

AMERICAN
HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

THE
ROCKY
MOUNTAINS

CLIFTON JOHNSON

AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PHOTODUPLICATION SERVICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



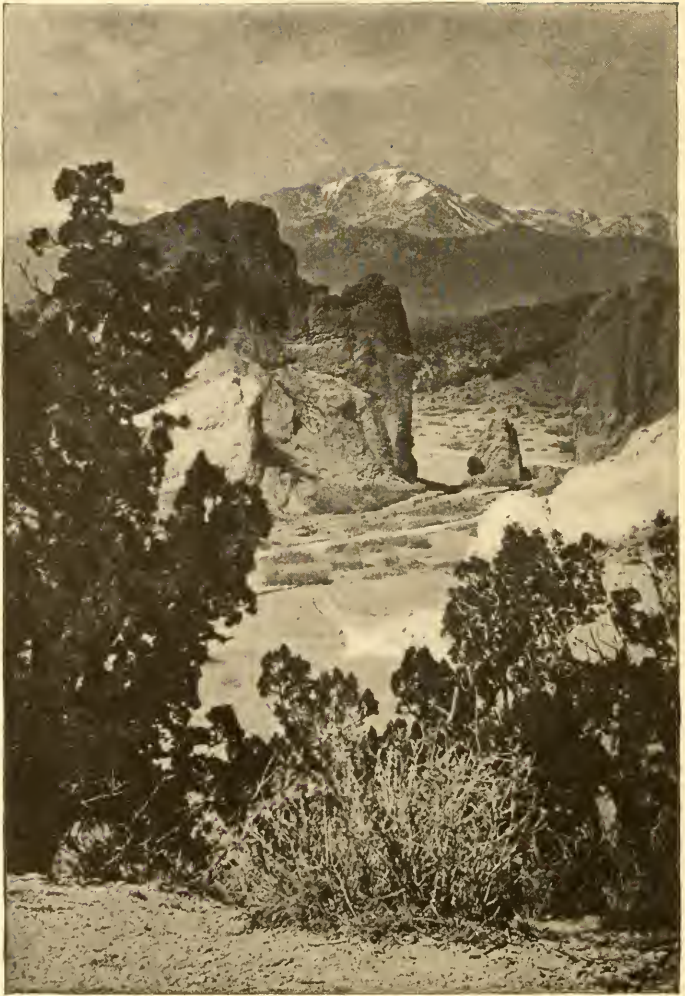
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Pike's Peak from the Garden of the Gods

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS
OF THE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS



WRITTEN AND
ILLUSTRATED BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON



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AMERICAN
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

INCLUDING
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
NEW MEXICO
OKLAHOMA
COLORADO
NEBRASKA
MONTANA
WYOMING
KANSAS
TEXAS
UTAH
AND THE
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

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Introductory Note

One of the preceding volumes in this series dealt with the Mississippi Valley and another with the Pacific Coast. The present book covers the region lying between and takes its name from the most dominant physical feature of that area. Of necessity its text deals both with the mountains and with the great agricultural states that lie to the eastward, but perhaps it is not any the less interesting because of the contrasts thus afforded. I have tried to give a fair idea of the varied characteristics and attractions of this vast territory from Mexico to Canada.

The several volumes in this series have as a rule very little to say of the large towns. Country life is their chief topic, especially the typical and the picturesque. To the traveller, no life is more interesting, and yet there is none with which it is so difficult to get into close and unconventional contact. Ordinarily, we catch only casual glimpses. For this reason I have wandered much on rural byways and lodged most of the time at village hotels or in rustic homes. My trips

have taken me to many characteristic and famous regions; but always in both text and pictures I have tried to show actual life and nature and to convey some of the pleasure I experienced in my intimate acquaintance with the people.

These "Highways and Byways" volumes are often consulted by persons who are planning pleasure tours. To make the books more helpful for this purpose each chapter has a note appended containing suggestions for intending travellers. With the aid of these notes, I think the reader can readily decide what regions are likely to prove particularly worth visiting, and will know how to see such regions with the most comfort and facility.

CLIFTON JOHNSON.

HADLEY, MASS.

Highways and Byways of the Rocky Mountains

I

WHEN THE FIELDS TURN GREEN IN NEBRASKA

THE winter was past, and the uncertain days of early spring had afforded enough encouragement to make the buds throw off their armor of protecting scales and deck the boughs with tender new leafage; and the sun in its northward journey had coaxed the grass to thrust up many a valiant spear through the last year's brown stubble. In the fields the farmers were busy ploughing, or were making preliminary preparations for it by getting rid of the straw stacks, and the cornstalks, which were still standing, ragged and withered where they grew. The stalks are cut with mowing-machines, gathered into wind-rows with a horserake, and burned. The straw stacks are burned also, and as you look out from the train window at this season in the corn and wheat country you see on every hand these little field fires with their long trailings of smoke. When evening comes, the fires

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are still burning, and the red flames impart an eerie aspect to the dusky landscape.

I stopped at Grand Island in the Platte Valley, a town that had recently celebrated its fiftieth birthday. The region around is typical of the older Nebraska farming country. One hundred and sixty acres is the size of the usual farm, and the home buildings are almost certain to be in a grove of protecting cottonwoods that shut off the violence of the winds and are a defence against the drifting snows.

There was something quite charming about the grove environment of the homes. Through the trees I could glimpse the snug little dwelling, the red barn, the windmill, the numerous sheds and corn cribs, and a medley of wagons and machines. I heard the domestic cackle of hens, the crowing of roosters, the cooing of doves, and there was perhaps a farmyard pool where a bevy of ducks and geese were paddling. Then, too, the groves are beloved by the birds. Those little busybodies, the sparrows, are chirping about the premises all the year through; and the robins, larks, yellowhammers and others arrive with the first mild days of spring, so that I found the groves delightfully musical.

At one of the wayside homes where I stopped, the woman of the house and several children were raking up the cobs that strewed the hard-trodden farmyard, and making bonfires of them. The cobs would have

been good to burn in the stove, but they were broken, and it was too much trouble to pick them up. They are a standard fuel in the region, and are especially esteemed for making a hot, quick fire in summer. The family had a great bin-full stored for this purpose, and they had sold many hundreds of bushels in the town at two cents a bushel. In some homes cobs are the only fuel, except that in winter a little green wood is used with them to make the fire burn more steadily.

I stayed to dinner with my farmyard acquaintances. They were prosperous and lived well, though more heartily than delicately. We dined in two detachments, the men and boys first, and then the feminine portion of the household. This was a rather necessary arrangement, for the rooms were small and there were thirteen children, all of them at home. Excepting the very youngest, every member of the family was a worker, and the stooping shoulders of some of the lads seemed to indicate that they had done too heavy tasks for their age in years past. This is a not uncommon phase of Western farm life. The children are sacrificed to the crops.

On the sunny side of the house I counted eight cats dozing in lazy comfort. They were, however, useful members of the household; for without them the rats and mice would raise havoc in the stores of grain. The boys kept two or three dogs, partly for compan-

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ionship, and partly to wage war on the gophers and rabbits. "Those gophers are a mean animal around this country," said one of the youths—"that's what they are. They scratch after the corn just when it begins to come up, and eat it. Sometimes we kill 'em by drowning 'em out. We drowned out one last Sunday. The way we do it is to take a dog along, and he smells around and digs, and then you know a gopher is in that hole, sure thing. The dog won't get excited on any old scent. We pour in water—perhaps two or three buckets full—and pretty soon the gopher pokes his nose out and starts off. But he's all wet and can't run very fast, and we either kill him with a stick, or the dog catches him. Sometimes the dogs go hunting a gopher alone, and they'll get him, too—you bet they will, even if they have to dig a hole three or four feet deep.

"The rabbits ain't so bad as the gophers though they do considerable damage gnawing the bark of young fruit trees. We kill 'em as much as we can. But they raise about three bunches of little ones in a season, nine to a bunch, and we can't get 'em all."

The boy's father had taken up the land on which he lived thirty-seven years ago. The second year after he came, in the middle of April, occurred the worst storm in the history of the state. "It caught us unprepared," he said; "for spring had come and we'd



Spring in a home field

been having nice warm weather. I was at a neighbor's when it started, and the first I knew there come a wind that blew my hat off. Then I hurried home and got the cattle to the sheds. But lots of people left 'em on the prairie thinkin' the storm would soon be over. The northwest wind was awful, and the cattle drifted along before it. There was no fences then to stop 'em, and they went into the Platte River and was drowned.

“The storm lasted three days. It was snow and rain and everything mixed together so thick you couldn't see. Some of the drifts were six or seven feet deep, and our sheds were just blown full, but I made out to get to the yard where the cattle were and fed 'em a little corn. When the storm was over, most of 'em was buried out of sight, except they'd kept their heads moving so there was a little place where they could breathe. Nearly all of 'em was lyin' down, and we had to go to work and dig 'em out. A great many birds were killed, and we found several wild ducks and a deer dead. The drifts didn't all melt until June.

“Another bad storm was in January, 1888. We'd been shelling corn that morning with the horsepower in the yard, and while we was at dinner a big wind began to blow and everything got dark. We had to light the lamps. I could hardly stand against the gale to get to the barn to see to the stock. A good many roofs of cow sheds and outbuildings were just

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straw or hay thrown on, and the wind blew that right off.

“At our schoolhouse the teacher and the twenty or more children stayed all night. They had a fire and there was lamps that they lit, but they got pretty hungry before the next day. Some teachers didn’t have the sense to keep the children, and quite a number of little boys and girls was frozen to death trying to get home.”

When I left the farmhouse I continued my rambling across the low levels until I came to the Platte, a wide and rather uncanny looking stream, the bed of which showed decidedly more sandbars than water. Indeed, it is sometimes spoken of as a mile wide and an inch deep. But in June when it is swollen by melting snows from the distant mountains it is a wild and swift, though still shallow torrent. Gradually the waters recede until September, when the flow entirely ceases and there is nothing left but sand and stagnant pools. It is a treacherous stream to ford, even when the water is nearly at its lowest, and a local farmer related how he was once crossing on foot and came to a place only ankle deep, yet he sank in quicksand above his knees and had a hard struggle to get out.

I did not care to linger long on the river bank, for a rude and chilling wind blew that was quite uncomfortable. I wondered that the birds could sing so

blithely, and was in doubt whether it was from enjoyment or to keep up their courage in the boisterous weather.

The pioneer who led the first band of settlers to the region was still living in the vicinity, and one evening I called on him. His house was on the far side of a thirty-five acre grove, and the approach to it was by a winding road through the great trees. The dusk was deepening, and the lamp was lighted in the kitchen where the family was just finishing supper when I rapped. The old settler himself came to the door. "Why don't you come in?" he said, as if rapping was a needless ceremony.

He was a vigorous, elderly German, whose kindly hospitality at once put me at my ease and we were soon chatting about his early experiences.

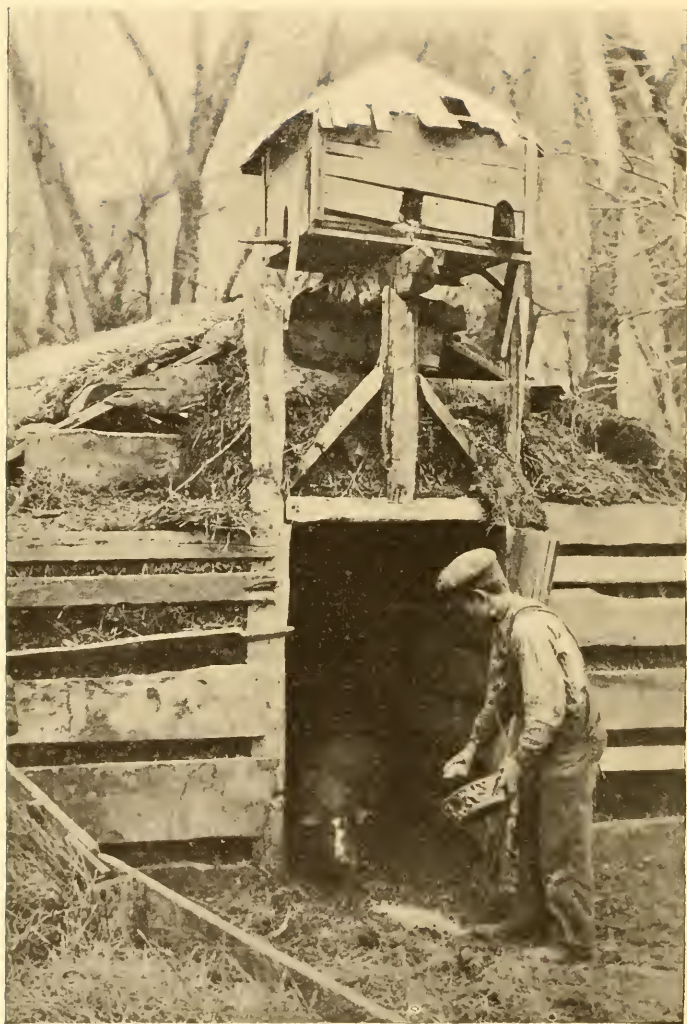
"It looks like a crazy piece of work, my coming here to live," said he. "In my boyhood there was nothing to indicate that I was cut out for a frontiersman; but some inward power causes young people to go, go, go. At first, when I came to America, I settled in Iowa, and at the time of the financial panic in 1857 my brother-in-law and I were in the mercantile business there and failed. We were ten thousand dollars in debt, and it was 'Root hog, or die.' But look at this," and he took a tiny green bottle from a drawer. "There is the proudest piece of property I've got. In that bottle are the

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ashes of the notes I gave for my debts; and I made all the money to pay those notes right here in this wilderness.

“Some men around where I lived in Iowa were interested in starting a town just half way between the east and west coasts. They thought that would be the place for the national capital. A number of congressmen were interested, too, and they were far-sighted enough to see that a railroad was bound to go up the Platte Valley, because that furnished the best natural grade for a route across the continent. They wanted their town in this valley, and they asked me to organize a colony. They were to furnish a surveying party and all the grub and arms and ammunition, and were to have half the land we took up. Our party started in June, 1858. There were thirty-seven of us including several women and children. The only settlement this side of Omaha was sixty miles east of here. To the west was nothing but a few forts.

“The exact central spot is twelve miles farther up the river, but it was a dry year and the land there was rather high and had become so parched it didn't look as if it was good for anything. In fact, the country everywhere, except along the streams, was apparently a sort of desert where it seemed as if no one would ever be fool enough to settle. Besides, even if the land had been all right, a person couldn't in those days



In the pigpen

have a home far from the streams, because on the open prairies there was no wood to burn or to build with; and no water unless deep wells were bored, and we had no machinery for doing that. But here it was all green and nice with quite a little timber along the river, and we decided on this for our location.

“The first thing we did was to cut cottonwoods and build four log cabins. They each had two rooms with a roofed passage between and were in a group close together. We had no boards, and our early roofs were either of sods or of slue grass. This slue grass grew as tall as a man, and when cut early enough it made good fodder—fine! It made excellent roofs, too. We’d bind it on with willow withes, and, if well made, such a roof would last a lifetime. As soon as the houses were done we began to break up the prairie, and some sowed buckwheat and got a crop that season. Plenty of prairie grass grew in the vicinity, and it was knee-high and as thick as could be. With our scythes we mowed enough to feed our animals through the winter. The next spring I built a log house specially for myself, and it is the ell of my present house. You are in one of its rooms now. For a while this was rather a lonesome country, but in 1859 Pike’s Peak was discovered—that is, gold was found in the Rocky Mountains. People got wild, and train after train of fortune seekers passed up the trail, often fifty wagons in a train, and they kept going till the railroad was built in 1866.

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“The second year after I came I wrote to my creditors, ‘If you expect me to settle my debts you must send me a mowing-machine, and you must pay the freight to Omaha.’

“They sent it, and I made eight hundred and twelve dollars with it the same season. Twelve dollars I kept to buy things that were needed at home, and the rest I sent to my creditors. The country was getting more people in it all the time, and by and by I wrote to my creditors, ‘If you expect me to settle my debts you must send me a threshing-machine, and pay the freight to Omaha.’

“You see I forwarded to them all the money I made, and so I couldn’t pay for the machine or the freight either. It cost nearly seven hundred dollars, but they sent it, and I made two thousand dollars with it that year to lessen my debt.

“In the winters I trapped beaver, otter and mink, and poisoned wolves. Beaver were plenty then, and so were the other creatures. I’ve killed seventy-five wolves in a single season. Most of ’em I got right around my house with poison. I stumbled onto a very good way to make sure of ’em. I’d prepare a number of sticks about fifteen inches long, pointed at both ends, and I’d cut some meat into inch cubics, one for the tip of each stick, and right where the point of the stick come through the meat I put some strychnine in a pellet

of lard. Next I'd drag a big chunk of buffalo meat along the ground to make a trail for the wolves to scent, and at intervals on the trail I'd set up my sticks. So now I was ready for business. In the night the wolves would come and dash along taking the pieces of meat, one after another. The lard would melt right away so the strychnine would take immediate effect and they wouldn't go far. Often I'd find 'em within fifty steps. Most settlers would put the poison into the meat and leave the meat on the ground. It would kill the wolves, but not quickly, and they'd die too far away to be found. Then there was no chance to get the hides. I sold the coyote skins for about a dollar, but the big gray timber wolves brought twice or three times as much. This little house has been nailed all over outside with wolf, beaver and other skins, and the walls inside hung full of the cured hides.

“My clothing was of buckskin, Indian-tanned, and it was warm in winter and cool in summer. Buffalo robes were our bedding for many years. The Indians would sell us the best of buffalo skins for two or three dollars apiece. I have seen thousands and thousands of buffalo at one time. You could look around and there'd be large herds on every side. The prairie was black with 'em. I thought we'd have the finest hunting as long as I lived, and my children after me. But pretty soon men began to butcher the buffaloes for their hides,

and lots of 'em were killed by the emigrants who'd shoot 'em with their good-for-nothing rifles, and often only cripple 'em. Sometimes the wounded buffalo would drag itself away twenty miles before it died. So in ten or twelve years all of 'em were gone, and most of the other game as well.

“October was our hunting time. We'd fix up a couple of wagons, and I'd drive with one companion to the Loop River to stay a month or so. We didn't know whether buffalo would be plenty or not, and as soon as we had a chance we'd kill any that we could, even if they were old fellows. The meat might be tough, but it was all good. Later, if we could get younger animals we'd throw the tough meat away. We didn't save the hides. They were too heavy to carry. The scent of the buffaloes we killed would be carried a long distance, and it attracted the wolves. At night we'd have to chain our horses well to the wagons or they'd break away. Hundreds of wolves would gather around, and I tell you their howling was a peculiar music. It was enough to make a greeny's hair stand on end. First one would howl and then the whole lot on all sides.

“Every winter the Pawnees camped down here on the river, and this house has been full of Indians many a time. In stormy weather they'd come in here and stay all day and tell me everything they knew. Occasionally two or three would stop over night. My wife

and I would be in our bed at the other side of the room, and they'd lie around the stove in the corner.

“When we came here we were at peace with all the Indians around; but I got the company together one time and said: ‘Now, boys, these wild neighbors of ours are certain to give us trouble sooner or later, and I would advise that we build a strong fortification to protect our families.’

“Then one of the fellows says: ‘He wants us to furnish him with a cow stable.’

“‘That’s enough,’ I said; ‘I’ll build the fortification myself.’

“So I went to work and made a stout log cabin with twenty-five portholes in it and a heavy four-inch door. Well, late in the summer of 1864 there was an Indian uprising. Everybody was frightened and for twenty miles around you could see the dust rising, stirred up by the fleeing people with their teams and cattle and dogs and cats and all they had. That fellow who’d accused me of wanting my neighbors to put up a building that would serve me for a cow stable came to me and said: ‘What are you going to do?’

“‘I’m too big a coward to run,’ I says. ‘So I’m goin’ to stay right here.’

“Then he wanted to take advantage of my block-house, but I said: ‘You’re the last man I want in that fort. It’s too good for you, and you can’t stay.’

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“The other people who lived near helped pile sods outside around the base, and we had a well in a corner, and an underground annex where we kept our horses. Thirty-five persons stayed in the fort for three weeks. A good many scattered settlers were killed, but the Indians didn’t attack us.”

My companion paused meditatively a few moments and then said: “If it was daytime I’d like to show you my apiary. I got my first bees twenty-seven years ago, and I spent a good deal of time and money to make good quarters for them. My wife did not like what I was doing and she got mad. ‘This is not a country of flowers,’ she said, ‘and we shall never have a bit of honey on the table.’

“She kept talking and talking, and at last I says: ‘Mama, you keep to your business in the kitchen, and I’ll take care of things outdoors.’

“Night and day I studied about bees till I learned to take scientific care of them. By and by I had honey to sell, and I increased the number of hives to about forty. Those bees have made for me eight thousand dollars, and so now my wife likes the bees, too. She is sometimes a little bit after the dollar herself.

“The apiary is in a little open space at the edge of my grove and near by I have an ornamental garden with flowers and vines and arbors. The grove is open to the public, and people come to it much to drive or walk through. Lovers like to ramble and loiter along its

paths and roadways on Sunday afternoons, and many a match has been made there. I set out the first trees that were ever set out in this part of the country. They were twelve cottonwoods, and I said: 'There are the twelve apostles. May they teach forestry in all this region.'

"Those original trees are all gone now. Most of them died of old age, but one was destroyed by lightning, and I called that 'Judas Iscariot.'

"Many things have changed since I came here. Even the air is different. It used to be purer and less humid, and we'd often see a mirage. While I was still living in Iowa a fellow from our town made a journey to California, and when he came back he of course had a good deal to tell. 'It's hard to believe,' says he; 'but I have seen a buffalo, and when I crawled two miles to get to it, by jingo! it was a crow.'

"'Heavens! what a liar that fellow is!' I said to myself. 'He's been to a bad school in California.' But when I came here the air played the same tricks on me.

"The worst setback this state ever had was the grasshopper plague in 1875. The insects came in such numbers they hid the sun. I had six acres of corn—fine corn. It was August and the ears had formed, but were still soft. In half an hour after the grasshoppers arrived nothing was left except the stalks. A neighbor had a nice field of onions. The grasshoppers began to

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come about noon one day and he said, 'We'll all go out and save what we can of those onions.'

"But his wife said: 'The dumplings are hot. Eat dinner first.'

"So the family sat down and ate, and when they went out to rescue the onions the grasshoppers had eaten, too, and there were no onions to rescue.

"The grasshoppers were bad enough in their way, but, still more disturbing to my peace of mind was a neighbor I used to have. His name was Hefner, and he lived just across the highway from my grove. No one could be more cussed and mean and sneaking. If there's a hell that's where he is now. My brother-in-law had some land near Hefner's place that he was breaking up one fall, and he used to feed his oxen early in the morning so't they'd be ready to work later, and then he'd go back to bed. That was his way of doing things. He was a good man, but lazy. While he was having his nap Hefner would come out and set his dog on the oxen, and away they'd go over the prairie. So when my brother-in-law got ready to plough he'd have a long walk to get 'em. This happened day after day until he had some suspicion of what was going on, and my wife did, too; but they knew what a firebrand I was, and didn't tell me. I would have stopped it just that quick!" and he snapped his fingers.

"Finally my brother-in-law lay in the long grass and saw Hefner set his dog on the oxen, and he went to him



A cyclone cellar

and told him he'd got to quit that sort of thing. Well, there were some other differences between us and Hefner, and he began circulating stories about us. One Sunday afternoon we were having coffee, German fashion, when a team with six men in it drove up to the house. I went out and invited 'em in to have coffee with us, but they said they just come to speak to me and my brother-in-law. 'We want to tell you,' said they, 'that unless you two stop troubling Mr. Hefner your days are numbered.'

"'You rascals, you villains!' I shouted, 'if you will wait one minute your days are numbered now!'

"I ran in after my rifle, but when I came out they were lashing their horse to get away. Even then I would have had a shot at them, if my people had not held my wrists.

"I spoke about Hefner's dog and the oxen. That dog was a constant nuisance, and yet he would have been all right if he had had a good master, but Hefner was too stingy to feed him, and he was savage and half starved. One night I heard a noise and I went out with my gun to see what was the matter. Hefner's dog had jumped up and got a quarter of antelope I had hung on the side of the house about nine feet from the ground. He was gnawing it, and when I opened the door he began to drag the meat away. 'Gr-r-r!' he said.

"I took aim with my gun—bum! and there he was. Then I went to bed and slept well, and the next morning

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early I dragged the dog over to Hefner's and rapped on his window. 'Mr. Hefner,' I said, 'here is your dog, and I give you notice that any thief who comes onto my premises, whether he has two legs or four, will meet the same treatment.'

"Well, well, that's all past now. How time does jump along. My youngest boy was telling me yesterday he was forty years old, but I don't believe it; and yet he may be right and the years have slipped away faster than I could realize."

The old settler's sincerity and courage, and his belligerent attitude toward what was mean and underhanded were very attractive, and I enjoyed him and his lively description of his experiences so thoroughly that I stayed until late into the night and parted from him with regret.

When I left the Grand Island region I went to the southern borders of the state. Here was the same prosperity, but the country was somewhat newer than that along the Platte, and the houses were not so sheltered by trees. Alfalfa is one of the important crops, and as the fields are mowed three or four times, haying is almost continuous from early June till the middle of October. But the Nebraska farmers do not make as hard work of haying as the Eastern agriculturists do, and the task is largely accomplished with machinery.

Wealth is the rule rather than the exception, and farmers worth twenty thousand dollars or over are not

at all unusual. But evidence of this is seldom seen in the style in which they live. You find it instead in the big fertile fields. The owners may continue to inhabit a cramped and shabby dwelling, wear work-a-day garments to town, and drive around in a ramshackle carriage, or in a lumber wagon with an extra spring seat put in for the wife or other members of the family to sit on when they go too. It is not alone in the country that the dwellings are small, for diminutive houses are surprisingly plentiful in all the villages. These are, however, a matter of preference. "My house is only a one-story cottage," said a merchant with whom I talked on the subject; "but it's all my wife can take care of. There's a doctor lives next door to me who has such a big house that he has to keep a hired girl; and his wife and that girl are busy all the time. No sooner do they get the house hoed out once than they have to begin and hoe it out again."

Not all the farmers own the land they till. Some are "renters." As one such man explained the situation, the owner of his place "kept the buildings in repair, or was supposed to," and paid the taxes and received for rental a third of the crop, delivered in market. If the season was favorable both parties did well, but he told of one dry year when he had fifty-five acres of corn, "and there wasn't an ear fit to feed the horses," said he. "I snapped off some for the cows and I saved the fodder, but it was poor stuff."

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The man was going to drive to town, and I rode with him. It was Saturday afternoon, which has a good deal the character of a half-holiday among the farm folk. Going to town is their chief recreation, and the place was enlivened with many teams, and the stores were busy with people bargaining and buying. It is the women of the household who do the bulk of the trading, and the man sits down on a sidewalk drygoods box and waits for someone to come along to talk to him.

On this particular day there was quite a buzz over an incident of the previous evening. It seemed that about two years previous a middle-aged Missourian came to the village, whose methods of supporting himself were open to question. He boarded at the hotel, and though he did an occasional honest day's work, it was as a gambler that he made a living. Playing poker for money was not uncommon among the natives, but he was more expert with the cards than they and was the winner in the games they played with him to a very disproportionate degree. Soon after his advent there began to be a series of robberies from the stores. Suspicion fell on the Missourian. There was no evidence as to who was guilty, but the authorities felt they must make an example of somebody and they got him before the court for gambling. He was found guilty and sent to jail. In his testimony, however, he implicated so many of the townspeople that when he returned to his adopted village his welcome was far from cordial. He had arrived



Looking for gophers

the day before, and a crowd got together in the evening and told him he must leave town at once. He was defiant, but after some squabbling they got him to the railway station. There he broke away and ran across the tracks up the opposite bank. The mob called on him to halt, and he drew a revolver and faced them. But though they knew he was a desperado they were too angry and excited to be stopped and promptly closed on him, wrested away the revolver, and a little later put him on a train that bore him off in the direction of his native state.

Incidents of this sort were of course exceptional, and life as a whole in the region was decidedly placid. Occasionally the town would make a grand effort and have a fair. Street booths were erected wherein the merchants made novel displays of their wares; acrobats were hired to give performances free to the public; and there were processions of decorated wagons in which rode the pretty girls of the community, and men in fancy costumes led the horses. The young and the frisky of the crowd bought confetti and threw it at each other, and some of them would go so far as to chuck it into the faces of the preachers. These fairs were intended to advertise and boom the town.

A celebration of a quieter sort was a Sunday-school picnic in a grove beside the sluggish creek that wandered through the lowlands. Then, too, there were the church sociables where cake and ice cream were dispensed.

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The profits helped pay the minister, and many people would go to the sociables who rarely attended church.

In the winter there was sure to be a variety of public entertainments by both local talent and travelling professionals. Once a lecture course was attempted, but it was not very successful. The people preferred to be amused rather than instructed. They, however, seemed to find a peculiar fascination in a revival. Even if a person was not personally drawn into the whirlpool of religious emotion, the freakish displays of human nature that developed were interesting to contemplate. One recent evangelist had inveighed strenuously against the use of tobacco. Bill Tripp, an inveterate backslider, whose habit it was to get converted in every fresh revival, rose in the midst of this exhortation, went to the stove, opened the door, and threw in a plug of the weed that he took from his pocket. Then he slammed the stove door ostentatiously and returned to his seat. The heroism and self-sacrifice of this act were appreciated, and many another fellow in the audience went and did likewise. Their reformation rejoiced the preacher, but he did not know that most of them bought a fresh supply of tobacco the next day. The use of tobacco was general in the region, and the boys began to smoke quite young. Yet they did not indulge in cigarets. These cannot lawfully be sold in Nebraska, and the result is a feeling that cigarets are rather disreputable anyway.

On my final evening in this vicinity I went for a walk out along the country roads and saw the sun go down

beyond the edge of the vast level sweep of the horizon. The birds were singing their last songs, the rabbits were nibbling along the roadsides, the hens were fluttering to roost in the farmyard trees. As I looked about in the cool damp of the dusk the fertile prosperity of the region impressed me more than ever. How beautiful and full of promise it all was! and what I could see was typical of most of the great state.

NOTE.—“Wherever you can raise wheat, alfalfa, and corn, you’ve got the world beat easy,” one Nebraska man said to me. That superlative condition is characteristic of a considerable portion of the state, and the agricultural prosperity of the commonwealth is a chief reason for the traveller’s making its acquaintance. There is perhaps no one region that excels all others. Much the same scenes and the same charms exist in many sections, and likewise in the three neighboring states of Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas, which with Nebraska constitute “the big four” from the farm point of view. I chose to spend most of my Nebraska days in the vicinity of Grand Island, attracted by the unusual historic interest of the place. Other visitors would no doubt find this region as satisfactory as I did, but they will hardly miss seeing some fine country even if they stop at random.

II

HISTORIC KANSAS

IT was only a little while ago that we thought of Kansas as a half-parched prairie country where the promise of an occasional good year lured the settlers to their certain undoing later, and where mortgages, hopelessly beyond the power of the farmers to pay, were well-nigh universal. This opinion, though never altogether fair to the state, was not without considerable foundation. But now the aspect is decidedly different. Good season follows good season, the mortgages have melted away, and Kansas has become one of the wealthiest and most productive agricultural states in the Union.

The region with which I became best acquainted is that about Lawrence on the Kansas River. Lawrence attracted me because of its New England ancestry and its troubled history in the anti-slavery struggle. The town itself might almost be a bit of Massachusetts, for Massachusetts people have moulded it and are still predominant in its life; and the tidy comfort and generous size of the homes, the tree-shadowed streets and trim lawns, and the repose and air of refinement that have come with the passing years are quite delightful.

When I wandered out into the country I found that similarly pleasing, and the homes were as a rule, commodious and shadowed by fine oaks and maples. Recent timely rains had given the soil a thorough soaking, the wheat and alfalfa and grass were all growing bravely, the potatoes were thrusting up into view, and the gardens were beginning to yield the earliest of their table delicacies.

Everywhere I saw workers in the fields toiling back and forth with their ploughs and harrows and planting-machines. It was a busy time, and yet I always found the workers ready to stop and chat with me. They were vigorous, capable fellows for the most part, who were satisfied with their condition and even enthusiastic over it; for they were prospering and the future looked bright with promise. As one native remarked: "There's money in farming here, and good money, too. These panics we hear about don't worry us any. They are Eastern affairs caused by the financial bullies of New York. Prices have been awful big for farm crops and we're all right. This ten-acre potato field I'm at work in I've rented from a man who lives in town, and I'll tell you the God's truth—the first year I raised potatoes on this ground I made a hundred dollars an acre. But the next year potatoes were a drug on the market, and lots of 'em never was dug. I sold three hundred bushels at eight cents a bushel. I usually dig about the middle of June, and then put the land into rye. That grows

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big enough so I can let the farm creatures run in it all winter. Last winter I turned into this field fifteen hogs, five head of cattle and two or three horses. It didn't cost me hardly a dollar for any other feed, and the animals come through just as fat as could be. If I didn't sow the land to some crop, after the potatoes were out, the crab grass would sprout up in a few weeks as thick as the hair on a dog's back, and don't you forget it!

"I used to have a grocery in the village near the river, but that flood in 1903 swept everything away as clean as a whistle. I never thought of its coming up to where my store was, and I didn't attempt to move out any goods. Yes, it took the building and left a hole fourteen feet deep. That was fierce. At my house matters wa'n't much better. The water was up in the second story, and when it went down the plastering come off and the furniture fell to pieces. I'd bought a new surrey and a single buggy a little while before and the flood took those. Oh, it just naturally destroyed all I had. But now I'm through with the grocery business, and I wouldn't go back to it. In a store you're everybody's lackey. This is a much more independent life, and it pays better, too. Yes, sir, farming is good enough for me."

I repeated the ex-groceryman's remarks to another local farmer. "I'll tell you right now," said he, "that you couldn't run fast enough to give me the best grocery store in Lawrence. I used to be a bookkeeper in a



The first cultivating

railroad office and had to leave because of poor health, but I wouldn't take my old job again under any circumstances. Besides, I've got my children to think of, and the town's no place for them.

"I make a specialty of vegetables, and it's been interesting learning how to handle 'em just right. I haven't got it all learned yet, and wouldn't if I lived to be two or three hundred years old. But there's no one around here doing any better with garden truck than I am. When we have a fair in town I take the largest space and make the finest show. I got a hundred and sixty-two dollars last year in premiums, and a seed man gave me twenty-five dollars for the privilege of hanging a sign over my display saying that the things was raised from his firm's seed. They weren't, but 'twas a good advertisement for him.

"The year of the flood I lost four acres of stuff and thought myself lucky to lose no more. Most of the land around lay lower than mine, and a good many of the neighbors had their entire crops ruined. The flood come about the first of June, and we'd never known anything like it. The Indians told of a similar flood in 1844, but the whites had lived here fifty years and seen nothing of the sort, so we didn't believe the Indians told the truth. When I saw the water spreading all over everywhere I drove my stock to the hills and took my family along. But we was soon back, and everything I raised sold for big prices the season through.

“That flood didn’t begin to be as serious to me as a hailstorm we had early in the summer two years ago. Three men I’d hired by the day had been helping me, and we’d just got the garden cleaned up of weeds. It was six o’clock and time to quit and they was starting for home. But I said: ‘The clouds look pretty black and we’re goin’ to have a bad storm. You better come in my cave a little while with me and my family.’

“So we all went to the cave and stayed till the storm was over. It destroyed every crop I had, and farther up the valley it was a real cyclone that took the bark off the hedges and blowed the buildings to smithereens. One man there was laughed at by his family for bein’ afraid, because he wanted ’em to go to their cave when the storm was approaching. He went alone, and he never saw any of the others alive. The storm took the whole outfit. The cyclones do some funny things. I knew of a baby that was carried half a mile and dropped in a graveyard without bein’ hurt a bit. Another queer case was that of a fellow who was landed in the top of a tree with his leg broken. He lived, but he was never good for much afterward. There’s a story, too, of a family that had started to run from the back door to their cave when a cyclone picked ’em up and whirled ’em off for nine or ten miles. They didn’t happen to hit any steeples or trees or buildings, and pretty soon were dropped down right where they’d started from, out of breath, but all safe and sound. The minister heard of their

escape and come and congratulated 'em, and he ended up by shaking hands with the man and saying: 'Brother, the Lord was with you.'

"'Well, if He was,' the man replies, 'all I can say is that He was a-goin' some.'

"Most everyone on the bottoms has a cyclone cellar. It ain't such a necessity on the uplands; for the air up there don't get heated as it does here and is much less apt to start swirling. Our cyclones are electrical storms with lots of thunder and lightning, and the noise and the flashes are so near when the storm passes over that it seems like as not you'd get hit. I've always took my family to the cave when I thought there was any danger; and if I'm in town and the weather looks threatening I'll telephone out and caution 'em to keep watch and go to the cave in time."

The man showed me the vegetables he was raising on his land, and the hotbeds where he had started sprouts for three acres of sweet potatoes. "And now," said he, when the tour was completed, "come into the house and hear a tune on my graphophone."

So he ushered me into his tiny parlor where I sat and listened to the music. When this entertainment was concluded, he resumed work and I betook myself to the highway. Just down the road was a "traveller's" family sitting at the foot of a great cottonwood tree eating dinner, and close by was their canvas-covered wagon. Two mules and a horse were hitched to the

wheels and they were munching a feed of corn, or nibbling the grass. I stopped to have a talk with this nomad household, and the man said: "I been in Oklahoma for six years where I had a quarter section of government land. We're goin' back now to where I used to live in Missouri."

"Travelling like this ain't very pleasant," remarked the woman. "It's too dirty for me."

"Yes, and the children get uneasy and go to fighting," the man added. "Some days are pretty hard on all of us. We can get up and start of a morning, and if the roads are good go forty mile easy. But yesterday the roads was bad, and it was hot, so my team was tireder after thirty mile than they'd been any day before. There are regions where travellers can't always get water, but we don't have any trouble thataway around here. Sometimes when we are ready to stop toward evening we'll run onto a man who ain't got no hay, and we'll have to drive a little longer'n we really like to in order to buy feed. We stop most anywhere that night finds us, right side of the road, and tie the mules and horse to the wheels. They do jam around a good deal, but we've got used to that. We sleep in the wagon. The boys have a place under the seat, and the rest of us settle down in the back part."

The farmers of the region did not have much liking for the travellers. "They are just that class of people who want to live without work," one man informed me.



A pause in the day's work

“Of course, some of ’em are all right; but a good many just start out in the fall and live on the country. They pick lots of corn along the roadsides to feed their horses, and never buy nothin’ if they can help it. Everything is convenient for ’em, and they’ll take potatoes and cabbages and fruit and once in a while pick up a chicken. This is a main travelled road, and I’ve seen the same wagon go west one week and east the next, and you find some of ’em goin’ the year around. There’ll be a man and wife and three or four little children, and they’ll send the young ones in to the houses beggin’. The children’ll tell you their father’s sick and the like o’ that, and yet the father may be a big stout man with nothin’ the matter of him but laziness. Oh, I know that to be a fact. There was once some of those children got a basket of potatoes and things of my wife, tellin’ her their father wa’n’t able to work; but I’d seen the family by the roadside, and he would weigh two hundred pounds and was takin’ care of the horses. He was abler to work than I am. I made up my mind that the next time such a story was told I’d go out to the wagon and see if the old man really was sick. I’ve never knowed of any of ’em stoppin’ to work. They could get a job if they wanted it. No one need holler for work in this country. Offer it to ’em, even at the top price, and them fellers’ll claim they ain’t able to work. They mostly disappear in the winter, and I reckon they go south like the ducks and geese to where it’s warm.

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“Do you see all these loads of hay goin’ to town on this road? It’s prairie hay. There’s lots of that wild hay cut—oh, land, yes! Probably twenty or thirty tons pass here every day. We raise good hay, both the wild and what is grown on the cultivated fields; but we ought not to store so much of it in stacks. Barn hay always brings a better price, and there’s more money lost in Kansas every year by having hay spoiled or hurt in the stacks than we would need to spend to build barns to shelter it. We’ve had good seasons ever since 1901, but that year the weather was so dry at harvest time she pretty near burnt us out—you bet she did! I was fighting fires in the wheat fields for seven days and five nights. The fires would start from the railroad engines. So, to prevent further trouble, the railroads hired teams to turn a furrow one hundred and fifty feet from the rails on each side, and burnt off all between the two furrows for a fire guard. They burnt off an awful sight of wheat that way, but they paid for it.”

Across the road a man was ploughing, and he had paused to give his panting mules a rest. “Where’s your boss?” my acquaintance called out. “I ain’t seen him around this morning. I thought he’d be out here to cuss the mules, anyway.”

“They need it,” responded the ploughman. “These mules are contrary, and you have to keep your eye on ’em all the time. We had a good pair last year, but the boss sold ’em. He’s the darndest man that way ever you

see. He'll swap or sell any creature he's got, right on the road, if he meets anyone that wants to dicker with him."

A crop of "cane" had been raised on the field the year before. "It's a kind of sorghum," the man explained, "and it makes awful nice feed. We raise it for our cattle, but it's so sweet I believe this 'ere would be all right for manufacturing sugar. The stalks grow eight or ten feet high—every bit of it. We saved a powerful lot of seed last fall and would have got more if it hadn't been for the English sparrows. They're the worst thing on earth for seed—them birds. There's lots of 'em around every farmhouse, and you've got to keep all the holes stopped up or they'll be building their nest into 'em. They drive away the other birds and are too blamed lazy to hunt for food, and they pay no attention to the bugs and worms. When you feed a mess to your farm animals they eat it up for you, and they'll light on your apple trees and pick a little small hole in nearly every apple." *

The field in which the ploughman was at work was fenced with a thorny osage hedge, which he had trimmed and adjusted during the winter so that it was "hog tight." "There ain't nothing can go through that now," he affirmed; "but a hedge is no good, by gosh! unless you take care of it. You need to trim it two or three times a year so as to keep it branching, and you've got to mow the weeds along the sides. That there little

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green stuff you see comin' up in bunches near the hedge is wild catnip. It is a good deal the same as tame catnip that grows in the gardens, only it'll get up as high as your head in summer, and unless you cut it the shade will kill out the lower branches on the hedge. Some farmers let the hedge alone until it's grown stalks big enough to cut for wood and for posts. We think hedge wood is equal to coal, and a hedge post will outlast one of stone. Hedges are at present the commonest kind of fencing here, but they are being gradually rooted out. They take up too much room, and they sprout up from the roots and keep crowding into the field all the time, if they're neglected."

