

KENTUCKY LOG.



BEECH WOODS NEAR LOUISA

KENTUCKY LOG.

BY

VINCENT GILPIN

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF A
JOURNEY ON HORSEBACK INTO THE MOUNTAIN
FASTNESSES AND TO THE FIRESIDES OF MOUNTAIN-
EERS AND MOONSHINERS OF KENTUCKY AND THE
VIRGINIAS, WITH PREFACE AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

SANFORD L. CLUETT.

7

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JUNE SIXTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND
FOUR, AT HOOSICK FALLS NEW YORK.

ENLARGE

ENLARGEMENT

U. S. ENGINEER'S OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER

August 1921, 1922



Captain Sanford I. Smith,
U. S. Engineer's Office

SIR:

As the various maps and publications you
will receive of this area show the
topography of the region, you will
will be able to see the general
contour of the valley and the
the river as shown on the map.

To THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER

On leaving Park Lake Station at 11:00 a.m.
Section and night at Elm's, opposite
house, a distance of 10 miles.

Take velocity of Buffalo River. Section
above south of Point Canal, near Pointville
Station and night at Park Lake.

Take Section at Mouth of Park. Station
and night at Park Lake. Williamson's House.

From Park Lake to Williamson on the Park
road will proceed in the general direction of
as best you can, the condition of the road
and trails being unknown to this office.
Photographs at "Point". As for the condition
to "Point", and then to "Point". Section
at Williamson.

PREFACE

WAR DEPARTMENT.
U. S. Engineer's Office.

LOUISA, KENTUCKY.
August 15th., 1900.

Captain Sanford L. Cluett,
U. S. Engineer's Office,

Sir:-

At the earliest practicable moment, you will proceed up the Levisa Fork and down the Tug, taking photographs and such notes as will be of value to this office, and also measurements for velocities and discharges of the rivers as herein mentioned.

On Levisa Fork, take section at Atkinson's Section and night at Elam's, opposite Whitehouse, and measure velocity of Whitehouse shoal.

Take velocity of Buffalo Shoal. Section above mouth of Paint Creek, near Paintsville. Section and night at Prestonburg.

Take Section at Mouth of Mud. Section and night at Pikeville. Williamson's Hotel.

From Pikeville to Williamson on Tug Fork, you will proceed in the fewest number of days as best you can, the condition of the roads and trails being unknown to this Office. Photographs at "Breaks". Across the mountains to "Roughs", and thence to Thacker. Section at Williamson.

Take velocity of Wolf Shoal. Section and night at Warfield.

Go across country from Warfield to Clifford or Falls of Tug. Section at Falls. From thence to Louisa.

The funds for this work being nearly exhausted you will execute the work in the most economical manner possible.

Yours respectfully,

B. F. THOMAS,
Resident Engineer.

How could the above order be executed in an economical manner?

In the first place, it generally takes at least four men to section a river the size of the Big Sandy; three in boat with the recording instruments, and one on shore to keep the line of the section and handle the tape.

I could make the journey on horseback that being in fact the only possible way of covering the required ground, and I could hire local men to assist in the observations; but at least one of these latter should be an engineer. To this problem there was but one solution; to send for Gilpin, and do all the work ourselves,-- trusting to wading and to the good luck that had providentially overtaken our previous expeditions together.

So Gilpin came, and hence we have this description of our journey. Had the latter occurred a little over one hundred years ago we might have seen George Washington the surveyor on one of the mountain trails between the Tug and the Levisa; for the records show that before the Revolution he made a recon-

noissance of this same region. To be sure; in Washington's time the hardy settlers were armed with flint-locks, and there were no governmental restrictions to cause hate or distrust; but otherwise, we found the same conditions and customs prevailing as existed before the Independence of the United States.

Now, however, a great change is coming; a railroad had been forced into the very "Breaks", traditions are overthrown, and the mountaineer is transformed, until he no more resembles his former self than does the Carlisle Indian his ancient brother of the Plains.

And there are other changes taking place. The Government Improvements creep slowly up the river, preceeded by the capitalist who knows that beneath the cozy little homes and farms tucked into the hillsides lies unbounded mineral wealth. But the lumberman preceeds even the capitalist; and the noble forests of oak, beech and maple are rapidly passing away. An autumn has come from which their bronzed and cadmium hued foliage-- spreading to the horizon like some great ancient rug-- can never revive. Our grandchildren can never see "the purple of the Hills," nor understand the meaning of that phrase.

And so this little book is made to record indelibly a delightful experience of thirteen days in the saddle, a narrative without sentiment, but a comradeship abounding in wholesome exercise and careless freedom; a page torn from a history of a hundred years ago.

Sanford L. Cluett

Hoosick Falls, N. Y.

May 22nd., 1904.

NOTE. All the characters mentioned herein are true to life and have their real names ; even conversations are, as nearly as possible recorded word for word.

Mr. Hazelton died recently, John Ward is dead, and others also have died, - Bob Cantrell the cousin of the friendly Mrs. Coleman has murdered Mullins our host at the Breaks. But the Pikeville court still reigns!

S.L.C.

KENTUCKY LOG.



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GLIMPSES OF LOUISA.

PREPARATIONS.

AUGUST, 1900

A RAILWAY
JOURNEY FROM
CATLETTSBURG
TO
LOUISA, KY.

LOUISA AND
VICINITY, AND
ALSO SOME
DELIGHTFUL
PEOPLE ARE
INTRODUCED.

PREPARATIONS.

PREPARATIONS.

A faraway river is the Big Sandy, both in space and time. It flows north between West Virginia and Kentucky to the Ohio River, its mouth being thus in touch with civilization; but to the south it climbs rapidly away to great distances and ancient times, until its headwaters seem to ramify through another world. Every bend passed, on foot or on a plodding mountain horse, means slow and weary miles to the traveler, every hill climbed takes him one more decade back toward colonial times, until among its sources he feels himself an anachronism. A sluggish railroad has made a start along its banks, but after thirty miles the weight of ages is too much for it. Beyond, a stage-road runs for fifty miles; then there are only horse tracks, old paths that followed the same streams in the same condition before the Revolution, many of them doubtless being ancient Indian trails. By those paths you may reach some of the roughest and most interesting of our Southern Mountains.

It was a fine September noon when I first saw the Big Sandy. The "F.F.V." a most comfortable express train, rolled in leisurely southern dignity over a long trestle above the great channel which the river has cut into the hills. The stream itself had dwindled away into a mere series of warm still pools

connected by a timid trickle of water which seemed only anxious to avoid absorption in the wastes of sand.

"Is that the Big Sandy?" I asked.

"Yas, suh," said the porter.

"Why is it so little?"

"Well, suh, hit's little now, but when de rain falls up in de mountains, hit's a right smart river. Dey do say hit gits out over de banks of de gully in de spring, and goes t'arin' round de valley.--- No, suh, I ain't neveh seen it, but I reckon hit's a fact. Makes a consid'able creek, don't it, suh?"

The walls of the gully were a quarter of a mile apart and forty feet high; and others corroborated the porter's story.

The train meanwhile came to a stand at Catlettsburg. Catlettsburg the dirty, Catlettsburg, the terminal of the lumberman's drives; smelling of sour sweat, the toughest town in the state.

I left my chair, and descended to the ragged and dingy platform with some doubt as to the comfort of the immediate future, being bound up this remarkable stream to the home of moonshiner and desperado. However, it was the Captain's expedition; he had promised to show me the "roughest country in the world," and under his leadership pleasure and profit were assured. He was at Louisa, twenty-five miles upstream, helping to control the river and turn it into a highway. For it seemed that this alternate rivulet and flood had occasional obliging moods in which it became a navigable stream, whereby flat-bottomed steamers took flour and cloth up to the mountains, and rafts of poplar logs floated safely down. This desirable state the Government

wished to make permanent by means of dams and locks, and one dam was in successful operation at Louisa.

Catlettsburg is not a good place to get a quick lunch. I counted on thirty minutes' wait there to eat, but alas, not even a peanut-man met the inquiring eye. The unpaved street straggled in from the southern hills past the station, and on between most unappetizing wooden shanties to the Ohio river. There was no promise of food in any direction,- no indication even of a neighborhood likely to support a decent restaurant, so I decided to live until evening on the memory of breakfast.

During this investigation the train rolled on toward Cincinnati, and its place was taken by a wheezy old freight engine which puffed about with unheard of noise and disturbance--weird coughs and sputterings not intended by the maker, and the most soul-stirring altercations with switches and frogs. By a series of miracles it stayed on the track, and under its ministrations a string of freight cars gradually grew longer. The manner of coupling was not noted for gentleness, or even a decent regard for railroad property, but these cars were already so delapidated that carelessness was excusable. Each car was added with a crash that deafened the bystanders, shook the neighborhood and passed on from car to car until it died away in the distance. The process was interesting at first, but soon palled, and as the half-hour drew to an end I thought to change the subject by remarking to a bystander that it was about time for the Louisa train.

"That's hit, right heah," he responded,

pointing to the freight cars. I supposed he was trying to "horse" me, and expressed neither approval nor conviction, as behooves an innocent stranger. The worst of the trouble seemed to be over among the cars; the engine was attached, and the jingling procession limped slowly by and stopped with the rear cars, aged but unmistakable passenger coaches, opposite the station. They proved to be bound for Lousia, and the bystander was vindicated.

