



ALBERT CARRINGTON.....EDITOR

Wednesday, July 24, 1867.

THE "MORMON" BATTALION.

The party given on the 16th inst., in the Theatre, on the occasion of the anniversary of the enrollment of the "Mormon" Battalion, called up many reminiscences connected with that noble band of men, which are not so generally known as they should be. Their enrollment and subsequent marches are matters of history, which are comparatively little known; and but few outside of those who were then making their weary way westward, by slow and painful steps, after having been mercilessly driven from their homes, know the peculiar circumstances of that enrollment, and the hardships attending the departure of those men from their families at the time they left, in obedience to the call of their country.

In June of 1846, a few months after the Saints had been compelled to leave Nauvoo, fleeing before furious and blood thirsty mobs in the inclemency of a winter season, the robbed and plundered pilgrims were strung along the road through Iowa, and some had crossed the Missouri river, all moving westward into an unknown and untried land. Behind them were remorseless and fiendish mobs; before them a wilderness to whose terrors Fremont and the hardy men with him had all but succumbed, though well provided with every requisite for their successful exploration, yet here they were about to be dared by old age, helpless infancy and the debilitated of both sexes; and around them were tribes of savages who might naturally be expected to view this incursion into their country with jealous eyes. Ricketty and poorly covered wagons, wind-galled, spavined and broken-down mules and horses, oxen unfit to haul the loads placed upon them, formed most of the outfit for this unparalleled journey. Scant of clothing, scant of provisions, lacking most of the necessities, and all the comforts and luxuries of life, with a journey of indefinite length and unknown terrors ahead, these wanderers were scattered along the line of march in the month of June of 1846.

There were about 2,000 wagons encamped in Western Iowa, between the east fork of Grand river and the Missouri river, a distance of about 130 miles, the main body of which had arrived at Council Bluffs, those with them having pioneered out and made and bridged a new road through an unknown region of nearly 300 miles. There were also several hundred wagons on the west side of the Missouri river.

On the 30th of June, Captain James Allen, of the U. S. army arrived among the wanderers, with an order from the then Colonel Kearney to call upon the "Mormons" for a battalion to proceed to California by way of Santa Fe, Kearney having been so instructed by Government. How the call was met will be best told in the extracts which follow. The first one is taken from "The

Mormons" a discourse by Col. T. L. Kane:

The call could hardly have been more inconveniently timed. The young, and those who could best have been spared, were then away from the main body, either with pioneer companies in the van, or, their faith unannounced, seeking work and food about the northwestern settlements, to support them till the return of the season for commencing emigration. The force was therefore to be recruited from among the fathers of families, and others whose presence it was most desirable to retain.

There were some, too, who could not view the invitation without jealousy. They had twice been persuaded by (State) Government authorities in Illinois and Missouri, to give up their arms on some special appeals to their patriotic confidence, and had then been left to the malice of their enemies. And now they were asked, in the midst of the Indian country, to surrender over five hundred of their best men for a war-march of thousands of miles to California, without the hope of return till after the conquest of that country. Could they view such a proposition with favor?

But the feeling of country triumphed. The Union had never wronged them:—'You shall have your battalion at once, if it has to be a class of elders,' said one, himself a ruling elder. (President B. Young.) A central 'mass meeting' for council, some harangues at the more remotely scattered camps, an American flag brought out from the storehouse of things rescued, and hoisted to the top of a tree mast—and, in three days, the force was reported, mustered, organized, and ready to march.

The next one is from "The Mormon Battalion," a lecture by James Ferguson, himself one of the Battalion:

Exposed to enemies who lurked in every grove, he (President Young) visited the various camps, nor ceased his exertions till the last muster roll was filled. But how few knew the sacrifice it cost. There was one scene that was particularly touching. An aged mother, to whom the call of the Government and the wishes of the President were made known, came forward. She had five sons. One was murdered, and now lay buried deep and unavenged in the tragic well in Missouri. Two were in a foreign land, propagating the faith for which their brother's blood was shed. One was still too young to administer, but needed, care and comfort. The other was a young man, the sentinel and protector of her tottering steps. Even in her aged heart, withered and broken as it was, the love of country burned deep and strong. She yielded up her son, and never saw him more! I knew him well. We marched side by side. He had been worn down by the bitterness and exposures of many persecutions. But Joseph (Richards) was noble, generous, and brave, and never complained.