The ploughman now resumed his work and I plodded on along the highway. About noon I stopped at a house and asked for the privilege of staying to dinner. It was not quite ready, but, as usual, I was welcome, "if I would be satisfied with what they had," and I sat down on the piazza where a lively small boy entertained me. He pointed toward a near-by tree and said: "Do you see the nest in that tree? There's eggs in it, I betcher. We got a pie-aner. That's my sister you hear playing it. She learned how to play it at the high skewl."

He sang snatches of the song she was playing, and then held up for my inspection the dry discarded shell of a big beetle which he had in his hand. "It's a sizzery bug," said he, poking it meditatively.



Starting his garden

Something snapped and he exclaimed: "Well, I'll be dog-goned if I didn't shot one of his bones out!"

Just then the boy's father happened along and remarked: "That's a dry weather fly. They make a kind of a funny noise buzzing with their wings. So the kids call 'em sizzery bugs. We see 'em around most all summer, but they don't do any harm that I've ever heard anybody say."

The housewife now called us in to dinner. It was a substantial and palatable meal, and one of the table delicacies was white clover honey from hives in the yard. "We had a swarm come out on Sunday," said the woman, "and I told my husband I guessed the weather was broke. Anyhow, it's been nice ever since, and before that it was cold and disagreeable."

After we finished eating I asked how much I owed, and when the woman answered rather doubtfully without naming an amount I handed her twenty-five cents; but she said fifteen cents was enough and wanted to give me the difference.

During my afternoon ramble I stopped at one of the humbler wayside homes to ask for a drink of water, and a tall young man in overalls said he would draw some fresh from the well in the yard. The well opening, which was even with the ground, was covered by a few loose boards, and the water was obtained by kneeling and lowering a tin pail into its cool depths. Several rods intervened between the well and the house—a

weatherbeaten little structure that had never been painted. The barn was scarcely more than a shed, but was supplemented by a cattleyard with a gigantic fence of zigzag rails. Black pigs of various sizes wandered about, free to go where they pleased, and the cows were grazing in the highway. The young man and I sat down for a chat on the borders of a mountainous pile of wood that was near the back door sawed and split ready for burning. He said "Dad" was a "fifty-sixer," by which he meant that his father had arrived in Kansas not later than 1856, when the struggle between the supporters of slavery and abolition ended in the election of a free-state legislature. "If you want to know anything about those times he's the person to tell you," my companion explained. "Some of 'em—their memory fails 'em; but that ain't so with Dad. He'll give you straight goods right from the word go."

The old man was baiting cows and, with the help of three dogs, seeing that they did not stray too far. He presently came hobbling along on his cane and sat down with us. In age and appearance he was a genuine patriarch, one of the earliest pioneers. "When I first got here," said he, "people was comin' in lookin' at the country, but it was quite a number of years before they began to take up land. I worked on the old California Trail freighting. Now and then I'd see a buffalo skull on the prairie, but the buffaloes themselves were gone and the hunting was nothin' extra. There were

wild turkeys, and a sprinkling of deer, and plenty of coyotes; and you can tell the people back East that we have coyotes here now that do lots of damage. I hear 'em howlin' every few nights.

“Plenty of trees grew along the river, but as soon as you got out of the bottoms there wasn't a stick anywhere. It was bare as could be—all prairie, and the most desolate lookin' country in the world. After the frosts came in the fall the grass was as dry as a powder house and the Injuns set fire to burn it off and run the game into the timber. Me 'n' three other fellers come pretty near gettin' caught in a prairie fire once. We seen it far off, but we didn't think of any danger. By and by we was goin' down hill and the big freight wagons made so much noise we didn't notice anything unusual until we heard a roarin' and looked back and saw the fire almost on us. Oh, my goodness! it was awful! I hollered that we was goin' to be burnt up, and jumped off to see if I could start a fire on the other side of the road. The first match caught and the fire spread from that on ahead of us as fast as a horse could run. We drove onto the burnt ground just in time to save ourselves from the fire behind.

“I took a claim over in the timber about two miles from here in 1854 and built me a log cabin with a stone chimney and a big fireplace. There wa'n't another house to the north for fifty miles. Not long afterward the settlers begun to come in rapid. Lawrence was the



A dooryard well

country. They claimed to be on the Union side, and they'd raid down into Missouri and pretend that what they stole was got from the rebs. But it didn't make any difference who they robbed. If a man had property he was their meat. There were cutthroats on both sides in that war. By and by thirteen hundred guerrillas come into Lawrence one August morning about sunrise. A company of colored troops was bein' recruited here, and the raiders begun shootin' them, and they killed citizens, too—one hundred and fifty persons in all. They broke open the safes in the banks and stores and got a lot of money, and they burned about three-fourths of the town buildings.

“One of the persons they particularly wanted to shoot was the chaplain of Lane's regiment—a man named Fisher. He was a pretty thrifty fellow. When he was movin' around with the troops over in Missouri he'd gather up mules, which he'd send here and later sell to the government. Once when they was in a rebel town Colonel Lane come across him lookin' up at the steeple on a church and asked him what was the matter.

“‘I was just thinkin' how nice that spire would look on my new church back in Kansas,’ he says.

“‘Take it right along, Brother Fisher; take it right along,’ says the colonel.

“Well, Fisher was in his house there at Lawrence, and the raiders knew it, but they couldn't seem to find him. His wife had hid him away somewhere in the

cellar. They give up searchin' and said they was goin' to burn the house, and Mrs. Fisher asked if she could get out some of the furniture first. They said she could, and she managed to put him in some carpeting and rolled him out of reach of the fire and piled chairs and things on top so't the raiders never had any idea of the trick she'd played 'em.

"I lived over by the crick then, and I'd be livin' there now, only the man who owned this farm put at me for a trade—half of my place for his eighty here. His'n didn't suit him because it hadn't no wood on it. This is a pretty good farm except that we sometimes run skurce of water. But there's wells within a mile that never fail, and we don't have the dry weather we used to have, so we hain't hauled any water for six or seven years."

While we talked, the cattle had strayed, and the old man now turned to his son and said: "Them cattle won't stay nowhar. Just go down the road and head 'em off and run 'em in. They've e't enough."

This brought my visit to an end, and I wended my way toward the town. It was a day of unusual warmth for the season, and one of my local acquaintances had remarked that, "When the weather gets so sultry it generally winds up with a clap." Sure enough, that night the wind roared threateningly about the hotel and the rain fell in torrents, while the artillery of the heavens

flashed and crashed in wild menace. But in the morning the sun smiled down on the drenched earth, and Kansas rejoiced, for the rain had made abundant crops increasingly certain and bestowed still more wealth on the wide realm of this great state's thrifty husbandmen.

NOTE.—Kansas has comparatively little scenic attraction, except the pastoral charm always associated with rich-soiled, well-cultivated farmlands. This agricultural charm is nearly universal; but the eastern portion is perhaps best worth seeing, for there one finds a repose that only comes with age, and a humanized touch in the landscape which is conferred by long association with mankind delving in the soil and making permanent homes. Then, too, this eastern section has seen a stirring past, and it is a pleasure to recall the wild incidents of the anti-slavery struggle, and of the Civil War in the vicinity where those events occurred.

III

IN OKLAHOMA

ON the train that carried me into Oklahoma I made the acquaintance of a citizen of the state who proceeded to enlighten me as to the nature of the country to which I was journeying. The climate was superlatively healthy, the winters were not very cold nor the summers very hot, the crops were always bountiful, everybody with an atom of thrift was prosperous, and in character and intelligence the people were the pick of the world.

“Why,” said I, “Oklahoma is going to be one of the finest states in the Union, isn’t it?”

“No,” he responded, “it isn’t going to be—it is now;” and he went on to tell how progressive the state was, and praised the excellence of their laws, and declared that they enjoyed all the comforts that could be had anywhere. He even affirmed that the wind was partial to Oklahoma, and was seldom otherwise than gentle. In his enthusiasm I suppose he exaggerated somewhat. At any rate I cannot endorse his statement as to the wind, for during a considerable portion of my stay it was blowing like the mischief, and filling the air with a gritty dust. One entire day it held me an indoor prisoner



Talking business

at Kingfisher, in the central part of the state. The gale kept up a constant rattling and banging, even rocking the three-story brick hotel I was in, and its fiercer gusts seemed to threaten to sweep things away altogether.

However, there were other less boisterous days when I contrived to do a good deal of rambling. Vegetation was more than a month in advance of that in the northern states. Roses were blooming in the gardens, and the locust trees, which abounded both in the town and about the farmhouses, perfumed the air with their pendent clusters of blossoms. The wheat was knee-high and billowy in the breeze, the corn was up, and the cotton had been planted.

The newness of the country was not so apparent as I expected. There are many Oklahoma towns still raw and forlorn, but Kingfisher could boast of frequent substantial business blocks among the other slighter structures, and its dwellings had lawns and shrubbery and a goodly showing of fair-sized shade-trees. Roundabout the town the land rose and fell in long sweeps with an occasional more sudden dip into a gully. The roads were monotonously straight, and the turns were always abrupt right-angles at the corners of the sections. Where the roads crossed a hollow the mud had washed in from the fields, and where they were on rising ground the rains had worn deep ruts. The space between the barbed wire fences that divided the fields from the highway was still the original prairie, and when a track be-

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came very bad the teams simply started another to the right or the left. In the pastures were numerous herds of grazing cattle, and nearly every farmer had a drove of hogs browsing in an alfalfa field.

One doubtful morning I accosted an old negro who was fishing on the wooded banks of a muddy creek and asked him if it was going to rain.

“You’ll have to ask God,” was the reply. “He knows. I don’t.”

That a fisherman should have no opinion as to the weather seemed to me strange, but I soon found out that this ancient darkey fished every day from morn till night; and whether the skies smiled or frowned made no difference to him. What he caught was the principal part of his food, and often he secured enough so that he could sell a few pounds.

Shortly after I left him a shower made me seek shelter, and I stopped at a snug little farmhouse with quite a charming front porch covered all across, except the entrance, by a flowering vine. The tall gray farmer was presently telling me his experiences. “This is a good country,” said he, “when there’s a sufficient rainfall in the crop-growing season. But we been knocked out two or three times by havin’ it too dry. Another time we had the green bug. Eighty acres of wheat and oats that I’d put in never yielded a grain of anything. I first noticed trouble in March. The wheat was turning yellow, and I looked and see it was covered with little

green bugs. They jis' sucked the life out of it and left it lookin' as if there'd been a drouth.

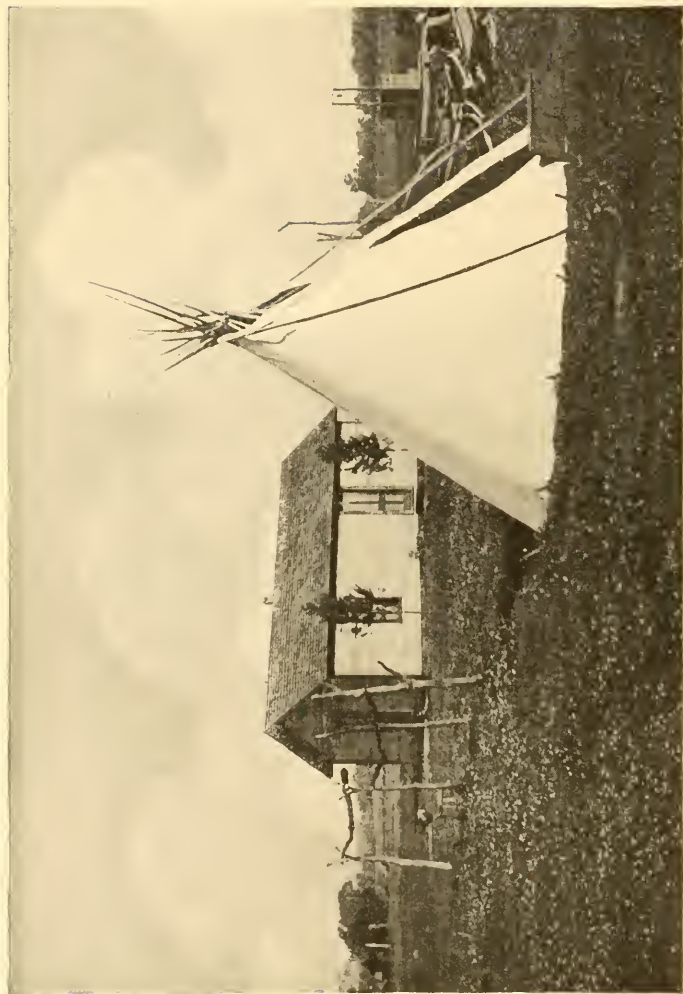
"I'm one of the first settlers in this region. The country here was opened up on April 22d, 1889. About two miles west of Kingfisher was the boundary, and it was marked with posts and guarded by mounted soldiers. Nobody was supposed to cross the line until the appointed time, but some did. We called them "sooners," and their claims were no good if their early start could beproved on 'em. Quite a number of 'em had to go to the pen for swearing falsely. People come from allover to get a chance at this new land—and quite a few women come as well as men. They were arrivin' for a week beforehand and camped close by the line in tents or lived in their covered wagons, and they brought their ploughs and everything all ready to go to work.

"Twelve o'clock was the hour that the race was to begin. We was there along the line ready, dozens deep, and everybody was goodnatured and jokin' and singin'. The crowd was plumb thick where I was because it was opposite a town site. Up and down as far as we could see was the soldiers settin' on their horses at regular intervals, and when the time come they gave the signal by firin' their revolvers. Then we all rushed forward as tight as we could go. You could take your pick and have any one hundred and sixty acres you wanted if you got it first. I was on foot and only run a little way, but most were on horseback or muleback.

When I stopped I stood and watched the others going on toward the town site under the whip jis' like a horse race. Oh, my stars! how they run! Most generally each man took a spade with him, and as soon as he decided he'd reached as good a piece of land as he was likely to get he'd jump right off and go to diggin' to throw up a little mound. On top of that he'd stick up a shingle with his name on it. Then he'd go back to camp, hitch up his team, and take it to his claim and begin ploughing. But perhaps by the time he got there he'd find someone else ploughing on that land. There was a fuss then, sure. Often two or three would get on the same claim and tear down each other's signs, and they might keep on till they got into a shooting scrape.

“The next day the land office opened, and we began to file our claims. When I got there considerable of a line had already formed and I had to take my place at the end and wait my turn. I stood there from morning till night, and it was terribly windy, dusty and hot. Fellers come around carryin' grub to us, and we'd buy and eat it without leavin' the line. A long file of us was still waiting when the land office closed for the day, and some, in order not to lose their places, camped right where they were.

“Those that did the best in the rush were the ones that got the town lots. They made a good thing. But I knew one old fellow who said he'd picked out the best site in town and intended to start a hotel, and when they



An Indian house and the tepee in the yard

surveyed he found his claim was right in the middle of a street so he had to move. There were lots of disputes for the courts to settle between parties on the same claim.

“I had trouble about my claim with a widow who seemed to think she was on it first. She was a very nice old woman, and people joked considerable because I was a widower, and they said our dispute could be fixed up all right. But I got out.

“As a whole, the newcomers were a good respectable class of people, and yet there were some pretty tolerable rough ones. A horse thief took this claim that I’m on now; but in a little while he sold out, stole what he could, and left. There ain’t only a few of the old settlers that have stayed in the region. Most of ’em have gone, and many places have changed hands three or four times.

“Grub at first was most awful scarce, and we was too late the first year to raise much except turnips and watermelons and kaffir corn. But those turnips was the biggest I ever did see. We fed ’em to our chickens, fatted our hogs with ’em, and made slaw to eat ourselves. The railroad hadn’t been built, and all our supplies were freighted in on wagons. Times got so hard lots of men was discouraged. If a feller come along and offered one hundred, one hundred and fifty, or two hundred for a claim, the owner would very likely sell

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and go back to his wife's people. But after we got our first crop we began to live and get ahead.

"I don't like the winter here. It's too chilly and rainy. Then in the summer the weather is apt to get so terribly hot we can hardly stand it. I shall always remember the second of May, 1892. I saw three cyclones that day, and the last one I saw a little *too* plain. I'd been to town for a load of lumber, and the air was so red hot, I said to myself: 'A storm'll come up after this!' Oh, it was jis' so hot it almost burned me. Our cows was in a corral down by the stream, and toward night my hired man said it was time to go and milk 'em.

"'I don't like the looks of the clouds,' I said, 'and I ain't goin' away from the house, but if you want to do the milkin' go ahead.'

"So he went along, and I stood right in the yard watchin' the clouds. Pretty soon I see 'em comin' together from all directions about a mile south of us, and I run to the house and told the folks we was goin' to have a cyclone and they'd better get out. The safest place I knowed of was a stable I'd dug about four feet down into the ground. It was roofed over with sticks and there was hay thrown on to shed the rain. We got into a corner of that, and I said to my oldest son who was man-grown: 'We'll stand over the balance of 'em to kind o' protect 'em.'

"Then the storm passed above us with a roarin' noise like a train, and the only harm it did to the stable was

to flop the hay from the north end onto the south end. There wa'n't no time to think, it was all over so much quicker than anything else that happens. I run out and looked around, and there was no house nor anything else hardly left. The hottest kind of air had come from that cyclone, and I was nearly suffocated with it. In the distance I could see the storm goin' off, and it was plumb black. Three miles from here it struck a house and killed a boy; and not far beyond there it broke loose from the ground. A feller who happened to be near by, and who had run into a patch of willows to save himself, said it went up with a whistle jis' like a steam engine.

“I told you how my hired man started to go to milk the cows. About the time he got to the pasture the wind come and knocked down a big sorrel horse that was close beside him; but the horse wa'n't hurt and it got up and run off across the field. The man saved himself by ketchin' hold of a little ellow tree, and he held on until the worst was over. Then he hurried to see whether we'd escaped. The house was tore all to pieces and nothin' was to be found of it but splinters. I had a right new wagon in the yard that I hadn't used more'n six months, and one of the tricks of the cyclone was to take that wagon a mile up on the prairie, where it was dropped with the iron parts all twisted up and the wooden parts all broke to bits. At the corner of my house stood a barrel of salt with a harness layin' on it.

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Well, sir, the cyclone left the harness there in a pile on the ground, but took the barrel of salt and broke it up and scattered it all around. Near the barrel I had a hen and twenty chickens in a coop, but only one chicken escaped. Such a storm will sometimes snatch the feathers all off of a hen. I've got a cyclone cellar now, and we don't take any chances. When we see a storm comin' up toward night on a hot day we jis' go in there for a while."

I ate dinner at the old settler's and had an excellent repast that was not at all in need of the housewife's apologies for its shortcomings, except in the matter of milk and butter. It seemed that wild onions abounded in the pastures at this season and were much to the liking of the cows. As a result the milk was strongly flavored, and the butter was neither good butter nor good onions.

"We've sometimes thought we'd like to sell out;" remarked the woman, "but when we wanted to sell we couldn't, and when we could sell we wouldn't. I was tellin' my daughter yesterday, says I: 'I'm ready to move any time your paw is.' Don't you know, people get awful tired of living at one place; but law! you lose more in travellin' around than you gain."

"The Germans are buying up a good many of the farms hereabouts," said the man, "and it don't take 'em long to pay for a place."



Evening by the creekside

“Well, and that’s no wonder,” commented the woman. “They all work like dogs to get ahead—the whole family, even the little tots no more than knee-high to a duck. The children will drive the cattle three or four miles, may be, to pasture, and the girls’ll haul to town and work in the fields. Them girls have a whole lot better health, too, than American girls, because they’re so much out in the air; and the women—see how tough and hardy they are! I’ve heard tell that Dutchmen wa’n’t good to their wives, but that’s a mistake. Their women would rather do field work than not, and are often as much the boss of the farm as the men. The American people are gettin’ lazier and lazier, and the women never think of working outdoors. German girls will do all that a young man of their age’ll do except the heavy muscular work. You’ll find ’em out every day driving the ploughs and harrows and binders, while American girls jis’ stick around the house.”

“It ain’t hard, running our machines,” said the man. “Take ploughing—you can sit on the seat and ride, and when you get tired of that you can walk along behind. Our fields are usually pretty level and they’re often half a mile across, and you drive right along with no change only to turn at the corners. After you’ve adjusted your plough at the start to have it go as deep as you want it should, you don’t have to touch it all day. A girl of thirteen, who can drive, is jis’ as good at ploughing as a

man. Why, I had a nigger once workin' for me, and he used to hunt rabbits while his team ploughed."

"I was raised up to cook and take care of the house for a family of five," said the woman, "and I thought I was a terrible worker; but my father told me I didn't know nothin' about work, and I reckon he was right. It would be a good thing if farmers' wives were more expert out of doors, for then if a woman was ever left a widow it wouldn't paralyze her."

"Late years it's been almost impossible to git hands," the man observed. "There used to be fellers come along and beg for work, but they don't any more. We hired niggers considerable until they got too triflin' and ornery. The only way to git a nigger on the farm now is to rent him a few acres for a share in the crop, and furnish him everything to work with. A number of 'em owns land here. They went and tuck up claims in some sandy country that the whites didn't think was worth anything, and they raise good cotton there. A few years ago one of these colored men got up a colony to go to Africa. They sold out their claims for five or six hundred dollars apiece and started. A good many become discouraged and turned back at New York, but others went on clear to Africa. They didn't like it there, though. The climate didn't suit 'em, and some died, and all the rest come back that was able to do so."

"The darkeys are jis' no account on earth," declared the woman. "Let 'em live among you and have their

own way, and they would lead you a merry gait. They sure are overbearing. I drove into one of their yards in town by mistake and across a corner of a garden, and a woman come out and give me fits for goin' on her land. Apologies didn't make any difference. She kept right on a-scoldin'. It made me feel awful cheap. In some towns they won't allow any darkey after sunset. The darkeys, too, have several towns of their own where they make the same laws about the whites."

The Indians are another race much in evidence in the region. Industrially they do not count at all, but they come and go on the trains and loiter in purposeless meditation for hours at a time on the town streets. It was quite evident that they did not have to work to live, and that they had been wholly unable to get into harmony with the white man's civilization. One of the town merchants who had dealt with them a good deal enlightened me as to their habits.

"They have a monthly allowance of eight or ten dollars apiece from the government," said he, "and when their lands were set off a few years ago every darn one of 'em, little and big, got a quarter section. That land they lease, and it brings 'em a nice little income. The whites raise wheat on it; but if an Indian would let a white man build his home on the land, the white man could agree to hand over a third of the crop, and when the time come give him a fifth, and both parties be better off than at present.

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“If an Indian gets any money, he ain’t happy till he spends it. Maybe he’ll buy a two hundred and fifty dollar carriage, and he’ll ride around in it for a while and leave it out in the rain and the broiling hot sun till the paint comes off. Then he’ll drive to town and sell it for fifty dollars or possibly thirty-five. Perhaps instead of a carriage he’ll buy a team and pay seventy-five dollars on it and give a mortgage for the rest. By and by he gets hard up and raises a little money by mortgaging the team to someone else. In the end the first man duns for the balance that’s due him, and the Indian surrenders the team and loses what he’d paid. At one time the government furnished the Indians with brand-new, spankin’-nice ploughs. But they just let ’em lie around. Such ploughs would cost twenty-five dollars apiece, and yet if a white man come along and offered three dollars for one the Indian would sell. He didn’t like the plough anyway.

“I know an Indian out here named Little Snake, who owns fifteen quarters of land and has built a three-room house. One day he bought a wagon-load of furniture in town. I saw him driving past with it on his way home, and I made the remark to my wife, ‘What in thunder do you s’pose Little Snake wants of that bunch of furniture?’

“Well, he’d bought a lot of bug juice here, too, and he was drunk before he left the town, and by the time he reached home he was good and drunk. Amongst

the rest of his new furniture was a nice dresser, and when he was unloading that dresser the next morning he saw himself in the mirror, and he thought the glass was libelling him. He's got a nose five times as big as mine, and it's all pitted with the smallpox—so he's no beauty at any time, and he looked rather worse than usual on account of his drunk. He wouldn't stand for what he saw in the mirror, and he took a hammer and smashed the glass all to pieces.

“Another Indian bought a hearse at a cost of several hundred dollars. He'd never before seen anything in the line of a riding carriage that was quite so grand, and he used to take great pride in driving around the country with it. Oh, these Indians are the most careless, do-less people on earth. The tribes used to be fightin' each other all the time, and now that they ain't allowed to fight they're at a loss how to spend their time. Some of the young fellows are quite civilized and smart; but the old bucks are wild—just like a buffalo—you can't teach 'em anything. There's only one Indian I know of in the whole compoodle of 'em who'll mow his own grass. But they will occasionally band together and work in the harvest, and they'll pick cotton. Then, too, the women do considerable of this bead work that's sold in the stores.

“They don't trust us. They think every white man is beating them. ‘White man lie,’ they say. I don't trust the Indians any more than they trust us. They've

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always stuck me on everything I've sold 'em unless I've got my pay at the time. They travel about a good deal on the trains or on horseback. You don't see 'em goin' afoot. They're too lazy. They won't even exert themselves to fish or hunt—though if an eagle shows up they'll follow that till doomsday to get it. They use the feathers to make a war bonnet, which they keep as a choice piece of finery. But sooner or later they get hard up and bring it to town and sell it for from fifteen to twenty-five dollars. If you start in to hunt on their land they'll very soon see you and come and look and look, standing first on one foot and then on the other. Finally they'll speak and say, 'No hunt, no hunt.'

“Well,' you say, 'I just want to shoot a few rabbits and quail. I won't get 'em all.'

“But they repeat: 'No hunt, no hunt!'

“Then you put your hand in your pocket and pay 'em fifty cents, and you can hunt all you want to, and Mr. Indian won't show himself again that day.

“They all like firewater. It's against the law to sell it to 'em; but they'll give some low down nigger or other cuss a dollar and tell him to go and get them a pint. So he'll buy a pint for fifty cents and keep the change, and'll hide the bottle in a place agreed on where the Indians can find it. I've known these fool Indians to buy patent medicines and flavoring essences to drink for the alcohol that's in 'em. After a fellow's got medi-



On the way to town

cine enough inside to feel happy he perhaps gets on his horse and gallops it up and down the street. He ain't content with just plain riding, and he makes the horse r'ar up and go along on its haunches. As soon as the horse stops the Indian tumbles off. In some cases drink makes the drinkers ugly, and two or three of 'em'll go to fighting and pretty near chop each other all up; or they'll want to go on a stampede and scalp the first white man they meet."

The nearest of the various Indian camps in the vicinity was Chief Bullbear's, about three miles from the town and nearly a mile from the highway. One morning I went to have a look at it. In order to get to the scattered group of houses that comprised the homes of the half dozen families who accepted Bullbear as their chief I had to crawl through several barbed wire fences. These inclosed the big pastures and cultivated fields, most of which had been leased to the whites. The fences were not at all romantic, nor were the Indian homes much more so. The banks of the creek were wooded, but the houses were on the level prairie, and their bareness was unrelieved by trees, vines or gardens. Through an open door I observed one family at breakfast. At the far side of the room was a cook-stove with shiny nickel decorations; but there were no chairs or tables, and the dishes and food were distributed all over the floor. Men, women, and children were squatted about amid the medley and were apparently going to spend most of the day at their feast.

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Bullbear's house was painted sky blue with red trimmings. In one corner of the yard was a pump that looked as if it would not work, in which respect it was like its owner. Four or five half-wild dogs were loitering around, and they growled at me suspiciously.

Bullbear sat on the edge of the little piazza, a grim and wrinkled patriarch. To his right and left, perched along in a row, were a number of squaws and children. One of the women, Hattie Stumphorn by name, had been to school in her youth, and could talk very good English; but except for her first name and her linguistic ability I could not see that she was much different from the rest of the Indians. I had hoped to find them living in tepees. There was, however, only one tepee in the camp. This was in a yard and served the family for a warm weather residence. Near the tepee I was interested to observe a lawn mower. It was in the midst of a grass patch, and I inferred that the owner had been disappointed in it and had stopped right there discouraged. Probably he was surprised to find it was more work than fun to run the contrivance.

In a pasture not far away was a prairie dog village which I found decidedly more lively than the Indian camp. Around each burrow was a conical heap of dirt with the hole in the middle, and these mounds, a rod or two apart, scattered away as far as I could see. On the mounds that were at a safe distance the little dogs sat upright watching me; while on the mounds some-

what nearer were other dogs, likewise watchful, but standing on all fours ready to dodge down into the holes. Each dog kept up an incessant racket of short, squeaky barks; and at every yelp he gave a jerk to his tiny tail. Numerous small gray owls were sitting on the mounds with the dogs, or flitting about. Many rattlesnakes also dwell in the dog towns and are to be found at home in the burrows with the dogs and owls. These various creatures constitute a friendly and happy family, except that the snakes have an unfortunate habit of eating the young dogs.

Other wild life was not lacking in the Indian vicinity. Sometimes a long-legged Jack rabbit would streak away with the swiftness of the wind for a short distance, then pause a moment with alert, sensitive ears to study my intentions; sometimes a half dozen quail sprang into sudden flight from beside my path; and once a crane, known as a "shikepoke," flew up from a wet hollow with dangling legs and broad wings and disappeared over the trees that bordered the creek.

When I returned to the highway the chief from the next camp beyond Bullbear's came along in a shabby old buggy, driving a scrawny pair of ponies. He at once offered me a ride, and I went to town in his company.

On my last evening in Kingfisher I came across a bit of news in a local paper that ran as follows:

"While our town has long borne the name of being the home of some of the most distinguished and politi-

cal men of Oklahoma she has another honor—one which very few of the largest cities can boast. This new honor is brought upon us by a woman, Mrs. I. S. Blank, the only successful lady novelist in the State of Oklahoma. Mrs. Blank's great gift has been known to only a few very intimate friends until a short time ago when her first publication was accepted by a Boston publisher. The novelist receives \$35,000 for the copyright, and five hundred volumes as a gift from the publishing company. The novel will contain a beautiful lithograph of the lady composer. Mrs. Blank is in the prime of life, highly cultured and educated. During her early residence here she was a leader in social circles, but growing weary of the general routine of functions she withdrew from society and of late years has devoted her time to the home life, and here in the privacy of her own home she has put her noble thoughts in volume, to be read and enjoyed by generations to come."

When I perused the above and heard from the townspeople that the lady herself had made the statements printed about her book I could not doubt but that the town indeed had a really remarkable romancer.

NOTE.—I think the attraction of Oklahoma for the stranger consists largely in its newness, and in observing what progress has been made in the short period that has elapsed since it became a white man's land. Wherever you go, the wonder is to find so much accomplished and such numbers of people and large towns where were only prairie

and Indians a few years ago. Visit Guthrie and Oklahoma City for examples of what the state's larger communities are, and go out and see something of the vastness of the farming country. The Indians, too, are worthy of attention, though amid the tides of civilization flowing around them and the busy agricultural thrift of the whites, they seem incongruous and at a loss to make the transition from the savage freedom of their fathers to the workaday necessities of the present.

IV

A TEXAS BUBBLE

FOR hundreds of miles, as the train sped along toward the Gulf, I had been in typical Southern country. That is, there were long reaches of oak and pine forest, and little sawmill villages, and negro cabins with stick and clay chimneys at one end, and many broad acres of corn and cotton. My destination was Beaumont, and during the final hour or two I observed that the streams and pools beside the tracks had an oily scum on them. A further evidence that I was coming into the famous oil region was the odor of the smoke from the steam engine, for oil has long been the standard fuel of the railroads in this district.

Beaumont became a bonanza oil town in 1901, and the story of its rise to fame is decidedly picturesque. This story has often been told, but I got a fresh version, with many touches of originality, from a local citizen who participated more or less in the events which he chronicled, and I repeat his words.

“The discoverer of the great underground supply of oil was a young one-armed fellow named Higgins who worked logging on the river. I’ll tell you how he hap-

pened to have only one arm. Way off on the edge of the town, where it was just wilderness in those days, was a nigger church; and one night, when the niggers was havin' a meetin', Higgins and a few other lads went out there to have some fun. They commenced rocking the church—throwing stones up on the roof—and a policeman come along and tried to arrest 'em. Higgins drew a revolver. The policeman did the same and put a bullet in Higgins' right arm. That made the lad drop his revolver, but he picked it up in his left hand and shot the policeman dead; and the next morning he was before the court and exonerated. His arm was taken off, and after he got well he went back to the river. He couldn't go jumping around on the logs the way he had before, and the sawmill give him a job at the boom, where it was his business to push the logs with a spikepole so the grip would catch 'em and draw 'em from the water up to the saws. All he got was a dollar and a half a day, and he began to figure on how he could make more money.

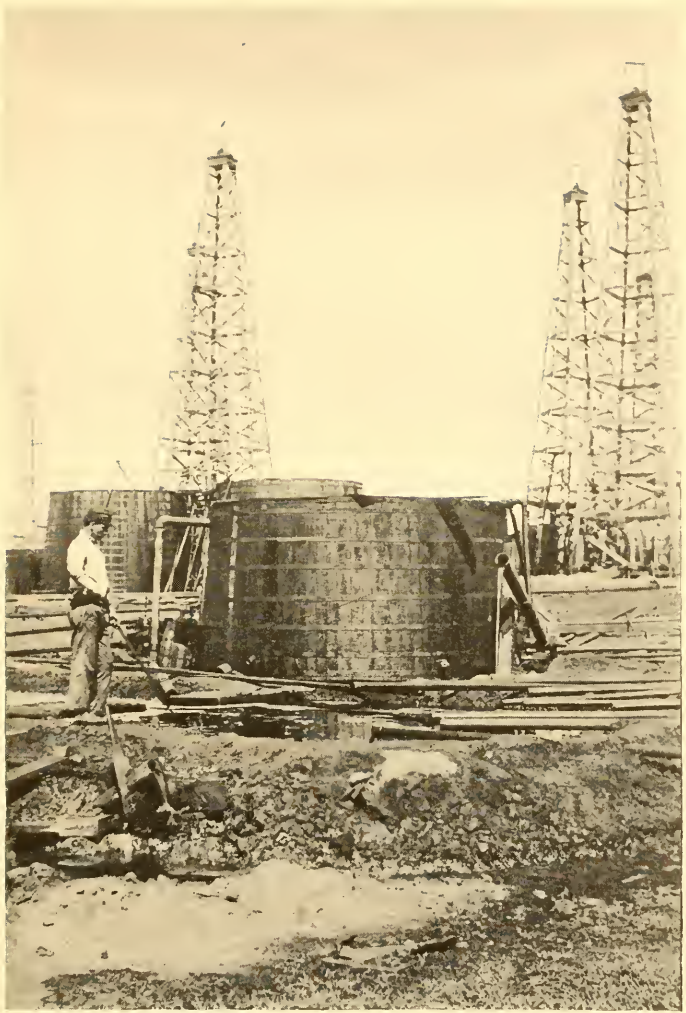
“About four miles out of town, at a place we call Spindletop, was kind of a greasy mudhole where gas bubbled up, and Higgins got the idea that oil could be found there. So from time to time he'd interest some person to furnish money to do a little boring. Pretty soon, however, his financier would get discouraged and quit; but Higgins was a fighting dog, and he never did give it up himself. As often as he could save up a hun-

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dred dollars he'd go to Spindletop and work his derrick. Nobody paid much attention to him. The land wasn't good for a thing in the world so far as crops were concerned. You couldn't even raise a disturbance on it.

“Finally Higgins got hold of a Pennsylvania oil man named Lucas who knew just how to do the drilling, only he didn't have much money and presently went broke. He was about to quit discouraged, but his wife prevailed on him to bore one day more, and that day, about noon, they struck a gusher which blowed their apparatus and everything all to Guinea. Lucas didn't lack for money after that, and he blossomed out in tailor-made clothes and a plug hat. The Beaumont people had been cussin' and abusin' him when he couldn't pay his debts, but now he was a great man to them. They'd watch him on the streets and point him out to strangers. 'I see him,' they'd say. 'That is Captain Lucas just going past.'

“Beaumont was at that time the dangdest old ramshackle wooden sawmill town you ever saw. There wa'n't much here but mud and slabs; but in a little while the place was known all over the United States. Talk about California and Colorado!—the excitement over the gold finds there wa'n't in it with what we experienced here. You see that Lucas well was an unusual one. Seventy thousand barrels of oil flowed from it every twenty-four hours. People went crazy, and the land for miles around soared up in price out of sight.



Some of the tanks among the derricks

Not only those interested in oil flocked in, but crooks and thugs and light-fingered gentry from all over the earth. This was the capital of toughdom, and if you didn't let your money slip to the sharpers by gambling, they'd lay in wait for you and knock you in the head.

"We perhaps had ten thousand transients in the place when the excitement was at its height, and rents were something terrible. Tents were put up all over town, and beds set in 'em in rows like in a hospital. To sleep in one of those beds cost a dollar a night. When I first reached town none of the streets were paved, and the heavy teams constantly going and coming made 'em a deep rutted bog. Oh, my gracious alive! you never saw such a mess, and it seemed to rain mighty near ever' day, too.

"A good many experienced oil men at first thought the Lucas gusher was a freak, and they weren't game enough to take hold of the property. So others got ahead of them. Some of the investors made fortunes, but about ninety-nine per cent lost instead. Many a person come here rich and left with nothing—had to walk to get away, and perhaps went barefooted at that. They'd arrive with their hands full of money, and beg for the chance to buy some land, and often they was sold land that never existed. I know there was a tramp beating his way West on a freight train, and when he got to Beaumont he see a dickins of a commotion on the street—people running up and down—and he says, 'Here's where I'm goin' to get off.'

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“He hadn’t heard anything about the discovery of oil at Spindletop, and he wanted to find out what was the matter. After working a few days till he understood things, he got a drygoods box to stand on and went to selling land on a street corner. He didn’t have any to sell, and yet he cleaned up two hundred thousand dollars and got away with the money.

“Some of the speculators were honest in their intentions, but the oil-producing district is quite limited, and these fellows bought anywhere and everywhere. Then they’d organize a company and begin disposing of stock. Usually though, their wells wouldn’t strike oil in paying quantities, or were only dusters—that is, they had been bored down into dry sand.

“Those speculators who were dishonest often didn’t invest in land or boring at all, but simply started a company and sold stock to suckers. They’d perhaps pay big dividends for a short time to coax forth more money from their victims, and then pocket the cash.

“But if there was lots of crookedness and disappointment, some of those Spindletop wells were wonders and no mistake; and the oil men kept boring them in spite of the fact that there was no way of taking care of the oil—no tanks, no pipe line, no refinery, not even a road to town. They simply turned the oil loose for the edification of the curious public. Why, for two or three years the ditches here in town were running with that black oil, and every stream in the region flowed with a

coating an inch or more thick. It gave off quite a rank smell, and we had also a strong odor of gas escaping from the Spindletop wells. Besides that, the gas ate off the paint from the houses, and they looked shabby and neglected, even if they were painted two or three times a year. But we've no reason to complain now. The industry has been thoroughly organized and nothing is wasted. It is supposed that the Standard Oil Company controls the bulk of the business. Their policy is to let others do the wild-catting and then step in and reap the harvest.

“The boom certainly did wake up Beaumont; and, sir, you have no idea how this blame place is growing. It's the best town in old Texas. You'd be surprised how much wealth we've got here. Several of the Beaumont boys got to live on Easy Street through oil investments, and Higgins is at the head of the biggest oil company in the state. He has an income of sixteen hundred dollars a day. Then there's all those who've been made rich by the enormous increase in the value of land in and near the town. But it ain't just oil that's built up Beaumont. Lumber and rice are responsible, too; and I believe there's more capital invested in rice than in oil.”

When I journeyed out to see Spindletop it was with the expectation of finding a steep, rounded hill, but the name originated in a clump of tall trees that grew in the vicinity and made a cone-shaped mass of foliage that

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was a landmark for the old settlers on the adjacent prairie. The oil district is on slightly rising ground covering a circular patch scarcely a mile across. It is a leafless, angular forest of derricks—a dismal, blasted tract wholly devoid of beauty, natural or artificial. You hear the hissing of steam, the throbbing of engines, you see whirling wheels and the pumps moving with unceasing regularity, and there are grimy men at work singly and in groups. But the men are few and scattered for such a jungle of derricks. One engine does the pumping for half a dozen wells, and everything has been so simplified that a single man's guiding hand accomplishes what would seem to be work for a dozen.

The drill consists of a six-inch pipe, and this has to go down about a thousand feet to strike the oil strata. The best well in the tract produces five hundred barrels a day, but the average is less than fifty barrels, and pumping continues even if the yield is only seven or eight. A near-by pit, a few yards across, serves each group of wells and receives the oil and the water with which it is mixed. The latter sinks to the bottom and is allowed to flow away into a ditch, while the former runs to a second pit and is then pumped into a stout tank. Finally, after some further settling, the oil is piped to the rows of great storage tanks a mile or two away. A well is seldom productive over two years, and new borings are constantly being made. The wonderful gusher which first brought fame to the region went



Neighbor meets neighbor

dry long ago, and nothing is left of it but a hole on the edge of a marsh. The engines are either protected by rude sheds or stand in the open. They burn oil and have open fronts, and when you look in and see the fierce flames flashing up and dying down, and hear the roaring indraft of air, they seem like demoniacal monsters endowed with life.

Off at one side of the field were a few short streets of shanty homes where the help dwelt, and which did not in the least relieve the chaotic and uninviting aspect of the oil-well territory.