The first car was full of natives who had started from Ashland (five miles away) an hour before, poor souls, and had calmly endured that coupling business for a full half hour! If it was annoying to me on the platform, it must have been excruciating to the tired women and children on board, yet they took it all in with seeming complacency. To them, as to me, it was a new experience, but from the other side; while I was getting my first glimpse of what might be called the Kentucky frontier, they were being introduced to civilization in the form of a railroad journey to Ashland, and both they and I were willing to put up with considerable discomfort for the sake of the advantage. In fact, the annoyances and dangers of the railroad seem its chief charm to the mountaineers. Many of them are train-sick, and tell of it with pride. If they were forced to sit on the cowcatcher or cling to the rail of the rear platform the trip would be even more novel, exciting and desirable.

The natives were no doubt interesting, but being en route to their headquarters I felt at liberty to neglect them for the present, and turned into the second car, empty but for

a single drummer. Round as a barrel, he miserably lacked the appropriate jollity. His little eyes, which should have twinkled with merriment, were set in dull and solemn gaze over the backs of the seats, with which they were just level, the cushions being in a state of complete collapse. The train backed with a jerk as I came in, and he was thrown across his seat, settling down at last to greet me in disgusted tones:-

"Say, a blow like that's calculated to cripple a fellow, ain't it? Darned little they care---" but the train cut him short with another crash and jerk as it started for Louisa. It puffed along with the greatest determination and perseverance for at least a quarter of a mile, and then the engine was reversed and the cars stopped after the manner of the old-fashioned brakeless freight-train: bang (that's the first car) bang- bang BANG- BANG- BANG- BANG. (that's you)

When things quieted down a bit, my fat friend relaxed his frenzied grasp of the seat in front, and growled defiantly, "Hit 'em again!" A few more cars were inserted in the train, and it stumbled off at last really and truly on its way to Louisa, only fifty minutes late. I began to have some inkling of the reason for their time-table, which had been a puzzle. It stated the distance from Louisa to Catlettsburg at twenty-five miles, and the time as two and a half hours. It looked like a mis-print, but if they spent two-thirds of the time smashing cars in freight-yards, it was easy to imagine that ten miles an hour would be fully up to the possibilities---even beyond them.

Once clear of Catlettsburg, however, they

rattled along at a good pace up the Kentucky side of the river with a fine view of the West Virginia shore opposite. It was a rough country, the hills, though low, being steep, bare and seemingly arid. Quantities of reddish brown rock cropped out, and the banks of the river showed a stiff hard clay, with little or no soil. Not a promising country for agriculture, and the only sign of success was an occasional dubious cornfield wherein the "tops and blades" had been stripped off, while the ear drooped at the end of the bare stalk drying and incidentally feeding the crows, which were many and prosperous. Each hollow we crossed contained the bed of a brook, now dry as a bone. All the way to Louisa not a drop of water could be seen except in the bed of the river, though the track crossed bridges over what must have been large streams in season. There were occasional patches of wood still green which softened the landscape somewhat, and the hazy light of the still autumn afternoon helped out, so that the scenery was by no means unattractive.

After fifteen minutes of progress the train stopped in the open country. Nothing civilized was visible in any direction save a little frame house in course of construction, on which one man was hammering away with a fair show of energy. After the train had stood inert for ten minutes or so, the drummer spoke up again.

"Ain't this great---making five miles every two hours? They ain't due at Whitehouse till seven, and it's less than twenty miles; they ain't in no hurry! What in the devil's the difference?" He meditated and listened to the hammering. "Say, do you know why that

fellow's working so hard out there? He's going home to supper on this train, and they're holding it for him till he finishes the job!"

But this theory had to be abandoned when we went on a short distance and stopped at Lockwood station, leaving the hammer still going. In a few minutes we were off again, and proceeded gloriously for a half-mile, we then stopped and backed resolutely toward Lockwood.

"By George," said the drummer, "I believe that engineer's forgot something and he's going back for it!"

He soon stopped again, however, seemed to ponder whether it was worth while, decided it wasn't and started once more southward. But it was not an unpleasant trip. The cool air, warm sun and golden light were happy circumstances for first impressions of this somewhat harsh country, and the drummer's sallies quite beguiled the monotony.

"I knew it," he exclaimed, as we drew up at a little church and graveyard, "somebody's neck's broke, and they're going to bury him!"

Past Buchanan (pronounced buck-hanon) we made a most tedious progress, pulling up a few yards at a time while they unloaded a little freight from each car in the train, and then starting off bravely on the homestretch. I soon looked for the outskirts of Louisa, but as hope ran highest we stopped, backed for a quarter-mile at full speed, shot onto a siding, and crashed into a train of freight cars standing there. Then dead silence, but for an unhappy baby in the car ahead, a slight panting from the locomotive, and a meditative crow far away in a cornfield, whose raucous



MILL CREEK WEST VIRGINIA, NEAR LOUISA.

caw was almost plaintive, so freighted was it with suggestion of clear still days in many faraway places. I was content to sit and listen to him for a while; even the drummer was somewhat soothed, and remarked quite cheerfully.

"Well, we're doing pretty well now; only took forty minutes for this last mile."

I agreed, and he asked what I had been writing all this while. I told him a letter.

"Oh, you're writing to a paper, I reckon?"

"No, just a letter home."

But he was unconvinced. "Mighty long letter," he grumbled, with respect which seemed to spring from the conviction that I was really a reporter, and some resentment that I would not own up.

Ten minutes later appeared the outlying shanties of Louisa, which soon grew more numerous and better conditioned, promising to develop into a town. Before this desirable consummation, however, we stopped to unload freight, and most of the passengers left the train. I would have followed but for the friendly assurance of the brakeman that it was "quite a ways" to the station and that the train was going on at once. So I sat it out, and fifteen minutes later rolled grandly up to the station and the welcoming crowd of idlers. There was the Captain, his close-cut beard wagging at me reprovingly while his eyes twinkled a welcome.

"Well, old man, I am glad to see you--- thought you weren't coming. Do you know, I've met every train for the last twenty-four hours?"

"Dear me, I'm awfully sorry! It was quite impossible for me to start any sooner. It's

too---"

"Oh, no matter! Here, I want you to know Dr. Wroten."

"I'm glad to meet you, suh. I know you well by reputation from the Captain's stories. And by the way, I wouldn't worry about his meeting trains, there are only two a day---"

"Here, give me your check," interrupted the Captain. "All right for you, doctor, I'll get even with you!"

"Yes, I reckon you will," chuckled the doctor, and I saw that the Captain was known in the land. The baggage was entrusted to a sanguine man with a mule and dray, who would "take it right down, yes suh." Several other inhabitants were introduced, and then we explored.

The Court-house of Lawrence County, large, wooden and ugly, stood in the center of an open square pleasantly surrounded with trees, outside which a horserack served for a fence. It was near the center of the town, and the well-worn paths and steps, and the hitching-bar almost destroyed by hungry horses marked it as the center of interest. North and south were a motley collection of small shops; eastward on the river bank were unkempt houses made attractive by goodly shade trees in front, and glimpses in the rear across the river to the West Virginia hills; to the west lay several prosperous brick stores and a somewhat dingy hotel. In the latter a little cubby-hole of an office was furnished with a discarded water-cooler and a tattered railroad map. There was no one in charge, and not a sign of life except the rattle of dishes in the distance. Sociable groups

of well-worn chairs were tipped to comfortable angles against the house and trees in front of the house, but their occupants were at the post office. It was the rule for everybody to meet the train, welcome the passengers, follow the mail-bag to the post office and exchange the day's news during the hour consumed in sorting the mail. The Captain had given me an eloquent description of his lonely days in this dismal hostelry, and his delight at finally getting quarters in the house of Mr. Hazelton of the Government office.

"Well," I said with some regret, "I suppose this is to be my abode until we take to the woods."

"No, sir," returned the Captain, hooking his arm into mine and trotting me off up the street. You've got to bunk in with me. I'm in a big room with a big bed, and if you can't put up with it, you can't go on this trip. that's all."

"But I can't crowd in on your friends that way."

"Yes you can, too. Do you know what they said when I first spoke of sending for you. 'Tell him to come now, so that he can visit here a month or so before you start.' They'd never forgive me if you didn't go there."

We saw the town-- schools, post office, "residences of prominent citizens," (you see the same kind in advertisements on the back of the Ladies Home Journal) and then walked "down" northward past a few more stores and a strikingly energetic steam grist mill. Beyond was the "Avenue," a dusty road sparsely lined with small wooden houses, and boasting a brick pavement on one side for a considerable por-



" A BRICK WALK LED TO THE DOOR. "

tion of its length. Up the sidewalk came cows, some of which turned out for us, some not, adding a pastoral touch to the quiet and peaceful scene. The Captain explained that they had not broken loose, but belonged to various houses in the town which had no pasture, and that being turned out to graze, they traveled miles about the town, and came back regularly at night.

Five minutes more brought us to a large square brick house, set well back toward the river, on a lawn of soft green grass, here a great rarity. A brick walk shaded by old apple trees led to the door, and behind were a neat stable, more apple trees and a garden sloping to the river bank-- a pleasant scene in the warm sunset light, and a marked contrast to the rest of the town, of which it was, indeed, the chief residence.

Inside, the household was assembling for supper, and a warmer welcome than they offered could not be imagined. The family severally and collectively reiterated that I was at home, and did their utmost to prove it with what I took for "true southern hospitality" until I learned that they all hailed from the middle states. The Captain took me to his goodly room, gave me a clean collar (the baggage was four hours coming up from the station) and we went down to supper. Now the cook had left in the morning, and Mrs. H. cooked that supper, whereby her culinary reputation is firmly established. Remember that they were effusively hospitable, add that breakfast had been my last meal, and you may imagine the great deeds done at that cheerful board. Afterwards the Captain helped me wash the dishes by way of acknowledgement.

