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# The Millheim Journal.

R. A. BUMILLER, Editor.

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**Lost on the Plains.**

Only sixteen or seventeen miles a day. A long, creeping, creaking line of white ox-wagons, stretching away to the west across the vast and boundless brown plains. Not a house for thousands of miles, not a tree, not a shrub, not a single thing in sight, except now and then, dotted here and there, a few great black spots in the boundless sea of brown.

This is the way it was when my parents took me, then only a lad, across the plains, more than thirty years ago. How different now, with the engines tearing, smoking, screeching and screaming across at the rate of five hundred miles or more a day!

There are many houses on the plains now. The pioneers have planted great forests of trees and there are also vast corn fields, and the song of happy harvesters is heard there. But the great black spots that dotted the boundless sea of brown are gone forever. Those dark spots were herds of countless bison, or buffalo—as they were more generally called.

One sultry morning in July, as the sun rose up and the world with uncommon ardor, a herd of buffalo was seen grazing quietly close to our train, and some of the younger boys who had guns and pistols, and were "dying to kill a buffalo," begged their parents to let them ride out and take a shot.

As it was only a natural desire, and seemed a simple thing to do, a small party of boys was soon ready. The men were obliged to stay with the train and drive the oxen; for the tents had already been struck, and the long white line had begun to creep slowly away over the level brown sea toward the next water, a little blind stream that stole through the willows fifteen miles away to the west.

There were in our train two sons of a rich and rather important man. And they were now first in the saddle and ready to take the lead. But as they were vain and selfish, and had always had a big opinion of themselves, their father knew they had not learned much about anything else. There was also in the train a sad-faced, silent boy, bare-footed and all in rags; for his parents had died with the cholera the day after we crossed the Missouri river, and he was left helpless and alone. He hardly spoke to any one. And as for the rich man's boys, they would sooner have thought of speaking to their negro cook than to him.

As the boys sat on their horses ready to go, and the train of wagons rolled away, the rich man came up to the bare-footed boy, and said:

"See here, 'Tatters,' go along with my boy's and bring back the game."  
"But I have no horse, sir," replied the sad-faced boy.

"Well, take mine," said the anxious father; "I will get in the wagon and ride there till you get back."  
"But I have no gun, no pistols nor knife," added the boy.

"Here!" cried the rich man. "Jump on my horse 'Ginger,' and I'll fit you out."  
When the barefooted boy had mounted the horse, the man buckled his own belt around the lad, and swung his rifle over the saddle-bow.

How the boys face lit up! His young heart was beating like a drum with delight as the party bounded away after the buffalo.

The wagons creaked and crawled away to the West of the great grassy plains; the herd of buffalo sniffed the young hunters, and lifting their shaggy heads, shook them angrily, and then turned away like a dark, retreating tide of the sea, with the boys bounding after them in hot pursuit.

It was a long and exciting chase. "Tatters" soon passed the other boys and pressing hard on the herd, after nearly an hour of wild and splendid riding, threw himself from the saddle and, taking aim, fired.

The brothers came up soon, and dismounting as fast as their less practiced limbs would let them also fired at the retreating herd.  
When the dust and smoke cleared away, a fine fat buffalo lay rolling in the grass before them. Following the example of "Tatters," they loaded their guns where they stood, as all cautious hunters do, and then went up to the game.  
The barefooted boy at once laid his finger on a bullet hole near the region of the heart and looked up at the others.

their knees, wild with delight, in an instant.

"They had really helped kill a buffalo! In fact, they had killed it!" "For are not two bullets better than one!" they cried.

"'Tatters,' cut me off the tail," said one.  
"And cut me off the mane; I want it to make a coat collar for my father," shouted the other.

Without a word, the boy did as he was bid, and then securely fastened the trophies on behind their saddles.  
"Now let's overtake the train, and tell father all about killing our first buffalo," cried the elder of the two brothers.

"And won't he be delighted!" said the other, as he clambered up to the saddle, and turned his face in every direction looking for the wagons.  
"But where are they?" he cried.  
At first the brothers laughed a little, then they grew very sober.

"That is the way they went," said one, pointing off. "Ye-ye-yes, I think that's the way they went. But I wonder why we can't see the wagons?"  
"We have galloped a long way, and then they have been going in the other direction. If you go that way you will be lost. When we started, I noticed that the train was moving toward sunset, and that the sun was over our left shoulder as we looked after the train. We must go in this direction, or we shall be lost," mildly and firmly said the barefooted boy, as he drew his belt tighter, and prepared for work.

The other boys only looked disdainfully at the speaker as he sat on his horse and shading his eyes with his hand, looked away in the direction he wished to go. Then they talked a moment between themselves, and taking out their pocket compasses, pretended to look at them very knowingly.

Now, many people think a compass will lead them out of almost any place where they are lost. This is a mistake.

A compass is only of use when you can not see the sun. And even then you must have coolness and patience and good sense to get on with it at all. It can at best only guide you from one object to another, and thus keep you on a straight line, and so prevent you from going around and around and around.

