

A THRILLING STORY.

Ten Years with the Savages of the Far West.

The Experience of Capt. Hobbs, the Famous Ranger
 —How He was Captured and Nearly
 Scalped— His Final Release
 and Return to this City.

Capt. JOHN HOBBS, a famous ranger and Indian fighter of Sonora and Northern Mexico, is the guest of a well-known publisher in this City. He arrived in the Metropolis a few days ago direct from Fort Sedgwick. He has probably suffered greater hardships from and has gained a greater knowledge of the plain and frontier Indians than any white man living in this country. His thrilling adventures and hand-to-hand conflicts with the Apaches during the past quarter of a century and captivity of ten years among the Comanches, would afford splendid material for a first-class romance. The exploits of this individual utterly overshadow the deeds of the renowned KIT CARSON, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and completely surpasses the doings of "Buffalo Bill" and "California Joe," whose names in connection with Indian fighting has been before the public in various periodicals during the past seven years.

Last evening a TIMES representative enjoyed an hour's conversation with the grizzled veteran, and learned from his own lips some particulars of an eventful career.

The Captain was found at the office of a stenographer who was busily employed in taking notes to be used in connection with a forthcoming history of his life. He invited the reporter to be seated, and handed him a pipe of unique pattern, with a stem about four feet in length, which he first lighted and indulged in a few whiffs as a starter. "That pipe," said he, "I captured from ALGALUMME, a Montezuma Chief, thirteen years ago, and I would not part with it for a thousand dollars." While smoking, the reporter surveyed the border-man; he is fully six feet in height, sparely built, is as straight as an arrow, has small, black, piercing eyes, long and coarse hair, as black as a coal, a swarthy countenance covered with scars, and a complexion in general that has been so tanned by exposure to the sun and wind that it resembles strongly that of an Indian. He wore a border-suit of buckskin, fantastically arranged, but his person was devoid of jewelry, which is such a characteristic weakness of frontier men. On a bureau at the right rested a huge white sombrero, while in one corner of the room, near the stenographer's desk, were scalps and tomahawks and other relics of the forest, and of sanguinary conflicts with the savages. As he had been a captive such a great length of time among the Indians, it seemed a matter of surprise to the reporter that he could converse so fluently in his mother tongue. He explained this by stating that he had as a companion in captivity an American, and had frequent intercourse with trappers and herdsmen whom he had assisted in capturing. By this mode he had managed to retain his English perfectly. His knowledge of dates was also surprising when it is taken into consideration that he was carried off by the Comanches when but twenty years of age, and previous to that event had but little schooling.