Then we walked to the Engineer Office, a few hundred yards farther north on the river bank, looking directly down on its Chief's invention and pride, the largest and most successful "needle dam" in the World. It is a curious arrangement which folds up like circus benches, so that in twenty minutes the river can be cleared of every obstruction, and floods, drift-wood, lumber rafts and what not may sweep down stream without doing damage. In front of the Office the clay river bank, some sixty feet high, had been cut to a smooth terrace and paved with stone to preserve it against floods. Into the stone was sunk a flight of steps, and down these the Captain led me tenderly by the hand, the last of the sunset light having faded away. The steps were long, steep, and indistinguishable from the surrounding stonework, the dam roared and foamed below, and the effect was much that of scrambling down the Great Pyramid into a maelstrom. At the bottom a stone platform loomed faintly, in its center a large square of empty blackness, from which issued the roar of a waterfall. I rather gasped as we stepped into this seeming watery tomb, but there was a good iron grating across the top, and we live to tell the tale.

Beyond was the dam. An uneven series of iron plates formed a narrow footway. Beneath this the water flowed over the brink in a smooth sheet, fell fifteen feet and broke into a mass of foam which gleamed yellow in the darkness as it scurried off downstream. Cautiously, and with a pleasant sense of adventure I followed the Captain out to the center pier, and we sat there, ears growing used to the roar, and eyes to the darkness,



POIREE NEEDLE DAM AT LOUISA

St. Charles

while he explained.

" This is what they call a 'three inch raise,'" said he. " This afternoon there wasn't any water flowing over,- it all leaked through, and it's been that way for six weeks. We have been sitting to read under the dam where that waterfall is now. This is a 'blue swell', water perfectly clear, and not a sign of rain. Anyway, it will keep us from starting until it goes down again. It's this way. The Government proposes to build locks and dams up to Pikeville on the west or Levisa Fork, and to Williamson on the Tug Fork (the inter-state boundary.) The river branches at Louisa, and the first dam was put here, making slackwater on two streams instead of one. Of course, the main problem is to guard against the floods, and the Chief's dam settles that.

This is, as I have written you before, the largest movable dam of the Poiree Needle type in the World. Yet it can be lowered by three men in as many hours. When we are telegraphed from "up river" that a flood and timber are coming, we can fold up the dam on the bottom of the river in time to give free passage to the great rafts that are floated down from the mountains, some of which we shall probably see before we return from our trip.

But the question arises whether in the dry season there is flow enough to replace what unavoidably leaks through the dams, and what escapes in the use of the lock. This has been a dry fall, and I am to measure the flow at various points on both forks at extreme low water. Incidentally, I am to take photographs of the country to be made accessible by the dams, and there's the point of this trip. It'll be part of the work to hunt up all the

interesting or pretty places anywhere around, and take first class photos of them. Now, I'll have to hire a workman occasionally-- I don't see why there should be any objection to having you along, ready to help."

"Great scheme," I replied.

We crossed to the lock, and poked about over it and the "needle-boat" which carries a small derrick to operate the dam, handle drift-wood, and so forth. Then we crawled back across the dam, and went uptown with the idea of calling upon the Chief and talking over the trip unofficially, but wandered aimlessly about the streets and talked.

It was pitch black in town but for a feeble glimmer every block or two of natural gas and Wellsbach burner which proved to be a recent acquisition, and the occasion of much pride. The Captain explained that some of the "boys" in town "shot 'em out every now and then, and it was difficult to keep them in repair." Once the Captain stopped, as if uncertain of the way, and as we peered about under the dense trees, there rose from our feet a great puffing sigh, like a porpoise blowing. It was startlingly mysterious in the dead silence, and some seconds passed before I recognized a herd of cows picturesquely grouped on the street and sidewalk. Meanwhile the Captain had found a way between them, and we went on.

Two or three houses where we might have stopped were already dark, so we returned, to find Mr. H. fiddling merrily, and his daughter unappreciatively devoting herself to my yesterday's Herald. We chatted a few minutes, already on an intimate footing (result of the Captain's many and astonishing yarns of our good times together) and turned in, in a

delightfully homelike bed.

Three days passed waiting for the proper stage of the river; a welcome delay, giving time to make preparation and meet the Captain's friends. A heavy canvas case was made for the one instrument it was necessary to carry-- a current-meter-- so that it could be lashed behind the saddle. Camera and plates were fitted into huge saddle-bags, and the chinks filled in with a very small selection of extra clothing, and a little oatmeal, sugar and chocolate, for emergencies. The office provided maps, itineraries and detailed instructions.

The Captain after some trouble obtained two proper horses for the trip, negotiations being somewhat complicated by the universal desire to get the last cent from the Government, and the unequalled generosity always shown to individuals. As Uncle Sam paid for the Captain, while I was going "on my own hook," we had to choose between paying double as a government expedition, or claiming unmerited and embarrassing hospitality as private citizens.

The Captain compromised by hiring horses and borrowing what we lacked of equipment, of which my saddle was the greatest problem. He declared his own army saddle perfection, but it was a type so rare in that country as to provoke continual comment. The unvarying choice of the natives was the "Kentucky spring saddle," a cumbrous affair wadded below and quilted above with springs between, so formless that it will neither keep its place on the horse nor hold the rider, chafing and exhausting both. But the "Colonel," a Gentleman of endless interests, possessions



THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER

and activities, was sufficiently eccentric to keep and occasionally use his old army saddle, which he placed most cordially at my disposal.

All manner of condolences were offered for the terrible trip we were to take. It was related how one man when ordered to the mountains had actually wept. But let me add that I afterward learned that this was because he had to leave his best girl to the mercies of a rival suitor: a drummer from Ashland. The drummer won; but was drowned a few months later while floating down the river from Pikeville. The inexpressible wildness of the country and the people was dilated on by engineers and Louisians alike, the latter feeling as far removed from the mountaineers as the former. The Captain was considered a mild lunatic, or a sadly misinformed man for the complacency with which he looked forward to two weeks of corn pone and sorghum, and as for me, politeness forbade expressing opinions of one who started for three hundred miles in the saddle owning that he had not been on a horse for years. Joking was not barred, however, and the bits of advice thrown at me and the various wagers offered as to how soon I would turn back were too numerous to mention.

THE START.

SATURDAY,
AUGUST 22nd.,
1900.

LOUISA, KY.
TO
MAT ELAM'S;
OPPOSITE
WHITEHOUSE.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
20 MILES.

CHAPTER I.



CHAPTER 1.

Saturday morning at seven-thirty, cool and clear, with the morning mists disappearing in the warm sun, found us waving good-bye to the assembled family, who shouted back good wishes. We passed quickly through the town, and turned into the road for Pikeville and the mountains.

Off at last! It felt like an old-time lark, and we galloped up the dusty road whooping like school-boys. The horses caught the spirit and kicked up their heels in fine style. Two pairs of fat saddle-bags, two coats, a current-meter and a tripod were strapped to various parts of the saddles; flannel shirts and felt hats adorned us, and a cloud of dust rose high behind. It was picturesque.

But the Captain checked our wild career. "This won't do for twenty-five miles," said he. "Not getting tired, are you?"

"No, certainly not. Why?"

"Well you know they think you'll give out sometime today."

"Pshaw, you're not worried, are you? This saddle's as easy as can be; just get the proper flop, and it's like an arm chair. Try it,-- lean back from the hips, then bend forward sharply at the small of the back, hunch your shoulders, stick your chin out, flop gently at each step and flap your elbows like

wings. That must be what they call 'riding Kaintuck.'

"No go, on my saddle," said he, "the back of it's too high, and besides, I can't bend forward that way. Frank's comfortable anyway." Frank was a handsome and spirited half-bred owned by the sheriff, and a favorite mount of the Captain's. "What do you think of Molly?"

"Oh, she's all right," I responded somewhat dubiously. "She's a bit hard to get started."

"Well, she just came in from a month's trip last night, and I suppose she hates to leave again so soon. You know, that's the most remarkable livery-stable man I know. He actually loves his horses. He won't rent them without good recommendations, and some times not then. He's as grumpy and silent as an Indian, and he used to make me fighting mad. But all last winter he'd have given me a horse every day for nothing, I believe, to get 'em exercised, because he knew I'd use 'em properly. And he's the greatest chap to doctor up abused horses. Molly's one of 'em. She was sold for junk-- spring saddles wore her back out-- but he took her in hand, and she's a good beast. I've ridden her a good deal, and she's only one fault; she won't stand without nibbling, and she's mighty clever about it, too. Just stop a minute."

We stopped. Molly meditated a moment, then sidled over to the bank. The bridle was fitted with one of the universal chainless curbs so long at the side that the reins dropped below her lips. Without hesitation she hooked her lower teeth behind the cheek of the curb, pulled the reins out a couple of

feet, and began to eat. No matter how short I held her, she could double her neck up just a little more, and catch hold; if I gripped the reins and determined to hold her up, there was a desperate struggle which, even if crowned with victory, did not add greatly to my peace or pleasure, and she had her way, nibbling wherever we stopped. It was a small fault in a most satisfactory horse.

The route was a stage-road, well-traveled and dusty. Its makers paid more attention than usual to grade. So commonly, roads, following old farm boundaries, go out of their way to climb hills; but this kept nearly level, winding in and out among the slopes, roughly following the river, though often leaving it for half a mile. The hills were low, bare and rain-washed. The country seemed, indeed, specially adapted to being washed away, for every tributary stream had cut out a huge gully, which made long detours necessary to keep the road level, and added tremendously to the distance. Small trees and bushes lined the road, and an occasional bit of woods relieved some of the bareness, but there was no very heavy timber, no crops, no grass even. Some of the bottoms were carpeted with a vivid green, smooth as an English lawn, but there was no grass by the road, only a little trailing vine, like a fine "Wandering Jew," which the horses nibbled sparingly, with a disappointed air.