The work of the employees is of necessity dirty and disagreeable. "I've been baptized completely many times," said one of them. "When we used to strike gushers, up the oil would go and come right down on you. Worse still was the gas. It seems to occur in little pockets and will burst forth all of a sudden, so that if you don't look out you're a gone chicken. It only takes one or two whiffs of it to stop your clock, and the other fellers come to your rescue in a hurry. They pick you up by the nape of the neck, and give you a hit in the back and roll you around and throw water over you. It's surprisin' how quick the stuff acts. There was an old negro woman out here lookin' on when we struck gas once, and she said, 'I smell somethin' jus' like b'iled cabbage.' Then over she went. It was in the time of the gushers that we had most trouble with gas. Of course it was important to cap a well as soon

as possible to stop the oil from running to waste, and I've seen owners beggin' men to work and offering 'em two dollars an hour. The men who undertook the job would have a rope hitched to 'em, so that when they'd run in where the oil was spouting and was overcome by gas they could be dragged out. Finally they got to using diving suits."

A few years ago Beaumont had for a short time the reputation of being "miserable sickly;" but this was apparently due to incidental conditions that soon passed away, for the inhabitants claim the town has one of the best health records of any place in the United States. "Why," said one informant, "we had to kill a man to start a graveyard. Later, when the boom was on, a Northern man died here. There was talk of sending the body back to his friends; but finally it was decided to bury him here, and on the way to the graveyard he come to life. If he'd gone North he'd have stayed dead."

The town is on a slight plateau bordering the Naches River, and across the stream are wooded swamplands with a thick undergrowth of palmetto scrub. "That's a fine place for fishing in the bayous over there," remarked a man I met on the river bank; "but there's millions of mosquitoes, too, and at times we have the confounded things by the bushel right here in town. They'll kill young chickens—just prod 'em to death—and I've known 'em to kill cattle by pestering 'em so

they'd run into a bog and lay down and die. Weather that's quiet and hot suits 'em best; but a wind will put 'em out of business, and you won't see 'em nowhere. Whenever they harpoon me real bad I have the malaria next day, sure.

"I used to be an engineer on the railroad; and along the coast the mosquitoes in the grass that lopped over on the rails would get crushed and grease the track so the engine wheels would slip. Sometimes that brought the train to a standstill, and we'd have to take a broom and get out and sweep and scrape and throw on sand. Then we'd start up and run as hard as we could to get beyond the grassy spot.

"I see by the paper the cyclones are hitting the country to the north and east pretty hard. We don't have 'em here, but we do get an occasional West India hurricane. I was in the one we had in June, 1884. It made a tidal wave that killed everybody at Sabine Pass and wiped Indianola off the face of the earth. Indianola had been quite a shipping place, but nobody lived there afterward except an old negro native of the place, who happened to be away at the time of the disaster. When it was over he went back to where his master had lived and built him a shack of the wreckage, and there he stayed till he died.

"I remember the day of the storm very well. It opened blustering, and about the middle of the forenoon the wind blew a gale for forty-five minutes. I

was takin' a passenger train south and was within two miles of Sabine Lake when I saw a wave of water five or ten feet high sweeping along over the level prairie toward us and carrying wreckage and boats and everything with it. A schooner—a great big feller over a hundred feet long—was taken clear across the track right in front of us, and the water come up on the deck of the engine, by jingoes! But the crest of the wave passed on and we were glad to find that nobody on the train was hurt. Our tracks were under water for several hours and we da'sen't go ahead or back with the train because of washouts. Late in the day we waded to dry land, following the track for about six miles; and the weather was then quiet and nice as could be. The train stayed there two months before the track could be put in shape to move it."

My companion pointed to a man who had come along the path where we stood and was now several rods beyond us. "That feller's got a pistol in his pocket," said he. "I done had my eye on him ever since he went past, and when the wind blows his coat against his side you can see the pistol is there all right. The law don't allow carryin' pistols, but a Southern man believes that's one of his born rights. I come here from Maryland, and I've looked down a gun more than once when the hole seemed to be six feet in diameter; but I can say this for the Texas people—I've never knowed anybody to be killed down here but what pretty near de-

served his fate. Usually the man killed is a feller who's butted in and tried to bulldoze somebody. If you come here a stranger and behave yourself they'll just tear their shirts trying to do any favor for you that you may ask. They very seldom kill a man on the sly, but of course they go out and shoot each other to settle a dispute. The shooting is soon over, and is all right—the burial expense ain't much, and the relatives pay that. The county don't have to bear it. If they both don't get killed there's a case for the courts, and that puts money in circulation for lawyers' fees. Among the old-time Texans one shot apiece was enough. There wa'n't any such thing as missing, and I could tell you of dozens of instances of duels where both parties was killed.

“Some curious things happen here in connection with law and order. I recall one Texas judge in a thinly settled district who kept a saloon and held court in the same room. Once a dead man was found in the vicinity with forty dollars and a revolver in his pockets, and the judge fined him the forty dollars for carrying the gun.”

Within a range of about thirty miles are several other oil pockets scarcely less notable than that at Spindletop, and I decided to visit the one at Sour Lake. On the way thither I had a chance to see the rice country sweeping away in apparently limitless levels with its network of canals and ditches. As the train went farther we entered a region of alternating prairie and forest, and

in the opens were numerous herds of cattle. There was no fencing along the tracks, and once the engine gave a series of sharp toots, the brakes were applied, and the train slowed up with jarring suddenness. "We most hit a yearling that time," said a man who had put his head out of a window.

The stock take care of themselves the year through, and ordinarily fare worst during the dry summer months. In the winter, if the weather is mild, they find feed plentiful. Snow is a rarity, and yet in 1895 the region had a storm that buried the earth in white a foot and a half deep, and many of the herds were almost wiped out. The golden period of the Texan cattle business was somewhat earlier. Then, in vast portions of the state, there was nothing but great grazing ranches, and the grass grew as high as a man's waist. "When a cow lay down in it," a former cowboy explained to me, "she was entirely lost to sight except the tip of her horns. But that grass has all been killed out by the excessive browsing and trampling. The cattle men lived in little log cabins or cheap box houses that the wind would blow right through. You never saw a door locked, and when you was on a journey and stopped for a drink of water at a house where no one was at home, you went right in and helped yourself, and if you shut the door as you went out the owner was perfectly satisfied. You could take anything you needed and welcome, except a horse. Steal one of the rancher's horses and he'd



A bog family

hang you if he could get hold of you. It didn't matter so much if you stole a yearling. You see all the balance of 'em did that."

Sour Lake was originally a health resort of the Indians. The lake was simply a small pond, the water of which was impregnated with sulphur and other minerals, and in the near-by woods were various peculiar springs that came to be recognized among the savages as beneficial for certain diseases. Indeed, some of the local dwellers claim that, "all the Indians in Texas" used to go there in April every year and camp in the neighborhood for several weeks, drinking the water and wallowing in the greasy bogholes. Among those who resorted to the springs, there came, about 1825, a boy who was half Indian and half negro, and as he grew older he adopted the spot as his home and became known as Dr. Mudd. He used to relate an Indian legend to the following purport:

This part of Texas was formerly very dry and entirely devoid of streams or other bodies of water. At length the Indians prayed to the Great Spirit to change the country and supply it with brooks and rivers. So the Great Spirit told them to move up into middle Texas for a few weeks. This they did, and while they were there the ground in the region from which they had come shook and split open, and streams formed. The center of the disturbance was at Sour Lake where oc-

curred "a tremendous terrible blowout," and when they returned, after the earth had quieted down, they found the medicinal pond and springs.

Dr. Mudd acquired something of a reputation for his knowledge of the healing properties of the different springs and bogs, and more and more people came to be cured of rheumatism and skin and blood diseases. Persons afflicted with these ailments were often greatly helped, but the place "would sure knock you out," if you had a tendency to lung trouble. Presently someone erected a large, pillared hotel near the springs, and it became the annual habit with many planters to bring their families from the low, malarial rivers to Sour Lake and stay through the summer. Not all of them lived in the hotel. Some preferred to put up a house of their own or to camp in a tent. They were accustomed also to bring their sick negroes to spend a few weeks.

The negro doctor had driven a pipe down into the soil about twenty feet, and it slowly dripped a sulphur oil that he put up in vials and sold for a liniment. He called it "Sour Lake Tar." The doctor was a very religious old darkey who revered God and was afraid of the devil; and when the first gusher came in he said that the oil men were destroying God's health resort. God would punish them, he declared, the same as He did those who started to build the tower to heaven, and in order to escape the wrath to come Dr. Mudd departed.

The first actual drilling in the region was done in 1896 by some West Virginia men. After going down two hundred and fifty feet they got a flow of thick oil which they concluded would be very good for lubricating purposes. They shipped some to the sawmills around, but when the machines to which it was applied became warm the odor of the oil was extremely offensive, and the mill workmen would not use it. This discouraged the prospectors, and Sour Lake continued to be a quiet health resort until after the "boom was on big" over at Beaumont. Then several drillers came here, and pretty soon the oil was running out all over everything in tens of thousands of barrels a day. There was no settlement worth mentioning—just a hotel and a little church, a schoolhouse and a few scattered dwellings. Close to where the oil was struck lived an elderly Irishman named Pat Cannon. He was a peddler who drove a wagon around the country selling needles and thread and a few drygoods. Mostly he had to take chickens and eggs in exchange. Before oil was found the land in the vicinity was worth about twenty-five cents an acre, but now the price jumped. Cannon had an old tumble-down place with the weeds and brush growing all around. He entirely lacked knowledge of large business transactions, and very likely the oil men would have swindled him out of his property; but a relative who was more used to affairs said to him: "See here, you just get out of the way and let me handle this for you."

So after some bargaining Cannon sold part of his land for one hundred thousand dollars and leased more for an eighth of the oil that was produced. On the day of the sale he had just thirty-six cents in his house.

As soon as oil was struck, crowds of adventurers and speculators, workers and sightseers began to flock in, and, as one informant declared: "People just had to stand out all night. I golly! they couldn't get no place to sleep. Drinking water had to be brought from a distance and was worth more than the oil. Water sold for fifty cents a barrel and oil for ten. Pretty near all the people have done gone and left us now so there's only about two thousand inhabitants."

It was thought at the time of the boom that Sour Lake was going to be a big city, and all the surrounding region was laid off in streets. The present town is for the most part a scattered, dingy settlement of unpainted wooden shanties, and big forlorn structures that were formerly boarding-houses. Along either side of the dusty, littered chief street are shabby stores and saloons, usually one story high with a covered veranda in front. The floors of the verandas varied so much in elevation and were so broken it seemed rather adventurous walking on them. In the ditches at the edge of this crazy sidewalk were oily pools and mudholes. Dogs abounded, and so did razor-backed hogs and grazing horses and cattle, and they all went just where they pleased. If anyone objected to the liberties they took he fenced his



On the hotel piazza

premises against them. Those freaks of hogs sometimes sauntered along on the veranda walks and would even take a look in at the saloons as if they recognized some of their kin in the loafers there.

I stayed at a hotel in a grove of noble live oaks and sweetgums that were festooned with long tresses of gray moss. The hotel quite charmed me at first with its stout whitewashed fence inclosing the yard, and its broad upper and lower galleries on two sides of the house. It was typically Southern in its architecture and had an attractive air of repose and shadowed coolness; but it was a hastily-built structure set on wooden blocks and was flimsy and dilapidated. About dusk the cattle came drifting in from the prairie; and the grove outside of the hotel yard was their favorite stopping place for the night in company with the razor-backs and wandering ponies. There was a good deal of lowing and grunting and whinnying and stamping around before the creatures settled down. Moreover, the town dogs had a habit of giving an evening concert, and soon after midnight the roosters would begin to crow their lusty challenges and kept up an intermittent chorus until daybreak. But the most insistent sound was the rumble of the pumps and drills off on the oil-field—a noise resembling the distant roar of a giant waterfall.

The bulk of the oil-field belongs to a single big company which bought the old health resort. Its wells are

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scattered through the woodland at quite a distance from each other so that one well does not take oil from territory another might drain. Just outside of this property, clinging along its edges, are the independent operators with derricks set almost as thick as they can stand.

Most of the early comers who found oil made money, but unless they later got into a large well-organized company, or left the field satisfied with a moderate fortune they lost what they had previously gained. "When you are once in this business," one pioneer oil man said to me, "it's a blame hard thing to quit, you betcher! As soon as oil was discovered here I come, and I come a-whoopin'. I bought oil land for nineteen hundred dollars that I sold for seventy-five thousand. Yes sir, but I haven't got that money now. I tell you, there's four dollars dropped to one that's picked up in this business. We've got plenty of good oil land here not yet included in what's being worked, and there's men who put in all their time wandering around trying to locate it—oil smellers, we call 'em. Every one of 'em has his own methods and looks for the signs that he thinks are sure. But the wildcat wells are seldom successful. The lack of results from them is very apt to be charged to the Standard Oil Company or some of the concerns related to it. The prospectors think their drillers are bribed by the big companies to go right through the oil strata, and it is a fact that a whole lot of drillers are no

better than United States senators. They walk around with one hand behind them and take money on the side. But of course you can't always sometimes tell. I've seen a well yielding seven thousand barrels a day, and right adjoining it another was drilled which didn't seem as if it could miss being a big producer, and yet the second well got nothing but salt water."

Sour Lake itself has been preserved and is a grassy scum-covered pond with park-like surroundings, and with the old medicinal springs still in existence along its borders. People continue to drink the waters, though they do not come thither in such numbers as formerly.

As to the future of the Beaumont oil-field there is some uncertainty. I met persons who believed that it would rapidly be exhausted, and others who thought it would continue productive for an indefinite period; but the time when the industry here was a bubble, iridescent with the promise of untold riches to the investor, is gone, and fortunes no longer are recklessly wasted in trying to realize those unsubstantial dreams of wealth.

NOTE.—The pleasure of an acquaintance with the Beaumont district down in the southeast corner of Texas depends largely on the remembrance of its romantic past. The oil industry as conducted there now is quite prosaic and business-like, though its out-door character and the picturesqueness of the great derricks cannot help but lend some attraction. But to wander about and recall the turmoil and excitement of the days when the gushing of the first wells was the talk of the world, and to hear the stories of the pioneers of those days

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is an experience to be heartily enjoyed. Sour Lake, which shared honors with Beaumont itself in the early flooding of the region with oil, has a quaint woodland setting, and should not be missed by anyone who visits the vicinity. A short trip to the south is Sabine Lake and the Gulf of Mexico, and nearly every traveller would be interested to visit Galveston which is only a few hours distant by railroad. Still farther down the coast is Corpus Christi a famous pleasure resort for tourists, fishermen and health-seekers. It is on a beautiful bay, has a delightful climate, and claims to be unequalled the world over for sea-bathing, fishing, and boating.

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIO GRANDE

THE river which is the boundary line for more than a thousand miles between the United States and Mexico has a name unusually impressive and charming to the imagination; and one naturally infers that the stream is big and beautiful, flowing amid superb scenery. I suppose we should not expect the character of the actual river to come up to this ideal; but I was to see it first at Eagle Pass—and the name of the Pass like the name of the river fostered the feeling that there, at least, the setting of the stream would be notably romantic. What I really found was a wide channel, with bordering clay bluffs that in places rose to an imposing height. The water did not at that season fill the channel, which, on one side or the other, was often in part occupied by broad, brushy levels, and shelving stone-strewn beaches. The stream was brown with mud, and ran seaward in swift shallows. Yet the volume of water was considerable, and when the river is in flood it is a tremendous torrent. Nevertheless, except for a few miles at the mouth, the stream is not put to any use as a waterway. At Eagle Pass I did not even see a rowboat on it, though twenty thousand people live on its banks in the immediate vicinity.

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The town on the American side is a rather straggling trading center, with a number of large stores, banks and hotels scattered along its chief street. Most of the other structures consist of a medley of little Mexican shops and dwellings that vary from substantial comfort to the most meager discomfort. The houses were often quite attractive, even when very humble. They usually had walls of stone or adobe, smoothly cemented and whitewashed, and vines and blossoming shrubbery grew about them. Many of the older houses were roofed with thatch and resembled the peasant cottages of Europe. Grass suitable for thatch is, however, becoming scarce. It used to grow abundantly in the bogs and along the streams, but it has been killed by the browsing of the cattle and by repeated cutting. A new roof on the better houses is now apt to be of shingles, and, on the poorer houses, of boards. Indeed, the huts of the humbler inhabitants recently built are as a rule wholly of boards, and are thoroughly ugly.

Another type of housewalls is made by setting up studding to which slender limbs of mesquite are nailed like lath. The space between is filled with flat stones and the lath are plastered over with clay. If the clay later begins to drop off it is an easy matter to dab on some more. But the Mexicans are not very thrifty in making seasonable repairs, and they often wait till some of the cross-sticks loosen and let all the stones come sliding out. Then, perhaps, instead of restoring



Filling a cask

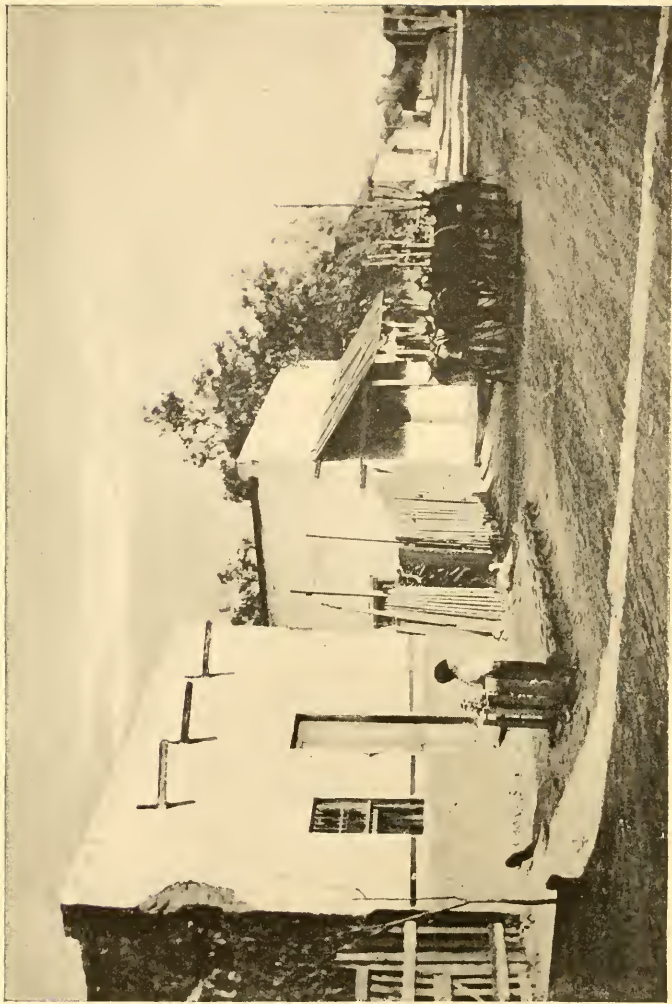
the wall, they put up a makeshift barrier of rushes or canes or old tin, and that may serve for months and possibly years.

Many of the oldest buildings had the appearance, as seen from the outside, of being roofless, but in reality the roofs were of cement, nearly flat, and the drainage was shot out over the sidewalk by a series of wooden spouts projecting through the front wall. Glass windows are a luxury, and the poorer families get along with little unglazed openings that can be closed with a board shutter. Often the upper panels of the doors are made to open for ventilation. The windows have gratings of iron, primarily designed to exclude intruders, but which formerly served also to keep the young men and young women apart. Intimate association between the sexes, after the children reached their teens, was thought undesirable. So the girls were obliged to spend most of their time indoors, and went out only when properly escorted. The boys, however, could roam the streets freely, and if a lad had a fancy for a particular girl he watched for an opportunity to talk with her through the barred window.

At Eagle Pass, as in all other villages along the Rio Grande, the whites constitute most of the mercantile class, but the bulk of the people are Mexicans. It is the Mexican language one hears most frequently on the streets and in the stores, and the majority of those who speak it are unable to use English at all. As a

class they are poor and illiterate and lack the faculty of saving and rising to a higher plane of wealth and living than the one to which they are born. This is especially true on the south side of the river, where a system of peonage keeps the laborer always indebted to his employer; and the law does not allow him to move away while his debt is uncanceled. He is forever climbing a hill and never getting to the top, and his children take up the burden after him. Perhaps in desperation he runs away and escapes across the border. Then he gets work, and all the money he can spare from his wages is sent back to Mexico until he has paid off his debt; for he could not safely return while any of it was unsettled. His energies are next bent to saving enough to pay the debts of his relatives and bring them across the river. If they attempted to get away by stealth and were caught they would be thrown into prison.

The Mexicans are used to heavy, prolonged work, and are sinewy and active. But they have little initiative, need oversight, are slow to adapt themselves to circumstances, and lack a vigorous courage. Employers very much prefer those newly across the line. A recent arrival, when he speaks to you, pulls off his hat and holds it under his arm, and his humility and readiness to do faithfully whatever task is allotted to him are points in his favor. After he learns English he is often turned away, because, "He knows too much,



An old street

begins to think he is the boss instead of you, will not work so hard as formerly, and, in general, is less reliable.”

It is not the habit for the women to work in the fields. Ordinarily they stay about their homes, cook the food, look after the chickens and take care of the garden if they have one. Among the lowest class it sometimes happens that a wife supports her husband in idleness by taking in washing.

The poorer families at Eagle Pass do not have connection with the city water system, but buy what they need at ten cents a barrel of peddlers who drive through the streets with a great cask mounted on two wheels that is drawn by a donkey. Some peddlers go to the river for the water, and others purchase it at a small price from the city.

In my rambles about the region I usually had the company of a very intelligent Mexican who could speak both his native and the English language; and he took me into quite a number of houses that I might understand more clearly how the people lived. The dwellings were rarely as spacious as the size of the families seemed to demand, and it was necessary to have a bed in the living-room. The better homes were neat and orderly, and the walls were adorned with enlarged portraits and gaudy-colored religious scenes. In the poorer houses there was only one room, with a shed-like kitchen attached. The floor was the hard-trodden earth, and

the space above was open to the roof. Such interiors were gloomy and cavernous and smoke-blackened. Usually there was a wide-mouthed fireplace, but if the chimney happened to be out of order a few stones were set up on the floor. On these stones a pot could be set with a fire underneath, and the smoke curled up toward the rafters and escaped through some window, or through crevices in the walls and roof. Often a home contains only one bed, and most of the family sleep on the floor. Occasionally a family had a pig, which was tied near the back door. If the pig was small, the cord was passed in a criss-cross fashion over its shoulders and back. If large, the creature was tied by a hind leg.

Several dogs were sure to be members of the household, and at one dilapidated hut where I called there were eight. A local American assured me that a Mexican felt bound to keep more dogs than he had children, and to feed them more, also. The hairless variety seemed to be especially numerous, and Antonio, my guide, accounted for this by saying: "People have a belief that sleeping with those kind of dogs will cure the rheumatism. But that's the only good thing there is about them. You can't touch one without its biting at you, or running away like a wild cow. These people like dogs, and are always ready to accept the present of a puppy, no matter what kind it is. The dogs sleep most of the day, and at night spend their time outdoors

barking at each other and the river. If an officer is ordered to go and shoot a dog that is sick or has bitten someone, the owners make him all the trouble they can. You'd think they were protecting one of their children.

"I do not care for dogs myself. It is the American fashion in the cities for a young lady to carry a dog in her arms. But no matter how sweet would be the girl, if she did that, I would have no use for her."

One of the staple articles of food in the Mexican homes is the tortilla. This is a kind of corncake that every family has at noon, and that many indulge in three times a day. To make tortillas the corn is first boiled with a little lime to remove the hull. Then it is thoroughly washed and put on a slightly hollowed slab of stone a foot wide and two feet long. On this the corn is crushed with a stone pestle held flat and rubbed back and forth. Presently water is added and the rubbing continues till the meal becomes dough. Then, a small piece at a time, it is spatted between the palms into thin cakes the size of a large saucer. These are baked quickly over the fire on a simple piece of sheet iron, and are eaten with an accompaniment of beans and meat and vegetables. The family perhaps has no table, and a box serves instead; and some sit on other boxes and some on the floor. Knives and forks are useless luxuries. The eater takes in each hand a tortilla doubled to form a scoop and by bringing them together in the stew, or whatever it is he has before him, captures a

portion which he conveys to his mouth with one of the tortillas. At the same time he bites off the end of the improvised spoon. Thus he keeps dipping and biting till at length he pitches what is left of the tortillas to the dogs who have gathered close around with ears erect waiting for their share. Then perhaps the dinner will be enlivened by a dispute between two of the dogs or between a dog and a cat. Sometimes the tortillas are eaten with a little lard and salt. Butter is never seen in the ordinary Mexican home. Coffee is the principal drink, but the poor substitute a tea made from peppermint, which they pick and dry themselves.

A field laborer gets up at daybreak, drinks some coffee, and goes off to work. About eight o'clock his wife or one of the children carries his breakfast to him. If the weather is warm he stops at eleven and goes home, and after the noon meal the whole family lie down for a siesta. The man probably reclines outside in the shade on a bench or the ground, or possibly in a hammock made of sacks. The woman's place is on the floor, just inside of the door where she gets the benefit of any breeze that blows. About three or four o'clock the siesta is over, and the man drinks a cup of coffee and resumes work. He continues at his task until dark. After he comes home he talks with his wife a while, has supper, and in the course of an hour or two goes to bed. The children have retired earlier, though they are often allowed to run the streets until quite late.

“But that is not good for them,” said Antonio, “and I have my boy come in early when I am at home. If I am away he stays out, because my wife cannot make him come in with all her yells. He is the only child I have now. Just a few weeks ago it was I lost my little girl, three and a half years old. I think I liked her better than my boy—and I like him all right. She had learned to pray already; and every time I came home she’d run and hug and kiss me. Yes, I think baby girls are the real happiness of a family.”

Antonio rolled a cigaret and puffed at it in melancholy reverie. I called his attention to an old woman not far away at the door of a hut. She also was puffing a cigaret. He said this was by no means an uncommon feminine habit, and that the men had to have their cigarets as a matter of course. “I began to smoke,” said he, “at the age of four. My mother was dead, and my daddy let me have anything I wanted to keep me quiet. But most boys don’t begin till they are eight or ten.”

Along the Rio Grande fifty cents a day is the usual wage of a Mexican laborer; yet by going a hundred miles or so to the north he can get a job herding sheep among the mountains at thirty dollars a month and his keep. He stays six months or more, and then, with about two hundred dollars, starts for home. It may be that at the first town he strikes he tries his hand at

gambling, and gets drunk. In such a case, the chances are that he is robbed and has to turn back to his lonely employment in the rugged uplands.

If, however, he escapes the allurements of the towns and reaches the home hut, he turns his money over to one of the women of the household—preferably the eldest. There may be a man in the family as old as the oldest woman; but the sheep herder would not think of making him the guardian of the treasure, for the old man might be tempted to spend it. With the old woman it is perfectly safe. She is from habit very close and economical, and she doles the money out a little at a time. Her bed is the hiding-place for the money, and one would think thieves might steal it. But some of the family are always about the house during the daytime; and at night not only are they all there, but the dogs and other domestic creatures besides, so that the disturbance created by an intruder would scare him out of his wits.

When the last of the money has been spent the man departs to the wilderness for another long period to accumulate the wherewithal to again return to home idleness. The living expenses of a family are not very great. Such foods as they use are cheap, and they get along with an extremely scanty supply of clothing. Laborers wear sandals, and the children go barefoot much of the time. There are only a few really sharp days, even in winter, and some of the poorer boys get along without any shoes at all.



Housewives at their washing

The biggest structure in the town on the Mexican side of the river is a bull-ring, where every few weeks a crowd gathers to witness a bull-fight. Sunday mornings are comparatively sacred, and most of the women and children attend mass. Quite a number of the young men are also at church, perhaps attracted by the presence of the young women; but the older men who go are few. Instead, you find many of them watching a cock-fight which is a regular Sunday morning feature in the Mexican town, and much of their hard-earned money changes hands in the betting. If there is a bull-fight later in the day they resort thither, where they are joined by a numerous concourse of those who have been to church. Antonio regarded bull-fighting as a superlative sport. He said it was very seldom a man was seriously injured, and those darts that were stuck into the creatures did not hurt much; and as for the killing of the bull at the last that was quickly over.

Gambling is another favorite Mexican recreation. The game is usually for small sums, and to play half an hour for a stake of twenty-five cents is quite usual. But though as a rule they do not play as rashly as American gamblers, yet a well-to-do Mexican will sometimes risk considerable amounts. If he loses, his relatives look on it as an accident of fate, and they will often all contribute to restore to him the amount he squandered.

The Mexicans have two Independence Days to celebrate, and our Fourth of July makes still another for

the dwellers on the north bank of the river. Freedom from Spanish oppression was won in 1810 and is commemorated on Sept. 16th; and the escape from the yoke of France in 1862 is celebrated on the fifth of May. There are fireworks and noise and music, and in the Mexican town they have a parade late in the afternoon, and finally all the people gather for an evening promenade on the plaza.

A very interesting phase of Mexican life is found in the wedding customs. When a young man and young woman have concluded that they want to marry, formal application must be made to the girl's parents. This falls to the lot of the boy's father, who writes a letter, or if he cannot write, the lad or someone else writes in his name, substantially as follows:

“Being that your daughter is a worthy girl, my son has come to me and tells me that he wishes to marry her, and I, discharging the duty of a father according to the laws of our church, and also to comply with the rules of good society, write to ask that your daughter may unite in matrimony with my son. She has the qualities that will make any man happy, and I hope to have a favorable answer from you.”

The missive is inclosed in a big, official-looking envelope, and then wrapped in a white silk handkerchief which is a present to the girl. With this letter in their charge the parents of the young man make an evening call on the parents of the young woman. But they do

not discuss the subject about which they are most concerned. When they are leaving they hand over the letter and say they will call for an answer in a week or two. If the girl's parents do not favor the match they talk her out of it and write a negative reply. But if everything is all right they say the wedding can be celebrated as soon as convenient.

When the young man has been in due form accepted he is supposed to begin at once to support his bride, though she continues to live with her parents. Perhaps he gives so much a day in money, or, if very poor, takes to her the necessities for her subsistence. He might even turn over to her all his cash and portable belongings, confiding in her prudence to have most of them left for their mutual use when they start housekeeping. Hitherto the couple have had scarcely any opportunity to talk privately together, but now they see each other as often as they please. If there is only one room in the bride's house her relatives go visiting at the neighbor's when the young man calls. "So the two are quite happy," as Antonio said, "until they are married, and then their troubles begin."

If the girl belongs to a family that is "pretty well fixed" she has three dresses for the wedding night. At the church ceremony she is in full white. After she returns to the house she dons a dress of a sky blue tint or other delicate color, and in this dances till midnight. Then she puts on red. The ball continues till daylight,

when the revelers depart, and the bride and groom go to the house where they intend to live.

The people are superstitious and are great believers in witchcraft. "I knew of a woman who was sick here," said Antonio, "and they took a right black chicken, killed it, and soaked it in kerosene, put on some chile powder, and then burned it, feathers and all, on the floor. Of course there was a strong smoke, and they held the sick woman so her head was in it and she'd breathe as much as possible. But she didn't get well."

A death is at once made known through the crying and wailing that proceed from the home of the bereaved, and the house is soon full of neighbors, who continue to stay about in strong force until after the funeral. Whiskey is furnished by the afflicted family, and the occasion is more jovial than serious to most of the crowd.

An excursion which I made from Eagle Pass, and recall with special pleasure, was to a rustic village on the Mexican side of the river. Antonio went with me, and we walked. At first the dusty roadway kept to the depths of a hollow through a monotonous wood of mesquite where the mocking birds warbled, and the red-birds whistled. Later we emerged onto stony hills dotted with sagebrush and big thorny clumps of cactus. Here we met a flock of two or three hundred milch goats grazing along in the care of a medieval looking shepherd. Another mile brought us to a spot where we overlooked a luscious, wooded valley with a little river

winding through it, and we could see cultivated lands and adobe houses. When we descended to the river we found by the shore many groups of washerwomen. There they knelt scrubbing away, some with a wide board slanting into the swift current, others using a shallow, partly submerged box. They had soap, and they had fires to heat water, and the children ran about wading and paddling. It was quite idyllic.

At several spots were fords, where the teams and horseback riders waded through, and we followed a path in the rank grass and jungles of cane to find a bridge farther up the stream. This bridge proved to be only a narrow, precarious timber laid across, but we got safely to the other side, and there Antonio stopped to get a drink. He said the water was not bad, but there were washerwomen above as well as below, and it looked too soapy to tempt me.

The village was an odd, half-ruinous hamlet, and the home premises were separated from the highway by walks of adobe, or fences of cane. At one house into which I looked was a man sitting on the floor making bird-cages, and he had numerous gay feathered captives all about the apartment and the yard. He was a handsome, alert, bright-eyed fellow who made bird-catching his business. In the village gardens grew figs and peaches and grapes, and great wide-spreading pecan trees flourished along the stream. All things indeed

appeared so green and flourishing that it seemed as if even poverty in such surroundings must hold a good deal of happiness.

NOTE.—Anyone journeying through Texas toward Mexico or the far southwest should stop at San Antonio. It has a marked attraction in its delightful climate, and, though thriving and modern in most ways, is not without certain interesting Mexican traits and features. No other Texan town can rival the part it has played in the state's history, and its age is attested by several old Spanish Missions that survive in the vicinity. They belong to a remote past that now seems but a dream. One of these old mission churches, the Alamo, fronting on a plaza of the same name in the heart of the city, has perhaps the most tragic fascination of any building in this country; for here in 1836 a beleaguered band of one hundred and eighty Americans met an untimely death at the hands of the Mexicans. Texas had been a part of Mexico, but had recently revolted and proclaimed itself an independent republic. This action aroused great enthusiasm in the United States, and many went to aid the Texans in their struggle for liberty. Among these was Davy Crockett, the most famous rifle-shot of his day, and such a successful hunter that his skill was proverbial. He came to San Antonio and joined a little band of other Americans who had fortified themselves in the Alamo. About the same time Santa Anna, the dictator of Mexico, arrived with an army of four thousand men and laid siege to the ancient thick-walled mission building. Day after day the defenders withstood the attacking host, but at last breaches were made in the outer defences through which the Mexicans made a successful charge. The frontiersmen then retreated to the inner building where a desperate hand to hand conflict ensued. After the Americans had fired their long rifles, they used them as clubs, and fought with their knives and revolvers. The unequal contest reeled to and fro between the shattered walls until gradually the defenders were all killed. Crockett was one of the last to fall. Wounded, and ringed around by the bodies of the men he had slain, he continued



In a country village

to face the foe with his back to the wall. Then he, too, was shot down, and the fight was soon over.

But as the story of the combat spread, more and more Americans flocked to the aid of the Texans until they had a force of eleven hundred men. Then they assailed the Mexican army with the cry, "Remember the Alamo," and won an overwhelming victory that secured the independence of the frontier republic.

Aside from the Alamo, it has always seemed to my fancy that the Rio Grande was one of the most notable attractions of the state, and there is a certain satisfaction in a first hand acquaintance with the river, even if the stream is less impressive in size and surroundings than its name would lead one to suppose. As for the life along its banks, that is quite alluring, and a few days can be spent very satisfactorily at Eagle Pass; or, perhaps with just as good possibilities of sight-seeing, at El Paso, where the hotel accommodations are exceptionally fine. Just across the river at both places is an old Mexican town where the quaint homes, costumes and manners of the people are so different from those of our own land that they have for the traveller the keenest interest.

VI

PUEBLO LIFE IN NEW MEXICO

MUCH of New Mexico seems to the casual observer a half-naked and stony wilderness where only the scantiest population can ever find subsistence. But there is a vast amount of good land that only needs irrigation to make it productive and beautiful; and by utilizing the streams fully and getting artesian water from below the surface the aspect of the region may be changed materially. By the time this possibility is realized to any marked extent the pueblo life now characteristic of a large portion of the country will be a memory of the past. Even as things are the picturesque conditions that make the Pueblo Indians and their villages so interesting are giving way to the white man's civilization, and their homes and habits are fast being modified.

Several of the pueblos are right on the line of the railroad. Of these, Laguna is perhaps best worth seeing, and moreover it is the point of departure for visiting Acoma, which in situation and in primitiveness is the most fascinating pueblo in all the Southwest. I made the fifteen mile journey from Laguna to Acoma in a

light farm wagon accompanied by an Indian who served both as guide and driver. According to this Indian the road was a very good one; but I concluded he meant in comparison with others in the region. Sometimes we dragged slowly along through sand ruts, sometimes bumped over a rough shoulder of rock, and there were sudden gullies and steep hills, and stretches of hardened clay full of wheel tracks and hoof prints.

The scenery was rather forbidding. All about, at frequent intervals, rose the mesas with their flat tops and their sides strewn with boulders that had fallen from above. Some of them were mere hills, others mountainous in size and height. The half-barren land between was dotted with bushy cedars, very thick-stemmed at the ground, but soon tapering off, and always dwarfed in stature. At last we descended into a big level valley that looked like the floor of some old lake. It was thinly grassed, and numerous flocks of sheep, horses and cattle were grazing on it. Each flock of sheep included a number of black ones, and still more variety was added by the presence of several goats, which are valued not only for their milk, but as a protection to the sheep from wild animals. The coyotes follow the flocks of sheep very persistently, and the old goats stand guard, and fight the enemy, if necessary.

On ahead of us we could now see what is known as "The Enchanted Mesa," a vast castle-like rock rising with perpendicular walls from the floor of the plain to

a height of four hundred and thirty feet. Its great size and ragged crags make it one of the most impressive natural wonders on the continent. Higher and higher it loomed as we drew nearer, and its name and the strange legends that have been told about it seemed quite in keeping with its peculiar character. According to one of the legends the pueblo of Acoma formerly occupied this height, and the path by which the people went up and down followed a crevice where a huge portion of the face of the precipice had partially separated from the main mass. One day, while all of the inhabitants except three sick women were at work in the fields on the plain below, there came a sudden storm, and the deluge of rain, or the lightning, sent the leaning ledge crashing down to the base of the mesa. The path was destroyed, and the three sick women perished beyond reach of aid on the then inaccessible cliff, and the rest of the community sought a new place for their village.

Several exploring parties in recent years have been to the summit of the great rock. The first of these, led by an Eastern college professor, laid siege to the mesa with a mortar and a number of miles of assorted ropes, supplemented by pulleys, a boatswain's chair and a pair of horses. Later parties have scaled the height aided only by a half dozen lengths of six foot ladders. They scrambled up a considerable portion of the distance over the loose stones at the sides of the precipice, and



The Enchanted Mesa

went still farther up a narrow gorge. Presently the ladders became necessary, but only in one or two places did they have to put all six together. Nevertheless, the ascent was arduous, and at the steepest points somewhat perilous.

On top is an area of twelve acres that is almost bare rock. The explorers find there bits of broken pottery, stone axes and arrowheads, and ornaments made of wild hogs' tusks. The only indication of buildings is a regular arrangement of loose stones which evidently were the foundation of a round room. That the mesa was ever the site of a pueblo seems doubtful. More likely it was used simply as a place of refuge for small parties cut off from retreat to the main village by marauding enemies.

Three miles beyond, at the end of the valley on another wild mesa, is the pueblo of Acoma, a place of about half a thousand inhabitants. There it has been for seven hundred years, probably presenting from the beginning almost the identical appearance it does today. From a distance you would think the long continuous lines of adobe walls were a part of the mesa itself rising to a slightly greater height, but as you draw nearer you see occasional little chimneys and windows. The lofty table rock on which it stands is scarcely less romantic than the Enchanted Mesa, and the savage crags seem to have been carved by thunderbolts.

At first sight no way presents itself of climbing the precipitous sides; yet the Indians have no less than ten trails up different crevices, two of which are practical for horses. We, however, stopped with our team at one side of the mesa, where rose, here and there, isolated brown pillars and ledges—gigantic statues of nature's own making. About the base of them were rude cedar fences and a few hovels where the Indians kept their milch animals at night. Beside one of these corral clusters we unhitched our horses and put them in a hut. Then we ascended a sand drift that rose far up against the cliff; and when that ended clambered on up a narrow crevice which twisted this way and that, and sometimes passed over a strewing of boulders and sometimes beneath one lodged between the walls of the ravine. Steps had been rudely chipped out at the steepest points, and little pocket-like holes made in the adjoining cliff to grip with the hand.

The top of the mesa is a gentle slope of solid rock with a somewhat irregular surface. In two or three places are deep hollows where the rain water collects in little ponds, and this is the town's source of supply for drinking, cooking and washing. The water looked rather dubious, but I was assured that impurities settled to the bottom and left it clean and palatable.

A church and three parallel lines of homes constitute the village. Each series of homes rises in several terraces, and the ascent to the top of the first terrace is

made by great rough outside ladders. To climb to the upper terraces, however, a few stone steps often do service. The original purpose of this type of architecture was protection against enemies; for the first story was without doors or windows, and when the ladders were drawn up the pueblos were safe from the assaults of their rudely armed, savage neighbors.

The walls are of stone laid in mud, and are daubed over smooth with mud inside, and frequently outside also. In constructing the roofs pine is used for the large beams, and across these cedar poles are laid close together. Next comes a layer of rushes and grass and the spiny leaves of the yucca. Then clay mud mixed with broken bits of wheat straw is put on. In a prolonged dry spell the roof is apt to crack, and unless the cracks are mended the rain soaks through and trickles down on the floor where it muddies up everything. Sheets of crystal gypsum serve for windows, the largest of which are about twelve by eighteen inches. They are windows of a single pane set solidly in an aperture of the wall.

The dwellings have from two to eight rooms, including such as are used for storage, and these are not nearly as gloomy as one might expect, for they are kept thoroughly whitewashed. One of the largest apartments is the living-room. It is warmed by a fireplace—not a very economical method of heating, perhaps; but the walls are so thick, and there is such lack of ventilation

that a little fuel goes a long way. Wood is plentiful on the rough lands around, and the Indians can get all they want for the trouble of cutting and drawing it, or carrying it on their backs as they sometimes do. Scrub cedar is used chiefly, because that is most accessible; but pine is preferred when it can be had, for it burns with almost no smoke.