But when the plain is one vast level sea, without a single object rising up out of it as a guide, what is a boy to do? It takes a cool head, boy's or man's, to use a compass on the plains.

"Come on! that is right," cried the elder of the two hunters, and they darted away, with "Tatters" far in the rear. They rode hard and hot for a full hour, getting more frightened, and going faster at every jump. The sun was high in the heavens. Their horses were all in a foam.

"I see something at last," shouted the elder, as he stood up in his stirrups, and then settling back in his seat, he laid on whip and spur, and rode fast and furious straight for a dark object that lay there in the long brown grasses of the broad unbroken plains. Soon they came up to it. It was the dead buffalo! They knew now that they were lost on the plains. They had been riding in the fatal circle that means death if you do not break it and escape.

Very meek and very penitent felt the two boys as "Tatters" came riding up slowly after them. They were tired and thirsty. They seemed to themselves to have shrunken to about half their usual size.

Meekly they lifted their eyes to the despised boy, and pleaded silently and pitifully for help. Tears were in their eyes. Their chins and lips quivered, but they could not say one word.

"We must ride with the sun on the left shoulder, as I said, and with our faces all the time to the west. If we do not do that we shall die. Now, come with me," said "Tatters," firmly, as he turned his horse and took the lead. And now meekly and patiently the others followed.

But the horses were broken in strength and spirit. The sun in mid-heaven poured its full force of heat upon the heads of the thirsty hunters, and they could hardly keep their seats in the hot saddles. The horses began to stumble and stagger as they walked.

And yet there was no sight or sound of anything at all, before, behind, or left or right. Nothing but the weary dreary, eternal and unbroken sea of brown.

"Away to the west the bright blue sky shut down sharp and tight upon the brown and blazing plain. The tops of the long untrodden grass gleamed and shimmered with the heat. Yet not a sign of water could be anywhere discerned. Silence, vastness, voiceless as when the world came newly from the hand of God.  
No one spoke. Steadily and quietly



**OUR NEXT PRESIDENT**  
Grover Cleveland!



219 ELECTORS!



Thomas A. Hendricks,  
Vice President.



the young leader of the party led on. Now and then he would lift his eyes under his hat to the blazing sun over his left shoulder, and that was all.

There comes a time to us all, I believe, sooner or later, on the plains, in the valley, or on the mountain in the palace or cottage, when we too can only lift our eyes, silent and helpless, to something shining in heaven.

At last the silent little party heard a faint sound beyond them, a feeble, screeching cry that seemed to come out from the brown grass beneath them as they struggled on.

Then suddenly they came through an open plain that looked like a plowed field. Only, all about the outer edge of the field were little hills or forts about as high as a man's knee. On every one of these little forts stood a soldier-sentinel, high on his hind legs and barking with all his might.

The lost hunters had found a dog-town, the first they had ever seen. Some owls flew lazily over the strange little city, close to the ground; and as they rode through the town, a rattlesnake now and then glided into the hole on the top of one of the ten thousand little forts. The prairie dogs, also as the boys rode close upon them, would twinkle their heels in the air and disappear, head first, only to jump up, like a Jack-in-a-box, in another fort, almost instantly.

The party rode through the town and looked beyond. Nothing! Behind? Nothing! To the right? Nothing! To the left? Nothing; nothing but the great blue sky shut tight down against the boundless level sea of brown!

"Water," gasped one of the boys; "I am dying for water."  
"Tatters" looked him in the face and saw that what he said was true. He reflected a moment, and then said:

"Wait here for me." Then, leaving the others, he rode slowly and quietly around the prairie-dog city with his eyes closely scanning the ground. As he again neared the two boys waiting patiently for him, he uttered a cry of delight, and beckoned them to come.

"Look there! Do you see that little road there winding along though the thick grass? It is a dim and small road, not wider than your hand, but it means everything to us."  
"Oh, I am dying of thirst!" exclaimed one of the brothers. "What does it mean?"

"It means water. Do you think a great city like that can get on without water. Come! Let us follow this trail till we find it."  
Saying this, "Tatters" led off at a lively pace, for the horses, cheered by the barking dogs, and somewhat rested, were in better spirits now. And then it is safe to say that they, too, saw and understood the meaning of the dim and dusty little road that wound along under their feet.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" Gallant "Tatters" turned in his saddle and shook his cap to cheer the poor boys behind, as he saw a long line of fresh green willows starting up out of the brown grass and moving in the wind before him.

And didn't the horses dip their noses deep in the water! And didn't the boys slide down from their saddles in a hurry and throw themselves beside it! That same morning, two of these young gentlemen would not have taken water out the same cup with "Tatters." Now they were drinking with the horses. And happy to do it, too. So happy! Water was never, never so sweet to them before.

The boys all bathed their faces, and the horses began to nibble the grass, as the riders sat on the bank and looked anxiously at the setting sun. Were they lost forever? Each one asked himself the question. Water was good; but they could not live on water.

"Stop here," said "Tatters," "and hold the horses till I come back."  
He went down to the edge of the water and sat there watching the clear swift little stream long and anxiously.