Altogether this was an unattractive country, but that is not to say that the ride was unpleasant. There is no more vivid pleasure than exploring, which was virtually what we were doing. Though we knew our destination, and the general reputation of the country,

all the details were enticingly vague. Every bend in the road might reveal something outlandish, and every slope surmounted certainly brought us one stage nearer the mysterious mountain land of moonshiners and outlaws.

But the mysteries seemed to flit softly ahead of us, keeping just out of sight. At eleven o'clock, in this state of anticipated thrill, we arrived at Atkinson's, a neat, fresh-painted, home-like house. The itinerary, detailed with paternal care, told us to stop here for dinner, the Captain's duties including a measurement of the river near by. Mrs. Atkinson gave us greeting in her husband's absence, sent our horses to the stable and told us dinner would be ready in an hour; all as a matter of course, with much the manner of a polite hotel clerk. In the well-travelled parts many houses stand ready to receive guests at fixed charges, and taverns are found only in the towns.

We set off at once to measure the river. The Captain on the way described with gusto the failure of an expedition of five men with two boats to get these measurements, and descanted upon the simplicity and economy of his own scheme. This was merely to select a shoal place and wade, thus getting the ease in changing a position and the accuracy in holding it, so difficult in working with boats, while securing a swift current, more accurately recorded by the current-meter.

We scrambled down the high bluff to the sand flat, shed our shoes, and set to work, with one youth for audience. The Captain unpacked the current-meter (A sort of miniature wind-gauge arranged to make an electric contact at each revolution) charged its battery,

ruled a page of the record book into a suitable blank, and gripped the end of a fifty-foot tape line in his teeth. Meanwhile I marked off a short stick into feet and halves arranged my watch so as to be easily consulted, and stowed the tape-line in a pocket so that it would run out smoothly. Then the Captain waded out five feet at a time, observing alternately the speed and the depth, while I gave him distance and time, and noted the results. This gave a cross-section of the river divided into trapezoids ten feet long, with the speed of the current known in each, whence the discharge was easily computed. We soon fell into the routine, and the tape-line stretched rapidly across the stream to a laconic accompaniment of exclamations.

"Go ahead! Whoa! Ready!"

"Go!"

"Time!"

"Fourteen-five."

"Go ahead!" Whoa!"

"Two and seven tenths," and so forth. When the tape-line was exhausted, I waded out to the fifty-foot station, and we proceeded as before. It was just enough occupation to give the satisfying consciousness of being at work without interfering with the enjoyment of a perfect day. A gentle breeze rustled the foilage along the river bank, kept fresh and vigorous as in early summer by the river mists; the cool clear water rippled over the shoals and swirled about our feet; the sunlight filtered through a great buttonwood on the west bank in splotches which struck through the water and played about over the pebbly bottom, and we would have been content

had the survey lasted all day.

But at twelve dinner was ready, and there was undeniable satisfaction in sinking back in a chair before a well filled board. Certainly the hardships of the trip were not yet apparent. The Captain was asked to say grace, and then we attacked fried chicken and biscuits, flanked with potatoes, beans, corn bread, jelly, preserves, etc., and followed by a pie, coffee and milk. The last three items were not comparable to home fare, but the rest was excellent, and we were well satisfied to pay twenty-five cents all round (including horses) although it was double the accepted rate "up-country." Very likely everybody was charged town prices so near Louisa. As we received courteous farewells, and turned away from the attractive homestead the Captain betrayed some uneasiness. He had promised me a rough trip.

"Don't you worry," said he, "we'll come to the rough country before long. We're still within reach of the railroad. Just wait till we pass Whitehouse-- then we'll see things rough enough to suit anybody."

That afternoon we made a short cut up George's Creek, while the river went wandering around a long loop to the eastward. It is remarkable, by the way, how much the importance of the creeks simplifies travel. The roads follow them to get an even grade, and in some cases even occupy the beds of the smaller ones, which are dry in summer, as smooth as the roads, and need no chopping out. The streams are extremely numerous, and all of the houses and much of the arable land lie on their banks, the hills being mostly rain-washed and barren where there were no forests

Thus a road apart from a stream would be useless, save from the head of one brook across the divide to the head of another.

All this reduces place-names to the utmost simplicity. Everything is in terms of creeks, not villages or roads or houses. Your way is "up Laurel and down Big," a man lives "at the forks of Beaver" or the "mouth of Hurricane," and as Laurel, Big, etc. are carefully put down on the maps, and form unmistakable land-marks, the way of the stranger is made easy. Here are the names of a few of the settlements near Louisa taken from the weekly newspaper published there and representing all that eastern part of the state: "Prosperity," "Ipez," "Hoot-Owl Hollow," "George's Creek," "Polly's Chapel," "Mouth of Cow," "Forks of Tug," "Twin Branch," "Irad," "Busseyville," "Boon's Camp," "Flat Gap," etc.

So we proceeded, not "up by Deacon Smith's place, and turn to the left at the big barn," but just "up George's Creek," and when it came to an end, we followed the road over the divide and so back to the river. It was a good stiff pull up that hill. I have already said that these hills, if low, were steep, but it will bear repetition. We walked and led the panting horses, but even so, Molly rebelled. She had a good firm will of her own, and was decidedly not a good leader, making it a point of religion to be pulled along by her bridle to the limit allowed by the strength and patience of her master. I dropped back alongside, leading with one hand, and applying inducements on her rump with a switch, hoping she would take them as coming from behind, but she recognized the source,



S. CHAPIN

"STILL POOLS AND LEAFY SHORES" BELOW WHITEHOUSE

and stopped as suddenly as though threatened from in front. Finally the Captain dropped behind, and as I pulled and chirruped, he vigorously applied a tough piece of cherry. A few doses were enough, and the treatment never had to be repeated.

We arrived at the top breathless and hot, for the mid-afternoon sun struck in viciously on the hillside. But above were broad poplars, and a pleasant breeze from the river beyond, which we enjoyed on the fence, while the horses ate the weeds and leaves by the roadside. A good stretch of the Big Sandy lay before us, gleaming and rippling in the wind. There was still the same gully, and clay bluffs, but the meadows were lacking, the valley narrower, the hills a bit higher, and the woods really considerable in extent and age. These were reassuring signs of approaching wildness, and we gaily descended to the main road with but a few miles to go to "Mat Elam's," the scheduled sleeping place, and the cool afternoon of a fine day to make them in.

There was but one interruption-- a bend of the river fine enough to be photographed. The clay banks here were veiled in trees, the hills close to the stream, and the still pools and leafy shores formed a series of exquisite pictures. We devised a "camera-drill," closely followed thereafter, whereby only twenty minutes were lost in taking a picture, and then we were off again. The afternoon light grew soft and golden as the sun sank towards the hill tops. The woods lay thick and green over a great part of the country. The road was fair, and the horses, feeling the miles somewhat, settled down to



WHITEHOUSE

a smooth and easy pace; for it is providentially arranged for the benefit of weary riders that a tired horse shall have a smoother gate than a fresh one. The river stretched forth its shining length below, now smooth as glass, now blurred by a vagrant breath of air. An occasional cabin peeped from among the trees. It was a pleasant ride.

As the shadows of the western hills began to stretch across the road we emerged upon a large farm filling a blunt promontory within a curve of the river, on the farther bank of which gleamed long rows of tiny whitewashed houses-- the coal-mining town of Whitehouse at the end of the railroad. This was Elam's, where a welcome was offered by the capable wife to the snug house, set about with trees and flowers. We stabled the horses, finding hay and year-old corn: signs of prosperity in a country where grass is rare and grain usually exhausted early in the summer. The place had a vigorous air of rewarded thrift quite out of tune with our expectations. The gates especially caught my eye. There were many of them, all on their hinges, working smoothly clear of the ground, and fitted with an ingenious wooden latch held in position by the pull of a diagonal wire brace. We wondered where the wildness was coming in, but comforted ourselves that this was the end of the railroad, and the land of promise was at hand.

Having still an hour before dusk, we set off at once for the river, and with some haste found a proper place and completed the required discharge measurement before dark. This was the last touch to our already keen hunger, and we hurried back, but only to find supper not yet ready, and so we spent twenty

minutes rubbing down the horses. It was after seven when Mr. Elam returned from a day up the river and welcomed us to his table. He was a fine patriarchal figure, large-headed and handsome, with a flowing gray beard. He said a long and earnest grace, in a rich voice, with scarcely a trace of dialect or mispronunciation, and proceeded to talk most interestingly on a great variety of subjects. His stalwart sons listened respectfully and ate industriously, and the wife and daughters served the table. The principal dish was boiled "fall beans," a sort of over-grown string beans, with other vegetables, and rank weak coffee, taken black from economical habit, while we, as paying guests, were further provided with ham and eggs. Afterwards were served very good cake and preserves.

The Colonel, owner of my saddle, proved to be well known here, being interested in the coal mines across the way, and the fact made a sort of personal bond with Mr. Elam. He regaled us with stories of the up-river country.

"Oh, yes, you'll find it rough enough up the river, just little log cabins, one or two rooms, and lots of chinks. I recollect one night I was sitting by the fireplace-- over on Tug Fork it was-- and a dog came nosing round. I can't abide dogs in the house, so I put up my foot and gave him a shove, and that dog just dropped right out of sight, as if he'd been a ghost! There was a big hole in the floor, and he'd fallen through. 'Well,' thinks I, 'I've got rid of him, anyway,' but bless gracious, there came his nose poking into my hand that minute! He just walked around, and came in the front door. Next

morning soon, about dawn, I was waked up by the most unholy racket you ever heard, and there were half a dozen geese that had roosted under the house, with their heads poked up through the floor, hissing and squawking as if I had no right to be there! Oh, it's a rough enough country. By the way, I see you've got the Sheriff's horse."