Across one end of the living-room a long pole is suspended from the rafters by thongs of rawhide. On this is hung all the extra clothing, blankets, belts, and some tanned buckskin not yet made into garments. Certain family heirlooms in the form of necklaces are likewise hung on the pole where they will attract the admiration of visitors. Some of these are very old and are made of fragments of seashells and black and cream colored stones shaped into beads. The best of them are worth fifteen or twenty horses.

A single sleeping apartment does for an entire family. The beds are mattresses of wool laid on the floor. There is never much circulation of air in the room, and if the weather is cold it is shut up tight and the fireplace furnishes the only ventilation. In warm weather, however, the Pueblo folk often sleep out on the terrace.

To descend to the lower rooms there is a trap-door and ladders. Climb down, and you find corn stored in a heap on the floor, and the wheat in big bins of plastered stone. Here, too, is the same sort of truck that white people usually relegate to the garret—broken



The ladders that give access to the upper stories

tools and furniture, discarded clothing and whatever other useless things would be in the way in the upper rooms.

The young people are inclined to adopt white ways and to buy home conveniences that were formerly lacking. For instance, probably half the families now have tables; but it used to be the universal habit to eat on the floor, seated on a few little stools or blocks of wood, or blankets, while the bowls, platters and other pottery containing the food were distributed handily around.

The sanitary arrangements of the homes are not all they might be; yet the women sweep out daily, and there is an annual clean-up of the whole town when refuse and filth are carted off, walls whitewashed, and everything made as spick and span as the antique conditions of the town will allow.

In clothing, the Indians are gradually donning the garments of the whites, and so far as the men are concerned the transformation has often been complete. The elders of the tribe, however, still occasionally put on blankets and colored turbans. Blanket wearing is the rule with the women, but their gowns are of civilized cloth, and shoes and stockings are replacing the moccasins and leg-windings of buckskin. These buckskin leg-windings are supposed to have been devised as a protection against snakes, and the present-day wearers retain them as a matter of fashion. Yet, in summer, they find the buckskin so uncomfortably warm that they are apt to take it off and go barefoot.

The people are peaceful and thrifty. Those Indian tribes that roamed the mountains and plains have become wards of the government, but the Pueblo Indians have maintained a self-supporting integrity. They irrigate in the valleys, and raise such staples as corn and wheat, and a variety of garden vegetables, apples, plums and other fruit.

One of the picturesque incidents of the harvest is the wheat threshing. A level circle of ground is prepared with a surface of clay that is wet slightly and beaten and walked over till it is perfectly hard and smooth. After inclosing it with a fence of cedar poles, all the grain belonging to one farmer is arranged in the center in a big loose pile, probably not less than six yards in diameter, leaving about eight feet between it and the fence. The threshing is accomplished by driving a dozen or so horses around the circuit, beginning about nine in the morning. A squad of men and boys is on hand, armed with whips to chase the horses, and the central pile gradually works down so that all the ears are trodden out. By twelve o'clock the threshing is done, and in the afternoon the straw is thrown into a pile outside of the fence, and the wheat cleaned up and everything made ready for threshing the next man's crop on the morrow. The grain is separated from the chaff some windy day by throwing it up in the air with wooden shovels.

Dogs and poultry abound in the village; for every family keeps about a dozen fowls and very likely half that number of dogs. One may often meet an Indian on horseback with three or four curs ranging along in his wake. The Indians have great herds of sheep that wander among the mesas the year through, and they have many horses and cattle. Certain kinds of wild grass in the Southwest cure on the stalk, and this hay which nature furnishes, and nibblings of sagebrush and cactus keep the creatures from perishing in the lean months. The rainy season comes in July and August, after which the grass flourishes and there is abundance of feed through the fall. The only creatures that are provided with winter shelter are the horses and such cows and goats as are milked. For the horses rude stables are constructed, but the cows and goats get along with corrals. Alfalfa and oats are raised to feed these animals; and the corn fodder is saved and thrown up on the stable roofs to keep the stock from devouring it all at once or trampling it in the mire. The creatures get but scanty fare at best and are sure to be decidedly thin by spring. The sale of wool and of the sheep and other creatures is the chief source of the Indians' income. Something is added to this by the women who make pottery and dispose of it at the railway stations to travellers on the trains, or to traders; and a portion of the men work for wages.

A good deal of the money that comes into their hands is not spent wisely; but the same might be said of the expenditures of any class the world over. They gamble in a small way, buy candy and jewelry, cookstoves, sewing-machines, and brass bedsteads, and make curious misfits in introducing modern articles into their ancient homes and half savage habits of life.

Their amusements are more varied than the outsider would suspect, and, in particular, they enjoy races, both on foot and on horseback. One peculiar contest of speed and expertness consists in two rival parties going in opposite directions and each kicking a stick about a foot long and an inch in diameter over a course agreed on. This course may be anywhere from five to twenty miles long.

In the fall some day is fixed on for a rabbit hunt. The young men, to the number of about a score, ride off on horseback armed with clubs, which they hurl at every rabbit they sight. Each rider is eager to outdo his comrades and get the largest number, and they have a wild time chasing and heading off the rabbits. If fortune favors they may secure an average of two or three apiece, but on the other hand the whole crowd may kill only a half dozen.

A hunt of a more serious sort, yet scarcely less enjoyed, occurs in November, when three or four parties with about ten in each go off some fifty miles in different directions and camp and hunt deer.



The governor of the village

For real fun, however, from the Indian viewpoint, nothing quite equals a special race it is customary to have on St. John's Day. The start is made on a level piece of ground near the village, where a live rooster has been buried in the sand all but its head. From fifteen to thirty racers mount their horses, go back from the rooster about two hundred yards, and at a signal put their steeds into a run. As they dash past the rooster each makes a grab at the bird until someone gets him. Then on they go in a mad rush engaged in a lively contest to gain possession of the captive chanticleer. The bird may change hands a number of times, and the fellow who brings him back to the starting-point is the victor.

After the harvest is finished dances are frequent until spring. Many of these dances are religious and commemorate some old tradition, and the participants dress up in all their barbaric glory. Other dances are merely social. There is not much movement in them. The dancers gather in a room and stand facing each other, one or two rows of men on this side, and similar rows of women on the other. Then they jump up and down, with certain changes of step, keeping time to the energetic music of drums and their own chanting.

One other pleasure that should be mentioned is the nutting expeditions. There are great forests of pines within twelve or fifteen miles, and thither the Indians resort in the late autumn and erect their tents on the

mountain sides, a number of families grouped together, mostly women and children. They pick up thousands of bushels and have great sport. The nuts are nearly all consumed in the months to come by the Indians themselves. They like them best roasted, and evening is the favorite time for eating them. It is customary to set out the nuts when visitors happen in, and while those present feast they gossip and perhaps repeat the ancient folk tales of their race. They are great story-tellers, and some of the old men—especially certain of the numerous medicine men—are professionals in the art. The stories are a mingling of fact and fiction. Some of them have to do with long journeys and adventurous hunting excursions. Others are narratives of fights with the Navajos and of the deeds of the tribal heroes. These heroes are still human in their attributes if they lived within a generation or two, but before that they are demigods.

In the presence of white men the Indians are usually silent and undemonstrative, but among themselves they carry on much lively chatter that is both loquacious and humorous, and they will often stay up half the night over their small talk.

The climate is favorable to health; and now that the Indians are no longer swept off wholesale by small-pox, every hardy child has a fair prospect of a long life. Rheumatism, pneumonia, and diphtheria are perhaps the most prevalent diseases. The people have a good deal

of faith in the curative properties of roots and herbs, and when these fail call in a medicine man. The physician tries to effect a cure by incantations; and he may resort to breathing on the patient or will use his eagle feathers to brush away the pain, or he will stroke the sick person with a bear's claw, which is another implement of his trade. Often his labors continue for hours at a time. His reward is generally a present of provisions or some article of clothing.

Each tribe has its governor and other officers, elected annually. The voting is done at a public meeting where the supporters of the rival candidates stand up in turn to be counted. In the evening, after the election, there is a big dance in some private house that has a large dining-room. It lasts most of the night. Once a month the council holds a session to transact public business and settle quarrels. This is a daytime meeting, and every official present receives a fee of fifty cents. Money for needful expenses comes largely from fines for drunkenness or assaults, but once in a while a small assessment is levied. Roads, bridges, fences, and irrigating ditches are taken care of by each man contributing a certain amount of labor on them yearly. All the land is owned in common, but any family can have set off to it as much as it will cultivate. If this land is allowed to lie idle for three years it reverts to the pueblo.

When the first Spaniards invaded the region the Pueblos seem to have accepted their rule and religion

without any very strenuous resistance. But in 1681 a plot was formed to throw off the yoke. A day was set for the massacre of all Caucasians in the pueblo country. Four hundred persons including soldiers, civilians, and priests were killed, and the rest fled for their lives. Churches were pillaged and torn down and mines filled up. Three priests who were in Acoma at the time of the outbreak were taken to a high point on the edge of the mesa and compelled to jump. Two were thus killed outright, but the gown of the third expanded into a sort of parachute which broke the force of his fall and saved him from injury. The Indians thought his escape from death was due to heavenly intervention and they gave him his liberty.

It soon happened that the leader of the revolt, intoxicated by success, insisted on being paid divine honors. Hero worship of this sort was not to the liking of the rest of the Indians, and dissensions were a result. Besides, the different tribes got to squabbling among themselves. So in a dozen years the Spaniards had reconquered the pueblos. Since then they have been at peace with the whites, but have suffered much at the hands of the Navajos and Apaches. They are naturally peaceful, but they would fight hardily in defence of their homes; and when they were on the walls of their Gibraltar-like towns with their bows and arrows, lances and war-clubs they were by no means to be despised. Their savage foes, therefore, confined their efforts to cutting off small parties and stealing sheep. Some-



An oven

times the Apaches would pick up a stray child. This child was made a member of the captor's tribe, and a good vigorous boy was always considered a welcome addition to the tribal strength.

The Pueblo Indians gave our own government valuable help in its operations against the nomadic Navajos, both in fighting and as scouts. Their natural capacity, energy, and thrift place them decidedly above the average of red men, and their homes and ways of life are strikingly original and interesting. This is especially true of Acoma which stands on its rugged mesa just as it has for centuries past, basking in the summer suns and swept by the winter blasts, with that wild region around of fantastic rocks, curiously eroded pillars and great buttes.

Another place in New Mexico possessing a peculiar attraction on account of its age is Sante Fe. It is the oldest European town in the United States, and it contains the oldest church and the oldest dwelling. These two structures adjoin each other and are impressive in their simplicity and evident antiquity. They are of thick-walled adobe, as are many other buildings in the town, which is as much Mexican as it is American in appearance and manners. It lies in a vast semi-arid basin with hills and lofty mountains at some distance. Little irrigating ditches network the town and there are luscious gardens and thriving trees. The inhabitants number only a few thousand and the place has much

the character of a big lazy village. Its people like to loiter on the shadowy, green-turfed plaza and on the corridor-like sidewalks, across which the older buildings have extended pillared porticos. There has apparently never been any regular plan in the building of the city, and the streets wind, and zigzag, and jerk around corners in a most unexpected fashion. As a somewhat garrulous visitor whom I fell in with remarked: "You walk along and think you are going somewhere only to find you are going somewhere else. Oh, it's jiggety jog; but, by gracious! I like it."

The speaker was a gray old man who had been a captain in the Civil War. Sante Fe's reputation as a health resort had drawn him thither, and he was delighted with its climate, its quaintness and the friendliness of its inhabitants. He had a cheerful greeting for everyone we met. Often he paused to shake hands with this one or that—to sympathize with a sick man, to pat a child on the head, to discuss history and religion with some priest.

"You couldn't use street cars here," he said in continuing his comments on the character of the town, "unless they were made on an angle and a circle, because the streets are so crooked. Why, there isn't a square corner in the city. You go along one street, and you run right up ag'in' a house. You try another and it takes you into a dooryard; and I was in one that ended like a wedge so I just had to turn around and come back.

“See those little burros with the loads of wood on their backs,” said the captain pointing down the street with his cane. “The wood is all cut up ready for the stove, and the driver in charge peddles it from house to house. Each burro carries about two wheelbarrow loads, and they’ve come anywhere from five to twenty miles. A man or boy follows behind and tickles them up with a switch—any old way to get there.

“But those peddlers are making an honest living. I recall back in Ohio a man who went around with a two-horse covered wagon, and on the sides was painted in big letters ‘WHAT IS IT? Admission 10 cents.’ The fellow lived in the wagon and drove from place to place exhibiting an animal he had inside. You paid your ten cents and went up some steps behind, and when you saw the creature you’d say: ‘Why, it looks like a ground-hog,’ and that’s what it was—nothing but a dirty Oregon ground-hog. And yet that man stirred up curiosity by his sign, and people would climb into his wagon and discuss and discuss what the animal really was. I suppose if I was to attempt a thing like that the sheriff would get me sure and put me in a lunatic asylum. But tricks go all right with some men.”

A wayside shrub attracted my companion’s attention, and he broke off a twig, which he showed to the next man we met with a query as to its name. The man replied rather gruffly that he didn’t know what the shrub was and didn’t care.

“You don’t live in this town, I guess,” commented the captain, and the man shook his head and walked on.

“I knew he didn’t,” the captain declared, “or he wouldn’t have answered a civil question like that. They’re a fine people here, polite and intelligent and accommodating, and they have the best climate in the world. Back in Ohio it’s an old saying that we have six months of winter and three months of late in the fall every year. But here, even in winter, most of the days are pleasant and comfortable. Then in summer, though the thermometer goes up as high as one hundred and twenty in the shade, they tell me it is a dry heat that don’t trouble a person. A man may perspire, and a few drops fall from his face, but he don’t get wringing wet as he would in the East. It’s healthy here. You bet it is; and I never was anywhere that suited me better.”

So he went on in his own lively fashion expatiating on the charms of the old town, and in his opinion it evidently was not much inferior to the original Garden of Eden.

NOTE.—New Mexico, in spite of its general aspect of arid and sun-burned monotony, has much to entice the traveller to pause and observe it more in detail; but of its various attractions the pueblos are the most piquant and unusual. Some of these are very easy of access, though naturally such are less characteristic than those more remote. The many-chambered communal homes in the territory number over a score, and their inhabitants own nearly a million acres of land.



The old church at Santa Fe

Albuquerque is a good central point from which to start visiting the pueblos. Isleta, one of the most important, is only ten miles distant, right on the railroad. Laguna is fifty-six miles farther to the west, and is not only extremely interesting in itself, but is the nearest point of departure from the railway for Acoma and the Enchanted Mesa. Accommodations at Laguna are poor, but the trip to Acoma will amply reward one for a good deal of discomfort. The journey to it and back can easily be made in a day. Another noteworthy pueblo is Zuni, forty-five miles from Fort Wingate.

For enjoyment of a different sort visit old Santa Fe. It offers exceptional attractions in the way of climate, quaintness, age, historic associations, and excellent hotels. The town is only a few miles off the main line of east and west railroad, and merits much more attention from travellers than it has had hitherto.

Still another attraction of New Mexico is its weather. The typical day is absolutely cloudless, and the sun makes its journey across the vast blue dome of the sky without the least film of mist to obscure its brightness, and they have three hundred such days every year.

VII

AROUND PIKE'S PEAK

“A GOOD many people go to the top of the Peak on foot,” remarked a casual acquaintance soon after I reached Colorado Springs, near the base of the mountain; “but a person like you from the low-lying Eastern States couldn’t do it. You are not used to high altitudes, and your breath would give out, and you’d be so sick and faint you’d have to turn back.”

What this man said proved to be my undoing, for I felt that I must find out for myself whether he was right or not. The mountain is a little over fourteen thousand feet high, and rises eight thousand above the village of Manitou where the climbing actually begins. There is a cog-wheel railroad for persons who choose to journey comfortably; and those otherwise minded usually trudge along the tracks. I started at noon to make the nine mile ascent. The trail at once became toilsomely steep. It followed up a ravine amid thin pine woods, and on the rocky slopes were many precariously-balanced boulders of mammoth size apparently ready to roll down and crush everything in their path. Quite a number of these wayside boulders were made strangely

incongruous by having religious mottoes painted on them in big black letters. I suppose some pious individual had done this for the public good, with the idea that the surroundings would incline those who passed up and down to serious thoughts. The execution was rather rude, as will be seen by the following sample:

HE THAT BLIEVETH
SHALL B SAVED

HE WHO DOES
NOT SHALL B
DAMNED

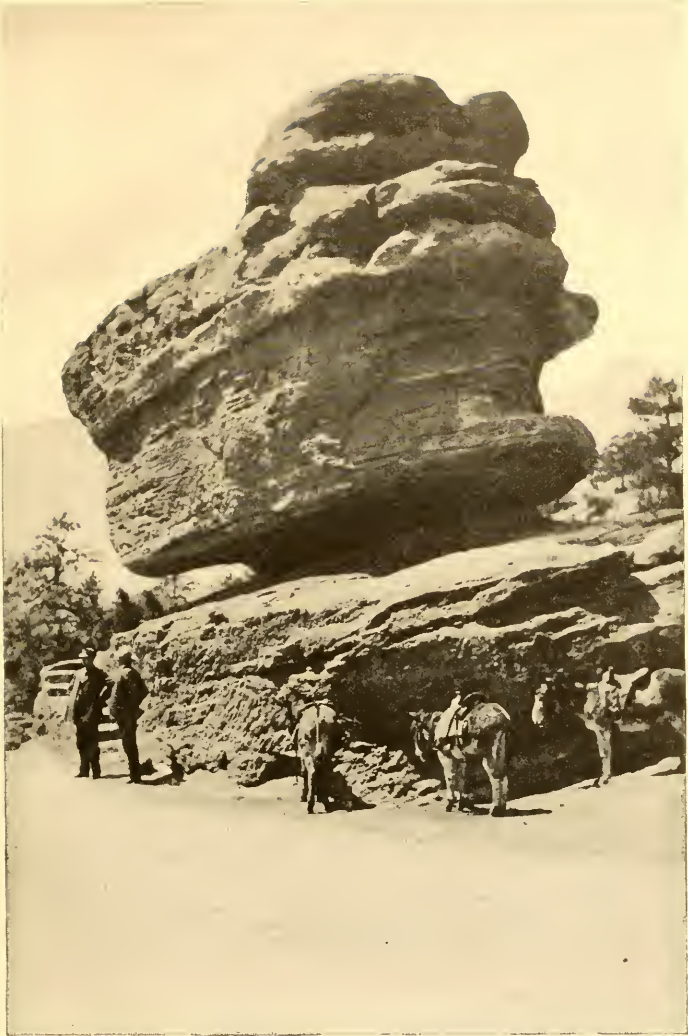
Another ran in this wise—"Let the wicked forsake his way;" but some wag had added a letter which made it read, "Let the wicked forsake *this* way."

For the first two miles I had the constant company of a mountain stream that made the air musical with its rushing and leaping, but presently I left the ravine and went on by a gentler grade across ragged upland with here and there an expanse of bog, or a little lake. When I approached the timber line the slant was again sharply upward. From here I could look far off over the neighboring giant heights and see the level prairie to the east with the cloud shadows floating across its illimitable expanse. Close about was the lonely wilderness, almost silent, save for the souging of the wind through the dark evergreen foliage.

By this time I was extremely tired, the muscles I used most were aching, and my heart was beating violently.

Besides that, I was panting for breath, and I had to stop every little while to recuperate. Things became worse as I went on, and I longed to turn back; but the fact that I had been told I could not go to the top urged me on. Now I passed beyond the last of the woodland and was amid a waste of broken blocks of stone partially hidden by snow. Sometimes, too, there was snow in my path, which made the footing slippery and greatly aggravated my troubles. I would totter on a few steps and then stop, gasping and exhausted. If I sat down I felt as though I never wanted to get up. The sky was increasingly cloudy, and once or twice I was enveloped in a filmy snowsquall. But in spite of the difficulties I at length reached the top. In utter weariness I crouched down near the low, stone summit house, and looked off on the wide mystery of mountains and prairie, warmed in places by the sunshine, and in other places blue with the cold cloud shadows.

I did not care to loiter. It was five o'clock, night was near, and I had that long descent to make. After a few minutes I rose lamely and started, and at first the change from climbing was a relief. I went along with hasty strides, digging my heels into the snow, and was rejoiced over my progress. But the air was becoming decidedly chilly, the wind swept unhindered across the bare slopes, and my hands grew stiff and numb. Several times I had to pause and warm them, and affairs did not improve until I reached the timber line. Then



A balanced rock in The Garden of the Gods

the route was less exposed and the air not so keen. My steps were again lagging now, and I had to pause frequently to give my aching muscles a little respite, and to ease my toes, which rebelled at the incessant cramming into the tips of my shoes. The evening gloom was by this time so dense that I was constrained to step carefully, lest I should plunge down into some unexpected depth. Nor could I help recalling that among the denizens of the mountains were certain wild animals whom it might not be pleasant to meet. Finally I was encouraged by the sight of lights in the hollow below, and yet I was not quite certain but that these might be in the infernal regions, I had descended so long. When I dragged myself into the village it was with a vow that I would never make such a climb again for the rest of my days.

The vicinity of the Peak is famous as a summer resort, and most of the mountain climbers go up in warm weather. Pedestrians ordinarily start in the evening, for during the day, the heat in the narrow chasm which the route at first follows, and the glare of the sun on the rocks make walking almost out of the question. Most of those who start do not realize what they are undertaking. In the clear Colorado air the mountain top looks much nearer than it really is, and the walker begins his climb with brisk cheerfulness; but by the time he attains his goal he is ready to swear that the mountain is ten miles high. The warmth in the

valley is uncomfortable; and yet at the summit the thermometer goes down nearly to zero every night. So each climber carries a blanket and a supply of coats and sweaters. A crowd starts out each evening. They are all happy and friendly, and the various groups will be stopping here and there along the way to build fires and make coffee.

“Everything goes pretty well,” said one informant, “till you get to the timber line. Just beyond is what is called Windy Point, where a breeze is always blowing, and it is so cold you are chilled right through, no matter how much clothing you put on. Lots of people, when they get that far, hunt up a spot where they can escape from the gale, and then make a fire, loaf a while, and go back down. Those that keep on wrap up as warm as they can, and as they walk along they think at every curve they’ll see the house at the top, and when they find still another lonely stretch ahead they sigh, ‘Oh, my!’ and stand and rest while they look mournfully up the long steep climb. The first part of the way everyone is jolly and talkative, but the last part they’re all sour and sad. They go up to see the sun rise, but they’re apt to be too tired to really enjoy the sight. The first thing they do when they get to the top is to go into the summit house; for it’s as cold as the dickens outside. Some think they’re freezin’ to death, and hug close up to the stove. That invariably makes ’em sick, while if they warm up gradually they’re all right. When I was there

last and they began to call, 'Hurry and go out—the sun is coming up;' one sick fellow said: 'Oh, goodness! everything else has come up already, and I'm going to stay where I am.' Of course, if the sky is perfectly clear, the sun just rises, and that's all there is to it; but if there are clouds the sight is really grand."

The authentic history of the mountain dates from November 13, 1806, when Major Zebulon Pike, leading a small exploring party of United States soldiers, sighted the white crest from the far east. It required ten days more to reach the base, and after vigorous attempts to scale the mountain Pike abandoned the project with the declaration that: "No human being could ascend to its pinnacle."

The mountain gave Pike, and the other pathfinders and pioneers who followed in his footsteps, the first glad signal that there were limits to the dreary waste of plain. It is an outlying sentinel of the Rockies, and no other peak of these mountains equals it in fame or can rival it as a continental landmark. Considering its height one would expect it to be heavily snow-capped, but there is not enough moisture in the atmosphere to make much precipitation. The snow gathers in permanent drifts in the ravines, yet the white mantle as a whole is usually rather scanty and tattered.

The first permanent settlers of the Colorado mountain region came in 1858. They were attracted by the reports of California emigrants that gold had been

found in the sands of Cherry Creek near the present Denver. One of the men who came at that time told me the story of his experiences. "We had our prairie schooners," said he, "drawn by from two to eight yoke of oxen, and we were three months on the way after leaving the Missouri River. It was slow, tedious traveling. I suppose we saw more buffaloes on that trip than there was cattle in all the world. Some days the plains around would be black with them as far as the eye could reach, and when we turned our cattle out to graze we'd have to stand guard to keep the buffaloes from stampeding them. The creatures continued plentiful for more than a dozen years longer, and I've known engineers on the railroad to stop their trains to let a herd go past. They used to start from northern Texas in the spring and feed along to the Canada line. Then in the fall they'd drift back. But where one buffalo fed in those days we now raise a good beef animal that provides us with meat worth twenty times as much as that of a buffalo. People would shoot the buffaloes for sport from the railroad trains, and their carcasses were strewn everywhere along the tracks. Hunters killed a great many for meat or hides, and people came from all over the world, especially from England, simply to see how large a number they could kill. There'd be a party of English lords, perhaps, each man wanting to kill more than the others, and they'd shoot maybe a thousand a day and keep up the slaughter for a month. The



Working on the road

entire plains were covered with hunting parties, and the decomposition of the carcasses poisoned the air. There was nothing very thrilling in the sport. It was about the same as to ride up beside a herd of cattle and go popping away.

“Of course many buffaloes were also killed by the Indians. They had their annual hunts to lay in a supply of jerked meat; but they were out strictly for victuals, and when that want was supplied they quit, so their hunting alone had no appreciable effect in diminishing the great herds. They looked on it as a task similar to what farm work is to us. It seems to be only the civilized white men who kill for pleasure; and the extermination of the buffaloes was one of the Indians' greatest grievances against us. After the plains were clear of them the fertilizer companies had the bones gathered, and there'd be piles as big as a house waiting at the stations to be shipped. While the animals were plenty everyone all over the United States who owned a team had one or more buffalo robes, and you could get a fairly good one for a dollar and a half, and a really magnificent one for three dollars.

“We brought grub to last for a year. If we failed to find gold in that time we intended to go back; and no matter how lucky we were we didn't want to stay permanently in the country. We thought it was only fit for Indians. My idea was that we could go into a canyon and find the pure gold sand which we would shovel

into our wagons and then turn back East. I didn't expect I'd got to work hard. We prospected with pans, and when things looked promising we'd make sluices and rockers. At several places we laid out town sites. Somebody started a town named Auralia, and then a rival town was planned close by which we called Denver City. It was the most desolate spot on earth, pretty near, and we were afraid the name was about all there'd ever be to the place, and in order to boost it as much as we could we put 'City' on the end. I owned more town lots there than any other man, but I sold out within a few months. We didn't seem to light on the valuable gold deposits we hoped to find, and I became a kind of town speculator. Carpentering was my trade, and as soon as I heard of a new town site being laid out I'd rush there, build a cabin for myself, and get contracts to build others.

“Those early cabins were just hovels with walls of logs, and the cracks chinked with small sticks and mud. The roofs were made of poles slanting down from the peak to the eaves and covered with grass and dirt. For the doors we'd split logs and hew 'em down to rough boards, bore holes and use wooden pins to fasten the boards together. The hinges were of wood or rawhide. We had no glass, and the window openings would be closed with an old sack. I got paid for my work, but most of the towns I was interested in played out.

“Nearly all of the people who came that first season or two were a good deal disgusted over the scarcity of gold. A party met me one day and asked: ‘Well, how long you been here?’

“‘I come a year ago,’ I says.

“‘If you are one of the fellers that’s helped get up this Pike’s Peak excitement,’ they said, ‘I guess we’ll have to hang you.’

“They were joking, but there was a feeling that they’d been fooled, and they called the gold attraction that brought ’em, ‘the Pike’s Peak humbug.’

“Some arrived here with nothing to eat. We couldn’t let ’em starve, and we’d divide with ’em; so they fared just as well as any of us. We could always get plenty of game, but flour, coffee and sugar were a dollar a pound. If food got scarce with us we’d usually rustle around and swap some town lots or mining claims for it. One man settled down near Denver and made a fortune raising potatoes. He was known as ‘Potato Clark.’ For one while I was sick with the scurvy from eating nothing but bacon and hard-tack and poor bread, and I went to Potato Clark’s to stay where I could get cured by eating fresh vegetables. He probably raised twenty acres of potatoes that year, and I figured he got nine hundred bushels to the acre. When he dug ’em they lay so thick they more than covered the ground. Eating raw potatoes and onions drove out the scurvy, and I went back to the mountains.

“Early in 1859 the first big gold find was made by a friend of mine named Gregory. He had been about the poorest man in the country until then, and he was satisfied to sell out for twenty thousand dollars and go back to his home in Georgia. That claim probably couldn't be bought for a million dollars today, after being worked all the years since. Prospectors soon began to come in crowds from the East, and generally they had painted on the wagon cover, 'Pike's Peak or Bust.' They didn't need to bust on account of any serious danger to be encountered until 1864, when an Indian war broke out. The government sent an expedition against the savages, and I was one of the soldiers. We knew they'd got a camp down on Sand Creek, and we travelled three days and two nights to surprise 'em. It was about dawn when we got there, and we rushed in and killed some fifteen hundred men, women, and children. Hardly a one got away alive.

“When Colorado Springs was started in 1871 I joined in the enterprise, and that same year two of us climbed Pike's Peak. We went over much the same ground people do today, only then it was a pathless wilderness. There were lots of fallen trees to climb over, and stretches of swamp to toil through. Late in the day we got to the timber line, wrapped up in a blanket, and lay down. The next morning we went on, but every little while we'd stop exhausted, breath gone and hearts working like fire-pumps. I suppose the view from the top may



Cattle on a Cripple Creek hilltop

give pleasure to some people who make the climb—as for me, I was so terribly fatigued I didn't care about anything except to return. That was comparatively easy, but the trip as a whole was the hardest task I ever undertook in my life, and I was lame for a month. I never could see much fun in climbing, anyway; and yet there are people over at Manitou who take their Alpinestocks and go rambling up and down the steep hills every day, and claim they enjoy it.

“I was attracted by this region from the start. The bright sunny weather that prevailed just suited me, and if we had rain there was no mud, for the water was at once absorbed by the porous soil. The mountains also were an agreeable novelty compared with the country I was used to in the East. Back in my native state of Indiana the climate was as wretched as could be, the air was raw and damp, and there'd be a month at a time, almost, when you didn't cast a shadow, and there wasn't a hill in the state that could be seen at a distance of ten miles. The foundation of Colorado Springs' prosperity is its reputation as a resort for health and pleasure seekers. Otherwise, not enough natural resources exist within twenty miles to support a town of five hundred people.”

Among the scenic attractions of the neighborhood, the most widely known, aside from Pike's Peak, is “The Garden of the Gods.” This overspreads two or three miles of rough hills, and the growths for which

the gods are responsible and which lend the Garden distinction, consist of a great variety of fantastic pillars and ridges of rock, mostly of red sandstone, but with an occasional gray upthrust of gypsum. Several of the pinnacled and grottoed ridges are of very impressive size, the highest over three hundred feet; and in the lofty crannies numerous doves and swift-winged swallows have their nests. Down below, the prairie larks sing, and the robins hop about the ground, and you see an occasional magpie. But to me the greatest pleasure I enjoyed in the Garden was the view I had thence of the brotherhood of giant mountains clustering about the hoary Pike's Peak.

To see the Peak in another aspect, and to get acquainted with life of a different sort from that at its eastern base, I journeyed to Cripple Creek, forty-six miles distant, high among the rugged ridges. The railroad followed up canyons, and clung along the slopes, progressing by long curves so that in places we almost doubled on our course. Much of the time we were in a thin woodland of pines or aspens. The fires had run over a large portion of the heights, yet the timber on the burnt ground was not wholly ruined. In this dry climate decay is slow. A tree killed by the fire and left standing till it is thoroughly dry continues sound for tens of years. No doubt trees killed thus half a century ago are now being hauled from the forest to be used as lumber.

Cripple Creek is a city of six or eight thousand people in a wide mountain hollow. Not a tree grows along the steep, stony, rectangular streets; and the brick blocks of the business center, and the cottages and shacks that serve for dwellings are equally unshadowed. The environing hills are scarcely less bare, and they shut out of sight the mountains that rise in imposing array at no great distance. The other towns in the group that make up this world-famous mining camp are most of them similarly situated in neighboring hollows within a radius of half a dozen miles. Usually the vicinity of the houses is strewn with tin cans and rubbish, while there often loom close at hand the towering dumps of broken rock from the mines. The inhabitants delve for gold. They have no thought for beauty. The dwellings are as a rule only one story high, and some have walls of logs. Serpentine paths and roadways wind up and down the hills, and lines of railway cut many a furrow, one above the other in the steep slopes. It is said that there is a frost at Cripple Creek every week in the year; but this is an exaggeration. In summer the grass grows green on the mountain sides, furnishing excellent grazing for the cattle, and those who choose can start gardens and raise a few vegetables.

The first house in Cripple Creek was built in 1872 by a family of herders. The land was then unsurveyed, and they were simply squatters who owned only the improvements they put on the ground. These improve-

ments consisted of the house and a few outbuildings, all of logs. They had fifteen hundred cattle, which ranged over a territory about eight miles long by four broad. I asked a member of the family whom I met, how the place got its name.

“Well,” he said, “soon after we came here, my brother fell off the house and got pretty badly mashed up. A little later, the horse that a cowboy who worked for us was riding r’ared up and keeled over backward breaking the fellow’s leg. Then my father one day run across a buffalo calf in with the cows, and he was going to shoot the creature, but as he was drawing his pistol he in some way discharged it and maimed his hand. These accidents led the cowboys to call the little stream in the hollow, on the banks of which we lived, Cripple Creek. We stayed only three years and then disposed of most of our cattle, sold our buildings, and moved to another valley.

“One of the boys in the family that bought us out got the idea that this was a gold-bearing country, and he was always prospecting. That stirred up some interest, and there was more or less searching for gold right along afterward. But the old-fashioned prospectors who looked around here condemned the region. The rock was porphery and granite, and gold had never been found in such rock; so the pioneer discoveries were made by tenderfoots who had no theories. Nothing important was brought to light till 1890, and that made

no excitement, for the experts continued to be pessimistic, and even after we were shipping two or three hundred thousand dollars worth of ore a month they still claimed that only a few chance veins existed, which would soon play out. But after a while the public got interested, and people were jumping in here from far and near. They staked the whole country. All you had to do to secure a claim was to blaze a tree or set up some sort of mark and run your lines fifteen hundred feet from there in one direction and three hundred in the other. Naturally the claims often overlapped each other. The first comer had the best rights, but there was lots of litigation. To hold your claim you had to sink a shaft ten feet deep, or in some way do a hundred dollars worth of work on it each year. You must also have discovered a vein of ore, but as any sort of a vein was considered an ore vein until it was proved otherwise that was no hindrance. Actual mining was not carried on very vigorously for several years. Most claim owners seemed content to incorporate companies for a million or two and make money selling stock. It was simply a boost business, and often the claims were good for nothing anyway.

“The gold occurs here in streaks running from below upward. There seemed to have been a kind of golden blowout, and in one spot you'll find a vein of gold and a little beyond not a trace. The area of payrock appears to be limited to a patch about three miles across; but

the country is full of prospect holes for ten miles around. That means a tremendous amount of wasted labor. Probably there was never a more profitable gold camp than this, and yet if we get on the average one dollar for ten expended we think we're doing well. However, the lucky fellows become immensely rich, and it's just a legitimate gamble.

“The city here grew very fast when it got started, until by and by we had a fire that nearly destroyed it. The buildings were all of wood, but the trouble was with our volunteer fire department. Everyone was telling everyone else what to do, and no one was doing anything effective. The fire started in a shack with a corrugated iron roof, and the boys wasted their energy playing the water on that red hot iron and hearing it sizz, instead of getting inside to business. So the fire spread and wiped out a big piece of the town.”

Another blow to the prosperity of the region was the great strike of 1904. I frequently heard of this, and differing opinions were expressed, but no one seemed to take much pride in any of the events connected with it. One miner who talked with me very frankly said the relations of the employers and their help had from the first been far from satisfactory. “We had a rough, wild crowd here,” said he, “and some of 'em thought nothing of killing a man and then throwing him down an old shaft where he'd never be heard from. There was lots of high-grading going on—that is, there were fellows steal-



Sorting over the old mine dumps

ing high-grade ore. They'd go down abandoned workings and hike around through into a mine where the ore was valuable. The mines were worked in two shifts, and they'd plan to do their stealing when the only person on duty was the watchman. He couldn't keep track of the whole mine, and the high-graders were able to load up with ore and get away. The regular mine workers were high-graders, too. They'd hide the ore in their clothing, and even though the mine owners knew of the stealing they didn't dare say a word for fear the miners would strike.

“By and by a worthless, no-account walloper was fired from an ore mill at Colorado Springs. The union here took up the matter, and when the mill owners wouldn't reinstate the man, the miners all quit work. Non-union men were brought in, and a lot of 'em were dynamited at the Independence railway station. Then the soldiers came and there were guns flashing around everywhere, and the women didn't dare put their noses out of their doors. Some men were deported and others went away of their own accord, and the union, after monkeying around a long time, gave up the fight. At present there are more workers than work, so the employers have things their own way, and this is a regular slave camp.”

The old boom days when everyone had money, and speculation and ferment were omnipresent will probably never return. This is not due entirely to the strike,

but would have come in the natural course of events. The mines produce more than ever before, but they have installed the latest labor-saving devices, and often several have combined to work their holdings in common. As a result one man perhaps accomplishes as much as five did a few years ago, the inhabitants have decreased, and the towns have a rusty, battered look that is far from cheerful. The town that has suffered most seems to be Altman, which is on one of the bleakest hilltops. But to compensate for its broken-windowed dilapidation it enjoys a noble outlook on the mountains. In one direction is the Great Divide, a long range of blue-based, snowy pinnacles, and in the other, near at hand, is Pike's Peak lifting its white crown far into the blue. This lonely sentinel, indeed, dominates the region for a hundred miles around.

NOTE.—Pike's Peak is the best known height in the Rockies. Its name is familiar everywhere; and this fact alone is a sufficient reason for desiring to see it with one's own eyes. Partly because of this attraction, and partly because of other favors bestowed by nature, the section of country immediately to the east of the mountain is one of the most notable pleasure resorts of the continent. Colorado Springs, the chief town of the region, is in its way very nearly ideal, with fine buildings, broad tree-lined streets and pleasant parks, and a beautiful view of the great snow-capped Peak and its companion heights. Close by is the Garden of the Gods, and the picturesque Cheyenne Canyon. At the base of the Peak is the village of Manitou in a graceful vale encompassed by cathedral hills and with the added attraction of sparkling, health-giving mineral springs. Many delightful rambles and carriage drives are possible, and the Peak invites you to climb, if you wish to do something very strenuous.

East of the foothills are the plains; but these are too forbiddingly arid to possess much interest. If you would see agricultural Colorado at its best, journey north to Greeley or some other place in the valley of the South Platte. There irrigation and industry have made a wonderfully thriving farming region.

For an attraction of another sort, go from Colorado Springs to Cripple Creek by the railroad that winds up over the wild chaos of mountains. On the grim uplands you find men searching for gold and tearing up the earth and burying the land beneath vast dumps of broken stone. But as a typical Rocky Mountain mining camp, easily accessible and with world-wide fame it is well worth visiting.

VIII

IN THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES

THE mountains that form the backbone of the continent are not a single series of ridges, or a closely huddled line of peaks; but there are many half-related ranges and groups of rough upheavals that are widely separated, or that have among them frequent great pastoral valleys. Some of the valleys are fully fifty miles long and nearly as wide, and are open grazing and farm land. Whether large or small, a mountain valley of this type is called "a park;" and it was in one of the lesser parks that I made my first stop, after passing through the wild and impressive canyon of the Royal Gorge that gashes the eastern buttresses of the mountains. The gentle levels of the vale, its trees feathering into new leafage along the streams, its cultivated fields and blossoming orchards were delightful—the more so, no doubt, because they were rimmed about by dark, wooded heights, and were guarded at a somewhat remoter distance by the white peaks of the Great Divide. At least half a dozen snow-clad summits were in sight, each over fourteen thousand feet high.

The winter was not entirely vanquished yet, and the mountains were often obscured by drifting snowsqualls that sometimes descended into the valley and sprinkled the earth with quick-melting flakes. To these frosty flurries the farmers paid no attention, but went on putting in their crops and hoeing their gardens. Some of the local dwellers complained that the seasons were too short, but as a whole they were contented and even enthusiastic. "This is the best place the sun shines on," declared one man; "and we have more bright days than anywhere else on earth."

He had left an Eastern city to seek health, and had found it in the high, dry air and out-door life he led in this Rocky Mountain park. His wife worked with him in the fields, and they were happy and prosperous and had no desire to become city dwellers again.

"But we have to irrigate to raise any crops," said he, "and that ain't no such easy job as a good many people back East imagine. They seem to think all you've got to do is to turn a faucet to make it rain all over your farm, and that then you can go and lay down. But we have to plough and harrow, and we have to fight the weeds, and there's lots of digging necessary to make water ditches and keep 'em in order."

Then, changing the subject, he added: "You ought to climb that mountain over to the southward. It's the highest one around here, except those with the snow on 'em, and you can see the whole world at one sweep from the top of it."

However, I preferred to keep to the valley. Its chief highway was known as the old Leadville Trail, and in the early days before the railroad was built this had been a very populous thoroughfare. At one point was an ancient "roadhouse" or tavern, now verging on dilapidation, but impressive by reason of its size and its connection with a stirring and romantic past. In the gold excitement days it was always crowded, and many travellers paid fifty cents each for the privilege of sleeping in their own blankets on the piazza.

