic on the road at that time. I found there were no saloons for 10 miles at least, as we were still crossing the military reservation of Fort Keogh, where saloons were distinctly discouraged.

It was a cool morning and the bulls made good time after their several days of rest on good feed. We had gotten well beyond the post by the time the sun began to make itself felt and then the fast walking teams began to lag. As it grew hotter the bulls began to display protruding tongues and the order was given to corral when we arrived near a small stream.

After unyoking and turning the stock loose, I helped the cook with his fire and carried water while the rest of the crew looked over wagon brakes, axles and such other matters as required attention. After dinner all laid about in such shade as they could find and waited for the heat of the day to pass. I learned this was the custom with bull trains in hot weather, as those heavy and sluggish beasts are keenly susceptible to heat, necessitating early and late pulls with a long rest in the middle of the day.

Five to Seven Miles

Five to seven miles at each pull was a good day's journey with this slow going cavalcade, and if difficulties appeared, sometimes much less distance was made. The bulls foraged on the country, a big saving in the overhead; in fact, if time was not a consideration, it was the cheapest transportation that up to that time had been devised.

How I did enjoy those long hours of lazying in the heat of the day! It was during those hours that I began to appreciate the qualities of my new friend, John Miner, as I listened to his tales of frontier experiences. He was not educated, in the sense we attribute to book lore, it is true. He could read and write, but his whole schooling had been interrupttent and even that came to an end in early life and he had not had time nor opportunity to delve into books. But he was far from ignorant, as he was a keen observer and his life had been rich in experience.

Although he drank, as nearly all of that young and virile element dominating the west at that time did, it was rarely that he indulged to excess. I never saw him lose his temper or mistreat an animal, even in the exigencies of controlling or urging the rather stupid motive power of a bull train. He had a fluent and lurid vocabulary pertaining to his profession, but it was not accompanied by any frothing at the mouth, or insane antics engendered by giving way to uncontrollable temper, such as I had observed in some other drivers. His fiery remarks convinced the bulls, perhaps, but we knew there was no heat behind them. He was acknowledged the best driver in the outfit, though modestly disclaiming any great skill, but it was noticeable his advice was always listened to by the wagon boss in any emergency.

A Gentleman

He was instinctively a gentleman in his deportment toward all. I do not mean that he was a polished diplomat gifted with fine phrases and a manner of elegance, but rather that he possessed a consideration for the feelings and rights of others weaker than himself, though when occasion arose he was ready to combat for his own rights or those of a friend. He was rarely called on for active demonstration of fistic prowess, his very size and catlike activity commanding a thoughtful regard for consequences on the part of aggressors. Even in the light of mature experience, there is no dimming in my mind of my conviction that John Miner was a real man in every sense of the word.

Perfection is not attained by any human and John was human and, therefore, not faultless. His greatest failing was a careless disregard in financial matters of his own, a very common attribute of the worker in those days, or any other days for that matter, a state of mind carefully fostered by the preying parasites who pandered to the questionable tastes of laboring men who sought amusement in their free hours in a raw and new land where laws were tolerant and even those were laxly enforced. With money John was prodigal. His debonair gesture at a bar was a revelation of insouciant disregard of any future contingency. It was the same at the faro table where he might win or, more often, lose his last dollar with an equally imperturbable spirit.

Lacked Education

John's aims were not high. Handicapped by a limited education, his world seemed bounded by manual labor, so why vex the mind with future problems? He was a good bullwhacker and in necessity he could turn his hand to other strenuous vocations. Few manual toilers of that day visualized opportunity, though it was glaringly visible in a vast land awaiting development by the astute minds of the Anglo-Saxon. The average worker looked on indifferently while the farsighted grasped the chance and gained a foothold that eventually brought a competence. The drifter ever passed on to new scenes of endeavor.

The bull train was even then almost a thing of the past, though we could foresee nothing of the vast and unbelievable rapidity of the changes taking place. With the Northern Pacific pushing its railheads simultaneously across Montana, both from the east and from the west, and the Utah & Northern coming up from the south, the territory was peopled by the white race in almost a twinkling. Where the tent town flourished at places the location appeared strategic and more substantial habitations grew in place of canvas—even embryo cities took form and came into being almost over night.

Realization of the march of events came too late to the large majority, who drifted on, ever seeking the free and careless life of the frontier, until they finally awoke to the fact there was no frontier. They failed to observe the insistent opportunity of becoming leaders in development; in fact, they wanted no teeming civilization with its crowding competition and struggle for place.