The Captain admitted that Frank belonged to the sheriff of Lawrence County.

"Well, it don't make much difference what county; he's made some raids up there, and I wouldn't mention that's his horse, or it might make trouble. They wouldn't hurt you, you know, but you'd have trouble getting in any place for the night, and you couldn't get any horse-feed at all. Sheriffs ain't exactly popular up in the mountains. You may have some trouble about feed anyway, for the old corn'll be gone, and too much new corn would give 'em colic. But you go easy, give 'em just a few ears, and make it up with roughness. Give 'em plenty of roughness, and they'll be all right."

"Roughness" was mysterious, but there was no immediate need of displaying ignorance, and as it sounded wild, it was accepted as an omen.

The meal was enjoyed, as was the talk which followed, and when that was cut short to do a little writing, the neat bed-room was a pleasant surprise. It's bed was white-draped and home-like, its furniture cheap but not uncomfortable, its lithographic and other ornaments at least cheerful. Being on a search for wildness, conscience troubled us for accepting these comforts so complacently, but was soothed by Mr. Elam's promises, and

finally silenced by a thought that struck me just as we turned in.

"Did you notice Mrs. Elam waiting on the table? Why didn't she eat with us?"

"Why, somebody had to wait. You don't expect them to keep servants, do you?"

"No, but there were the girls; why didn't one serve and the rest eat? Tell, you what, it's something better than frontier rudeness we're going to, it's medievalism!" We slept soundly and peacefully.

TO
PAINTSVILLE, IN.
1880
RETURN TO
CARRIAGE

T. DUNFORD
TRAVELER'S OP
OF 1880.

CHAPTER II.

A SHORT DAY.

CHAPTER II

SUNDAY
AUGUST 23rd.,
1900.

MAT ELAM'S
TO
PAINTSVILLE, KY.
ALSO A
RETURN TO
WARDS.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
23 MILES.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER II

The morning broke dull and sprinkled with rain from the last of a flying host of clouds. We roused ourselves with difficulty, and found it six-thirty, a late hour for the anticipated sunrise breakfast and early start but it was Sunday (which was almost forgotten, the schedule making no allowance for interruptions) and breakfast-making was not even begun. We crossed the rain-soaked fields at once to Whitehouse shoal, and measured its speed; then scrambled upstream alongshore, first on the river-bed of sand and stones, then on the banks, which were quite high, now bare and perpendicular, now shelving and tree-clad. After some climbing we got a good view of the town across the way, executed the camera drill with neatness and dispatch, and hurried back to breakfast through a prosperous cornfield. After a good meal, we paid Mr. Elam two dollars and a half, a sum which rather struck terror to our hearts, as it was not only computed on the twenty-five cent basis, but included a charge for lodging as well, something supposed to be unheard of "up the river."

At the stable was further perturbation. When the horses were led out for a rub-down, Frank was plainly "queer." Small flat swellings had appeared, mainly on his head and neck, and none of the family had a notion what

they meant. They were of different shapes and sizes, and on his cheeks were almost run together, making a smooth swollen surface, with creases or wrinkles of normal skin. After a time, as he had no fever and seemed perfectly happy, without pain, we decided to go on, for it might be the effect of over-feeding, which exercise would dispel, and time was precious.

We were saddled, packed and off directly, and with the bustle, our spirits rose. The clouds were gone, leaving a fine Sunday morning, bright and still, and warm enough to make a lively motion through the air pleasantly cooling. Frank stepped out gaily, in the best of spirits, and though the swellings rather increased than reduced, it seemed plain that a horse so evidently happy and vigorous could not be seriously amiss, and nothing marred the jolly ride to Ward City.

Here John Ward owned a combined house, store and informal hotel, another man had a grocery, and two other small houses completed the town. This was an enlightening hint as to one mystery-- how the map of this "wild" country could be so thickly sprinkled with names of towns. However, Ward was really of some importance as the end of one telephone line from Louisa, and the beginning of another to Paintsville. The Captain dismounted to report to the Chief and get final instructions, while I became the center of a curious group of Sunday idlers, gathered to have their pictures taken by a wandering photographer, and enjoy a day in Ward. There is a courteous prejudice against asking direct questions in the South, but even so a few inquiries were put by the younger and bolder element, while the air was thick with the most varied and

interesting hypotheses thrown out in the hope of confirmation or denial. By this means they gathered that we came from Louisa; that in spite of being on army saddles, we were not soldiers; that "them slick hard things" were more comfortable than spring saddles (which they did not believe), and that we were bound for the Breaks of Sandy to see the country and take pictures. They envied and wondered at the long journey ahead for us, and said how they had heard tell what a rough country it was, and what fine mountains and what wild people, and finally produced a man who had actually been there in person, and who confirmed all they said, and added more. I began to feel myself quite on a pedestal of glory, when a little old man piped up.

"How much do you charge fo' yo' pictures, suh?"

They took us for rivals of the picture-man! I tried to explain that we were after scenery, not portraits, but it was no use; a photograph was a photograph, and it was absurd to deny it. I changed the subject by asking if anyone knew what ailed Frank.

He was restive in the sun after exercise, and the swellings rapidly increased until his head was too big for the bridle, and his sides were thickly covered with splotches like large flat blisters. I let out the throat-latch and cheek-pieces, but he grew more and more uneasy, pawed nervously, and presently began to rub his legs and sides violently with his nose, and even bite at the skin. I hitched Molly and kept him moving quietly. He was not feverish, and the skin, even where swollen, was cool and loose. It was mysterious, and the crowd could give no explanations.

"No suh," they said, "neveh saw nothin' like that, nowheres."

"My brotkeh had a mare once that got mad-itch, and he said she bit and kicked and tore around awful before she died.-- No suh, I didn't see her; I don't know what she looked like."

"Yes, they's a hoss-docteh oveh neah Paintsville; hit's on'y about eight miles. You could telephone theah, and they'd send a boy out. I reckon he'd come."

"Tell you, you might send fer old Uncle Billy up the cove, and I reckon mebbe he could bleed him fer ye. That's what he needs, suah."

"No, he don't, neither, his skin's just as cool--"

"Don't make no diffunce, look at that!"

Frank spasmodically pawed and rubbed and bit worse than ever, his ears pricking forward and back in excitement. He was beginning to be hard to hold when the Captain came out.

"They say if we can't use him to get another horse and go on, but that he'll probably be all right. Great Scott, though, I didn't think he was as bad as that! Doesn't anybody know what ails him?"

I gave him the sum of the crowd's knowledge.

"Well, we'll put him in the stable and send for the doctor"

Frank entered the large stall with an air of satisfaction. He seemed easier in the shade, and eager for food, nosing out some old corn cobs and chewing them up, but he still rubbed viciously every now and then, and the swellings were running together, making him smoothly puffed all over. At the "other store"

the Captain hung over the telephone for half an hour before getting connection. Then a boy had to be sent to the doctor, return, and report. It was an interminable business, lounging on the store boxes and making desultory talk with the store-keeper, who had opened the building for us and was waiting to close it again. The crowd scattered, to center around the picture-man, and then disappeared for dinner. Frank remained apparently comfortable, and crazy for food when the other horses were fed. But he was given nothing, as we still thought that his trouble might have come from overfeeding. The sun crawled up to mid-heaven, and the air grew hot. Mr. Ward's dinner bell rang, and then as we were about to give it up, an answer came. The doctor had just started, and would arrive in an hour or so.

Dinner was served first to the male half of the crowd, the feminine element flying about with Mr. Ward's women-folks to wait on their cavaliers, who ate the rather indifferent meal with gusto, and then retired to talk horse, while the girls ate what was left. One lank young chap with a drawly So'th Ca'lina voice seized upon a toy banjo, the special pride of a small Ward boy, remarking to the protesting owner, "Heah, sonny, I'll learn you-all how to pick it," and beguiled a half-hour by many repetitions of one plaintive but wearisome strain, supposed to be varied by being attached as prelude or conclusion to innumerable short and colorless tunes. Out at the stable Frank was quiet and hungry, but with a head still too big for the bridle. Then at last the doctor arrived, a seedy little old chap on a seedy nag, with an

evasive eye, an inaudible voice, but a most inconsequential manner.

"Are you the horse-doctor?" asked the Captain.

He muttered something unintelligible which we took for assent. Either he was a man of note, or the crowd expected some fun, for everybody tailed after to the stable. He looked Frank over with a fixed expression presumably due to professional calm, but which in a mere ordinary mortal would have passed for puzzled ignorance, grumbled, felt the horse's skin, whistled and gurgled a bit aimlessly, and looked around as though for directions.

"Well, do you know what ails him?" asked the Captain somewhat impatiently.

"Oh, yes-- yes-- know all 'bout it. Often seen 'em," muttered the "doctor," highly offended.

"What is it?"

"Oh--h, m--m--farcy,-- that's what it is," (about as sensible an answer as 'appendicitis')
"Do you-all want him bled?"

"Why, I don't know. That's your business. Does he need it?"

"M--m-- well,--if he was mine,--I'd bleed him. Yes suh."

"What if he isn't bled?"

"Oh--h-- be all right,-- all right anyway. But he'd oughter be bled,-- yes suh."

The crowd echoed, "That's what I'd do."
"Wouldn't do no harm, nohow," "Yes, suh, you-all bettah have 'im bled, suah." I began to be of the same opinion, but the Captain concluded that they were merely anxious to see blood, and decided to do nothing. The old man assumed an injured air, and charged us two

dollars for his ride. When asked to give a receipt he drew aside and mumbled that "he couldn't write very good," which meant that he couldn't write at all, but made his mark. He departed somewhat crestfallen, but still with an air of despised virtue.