One man, whose parents came to the vicinity at that period and settled on a cattle ranch, told me something of his experiences. "I was a boy then," said he, "and I used to sell buttermilk to the Leadville freighters. They'd have their white prairie schooners with two or three spans of horses or mules attached, and generally went in bands, several together, and camped nights by the roadside.

"We often saw wild horses up in the hills, and the fellows would build a corral with wing fences in order to capture 'em. As soon as there was a good chance, the boys would circle around the broncos and work 'em down to the fences and into the corral. When they were out running loose they looked like nice horses; but in actual use they weren't very desirable in most ways. Yet they were so nimble and tough they couldn't be beat for the cattle business. The worst thing about 'em was that you'd got to break 'em over again every time

you rode 'em. My father bought one for me when I was about fifteen years old. I knew more then than I ever shall again, and I picked her out myself. 'There's a dandy,' I says.

"The man we bought her of claimed she was good and gentle and all that. So I expected she'd be quiet as a lamb; but, whatever her temper, I wore big cowboy spurs and was equal to anything. As it happened, she proved to be a Virginia rail fence buckler. She didn't buck straight ahead, but would give side jumps, first this way, then that, and stiff-legged too. I hadn't been on her back half a minute before I was thrown off. As soon as I could pick myself up I mounted once more, and the bronco got ready to go after me. Up she went into the air, and when I was comin' down I met her goin' up on the next trip. But I hung on till the horse tossed her head back and hit me in the nose. That took all the ginger out of me, and I was ready to quit. I owned her for a number of years, but I never could tell when I got on her which way the hurricane was goin' to strike me. Once she carried me straight across an eighty acre field as tight as she could go and tried to jump a wire fence. Her heels caught in the wires, and she would have been badly hurt only she got so beautifully tangled up she couldn't struggle.

"The worst proposition I ever had was a mule, and there's nothing tougher or meaner on earth unless it's two mules. The first time I got a-hold of her we were

hauling dry peas out of a field, and you know how those'll rattle. I hitched her to the tail end of the wagon rack, and she had to come right along whether she liked the rattling or not. But after a while she made a plunge sideways that cut the rope against the edge of the rack, and she made off for the range. I wore out one horse and almost wore out another before I caught her. From time to time afterward I tried breaking her, but I couldn't get her under control. You might just as well ride on a steam engine. She'd run about two hundred yards and stop, and if you weren't on the alert you'd go over her head. Finally I traded her off, and she changed hands pretty rapidly for the future. At last she got away with a saddle on her and led the owner such a chase that he shot her in order to get the saddle.

“We had a range of about a thousand acres, and kept something like a hundred cattle—let 'em run. It was rather discouraging there were so many losses. During the winter the cattle became lean and weak, and in the spring they'd get into mudholes and not have the strength to wade out. Some were stolen, and others were destroyed by the railway trains. You see the track melted free of snow sooner than most of the land around. So at night the cattle would lie down on it to keep warm and dry; and if they chose a spot that the train come on suddenly from around a curve they'd be run over.



The farmer and his helpmate

“We raised alfalfa and cut considerable wire grass on the low ground, and we could have fed the cattle some in the bad weather of the cold months. But that wasn’t economy. It made the cattle expect to be fed right along, and they’d hang around and bawl instead of getting out on the range to rustle for themselves. The horses were able to stand exposure better than the cattle. They could wade through the snow easier, and go much farther for food, and they’d come down from the mountains in the spring in pretty good shape and as shaggy as sheep.

“Our hardest work was in June and September when we had our roundups. The whole country was laid off in roundup districts, and the ranchers would combine to do the work. We’d have a grub wagon along; and one rancher would furnish the team, and another the wagon, and we’d all chip into supply the food. Each day we’d go over ten or fifteen miles of country and drive the cattle to some central point agreed on; and I tell you it ain’t what it’s cracked up to be—this keeping in the saddle hour after hour from early morning till the middle of the afternoon. The June roundup was for calves, and each day when the drive was finished we’d grab a little to eat and go to branding. We’d have a lot of branding irons in the fire, and there’d perhaps be a dozen fellows, and we didn’t stop till all the calves in the drive were branded even if it took us till after dark. Each calf was branded the same as the

cow it was running with. The September roundup was to pick out the creatures we wanted to sell for beef. It's astonishing how widely scattered even a little herd gets; for a long storm will drift 'em horribly. I'd have to be out at least a week to cover the ground where our cattle were likely to wander.

“Around our home were a few acres that we irrigated. We had a very good water right; for we'd filed on it early. You were allowed to file on as much water as you could reasonably use on your land. But it was first come, first served, and in a dry time the later arrivals suffered. The water right is the most important item in the value of a farm here, and has often been a cause of bloodshed. For instance, my wife's father, who was a quiet, law-abiding man in every way, had some dispute with a neighbor over their water claims and was shot at from a fence near which he was digging a ditch. The bullet went through his blouse. With only a shovel in his hands he ran and drove off the fellow who'd done the shooting.

“A night or two later his house was set on fire, and when he came hurrying out to see what he could do to save his property he was shot dead. His wife dragged him beyond reach of the flames, extinguished the fire, and rode off to get help. A vigilance committee started for the home of the murderer, but they got a little too hilarious on the way, and were so slow, someone had time to give the fellow the wink, and he escaped. We had

some rough doings in those days, and every old-timer used to keep a revolver hanging on his bedpost."

Now, however, life in the valley is scarcely less peaceful than nature itself, and I left this pleasant region doubting whether I would find another among the mountains equally attractive. Certainly Leadville, my next stopping-place, was not such a spot. When I arrived in the late evening the snow was steadily sifting down from a sky where, behind a thin haze of cloud, the full moon shone dimly.

"We have snow every month in the year," commented a native. "This is a funny country. Once it snowed like sixty on the Fourth of July."

Leadville lies at an elevation of over ten thousand feet, and is sometimes spoken of as "the town above the clouds." Winter seemed to have the whole region in its chill grip on my first morning there, and a frosty wind blew from the big bleak hills and frozen mountains roundabout. But the snow which covered the ground melted rapidly, and by noon the town emerged from its white robes in all its usual dinginess. The larger part of the place is a treeless huddle of frail cottages and shanties, many of which are dilapidated and vacant. However, it is only fair to say that much of the business section has an air of well-built permanence, and there are certain residence streets, where the homes, in size, architecture, and surroundings, are suggestive of comfort and refinement.

A peculiarity of the mines of the district is the great variety of metals they produce. These include silver, gold, zinc, lead, iron, and copper. But it was gold that first attracted miners to the region. For several years they delved in the gulches, and washed the silt in their pans and cradles and troughs without getting any phenomenal returns. The excitement began in the spring of 1878 when ore remarkably rich in lead and silver was discovered. "Then," as an old miner explained to me, "people began pilin' in here from all parts of the world. They came in wagons and on horseback and in the stages, and by 1881 we had a city of thirty-seven thousand inhabitants. This used to be a pretty lively country, but it's dead now.

"My pardner and I were among the early comers, and we located in California Gulch and put up a tent to live in. But the tent was just temporary, and in the course of a few weeks we built a log cabin. Later I fixed up a shanty of slabs right in the sagebrush where the heart of the city now is, and I fenced it in, too. Pretty soon afterward I went off to work in another camp for a few months, and when I came back, cabin, fence and all were gone. I knew where they were, but it meant gun play to get possession. So I said, 'Never mind.'

"The place was crowded. Why, Lord! you could hardly get through the streets there were so many people and teams, and the noise never stopped, day or night. Little sawmills were stuck up here and there, but they



Game in sight

couldn't get out lumber fast enough, and men would take slabs or anything else to build their shanties. Often they made the sides of boards and the roof of canvas and got along that way. Every man brought blankets, and quite a few just wrapped up and slept under trees, or in the saloons. The saloons were open all night, and there'd be fellows lying around on the sawdust-strewn floor so thick you could hardly step between them. In the morning they'd roll up their blankets and go about their business. There was no charge. It was a sort of advertisement that brought the saloon custom. A gambling den was always run in connection with the saloon, and there were plenty of dives ready to rob anyone they could get hold of. It was a rough place, and the mortality was blamed bad, too. But in three or four years they cleaned up some, and if the police found a man with a gun they run him in. After that there was more reason for being scairt back in the Eastern cities than there was here.

“The men living in tents usually cooked their meals outside over an open fire, but you'd find a sheet-iron stove in most of the cabins. A frying-pan and pot were about the extent of our cooking utensils. The meat we ate was nearly all bacon and ham, and navy beans were a great standby. We didn't use much butter or milk, and it was darn seldom we got any potatoes.

“Wherever a new mining camp was started, the lawyers and doctors came in with the swim. There'd

be about a couple each of lawyers and snide doctors, even if there wa'n't more'n fifty men in the camp. The ministers wouldn't arrive till later; but it was a good business proposition for them, too. Money was as free as water, and when a church was to be built, or a bell bought, the minister would make the rounds of the gambling hells and other places to get contributions, and the fellows would all dish out. Even if they never went to church they'd give just the same. The Irish were church-goers, but the balance of the gang—no. Perhaps everyone would turn out to a revival and throw in a little boodle—from one to five dollars apiece. That's as near, though, as they came to bein' religious; and yet I've never seen a crowd like there is in this town when it comes to givin' every religion a show, even if they don't care about any of 'em. One night a drunken fellow went to interfere with a Salvation Army service. As often as they'd start to sing or preach he'd butt in. But the crowd soon put a stop to his nonsense. They kicked him all over the street, and then he was thrown into jail.

“While the mining excitement was at its height it was queer how eager people were to invest. They had an idea, if they could get a claim most anywhere within a few miles of where the big finds were made, their future fortune was sure. ‘Can't you put me onto something?’ a stranger would say to you; and if you were at all acquainted with the region you'd go and show him a

spot that hadn't been taken up. In an hour's time you'd very likely get for the assistance rendered two or three hundred dollars. Lots of these investors would sink a shaft fifty feet or so, and then go away and never be heard of afterward.

"I used to have a third interest in one of the best claims here. If I hadn't sold out I'd have been a millionaire. My partners were Charlie Jones and a man named Robinson. By and by Robinson wanted to buy us out, and about that time Charlie went on a tear, and one morning when he'd been drinking all night we found him dead behind the stove. Then Robinson went right off East to Charlie's relatives and bought out his interest for seventeen hundred dollars. He wanted to bulldoze me into selling at his price, too.

"We had a gang of lawyers here who were always ready to take up your quarrels. 'I'll win for you,' they'd say, and encourage you to spend your money, even if you had no chance at all. I engaged one of 'em, but before the case came up for trial and showed whether he was any good, Robinson settled with me for thirty thousand dollars.

"A while later he had some trouble with the superintendent at the mine and turned him off and stationed guards with orders to let no one they didn't know approach the property. But one evening he walked up to the mine himself, and the guard didn't recognize him in the darkness. Robinson paid no attention when he was

ordered to stop, and the guard banged away and wounded him so badly that he only lived a day or two afterward. But Robinson never blamed the guard, who he said had simply done his duty, and he willed him a thousand dollars. However, the guard worried considerable over what had happened, and though he was naturally sober and industrious he took to drink and was good for nothing afterward.

“Well, I had all that money I spoke of, and I went to Denver and bought a home. I was goin’ to quit mining, but the first thing I knew I was in deeper than ever, and the money slipped away. That’s how it is in mining—easy made and easy gone. Some of my old friends made millions, and yet died poor. You see they’d get to speculating, and everybody was after ’em when they had money. ‘We’ve got a deal on,’ the fellows would say, ‘and will give you a chance;’ and most every deal made a hole in the fortune. There was Finnerty had three hundred thousand dollars and lost it horse-racing; and there was John Morrisey, Diamond Joe’s pardner. He got to be very rich though he couldn’t read or write. Why, he carried an expensive watch, but was too ignorant to tell the time of day by it. You ask him the time, and he’d take out his watch sayin’, ‘I do’ know—about so and so,’ making as good a guess as he could. Then turning it toward you he’d say, ‘and to show you I ain’t lyin’, look yourself.’



A placer miner in a Leadville gulch

“Once the priest asked him to help buy a chandelier for the church. ‘A chandelier’—says John, ‘sure, that there church ought to have one. Put me down for a hundred dollars. But who are you goin’ to get to play it?’

“He was prosperous until some dirty trick of his made Diamond Joe drop him. After that he went to the dogs. His friends deserted him, his wife got a divorce, and he died a pauper; but we saw that he had a nice burial.

“That shows the way things have gone at the mines here; and the town has had its ups and downs, too. You may think it’s destined to be wiped off the map presently, but I tell you it’ll be a camp after we’re all dead and gone.”

Probably nothing like the spectacular boom of the early days will be known at Leadville again; but it will be a long, long time before the region ceases to be a wealth-producer.

Still another place that I visited among the tangled heights near the crest of the continent was a hamlet some fifty miles farther west, deep in a wild hollow. Two or three streams met just there, and they were crowded so closely by the steep ridges that rose around as to afford the village only the slenderest foothold. If you followed the streams back into the hills you were sometimes in forest, sometimes amid beetling cliffs, while the water hastened down the ravine with many a

foaming leap and tumultuous rapid. Here and there you came across a mine or a little sawmill, and at rare intervals occurred marshy meadows and possibly a rude ranch with a few scanty fields. In favorable places you saw great white peaks peering over the near slopes. The most notable of these is the Mountain of the Holy Cross; but the emblem which gives the peak its name does not appear till nearly midsummer. Then the snow has melted from the high cliffs and is only retained in two deep ravines that form a cross. This continues in view until the late fall when the snows again take possession of the entire crest.

The situation of the village was quite delightful, but its huddled double line of cheap angular wooden buildings had not the least touch of grace. Luckily the mines were beyond view. Most of them were down the main canyon clinging along the face of a vast precipice.

One day, after a long tramp among the hills, I sat down in the village drug store. A young woman was in charge, and she was as ready to impart information as to serve customers. Trade was not very brisk. A man came in to buy a bottle of patent medicine, a housewife invested in a box of rat poison, and a young fellow selected a dime's worth of candy to which he treated the girl who sold it. Afterward the candy-buyer lit a cigaret and backed up to the stove with his hands behind him as if to warm himself. Thereupon the girl chaffed him, for there was no fire in the stove.



A chat on the highway

“But I don’t blame you, Charlie,” she continued. “A person gets used to thinkin’ it’s cold here in this place. Heavens! what winters we have! It’s nothing at all to get up and find the thermometer twenty and thirty below zero. The snow lasts from November to April. But the grass and things grow fast when they once start. There’s flowers blossoming before you know it. Oh my goodness! the clusters of anemones come right out of the snow, almost. In another month the hills where the sheep and cattle graze will be just covered with columbine.”

“Where were you last evening?” asked Charlie.

“The moon shone,” said she, “and it was such a pretty night that I went for a walk. But we certainly are hemmed in here. You can’t go far without getting into the wilderness. There’s only the one street, and at each end it runs smack up against a mountain. I don’t know where we would put another building, and I’m not sure we can keep all that we have now. Lately the mountain seems to be comin’ down and crowding our church out into the street. That’s a funny thing to happen, and I’ve had more laughs about it than a few.

“I believe there’s about two hundred people in the place when they’re all at home, but half of ’em are generally gone; and yet we can support three saloons. Yes, and we have two weekly newspapers, but one of ’em is so weakly we’re never sure there’ll be another issue. Then, too, there’s our hack. The railroad station had to be put farther down the crick because of

lack of room in the village, and as soon as you get off the train they ask if you want a hack. But when you look around—gee! you find only an express wagon. We have an opera house, and sometimes a show company drops off here. That's happened only once though in the last six months. Of course pretty near everyone went—you bet they did! I wished I hadn't afterward. It was something awful—the rottenest show I ever saw in my life. Saturday night, a week ago, we had an ice-cream social at the church—fifteen cents a dish, and a dance at the opera house afterward. The entertainment kept going till half-past one, and I thought they must be pretty good church members to eat and dance over into Sunday.

“We dance quite a little in the winter—anything for a pastime! Often there's as many as twenty-five couples. We use the old schoolhouse. It isn't good for much else since they've put up the new one. An organ and violin furnish music, and we have three big lamps for light. Once in a while a four-horse load of young people drive up Turkey Crick to a dance at Clifftop. It's claimed they've got a better floor there than here; but that's never induced me to go. Gee whiz! the road don't look any too good in the daytime, and of course it's icy and slippery, and we might slide off down into the canyon.”

These elucidations made it evident that though a stranger might fancy the village to be rather oppressively secluded, its life was not without piquancy and

a somewhat varied enjoyment. As for its surroundings, their wild charm could hardly be excelled.

NOTE.—The most picturesque passage through the mountains on any of our several great transcontinental railroad routes is that of the Denver and Rio Grande. It is by way of the magnificent Royal Gorge whose towering cliffs form one of the most impressive of canyons. This is the gateway to western Colorado—a broken region of tremendous mountain ranges intermitting with many a sheltered pastoral valley. Any of these valleys will amply repay a visit, but I would mention Salida and Buena Vista as places that especially appealed to me.

By turning a little aside from the main route one can visit Leadville in its lofty eyrie. The chief attraction of the town is its reputation as a mining camp, though the surrounding region is not without considerable scenic beauty.

In the late summer and early autumn a pause at Red Cliff, about fifty miles west of Leadville, is to be recommended. The little village itself with its Swiss-like environment is quite delightful, and the Mountain of the Holy Cross is at that season in all its glory. The mountain can be glimpsed from the railroad, but a really intimate acquaintance with it necessitates a somewhat arduous trip of a dozen miles back into the woods from Red Cliff.

Still farther west is the well-known health resort of Glenwood Springs in a beautiful valley surrounded by forest-clad hills. Another place worthy of special notice is Grand Junction, in the vicinity of which is some of the most productive fruit country to be found in the entire Rocky Mountain region.

IX

LIFE IN A MORMON VILLAGE

IT was an old-fashioned little place—one of the early settlements near the shores of the Great Salt Lake.

Close behind rose a steep, lofty mountain ridge. Tall Lombardy poplars lined the streets and stood in stately rows along the borders of the fields, while the houses nestled amid apple, cherry, peach, and other fruit trees. The dwellings were apt to be small, but their vernal setting of trees and vines made them quite idyllic. Irrigation ditches networked the whole region, and the life-giving water flowed in swift streams on one side or the other of every street. In the open country roundabout were broad acres of wheat and alfalfa, and luscious pastures.

During my stay in the village I lodged in one of the Mormon homes. It was on a grassy lane a little off the chief street, and was snugly fenced from the encroachment of the cows that grazed in the lane for a time both morning and evening. The main part of the house was of adobe, but there was a newer portion of wood. None of it was over one story high, and the crudity of its appointments can be judged by the fact, that to wash



At the back door of an adobe house

my hands and face I had to resort to the little shed kitchen, where there was a tin basin on a stand, and a pail of water on a chair. The dirty water was thrown out of the back door.

From beneath the trees that shadowed the house I could see the Salt Lake far off across the lowlands, and beyond the silvery water were lines of high blue ridges crowned with snow. One morning I started out to get a nearer view of the lake, and a three-mile walk across the marshy lowlands took me to a wide stretch of oozy beach that stopped my farther progress. I was a little disappointed because I wanted to taste the water. It could hardly be very palatable, for it is about twenty-five per cent salt—a per cent only exceeded by the Dead Sea in Palestine. Yet the lake is not always equally salty; for it has periods of rising and falling that extend somewhat regularly over a series of years. Between the lowest and the highest level there is a difference of sixteen feet, and the saltiness of the water varies accordingly. This has been down to eleven per cent, the record for dilution, while the other extreme is over three times that amount. Salt from the lake, obtained by evaporation, is shipped away in vast quantities.

Some ten thousand or more years ago the lake was a magnificent body of fresh water the size of Lake Huron, and its outlet was by way of the Columbia River into the Pacific Ocean. Since that time the climate has become

arid, and the lake has gradually dried up from over a thousand feet deep to about twenty feet, and it has less than a tenth of its original area.

The salt makes the water very heavy, and the waves roll with a lazy motion, but with tremendous force. A person can lie flat on his back in the water, and a third of his body will be above the surface. There are no fish in the lake, and life is confined to a little shrimp about a fourth of an inch long and a small worm. Hundreds of the shrimps are found in every bucket of water, and in the season the water is milky with the eggs of these creatures. Except at that time the water is as clear as crystal.

The vicinity by the lakeshore that I visited did not entice me to linger. It was almost bare of trees; and there were gulls flying about, and numerous snipe, and a few heron and sandpipers, whose lonely cries hastened my inclination to return to the town.

The place seemed very effectively sheltered from rude gales by its trees and the lofty ridge behind; and yet my landlady said: "The east wind is often a regular hurricane here in the autumn. It takes roofs off and blows barns to pieces and breaks down the apple trees; and it will just keep up that way for three or four days. We have storms other times, too. Only last week it snowed here like the dickins; and it's very seldom that we don't get a snowstorm in May. Some of the storms



On the shore of the Great Salt Lake

seem fearful at the time, but they don't do such damage as to prevent the people being mostly pretty prosperous."

The family with which I was stopping ordinarily consisted of Mrs. Dutton, my landlady, and two daughters. There had, however, been a full dozen of children, and though the others had married and established homes of their own, some of them were frequently dropping in to call, and occasionally might stay for a meal or spend the night. They were a lively clan and had a breezy Western way of talking that was characterized by a good deal of slangy vigor. Mrs. Dutton herself was a kind-hearted, motherly old body to whom the tumultuous ebullitions of her progeny were at times disturbing, but she was not without energy and a keen tongue. "You're gettin' crazier every day!" she would declare, addressing her daughters; "I'd have you to know, though, that I'm boss of this shebang, and I won't be run over."

One day a tramp came begging at the kitchen door, and she fed him. "Perhaps I ought not to have done it," she philosophized afterward, "but I can't turn a tramp off to save my soul. Brigham Young used to say: 'There's three kinds of poor—the Lord's poor, the devil's poor, and the poor devils.' That is, the worthy poor, the vicious poor, and those who are shiftless and incapable. He said each class ought to be treated differently; and that some of the poor shouldn't be helped

at all. But if a man says he's hungry I can't do anything only feed him, no matter what he is."

While we were talking two of her grandchildren wandered in, and I asked her how many she had in all. She hesitated. "To tell you the truth, I've forgot," said she, and began to reckon up—eleven in one family, nine in another, five in another and so on.

The two children, a boy and a girl, were quite small, and presently the landlady's daughter Dora took them in hand to tidy up their hair. She got along all right with the boy; but there seemed to be molasses or something of the sort in the little girl's flossy tresses, and no sooner was the combing started than the child doubled over and began to cry. "Shut up, miss!" said the young lady. "Quit your bawling!"

"Don't cry, lovey," begged grandma. "Why Dora, she's just a-sobbing—for goodness sake!"

"She's trying to cry, and that's all there is of it," affirmed Dora. "Stop it, you little stink! If your mother was here she'd slap you!"

At last the process was completed and the children were free to play. About that time their mother arrived. "Everybody's always thought this was a slow old town," she remarked; "but it's coming out of its kinks now. They're going to get power from a stream on the mountain and light the place with electricity."

"Well, my gosh!" exclaimed Dora, "that will make this place quite modern."

“I see you are wearing one of those new-fashioned wide-brimmed hats,” said Mrs. Dutton.

“Yes,” assented the newcomer, whom the others addressed as Angeline, “everybody has to have ’em now; but I tried this on mother, and her small face under such a wide brim looked just like a peanut.”

“Winnie Snell is going to be married next week,” observed Dora.

“I’ve expected that would be the outcome all along,” said Angeline. “It’s too bad. He’s about the poorest piece of humanity she could pick up. He may be good and all that, but he’s sickly. Her folks have kept up the darndest row ever since he began going with her, and they’ve tried their best to keep ’em apart. So of course they was bound to have each other, and you couldn’t have pried ’em apart with an iron bar. If ever my daughter has a beau that I don’t like I’ll have him in the house to breakfast, dinner, and supper and let her get so much of his company she’ll be tired of him; but the guy I do want her to have I’ll just about kick out of the back door to make the match certain.”

“Winnie is a good Mormon,” commented Mrs. Dutton; “but I don’t think the fellow is.”

“That’s all right,” said Angeline. “I’m not a good Mormon either, though there’s lots of elders and bishops and other church officers in our family. What they tell about the way the Mormon religion started sounds like a fairy tale to me.”

“It’s all true—every word of it,” asserted Mrs. Dutton. “The things that happened to Joseph Smith are just as easy to believe as what you read in the Bible. You’ll find the Bible says: ‘In the last days the gospel shall be revealed.’ That’s what was done through our prophet Joseph Smith. He began to be troubled about religion when he was only a boy, and one time in his bedroom there come over him such a darkness as nearly strangled him. That was the devil. Afterward he was surrounded by a great glory of light. That was God; and the boy asked which of the different religions was right. God said that none of ’em were right, but he would reveal to him the true religion written on some plates of gold buried in a certain hill. Joseph went to the hill and got the plates. When he began to preach the new religion he was persecuted, and once when the mob was after him he hid the golden plates in a barrel of beans to save ’em from destruction. I don’t see anything about all that but what a person can believe easy enough; and there’s no other religion I’d accept in the place of Mormonism.”

Angeline was still unconvinced; but she said she was going to sit down sometime and read the Book of Mormon through to see what she could make of it. At present she was unregenerate enough to have the opinion that there were “more hypocrites in the Mormon church than out of it,” that most intelligent Mormons were really as skeptical as she was, and that business or



Mormon Maidens

social motives were all that kept them nominally faithful. She mentioned polygamy, which used to be a part of the Mormon teaching.

“Well,” said Mrs. Dutton, “I didn’t like that myself. None of the women did. If a husband took more than one wife it always made bad feeling in a family. He was expected to treat every wife alike; but I’m afraid that was expecting too much; and even if he succeeded, a woman didn’t want to share her man with another woman.”

“Brigham Young had eighteen wives,” said Angeline, “and I guess he’d have liked to have a few more. There was an aunt of mine he saw and wanted to marry; but though her parents were good Mormons, that didn’t suit ’em. They kept her hid in a cellar for two weeks and then sent her off to relatives in the East. Brigham Young persuaded father that he ought to take another wife himself; but when he told mother, didn’t she make him sashay around! She got him to move to another town.”

“My husband never seemed to have any inclination that way,” remarked Mrs. Dutton; “and I never coaxed him to take another wife—that’s a sure thing! If he had brought one home maybe I’d have acted like the very old deuce as so many other women did. I’m glad polygamy is a thing of the past.”

The church is the most vital element in the village life, and I imagined I should find the “meeting-house”

as they call it, a rather conspicuous building; but it was very plain, without spire, or dome, or bell, and though close to a chief thoroughfare, had such narrow grounds and was so hidden by a martial company of poplars as to be scarcely noticeable. There were three services every Sunday—the Sunday-school in the morning, preaching for adults in the afternoon, and a young people's meeting in the evening. As all the services are lengthy this may seem rather strenuous, yet the day is far from being Puritanical. There is much loitering and visiting, the boys play ball and pitch quoits, and the young men take the girls to ride and sit up with them far into the night.

The Sunday that I was in the village was pleasant, but cool, and at the morning service the interior of the thick-walled stone church was decidedly chilly. At one end of the main room where we gathered for the general exercises was a platform of generous size on which was a pulpit, a desk, and a score or so of chairs. In an adjoining corner was a small pipe organ and seats for the choir. Rows of settees occupied most of the floor space, and in the midst of them was a tall stove.

The preliminary exercises consisted chiefly of singing, into which the audience entered with great heartiness. The songs inculcated the love of good, of nature, home and country, but I observed an occasional hymn in the book used that had an individuality peculiar to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. One such ran thus ;

“I’ll be a little ‘Mormon,’ and seek to know the ways
That God has taught his people in these the latter days.
I know that he has blessed me with mercies rich and kind,
And I will strive to serve him with all my might and
mind.

“By sacred revelation which he to us has given,
He tells us how to follow the ancient saints to heav’n.
Though I am young and little, I, too, may have forthwith
To love the precious gospel revealed to Joseph Smith.

“With Jesus for the standard a sure and perfect guide,
And Joseph’s wise example what can I need beside?
I’ll strive from ev’ry evil to keep my heart and tongue,
I’ll be a little Mormon and follow Brigham Young.”

Here also is a verse from a song which shows the trend of Mormon teaching in the matter of temperance.

“That the children may live long
And be beautiful and strong,
Tea and coffee and tobacco they despise,
Drink no liquor, and they eat
But a very little meat,
They are seeking to be great and good and wise.”

These principles are not merely a matter of juvenile sing-song, but are preached from the pulpit and incorporated in the church manuals.

I was surprised to find that the sacrament was celebrated in Sunday-school; but it seems this is a part of each of the three services every Sunday. Water is used instead of wine and each distributor carries along a tall silver tankard from which to replenish the goblet that passes from hand to hand. All partake, even the little children.

At length we adjourned in several divisions to rooms at the rear of the building to consider the Sunday-school lesson. The class of adults which I joined included a number of women who had brought along their babies and smaller children, and the apartment was pretty well crowded. Our topic was "The Beauties of Motherhood," which was treated in a characteristic Mormon way by emphasizing the desirability of large families. But the remarks of those who spoke covered quite a wide range and were often original and spirited.

"Some women say they don't want children," commented a bent old lady whom the villagers all knew as Aunt Mary. "They're like some men who pretend they don't want a wife because she'll be a lot of trouble, but want one just the same."

The question was raised whether it was better to give children toy animals like rabbits and bears for playthings, or dolls. "What do you think, Sister Watson?" asked the young man who was our leader.

"I never approved of them animals," Sister Watson responded. "It ain't natural to treat 'em like babies the way the children do. I believe in dolls."

Others thought that play with toy animals might cultivate sympathy with the dumb creatures. However, it was agreed that dolls were necessary for the girls in order to cultivate the instinct of maternity. It was also argued that the older children should spend considerable time taking care of the babies in the family. But one

woman, who rose to speak with a baby in her arms and two other tots clinging to her skirts, said: "I don't believe I was seven years old when I had to begin to mind a baby, and I was kept to that job for years. It didn't seem as if I had any childhood, and I can tell you the experience didn't make me fond of babies either. The farther away they were the better I liked it. So I don't think the children ought to be tied too close that way if you would have 'em grow up wanting to have babies of their own."

In the afternoon I was present at the preaching service. There was nothing to attract special attention in the way of ceremonials or ecclesiastical robing. Everything was simple and business-like, and I was interested to notice that the boy who pumped wind into the organ did his work in plain sight and chewed gum in unison with the motion of the pump handle. Seated on the platform were about a dozen church officials and elders, including the chief dignitary of the local organization, known as a bishop. They were no different in dress or manner from the other men present. Down below, the audience was divided into two sections, with the masculine portion on the left, and the feminine on the right. Nearly all of the latter removed their hats, which seemed a comfortable and sensible thing to do. The few exceptions were quite youthful, and their headgear was apparently for exhibition purposes.

The Mormons do not have a paid ministry. To receive money for preaching seems to them obnoxious. Individual church members address their fellows from the pulpit, and a large proportion, either from natural capacity or training, are able and willing to speak thus. The chief address which I heard was given by a stalwart big-handed young farmer. It was colloquial in manner and had touches of humor that made ripples of smiles run through the audience, and at the same time it showed culture and constructive thought of a high order.

When I returned to my boarding-place my landlady enlightened me further as to the ways of her church, in response to a question of mine about the tithings. "Yes," she said, "we're supposed to turn over a tenth of all our earnings; but I don't know anybody who pays 'em right up to the very letter. There's no compulsion. It's just simply that if you don't give the church its due you won't get the highest glory.

"I'm afraid we don't live up to any of the church rules. For instance, one Sunday a month is a fast day, when everybody over eight years old is expected to go without eating from sunrise to sunset. The previous night you should take to the bishop's storehouse a donation of flour and supplies equivalent to what you would naturally save by fasting. But people are getting so they don't pay much attention to the fast days. Once there was kind of a plague in the place—diphtheria, I think it was—and we had special prayer-meetings and fasting



The old settler

to get rid of it. For twenty-four hours I didn't touch any food, and I was pretty near paralyzed. Since then I don't fast any more.

“Another thing—in the Mormon book of rules called ‘The Word of Wisdom’ it says you mustn't drink intoxicating liquor, or smoke, or use tea and coffee; but I don't know how I'd get through the day if it wasn't for my blessed coffee. None of those rules are observed at all strictly. In the matter of smoking, lots of the boys puff their cigarets and pipes; but as they grow older some of them get to have sense enough to stop. My husband told a neighbor once that his sons smoked, and that man got so hot he could have knocked my husband senseless. ‘You're a blame liar!’ he said, and he wouldn't believe a word of it. But later he found out to his sorrow that it was no more than the truth, you betcher!

“What troubles me is that things don't seem to be improvin' any. I know Mormons who drink, and that's preached against almost every Sunday. Some think the church is too strict, but I guess it allows ways enough for people to enjoy themselves. It approves of dancing and of having a good time generally. Yes, our young people are terrible dancers. There's a dance once a week at the public hall in the winter, and they go every evening to dance at a pleasure resort near here during the summer.

“Below that pleasure resort, in the creek, we have our baptizings. We baptize by immersion. That’s the only proper way, and the Bible says so. I’m not claiming that everyone will go to hell that ain’t immersed and that don’t believe as we do, but I know the good Mormons will have the front seats in heaven. The children are all baptized when they are eight years old, and then they are members of the church and behave themselves, or are supposed to. If an unbaptized person above that age dies, some member of the family is usually baptized afterward in the dead person’s place. Children younger than that who die will be all right, we think, even if they haven’t been baptized. Oh, sure they will—they’re too young to sin with full knowledge and responsibility.

“The young men as they grow up and show themselves to be steady and faithful are made church elders. There’s one or two elders in every family, and those that are good for anything are at some time in their life—and perhaps more than once—appointed to go on a mission. Mormon missionaries are preaching our religion and making converts in every state of the Union, and all over the world. Some of the most successful of them are young men who don’t understand any of the principles of the gospel; but they have a gift for speaking. They and their home people pay most of their expenses; so we don’t send the very poor. Sometimes a concert is got up when a man is going off, and forty or fifty dollars

raised for him; and the church pays his return fare. Once in a while a missionary will travel in the Bible fashion without purse or scrip, but that's not usual. It isn't the habit to take up any collections from their audiences. All that they ask is to have people listen to 'em. They're away two or three years; and in most of the foreign countries a good deal of that time is spent learning the language. The expense is quite a handicap to some families; but I never knew anyone to refuse to go. We had to sell twenty acres of our best land to keep my husband on mission. There's always several from this village away scattered over the earth. Some die while they're gone, and others get diseases of which they die soon after they return.

“The Mormons have always been ready to sacrifice a good deal for their religion. See how they suffered coming here when they were driven out from Illinois. We had a pretty rough time twenty years afterward, when I came. There was enough to eat, and the captain of the company knowed just how far our ox-teams must go each day to reach water; but we never felt safe. The Indians were often in sight on their ponies, and they carried off one of our women. She was small and slim, and she'd got tired and wore out. As she walked along she hung behind the train, and her husband went back and told her if she didn't hurry the Indians would get her.

“‘I don’t care,’ she says, ‘I’d just as soon be with the Indians as with you.’

“She’d hardly got the words out of her mouth when the Indians came rushing down on them and shot the man in the leg and caught the woman up on one of their horses. They were off like the wind, and we could hear her screams long after she was gone from sight. Efforts were made to find her for years, but we never could learn what had become of her.

“You ought to talk with old man White. He is eighty-five years old and came here very early.”

Later I had an opportunity to meet this pioneer—a white-bearded patriarch with faded eyes and tremulous limbs; and yet, in spite of his age and evident weakness, I found him at his backdoor splitting stovewood. “The first company reached this region on July 24, 1847,” said he. “Brigham Young was the leader. He was sick in his carriage, but he’d seen the place in a vision, and when they come over the ridge in sight of the lake, he looked out and says: ‘That’s the valley where we are to settle.’

“The prospects didn’t seem very promising then. It was a very dry year, and except along the cricks the soil was like ashes. Some didn’t think we could ever grow any crops, and a California man was so sure of it that he offered to pay one thousand dollars for the first ear of corn we raised. I was afraid we’d all starve. Some dug thistle roots and such things to eat. Our

family was fortunate. We had a cow. She'd go to the hills to browse around during the day and come back at night to be milked, and we mowed canebrakes for her.

“Our first houses were little cabins of logs or 'dobe. They had flat roofs of poles with dirt thrown on. The roofs weren't made to shed rain, because it didn't look as if rain ever fell in this desert. But in April it began to storm, and sometimes we had rain, and sometimes snow. In our house we stretched an oxhide over the top of the bed to keep that dry. There were four or five inches of water on the floor, and we had to lay down sticks to walk on to get to the fireplace.

“Father and me got a good crop that year, and I threshed the first bushel of wheat raised in this state. But there were times in both the first two summers when we thought the big black crickets was goin' to eat up everything. There was such numbers of 'em that they'd have ruined us if the gulls hadn't come by millions to eat 'em. Then a few years later we had a plague of grasshoppers. Lots of 'em were drowned in the lake, and they washed up along the shore in great quantities. But there were plenty left, and we'd dig trenches and drive 'em in and cover 'em with dirt. At night they'd roost on the tree-trunks and fences and the posts of the piazzas so thick as to hide the wood out of sight. In one day they took our wheat, which was growin' nice and green, and left the ground just as clean as a floor.

We had a big patch of onions, and they slicked 'em out right down to the roots. Oh, we had a good many setbacks, and the people were poor for a long time."

But those days are now long past, and comfort and prosperity are general. As to the Mormon Church, there is not a little ferment and independence in the organization. Many of its members are lukewarm or lax, and even heretical; and the cohesiveness which still characterizes the Church is by some observers attributed largely to the unreasonable bitterness of its Gentile critics.

NOTE.—The one place in Utah which is universally known and sure to attract the traveller is Salt Lake City. It is fast growing to be a great metropolis, and is a handsome town with wide, tree-lined streets and a beautiful mountain background. Its chief interest for the general public probably arises from its association with the Mormons, and it is still their capital and center of authority. The most important Mormon buildings are in the heart of the city, but neither the many-pinnacled temple nor the great mushroom-shaped tabernacle have any architectural charm.

The Lake, which is about twenty miles distant, can be best visited by going to the pleasure resort of Saltair.

But to see the Mormon country at its best, journey to one of the farm villages to the north or the south of the capital city, and if possible be there on a Sunday to attend church. This will give one an opportunity to get acquainted with many Mormon characteristics that otherwise would be a sealed book; and the village itself is almost certain to be full of a quaint and serene attraction.

X

WYOMING DAYS

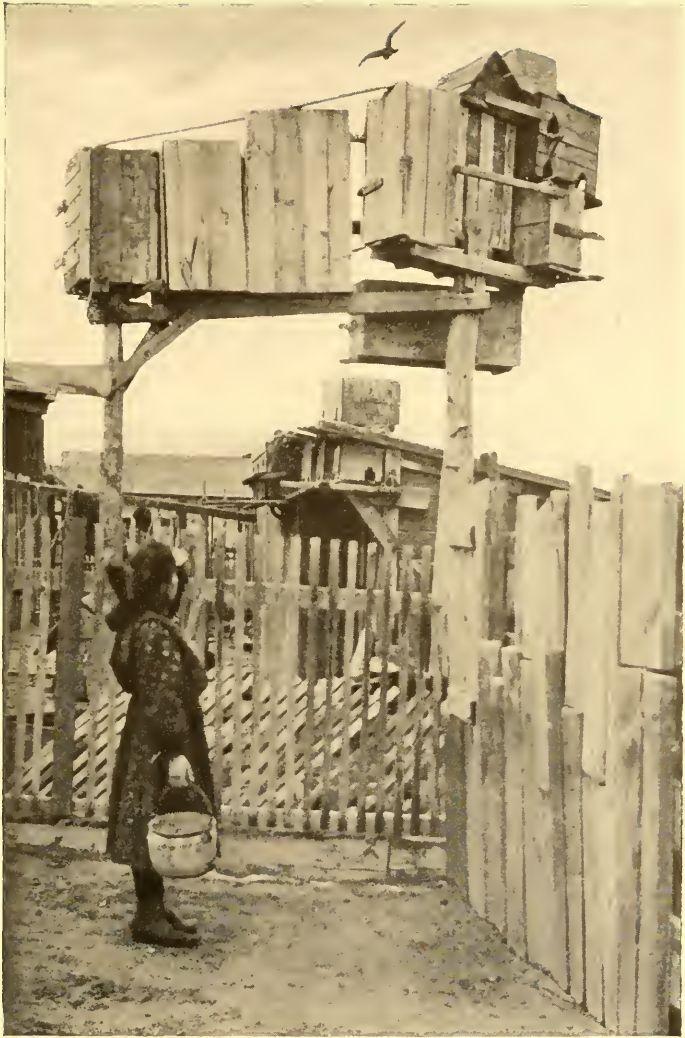
IN looking at a map of Wyoming I was especially attracted by two towns—Rock Springs and Green River. They were not far apart and their names were suggestive of a region of crystal waters, and pastoral hills, and vales with pleasant groves of trees. But I concluded from later experience that Wyoming landscapes are nowhere made on that plan. You can travel for scores of miles and find yourself all the time in a region of scanty verdure, its more level portions much furrowed by dry, abrupt-banked gullies, and abounding in steep, flat-topped hills, and towering pillars and castellated bluffs of strangely-worn rocks. It is a forsaken-looking country, and the few towns are not usually of a sort to help much in mitigating the unprepossessing landscapes.

At Rock Springs coal mining is the chief industry, and the sooty, odorous smoke poured from numerous chimneys at the mouth of the mines, and not infrequently overspread the town in a gloomy cloud. Early in the morning I saw the miners going to their work, and late in the afternoon saw them returning clad in

their grimy clothes, each with a torch stuck in the front of his cap. Some of them had such blackened visages when they emerged from the mines they appeared decidedly weird and spookish. The place was prosperous, and there was employment for all who were willing and efficient. Not every person, however, would fit the task to which he aspired, as was evidenced by the following sign in a restaurant window: "Wanted, man to sell lunch on street at night. No dead ones need apply."