Tolerant Freedom

The old heedless irresponsibility and tolerant freedom of personal action suited them. Even the cheapening of their simple commodities, including liquids that cheer, which they had been accustomed to consume at two-bits a drink and which, with the arrival of cheaper transportation had been cut in half, failed to meet their approval. The coming of the nickel into circulation was the final straw that exhausted the patience of the old-timer. He scorned "cheapness" even in the things he had to buy. The whole thing was offensive to the best in western tradition.

However, the realization was not quite so bad as it seemed. Montana covers a big territory, and it takes more than one transcontinental railroad to develop its huge open spaces. Progress doomed the bull train, though, and it was one of the first of the picturesque features of the old order to become extinct. It was altogether too slow to serve the clamorous demands of rapid transit.

John Miner reacted to the transition true to form. He bewailed the nickel and cursed the inevitable. He had no quarrel with the individual newcomer, or "pilgrim," as they were contemptuously termed, but the mass irritated him.

"Dang it all, Kid, this country is getting too crowded. They ain't no place to go nowhere now, 'thout meetin' hard hats and umbrellas. Look over at that pile of lumber. They tell me it's going' to be a Methodist church! I think I'll drift back to the reservation. It's off this damned railroad anyway."

Changes Too Great

We had drifted up to the new town of Billings early in the fall with John Holmes' bull outfit, which we had joined at Huntley, where we had severed our connection with the Shaffer outfit. The latter had been ordered back to the Black Hills, and we did not care to travel in that direction, so we threw in with the smaller outfit for the trip up the river. We were now idle and enjoying the sights of the little town destined to become a city of consequence.

John was not opposed to churches in the abstract, only as they were symbolic of the inevitable change. So far as I could see, the nucleus of Christianity, as exemplified in the lumber pile destined to figure in the attempt to spread the gospel, had not affected to any visible extent the activities of the wide open saloons and gambling houses. Garrison's and Smith's places were crowded day and night, while dozens of saloons of lesser pretense were doing their share to separate the eager spender from his hard earned wages. Games of chance and games where the sucker had no chance at all were operating at all resorts and were crowded with players, seemingly having no object but to lose their money. Quick action was desired and received.

The main thoroughfare of the new town paralleled the newly laid rails on both sides for two or three blocks, and at that time these few blocks constituted pretty much the whole town. For the moment it was the terminal of the railroad, though the track-layers were some miles to the west and the railhead was working toward the setting sun at the rate of a mile or more a day. The one street was crowded night and day almost with freight teams loading for trips westward, while the plank sidewalks resounded with the restless tread of humanity of all degrees seeking diversion or novelty in what to most of them was a rather bizarre environment.

Snakehead Appears

John had spoken of the "reservation." Aha! I recalled a noonday camp some three months before, where we had unyoked in a big bottom near the Yellowstone where the grass was to the liking of the stock. We were sprawled about in the shade at the edge of the cottonwood grove, fighting mosquitoes and cursing the heat, when we were aroused by the complaining voice of the cook:

"Damn it all, here comes old Rain-in-the-Face and his squaw and I suppose they'll be beggin' for suthin' to eat!"

I looked up and saw an Indian, followed by a squaw, riding across the flat toward camp. The squaw was behind and leading another pony with a pack. As they approached, John looked up and exclaimed:

"Why, that's old Snakehead and his girl. I wonder what he's doin' way up here. I used to know him down on Tongue river.

John got up and met his former friend and engaged him in conversation, augmented by signs. Snakehead appeared about 60 years old, I thought, and was really a fine looking man of dignified mien, tall and erect. Noting this absently, I looked toward the squaw and was quite surprised to find she had a considerable claim to beauty, even judging from a white man's standard. Most Indian women of the plains tribes I had heretofore seen were not attractive, to say the least, and it was rather refreshing to find one to give a measure of support to the rhapsodies of the poets who have sung of the charms of lovely Indian maidens from the days of Pocahontas down.

Barbaric Beauty

Her beauty, of course, was of the barbaric type, accentuated by her costume. Youth gave softness to the rounded face, crowned by raven hair dressed in two long braids hanging in front of her shoulders. She might have been anywhere from 16 to 20-odd years of age for all I could tell and made quite a charming picture as she sat silently on her horse awaiting the pleasure of her escort. But I noticed she paid no attention or even looked in my direction, while I stared rather rudely and wondered how she would compare with her white sisters if she had been clothed as they and some of the tan and dust of travel removed. Not unfavorably, I thought.