We were mustered into service on the 16th of July, 1846. A few hurried preparations, and the grey haired men and striplings marched off merrily as our commander ordered the music to play a hasty farewell to 'the friends we left behind us.'

The following very condensed statement has been kindly furnished by Elder George A. Smith, from whom we have also received other facts connected with the Battalion. Captain Allen was commissioned by the President of the United States to take the command:

The volunteers comprising the Battalion, numbering 545—five companies of 109 each—assembled at Council Bluffs, were mustered into service on the 16th of July, 1846, and, leaving their families and wagons in the country belonging to the Omaha and Pottawattomie Indians, set forth.

They marched to Fort Leavenworth, 180 miles; on the route one of their number perished from fatigue and excessive hot weather; there they received their muskets and other accoutrements, of U. S. Infantry, and commenced their march August 13th, for Santa Fe, each soldier carrying besides his musket, his blanket, knapsack, supply of ammunition, and canteen for water.

Col. Allen who remained behind the Battalion at Fort Leavenworth, to complete his outfit, died suddenly; his loss was deeply mourned by the Battalion, who were sincerely attached to him. They continued their march to Santa

Fe, suffering much from want of water and provisions; in one instance they made a march of sixty miles without water, which was very scarce in many places, and that found, was of inferior quality.

On their arrival at Santa Fe, on Sept. 12, General S. W. Kearney appointed Lieut. Col. Philip St. George Cooke to take command of the Battalion, in the place of Col. Allen, who before marching for California, selected out all the laundresses, and those who on a rigid examination were supposed to be unable to continue the march, and placed the under the command of Capt. James Brown, who started on the 18th September, with orders to make a post at Puebla, on the Arkansas river, which was accordingly done.

Col. Cooke with the residue commenced their march to California without a road, a wagon having never passed over the route by which they were conducted. To avoid the snow of the Rocky Mountains, Col. Cooke followed the Rio del Norte, south, for 300 miles, then turning west, passed through the fortified town of Tucson; after which their guides were unacquainted with the route, and it had to be sought out like men traveling in the dark. On leaving Santa Fe, they were placed on three-quarter rations; they were soon after reduced to one-half, and subsequently to one-quarter rations. Their meat was composed of the remains of such draught animals as were unable to proceed further. On one occasion they were relieved by a very romantic and providential encounter with a herd of wild cattle.

They traveled 100 miles without water; sunk deep wells in the desert; and arrived on the Pacific with but little loss. The distance from the place of enlistment to Fort Leavenworth is about 180 miles; from Fort Leavenworth by the Cimarrone route to Santa Fe 700; from Santa Fe by the route traveled to San Diego, 1,150 miles; making a total of about 2,030 miles; almost the entire march being over an uninhabited region, and much of the way a trackless, unexplored and forbidding desert, and the latter part of the march affording neither sufficient water nor grass for animals, and leading over hitherto unexplored mountain gorges. When the teams failed, the Battalion had to carry the extra amount of ammunition, and at the same time had to push the wagons through the sand and over the rugged mountains. The following complimentary order, of their commanding officer speaks for itself and for the Battalion:

Head Quarters, Mission of San Diego,
30th January, 1847.

Order No. 1.—The Lieut. Colonel commanding, congratulates the Battalion on their safe arrival on the shores of the Pacific ocean, and the conclusion of its march of over two thousand miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry; nine-tenths of it has been through a wilderness, where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found; or deserts, where, for want of water, there is no living creature. There with almost hopeless labor, we have dug deep wells, which the future traveler will enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them, we have ventured into trackless prairies, where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar and pickaxe in hand, we have worked our way over mountains, which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat; and hewed a passage through a chasm of living rock, more narrow than our wagons. To bring these first wagons to the Pacific, we have preserved the strength of the mules, by herding them over large tracts, which you have laboriously guarded without loss.

