

The Country North.

Valley of the Teton — Old Blackfeet Agency.

The Indians — Where They now are and what they are doing.

Location of the new agency on Badger Creek- Progress on the buildings, etc.

Returning from a ride to the lower settled portions of Sun River Valley, where we had a pleasant chat with Messrs. Armstrong, Strong and others, and inspected the fine colts, training track, and big grain stacks of Robert Vaughn, we supped by the way at Mr. Dunn's, and arrived back at dusk at the Crossing. Here we stopped for the night, sharing the comforts of Jim Lemon's bachelor lodgings, and taking next day our morning and noon meals at the hospital board of John Largent.

Over the river, spanned by the splendid bridge at this point, is the fine residence of John Healy, one of the most enterprising citizens of the valley. John is a farmer, miller, thresher, and more beside. His splendid flouring mill, valued at \$18,000, is one of the best in the Territory, and some fine brands of flour will be turned out this season from portions of the wheat crop left by the grasshoppers and injured by the early frost. In the afternoon we were again at Fort Shaw, where we stopped for the night. The following morning, joined by Captain Andrew Dusold, of the Indian service, we struck off north for the

Country of the Teton.

The fording of Sun river, several miles above Shaw, was easily effected and then, after a hasty lunch from the Captain's private stores, commenced an animated and delightful drive over billowy plain and alternate level of upland and lowland, for a distance of 30 miles. There is no habitation along this extended stretch of trail, but it matters little when fleet horses and smooth wheeling enables one to compass the distance inside of four hours. The Teton, of one-fourth the volume of Sun River, is a beautiful, clear stream, heading in the northern range of mountains, and flowing down to the Marias, with which much more considerable river it mingles its water within half a mile of the Marias' confluence with the Missouri.

The valley of the Teton, now open to occupation, offers inducements to settlers — farmers and stockgrowers — superior, if anything, to those of Sun River, considering the considerable scope of country already taken up in the latter valley. The area of arable land, susceptible of easy and cheap irrigation, is greater than that of

Sun River, and grain and vegetable cultivation will undoubtedly be equally successful when our pioneer people shall have occupied the land and commenced the tillage of the soil. Crossing the stream and looking up the valley, we descry, five miles away, the outlines of the stockade enclosing the

Blackfeet Agency.

In a brief time we drive beneath the arched gateway and are soon made comfortable and heartily welcomed by the little community here stationed at the northernmost extremity of our journey. The Agent, Major Wood, is absent at Badger creek, superintending the construction of the new agency post, but Mrs. Wood, a most estimable and cultured lady, and her two daughters, Louella and Francis, are "at home;" as also the Agent's brother, Mr. Q.A. Wood; Dr. A.C. Hill, the Agency surgeon and physician; Mr. John Rainford, Secretary, and his accomplished and agreeable wife; the veteran interpreter, Henry Robare, and others.

The farmer hastens forward to take care of our horses, and Dr. Hill bundles us off to his bachelor quarters, where we dust, wash and refresh ourself with a draught of delicious spring water and a puff at a choice cigar.

We sopped several days with the good folks here, most agreeably entertained, and spending portions of two days in successful hunting and fishing expeditions with that prince of sportsmen, Dr. Hill. Grouse and chicken are plentiful everywhere along the Teton, while trout are abundant in the pools of Spring creek and the main stream of the valley. Pleasant evenings were passed at the family quarters, where the Misses Wood and Mrs. Rainford entertained us with vocal and instrumental music, and Mrs. Wood related some interesting episodes of Indian life. Practical reforms, looking to the elevation morally and otherwise of the numerous tribal bands of Blackfeet under the jurisdiction of this Agency, have been instituted and carried successfully forward by Major Wood. The Agent returned on the evening of the day preceding our departures and what information his assistants had not already given us of Indian matters he fully supplied.

Whiskey selling has been effectively shut out from the reach of the Red men, and drunkenness and crime are no longer recurring in the country. The abolishment of polygamy among the tribes has been consented to, and the Indians are now content to take but one wife. British appellations applied to chiefs, warriors, women and

children, are eventually to be done away with altogether, and Christian names subscribed to instead.

The Agency school, taught by the Agent's daughters, is full to its capacity, and the scholars are being rapidly tutored in elementary educational exercises. We have never visited a primary white school where the little ones better acquitted themselves in singing than at this Blackfeet Agency Indian school. A visit from Little Plume,

Head-chief of the Piegan, was an event we most passingly refer to. He readily consented to an interview and through interpreter Robare he told us of the stealing of a number of his horses by the Pen d'Oreilles of his journey, singly and alone to recover the animals of the demand of the Pen d'Oreille chief for two of the stolen horses in consideration of returning the remainder of his refusal to take any if not all of the recovery of his entire property and his safe return with every hoof of the stock. Little Plume went on to tell about his Indians. They were then for the most part in the Milk river country; they had put up much dried meat, and were getting ready to run the buffalo for robes. They expected a successful hunt, and would be rich in robes when winter came.

The New Agency.

Fifty miles north of the Teton, on Badger Creek, is going up. Temporary quarters are about completed, and the Old Agency will be abandoned by the last of the present or the fore part of next month. A steam saw mill is on the ground, and squared logs are being sawed for the permanent structures. Major Wood is on charge of the work, and personally attends to the details of the construction and takes a hand at the heavy work, even. He speaks flatteringly of the new location, and says in wood, water, stone, and ground for cultivation, the site is all he could desire. Its isolation is the principal objection to it and even in this respect he thinks the Agency will be better off than those along the Missouri. We confess to the impression that Major Wood is the right man in the right place, and that he is one of many eminently fitted for the responsible position he is called upon to fill. His knowledge of Indian character enables him to manage the wards under his charge effectively, and his judgment seldom if ever errs in the efficacy of plans adopted for their government. We are greatly indebted to the Major and his family, Messrs. Dusold, Rainsford, Hill and others, for courtesies shown us during our visit, and we shall endeavor at some

time to return their kindnesses when opportunities equally good present. [Transcribed from the Helena Daily Herald 10-26-1875]

Mr John Rainsford, just down from the Blackfoot Agency, favored us with a brief call this morning. Little Plume, with the remnant of Indians on the Teton, has moved out to Badger Creek, within the limits of the new reservation. The temporary buildings at the new Agency are completed, and work on the permanent quarters is being actively pushed. Major Wood and family and all attaches of the Agency will probably be located on Badger Creek before the end of November. A large number of the Indians are out on the hunt, and the robe "catch" this year promises to be an average one. Indian detective Dusold is out on the frontier looking after several bad characters from across the line who are said to need watching. Mr. Rainsford returns north in a few days. [Transcribed from the Helena Daily Herald 11-3-1875]