John paid little attention to her, but she apparently had no eyes for anyone else. After a rather long talk with the old man, mostly in Indian and sign languages, John turned to the girl and spoke a few words in English. I thought, though I could not hear what they said. The old man and the girl then kicked their ponies around in Indian fashion and went on up the river.

I was full of curiosity and wanted to know at once who they were and where they were going, but John was reticent and seemed inclined to say little about them. The other men noticed his disinclination to discuss the visitors and, for a wonder, refrained from any banter regarding the Indian girl, which was an unusual display of consideration on their part. As a rule their comment regarding the opposite sex was distinguished more for its freedom than for any refinement of expression. But John had a way of displaying his moods that discouraged levity when he was not in the humor for it.

Honored Women

His general attitude toward all womankind savored of a sort of reverence, extending even to those poor creatures who made a precarious living in the resorts of those seething and blatant communities that sprung up at every advantageous point along the right of way. In our casual visits to these resorts I noticed John's treatment of the female parasites was tempered more with pity than any desire to make their hopeless lives more miserable. Many other men of coarser natures, I noticed, seemed to take a pride in cruel and contemptuous allusions and comment and appeared to derive pleasure in arousing anger and profane repartee.

In discussing with him one day the obvious changes taking place and the influx of a new people, in my ignorance and immaturity I ventured the assertion that "there would soon be good women in the west."

"Good women! Why, Kid, there's always been good women in the west. The first covered wagons that crossed the plains carried them and they've been comin' ever since. Remember, you haven't seen any of the west yet. Why, the best and bravest women in the world are scattered all over the west. We don't see many of them along this damned railroad while it is building, for that's a man's job, but they are comin' and it will be a different country when they get here. This country is goin' to be civilized in a few years, I know, because I've seen Denver and Salt Lake and all the towns along the Union Pacific. There'll be more women than men and it will be a better country, but it won't be any place for me to live in. I ain't used to that kind."

Story of Snakehead

Finally, one day as we were by ourselves in one of those long midday rests, during which we had taken a swim in the cool Yellowstone, and were then sunning ourselves on a grassy bank, John unbent and told me of Snakehead and his daughter:

"Old Snakehead, you know, got in bad with some of his people while he was a sort of a subchief of the Cheyennes. A lot of the young bucks wanted to join Sitting Bull in the campaign of the Big Horn but Snakehead was against it and did his best to prevent it, without much success. He was right, of course, but he lost prestige as a war chief through his plea for peace, and has never regained it wholly. He is a progressive old chap and wants his people to take their allotments and follow the white man's way of life. He tells them they will have to come to it sometime anyway and they might as well start now.

"Of course he has some followers and he is now on his way to see his old friend, Paul McCormick of Junction, to get him to help him out at Washington. They want allotments of land and intend to begin farming and stock raising. He took his daughter along, as se is an educated squaw, you know, and, though she's back to the blanket now, she's backing the old man in his scheme for imitating the white man. She talks about the future self-supporting Indian. She's a mighty smart girl and she'll shed that blanket this fall and return to college to finish her schooling. I wish I knew as much as she does. I was at their camp on Tongue river for two or three weeks last summer."

When John spoke of going "back to the reservation" while we were in Billings, I had an idea of what he meant, especially as I recalled the manner of the young Indian girl who visited our camp and who apparently had no eyes for anyone else. I wondered.

CHAPTER IV

Years afterward, when John Miner had become but a hazy memory of youthful days, a slight matter of business and a larger wish for a holiday carried me through the scenes of former experience. In place of the deeply rutted trails of loaded freight wagons, my speedometer marked for long distances the rapidly slipping miles of a perfectly graded and smooth surfaced modern highway. Thirty-odd years is a cycle of achievements in Montana, but was it possible this broad valley of agricultural contentment, evidenced by modern farm homes with great outlying barns, shade and fruit trees in abundance, neat boundary fences, in short, a prosperous looking and, withal, lovely picture of the magic accomplished by irrigation, was once the semidesert, dusty and thirsty, across which I had helped pilot a long train of lagging freight teams a score and a half years ago?

I recalled the dust, the heat, frequent trips to the water keg lashed at the side of the big lead wagon with its tepid and unsatisfying liquid and the longing for the camp and its possible refreshing bath—and doubted. Along the roadside a clear stream rippled in the ditch, a trickle here and there turned through the bank to give life to the vivid alfalfa in a broad field or perhaps to the even rows of a splendid orchard.

