

An Overland Stage ride through Missouri.

NOTES BY THE WAY—ALTERED TONE OF THE BORDER POPULATION—THE RETIRING FILLIBUSTERS—COL. TITUS AND COL. BUFORD—STAGE ADVENTURES, ETC.—KANSAS CITY TO INDEPENDENCE.

As many prospective emigrants to Kansas are hesitating whether to tempt the hardships of the stage route during January and February, or await the reopening of the Missouri River, I have thought that some notes of a recent pilgrimage by the former road, might not prove unacceptable to the readers of the TIMES. As the trip, moreover, gave me an opportunity to study the present temper of a people who have recently earned for themselves an unenviable notoriety as wholesale violators of Constitutional and State laws, it may be that a narrative of some of its incidents will serve a still further purpose of enlightenment.

In company with a great many others, I had intended to get to St. Louis by water before the closing of the river; but Winter frustrated all these prudential plans by hastening his arrival—usually in that region hesitating and tardy—and when I reached Kansas City, I found the river running thick with ice, and no steamboat up except the *Australia*, which was reported on a sandbar near the new town of Quindaro. The Missouri, too, was gorged a few miles below, and it needed but a slight knowledge of the ways of the great river, to demonstrate that navigation for the year 1856 was closed.

The crowd at Kansas City was immense. Tardy residents of Kansas, eastward bound on a Winter visit to anxious friends; sharp speculators, fresh from the land sales at Fort Leavenworth, and hastening home to report loans at forty per cent. or purchases even more profitable, and disheartened fillibusters, more anxious to bid adieu to Kansas than they had been to hail it a few months since,—all were headed abruptly off by the cold-hearted weather-king and forced to realize the painful conviction that a tedious trip by land, at a very considerable increase of expense, was their only alternative for the lost opportunity of a steamboat ride down the Missouri.

Among the fillibusters, the most noteworthy were "the gallant Floridian," as the friends of Colonel Titus love to call him, and the father of Southern Emigrant Aid-ism—Major Buford. Every evil is intermingled with good, and amidst all the vexations attending my several days' sojourn at the "American Hotel," (now purged of Abolitionism, of course,) was a very good opportunity for observing the altered attitude in which radical men of the opposite political parties stood to each other, from that of a few short weeks ago. Here, at dinner, might be seen the (to me) strange spectacle of Titus, Buford, and others of like kidney, mixed freely in with Gov. Robinson, Lieutenant-Governor Roberts, and that same obnoxious Colonel Eldridge, who, in June last, was forced to sell this very hotel to its present proprietor, on pain of having it demolished, as was done to the "Eldridge House," in Lawrence!—and no person, not knowing the strange history of the past year, would, for an instant, suppose that these were the men who had arrayed their respective parties against each other in deadly conflict, and whose grand aim it had seemed to be to take each other's lives! And, strangest of all did it seem, to see Titus send round his champagne bottle to those who had held him prisoner in Lawrence, when it was doubtful whether there was strength enough among the Free-State leaders to save him from the vengeance of the outraged citizens; and, forgetful of the object of his expedition, pledge them, in the toast—"Kansas, a Free State!"

Titus, too, amused me in other ways. When he first came, he had his company, a hundred strong, on the other side of the Kansas River. The Sheriff undertook to serve a process on him for a debt contracted by one of his men. But the burly Floridian knew his latitude too well. He exploded upon the officer a series of the most energetic expletives I remember having heard; assuring him that he was a fillibuster, and no man should molest his "person;" that he had men enough at hand to turn their d—d town bottom-side-up in two minutes; and that the Almighty himself had not the power to put him in durance! Of course, after so forcible a definition of his position, the Sheriff meekly withdrew; and the "champion of law-and-order" had achieved a characteristic triumph.

Titus, however, is said not to be destitute of good points; and certainly, with his burly form cased in a military suit, his red cheeks and glowing eyes shaded by his Magyar hat, plume *à la Kosuth*, he presents a figure by no means displeasing to the romantic vision.

And, amidst all these little incidents, what was the temper of the citizens of Kansas City? A little while since, and the last decidedly Free-State residents had notice to quit; and now, no inducement was too great to offer to secure their stay. In the same town where he was so lately denied to live and hold property, Col. Eldridge was received with the most marked respect. Compliments were showered upon him—favors urged on his acceptance—every attention bestowed that an honored citizen could expect after a regretted absence!

I dwell upon these trifles, because they seem to me encouraging omens of a peace that will endure.

All this time, of course, the crowd was thinning out. Every team procurable was chartered for Jefferson City, and those not lucky enough to get teams, contented themselves with entering their names on the stage-bill, for several days in advance. Having made some business for myself *ad interim*, I delayed till the rush was over. I had heard horrible tales of the manner in which "through passengers," along the line, were jostled aside and made to lose their seats by other "through passengers," who had lost their own in the same way, and I was willing to wait till the path was somewhat clear. And finally, one Thursday, Mr. W. and myself received the gratifying assurance from the stage-agent that the crowd was over, and a guarantee that we could now proceed without delay or risk of seat. Kansas City, he assured us, was the head of the stage-route, and no persons taking the coach at any other point, could interfere with our seats. So, about 2 o'clock Friday morning, beneath a bright moonlight, and breathing a pure wintry air, we packed ourselves, with two more unfortunates, into a mud-wagon at the door of the "American Hotel," and were rattled off moderately on our way.