The crowd was curious. "Reckon his charges was pretty light, wa'n't they?"

"No, they weren't," said the Captain, shortly, "he asked two dollars."

"Whewee! Why, he come down here and spent a half-a-day with Jake Lemley's calf, and give it a lot of medecine, and didn't charge but a dollah. He suah had a grudge against you-all."

The show being over, and the facts known, the crowd withdrew to discuss and enjoy. The Captain was in a quandary. Frank was comfortable and growing better, but he was still unusable, and the Chief's orders were explicit not to wait for him. Mr. Ward on consultation said we could have his mare "Bird" to go on with, and he could send Frank back to Louisa. We decided on this scheme, paid the score, including the hire of a boy to take Frank home, (the pocket-book began to look thin) and saddled up. This proved a longer process than usual, for Bird was large and extremely fat. At last she was ready, girth in the last hole, and with a farewell look at Frank, who whinnied for his dinner, and parting instructions to Mr. Ward, we started.

The Captain vowed he was mounted on a barrel, "and she wobbles, too-- jerks you every-which-way." She was by no means energetic, and worst of all, proved to be completely blind in one eye. "She is a bird," said the Captain, his spirits visibly sinking as Frank

was left behind.

We were to follow the river, making a long sweep to the left to measure "Buffalo Shoal," instead of taking the direct road to Paintsville. As there was reported to be a river road following the east bank, we forded just above Ward, "right up heah at the mouth of Greasy," (Fancy the multitude of streams, and the barrenness of imagination which could result in naming a pretty hill stream Greasy Creek!) There was precious little engineering about that ford. The stiff clay banks were thirty or forty feet high, and you scrambled up and down as best you might. On the east the horses had to be led up a mere rain-cut notch, almost too steep for a man to keep his footing. Molly puffed like a porpoise when she reached the top, and poor Bird was almost overcome, fairly trembling with exhaustion. It was really a remarkable road, emerging in the dooryard of a house with no apparent exit, and no one at home to question. We followed a horse-track which led through a snake-fence (no gate-- you simply laid a panel down, rode through, and built it up again) and across the fields to a sort of half lane, half road, which led through a series of prosperous and well-fenced meadows with gates between.

After a mile or so, the meadow land ceased, the river flowed close under the wooded hills, and the road mounted high above the stream. It was here plainly the remnant of an old wagon-road, built at great expense, being well-graded, and in some places cut deep into the hill; but it was now disused and largely washed away. The river wound most gracefully between the hills, and bits of its



BUFFALO SHOAL

surface, wind-ruffled and sun-flecked, showed between the tops of the trees below. It was comfortably warm and pleasantly cool as the sun and breeze played over the road, and the ride should have been delightful. But Bird panted and wobbled, Frank was being left further and further behind, and the Captain's spirits were still sinking. It was really a relief to arrive at Buffalo Shoal and have something to do, if it was only timing the current, and taking a picture which looked up to a bend in the stream with a dot of farmhouse to give perspective and life. Then we forded, and after one or two false starts struck the road to Paintsville up the west bank.

A few short miles through the woods brought us to the mouth of Paint Creek, which was surrounded by half-a-dozen most disreputable-looking shanties. Just below, three or four large steam-driven flat-boats were discharging cargoes, mainly of flour-barrels. Instructions included a section "above Paint Creek," and as the mouth of Paint was a slough, impassable for the horses, we hitched them in a bit of thicket and scrambled across, wondering how many of our traps would find their way into the shanties before we got back. Above the creek, however, the river proved to be a deep still pool, a mile or more long, where we could not work, so, as there was no appreciable flow in Paint Creek, we went below, near the unloading steamers, and completed the section by sunset.

Then there was a pleasant surprise. The shanties on the bank were not fair samples of Paintsville. Instead some half-mile up the creek appeared a fine little town of six or

eight hundred people, with comfortable homes, and no little effort at beauty in neat streets and fresh paint. At Hager's Hotel a tall and dignified proprietor cordially asked us in. He was rather handsome, with a drooping white mustache and military carriage, and preserved much of the courtly manner of the old southern gentleman. We felt rather his personal guests than wayfarers at an inn, and the prospects were good for a pleasant night.

The Captain decided to forego these attractions, however, and return to Ward, on the chance of bringing Frank back the next morning. The delay need not be great, and was really necessary, as it was impossible to go on with Bird. He and Mr. Hager made an unsuccessful attempt to get Ward by telephone, the "other store" being evidently vacated. Then we had supper in company with some fifteen or twenty men, largely drummers, dressed in gay Sunday raiment. We found ourselves quite well-known from the horse-doctor's report-- goodness knows what weird tales he had told-- and received many inquiries for the sick horse. The Captain cut his meal short to get an earlier start, once more failed to get a response to the telephone, and set off, without baggage, for his dark and lonely eight miles. The direct road being quite unknown, the night black, the horse blind, and his return unexpected altogether promised little pleasure, but the prospect of recovering Frank more than made up.

As I ruminated in the twilight in front of the hotel, Mr. Hager introduced a gay drummer as "Mr. Fostah, also of yo' state, suh," and I listened with interest to his guilt-edged narrative and comment on soliciting in the

mountains and elsewhere. He had a fine large manner, good clothes and some claim to good looks, and was probably a first-class seller. He had small opinion of the South.

"Pshaw," said he, "they talk about southern hospitality and Yankee stinginess. Why, you can go most anywhere through the country in New England and ask if you can get dinner; they'll say 'Certainly, walk right in and set down,' and when you ask how much,-- 'No, sirree, won't tech a cent,--proud to hev ye.' And down here, Great Scott! They'll look at you as if they'd caught you house-breaking, and maybe they'll take you in and maybe not; if they do, they charge you double. They've got a notion that travelling mens' expenses are paid, and they say 'Look at all the money these chaps take out of the country, let's get some of it back.' Oh, hospitality, rats!"

He introduced a kindred spirit who just then wandered out in the person of an itinerant piano-tuner, a sickly young person with bangs and a smooth round face. I asked what on earth he came to Paintsville for, but he said business was good!-- there were at least twenty-five pianos in the town. Another drummer wanted to know if we "worked for Uncle Sam," having seen the army saddles. Then the "ladies," a gay lot, came out from the second table (even in this town they had to wait,) and the men joined them. The piano inside was in excellent tune, and the round-faced boy could also play not at all badly, and I went up to my room wondering to find so much music in such a personality.

Our traps were stowed in a room with four beds. While I was congratulating myself on its spaciousness and choosing a bed, a drummer

came in and introduced himself as my roommate; then another did the same, and then two more. It might have been an interesting experiment, but I had writing to do, and got a room to myself. In this was a bed-- the sheets, to be sure, suspiciously lacking in creases, but still a bed-- also a bureau, a hand-basin and water. The slop-jar was lacking, but was not the window close at hand? I wrote till 9:30, meanwhile receiving a social and curious call from Mr.Hager, and declining an urgent invitation to a hand of poker. The sounds of revelry and chink of coin came through the transom for hours after I had turned in on the husk mattress.

AT
HALLS FORD,
KENTUCKY.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED BY
27 MILES.

CHAPTER III.

MOUNTAIN FARE.

CHAPTER III.

MONDAY
AUGUST 24th.,
1900.

WARDS
TO
PAINTSVILLE
ALSO TO
LAVIN'S
AT
HALLS FORD,
KENTUCKY.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
27 MILES.

CHAPTER III.

CHAPTER III

Hager's Hotel improved somewhat by daylight. The hot breakfast was decidedly better than the cold supper, the drummers assumed less startling dress and talk, and the assorted girls had vanished. Foster's conversation enlivened a half-hour before he packed his sample-cases into a two-horse buggy and started for the mountains, bemoaning his fate and longing for a balloon. "I've been there before," said he, "and those roads,--whew!"

Then I strolled about aimlessly studying Kentucky architecture until 9:30, when the Captain arrived, somewhat travel-worn and sleepy, but triumphant, for under him was Frank, in perfect health and spirits. He was anxious to make up time, and would not stop for rest or food, so I sent at once for Molly. And here, in anxiety not to be cheated, I nearly cheated the stable-man, who asked if we would pay him or Mr. Hager for the horses. Thinking it the hotel stable, I naturally said Hager, and would have ridden off after paying the hotel bill, which I was rejoiced to think moderate, had not the hostler been on the watch, and presented a second bill for the stable, which was a separate establishment. It may be annoying to try to cheat and be detected, but I doubt if it is as much so as to be caught cheating when you mean to be honest! Mr. Hager gave us an urgent invita-

tion, in case we should come back that way, to have a day's shooting with his dogs, and took a letter to mail which he kept in his pocket four days.

Once across Paint Creek Gully, almost as large as Big Sandy's, the Captain recounted his adventures. Between the pitch-black woods and Bird's blindness only a kind providence had saved him from sundry gullies and unguarded culverts, but any outdoor exercise assumes a new piquancy at night, and the dark ride was by no means without compensation. It was most remarkable how Bird could follow parts of the road in the darkness, and still more remarkable how she could make up for the loss of one eye and judge distance by stopping and moving her head quickly from side to side; thus gaining a perspective that was impossible from but one point of view. Bird probably invented this method herself and she should therefore rank high in all scientific communities. The excitement however came in trying to rouse Ward at 9:30. He banged and shouted, raising packs of dogs, which split their throats with yelping, but not a sign of human life was provoked for twenty minutes. Just exactly the principles the natives acted on when called at night we could never determine, but the action was always the same. Presumably they were distrustful of strangers, but they would always answer in the end, and why determined yelling should indicate good character and peaceful intention is hard to see. Eventually Mr. Ward appeared, and everything was lovely. Next morning Frank was in good shape, Bird's short term of service was accepted with the best grace possible, and the Captain was once more happy on

his original mount, relieved from fear of responsibility should Frank reach home in bad condition.