But as I turned my eyes toward the enclosing bluffs beyond the green at a great belt of cottonwoods marking the course of the river, I was assured. The abrupt pinnacles and bold headlands had not changed. They were of the same yellow tint as ever and I could discern no change in conformation as mile after mile they reflected the heat of a blazing sun.

A Great Change

My business called me to the White Antelope Indian agency, but it was a small matter and only the excuse for a vacation trip. I left the valley and steered my roadster into strange lands, though, for that matter, my whole morning's drive had been through a new Montana, so great had been the change from the days of tollsome youth. The unchanging bluffs held a familiar aspect, but memory could identify no particular vista with certainty except one. Pompey's pillar, that strange and solitary sandstone pile, huge and lonely, standing aloof in solemn silence, was recognized at once when it came into view. It is not only a landmark but a spot of historic interest, as under its shadow, it is reputed, is the site of the camp made by Captain Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Toward evening buildings of the agency came into sight as I topped the low hill and allowed the car to drift down the easy grade leading to the narrow valley of Locust creek and drove up to the administration building, the largest of many set in an orderly fashion about a large open space. The tall flagpole in front of the building was the cause of my guess as to this being the headquarters of the agent, whom I had come to see, and it proved accurate, although there was a flagstaff in front of another smaller edifice that I later learned was the agency school.

Meets Major Austin

An Indian in the uniform of the reservation police directed me to the main office, where I introduced myself to Major Austin and stated my business, which, as I have intimated, was of a trivial matter, though the information I desired could not be explained satisfactorily in a letter or telegram—hence the journey. Major Austin directed his secretary to look through certain files and while we were waiting we engaged in conversation. Learning that I was connected with newspaper work, he suggested that I remain for a few days as his guest and learn something of progress made by the government in its guardianship of the Indians.

"I am a bachelor," he remarked, "and visitors are rare. But I have an excellent cook and plenty of room at my quarters. I would appreciate your company for as long as you can stay. I can show you a few points of possible interest around the reservation and also give you an idea of what we are trying to do and what we have already accomplished."

The files secured and data noted my business was completed and soon after I accompanied Major Austin to his establishment and was shown to a comfortable guest room where the dust of travel was removed. I was, frankly, hungry for I had driven many miles that day with an indifferent lunch at a small town hotel. I agreed with the major as to qualifications of his cook most thoroughly, for it was an excellent meal and enjoyed as only such a meal can be enjoyed with a keen appetite gained through many hours in the open. Its very unexpectedness gave it an added flavor, for that is one of the charms of travel in strange surroundings. I remarked something of this to the major in an attempt to congratulate him on the excellence of his establishment.

Likes Good Living

He smiled and agreed. "Yes, it is no use for men to try to disguise the fact that good living occupies a large space in their minds. For myself, I have been eating a great many years now and, strange to say, it never gets monotonous. With health, we never lose that boyish interest in the next meal, especially if we bestir ourselves and take the proper amount of outdoor exercise. For myself, I can imagine no more pleasure after a long ride in the open air than to drop into strange surroundings and sit down to an unexpectedly excellent dinner. I am pleased that you approve."

I was in no hurry and had accepted the hospitable offer of Major Austin, though I had no intention of making any prolonged stay. I was favorably impressed with the genial agent and had no reason to change that opinion for in my few days' visit I found him a cultivated gentleman of fine attainments and learned he had held his position through sheer merit and love of his work, notwithstanding political upheavals.

The next day we visited the irrigated farm operated in connection with the agency and several farms and stock ranches where Indians had taken allotments and were becoming

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self-supporting. At most of these places the buildings were crude log affairs and all flanked with ubiquitous tepees. There were white men in evidence at one or two of the more pretentious establishments and I took occasion to ask the major:

"What is the general influence of the 'squaw man' on your charges as a whole?"

Mixed Blood Problem

"At present good, in the majority of cases, I should say. You know we made it disagreeable for the vicious element and are pretty well rid of them now. Of course there are a few weak ones left, but most of them are well meaning and fairly industrious in a way, while we have a few who are a real help to us. Some of our young men of mixed blood cause our most serious problem and they need firm discipline at times. They will get liquor occasionally despite all law and penalties and invariably that causes trouble. Our police system is efficient, though inadequate, but I believe we are gaining ground each year."