The river, I should have mentioned, had risen sufficiently to take the *Australia* off her sandbar, and enable her to reach Kansas City, where, I suppose, she still lies. At all events, she was one of the last objects I remember seeing in that town, for the gay officers had given a ball in her, and she was shining in all the glory of lamp light as we passed by. Our driver had been a guest there; and it soon became evident that his temper had been in no wise improved by the patronage he had bestowed on the bar. He showed himself to be on bad terms with his bar; which I consider, always, a highly suspicious circumstance in a driver. However, he scolded and swore them along, and in about an hour took us into Westport—a drive of four miles. There was a mail to be changed, and while this was doing, the driver betook himself to the office of the "Harris House," and became comfortable. He had given us no intimation of any delay, and we kept our seats till cold feet and impatience drove us out. After about half an hour, I followed him into

the house, and was greatly edified at seeing seven men, with every appearance of having been roused from half-finished slumbers, preparing to join us in our wagon, which, at the outside, had a capacity for only eight. Here, then, were eleven passengers to be provided for, besides a pile of baggage fully proportioned to the size of the crowd.

Some little altercation between the driver and these new men, and between said men and the stage clerk, indicated to me that the difficulty I foresaw was not entirely invisible to others. Hence, I considered that sound policy demanded of me to resume my seat in the wagon, which was done, not much too soon; for presently out came the driver and his new patrons, and the trunks on the shoulders of several ragged niggers. What should be done? Presently the driver raised a curtain and said, "The Kansas City passengers must stay over till to-morrow!"

We had partly anticipated this, but were resolved to maintain our rights. We replied that the seats were ours, and we should keep them. He rejoined by swearing. Finally he bade us get out till he could *put in the mail!* We respectfully declined being caught with any such chaff, and sat still.

The driver swore.

We exhorted him to keep cool, (we were more—quite cold,) and stated that our contract with the stage agent gave us a right to our seats.

The driver said he was an agent, and swore.

We said we should keep our seats.

He swore he would take off his team, and take another wagon.

We doubted, and sat still.

Finally, he and the new men retired into the house, discomfited; and, after another half hour of tedious delay, a lumber wagon drove up, the baggage and part of the passengers loaded in, the rest took seats with us, and off we started for Independence.

This twelve miles, over a rough, hilly road, we accomplished in about three hours. Arrived there, we found a beautiful town, a fine hotel—the Nolan House—and a good breakfast. This discussed, we were carefully packed into one of the best coaches I ever saw, and, with a capital team and driver, off we went again for Lexington.

Kansas Prospects—Returned Emigrants.

From the Milwaukee Sentinel.

We had the pleasure, yesterday, of greeting our old friend, E. G. Ross, for a long time foreman in our office, and who went out to Kansas with a party from this city. Mr. Ross has been through all the troubles in the Territory, and borne his full share, with the other settlers, in the gallant stand made for Freedom there. He is now, with his brother, publishing the *Kansas Tribune*, at Topeka, the Free-State capital, and a part of his business here is to obtain subscribers to his excellent paper. We trust that he will be successful.

Mr. Ross informs us that the two Legislatures are to meet in about a fortnight, at Leocompton and Topeka, but no collision is anticipated between the hostile parties. He thinks it probable that the Bogus Legislature will adopt a State Constitution, and submit it to the people; but unless the test acts are repealed, and all idea of enforcing the bogus laws given up, the Free-State settlers will have nothing to do with the matter.

Mr. Ross states that in coming through Missouri, he found the feeling very general that the attempt to make Kansas a Slave State must be given up. In this connection we have the following from the *Lawrence Herald of Freedom*:

A gentleman who has spent a greater portion of his life on the western borders of Missouri, who is familiar with the entire working of the institution of Slavery, and who is at this time a heavy slaveholder, assured us the other day, that the property holders in that State, who have been compelled to pay the expenses of those marauding expeditions into Kansas, have fully determined to array themselves, with all the power they can command, against further interference by the people of that State, with the institutions of Kansas. He said the day had gone by when there was even a hope of making Kansas a Slave State. "Every intelligent person, who knows the true state of affairs," said he, "knows this to be the case." He claimed that Stringfellow and Archison might continue to bluster, but if left to themselves, instead of hurting others, like Col. Benton's bull, they would kill themselves "splurging."

Already many persons in Missouri, who apprehended all was lost if Kansas could not be made a Slave State, are preparing to leave with their slaves for Texas. This is but the natural effect of the foolish statements of the demagogues of Missouri, who said "Slave labor would be valueless if Kansas was an Abolition State." The assertions of those men that Missouri would be a Free State in ten years, if Kansas should be a Free State, has done more to make it such than all the action of the Northern men combined.