The railroad passed through the center of the town, and on either side of the tracks was a row of saloons, hotels, and stores, beyond which were the homes. Trees were so few and small as to be practically non-existent, and the town was no more vernal than was the lonely surrounding desolation of greasewood and sagebrush. Quite a number of cows were browsing on the village outskirts, though what they found to feed on was a mystery. "They're lean, now," one of the natives observed to me; "but the grass is starting, and they'll soon pick up and be hog fat. Every night they'll come in just puffed up with feed. Yes, they wiggle around in that sagebrush pretty good. They're great travellers when they take a notion. I've got a little red cow I bought off a man living at Whiskey Gap, sixty miles away. After I'd had her eighteen months she concluded to go back to her old home, and she got there, too."

I asked this acquaintance about the people in the place, and he affirmed that there was "nothing in town



Dove cotes

but Dagos and Greeks." So sweeping a statement scarcely fits the facts; for even in the mines most of the men are English-speaking. But if the latter are in the majority, the rest are a very polyglot lot. The nationalities employed are many, and as one man said: "You find a bunch of miners on the street, and every one will be talking a different language." There is a colony of Chinese, another of Japanese, and another of Coreans. Of these yellow men the Japanese are rated highest as workers. The Chinese are the most numerous, and they have several streets of ramshackle houses with many curious makeshift additions to the original structures. Some of the supplementary roofs run so low that it is evident the rooms are largely underground. On the doors are strange red signs in Oriental hieroglyphics.

In a wide hollow neighboring the Chinese settlement was another peculiar collection of huts. Many of the houses were backed up against the steep banks. Often the roofs were covered with dirt and were a continuation of the bank-tops so that it was difficult to say where the ground ended and the houses began. Helter-skeltered among the dwellings were stables and hen yards and dove cotes, and heaps of filth and rubbish, and through the depths of the hollow flowed a slow, dirty stream. There were other parts of the town decidedly better than this, but as a rule the home environment was rather oppressively forlorn.

I wondered how the children spent their spare time, the opportunities for amusement seemed so slender, and one day I interviewed a group of youngsters who were paddling around in a muddy gully. They told where the blue birds built nests in holes in the banks, and the thrushes in the big sagebrush, and they told about the habits of the meadow-larks, the crows, and the hawks. "On Saturdays we go four miles out to White Mountain," they said, "and we take a little gun with us to shoot gophers and rabbits and chipmunks. Yes, sure we do! There's cedar and willow trees out to White Mountain, and tall grass. We carry our lunch in tin buckets, and after we're done eating, if there's snow on the hillside, we lay the buckets down sideways and have a sleigh-ride on 'em. We slide, too, around home in winter, and when there ain't sleds enough we use shovels instead. By damming the crick we make a pond that freezes so we can have a good time skating. When it's summer we go barefoot and run races and go in swimming. Bitter Crick is our best swimming place, and one hole there is so deep, if you went out in the middle you'd get drowned."

On the whole I could not help concluding that youthful pleasure and excitement were to be found there in generous measure.

The town was the railroad center for a vast, thinly-settled country roundabout, where were occasional ranches and little mines. Certain men made a business

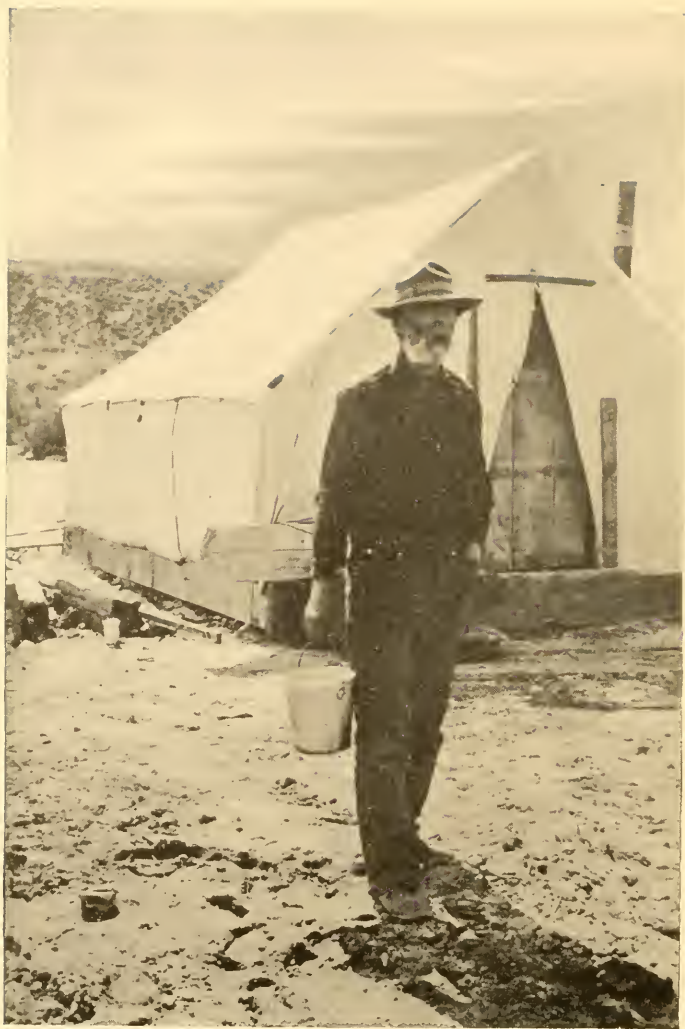
of carrying supplies to these outlying regions, and some of their hauls were for a distance of nearly one hundred and fifty miles. A driver who was making regular trips about half that far told me it took him a week to go and come. His usual load was seven tons. "I have three wagons," said he, "hitched one behind the other, and back of those is a cooster—a canvas-covered two-wheeled cart in which I cook and sleep and carry what things I need on the road. I drive twelve horses and go alone. Of course, us fellers know all the roads and just how to plan stops so the stock won't be too long without water. In summer I hobble the horses and let 'em graze all night. In winter I turn 'em loose just the same, only I put blankets on 'em and scatter hay so they can all get at it to eat. Sagebrush does me for a fire in warm weather, but when it's cold I carry along a sack of coal."

During my stay at Rock Springs a man dropped dead in one of the saloons. It seemed that he had been "bumming his way" along the railroad. No one knew who he was. When they examined him they found he had been stabbed in the breast, apparently about two days before, and the wound was the cause of his death. Here was a tragic mystery, but the town was used to that sort of thing and it occasioned only passing comment. "You'd think our country here was kind of civilized," said an old resident, "and yet we have one or two murders in the region every month; and we have fatal or serious accidents oftener than that. The other day one

of the miners lost his eyesight by the kick of a mule, and we got up a benefit dance for him. Everybody bought tickets whether they intended to go or not, and the affair netted him over twelve hundred dollars. Oh, they're a big-hearted people here!"

I tried to get my informant to tell me something of the town's early history, but he said: "I can't talk. I'm not well. Lately we elected a mayor here. The different parties was all yankin' and yellin', and I'd always been over head and ears in politics, but I was feelin' so poorly I had to stand one side. Part of the time I was at home in bed, and one fellow called and began to argue politics with me. He had some drink in, and his talk was enough to make a well man sick. 'You get!' I said. And you bet he got, too. I'm an old man now, and though I've always been hearty till lately I guess I'm pretty near ready to pass in my checks."

So saying, he turned away and hobbled lamely off homeward. I was disappointed, but I afterward made the acquaintance of other pioneers who told me what I wished to know. "When I crossed the plains in 1868, said one of these, "the railroad ended at Fort Steele on the North Platte, and we camped there a few days getting ready to start. Our company had about fifty wagons, and the oxen that was to draw 'em was grazing on the range within sight of the camp. But one afternoon there come along a stampeding herd of buffaloes—several hundred of 'em, tails up and running as fast as



A tent-dweller

they could go with all the old bulls in front. They plunged right in amongst our cattle and began to bellow; and then the cattle began to bellow, and off they went, every hoof of 'em, just as wild as the buffaloes. The cowboys started in pursuit. It was four days before the last of 'em returned, and they didn't succeed in getting all the cattle even then.

“After our journey began we had adventures every day. There were Indians around, and we kept outriders five or six miles ahead and on each side watching for trouble. Then at night we'd corral the wagons—arrange 'em in a circle and pitch our tents in the open space that the wagons inclosed. The cooking had to be finished and the fires all put out before dark so the Indians wouldn't have a chance to pick us off. But we never saw one of 'em the whole trip, though I've no doubt they saw us right along.

“One afternoon we come to a wagon standing by itself loaded with all sorts of merchandise. Leaning ag'in' a wheel was a double-barreled shotgun with one barrel discharged, and there was a bed on the ground beside the wagon that had bloodstains on the blankets. Not far away, was a new-made grave with a board stuck up at one end, and these words burned into it with a hot iron: 'Killed by Indians.' We looked around and studied on what we saw, and our captain said: 'That man was never killed by the Indians. There's something crooked here. It's easy enough to see that the

Indians wouldn't have left that gun there. Besides, the wagon has got a whole lot of powder and shot in it, which would be the first things they'd have wanted. There was two men in this outfit, and one has killed the other.'

"We went on and left the wagon as it was, and late the next day we met three men, two on horseback, and one on a big black mule, and all of them heavily armed. They were going back after the deserted wagon. The man on the mule said he was uncle to the fellow who'd been killed. He claimed they were going to a place on the Sweetwater where there was a gold excitement. But the night before we come along they camped, and while he was out herding their cattle the Indians shot the young fellow. So he drove the cattle over the divide and went to get help.

"And now I want to tell you the windup of that affair. A good many years had passed, and I was living here at Rock Springs. One day the old ladies got together for a tea-party. They was telling their experiences, and my mother told about the abandoned wagon and the grave beside it that we'd seen when we crossed the plains. Then one woman in the crowd began to cry. She said she used to know the dead man. Him and her was engaged to get married. He'd started with his uncle for the mines, and he was going to marry her when he came back.

“Soon after the time of the tea-party there was a holdup on one of our railroads. The sheriff got after the robbers, but they killed him and his deputy. Then some big posses organized. They shot one robber to death, and another they put in jail. While this fellow was in prison he tackled the jailer in an attempt to break out. But the jailer’s wife commenced to scream and yell and holler blue murder. Help come, and they lynched the prisoner then and there to make sure of having no more trouble. The man’s picture was put in the papers, and I recognized him. He had a great big nose, and was known as ‘Big-Nosed George;’ and he was the same person I’d seen riding on a mule going back to the deserted wagon.

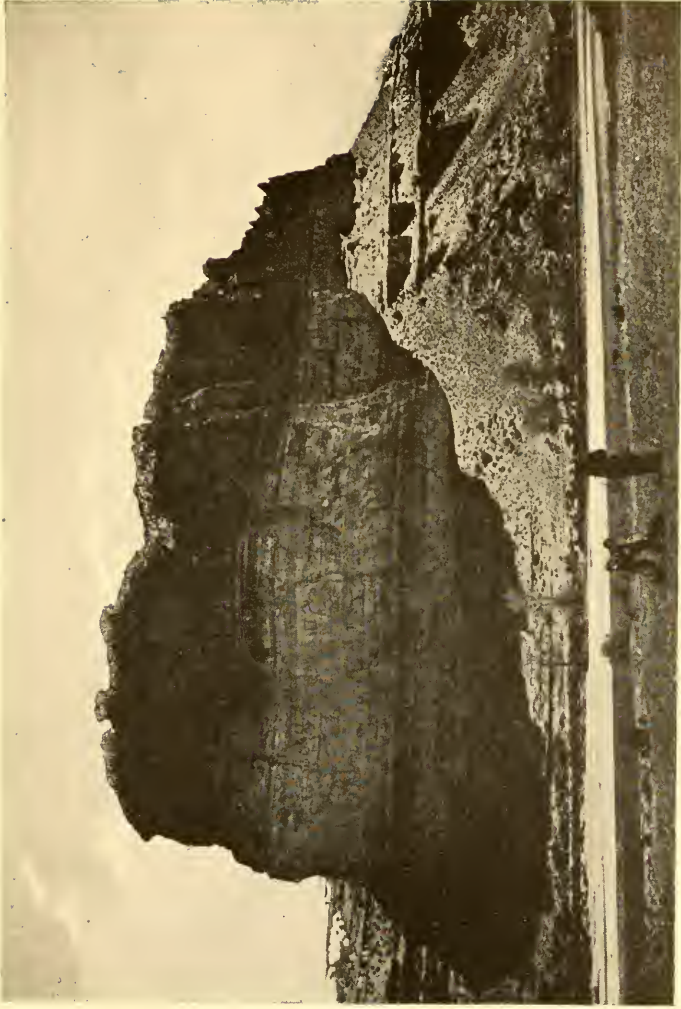
“There wa’n’t a dozen houses in this town when I got here in 1873. They’d begun coal mining in a small way, and there was a company store and meat market, and two saloons in tents and another in a little frame dwelling. It was good hunting here in those days—I should say it was! There were deer by the thousand and antelope by the million, I guess, and they’d come close to town. When you went out with your gun after ’em, it was more like slaughter than hunting. I’ve stood right in my tracks and shot seven antelope without stirring. They’d go in droves like sheep; and there were lots of elk—sometimes hundreds in a single band.

“Hunting used to be our chief amusement, though of course we played cards a good deal. Once in a while,

too, there'd be a stag dance that'd last all night, and everyone would get drunk. But perhaps the most curious fun was when a few of your friends made an evening call on you. They'd be sitting around without much life in 'em, and someone would say, 'Let's have five minutes' roughhouse.' Then they'd all go pullin' and tearin' at each other and tumbling around, and some were handled pretty rude. However, they were all friends, mind you, and not one of 'em got mad. The dishes would be smashed and the stove turned over, even though it was red hot. But we had to do something to break the monotony of the wilderness. After the scramble we'd send for a kag of beer, and while that was comin' we would clear up the wreckage.

"One of our summer amusements here is to hire a team and go for a drive. The resort most in favor is a ranch about twelve miles out. The man there raises fine vegetables, and has nice water and a few trees. The rancher likes to have the picnickers come because they buy his lettuce and buttermilk and such things, and it's company for him. He lies around in the shade with 'em and always gets a share of their lunch."

I mentioned to my informant what another townsman had said about the frequency of violent deaths in the vicinity, and he responded: "Things of that sort you hear of now ain't a circumstance to the happenings in the past. Take, for instance, the massacre at the White River Indian Agency. The savages killed the



One of the buttes beside Green River

agent and a few others, and went off to the mountains. Then the troops come and made their headquarters at Rawlins. That attracted a lot of toughs to the place, and things got so bad a woman couldn't go on the street in the evening without being insulted. There was such a lot of drinking and gambling and killing that the people got tired of it. So one day all the regular inhabitants went out of the town a little way and held a meeting and made themselves into a vigilance committee. When they come back they hung three of the ring-leaders of the toughs to the posts at the stockyard and ordered the rest of the gang to clear out. Those fellows didn't need a second telling. By and by the coroner got around, and held an inquest, and the jury declared that the dead men had met death at the hands of parties unknown. After that Rawlins was a good town.

“But I want to tell you about an occurrence in Rock Springs a few years later. Right here in the town you're in now we had one of the darndest affairs that ever was. There were some seven or eight hundred Chinese working in our mines then, and the competition of this cheap labor wasn't much to the liking of the other workers. But the worst of it was that the Chinese began to think they could have everything their own way. They got so insolent that if you met one of 'em on the street you'd got to turn aside, or he'd swear at you and shove you out of his way. The relations of the white and the yellow men was growin' more and more stormy when one

day, down in a mine, a Chinaman went to work at a place where a white man had started, and when the white man tried to pull him away he gave a yell for help. Others come running to the spot—some Chinese and some whites—and there was a fight in which two Chinamen were killed. Everyone hurried out of the mine then, and word was sent to the other mines to have all their men come out, too. In a little while the whites had changed their clothes, got their guns, and held a meeting at which it was decided that the Chinese must go. The crowd then went over to the huts where the Chinese lived and ordered them to move. But that didn't suit the yellow men, though it was a nice afternoon in early September, and as good a time for moving as they could have. The whites then began to shoot in the air, but gradually aimed lower and lower until their bullets were going right in among the Chinamen. The assailing party didn't make any bones about it, for they were determined to drive the Chinese out. During the shooting they set fire to the huts. There were sixty of them, and all went up in smoke except one. That had no floor and wouldn't burn. Twenty-seven dead bodies were found afterward; but most of the Chinese escaped by scattering out over the hills. Some went east and some went west and all of 'em struck the railroad after a little and were picked up by a train. They wanted to go to San Francisco and back to China, but the soldiers came here to keep order and the Chinese were induced to return. They weren't so sassy after that."

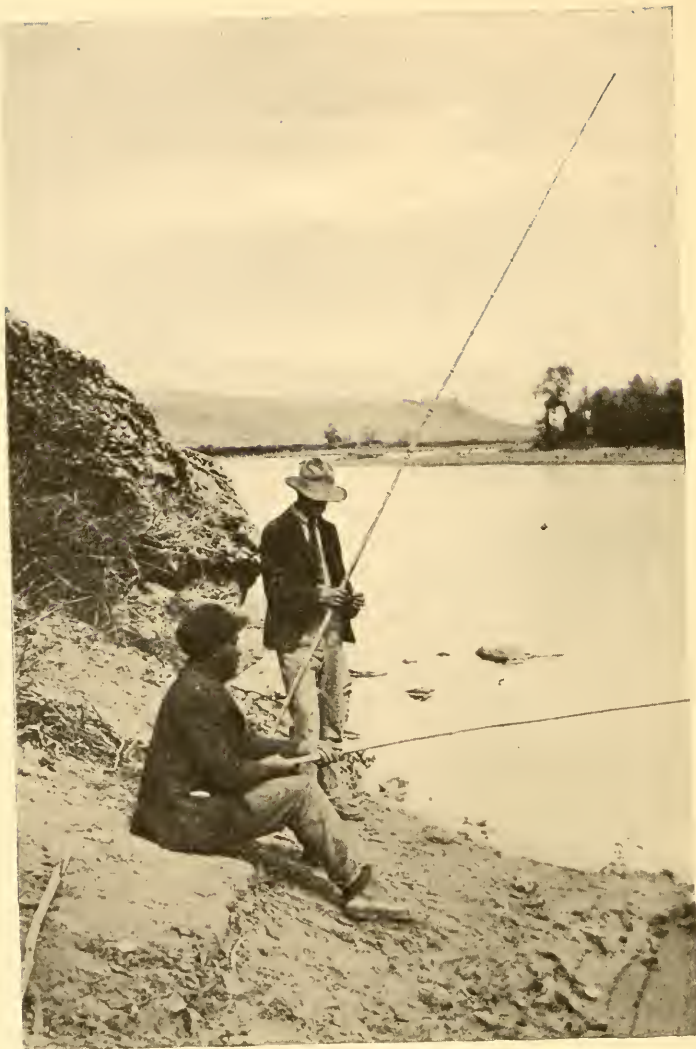
My stay at Rock Springs ended in a snowstorm. The storm began in the evening, and the next morning the country had all the bleakness of midwinter in its aspect. "It did blow last night all right," remarked one man. "It certainly did; and now the snow is melting, and the air is so damp I could take a handful and squeeze the water out of it."

I went by an early train to Green River. There, too, winter had taken possession, and the ground and the roofs were all white. In some of the yards were a few apple trees in full bloom and bending beneath the weight of the clinging snow, and the town for the moment was not without delicate touches of beauty. But when the clouds broke away the sun soon played havoc with the snow, and the place stood revealed, a grimy railroad town in a hollow among the big bare buttes. Yet an effort was apparent to live up to its name, for little poplars had been started along the streets, and there were grassplots in occasional dooryards. The river, which threaded its way among the dreary sagebrush hills and lofty bluffs of gray, red, and yellow-colored strata, was quite idyllic in nooks here and there, and was apt to have a bordering of cottonwoods.

As I was passing a tent on a lowland level a man accosted me from its doorway. "You're a stranger, ain't you?" he inquired. "I s'pose you're takin' an invoice of this country. It's quite a scenery to people from back East.

“This snow we’ve had will provide good feed on the range; but it must have made the sheep men jump. A snowfall so late in the season is pretty hard on the young lambs. There’s a terrible lot of sheep in this state, and they’re pretty profitable—you bet they are! The sheepmen get the feed for nothing, and our Wyoming mountain grass is equal to Nebraska oats. The sheep have to be watched all the time, and a herder and camp-mover go along with every flock. They have a wagon to live in, and the herder has a couple of dogs to help him. He couldn’t do a thing in the world with the sheep, unless he had dogs, they’re so contrary and stubborn. You can’t learn a sheep nothing. It’s too muleheaded. A dog will do more in handling a bunch of sheep than fifty men.

“Usually the herders can take things easy, but it’s a lonesome life, and dangerous, too, sometimes. In winter the sheep must be got together every night in a nice, sheltered place where the wind don’t blow. But perhaps a storm will come up and the wind shift around. Then very likely the sheep will leave the bed ground and drift on before the storm. The herder has to get out and try to keep ’em together, and turn ’em so they won’t get scattered and lost, or be goin’ over some precipice. The snow will be blowin’ so blame bad he can’t see, and he don’t know the direction he’s goin’ any more’n the man in the moon. So every once in a while some herder out on the range freezes to death.



The fishermen

“The worst enemies of the sheep are the coyotes. There ain’t any better judges of mutton than those animals are, and they always pick out the choicest. Last winter four men trapped over twelve hundred in this county for the sake of the hides and the bounty; but you go out in the hills and sleep over night and you wouldn’t think there were any less. They’re awful sneakin’ and cunning, and you have to look out for ’em, ’specially on stormy nights. They ain’t lyin’ by the stove then, but are out to rustle. That’s the time they get their harvest by picking up stray sheep, or by flying into a herd and cutting off a bunch. They work together. You can tell that by the way they answer each other—just like the roosters answer each other crowin.’ They have an unearthly yell, and if a man hears it close enough it’ll make him sit up and take notice. I don’t mind their noise myself, and I like to snug the blankets up about me and listen to ’em. It’s a plaintive, funny kind of a sound, and they will change their notes as fast as you could change your fingers around playing a piano. The yelps and howls get all twisted together, and the racket from a single coyote will last a full minute without a pause to take breath. You’d think there were half a dozen, and when several are together they sing a regular old chorus.”

As I was about to part with the tent-dweller he remarked: “I suppose, now that you’ve happened here in this late snowstorm, you think we have curious

weather, but this ain't a fair sample. Take it the year through, and our climate is about as good as they make 'em; and we have the finest fall that ever was seen, quiet and fair for weeks together. The weather has changed some from what it used to be. I know years ago most every summer afternoon toward night you'd notice a cloud about the size of your hand coming up over the mountains. Gradually it would spread across the sky, and you'd go to bed at night thinkin' there'd be a down-pour; but not a drop of rain would fall. You'd seldom hear any thunder either, though the lightning was flashing so you could pick up needles and pins, almost. Our summers now are pretty hot at times, but we are sure to have cool nights, and you always need a blanket over you. So a man can depend on sleeping comfortably, and that's a great blessing. Yes, a fellow is much better off here on a summer night than sweating and stifled in the hot muggy air you have in the East."

Whether his enthusiasm was fully justified might be open to debate, but it is always a pleasure to meet a person who believes in the superiority of his own particular region.

NOTE.—The part of Wyoming to which this chapter is devoted can hardly claim to be ideal country for the sightseer. Yet the scenery is often ruggedly impressive, and the towns have a certain attraction in spite of their rather forbidding environment. The human element at least is unfailingly interesting. These towns are the trading centers for such herdsmen, miners, ranch-dwellers and others as venture into

the vast outlying wilderness, and whose labor and experiences are always matters of discussion, and whose coming and going imparts a peculiar individuality to the Wyoming town activities. Perhaps the best time for a visit is when the great flocks of sheep are driven to the vicinity of the settlements to be sheared. That is the busiest season of the year and affords the only opportunity for seeing the wandering flocks to advantage without going far into the wilds.

XI

MOUNTAIN AND VALLEY IN MONTANA

THE biggest town in the state, and the one best known to the world outside, is Butte, high among the mountains near the continental divide. It has almost one hundred thousand inhabitants, and is old as age is reckoned in that new country, yet it is still spoken of as a mining camp. Indeed, without the mines, it would fade into insignificance; but, as things are, the town is a source of enormous wealth. From it comes one-fourth of all the world's production of copper, as well as considerable quantities of gold and silver; and the revenue from the Butte mines is equal to the entire income of the government of Holland.

The town is on the long slope of a hill, the crest of which is a steep ridge terraced with waste from the mines, and dotted here and there with rude groups of buildings and lofty smokestacks. That final ridge is particularly ugly, yet counting the riches that have come from it in the past and that still lie buried in its depths it is the most valuable hill in the world. You might fancy that one result of this wealth would be a beautiful city; but the reality is far otherwise. While I was there,



In the mining district of Butte

the streets, except for a few that were paved, were about three inches deep with a black, sticky mud which threatened to engulf me at every crossing. The place has its fine buildings, but log structures still survive even in the heart of the city, and most of the dwellings are only one story high, closely crowded, and often shabby. Below the town, on the low levels at the foot of the slope, are great dark heaps of slag, and broad wastes of sand and mud, the results of mining, both past and present. Bordering these flats several big bare mountains rise rugged and imposing, and in the distance is a range of snowy peaks.

Butte began as a gold camp. The first wandering prospectors came into the region in 1863. At first they simply panned or rocked the silt along the streams. The panning was done in a big shallow metal dish, eighteen inches across and five deep with the sides slanting sharply outward. The prospector put in a few handfuls of soil, dipped up some water with the pan, then shook it and gradually let the dirty water escape over the edge. This process of dipping and washing was repeated until he had only gold left. The washing took only a few minutes, and the gold remained behind, simply because it was heavier than the rest of the soil. It requires good rich dirt to make panning profitable. Anything less than an average of ten cents to a washing is not considered satisfactory. But on a basis of three cents worth of gold to a pan it is worth while to

do sluicing. If the miner who wishes to adopt this method of securing gold is hard up, he will very likely resort to rocking to get the means to pay for sluice boards and supplies. Rocking was a California discovery. A party of forty-niners reached a place where they wanted to do sluicing, but no lumber was to be had. So one of the men took a cradle he had brought along, fitted the bottom board with riffles, and adjusted this board so it slanted a little from the head to the foot. At the head he fastened a coarse sieve of perforated tin, and as dirt and water were thrown in this it screened out the coarsest stuff. Then by rocking the cradle, as more water was added, the gold was caught in the hollows of the riffles, and the lighter dirt and grit flowed off. Two men were needed for this job; one to shovel in the silt, while the other rocked the cradle and poured in the water taken from the stream with a long-handled dipper. Often there remained mixed with the gold a little magnetic sand which was too heavy to be washed away without also losing some of the yellow metal. To dispose of it, the mixture was dried over a fire. Then a magnet between a fold of paper was held over the gold, and the sand would jump up and cling to the paper. After that it was only necessary to move the paper to one side, slip out the magnet, and the sand fell off.

The gold miners at Butte adopted for a time the usual simple methods of securing gold, and then hydraulic mining became common. All the soil on the lower slope

of the present town site was washed off, and in some places it was twenty feet deep.

According to an early settler with whom I chatted copper mining did not begin until about 1880. "We knew there was copper here," said he, "but there was nothing very promising showed up at the surface, and one of our richest mines was once traded off for an old cayuse and a saddle and bridle. The more ambitious miners neglected the hill just above the town, and froze to death prospecting on the mountains; or perhaps they'd escape freezing, and instead would work themselves to death on their claims; or they'd get disgusted with their luck and shoot themselves. Really, those that made most in this camp were a class of miners who took life easy—lazy old bachelors, who were so shiftless they didn't care to exert themselves. They'd pound rocks just enough to get and hold some claim that no one else would have, and the rest of the time they loafed in their cabins. But it finally commenced to dawn on them that these copper claims was goin' to be valuable some day, and pretty soon the owners were rich. The money just piled in on 'em—they couldn't keep away from it.

"As soon as copper began to be mined in quantities some big smelters were built here. The smelting was done by roasting the ore on the ground with wood fires. That set free fumes of arsenic and sulphur, which filled the air all through the region. By George! it was fearful. The place was a regular hell with the smoke and

the smells; and the arsenic killed all the grass and trees for miles around. There was just bare earth and rocks left. It doesn't seem reasonable that such fumes could be very conducive to human life, but we weren't affected the way the vegetation was. People would cough, and some of 'em would tie handkerchiefs over their mouths and noses. The smell was worst when the air was driest. Then it would pretty near cut your lungs right out, and at times I'd find myself wheezing as if I was about to be suffocated.

“Great volumes of smoke were always rolling up from the smelters, and I've known that smoke to settle down and hang here for weeks. When you climbed up above it and looked down you saw it lying in the valley like a blue lake. When there was fog, that and the smoke would get mixed, and be so thick you'd bump into people as you walked on the street, and the hack horses had to be led from the depot to the hotels. The sun would be hidden from sight completely, and if you got under an arc light it would seem like just a little spark above you, and you'd wonder what it was. Teamsters going outside of the town would get lost, and they'd unhitch their horses and hunt their way back to the stable. It might be a week before they'd find the wagon. If the weather was cold, that infernal smoke penetrated your clothes and seemed to make it colder. The gloom and the odors and the desolation were so bad that at last the people got up a crowd and took teams and went

and smothered the smelter fires with dirt. The mayor was with 'em doing his part to help; and after that the owners of the smelters moved into another valley, and built 'em so they wouldn't turn the region there into a desert as they had here. Now the poison is gradually getting washed out of the soil and we're trying to have lawns and trees and flowers again. It's not yet a town that strangers like at first sight, and if they settle here they declare they'll move away just as soon as they get the means. But the wages are high, and life is freer and easier than in most places, so that people who get used to Butte are never satisfied to live anywhere else.

“Until 1885 the buildings were mostly of logs, though some places of business were faced up with lumber to give 'em a better appearance. Sunday was the liveliest day of the week. All the prospectors came in from the country then, every store was open, and the gambling houses were running full blast. You could look right into the gambling dens from the street and see the twenty dollar gold pieces stacked up on the tables. The early miners were Americans as a general thing. They were frontiersmen who had run away from too much civilization. At their former homes the folks had got too strict, too religious or something, and these men felt they had to fly away as far as possible. There was nothing mean or stingy about 'em. If you saw a fellow you knew who wa'n't treating to drinks or spending no money, you knew he must be broke, and when it was

mealtime you'd say, 'Well, Jack, you ain't e't yet—come on and eat with me.'

"They were a liberal and hospitable people, and nobody starved in this country. They'd divide their last mouthful with you—yes and divide their bed with you, and it made no difference whether there were gray-backs in it or not. Every cabin had a buckskin latch-string, and it was always out. They never thought of locking any doors in a mining camp. Supposing you were off in the mountains and hungry, and you came to a cabin where no one was at home—you'd step in and help yourself to food, cook it, wash the dishes, and go about your business.

"We had no holdups then—at least not of individuals; or if there was, the vigilance committee got after the party they thought was responsible and hung him. Now you can't even leave an ax outdoors but that someone will borrow it and forget to return it, and there's lots of petty larceny thieves who steal just to be put in jail and fed.

"As a rule the miners are spendthrifts and always have been; but their worst enemy today is the credit system. For instance, young people marry and start housekeeping, and when they find they can get trusted for what they buy they begin to live a little beyond their means, and by and by they no longer have any honor about paying their debts. It doesn't matter what their income is. If they got ten dollars a day they'd be broke



A pioneer cabin

before the next pay day came just the same. The old-timers spent their own money, but they didn't sponge on other people. Whatever their faults, they were good, sincere men. That is one reason why they weren't religious. It's about as 'twas with me when I was a boy. I wanted to be pious, and I'd try to pray; but it would flit through my mind that Pete Mason and I was goin' fishin' on Sunday, and I give up. It didn't seem right to pretend to be religious when I was doin' things I knew religion didn't approve of.

"I've spent a good deal of my time here placer mining in the mountains, and men are still washing out gold in that way within fifteen or twenty miles of here. The gold hunter leads a great life. There's a romance about it to be found in nothing else. You're in close touch with nature, and the gold you get isn't just an ordinary commodity. It was made in the form you found it by the power that made the world. A dollar of it seems worth five gained in any other way. I didn't use to notice the time go by. When night came, after working hard all day, I'd wish I could keep right on. If we had dry weather so there wasn't water enough for working I'd take my gun and go after game. I was hearty and well. A man never could feel better under any conditions.

"Some of those fellows prospecting among the mountains are now old men. If they make money they drink, gamble, speculate—any way to get rid of it. One of 'em that I know is over seventy, but when he gets a dram or

two of nose paint he thinks he's one of the boys, and then he don't care how the money goes. He and his pardner have a small ranch where they raise a little wheat and stuff, and after working through the week they get a jug of liquor, bet five dollars as to which is the best marksman, and spend Sunday shooting at a target and emptying the jug. He went East to his relatives a while ago intending to stay with 'em the rest of his days. But he was soon back. 'That sort of life would kill me,' he said. 'I couldn't stand it.' "

To see Montana in another aspect I visited the Gallatin Valley known as "the garden spot of the state." It is about thirty miles long and half that broad. Much of it is as level as a floor, but along the borders are big softly rounded hills with a background of impressive mountain ranges. The soil is justly celebrated for its fertility, and prosperity is general. Many of the farmers stay on their farms only during the season that the crops need attention and spend the winter in homes that they own "in town," which usually means Bozeman, the metropolis of the valley. Bozeman is, however, not much more than a snug country village, embowered in trees and quite suggestive of sociable serenity. The educational advantages of the town are one of its attractions; for in addition to the schools usually found in any good-sized community there is a college. "The biggest part of the valley children graduate from the high school," an acquaintance remarked to me, "and

those that want to make something besides farmers out of themselves go to college afterward." Often the young people move to town in the autumn and attend school and do their own housekeeping, while their parents continue at the farm till the harvest is ended.

On the uplands a good deal of dry farming is being done, and excellent crops are produced where formerly it was thought only grazing was possible. Dry farming does not mean that crops can be raised in soil devoid of moisture, but that by proper treatment the soil is made to conserve its moisture for crop nourishment instead of giving it off into the air. The ploughing is done in the spring. Then the land is thoroughly disked and harrowed, and after every rain it is harrowed again. By keeping the surface pulverized a sort of blanket is formed which prevents the moisture from escaping. Finally fall wheat is sown and the land then takes care of itself until harvest time.

There were still occasional straw stacks around the farmhouses and here and there in the fields. "We won't get shet of them this year," said one farmer. "Usually the stock tear 'em to pieces and eat considerable, but last fall the feed was so good in the pastures we didn't use no roughness hardly."

On one of my rambles a shower drove me into a farmhouse, and I sat down in the kitchen. "This is Monday," said Mrs. Farmer, "and I don't like to see it rain, because Monday is our day for washing if it's fit

weather. Then, too, they say that rain on Monday means rain all the week, or three days anyway. I heard the robins singing their rain song last night, and this storm is no more than I was expecting. I wish we could have some pretty weather till the crops are in. It's been so wet we couldn't plough."

I mentioned that I had met a man on the road who told me the moon was about to change, and therefore the weather would change also.

"Yes," said she, "but did he notice that every change of moon this month was on Friday? That's something never's been heard of before. So I think it will rain every day this month. But goodness sakes! I hope not. My husband ketched an awful bad cold last week, and I can't keep him in out of the wet the best I can do. It might develop into pneumonia. That's the most dreaded disease we have here. People seldom get over it, the climate is so high. There's one thing we don't have though, and that's malarial fever. We asked about it when we moved from Missouri, and they didn't know what 'twas—never had heard of it. Oh, I like this country fine!

"Did you notice the bushes along the roadside all white with blossoms? They'll be loaded with berries later—sarvice berries. You can take your hands and just rake them off. They're awful good to eat raw—healthy, you know, and you can sell 'em in the stores, or make 'em into butter. Choke cherries make good

butter, too. You cook 'em and then take and rub 'em through a cullender. After that sweeten to taste and cook again till the butter is right thick. People just go crazy for choke cherries here. They come out from the town to pick 'em, and they claim they're the finest kind of medicine; but my goodness they're dreadful puckery things to eat raw, and you dassent drink no sweet milk after eating 'em. If you do, you'll sure be made sick. Raspberries and currants grow in the brush along the streams, and you can find gooseberries in the canyons—just quantities of 'em. Up on the mountains there are plenty of huckleberries in a good year. I think they're the best fruit that grows. You can cook 'em and can 'em up any old way, and they keep good, no matter how you fix 'em."

About this time the man of the house came in, and we had dinner. While we were eating he remarked on the shortness of their seasons. "I can't grow corn," he said, "except a little sweet corn for roas'in' years; and that hardly ever matures enough so it can be used for seed. The nineteenth of August last year we had a killin' frost all over this valley, pretty much. It damaged the oats so I don't reckon some men cut theirs at all; and the spring wheat got such a setback that it was naturally ruined and was no account afterward. The frost nearly got away with the gardens, too. Oh, it was bad!

"When I first came here I was afraid the winters would be too harsh for us, but the cold is still and dry

and don't go right through a fellow as it does in a climate that's windy and damp. Yes, this country suits me, and when it comes to grain, hay and potatoes, the Galatin Valley can't be beat."

The enthusiasm for that particular region which this man voiced was shared by most of his neighbors, and they were apt to feel that they could never be contented elsewhere. One such family with whom I made my home for a time occupied a huddle of one-story, dirt-roofed log cabins. They were people of refinement, and well able to afford a dwelling of more modern type, but they had become attached to their home in its primitive, pioneer form. The buildings were in a little meadow with steep protecting hills on three sides, while on the fourth side were level lowlands sweeping away to lines of distant mountains. Just back of the cabins was a grove of big cottonwoods, and a shallow creek lingered through the meadow, and gathered at one place in a pond where the ducks and geese liked to paddle about. The nearest village was four miles distant, and the road thither was a most erratic sort of a byway. It forded the creek a dozen times, and encountered numerous barbed-wire gates which must be unfastened and dragged aside every time anyone passed through.

The log cabins were rude, but had a substantial and cosy simplicity that was quite pleasing. "We appreciate 'em most in winter," said the owner. "They're much warmer than a frame house."

We were sitting in the living room. The logs and boards of the roof had been whitewashed, and the walls were pasted over with newspapers. It was lighted by two small windows. The floor was roughly boarded, but the family regarded the cracks and bumps with complaisancy, it was so much better than the dirt floors of earlier days. In one corner was a cookstove accompanied by a big red woodbox. Many utensils and articles of clothing hung on the walls.

My host's chief criticism of the vicinity was that fruit trees did not flourish. "When I was a boy back in Ohio," said he, "there was a peach tree in every corner of our Virginia rail fences, and I'd sit on the fence and eat the peaches till I fell off. After I grew up I began to move on west, and in 1859, I took a farm in Iowa to work on shares, two-thirds of the crop for me and one-third for the owner. I put in oats, corn, and wheat. They all turned out fine, but I had trouble doing the harvesting and marketing to advantage. For cutting the wheat and oats I gave my share of the wheat; and then for threshing and delivering the grain I gave my share of the oats. That left the corn. There was a hundred acres of it, and when I shucked it I had to have a regular village of corn cribs to store it in. However, in order to sell it, the corn must be drawn a long distance, and then I couldn't sell it for money, but had to take cottonwood fence boards in exchange. Those boards would warp off my wagon before I got back, and when

I nailed them on to the fence posts they'd warp the nails out at one end and twist over so you could nail from the other side. I got discouraged, and I finally swapped my corn for a watch. The watch was a pinchbeck affair that never did run, and later when I come across a man who hadn't any watch I asked him what he'd give for it. 'Five dollars,' he said, and I sold it to him. After keeping it a few months hung on his wall he paid two dollars and a half to have it repaired, and then it wouldn't go.

"There was quite a noise about Pike's Peak at that time, and in the spring I left Council Bluff's for Denver. We had ten men in our company, and six ox-wagons. Lots of other outfits were on the road, and we always had some of 'em in sight. Once in a while we'd overtake a party that was having a fight. Perhaps four or five men owned a single wagon, and some were kind of faint-hearted and didn't want to go any farther. I've seen 'em cut a wagon in two, and make it into carts, and one cart would go on, and the other return. I recollect one big Georgian on the back track. He was barefoot and dilapidated, and we laughed at him. 'You'd laugh out of the other side of your mouth,' he said, 'if you was me. I never was away from home before. I've been to Denver. It's a new camp—just a few houses scattered over the sand, and things looked so disagreeable I thought I'd go back.'



A problem

“Our party went into the mountains looking for gold, and in one place the first pan showed two dollars and forty cents worth. Then we whipsawed boards enough to make a sluice. The sawing was done by fixing up two tall sawhorses on which we mounted a log, and then, one man standing up above, and one down below, we’d work the saw. Sluicing in that particular spot didn’t prove to be profitable. We were living in a little bush shack made by setting up two crotched stakes with a pole laid on them from which spruce boughs were slanted down to the ground on one side. The spruce turned water pretty near as good as a shingle roof. A fire out in front served for cooking and kept us warm. While we were there three fellows came along who had only one blanket between them, and just what food they could carry in their pockets. So they e’t off us; and they went up the opposite side of the crick and located where there was a pocket from which they took out nearly two hundred thousand dollars.

“By fall of the next year I succeeded in getting together eleven hundred dollars and I returned to the states and blowed it in before the winter was over. Then I came to Montana. I was still gold-hunting, but the claims didn’t amount to anything here, and in November I settled down on this farm. The next spring I did some of the first ploughing ever done in Montana. I thought this was the most beautiful wild country I’d ever seen. There was game running in every direction,

and the antelope were so thick you could shoot 'em right from your cabin; for they'd come up quite close out of curiosity. They were bound to investigate anything new. If you lay down on the ground and stuck up a colored handkerchief on your ramrod, you'd soon have 'em within shooting distance.