We were driving across a high and fairly level bench where a few scattered bunches of white faced cattle were grazing. To the left and ahead of us were the foothills, merging into the mighty range of peaks dominating the southern boundary of Montana for more than 150 miles. The shadows of those peaks were reaching toward us as the car brought us to the rim of a deep valley of vivid green, attesting to the virtue of water when diverted to a thirsty soil. It was a typical foothills ranch, the buildings showing a startling white against the brilliant green of alfalfa and timothy meadows.

"I want you to meet a remarkable man and also an unusual woman," said the major as we began the descent into the valley over a fairly good graded road. "He is a 'squaw man', but I warn you that his wife is better educated and more intelligent than the majority of white women and I'll also gamble that you'll forget she's an Indian when you see her home and the way she manages it."

Modern Ranch House

It was getting toward evening as we drove up to the modern looking ranch house, the entire establishment presenting a striking contrast to those places we had heretofore visited on the reservation. The whole place bore insistent evidence of excellent management and would not be out of keeping in the most progressive of Montana communities. Only two dogs were in sight and they could even boast of lineage, a matter that most reservation dogs are indifferent to, as I had noticed. At places heretofore inspected we had been vociferously greeted by from six to a score of canines, apparent descendants of every known breed, and some quite unknown.

I noted an elderly man seated on the broad veranda as we approached. He arose and stepped down to greet us and I felt there was something familiar about the massive figure, still erect and active, but before I had opportunity to search memory, Major Austin greeted him:

"Hello, John. Allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. L———. Mr. L———, meet my friend, John Miner."

It came in a flash as he spoke. I grasped his hand as he came up to the car.

"I see you have forgotten the 'Kid,' John, but I forgive you. Thirty-odd years has probably made changes in both of us."

"I'll say I haven't forgotten you! But you can't blame me for not recognizing you at first. The years seem to have dealt out weight to both of us. Come into the house, supper will be ready soon."

Remembers Mrs. Miner

He led the way indoors to a large living room, comfortably, even tastefully furnished, not noticeably dissimilar to the average well to do ranch home of the west. A large and beautiful Sioux war bonnet hung over the fireplace and more Indian relics and curios were displayed than usual, but none were out of taste and all added to the effect of a prosperous household.

"Oh, Ellen!" John called as we found seats. Presently a woman entered and greeted Major Austin and then I was introduced to Mrs. Miner. John had probably forgotten that I had met her, or at least seen her, once before, for he made no mention of it. The years had dealt kindly with her, though she was far from the slim young Indian princess I had stared at so many years ago. Still she was not the shapeless bag that so many of her dusky sisters achieve with middle age and I could trace a resemblance to the shapely features that had formerly excited my admiration, while her dark eyes were still clear with a liquid beauty that lighted her face with intelligence and expression.

She spoke with perfect enunciation and with a pleasing voice of evident refinement. I recalled that she was educated and straightway forgot she was an Indian. Indeed, one could not associate this household or its people with customs and habits, many of them difficult or impossible to describe, as observed in sporadic contact with the reservation Indian at various former periods. That the mind of the red man is basically susceptible to the ways of the white man, even to his viewpoint, has been proven numberless times and the transformation is not always the case, as in other instance. She was born and bred an Indian, but here she was a white woman in all that pertains to the habit of civilization. One was inclined yes, compelled to meet her as an equal with no lingering sense of mental or physical superiority to mar the real pleasure of making her acquaintance.

"Rosie Too Pretty"

A few minutes of general conversation and supper was announced by a comely girl of evident Indian blood, a half-breed, I thought.

"Rosie is too pretty for us to keep her very long, I am afraid, but she is a good girl, even if the boys do get rather thick around the kitchen at times," remarked Mrs. Miner as she led us into the dining room.

The table was well appointed and there was nothing to indicate we were guests on an Indian reservation unless the slightly unusual decorations of the room brought it to mind. There were chokecherry wood bows with mountain birchwood arrows crossed on the walls, pipestone ornaments and beadwork and a beautifully painted robe hanging on one side of the room. Mrs. Miner did not seem to be ashamed of her race, at least, and why should she be, I asked myself as I noted these things.

Habits of thought are fixed and stubborn and so are physical habits. In common with a large proportion of civilized humanity, every morning I perform certain personal rites—wash, brush teeth, spray mouth, nose and throat. Lots of us do it unconsciously and forget it immediately. Thought has the same trick through long habit. Here I was, the guest of a woman of inferior and alien race, but dammit, reason insisted that this woman was my superior in education and refinement. Again reason interfered and raised the question—was she of alien race? Of course not. We were the aliens as a matter of fact and I realized our false superiority was founded on nothing more substantial than that we had dispossessed her ancestors through trickery and superior numbers. My pride vanished with the reflection and I accepted my hostess as a lady and at her true worth. With all my boyish hero worship of John Miner, I now knew he had not married beneath himself. Quite the contrary.