He was born in a small frontier village on the Big Blue River, in the northern portion of Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, in the year 1829, but does not remember the month. When but a mere lad he gained a great reputation among the hardy backwoodsmen and trappers of that section as a wonderful shot, as he had been known to bring down a deer at four hundred yards. At eighteen he was a successful trapper, and knew every elk path and otter pond for miles through the wilderness. His shrewdness attracted the attention of BENT, the great St. Louis fur-trader, who secured his services when nineteen. It is to this incident that his subsequent misfortunes and ten years' captivity and sufferings among the Comanches may be attributed. Shortly after entering the services of the fur company, as the Captain related, he and a companion, JEAN BATTIES, a French Canadian, were sent to the Cimerone Springs, near the head waters of the Arkansas River. At that date the whole country was almost a howling wilderness, with but few settlers scattered here and there, and was swarming with hostile Apaches, Pawnees, and the scourge of Northern Mexico, the blood-thirsty Comanches. On the 17th of September, 1847, as their luck had been bad, BATTIES proposed to HOBBS to start further south, where game was supposed to be in abundance; the latter acquiesced. During the evening of the first day's trip HOBBS trailed a buffalo. His capture is given in his own vernacular. "Putting spurs to my mare," said the Captain, "I soon overhauled the varmint, which proved to be a cow, which I killed. BATTIES soon joined me, and after we cut off all the meat we wanted we built a fire and bunked in for the night. The following morning, while preparing our grub, a war party of twenty Comanche braves, with eight or ten Pawnee scalps, and a drove of stolen ponies appeared on the scene. The leader of the band advanced toward me with outstretched hands, and growled out 'How?' I answered him in a friendly way, still keeping an eye on my shooting-irons. All of a sudden one of the most demoniac yells that ever greeted a mortal's ears was given, and before we could move the whole pack of hell-hounds were upon us two poor devils. They killed poor BATTIES before my eyes, scalped him, took off his moccasins, secured his rifle and ammunition, and then made for me. But the Chief somehow took a fancy to me and drew off the pack after they had almost finished me and had the knife to my scalp. Look here," so saying the Captain parted the thick black hair on the side of his head and a long white scar was revealed. "That's the commencing place," he resumed, "and in two minutes' time longer I expect they would have raised my top-knot, for certain. Do you see this?" Here he pointed to a deep scar just above his mustache, at the right of the nose. "That's another mark they gave me with a tomahawk on that occasion. Well, to make a long story short, they carried me with them up to the mountains. They danced around me, sung and played on the tom-toms nearly all night, and to wind up they cut off my hair and commenced to cut up my face, or what you might call it, to tattoo me. I objected so strongly that they stopped it, but they managed to put a brass ring through my nose. This I wore during my ten years' captivity. I was made a warrior, and went out with them on all their war and marauding expeditions across the Mexican border, and several times came near losing my life while fighting the Apaches and Pawnees. All told, my body bears seventeen bullet and arrow wounds." Removing his boots, the Captain exhibited to the reporter five buck-shot "indentures" in his right leg, and three or four gun-shot and arrow wounds in his left limb. "I remained with the red-skins two years before I was made a warrior. About six months after this event, while hunting alone in the mountains of Lower Sonora, I heard the breaking of a twig not far from where I was standing. I cocked my rifle, thinking it might be a cinnamon bear. I did not hear the sound again, but instead saw the cause of it in the shape of a big Pawnee warrior who stood partly concealed in a clump of chaparral about 200 yards distant. We looked at each other fully five minutes without drawing a bead; suddenly he raised his gun and fired at me without taking aim. I jumped to the right and escaped, still keeping an eye on the Pawnee; he dodged around, but I soon let him have it square in the head and scalped him. When nearing the lodges I got two ash poles and stuck the ends of each into the ears of the scalp—it's the style of the Comanches to take ears and all—and marched into camp.

Five minutes later seven hundred warriors, headed by OLD WOLF, whom the United States soldiers and Mexicans well know to their sorrow, surrounded me, and such shaking of hands and hugging I never experienced before. The chief the next morning gave me his third daughter as a bride. By our marriage I have seven children." "Where are they now?" queried the reporter. "Oh, they're running wild on the plains," replied the Captain, laughingly. He said that in the Fall of 1847, after numerous fights with United States soldiers, during which he tried to escape, (rather dubious,) the Comanches concluded to sell him and another white prisoner named KIRKER. Thus, after ten years of captivity, he was taken to Fort Bent, and was sold to Col. SUMNER, of the Sixth Cavalry. The Captain was ransomed for six yards of red flannel, one pound of tobacco, and a string of beads. KIRKER was sold for eight yards of curtain calico and a pound of London Mission tobacco. After being ransomed, the Captain sought the home of his

youth; but all his relatives had removed, and, heartbroken, he retraced his steps and made his way into Mexico, where he joined PLACIDA LA VEGA in his war against the Church Party. At the conclusion he made his way to Chihuahua, and was employed by Gov. ANGLESTRES to fight the Apache at the rate of \$50 per scalp. With thirty Mexicans, during six months, they raised ninety scalps. Becoming disgusted with the Mexicans, he again cast his fortunes with OLD WOLF and the Comanches. He continued fighting with them two or three years against other tribes, and when the French invaded Mexico he repaired to Chihuahua and was made a lieutenant of artillery in the Liberal army by BENITO JUAREZ, and participated in the battles of Los Mimbres, Mazatlan, Zapick, Santiago, Equantito, Sierra Alegre and various others, down to Queretaro, when MAXIMILIAN surrendered. At the close of the war he again visited his Indian home, and, growing tired of that species of existence, determined to live in the future among civilized people. His faith, however, in humanity has been terribly shaken since he has been in Gotham, as he lost \$150 in greenbacks at a place of public amusement a few evenings since, and he has changed his mind considerably. He speaks fluently the dialects of seven different tribes—Castilian and half-Montezuma, the language of Northern and New-Mexico and Sonora. He is probably the only white man that can aid the historian in translating them.