“There was plenty of good grazing—buffalo grass and bunch grass growing everywhere. A cow could lie down and get more feed than she could now walking around. I've wintered cattle on the range that'd sell for beef in May, and they would be fat, too. Timber wolves bothered us considerable, and they are still doing lots of damage in the northern part of the state. They mostly kill colts and calves, but a bunch of 'em together will down anything, if they're hungry.

“I planted six acres my first year here. Potatoes were the main crop, and the yield was tremendous. As soon as I got 'em dug I loaded one hundred and eighty bushels on a couple of prairie schooners, leaving a little space under the bow of the canvas top for a bed. I hired a man to go with me, and we hitched up with five yoke of oxen to each wagon in order to get over the seventy miles of rough trail to Helena. Just before starting I used the last of my flour to bake a pone of bread. The baking was done in a Dutch oven—a shallow iron kettle with stout legs. You set it on the coals, and it had a rimmed cover so you could heap coals on top. I've baked as fine bread in a Dutch oven as you

could ask to see—light as a cork. On the third night we made our last camp about half a dozen miles from Helena. By and by I noticed some smoke curling up off in the brush, and I went over there and found a man who had a little supply of flour. He was willing to sell me five pounds for five dollars, and he measured it out in a tin cup that wouldn't hold much more'n a half-pint and called each cupful a pound. Next morning we had fry-pan bread and bacon for breakfast. To make the bread I stirred up the flour with a little yeast powder and cold water. Then I greased the fry-pan with a piece of bacon, turned in the dough, and spread it out over the bottom. It rose and filled the pan, and when I got it well fried on one side, I flopped it over to give the other side a chance.

“I sold my potatoes in Helena to two grocery houses at fifty-two cents a pound, and got a whole bootleg full of gold dust for them. Gold dust was the common currency in the mining country, and everybody had a pair of balance scales for weighing it. No one would think of buying or selling anything for less than twenty-five cents. Now the minimum price is five cents, and I think that's low enough. I went into a store in town the other day and they gave me two of those blame pennies in change. They were a nuisance. Some of the big stores for an advertisement are shoving pennies out all the time. The merchants make a price with odd cents to have it appear they've trimmed the profit to the

limit, but the next week they cut the price previously made twenty per cent and are getting rich even then.

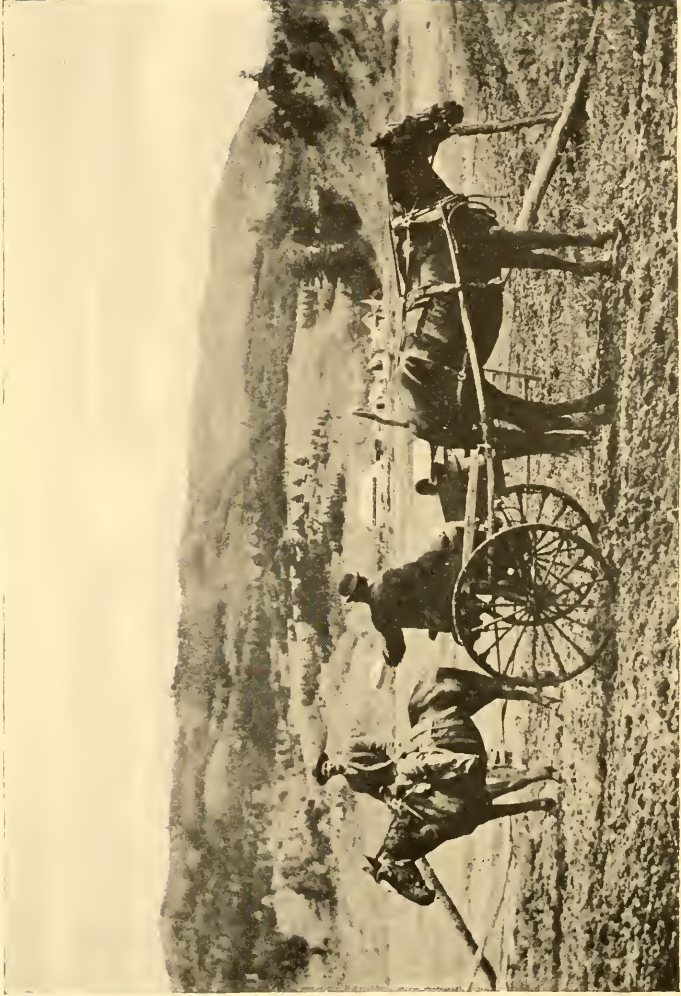
“Potatoes hadn’t been seen in Helena for a long time, and the people were hungry for ’em. I saw a man pick out a good big one and ask the price. The merchant weighed it and said, ‘Just a dollar.’

“So the fellow handed over the cash and went off with the potato in his pocket. For that year’s crop of potatoes and onions I got sixteen thousand dollars.

“Potatoes were a luxury and so were most other things, but I think we were worst off in the matter of tobacco. It was so costly that if a man had a little in his pocket he wouldn’t take it out in public for fear someone would ask him for a chew; but he’d go way off on the prairie to take a bite. Often you couldn’t get any but mouldy, strong old stuff that they called Indian tobacco, because it was chiefly used in trading with the Indians for furs.

“It was only the first year that potatoes were a bonanza for me. A while afterward I tried dairying and kept thirty or forty cows. The butter sold for a dollar and a quarter a pound; but later the price dropped to six bits, and I wouldn’t bother with the cows any more.

“One season I joined a freighting outfit. There were fifty men in the company. I had six yoke of oxen hitched to two wagons, one wagon trailing behind the other. We’d corral the wagons at night—arrange ’em in a circle with the back wheel of one wagon chained



A rural mail delivery

to the front wheel of the next. If it was in a place where there was no water, and the cattle would be inclined to go off in search of it we'd keep 'em inside the circle of the wagons. But as a general thing we night-herded 'em—that is, let 'em graze with three men watching, and changed the guard at midnight. The first part of the night the cattle would be feeding pretty steady, and after that they'd lie down and get up by spells and wander over quite a little territory. Once when we were camped at Fort Gilpin, which was just an old stockade, about fifty Indians, each lashed onto a black horse that shone like a raven, came sailing over the sagebrush. They wore their feather bonnets and were smeared with red and yellow war paint. One of our men was killed and a couple wounded, and the savages got away with sixty of our cattle.

“Another time I saw a fight between two parties of Indians—probably a hundred on a side. They were a cowardly outfit and would just circle around on their ponies and yelp as they approached each other. But when they came within about two hundred yards they swerved off. They were always on the move, never stopping for a moment. I could see their arrows glisten in the sun, but it looked like they didn't get near enough to kill anyone. I believe each party secured one scalp.

“Besides Indians to keep a man uneasy there were a lot of bad whites who floated in from Nevada and California, and in 1864 the road agents elected their chief

as sheriff of the whole territory. They were going to have things their own way, but a Vigilant Committee organized and hunted him out and hung him. He was a fine-looking fellow, as smart as steel, and not thirty years of age.

“This country is in most ways all right now, and any industrious man of good habits can make money here. In fact, nearly all our farmers are free from debt and have money in the bank. Isn't it astonishing the changes and inventions and wonders that have come to pass in the last fifty years. If a man at the beginning of that period had prophesied what's taken place they'd have locked him up. I'd like to live fifty years more just to see how things would be then.”

NOTE.—Butte is interesting to the traveller as the greatest silver-producing center in the United States, and the biggest copper mining camp in the world. It has but a single industry, and every inhabitant is either directly connected with the mines or in some way caters to the wants of those who are thus employed. The region has a somewhat sinister aspect due to the fact that the fumes of the smelters have blasted nature's greenery for ten miles around, but the grandeur of the mountains remains, and the mine dumps and tall chimneys on the crests of the hills form striking features of the landscape.

A more attractive phase of Montana life can be seen by descending the mountains to the eastward and visiting the beautiful Gallatin Valley. Bozeman is probably the pleasantest stopping-place, and is a good center from which to make expeditions into the fine surrounding farming country or to the glens that open back into the surrounding hills.

XII

MAY IN THE YELLOWSTONE

THE Yellowstone National Park is a remnant of the untamed wilderness which a few decades ago included all the country west of the Mississippi. It is, in fact, almost the only easily accessible portion of genuine wilderness now left to us, where the woods and streams and the creatures that inhabit them are just as they would be in undisturbed nature. There are other features, to be sure, that give it individuality, and that have made its fame world-wide, but I think its wilderness is its most unique charm.

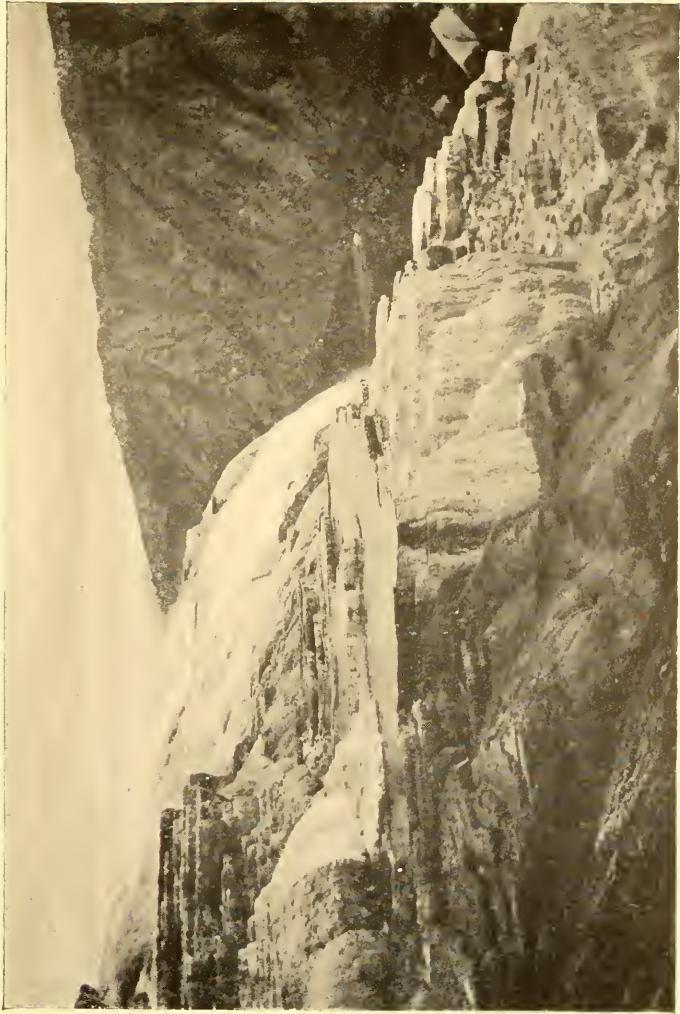
The northern gateway is the favorite entrance for the multitude of visitors whom the Park attracts, and there you find a rude little town named Gardiner. I reached this place one rainy day when the mountain crests and hilltops around were hidden by the overhanging clouds, and the somberness of the weather made the hamlet appear even more forlorn than usual. Its most pretentious portion consisted of a long row of saloons with a few stores and hotels among them, lined up close to the Park entrance. They were all of wood, and only a story or two in height. The helter-skelter of lesser struc-

tures which made up the rest of the town stood amid rocks and sagebrush, and many of them had log walls. It was a Wild West village, seemingly lying in wait there, like a spider alert for flies.

The tourist season was still a fortnight off, though May was nearing its end; for the Park is a lofty mountain fastness where winter holds sway during the greater part of the year. I could therefore only find a public conveyance for the five-mile climb from Gardiner to Mammoth Hot Springs. The vehicle had no canopy, and its occupants were exposed to the chilly onset of the storm, and to splashes of mud from the wheels and the horses' hoofs.

My fellow passengers were three Irish stonemasons, who talked with a brogue and called every wild creature they saw a "son of a gun," and who compared the scenery to that of the Lakes of Killarney in their native Erin. Our road followed up the winding valley of a mountain stream which careered down its rocky channel in a foaming torrent. As we went higher the rain turned to snow, and we had around us lofty whitened mountains looming dim amid the falling flakes; and then we came to a nook in the upland that gave footing for a hamlet of government barracks, hotels, and accessory buildings.

After I had found shelter and warmed myself, I went for a walk and climbed the big steep hillside near by, where for a half mile or more the hot springs well forth



A terrace of hot springs

in many scattered spots. The springs are not simply hot water gushing up from the ground. They are architects and builders; for the water is laden with lime which forms series of dainty basins rising terrace on terrace, or decorates the slopes with shelving convolutions that in places drop almost perpendicularly, and again are nearly level. Another marvel of the lime is the color. Some portions of the formation are pure white, and some are gray or creamy, while still others are yellow, orange, or deep brown, or some shade of green. These fountains with the dripping rims, though often quite massive, are not very permanent; for the limestone is soft, and when a spring shifts its outlet the abandoned terrace soon begins to crack and crumble. But so long as a basin is supplied with the subterranean water its contour is unfailingly graceful, and even the details are very charming in their flutings and corrugations. Sometimes the water boiled with a bubbling vigor, but as a rule it gently simmered. Here was a nectar of nature's brewing in chaliced cups of a size suited to the gods and goddesses of mythology. The steaming contents, delicately blue in tint, were apparently just warm enough to be satisfying and comforting.

In the neighborhood of the springs the snowflakes melted as fast as they fell, and numbers of robins and other birds hopped around on the bare spots as if to warm their feet. The air was gray with the storm, and

I could barely see the mountains looming roundabout. Near at hand were occasional straggling clumps of evergreen trees adorned with spotless festoons of snow; and the white earth, and the silence, broken only by the soft rustle of falling flakes and the equally soft bubbling and steaming of the springs, was full of mystery. Once a jack rabbit leaped nimbly away, and again and again a squad of deer rambled across my path.

The next morning the storm was nearly over, and when I looked out of my window at the hotel I saw the footprints of a bear in the snow down below, and noticed that the creature had tipped over some garbage barrels at the back door. An hour later, when I started on a twenty-mile walk to the Norris Geyser Basin, the sun was breaking through the clouds, and the snow on the evergreen boughs was beginning to drip. The birds were singing, and as I plodded along the deer looked inquiringly at me from the roadside thickets, and in one of the high meadows I saw two or three herds of elk.

For the first part of the way there were wild canyons that yawned beside the trail, and great mountain cliffs, but later the route was rather monotonous forest with here and there an open glade or a little lake. The snow lay six or eight inches deep, and it was slow work toiling along the unbroken roadway. At length I met a mounted soldier, and later two government mule teams, and the path they broke through the snow made the walking somewhat easier. Yet the muddiness increased,

and the endless slop, slop, slop of my footfalls was decidedly wearisome. I appreciated the companionable mileposts by which I was able to measure my progress. Nor could I complain of the road, except for the snow and mud. It receives the best of care from the government, and in the dry days of midsummer a score or two of sprinklers, just such as one sees on the city streets, are busy laying the dust, each going over an allotted distance.

One of the wayside streams was interrupted by frequent snaggy beaver dams. The beavers have become numerous in the Park during recent years; but they prey on the fish too ravenously to be altogether desirable.

As I went on signs of the underworld heat that produces so many curious spectacles in the region were increasingly frequent. Here and there were blasted patches of ground where a hot spring welled up, or where steam issued from holes and crevices, or perhaps there was simply a belching of sulphurous fumes. At one point was the "Frying Pan"—a muddy hollow containing several shallow pools in a constant sizzle, from which a succession of big bubbles were floating away down a tiny rill. Another striking sight was what appeared to be a burning mountain with many shreds of smoke rising from among the trees that had been killed by the fumes and heat; and thence came a medley of muffled rasping sounds as if the gnomes were running a sawmill in the depths of the earth.

When I reached Norris I found a barren circular valley full of bubbling water-holes and spouting fountains. Drifting steam was rising from these and from many pools and hot streams, and from cauldrons of mud at the borders of the Basin, and the air was laden with stifling odors. Perhaps the most appalling feature was a blast of steam that comes with terrific force from a red-throated crevice. Its hoarse voice thrills the valley unceasingly. Many of the water-holes erupt at more or less regular intervals. Up goes a burst of water accompanied by clouds of steam, but the tumult is soon over, and the fountain subsides to prepare for a new explosion. There are several other geyser clusters farther south, and it is at one of these known as the Upper Basin that the geysers are seen at their best. Here is Old Faithful which spouts every hour, and the water column is thrown over one hundred feet in the air, retains its height a few moments, and then after many weakening rallies sinks hissing and rumbling into its brown cone, leaving all the rocky earth about glistening and steaming with the hot water. Of course such a spectacle is impressive, and so are all the other varied manifestations of subterranean power, yet much of this is not beautiful, but simply uncanny.

Most of the Park consists of a high plateau near the backbone of the continent that averages seven thousand five hundred feet above the sea level. The tourist season ends September 15th, and winter soon puts a stop



An upland brook

to all wagon travel. At Norris, the big hotel was still vacant except for the family of the winter keeper, the members of which had led a lonely life for the last few months. "But the snow was less deep than usual," said the keeper as we sat by the fire in the evening. "We only had four feet on a level, and we got our mail mighty near every week. The keepers farther in the Park didn't fare so well, especially the man at the Canyon. There's only him and his wife, and he didn't have any soldiers stationed close by to keep him company like we do. None of us can find much work to be busy about, and those two pretty near went crazy. What we fear most is sickness. A year ago a keeper's wife was sick, and the soldiers put her on a toboggan and dragged her down to Mammoth Springs.

"Everybody goes on skees here in winter. I can get into a sweat on those even with the thermometer fifty below zero. They work good when it's cold. The snow won't stick to nothin' then, but a good many days it softens some, and then we can only use skees to advantage early in the morning or late in the afternoon."

I spoke to the keeper about some of the animals I had seen, and of the numerous footprints of wild creatures I had observed in the snow and mud. "Yes," he said, "we have here about every animal that'll live in a cold climate—bears and buffaloes, moose, wildcats, lynx, badgers, big-horns, red, black, blue, and silver foxes, mountain lions, eagles, and lots of other creatures. They

claim there ain't any wolves; but I think I saw one once. He snapped his jaw at me and run off, but it was in a snowstorm, and I didn't see him real plain. The government tries to kill off any such animals that are very destructive to the other creatures. Mountain lions are bad that way. They ketch a good many of our deer and elk. I suppose there's quite a lot of 'em in the park; but you might stay here a hundred years and never see one—they're just that sly. However, they see you and will follow you, stopping when you stop and going on when you go on.

“Nearly all the animals are much more plenty than they were when I began living in the Park in 1883. I didn't see any deer for a long time. They were so wild they kept back in the woods. Now they're so tame I often feed 'em out of my hand. One of the most interesting things I know of is to see a deer kill a snake. It will leap into the air, put all four feet within a few inches of each other and light on the snake so quick that the snake don't know what's happened. The deer is off at once, and then makes the same kind of a jump again and again, till its sharp hoofs cut the snake right in two. A deer will kill every snake it comes across.

“One queer creature we have in the Park is a wood rat—a tremendous big fellow with a flat tail as large around as your finger. It likes to beat on the floor with that tail, and makes as much noise as you could with a stick. For a nesting place it prefers some dark loft

where it uses all sorts of rubbish in building a nest that would fill a barrel. Whatever it can get hold of that is not too heavy or bulky it carries off. We might leave our shoes and socks here by the stove, and perhaps one of those rats would carry 'em off. But the chances are, if it wasn't disturbed, it would bring 'em back the next night.

“The worst nuisance we have though in the way of wild varmints is the bears. They're raising Cain all the time, and there's getting to be lots of 'em. The grizzlies are the bosses. When a bunch of the cinnamons and blacks are together at a hotel garbage heap they all get up and run fit to kill themselves if a grizzly comes around. Some of the bears are big fellows that have a footprint the size of a pan. About this time of year they're beginning to fish in the small streams. They'll lie down at the edge of the water and watch perfectly still, and then give a slap that'll throw a trout way out on the land.

“They make lots of trouble for tourists with tents and wagons. I was camping in the Park one time, and a bear smelt my provisions and come right after 'em. It was night and dark, and every time I heard the bear prowling around I'd throw something at it, and I had to spend all the next day picking up the articles I'd used for bombarding the creature.

“I used to have a mule that liked nothing better than to chase a bear up a tree. Then he'd back up to the

foot of the tree and wait for a chance to kick the bear when it came down. Oh, the mules like to fight a bear. They'll run one off into the timber any time.

"The bears are not at all dangerous as a general thing. I threw a stone at one the other day, and whop! it hit him a bat side of the head, and away he went. Sometimes I've caught a bear by the tail when he had his head in a slop can. He'd leave the can in a hurry and start for the woods, and perhaps I'd chase him about half a mile just for fun. But if the bear stopped, I'd go the other way. One night I opened the door to go out and almost tumbled over a grizzly with eyes as big as dinner plates. I tell you I broke and run into the house over the tables and chairs and things. Unless I can see and have a notion of what a bear is planning to do, I don't take any chances monkeying with him.

"You want to look out about coming to close quarters with a bear that has cubs. If you get between a cub and its mother, the first thing you know the old bear is onto you, and you don't last long. There was a tourist come to the Park once makin' his brag that he was goin' to have his hands on a bear. That's a kind of hobby with some people—they want to get their hands on a bear. The men here told him he'd better not, but that didn't make any difference. So one day he and his wife saw a bear with two cubs, and they gave chase. One cub ran up a tree, and the man touched it as it was climbing. He'd succeeded in his stunt, but the old bear didn't know



A geyser basin

that was the end of the game. She went for him and knocked him down. His wife drove the bear off with a club, but the man was clawed up so bad he died soon after he returned to his home in the East.

“Another fellow who had a hankering to put his hands on a bear was a Chinaman cook up at the Lake Hotel. If a bear happened around when he was off duty he’d go and chase it. I was in the woods up in that region one time when I heard a bear comin’ rippity-dash through the timber, and it was sure tearin’ up the brush; and behind it was the Chinaman hollerin’ ‘Hoop! hoop! hoop!’ The bear started up a tree, and the Chink grabbed it by a hind leg. But the bear turned and gave him a swipe with its paw that cut his arm plumb to the bone. He’ll carry the scar to his grave.”

The keeper’s wife had joined us while we were talking, and she now remarked: “I think bear meat is just lovely. I’d as soon have it as the best pork that ever was. In fact, I’d rather have it, because pork, you know, is apt not to lay good on your stomach, but bear meat never troubles you that way, no matter how much you eat.”

“I wish they’d let us shoot a few of these bears,” said the keeper. “But the government is very strict about prohibiting the use of firearms by anyone except the soldiers. It’s strict in a good many other ways, too. People are not allowed to soap the geysers or to carry away souvenirs the way they used to.”

“There’s one family I know,” said Mrs. Keeper, “that has a piece of lime deposit they took from up by the lake in the early days, and it’s as big as a stove.”

“But they couldn’t have carried away such a piece,” objected the keeper. “They couldn’t come in here with wagons. There were no more roads than a jack rabbit has.”

“Oh—get out!” retorted the lady. “What’s the matter with you? All the old-timers went through here with wagons, though maybe that piece wasn’t quite as large as I said.”

“Anyhow,” resumed the keeper, “it got so people would lug off anything they could carry, and the government made ’em quit. Soaping the geysers was another freak of the public. If soap was thrown in, it seemed to stir ’em up and make ’em spout. The largest geyser in the Park was ruined by a dose of soap which a soldier gave it, and which resulted in its blowing to pieces. Then there was a Chinaman who had a laundry in a tent at the Upper Basin. He emptied his soapsuds where they ran into a geyser, and the geyser exploded after a while and blew up the fellow’s tent.”

The longest walk I made while in the Park was from Norris to the Canyon. Including the various asides, I covered that day twenty-six miles. The jaunt, when I set out, promised to be exceptionally fatiguing; for the snow lay deep, and at every step I broke through a crust that had formed during the night. But I soon got

into a path made by two bears which had followed the road, one behind the other, almost the entire distance to the Canyon. The imprint of their broad feet was clearly marked and had a savagely human aspect. I decided to give the creatures the road if I chanced to meet them, and that I would climb a tree if they were inclined to cultivate my acquaintance. But probably they would have made as hasty a detour as any I contemplated. At least, two grizzlies which I attempted to approach one evening in the neighborhood of the hotel where I was stopping, promptly scampered off into the brush with just such snorts of alarm as a hog makes when suddenly frightened into flight.

The road that the bears and I followed was, for much of the distance, an avenue through the sober pine forest. I was in a howling wilderness, if ever there was one, but the nearest approach to howling that I heard was the sonorous honking of wild geese. From the marshes came the stuttering notes of a multitude of frogs. Several times I heard partridges heralding the spring with the resonant roll of their drums, and once in a while I would see a chipmunk scudding timidly across the snow, or a squirrel would chatter at me and accuse me of being an undesirable citizen of the forest.

The winter keeper at the Canyon Hotel welcomed me cordially, for it had been a long time since he had seen anyone from the outside world. He was a young man, but decidedly bald, which he took pains to explain was

because he found it convenient one summer to wash his head daily in a hot spring. "And that sulphur water takes your hair out all right," said he—"kills it dead as a doornail."

We went together to view the Canyon. This is undoubtedly the finest scenic attraction of the Park. It is a narrow glen worn more than a thousand feet deep in the many-tinted rocks, and graced with a noble waterfall. The long leap of the stream, and the beautiful color and imposing depth of the chasm, combine to make the waterfall one of the most notable of which America can boast. My guide as he looked down from the verge of a crag on the warm-toned rocks of the tremendous ravine said: "There's all kinds of gold in that Canyon."

Surely the color might lead one to infer as much; but why dream here of wealth, except that conferred by the golden inspiration of the scene? It was quite warm there in the glen, and the snow was gone except for remnants of drifts. "This is the tail-end of our winter," said the keeper; "but we are never sure of steady hot weather. There's liable to be a cold snap and snowsqualls at almost any time. That's a thing the tourists from lower, warmer sections of the country are apt not to think of, and lots of 'em come here with nothin' on and really suffer."

It is possible to make the tour of the Park in several different ways. To walk is ideal for a few, to take the



The falls in the canyon

regular lines of coaches is best for the majority, and an occasional party will prefer to go with its own team and tenting outfit. While I was on the train, after leaving the Yellowstone, a Wyoming man who had made a rustic trip to the Park in 1895 gave me an account of his experiences. "There were two of us," said he—"an old Texas soldier and me. He furnished the wagon and horses, and I furnished the grub. We went right through the mountains to the Park from the eastern part of the state, and we got to her about the middle of summer. I made a mistake in my pardner. He was an old crank who didn't care for no natural scenery. The only thing he wanted to do was to kill antelope. So he was shooting 'em all the way—that is, he shot at 'em—he didn't get 'em. But when we reached the Park the guards took his gun away. There was nothing he was interested in after that, and he didn't want to stop anywhere. I was bound to make the tour, though, and he spent most of the time lying around camp. I'd liked to have had an educated man with me who had some sense and would have reasoned with me about what we saw.

"Well, we went all around. Those hot springs are a wonder, ain't they? and oh my! ain't the falls at the Canyon grand? While I was at the Norris Basin some of the tourists came in their fine coaches; and the ground there, where the hot water holes and geysers are, looked so shaky they wouldn't venture out on it. But I did, and I says to 'em: 'This may be more risky than I

think, and if I break through into the infernal regions underneath I wish you'd write and tell my wife what has become of me.'

"The paint pots are kind of dangerous to fool around, too. And how did that mud geyser suit you? It has the darndest smell of any hole in the Park. I seen Old Faithful spout, and lots of others. In particular I remember the Giantess. She's a dandy fine one! Say! but what splendid fishing there is in the Park! Near the outlet of the lake I found the best place to ketch trout that ever was heard of. I could stand and pull a fish out of one stream, and without moving a step or taking him off my line flop him over into a hot stream and scald him ready to eat—yes, you bet your life! There's no question about some of that Park water being hot. I often wrapped eggs in a cloth and putt 'em in a stream or pool to boil. The only fault I found with the trip was the kind of man I had with me. When we got ready to leave I told him he could drive his team home, and I went along by train."

No doubt a sympathetic companion is a matter of great importance in contributing to one's enjoyment of the Park. Yet even an unsatisfactory comrade cannot wholly dull its charm, as was proved in the case of the man I have been quoting. At the time I met him he was returning home after a long absence to attend the funeral of his wife. In spite of his loss, though this was sufficiently saddening when he happened to think of it,



Cowdry mannevers

he was full of jovial enthusiasm as he recalled those wonderful days in the Yellowstone Park. They had left delightful memories which would stay with him the rest of his life, and his experience in this respect is the usual one of visitors to that wonderland.

NOTE.—The railways afford an entrance to the Park from the north at Gardiner, and from the west at Yellowstone. Usually the tour of the Park itself is made by stage. In a general way, the route consists of a circle in the center of the area, and it covers only a small portion of the sixty-two miles length and fifty-four miles width of the entire Park. But this is the "heart of wonderland," and what lies beyond is largely variations of the same themes as are to be found along the main thoroughfare. It takes at least six days to go over the route comfortably, and more time can be spent to advantage. But better a hasty trip of two or three days than to miss the Park altogether. Visit at least the Mammoth Hot Springs, one of the geyser basins and the Grand Canyon; and in doing this you will see much that is delightful along the way.

The Park is especially attractive as a summer resort because the days are never oppressively warm, and the nights are always cool. Its fine roads afford the best of opportunities for horseback rides, there is splendid trout-fishing, and you can indulge in mountain-climbing and camping to your heart's content. You will, of course, be interested in the remnants of volcanic action dying out in geysers, pots of boiling mud, and earth-rents hoarsely discharging their sulphurous steam. But of all the Park's attractions I would rank highest the chance to see the wild creatures of the forest. Here they are protected from the attacks of the hunters; and even the buffalo—that nearly extinct monarch of the plains—draws about him in security the pitiful remnant of his once mighty herd. Two companies of United States cavalry are stationed in the Park to prevent the spreading of forest fires and the commission of acts of vandalism.

One should be prepared for sudden changes of weather and altitude. It is well to have wraps at hand such as shawls and light overcoats.

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Thick-soled shoes for walking are desirable, and indeed are almost a necessity at the Mammoth Hot Springs and among the geysers where numerous tiny streams of hot water are sure to be encountered. Colored spectacles and a pair of opera glasses will often add greatly to the pleasure of a trip.

XIII

CUSTER'S LAST BATTLEFIELD

FEW events in the great Northwest have been more tragic and melancholy than the encounter between the gallant Custer and the Indians late in June, 1876. Not one of the whites escaped to tell the story, and all we have learned of the details, except what the battlefield itself discloses, has come from the hostile red men. The struggle took place in southern Montana, not far from what is now the village of the Crow Agency. Through the lowlands flows the winding, tree-fringed Little Bighorn River, and on the broad alluvial lowlands are many small farmhouses and fertile grain-fields belonging to the Indians.

Between the Agency and the battlefield, a distance of three miles, is a level stretch of pasturage where a few horses are usually to be seen grazing. Then you come to hills rising in a long and often steep sweep to a high ridge that overlooks all the country for miles around. Along this ridge the battle was fought. It is a dreary spot, entirely devoid of trees or other marked features. The soil is full of small stones scantily hidden by growths of sagebrush, prickly pear, and tufts of coarse grass.

The other ridges of the region have the same character, but on the western horizon lies a low range of blue mountains, and the strip of valley bordering the stream is vernal and inviting.

For a mile along the hillcrest is a scattering of white gravestones, each marking the spot where a soldier's body was found. Some of these occur in groups, others singly, and they are a pathetic indication of the fierce struggle of the troops to defend and disentangle themselves from the clutch of their savage enemies. Occasional stones are far down among the steep-sided coulees that furrow the rough slope, as if the men had made sorties in an endeavor to reach the river. No water was to be had nearer, and the lack of it was a serious handicap.

The last stand was made just under the western brow of the extreme north end of the ridge, where it rises highest—a cool and windy spot usually, but on a still summer day baking hot. Opposite this height, on the other shore of the river, the Indians had their encampments straggling along for two miles or more. Each party was in plain view of the other, and at all times knew its opponent's movements and condition. Custer fell in the midst of his men, and a wooden cross marks the location where his body was found. I did not think this rude memorial was altogether appropriate, but nothing is safe from the rapacity of the relic-hunters,



The spot where Custer fell

and when they have destroyed one cross by carrying it off splinter by splinter another can be set up in its place at small expense.

The general opinion of the people in the Western country seemed to be that Custer made a foolhardy sacrifice of himself and his men. One informant, whose views are typical of those I usually heard, expressed himself thus:

“Custer was what you might call a dude—more showy than practical; but for dashing bull-headed bravery he couldn't be beat. If there was fighting he didn't go behind, the way some officers do. He'd take the lead; and he didn't have no more use for an Indian than for a rattlesnake. As soon as he saw one his blood began to boil and he was bound to kill him. The Indians had some advantages, though, over him and his men. If the soldiers were to cut loose from their feed wagons they'd perish. Civilized food was a necessity, while the Indians were perfectly free to go where they pleased and would live on anything they could get hold of. They just liked to be chased by soldiers. What did Indians care for them, or for the kids from the hospital—West Point—who officered them? A hundred cow-punchers were worth a whole regiment of soldiers, and I'd rather have had 'em—yes, or miners. Cow-punchers and miners were a class that would fight any blame man in those days. When they went into a fight they meant business, and the Sioux had a great fear of 'em.

“One thing that perhaps had a good deal to do with this particular battle was that Custer had been overstepping the mark in various ways so that he was out of favor with some of the higher officers and the authorities in Washington. He wanted to regain a little lost prestige by winning a spectacular victory. Orders had been given to fall back, if he discovered the enemy, and wait for reinforcements. But he didn't do that. He didn't even reconnoiter to find out what he needed to do. There was no attempt at stratagem, and it is stratagem that counts in war. He was too hasty, and charged right into the Indians as soon as he came in sight of 'em. It was his intention to massacre 'em, but instead of that he massacred his own men.”

The records hardly bear out the fairness of these impressions. Custer's orders were not of a hard and fast sort, and they left nearly everything to his discretion. His fatal mistake was in underestimating the strength of the enemy; but this error was one he shared in common with all the other commanders in the expedition. The war originated in the demand that certain wild bands of the Sioux should settle down on the reservations under the control of the Indian Agent. It was not supposed that these wanderers could muster more than seven hundred warriors, and yet Custer encountered about four times that number, including boys who were armed with bows and arrows.

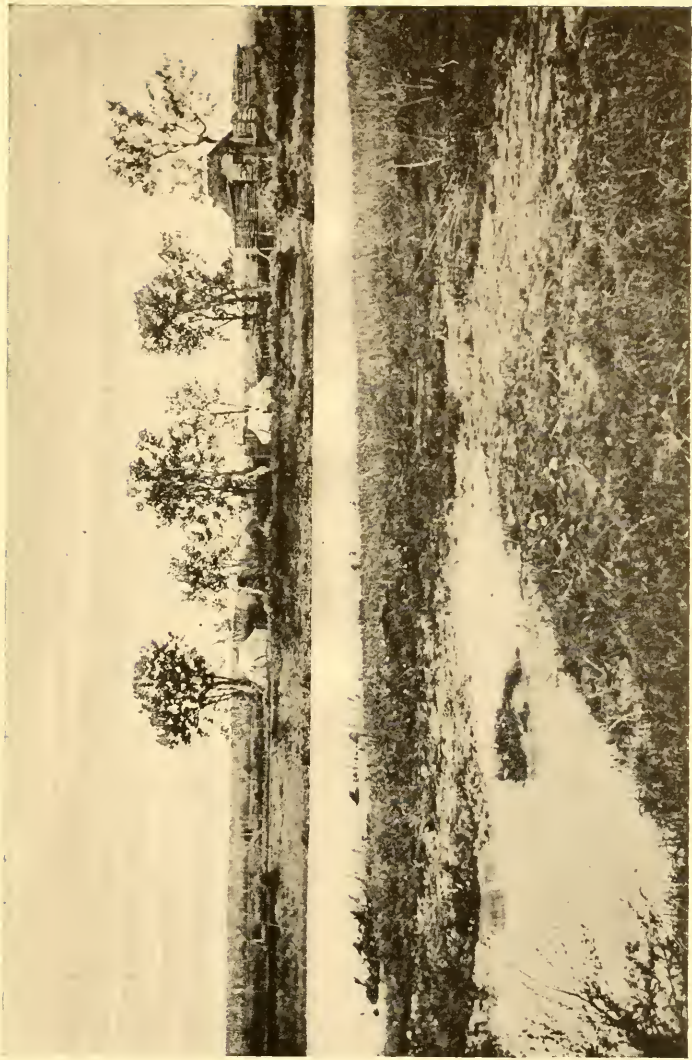
The campaign opened in March when General Crook's command was so severely handled that he felt obliged to retreat. This gave the Indians confidence, and great numbers slipped away from the agencies to join the hostiles. With the beginning of summer the troops were again in motion, and Custer, whose command consisted of six hundred men, presently got on the trail of the enemy. It was his business to punish and bring them to terms, and he knew very well that the Indians have no fondness for pitched battles. Even with the odds in their favor they prefer to scatter and run away. The only chance for the troops to effectively chastise them was to catch them unawares and strike quick and hard.

On the morning of the battle the approach of the soldiers was betrayed by the cloud of dust they raised, for the weather was very dry; and as soon as Custer knew that he was discovered he had his men move forward with haste. They were then on the banks of the Little Bighorn, and a portion of the command, under Major Reno, crossed to the north side to go on up the valley and engage the Indians, while Custer with the rest, numbering about two hundred and fifty, kept to the south side to fall on the enemy from a different direction. It was then nearly noon. Reno had not gone far when he was brought to a halt by the foe, who assailed him with such energy that in a good deal of confusion

he retreated and soon found himself besieged on one of the hilltops.

With the first knowledge that the Indians had of the approach of the troops they began preparations to break camp and fly; but when Reno was driven back they took courage and decided to delay their flight until the urgency became greater. The entire fighting force then concentrated their attention on Custer, leaving Reno for the time being almost unmolested. Possibly, had he gone to his superior's aid, the fate of the day might have been changed, but he seems to have been too shaken by what had already occurred to make the attempt.

Custer had moved along the ridges south of the stream for several miles before the Indians attacked him, and he was not backward about striking in return. His opponents, in order to hide their own movements and drive out the troops, set fire to the grass. This helped develop a confusion that soon put the whites on the defensive. They were in two or three different detachments, and the enemy seems to have dealt with these separately. The Indians would advance under cover of the slopes far enough so that when they stood erect they could see the troops, but were protected when squatting or lying down. By rising and firing quickly they exposed themselves only an instant; but this served to draw the fire of the soldiers and make them waste their ammunition. After a time they would give a war-



An Indian home on the banks of the Little Bigborn

whoop and charge. The fight was not long drawn out. Its duration was only a few hours at most, and it came to an end with the death of Custer who, fighting to the last moment, had survived all his comrades.

The Indians, jubilant with victory, yelled and revelled on the battlefield, scalping and plundering the dead soldiers; and the young men and boys rode about firing into the bodies. When darkness came they lighted bonfires in their encampments, and though naturally economical of fuel, they did not stint it this time, and the surrounding hills were brightly illumined. All night long they were engaged in frantic rejoicing, beating drums, dancing, yelling, and discharging firearms. The next day they attempted again to overwhelm Reno, but he had rudely fortified himself and gotten a supply of water, and he successfully resisted the fierce attacks. Then, fearing the approach of another detachment of troops, the entire body of Indians withdrew into the wilderness.

The Crow Indians who dwell in the vicinity did not join forces with the hostiles. In fact, some of them were scouting for Custer. At the Crow Agency village the inhabitants are mostly whites who are government and railroad employees, but the red men are always much in evidence, coming and going. I found it rather a charming hamlet, and even suggestive in a mild way of an historic university town; for a number of good-sized

school buildings fronted on a grassy common of ample area, and avenues of great trees arched the walks and streets and grew in clumps about the buildings. So there was pleasant shade, and a dreamy atmosphere of serenity and refinement.

Among the other structures was a two-story wooden hotel, very like any country hostelry, except that the office had its walls papered with pictures, most of them colored, and having as a rule Indian scenes for their subjects. Especially conspicuous in this art collection were two oil paintings done on tin that had served formerly as receptacles for kerosene. They were about three feet square, and had ponderous, gaudy frames. One painting was of an Indian chief labelled, "Little Dog," and the other of "Bronco Jim," a wild, bewhiskered plainsman with his teeth showing, and a knife raised ominously in his right hand. The two pictures were really fascinating in their crude, raw ghastliness; and it seemed perfectly evident that some aspiring savage had painted them. But the landlord said: "No, they were done by an old priest. After he was over eighty and about ready to die he concluded he'd missed his calling and started in to be an artist. So he got some house paint in different colors, and flattened out some old tin cans to serve instead of canvas and went at it. You may think these are pictures of real people, but they're ideals, names and all."

The Indian children are gathered in at the school when they are seven years of age, and there they live. It is usual to keep the girls till they are eighteen, unless they leave to marry, and the boys stay till they are twenty-one. The education is largely industrial, and an attempt is made to give the students civilized habits of home life both indoors and out. For the girls there is cooking, washing, sewing, sweeping, etc., and for the boys work in the barns and gardens and fields. The boys have a keen liking for athletics, and their baseball club nearly always wins in the match games with the whites.

Outside of the village the long sweep of fertile, irrigated valley looks quite attractive, and the many herds of horses and cattle on the hills seem to attest the prosperity of the Indian owners. But if you question the white men who live in the neighborhood concerning this apparent thrift they say: "Only about one out of every fifty raises a crop or works, and even these few, as soon as the results of their labor come to them in the shape of money, usually blow it in. No matter how large the sum is it only lasts them as long as it takes to spend it, and they spend it dog-goned quick. They're great hands to buy buggies to drive around in. One feller went and bought three after selling a lot of hay he'd raised. He had no more use for three buggies than a man has for six legs. Two of 'em he gave away, and

in a few weeks he was wanting to sell the other for forty dollars though it had cost him over a hundred.