Typical Cattle Ranch

After supper we strolled about the place, which was typical of any prosperous Montana cattle ranch, the only noticeable difference being that the half dozen or so cowboys or haying crew were Indians or breeds, only the foreman being white. We visited on the porch and smoked, yarning of youthful days and the romance of Montana in general, for we were all old-timers and had seen great changes in the commonwealth. Later we adjourned to the living room and Mrs. Miner exhibited with the pride of any mother photos of her three sons and two daughters, all grown and fighting their way upward out in the world. The eldest daughter was a teacher at the agency school for girls, while the younger daughter was attending the nurses' school at one of the hospitals in Billings, intending to follow that as a profession. The eldest son had taken a degree at a famous medical university and was now practicing in an eastern city. The second son had completed a business course and was employed with a copper company in Butte, while the youngest boy had developed a bent for mechanics, refused college, and had gotten himself a job in a garage at Miles City.

She made no attempt to conceal her pride in her children and I felt she had cause to be elated over their apparent success. They were a handsome family and displayed character, if the photos could be relied on. All except the youngest daughter betrayed their Indian ancestry, though not obtrusively. The youngest daughter had the blond hair and light eyes of her father and was a most beautiful girl.

A Grand Profession

In turn I told Mrs. Miner of my family and much of my wanderings since the bullwhacking days when I had followed her husband and admired his superlative skill in things pertaining to the frontier.

"Yes, John even now thinks bullwhacking a grand profession and often talks about the good old days, but if he wanted to go somewhere I noticed he always saddled up his fastest horse. Since we bought a car, he doesn't ride horseback any more and he drives as fast as the roads permit, too. I'd like to see him with a string of bulls, as he calls them. I think he would find them rather slow for his taste even."

"Possibly, Mrs. Miner, it is not so much the 'good old times' as old fellows sigh for as it is our lost youth. We have the habit of kidding ourselves, but in reality we want nothing of the old life except the visions of romance and adventure inseparate from the young mind."

"Yes, we are all of us wishing for the unattainable, but yet a few dreams come true after all," and she smiled.

"Oh, I admit that, but reality has a habit of changing the fabric, so that later visions are tinted with reason, until finally we cease dreaming and juggle with cold facts, and the weight of years is the hardest and coldest fact of all."

"I know, but we should be thankful that memory is left us and if we desire we have the faculty of living over again our young dreams of romance. Not all of them turned to ashes, you know. We can recall with calmness the unpleasant episodes—even force them from memory altogether, while the pleasures can be recalled at will and in a measure, lived over again. Age, after all, has some compensations."

Seeking Enjoyment

"Perhaps, Mrs. Miner, you have discovered it also, but I have found something that seems remarkable to me, and that is we do not lose the capacity for enjoyment with advancing age. Youth looks on age as the sere and yellow leaf. I recall as a boy that I looked upon 40 as approaching senility, but when I arrived at 40 it seemed that life was at its best, though I have since discovered my judgment was still immature. So long as we retain our faculties and health, I am firmly convinced that life becomes fuller and more satisfying with each recurring year. We can look with equanimity on vanishing hair and teeth, for the true philosophy of life has arrived with their departure, and it brings a calm content that appears to me better than the thrills of youth. Perfect happiness is, of course, never attained, but, with moderate health, I have at least found life bearable."

"I suppose I should consider myself a peculiarly happy woman, and I feel that I have been very fortunate. But I doubt if I have been really much my race. Of course, the squaw is the burden bearer and, from the white man's point of view, leads a hopeless and dreary existence. In spite of a drab and weary round of the incessant struggle of a primitive life, the Indian woman finds moments of romance and pleasure. I know, because I am an Indian myself, have lived with them and know the life. The Indian woman is not clamorous for her rights, because she has none and knows not the meaning of the word in the sense the white woman defines it. She is usually uncomplaining and performs her duties as she has been taught by centuries of service. And there is a sort of joy in service for itself, as even some white women have discovered."

Not Making Apologies

"I know," she continued after a pause, "that we are considered an inferior race by many of your people, but I am not making any apologies. I am really proud of my ancestry and sometimes am compelled to smile inwardly at the patronage and condescension I have occasionally been treated with by women of your race. I sometimes wonder if any of that sort of women have any particular reason to venerate some of their ancestors, when they plainly indicate they regard me as an alien. Alien, indeed! I recall the fact that my people at one time owned this vast country; at least, they occupied it, and possession, according to the white man's code, is nine points in the law, and the fact that no one else claimed it at that time seems to me made the title complete.