So it was in an appreciative mood that we paced along up the Pikeville stage-road, a far better road than those north of Whitehouse. Yesterday's ride had been mainly on by-roads, with thoughts centered on the horses. Today we realized that we were passing through a prosperous, or at least a well-worked country, on a fair highway. It followed the river for a mile or two, then turned up Little Paint Creek, between rolling hills so steep as to be barely workable. Timber was almost lacking, and though houses were infrequent and not over-prosperous, the general atmosphere was anything but that of the mysterious wilderness, which seemed to recede as we advanced. Still, the sun was bright and warm, the air was fine, and the horses happy; under such circumstances who could help enjoying an unknown road in a new country?"

Two or three miles out, pattering hoofs rapidly approached behind, and a young man reined up his "fox-trotting" horse alongside, introducing himself as Martin Caudill, a stock-buyer, also bound south, and anxious for company. He proved an acquisition, with long experience in roads and stopping places.

"Going to the Breaks, are you? Well, I reckon you'll have a good time. Yes suh, it's suah a plumb sight. It won't cost you so much up theah, neitheh. You see, right along the river theah's the stage-line, and the boats come up, and the agents pass by, and everybody sticks it on wheah theah's many strangers around. But you go back a little piece into the hills, and they won't charge

anybody more than a quarter for a man and a horse. Now for me, being a stock-buyer, they never charge more than that anywheah. Co'se, you mightn't like the food, but that depends on wheah you go, too. Now, you'd betteh stop for dinner to-day wheah I'm going, Uncle Lem Johnson's, at East Point. He'll treat you right. And if you get as far as Hall's Ford to-night, George Laven'll put you up and make you comfortable."

He was an encouraging and cheerful soul, and though the day grew hot and the country bare and deserted, we enjoyed the morning's ride. At 11:30, just in good season, Uncle Lem's house came in sight, constituting in itself the town of East Point. It was a rambling affair, well worn and paintless, but comfortable. Uncle Lem, another patriarchal figure, like a more rustic copy of Mat Elam, greeted Caudill as a friend, and us as Caudill's friends. His long and not immaculate beard flowed over a collarless brown shirt; his trousers were tucked into clay-stained boots, and an unbuttoned black vest completed his attire. He was having rather a hard time from rheumatism, brought on by well-digging. There was a good supply of water, he explained (water being scarce everywhere, this was a sore point) but it was too far from the barn, and he was determined to have things more convenient. He asked apologetically if we would mind stabling and feeding the horses ourselves, as he was very stiff and sore. There was grain, he said, and roughness. We gladly assented, and found a roomy and airy stable, fitted with large box stalls. There was a liberal store of corn; also corn-fodder and oats in the sheaf, substitutes for hay,

which latter is an unheard of luxury in this grassless country.

We wondered which was roughness. Of late there had been several suggestions about this mysterious article, first mentioned by Mat Elam. "Yo' hosses'll be all right up theah, - get plenty of roughness," someone would say, or, "Yes suh, give 'em a dozen yeahs of cohn and all the roughness they can eat," or "Just fill up the rack with roughness and let 'em eat all they can." We could not guess what it was, and had come to a tacit but stubborn agreement not to ask.

Uncle Lem was waiting at the door, and led us through the hallway across the main house to an L-shaped "gallery" which served as a passage from the front to the kitchen wing. At one end was a well with rope and windlass, and a long shelf with bucket, gourd, tin basin and soap. On the wall were a bit of mirror, towel and comb. Below was a small door-yard of sun-baked clay, with some remnants of grass struggling against repeated douches of dish-water. Chickens wandered about the grounds, and hounds, droop-eared and sad-eyed, ranged the gallery, or stealthily crept into the cooler hallway, only to be summarily ejected by Uncle Lem with a tirade against their worthlessness. Ablutions finished, the company tilted hide- or splint-bottomed chairs against the wall and exchanged news and gossip. This soon turned into a discussion of stock, and certain fat cows of Uncle Lem's in particular, which lasted till dinner was ready.

Here, welcome sight, seemed at last to be a true up-country table, with the simplest and coarsest of table-furniture. Uncle Lem

asked a long and earnest grace, and his wife served us with a meal abundant, but not markedly tempting. Meat was represented by bits of flabby and semi-rancid bacon, or "side-meat," floating in grease. The accompanying fried apples also floated in pork-fat, but it was possible to fish some palatable bits off the top. There were good sweet potatoes, fairly good white ones, good raw tomatoes, poor stewed ones, excellent biscuits, fair corn bread, fall beans, sorghum, soft butter, bad coffee and sour milk.

The children were privileged above their mother in sitting at the first table, and were cheerful and natural little things, staring at us in curiosity. But strangers were no such rarity as to destroy their appetites, and their mother spent half her time stirring butter and sorghum together and spreading it thick on biscuits. It seemed a curious diet, but everyone was satisfied, and the children were solid and rosy. For some time Caudill and Uncle Lem discussed religion and "faith-curing," anent a traveling healer. When they had arrived at the usual conclusion "folks will believe most anything, but I'd just like to see what they do, once," Uncle Lem asked how we liked the country.

"Why, it was a very fine-looking lot of farms we saw this morning."

"You're right," he answered with conviction, "there ain't a finer country anywhere, nor a prettier valley in the world than right here. Lots of folks have moved out, but they most always come back again. There's a right smart lot of folks around here, and of course some of 'em are lazy, and that won't do. Besides, it does get powerful dry here some-

times, and that's discouraging. Right now there's a lot starting for Oklahoma-- six families-- but I reckon maybe most of 'em will come back. They must get pretty homesick, for this is surely a fine country."

After dinner we sat on the gallery for a time chatting, making friends with the dogs, and waiting for the horses' dinner to settle. There was always as much consideration shown for horses as for men, sometimes more. They were valuable, and easily injured. Men, presumably, were less valuable and tougher. In fact, most of the natives looked as if they could stand a good deal, and according to Uncle Lem there was quite too large a supply of them. On asking what we owed, Uncle Lem "reckoned about half a dollar."

"That is, half a dollar each?"

"No, for everything." Joyful sound! Really and truly twelve and one-half cents a meal at last! "You see," he explained, "that's the regular price in this country; most people charge double for strangers, specially salesmen and government men, they having their expenses paid. But I give everybody a good meal, and charge a fair price, and that's all. 'Do as you would be done by,--' and I reckon," he added, with a little smile, "it helps folks to remember this is a good place to stop." This sounded uncommonly shrewd, but perhaps the usual surliness and high prices are equally so, as many natives do not want the "tavern business."

Caudill had some further business about the fat cows, and announced his intention of spending the afternoon and night with Uncle Lem, saying he "knew a good place when he saw it." He was anxious to jolly the old man

into a proper frame of mind to trade, and it seemed likely that his anxiety to guide our patronage to Uncle Lem was one result. But everybody was satisfied.

The road led to the head of Little Paint Creek, through a rather more picturesque neighborhood. The head of the stream was well wooded, and on the divide over which we scrambled to regain the river were really fine beeches-- remarkably tall straight trunks. There was something very inspiring in that afternoon ride. Frank had recovered, and the only effect of his sickness was a little extra liveliness from the half-day's rest. If you can imagine the importance of one's horse in such traveling, you can picture the effect of this on the Captain's spirits. In spite of his early start and extra eight miles he was as jubilant as a small boy at the circus, and I had no reason for not following suit, so we were a merry pair. The sense of adventure descended on us anew, with the realization of perfect weather, a good outfit, and pleasant prospects; and the beech wood rang with old songs, and laughter, tales and memories.

The road rejoined and forded the river at the mouth of Abbott, where a section was called for. The warm beasts were hitched under a fine buttonwood tree, and preparations made with practised speed. Below the ford, which was shallow and quite smooth, a curious ledge of rock ran out to mid-stream level with the surface of the water, and from this we worked, as the current opposite was swift and narrow, and evenly two feet deep. A stout and florid personage in round straw hat and open black waistcoat came from a near-by



TAKING SECTION NEAR MOUTH OF ABBOTT

house and greeted us with a cheerful "good-evening," (evening commences at noon hereabouts.) From the shade of the buttonwood he quizzed the Captain about the lock and dam scheme, with which he recognized our connection. He was anxious to develop his coal mines, and plunged into a long and enthusiastic encomium. Such coal was never seen, nor such quantities of it, nor such easy workings. He talked as if he were trying to persuade the government not to give up its plans, and he probably thought he was succeeding.

When we had reached mid-stream a heavy buggy and pair approached across the ledge of rock and plunged with unheard of jerking and twisting over the edge into the stream. The men inside were apparently used to it, for they managed not only to keep their seats, but to avoid being knocked on the head by the irons in the wildly swaying top. They pulled up near us, and I recognized Foster the drummer.

"Well," said he, "this is as far as you got, eh?"

"Yes, had to wait for that sick horse, you know."

"That's right, sure; how is he?"

"Oh, he's all right, standing yonder."

"Good. What's that you're doing, measuring the river, eh?"

"Yes, to find out how much water's flowing."

"Oh yes, I see. What's that thing--"

"Current-meter; shows how fast it goes," I said shortly.

"Well, well. See that, Jim? How does it work?"

But the Captain evidently bethought him

self of fighting fire with fire, and answered "Electricity. Where are you going?"

"Up through the mountains to Grundy. Does that little fish-tail thing--"

"To Grundy, eh? Pretty rough trip, isn't it? How do you go?"