The garrison of four Presidios of Sonora, concentrated within the walls of Tucson, gave us no pause; we drove them out with their artillery; but our intercourse with the citizens was unmarked by a single act of injustice. Thus marching, half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country.

Arrived at the first settlement in California, after a single day's rest, you cheerfully turned off from the route to this point of promised repose, to enter upon a campaign, and meet as we believed, the approach of the enemy; and this, too, without even salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat.

Thus volunteers, you have exhibited some high and essential qualities of veterans. But much remains undone; soon you will turn your strict attention to the drill, to system and order, to forms also, which are all necessary to the soldier.

By order of

Lieut.-Col. P. St. GEORGE COOKE.
[Signed] P. C. MERRILL, Adjutant.

One great source of annoyance to the Battalion, was the want of confidence in the U. S. Surgeon, D. Sanderson, who was known to have been formerly a bitter persecutor of the "Mormon" people; and whose expressions and actions confirmed their suspicions that it was his wish to destroy them.

They were discharged at Los Angeles, one year from enlisting, without the means to return to their families.

At the request of the military commander in California, who feared a

Spanish revolt, one company re-enlisted for six months, which service was performed in a highly satisfactory manner, both to the officers and the people of San Diego, where they were stationed.

It was to commemorate the anniversary of the enrollment of that Battalion that the party on the 16th was given. There old comrades, who together had marched that long and terrible march met, surrounded by friends, the enjoyments of social intercourse, and with hearts swelling to God with gratitude for the blessings He has bestowed upon His people. The charges of disloyalty, maliciously flung against this people by political intriguers, contract-hunters and their "volunteer" allies, rebound back from a buckler of true loyalty to our country and its Constitution, formed by such practical acts of pure, honest-hearted devotion to the principles of freedom, as that manifested in the enrollment, sufferings and services of the "Mormon Battalion."

WOULD DENY US LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

An eastern contemporary informs us that it has nothing to do with our religion, only we must abjure polygamy and everything in the shape of spiritual authority on the part of our leaders. It has become quite common for people, from whom we happen to differ in views and opinions, to say that if we will only cease the practice of plural marriage there will be no further cause of opposition against us, and we can live on the best terms of amity with our neighbors who reside near us, and those who live at a distance. We have not failed to declare that this is not so; but that if we were to abjure any one principle of our faith to please our neighbors, they would demand further concessions of us, and so on, until we became like them in every respect. The journalist from whom we have quoted in the opening sentence, is a little more outspoken than some others. He states in a few words that which he objects to, at present, in our social and religious polity. And he calls upon us to abjure it; declares we must do so; and then, with an air of sincerity which tells that he does not know how absurd his language is, says that with our religion he has nothing to do; "we are welcome to worship," &c.,—the usual style in which the thing is put.

This writer we look upon as not knowing enough to play the hypocrite so well as many of his brother journalists, who confine their demands to our repudiating one point of our faith. He informs us that we must throw our leaders overboard, and then, of course, everybody must get salvation on "his own hook"—to use a Yankeeism—and in his own way, regardless of whether God has anything to do with it or not. General Clark of Missouri told us at Far West that we must give up our Prophet, presidents, bishops, the Book of Mormon, and a few other things, and we must never meet together again in a Church capacity, or we need not think we would be tolerated in that State. He told us, too, that the Church was "used up;" there was nothing more of it, and never would be; and so we had better accept his terms. But we believed then, as we believe now, that the Almighty had something to say and something to do about matters, before the Church was "used up," and so we begged to be excused from accepting Clark's manifesto, preferring to be driven from the State, and to suffer all the persecutions we were made to endure. There was no plurality of wives practiced then, to ask us to abjure; and those who say that it is all that the world ob-