"I don't wish to appear bitter, for I am not. The men of your race I have found, for the most part, are gentlemen, who have treated me with consideration and on a basis of equality, but, when your women sneer at me as an alien, I laugh. They are excusable, I suppose, for probably they never realized that they are the aliens. John and I are able to live anywhere we wish, but I would live nowhere but on the reservation among my own people, and I am sure John feels the same way."

"Mrs. Miner, you have enlightened me and also forced an apology. I confess to the usual amount of mental race prejudice that we Americans hold, though I hope it has not been visibly manifested in this house. You have been frank and I admire you for that frankness, for it has revealed a viewpoint that I never knew existed. We can hardly blame ourselves for that mutual misunderstanding between races of people, for it is bred and born with us. We can't knock down the barriers of race with a word, for you will have to admit there are peoples on this earth whom we cannot visualize as amalgamating with the whites. But you have made a case for your people. Tonight I have gotten a new 'slant'—as my son would say—on the matter. You should go 'a-lecturin'' and let your white sisters get a flea in their ears."

"Now you are making fun of me."

Education Is Salvation

"Indeed, I'm not, for you have changed my views completely in regard to the status of the Indian in our nation. What education has done for you it can and will do for all your race eventually."

"I hope so. My children, who are taking their place and fighting their way among the 'superior' race, will be snubbed occasionally, but they are not altogether ostracized, and if they display merit they will be recognized according to their ability. I have tried to prepare them for possible insults and have faith they will surmount the handicap of birth, which will cause them heartache, perhaps, at times, but I think they have a pride that will carry them through. I sometimes feel that intermarriage between our race and the whites is looked on with increasing tolerance each successive generation. Our government has recognized in legal form at last that we are citizens of this country. It could hardly do less in light of the fact that so many of our young men volunteered and fought in the World war."

"Say no more, Mrs. Miner. You have proved your case—that is, if there was anything to prove. My prejudices are obliterated."

It was getting late. Major Austin and John had been discussing range problems and had been paying little attention to Mrs. Miner and myself, though the major had evidently overheard portions, as he remarked:

"Well, if you folks have settled the status of the Indian in America, I think we should consider it bedtime. I've listened to Mrs. Miner before and am fully converted to her theory of the destiny of her race. I know the Indian character pretty well myself, for I have lived and worked with them for many years."

After an early breakfast we bid Major Austin farewell as he left for the agency, visiting two or three other well appointed cattle ranches, one of which was owned by a full blood, a most interesting man, college educated and a fine conversationalist. He married a half-breed woman, graduate of the reservation school, a good housekeeper, evidently, and both possessed a liberal share of good looks.

It was an exhilarating drive, though the roads were susceptible of much improvement in places, on high and level benchlands the prairie road was as smooth as a pavement.

A Remarkable Pair

I voiced my thoughts:

"Mrs. Miner is a remarkable woman, don't you think?"

"Yes, and John Miner is a remarkable man," agreed Major Austin. "I have known them both for 30 years. You know I taught in the reservation school many years before I was appointed agent and received the honorary title of 'major.' Their lives and achievements are both romantic and interesting in its influence on the affairs of this reservation."

"You must tell me about it, major."

Well, I'll try and narrate a few incidents this evening that may give you more of an insight into reservation life. Now, I'll have to step on the gas if we are to beat that shower coming up over the mountains," and he nodded toward the range to our right, where a dense bank of clouds were heaving up behind the peaks.

We pulled up at his quarters just as the first drops of a fierce thunder gust swept over the agency buildings, kicking up spiteful bursts of dust in the street, but shortly changing the latter into soggy mud as the rain beat down in almost cloudburst fury. Now and then the gloom was pierced by a blinding flash, followed by crashing thunder.

In 20 minutes the western sun broke forth and, as the black cloud drifted east, thunder rolled away in the distance, the sun shone through gently falling rain a few minutes longer, although the sky overhead was apparently clear, while one of the most brilliant rainbows it has been my fortune to view appeared over the eastern horizon, each segment resting on the earth but a few rods away, seemingly. In fact, there were two almost complete crescents, one above the other. We sat on the veranda enjoying the freshened air until the display faded and finally dissolved, when supper was announced.