“Of course there are exceptions to the rule. Some are buying good teams and farming implements and a bunch of cattle and getting down to business. They all take pride in their horses, and they have some blame good ones, and as nice rigs as any owned in Wall Street. But in most ways they are lazy and have no judgment, and their financiering is shortsighted and childish. Very few of 'em are downright honest and square. Instead, they're quite irresponsible and never pay a debt if they can avoid it. You let them have goods on credit and they'll go to the limit in buying every time, and then want more rope.

“Perhaps the chief trouble is that they've been raised to another style of living. You really couldn't expect 'em to be models of industry. They used to be a war-ring, buffalo-hunting tribe. There were millions of buffaloes in this region, and it was hunt and pleasure for the Indians all the way through. But the government got into a row with the Sioux, who became so bad it was necessary to starve 'em into submission by clearing out the buffaloes. Then the Crows saw hard times, and the government made paupers of 'em by issuing rations to the whole tribe, old and young. All an Indian had to do was to sit down and say he was hungry to have his food passed out to him.



A waterside footpath

“The present agent has been trying to set 'em on their feet and show 'em how to take care of themselves. It was his idea that a man didn't deserve food if he wouldn't work, and he cut off the rations from the able-bodied intending to let 'em rustle. But rations were still given to the old people, and the young bucks flocked around to help eat them. So the issuing of food was stopped entirely.

“The government controls considerable money that belongs to the Indians, and they're all the time at the agent to get hold of it. A person requesting money who has a foolish plan for spending it is given some good advice, and goes away empty-handed. An Indian is not very demonstrative. If the advice suits him he looks very solemn and shakes hands. If he's mad he looks very solemn and walks off without any hand-shaking. Some of the young fellows raise a great row when the agent withholds their money, and to keep the peace he turns it over to them, lets 'em fool it away and suffer the consequences. To allow the old people to squander their property that way is a more serious matter. As long as they have a little income their relatives will take care of 'em; but with their capital in their own hands they're soon paupers. Then none of the tribe wants them around and they lead a hard life.

“Most of the men have adopted the garments of the whites, but the old fellows still cling to their blankets.

The women dress practically as they always have, except that they use calico instead of buckskin, and substitute a white sheet in summer for the blanket they ordinarily wear. The finest feminine garment is a dress ornamented with elk teeth, or shells. Such a dress is handed down as a family heirloom and is only worn by recent brides and young girls. It is often worth a good team.

“Some of the Indians have pretty nice places, but the habits of the inmates of even the better homes are apt to have a flavor of the barbaric. The girls will go right home from the school and fry dough and boil meat just as their mothers have in the past. You seldom find anything but ordinary squaw-cooking. Then, too, they get tired of living in a house. Perhaps it becomes too dirty, and the family prefers to move out rather than to clean it. So they transfer themselves to a tent. That has advantages over a house, for when the dirt gets too offensive they can shift the tent to a new spot. It’s too bad, but the tents are knocking out the old picturesque tepees, because they are so much cheaper, and are easier handled.

“The health of the Indians is poor. Tuberculosis is the disease that is carrying off most of them. They are very susceptible to it. For one thing, they don’t use any judgment about ventilation. A tepee would ventilate itself. Every time the flap at the entrance was

thrown up there'd be a change of air. It's different with a house, or even with a modern tent; for they have a campstove in the tent and sit around it and sweat, but keep the fire going just the same. They don't like to go to a doctor when they're sick. The mummery of their own medicine men suits them better. We tried recently to send a physician to a fellow who'd broken his arm, but he hid out, and that arm will be crooked for the rest of his days.

“They're very fond of dogs. A few weeks ago they had a camp down the river a mile or two, and there were seventy tepees and a thousand dogs. Some tribes like dog meat to eat, but not these fellows, and the dogs multiply past endurance. We had a poisoning bee here one time. The Indians were goin' to get together for a dance, and of course the dogs would all come; so we decided to see what poison would do. We got a quarter of beef the day before the dance, cut it up, fixed it well with strychnine, and then took it in a rig and drove over the road throwing the pieces out to the sides as we went along. The next day there were dead dogs scattered the entire distance. They were worthless curs, you know, and if we didn't do something like that the whole darn country would be overrun with 'em. The owners never kill any, and if a dog goes mad it bites other dogs and ponies and stock, and we have a dickins of a time.”

A dance such as my informant referred to occurs every two or three months, and the Indians gather to it

from twenty miles up and down the valley and continue their pow-wow for several days. One of these was in progress, about six miles north of the town, at the time of my visit. The crops were all started, there was no pressure of work, and it was a favorable time to get together a crowd. Usually a man not only came himself but brought all his family, riding in a stout farm wagon that was laden with food and bedding and a tent or tepee. As if by magic a village sprang into being in a glen that opened back into the hills from the main valley. It was a crowded hamlet of white canvas with many vehicles standing about, and a throng of Indians enlivening the vicinity. On the afternoon that I joined the gathering occasional members of the tribe lay dozing in convenient patches of shade, others squatted in groups to chat, still others sat looking down on the scene from points of vantage on the steep hillslopes, and some were going to a near stream for water or to let their horses drink. There was much cantering to and fro on the valley road and through the village and over the surrounding hills. Often the riders were little girls and little boys; yet they would gallop about perfectly fearless with as wild an ardor as any of their elders. I marvelled that they were able to stay on, but as a local dweller explained: "They start in to ride almost before they can walk. The men tie 'em on and then turn 'em loose."



A dancer and a youthful admirer

In the midst of the encampment on a grassy level was one tent far larger than any of the others. This was reserved for the dancing, and now and then a brave daubed with paint and arrayed with much savage finery of beads and feathers stood forth near it and shouted a weird high-voiced summons to the merry-making. The painted warriors became increasingly numerous, and in the case of some of them the paint and decorations were about all they wore. Presently the dance began, but many of the tribe continued to loiter about the camp or to canter hither and thither on their ponies. As to the spectators, they could go inside of the big tent or peer through the crevices as they preferred. I found the performance quite fascinating, and the music, though a kind of monotonous chant accompanied by the pounding of drums, was wildly exhilarating. Those concerned entered into the activities with vigor and heartfelt enjoyment, and their delight was contagious. The dancing consisted either of marching, or of standing in formal groups and keeping up an odd jerking motion by bending the knees slightly and then straightening up. Both men and squaws took part in the dancing, and they were reinforced by some of the smaller children who sang and jiggled and paraded with all the fervor of their elders. Once a band of men marched out of the tent and went a few rods up the slope, where they stood and bobbed up and down with nodding feathers and chanted vociferously. They made an imposingly

picturesque group, and yet the individual warriors were often simply frightful in their unearthly grotesqueness. The Indians' enjoyment of the occasion was evident, and I was not surprised to learn that they take better care of their war bonnets and other ornaments displayed at the dances than of anything else they own!

Three or four white people were present to witness the ceremonies, and among them was an old farmer from the next town up the valley. He left at the same time I did, and we stopped for a chat on the outskirts of the camp. After some preliminaries he became reminiscent and said: "I was raised up a little bit like old Abe Lincoln was. My folks was poor white trash in the Tennessee Mountains. A fellow didn't have much chance in that region. I cut twelve cords of wood at twenty-five cents a cord to pay for my first pair of cowhide boots, and I've swung a scythe many a time for fifty cents a day. After the war I went to Kansas poorer'n Job's turkey—hadn't a thing on earth—and picked up odd jobs where I could. I've grubbed all day there for a bushel of potatoes. I had to do that or starve. But pretty soon I got hold of a nice farm, and that country just suited me except for the fever and ague. Finally, I concluded I couldn't stand it in the Kansas river bottoms and I come to Wyoming and bought up an old sagebrush desert. Any man that got into the Wild West twenty-five or thirty years ago had to do some hard scratchin' to make a living; but we

prospered, and pretty soon I had a nice ranch. My daughter too got to have a place of her own by filing a homestead claim. She's a worker—good to tend a garden and to do lots of other things around the farm. Lately we sold out and come and drew some of the new land they're opening up in this valley. If only the irrigation ditch had been finished in time I could have growed forty bushel of spring wheat to the acre on my land this year like a top. I don't like the cold northwest winds they have in this part of the world, and I'm not satisfied with the kind of home we've got. I'll tell you for why—the region is open and bleak and a house looks lonesome without trees. But I've putt in some cottonwoods to break the wind, and in ten years' time we'll have as snug a place as anybody could want. Yes, the part of this valley where the whites are is going to be fine. I don't know about the Indians. Whether they can settle down to drudging on a farm and make a success of it is a question."

NOTE.—To visit the scene of any famous event that the world has recognized as exceptionally important or tragic is always a satisfaction, and the Custer battlefield for this reason should draw to it many a traveller from a distance. It is easily accessible, and though having in itself no scenic beauty, its very dreariness adds to the sombre attraction of the spot. As an offset to the barren aspect of the battlefield, there is near by the charming Crow Agency village, and the region abounds with Indians making a struggle to adopt the ways of civilization, yet not at present succeeding well enough to entirely lose their picturesque interest. Of course, if the visitor can happen to be on hand at the time of one of their frequent dances he has the chance to see the savage in all his glory; and the spectacle has a wild impressiveness quite unforgettable.

XIV

AMONG THE BLACK HILLS

THE Black Hills are an outlying group of the Rockies, so far removed from the main series of ridges as to be almost unrelated. Roundabout them for hundreds of miles the country is a monotony of low hills and plains which offers a striking contrast to this medley of craggy uplifts and irregular valleys. Harney Peak, the monarch of the Black Hills group reaches an elevation of over seven thousand feet, but the immediate vicinity is itself so high that neither Harney nor any of the other mountains are especially impressive. On the slopes and heights grow dark forests of pine, and in the vales is pasturage and many a sunny well-watered glade where are occasional small cultivated fields and rude farmhouses.

One advantage the Black Hills inhabitants claim to have over the dwellers on the plains is that their region is immune from tornadoes. "Since I've been here," said one old resident, "we've never had enough of a gale to take the shingles off a woodshed."

But I was informed that in some of the outlying foothill hamlets the wind at times blew so that the people "could hardly keep the buttons on their clothes."



Panning for gold

Considerable mellow soil has gathered in the valley pockets, yet rocks are for the most part omnipresent, often thrusting up great ragged ridges to a height of hundreds of feet. Mica is plentiful in the rocks, and the soil is full of glittering particles that have a very pretty sheen and sparkle in the sunshine. Then, too, you see many scattered fragments of quartz as clear as crystal, and though the quartz and the pulverized mica have no value they attract and please the eye, and are suggestive of hidden wealth.

The discovery of gold in the Black Hills is usually attributed to a government exploring expedition which spent the summer of 1874 in the region; but even at that time there were a good many miners roaming around prospecting, entirely independent of the troops. The miners found gold, and so did the soldiers, and both told stories of wealth to be found in the Hills that created great interest throughout the country and at once gave the group of wild mountains world-wide fame.

For a number of years the floating population of the frontier had been suffering from a dearth of exciting mineral discoveries, and they promptly made ready to rush in. Numerous other fortune-seekers were attracted from the older Eastern states. The fact that they would be trespassers on the choicest hunting-ground belonging to the Sioux Indians was no serious deterrent. Men have always been ready to risk their lives for gold; and

the rights of Indians do not usually count for much with the whites. The government, however, had included the Black Hills in the Sioux reservation, and, to avoid trouble, the authorities at Washington endeavored to keep the miners out. They soon realized the hopelessness of the attempt, if the Hills were rich in gold, and started negotiations to buy the tract from its owners. This they succeeded in doing in 1876, but fortune-seekers were numerous in the Hills long before the transfer was made.

“People went crazy about gold,” one old-timer said to me; “and though the soldiers took a good many men out of the reservation the population was increasing right along. Men who were used to mining and to rough frontier life couldn’t have been driven away with a club. They were bound to keep on gold-hunting in spite of everything. I know an old man who’s a fair sample of what those fellows were then. All the soldiers in the United States couldn’t keep him away from a mining camp. In his day he made quite a lot of money; but it has all slipped away from him. Still he sticks to mining, and he’s out in the mountains prospecting now. He hunts around and picks up stones that look promising, pounds ’em up in a mortar and pans out the stuff to see if there’s gold in it. He’s all alone, and some day he’ll be found dead in his little shack.

“My pardner and me come here in the spring of ’75. The soldiers didn’t ketch us, and we was in the town of

Custer when the big strike of gold was made early the next year in Deadwood. It was toward the end of winter, and there was still snow on the ground, but everybody who could leave started off for the new diggings. We'd thought Custer was going to be the big town of the Black Hills; and yet almost in a night it was depopulated. There were fourteen hundred buildings in the place, and only fourteen persons remained in town; so there were a hundred buildings to each person.

"It's funny how people will hustle off that way. They are just like a lot of cattle stampeded in a storm—each going with the crowd in a mad rush and not seeing or thinking. A feller will tell about a prospect that he thinks is going to be a money-maker. The next man who tells the story enlarges on it a little, and by the time it's passed through half a dozen hands everybody goes wild. Off they start for the new camp; but even if no one makes a cent there's not a man among 'em who isn't happy until he's broke.

"I didn't make any lucky gold strikes myself and presently I tried work of another sort. In the spring of '77 I carted hay forty or fifty miles from the borders of the Hills to Deadwood. I had eight oxen and carried about two tons to a load. The hay cost me thirty dollars a ton, and I sold it for fourteen cents a pound. Supplies of all sorts were scarce here in those days, and the stock in Deadwood really suffered for food. I wasn't long in

disposing of what I brought. I'd stop in the middle of the street, and men would crowd around the load like a swarm of bees, and hold up their money to buy. The hay was tied up with light rope into bundles that sold for a hundred pounds, but which didn't weigh much over seventy-five. As soon as my cart was emptied I'd turn around and come back to where there was prairie and a chance for the oxen to graze. I couldn't have afforded to feed them in Deadwood.

"I was out and around alone a good deal; and yet with all the travelling I did I never saw any Indians. I didn't want to see any. They weren't friendly toward the whites, and I was always more or less anxious about 'em. So were the other people who came into the region. But I was more afraid of lawless white men. They'd dress up in imitation of the savages—paint themselves and put on blankets and fasten a horsetail on the back of their heads to look like long Indian hair. Then they'd rob the stage and the poor tenderfoot who was coming in with money. Lots of misdeeds were laid to the Indians where they weren't to blame at all. What the outlaws liked best was to hold up the coaches when they heard that bullion was going to be shipped out; but now and then the owners of the bullion would fool the robbers by filling the bags with sand.

"The nearest I came to running afoul of Indians was one morning on my way to Deadwood with a load of



Begging to go fishing

hay. I came to a spot where a party of whites had camped the night before, and found a woman dead beside the road. It was a pretty bad place for Indians—handy for game and water, and just the spot they'd naturally pick out for a camp. They had turned loose on the whites at about daylight, and of co'se the whites skipped out. They didn't know what they was doing—this outfit didn't. All but one woman escaped up a hill. The horses was so scared they stampeded, and the Indians couldn't get them; and there was no chance to steal from the wagons because the whites were all the time shooting. In a little while the Indians left. Pretty soon afterward I happened along, and there lay the dead woman, and the rest of the company was hollering on the bluff.

“No one was safe from the Indians in the first year or two. They would crawl up the high hills and shoot at the men working in the gulches below, and the miners used to keep their guns handy, and they provided defences for emergencies.

“The last Indian rising was in 1892. One of the old heads went into a trance. He said the Messiah appeared to him and ordered the Indians to drive out the whites, and promised that the deer and buffalo would return so the Indians would have their happy hunting-ground to themselves again. They began to massacre the whites; but the troops soon put a stop to that sort of thing. The savages might have made more of a fight

if they hadn't been so afraid of cannon. Let 'em hear the discharge of a cannon, and they think the world is coming to an end. With just one cannon you can scare a whole tribe. Often you don't even need to fire it; to show it on a knoll is sufficient."

The man whose comments I have reported was a citizen of Custer where I spent some time rambling about the region. The town has never recovered from the famous exodus that depopulated it in its youth, and is merely a village in a glade of the rocky uplands. As a matter of fact the only really notable mine in the Black Hills is the "Homestake" near Deadwood. This employs nearly two thousand men under ground and is one of the richest gold mines in America. The first prospectors looked around the neighborhood late in 1874, and other parties came drifting in the next year; but there was no special excitement till a twelve-month later. Deadwood Gulch, where gold was first found in quantity, was then covered with a dense growth of pine, much of it dead and mingled with a nearly impassable tangle of underbrush.

The biggest strike was made by a man named Wheeler. He is said to have cleaned up over one hundred thousand dollars, and then to have asked and obtained an escort of soldiers to see him safely across the wilderness to the nearest railway station, two hundred miles distant. What became of him and his fortune afterward no one could tell me. If he went away satisfied with

the wealth he had accumulated he was a very exceptional miner. Usually the lucky ones embarked on new ventures and lost their earlier gains. The chances were always fascinating, but where one made money, thousands of other adventurers made nothing at all. Perhaps the commonest source of profit to those who discovered "a prospect" was to sell it to moneyed Eastern men. The purchasers, as a rule, not only put their money in the ground but left it there.

During the spring and summer of 1876, each day, and almost each hour, witnessed the arrival of new parties of gold seekers in Deadwood Gulch. Whoever could saw a board or drive a nail commanded his own price, and in a short time the place grew from a few log cabins to a city of seven thousand inhabitants. The hotels were so crowded it was considered a luxury to occupy a chair in the office during the night. Everything was extremely expensive. Bread went as high as a dollar a loaf, and people were glad to get it at that price. One man with whom I talked declared that the high cost of living was a result of modern trust methods among the merchants.

"They were pretty smart," said he, "and were careful not to let too many supplies come in at a time to lower the price. If they had a load of flour on the way they'd drive out with a buggy and meet it and have it stop or come slower. They'd carry back just a few sacks and say the team was delayed by bad roads.

“But no one minded those little tricks then. Everybody come in with plenty of money, and they expected to be able to get plenty more when that was gone. A good many of the gold-seekers was fetched in by Joe Vollin, who had a freighting outfit going back and forth between the Black Hills and the Missouri. He charged ’em twenty-five dollars a head, and they had to walk all the way. But they were allowed to put their little baggage—a couple of blankets and a satchel—on the wagon. If the wagon got stuck in the mud, a rope would be hitched to the end of the tongue, and the tenderfeet would get hold and help pull the thing out on firmer ground. You take seventy-five or a hundred men and they can pull a dickins of a load. They worked their way and paid their fare, too; but they thought that was all right. They’d never been in a wild country before, so it was easy for Vollin to scare ’em with his Indian stories, and they had no hankering to go ahead by themselves.

“Often they didn’t know what to do when they got here. They’d thought the gold would be lying around right on the surface of the ground. It was their idea they could walk along the cricks and pick up the gold in lumps. When they found they’d have to work for it, and that there was nothing to be seen but dirt and rocks and wild woodland many a feller got sick of the proposition about the second day and was ready to pay Vollin



On a Black Hills roadway

another twenty-five dollars to be allowed to walk back to civilization alongside of one of the freighting wagons.”

The placer mines of Deadwood Gulch and the tributary ravines were for a short time very remunerative, and the town that grew up there was the metropolis of the Black Hills. Thither the miners from all the region around wended their way every Saturday night with their weekly accumulation of gold dust and nuggets. Gold in these forms was the commonest kind of currency in the Hills, and everyone carried a bottle or sack of it for use in place of money. On arriving in Deadwood at the week-end the average miner proceeded to spend his golden wealth like a nabob; and on Monday morning, with a fresh supply of “grub” thrown over his shoulder he returned to his claim to delve for more of the precious metal. No doubt he was cheered at his rough labor by the certainty of having another “good time” the next Sunday. That was the busiest and noisiest day of the week in Deadwood. The streets were crowded both with buckskin-clothed mountaineers, and with recent arrivals from the East. You heard the blows of hammers and the rasping of saws where buildings were being erected. Here a gambler was crying his game, and there a street preacher was exhorting sinners to repent.

As to preachers, one finds very little veneration for them among the mining folk—at least in fair weather. “We never was much for going to church,” remarked

a pioneer of the region. "You can't make no money that way, and a miner has something else to do besides attending to religion. It's curious, but it's a fact, that when a preacher wanted to build a church or anything of that sort he was sure to get most of the money off the gamblers and liquor sellers. Naturally they can't collect much from their religious church members, because a man that prays all the time can't be expected to earn or have much money. Such men perhaps give ten cents or a quarter apiece, while from each saloon the minister will get ten or twenty dollars. Then he'll give the liquor sellers thunder in church the next Sunday. Religion is only society—I call it. You take away the social attraction, and you'd have nothing left. In fact, there are not many people in the world who believe very seriously in religion unless they're weak in the mind. Still, it's good enough for young people and puts a kind of fear in 'em they never forget. But you can't put much fear into an old man like me. I'm glad though to have my children attend church. It keeps 'em down a little. They'll learn fast enough."

The only local clergyman who seems to have gained a permanent place in the hearts of the mining folk is one who was killed by the Indians while on his way to a neighboring village where he was to preach. He knew the danger, and yet duty called and he took the risk. This heroism and the tragic result brought him what no amount of exhortation would have gained, and he is one

of the Black Hills saints. High on the terrace of a bluff above the town is the cemetery overlooking the narrow glen, and there the martyr preacher is honored with a full-length brown-stone statue which has an inclosing coop of chicken-wire fencing to protect it from the affection of those who would like to chip off mementoes.

A still more popular hero, similarly memorialized, was "Wild Bill." While on a visit to the region to see what the country was like he was shot dead as he was playing in one of the gambling places. So far as I could learn he was of the ordinary type of frontiersman—not a desperado as his name and manner of death might suggest—but with the usual frontier virtues and failings. He had been a scout in the Civil War and had served in a like capacity on the plains. There was no fear in his make-up, but he well knew that he had enemies, and he took the precaution, whenever he sat down indoors, to place himself with his back to the wall. But this did not save him from a violent end.

A marble bust on a pedestal formerly marked his grave in the cemetery, but the relic hunters did some busting on their own account after the sculptor finished, and soon the monument was ruined. Then fresh contributions were levied, and now the visitor to the cemetery sees a full-length brown-stone figure of a bare-headed, long-haired plainsman, standing in a wire coop like that which protects the martyr preacher. In one hand the effigy holds a pistol and is about to draw

another from his cartridge belt. It is a rather belligerent looking figure for that silent city of the dead, and its grotesqueness has been made the more emphatic by painting the pupils of the eyes blue.

Another contemporary notable was "Calamity Jane." This name appears to have been her chief stock in trade, and about the only reason for her being remembered. She was shiftless and vicious—an idling dare-devil who was in her glory when she dressed up partly in man's clothes and partly in woman's and walked around the the streets to be greeted as "Calamity Jane." No monument marks her resting-place—possibly because there was nothing startling about the manner of her death.

In the turmoil of the first year or two of the gold excitement Deadwood was a rough town. It was full of gamblers, and shooting was a common pastime. But this period soon passed, and the place became as orderly and well-governed as most of its sort. That does not mean it was ideal; for drinkers, gamblers, and other purveyors or indulgers in dissipation are allowed to do much more as they please in mining towns than in the average community.

By reason of its situation the town is particularly piquant and interesting, and it has a pleasing air of stability and comfort. The homes cling along the declivities of the deep gulch, and creep far up every side ravine. Some of the streets with their attendant board



A walk with grandmother

sidewalks are marvels of steepness; and the houses are arranged in terraces, each row looking down on the roofs of those below. In the depths of the hollow are the railroads and a swift muddy creek, business blocks, mines, shops and other buildings, all jumbled together and entirely lacking elbow-room. Roundabout rise the lofty wooded ridges with here and there a perpendicular crag, or a hilltop crowned with monumental ledges and heaps of boulders. It seems a fitting place for Nature to have exercised her magic in making the gold which has directly or indirectly been the means of drawing most of the population to this rugged region.

NOTE.—The Black Hills cover a stretch of country about one hundred miles in length by fifty in width. They rise abruptly from the surface of a level prairie country and reach altitudes varying from three thousand to seven thousand feet. It is evident that with their streams and crags and pine-clad slopes they must contain not a little scenery that is ruggedly attractive. There are many picturesque villages in the valleys, and a leisurely traveller who likes rambling on foot or riding on horseback finds much to enjoy. The town that is most strikingly interesting in its setting, and in its romantic history, is Deadwood. Several other places that have considerable attraction, either commercial or scenic, are near at hand, and among these is the city of Lead, where is located the great Homestake Mine.

A DAKOTA PARADISE

IT was known in local parlance as the "Jim" River Valley, and its metropolis was called "Jimtown;" but on the map you found the James River and Jamestown. The fertility and productiveness of the region are superlative. Aside from this, however, neither the river nor the valley can lay any great claim to beauty. The Jim is a sluggish stream that wanders placidly through the alluvial and often marshy lowlands and never cuts up any wild pranks by flooding and tearing to pieces the land along its borders. On one side or the other, sometimes on both, mild, grassy bluffs rise to a higher level where the country sweeps away in an apparently limitless prairie, dotted with groups of farm buildings and criss-crossed with roads and wire fences. Trees are rare except for plantings around the homes, and these plantings are still for the most part of slender growth. At the coming of the first settlers the upland was perfectly clear prairie, and even along the river "not a stick" grew for scores of miles. But now nearly every farmer has started a grove of cottonwoods and other quick-growing trees to ameliorate the barrenness

of the home surroundings, break the wind, and furnish a little firewood.

“This is a great country for winds,” one man explained to me as I chatted with him in the dooryard adjoining his home, in the southern part of the state. “Why, I built a heavy hay rack on my wagon one morning, and before night that rack lay on the ground and the wagon was on top of it. The same wind tipped a passenger train off the track within three miles of here. But it wa’n’t no twister. It was right down straight-away business. We don’t have cyclones. Of course the clouds come rolling up pretty threatening sometimes, and my wife will perhaps go down cellar, but I don’t think that is necessary.

“We’ve been having good seasons right along lately, and everything is prosperous and the people happy. But it was different in the early days. There was a kind of a craze then over the Jim River Valley, and my people come rushing in with a good many others from Illinois about 1880. They went over plenty of country just as good long before they got here. But they were just like a herd of cattle that had broken into a corn-field—sure not to stop till they’d got to the farther side of it. The first year that we lived here the weather was so dry we couldn’t raise a thing. Hundreds of acres of wheat never sprouted at all, and the ground continued as bare as my kitchen floor. You couldn’t depend on anything in those times; but now that the

country is broken up and more or less trees growing we seem to have a different climate. The first settlers thought they'd been terribly fooled. However, the disappointment was partly their own fault. The men who came in here then were mostly clerks from stores and cashiers of banks and that sort of fellows. They expected they could get rich off of wheat easy, and they were goin' back East as soon as they'd made their fortunes. Wheat was the only thing they planted, and when that failed there was nothing else for 'em to fall back on. They didn't have hardly any cattle, and not even hens. Butter and eggs were shipped into the valley from a distance, and the settlers went to town and bought 'em. That's no way to farm.

“A good many, after a bad season or two, saw what sort of a boat they were in, and picked up their things and left. But some couldn't get out. They were so poor they had to stay. The walking was all right, but they didn't feel like walking so far. A quarter section as good as you'd want to squat on could be bought for three hundred dollars. And yet, at that time I wouldn't have taken a quarter section as a gift if I'd got to pay the taxes on it.

“I own quite a herd of cattle, and I depend on them to tide me over if we have a bad crop year. There's thirty acres in my chunk of pasture. Buffalo grass is the chief forage there. It is a curly grass that sprawls over the ground and never grows very high; but the



Beside the stream

cattle like it, and even after it dries up the goodness seems to be retained, and they will live on it all winter. For hay we depend a good deal on the wild red top that grows on the bottoms. I've seen it waist high and so heavy that the rains would lodge it down. When fall comes, if a man wants more hay for the winter than he has secured already, he goes out and mows on the prairie. The grass there is then perfectly dry, just as it stands, and can be put in stacks as soon as it is cut."

"Isn't your land suited to alfalfa?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "we can raise alfalfa till the cows come home; but at present there's very little tame grass of any kind grown here. Wheat is still the principal crop, and it doesn't seem to exhaust our soil as it does in most regions. We are getting good wheat yet from fields that have been sown to that same crop for thirty years. But our farming is going to be more diversified in the future. Dairying will be one of our important industries, and we'll make all kinds of money at it. Yes, the milk business is bound to be a cracker-jack here. There's no inspection, and the price in town is seven cents a quart in summer and eight in winter. The time will come, too, when we will fertilize more. Now we generally burn our straw stacks to get rid of them; and the barnyard and stable refuse we dump into some convenient hollow. We wouldn't trouble to cart it off from around our buildings only it's in the way. But I've noticed that where the old straw stacks have

stood the new grain grows twice as stout as elsewhere, and adjoining the spots where the stable dumps are, the weeds grow ten feet high. So it's plain we're wasting valuable material for enriching the soil; and I've begun to put every bit of fertilizer this farm makes on the land. It's the common habit to cultivate all the land in sight even if you only half take care of it. We do the work any old way to get a crop, but I believe in fewer acres and better tillage."

This farmer had a quarter section and took care of it with very little help except what he got from his children, and they were too young to do much. "I don't want to make pack-horses of them," said he. "It's natural for children to like play, and it ain't right to pin them down too close. One of my neighbors works at carpentry, and his little boys, ten and twelve years old, run the farm. Light tasks in moderation are all right, but the heavy work those boys have to do, and the responsibility will be apt to hurt them in growth and health and make 'em old before their time. There are cases, though, where the boys have to pitch into the work whether they're able to or not. My father was in that fix with his family. He got in with a skinner who skinned him out of all he had, and we were obliged to begin at the bottom. But I don't want my boys to work as hard as I did."

I stayed at this farmer's to dinner. The house was small and flimsy, and they were planning to put up a

new dwelling soon, and it was to be nearer the road where they could see people passing. There was no cellar except a hole under the kitchen, to which access was gained by a trap door, and the three rooms were hopelessly overcrowded.

“Are you a foreigner?” questioned the housewife when we were seated at the table. “You have a kind of brogue different from the people here in this country.”

“I’m from Massachusetts,” I responded.

“Why, yes,” the woman commented, “now I think of it, you talk just like a lady from Boston who was visiting at our next neighbor’s last summer.”

They were a cordial and hearty family, and though their surroundings were rather barren and primitive, I thoroughly enjoyed their acquaintance. In a few years more they would probably make many improvements in the home premises and would attain a prosperity little, if any, short of wealth.

Most of the villages in the valley are mere patches on the prairie, and you can look from the streets out on the farmlands in any direction. But Jimtown is large enough to spread over considerable territory, and its business blocks and better residence streets are beginning to have an air of substantial permanence. It is still, however, sufficiently rustic for most of its dwellers to own a cow or two. These are collected each morning in several herds and driven away in different directions

to the outlying pasturage; and in the evening they are brought back and separate to go to their individual stables.

The people are proud of the place. Indeed, it is a very miserable sort of a town in the West that the inhabitants are not proud of. As a rule they are ever ready to sing the praises of the town they have adopted and make a sort of fad of "boosting" it. "Yes," said one of the Jimtowners, "this is a lively place. We don't go to sleep in the daytime. It is the trading center for all the wealthy farm region around, and you can judge something of the value of the trade we get when I tell you that lots of the farmers bring their butter and eggs to town in thirty-five hundred dollar automobiles. The younger farmers, especially, not only make money but spend it like water. All the best shows stop here, and the farmers make up a considerable part of the audience at the opera house. To pay a dollar or a dollar and a half for a seat is just peanuts to these fellows. The older men go slower. They don't spend a great deal for pleasure, but when they have surplus money buy another quarter section. A great deal of land that they got a few years ago for ten dollars an acre is worth thirty now. When a man picks up coin like that without raising his hand it's comin' in hacks, and he's apt to get chesty and forget there ever was a time when he was poor. Prosperity has made quite a change in our



The village cows starting for pasture

farmers. They don't work any more, unless you call it work doing everything riding around on machines."

The remarks I have quoted were made by the proprietor of a barber's shop into whose place of business I wandered one evening. He was interrupted by an exclamation from a bald-headed customer whose bare cranium was being anointed with a hair restorer by the barber's assistant. "You're careless with that stuff," said the customer. "Don't let it run down over my forehead or I'll be like the dog-faced man in the circus. Last week a drop of it fell on my shoe, and I'll be dinged if that spot ain't all growed out thick with hair."

A young fellow sitting in a chair tilted back against the wall reading a newspaper now looked up and remarked: "That's about as big a story as those Bill Conroy tells. The other day he was saying that one time he was helping build a bridge across a canyon, high up above a river, and he was underneath hanging by his toes driving spikes when his watch dropped out of his pocket. He'd paid sixty dollars for it, and it was too valuable to lose. So he let go with his toes, and down he went so fast that he overtook the watch and grabbed it just as it was going into the water."

"Did you ever have any trouble with the Indians here?" I inquired.

"No," responded the barber. "When the whites come the Indians took to the tall timber. Our troubles were of another sort."

"I first saw Jimtown in 1880," said the bald-headed man. "It was then just a little frontier settlement without a single building of brick. Homesteaders were locating in the region all around, and they lived in cheap shanties thrown together just as quick as they could put 'em up."

"Well," interrupted the fellow with the newspaper, "there's a good many men yet who have a punk house, even though they've built a nice barn."

"What is a punk house?" I asked.

"Oh, one that's tumbledown and unpainted," he replied. "Some men build a good barn and live in the granary until they get the money to put up a house."

"Yes, there's makeshifts still," acknowledged the bald man; "but nothing like what there used to be. Often, the early houses were made of sod. To build one a man would plough up the turf, turning a furrow fourteen inches wide and four deep. Then with a spade he'd cut the strips of turf into two-foot lengths and build his house walls with the pieces just as if he was laying bricks. Usually he'd first put up a hut of boards and make his walls of sod right around against the sides of it; but some got along with turf only. You couldn't have a warmer house, and if well made it would last a dozen years. But of course the roots that held the sod together soon decayed, and if the roof leaked or the wall got jammed the house would go to pieces in a very short time.

“However, we’d been willing to worry along in any sort of a house if the crops had been all right. What troubled us was the weather. For several years there was such a lack of rain everything dried up; or we’d get hot winds with a little hail mixed in with ’em occasionally that would spoil all our hopes. I’ve seen the wheat looking prosperous and nice as could be, with the heads forming, and in a week later it would be just burnt up. If those hot winds came, goodbye to your crop. The air was like an oven. It would scorch you almost. One year I had a hundred and twenty-five acres of oats that averaged two bushels to the acre, and three hundred acres of wheat that only panned out fifty bushels in all, and a hundred and forty acres of flax that yielded sixty bushels of dirt and flax, and probably two-thirds of it was dirt. After three such seasons in succession we was in bad shape; and the town merchants was hit pretty hard, too. The farmers couldn’t buy, and they couldn’t pay their old debts. They simply had to be tided over by the merchants till they could get the money out of the ground. If the crops had been good we wouldn’t have had our noses rubbing on the grindstone, but would have been looking skyward. Some farmers didn’t have a dollar to buy seed, and they could only mortgage all they hadn’t mortgaged before and pinch along hoping the next year would be better. Meanwhile they’d perhaps live mainly on potatoes and turnips, with now and then a quarter’s worth of flour as a luxury.”

“You can’t tell me anything new about that,” said the barber. “My folks stayed here through bad season after bad season until all our front teeth dropped out. The drouth and the interest made a team you couldn’t buck at all. People had to borrow, and the money sharks could get their own price. We paid three per cent. a month on four thousand dollars. I told my father he might just as well lay down and put his heels up in the air; but he hated to give up that farm. The soil was as black as your hat and not a pebble in it.

“There’s a good deal of such land in this country, but we have other sorts, too. Once in a while you find gumbo, and if it’s dry and you strike a regular patch of it while you’re ploughing, the plough will jump right up in the air. If it’s wet the sun soon dries what your plough tips over into chunks that are as hard as paving bricks. Then there’s clay soil—Gee whiz! you walk through that in the spring, and your shoes will gather it up till they’re three feet across. It’s fierce, ain’t it, Seth?” and the barber turned to the young man with the newspaper.

“I wouldn’t live on a farm if you’d give me one,” Seth responded. “It’s too lonesome. The neighbors are a mile apart—yes, all of that. Besides, the winters are too cold, and the roads get too drifted. After a snowstorm, if the wind blows, you want to get under cover. How it will stack the snow up! I’ve been on top of drifts so high I could touch the telegraph lines.”



Advising the boys

“Snowdrifts—why here’s where we raise ’em,” declared the barber; “and it’s one beauty of this country that you don’t have to buy coal but eleven months in the year. The other month you sift ashes or sit around with your overcoat on. I’ve seen the mercury take such a drop that we had to hook three thermometers together, one below the other, to get the record. Someone imported a Klondike thermometer, but it froze to death. It couldn’t live here at all. Yes, at times it’s so cold we have to go outdoors backward. If you try to walk out straight ahead your breath freezes in front of you in a solid mass that brings you to a standstill. Thirty degrees below zero is nothing here. We go around all day and never mind it. The wind doesn’t blow at such times; it seems to be frozen up. Of course, during the cold season, this ain’t no summer resort nor anything like that, but the freezing point in the damp atmosphere of Chicago is worse than zero in our dry air.”

“It’s one blessing of our summer that we always have cool evenings,” observed the bald man. “You can take pretty near the hottest day, and you need a blanket over you at night. That’s where we’ve got the world beat. A man can’t get a really beneficial rest reeking with sweat and with no air to breathe.”

“How about mosquitoes?” I asked.

“We have a good many in a wet season,” said the barber. “Some of ’em seem to be about the size of a canary, and they come around and present their bill

most any time of day. They don't bother us much in the town; but oh, golly! you find 'em good and thick in any swamp you happen to strike."

"This is fine country for prairie chickens," remarked Seth, "and hunters come from everywhere to shoot them. On the first day of September, when the season opens, every rig in town goes to the prairies, and the teams have all been spoken for over a month before. A nice fried prairie chicken is something worth talking about. It's a far greater delicacy than any farmyard fowl. The wild flavor just suits me. But the birds are getting shyer and shyer, so you can't do much successful shooting without a well-trained dog. Later in the fall the wild ducks and geese come here to get the rice that grows in the shallows of the ponds and lakes. They go over the town in such big flocks that the air is sometimes fairly blue with them. In the evening the electric lights seem to disconcert 'em, and you can see 'em wheeling about up there in the sky and hear 'em honking and quacking."

While we were talking a shower came up, and the bald man said, "Tomorrow's Saturday—I hope it won't rain then because that's the farmers' day to come to town and get supplies."

"And I hope it won't rain Sunday or Monday," said Seth, "because those are the days for baseball."

"I suppose they don't play ball much on Sunday back in the East," observed the barber; "but in our

towns here we have a Sunday game almost every week from spring to fall; and I'd like to have you explain to me what there is in a ball game to drive a man to hell. Those people that prefer to rest, let 'em get up in the attic and stay there; but if others want to chase a pewee around, that's their business. A man who has to work all the week likes a little recreation on Sunday; and if it suits him to take in a ball game or go shooting gophers he ought to have his say about it, instead of being told by the preacher when to head in. The folks that prefer to go to church—let 'em; but there's just enough mule about all of us so if you go to forcing things we back up. The churches have a pretty fair attendance except in summer, when the outdoor attractions thin the numbers down a good deal."

"Some things could be improved," said the bald man; "and yet, take it as a whole, North Dakota is about as good a place to live in as you can find. One of its good points is state prohibition. You cross our boundary line into the license states and see the difference. The license towns are rougher and dirtier than our towns every time, and have more loafers and lawlessness. I tell you the open saloon makes the road to drunkenness and poverty and crime wide and easy. The saloons and their low hangers-on don't have the best corners on our streets, but if they exist at all slink off into the byways. The law don't absolutely stop liquor-drinking any more than our laws against stealing

or other crimes entirely succeed in their purpose. Our confirmed toppers have liquor sent to 'em from outside of the state, or buy it at the drugstores and guzzle on the quiet."

"Yes, that's straight," commented the barber, "they can always manage to get it; but there's very much less drank than there would be under license, and that is a big help in making our towns clean and safe and thrifty. The greatest gain though, is for the young men, because the temptation for them to begin drinking is so slight. I wouldn't want to bring up a family of boys anywhere else."

The rain was now falling in torrents, and at frequent intervals there was a sudden crash of thunder. Seth went to the door and looked out. "Well, I must be going," he remarked, as he buttoned his coat about him and turned up his collar.

"Where's your umbrella?" inquired the barber.

"That reminds me of a story," responded Seth. "A little boy went to church one rainy Sunday and the minister asked him why he didn't carry an umbrella; and the boy said, 'Ours are all worn out. Pa don't bring home any more umbrellas since he quit goin' to church.'"

The weather was so showery and the roads so muddy while I was at Jimtown that the farmers were not riding around in their automobiles. "But there's plenty of 'em," I was assured. "It only takes one or two good



Dandelions

crops to set the farmers right on their feet. Last year they didn't do as well as usual—only raised fifty bushels of wheat to the acre, and of course they felt terribly abused; but if we get a big harvest this year things will be just booming again. Oh, they make their pile easy, and live on the fat of the land.”

They have the means to travel if they choose, and some of them go to California to spend the winter. Nor were conditions in the Jim Valley at all exceptional. Prosperity was general throughout the state. All this country is still youthful. Man has not labored long enough there to thoroughly humanize it, and often you continue to find a savor of the desert or wilderness. It may never have quite the charm of the well-watered Eastern regions; but mellowness and repose will come with age, more care will be bestowed on the homes, and the long broad slope between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River which includes North Dakota is destined to be in most ways an ideal farming section that for extent and fertility will be unrivalled the world over.

NOTE.—To see the thriving farm country of North Dakota to advantage anyone would do well to visit the James River Valley as I did; but there are other sections just as good. Perhaps the best of all is the basin of the Red River on the eastern borders of the state. The country is too monotonously level to have much scenic attraction, but the general prosperity and the evident rich productiveness of the farms to a large degree make up for this lack and fill even the stranger and sight-seer with satisfaction.

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