At last he sprang up, rolled his ragged pants above his knees, and dashed into the water. Clutch a little white object in his hands, he looked at it a second, and then with a beaming face hurried back to the boys.

"There! see that! a chip! They are camped up this stream somewhere, and they can't be very far away from here!"  
Eagerly the boys mounted their horses, and pressed close on after "Tatters."

"And how do you know, they are close by?" queried one.  
"The chip was wet only on one side. It had not been ten minutes in the water." As "Tatters" said this the boys exchanged glances. They were glad, so glad, to be hearing their father once more.

But it somehow began to dawn upon them very clearly that they did not know quite everything, even if their father was rich.

Soon guns were heard firing for the lost party. And turning a corner in the willowy little river, they saw the tents pitched, the wagons in corral, and the oxen feeding peacefully beyond.

The New York Times asserts that "every sign of the times indicates that farmers are neglecting the most profitable part of business, which is rearing and feeding stock. While grain is lower than it has been for a century—indeed—beef cattle are higher than for a dozen years, and higher than ever before, counting the value of the currency, which made the highest prices twenty years ago. Beef is scarce and everything else is cheap. Cheap bread and butter is a public blessing no doubt but the wheat grower who must sell for seventy-five cents a bushel and the dairyman whose butter brings sixteen cents are apt to think it a blessing in such disguise as to be unrecognizable. Just now, of all branches of agriculture, stock keeping is the most profitable, and doubly so, because while live stock is very high, everything else is very cheap.

Great Britain has but 121,000 square miles over which to carry the mails, while the United States has 3,000,000 square miles. Our postoffice department has about twenty times as much territory over which to extend its operations.

"I'm not in politics this year, but I'll take the stump all the same," said a tramp, going down into the gutter for a half-smoked cigar.—*Merchant Traveler.*

Starting a Boom.

He was a man about twenty-five years old. He had a prominent nose, red neck, fighting jaw and sheet lightning in his eyes. He had been hunting for a certain citizen for half a day without success, and when finally asked if it was very particular business he replied:

"You'd better bet it is! He wants to engage me to start a boom for him."  
"A boom?"  
"Exactly. He wants a county nomination, and I'm going to work it up for him."

"How do you boom a would-be candidate?" was asked.  
"Well, it's easy enough. There's three brothers of us. He divides \$50 among us as a starter. That makes us solid for Smith. We begin to burrah for him. Somebody hurrahs for Brown. We pulverize 'em. We talk Smith in saloons, on the street, out in the country and all over. Smith's the chap—stands in with the boys—no aristocrat—good fellow—honest man—sure to get thar—got to see him through."

"But suppose another faction wants Collins?"  
"Clean them out. Lick a Collins man and he begins to whoop for Smith. Keep treating and hurrahing and knocking down till the day of the county convention, and then watch your delegates. Bribe some, lick some—get others too drunk to sell you out. Just as easy as grease when you know how. Hang it, Smith ought to be on hand. I know of two places where I've got to set up kegs of beer to-night, and I expect to lick three different men before midnight. 'Rah for Smith!'—*Detroit Free Press.*

The Farmer and the Editor.

"Seems to me you don't have nothin' ter do," said the farmer, walking into the sanctum of the editor, the other day.

"Well, I have worked on a farm a good deal of my life, and I regard editing a so-called humorous paper as harder work than plowing corn," the editor replied.

"Oh, shucks!" exclaimed the farmer. "If I didn't have nothin' to do but sit around and write a little 'an' shear a good deal, I tell you I'd be havin' a mighty easy time."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the editor. "I'll plow corn a day for you if you'll write two columns to-day for me."

"Done," cried the farmer. "And I'll bet you ten dollars ye can't plow as much as ye orter."  
"I take you," the editor replied.  
"What am I to write about?"  
"Oh! anything, so it's funny. Remember, now, Mr. Farmer, you are to do the writing yourself. The matter must be strictly original."

"Never mind me, Mr. Editor. But look ye. You have got ter do a good day o' corn plowin'." Do it jest like I would!

"All right." The editor went to the farm and set a good hand whom he had hired on the way, at work plowing corn. The farmer wrote a head line which read: "Killin' tater bugs," before the editor was out of hearing.

In the evening the editor came into his sanctum blithe and cheerful. The farmer sat at the desk, vexed and worried into anger.

"How do you feel?" asked the editor.  
"Used up. Hardst day's work I ever done, an' two lines ter show for it." Sure enough, he was but one line beyond the head line. That line read: "Killin' tater bugs is funny."  
"And I have won the wager."  
"What?"  
"Yes sir! I have plowed several acres of corn, and done it well, and I've written my two columns besides." "Creation! How'd ye do it?"  
"Just like you would. I hired a man to do the plowing, and I sat in the shade; but I wrote while I sat there, and did not sleep as you do. Fork over the ten."

The farmer paid ten dollars for his information, but the lesson was well learned and as he went out, he said: "Stranger, I wouldn't be an editor if I could. It looks mighty easy, but by Jerusalem, it ain't near so easy as settin' down an' watchin' the man plow corn."

I'm a blasted fool, an' yer kin say it in yer paper if yer want to.

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