Major Broaches Subject

On the veranda again after supper, with cigars lighted, Major Austin broached the subject that was on my mind, also, by remarking:

"I wonder just what constitutes miscegnation? We look with repugnance on intermarriage between white and black races or the white and yellow. There is more tolerance where it comes to the white and brown or the white and red, but just wherein lies the difference I am unable with certainty to figure out. Of course, my experience is confined to examples of the latter and it leads me to the conclusion there is no great meaning to the term in an undesirable sense.

"It seems to me the brain of the North American Indian functions very similar to that of the white man. His sense of honor and integrity is similar to ours; his logic is faultless, with a keen and clear idea of justice in his reasoning faculties. The proportion of good Indians and bad ones appears to me to run in about the same ratio as that of good white men and bad ones. While the Indian mind absorbs civilization clearly and completely, unfortunately his physique is not yet attuned to the white man's way of life.

"In time, with the gaining of sanitary knowledge, this handicap will be removed. With my opportunities for observation I venture to propheay a complete amalgamation with the white race of America. Then there will be no Indians, but rather a new race of Americans. Of course, I do not venture to name a date for any such occurrence, but I firmly believe the time will come. I admit an optimistic streak in my mental attitude and possibly a slight prejudice."

"Well, major, I have seen some things since I have been here that inclines me to a tolerant view, at least, of your opinion. These Indian police, now, appear rather alert young fellows, and I certainly can find little to criticize in the appearance and deportment of the young school girls and of the clerks I observed in the administration building. I really hope you are right. But you were going to tell me something of my friends, the Miners."

"I'm not much of a story teller, but I'll make a beginning:

(To Be Continued Next Sunday)

Coutts Man Faces Negligent Driving Charge in Alberta

Special to The Tribune.

SHELBY, Sept. 15.—Mike Jaddock of Coutts was arrested at Lethbridge, Alta., on a charge of negligent driving. The Jaddock car turned over when it struck a car driven by Warden Blake of the provincial jail. A partly filled bottle of liquor was found in the car driven by Jaddock. In the car of Warden Blake were his children, Helen and Owen. None was injured.

Grace Toposki of Hardieville, who was in the Jaddock car, was taken to St. Michael's hospital, suffering from shock.

Jaddock was arrested by Constable Dunlop and released on bail.

Good Wheat Yields Near Sweet Grass

Special to The Tribune.

SHELBY, Sept. 15.—John Farbo and Pete Berube were here from Sweet Grass. Mr. Farbo, a farmer living a mile southwest of the border town, says he has completed threshing 250 acres of wheat that yielded about 26 bushels an acre. He had wheat on four pieces of land. One crop of 50 acres averaged 30 bushels. Crops east and west of Sweet Grass are going from 20 to 30 bushels an acre. Pete Nichols, one of the biggest farmers in that vicinity, had grain that averaged more than 25 bushels. It is believed that in some places near the Sweet Grass hills crops will go nearly 40 bushels an acre.

Chaco Indian Uprising

BUENOS AIRES, Sept. 15.—(AP)—Two army airplanes arrived here today to aid land forces in smashing a band of Indians on the warpath in the Chaco region.

Charles Dahl, Early Lewistown Settler, Laid to Last Rest

Special to The Tribune.

LEWISTOWN, Sept. 15.—Funeral services for Claus H. Dahl, old-time resident of this county, were held under auspices of the Odd Fellows lodge, the services being conducted by the Rev. George Hirst of St. James Episcopal church. Royal Neighbors, of which Mr. Dahl was a members, attended the funeral in a body. Interment was in the Lewistown cemetery.

Government Cattle Will Leave Roundup

Special to The Tribune.

ROUNDUP, Sept. 15.—The first shipment of drouth cattle purchased in Musselshell county by the federal government will leave here soon. A special trainload of the stock will start Monday, with additional cattle being picked up at Musselshell and Melstone Tuesday. The cattle will be shipped east but the destination is not yet known.

Since appraisal started, 523 cattle, including cows, yearlings and calves, have been appraised. It is expected from 800 to 1,000 will be in this shipment, which will probably made a train of more than 30 cars.

Ranchers desiring to sell sheep to the government are listing their stock at the office of County Agent F. B. Peterson here.

Awaits Summons

PARIS, Sept. 15.—(U.P.)—While the League of Nations is discussing procedure for Russia's entry, the United Press learned today that Maxim Litvinoff, foreign commissar, is "in hiding" at Thonon-les-Bains, on the French side of the Swiss border, awaiting an official summons to Geneva.

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