"Right up Levisa. How does elec--"

"Well, you surely don't get much trade up through the mountains?"

"Oh, yes, there's good business in some of those little places."

"Pretty rough country, though, isn't it?"

"Sure, terrible-- just an awful country. And the roads-- why, there ain't any roads."

"That so? We're going up Russell Fork to the Breaks, and across the mountains to Tug Fork. Know anything about that?"

"Great Caesar, no! Don't believe you can do it! Guess you'll have to come around by Grundy."

"Well, maybe we'll see you there. Hope you'll find lots of business," and he turned to the survey again.

Foster's eyes glittered with questions but the Captain was already beyond earshot in the rushing water, so he yelled goodbye, and the buggy lurched and rolled across the boulders to the other shore.

"By George," said the Captain, "no wonder they don't want to rent buggies to drummers. Wonder how he got so far off the ford?"

"Guess the old chap on shore sent him wrong, just to see a drummer get jostled."

We finished the section, getting a picture of the operation with the assistance of a passing boy to press the button; and the expedition remounted. The horses had seemed rather anxious to reach the water, as though

thirsty, and when halted in midstream, plunged their noses in eagerly, then stopped short, took a few small mouthfuls, and sniffed about suspiciously. The same thing had happened at various fords and streams, and had been attributed to the mud, or various similar causes. Now we realized that they had really drunk little or nothing since leaving Louisa, not a quarter of what a horse usually takes in warm weather. Evidently they didn't like the water in this country, perhaps because it was a little hard, and it began to be a question whether their dislike was so great as to prevent them from drinking enough water to keep in good condition. Until they showed some ill effects there was nothing to do, but it remained an anxiety.

A mile to the south on the east bank Prestonburg lay warm and still in the afternoon sun. It was a neat and pretty place of several hundred people, with lots of flowers and trim little door-yards, much better kept than Louisa, but we had no business there and were tempted to stop. In fact, the Captain did stop for a moment; while lopeing Frank stumbled and fell to his knees with a crash. But no damage was done. Hardly a soul was visible as we pushed along three or four blocks of the sandy street nearest the river, and forded again beyond the south end of the town to take another short-cut on the west bank. The road led back into the country up a little streamlet, across a hill to a branch of Bull Creek, down this to the main stream and up a branch on the other side, and over another divide to the head of a runlet which led directly to Hall's Ford on the river.

The few households along the way were much



AN EARLY SETTLER, NEAR HALL'S FORD.

interested in a pipe-line which was being put through from some newly discovered petroleum wells on Beaver Creek to Whitehouse. It was laid on the surface, in a beeline, stopping for nothing, whether woods, hills or cliffs, making a clean sweep through everything. The people were much excited over a work of such magnitude, the wealth of the promoters, and the new fortunes they would coin in the scheme. They all agreed it was a great thing for the country, though it was hard to see how it benefited anyone unless there was a chance of finding oil on his land.

There was confusion here in asking the way, as some insisted that Laven lived at Alphoretta, not Hall's Ford. It finally appeared that the neighborhood was known indifferently as Laven's, Hall's Ford (real name), Alphoretta (map name), and Dwale, (post office). We arrived at all four at five-thirty.

There was no trouble in finding Laven's. He kept a prosperous-looking store by the Ford, and his house was perched behind on the bluff overlooking the river. Early as it seemed, with the sun still high, supper was finished, and the house was in some confusion because of illness, but they finally offered to take us in, and we accepted, not knowing where else to look. A pair of mules was turned out of the rickety stable on the edge of the bluff, and the horses turned in and given a small feed of new corn, and a suspicion of grass bedding to cover the mire in the stalls which they promptly ate up. Pending supper they showed us to a large room on the ground floor-- there was only an attic upstairs. Here were a walnut bedstead and

bureau, a trunk and various nic-nacs and bits of ornamental furniture, culminating in two or three very fancy lamps. These all refused to burn, but that was unimportant, their function being to decorate. There was a strip of porch looking up-stream and into the back windows of the store from which we watched the sunset and observed the neighborhood. It was not over-attractive. There was a meager grassy dooryard, bounded by a shaky paling; outside, the clay of the bluffs was worn and washed into unsightly hollows and ridges. Pigs wandered about and crowded into the stable-doors, blocked up with bits of fence-rail, stealing the horses' corn and scaring them half to death. We drove them off, and from the stable looked down on the ford, where a team or two crossed, and a few cows were driven to water. On the east bank lights began to glimmer in three or four houses, and then supper was ready.

Mrs. Laven waited on the table, weary but cheerful, between whiles fanning off the flies and telling of the boy's illness.

"Yes suh, he's been right sick, but the doctah says he's some bettah today, and I reckon if he has a good night, he'll soon be all right. He's got the fevah. Oh, theah's a sight of sickness round heah now, 'count of its being so dry. The wells all get low, and the water's bad. Theah's some of the neighbors coming in to watch tonight."

The supper was good; fried chicken, beans, biscuits (here, as always, brought on "hot and hot") fried apples, honey, etc. She urged us to eat as personal guests. "Have some mo' chicken-- no? Then take out some of this honey, it's right good." There was no

lack of appetite, and the table was well cleared. Afterwards Mr. Laven made ready our bed by stripping off elaborate "pillow and sheet shams" and expressed great interest in our trip.

"Oh yes, I know that country. It's mighty rough up theah, but it's pretty, suah. I go up theah frequent on business, and if the boy was only well, I'd go right along with you tomorrow."

But even he could give us no hope of being able to cross the mountains to Tug Fork, and we turned in almost convinced that a long detour would be necessary.

It was not a restful night. The bed was made mountain fashion, and I spent ten minutes hunting for the other sheet, not knowing that one was the regular outfit, with unlimited quilts above. We "caught on" finally, and settled down in underclothing, after the universal custom (there was no room in our saddle-bags for such fripperies as night-clothes,) and tried to dismiss futile conjecture as to the cleanliness of the quilts. The Captain, having had a long day after a short night, soon gave a fine example of slumberous acquiescence, and I was about to abandon myself likewise to a delicious sense of rest regardless of circumstances, when a fearful din arose outside. Pigs grunted and squealed, horses squealed and kicked, and we rushed forth in scant attire to quell the tumult. The protesting pigs were turned out of the stalls, and sundry fence-rails, poles, and bits of cord-wood pressed into service to block their ingress, and secure the nervous horses. It was amazing how they seemed to hate those pigs.

Peace restored, and sleep once more approaching, mysterious noises became audible through the house. Subdued voices murmured here and there, stealthy footsteps went to and fro, and now and then a faint light flashed through the cracks around the door. It was most mysterious, and rather exciting. But the voices grew gradually louder, and we were edified by bits of gossip, comments on the weather, etc. Politics soon commenced, and a brilliant debate followed, destroying all pretense of cautiously lowered voices. Then came a troubled moan, and an inarticulate exclamation, followed by a woman's voice.

"Pore child, he can't get no sleep, noway!"

It was the neighbors, watching with the sick boy, eight or ten of them stuffed into his air-tight, lamplit room, wrangling over candidates, and sympathetically wondering why he lay uneasily awake! And they kept it up all night, too,-- at least until I went to sleep.

But before that blissful consummation one more annoyance arrived in the form of those rapacious little beasts which so rejoice in fresh and juicy victims. Why one should feel more repugnance for them than for any other biting insects is not plain, but nobody loves them. The Captain had sniffed suspiciously at the bed, and thrown back the covers, but it is hard to catch them napping, and only when use had made other disturbances ineffective did they emerge from their fastnesses and descend upon us. It was too much. I leaped out of bed, dressed completely and carefully, and lay down on the floor across the room. The Captain chuckled sleepily:

"Don't you suppose they can crawl across the floor? You'd better stay here. There's something soft to lie on anyway."

There seems to be a limit to one's capacity for discomfort. At last, well on in the small hours, we slept, and knew no more till daybreak, when we counted up damages and compared notes.

TO PIKEVILLE.

TUESDAY
AUGUST 25th.,
1900.

LAVIN'S
TO
PIKEVILLE,
KENTUCKY.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
23 MILES.

CHAPTER IV.



A NATIVE OUTFIT

CHAPTER IV.

Even a really good breakfast hardly compensated for the night, and when Laven placed the bill at a dollar apiece, I begged off. These rates would speedily empty the purse. On the ground that I was not an agent nor an officer, but a mere stranger sight-seeing, in some danger of running out of cash, he compromised on seventy-five cents, eighteen cents a meal, and we departed hardly knowing whether we had been overcharged by a grasping native, or had meanly jewed down a deserving man.

It was a sleepy and somewhat dispirited pair that forded the river and set off up the east bank. Would the money hold out? Would the horses suffer from the small feeds that we must give them of the new corn, and could they stand the rough country and poor stables, and what would happen if they always refused to drink? Would there be anything to eat in the mountains? Of course there would be no roads at all, everybody said so. And how could we possibly get along with only an hour or two of sleep in these inhabited beds? The climax came three or four miles up stream, on missing my belt. It was quite superfluous (uncovered suspenders helped to make us more homelike and acceptable to the natives.) And it was not valuable, and to waste two hours returning for it was not to be thought of. Yet I was distinctly irritated

when the Captain pointed this out, and the cavalcade proceeded in gloomy silence for several miles. But even weary spirits could not withstand such a gorgeous day and cheerful road. Close to the east bank it swung along above the winding stream, which flashed and glittered in the fitful breeze. Great buttonwoods by the road-side made cool and welcome resting places, and the wooded hills rose high on every hand. So when the obvious scheme suggested itself of writing Laven to mail the forgotten belt to Lousia, peace of mind was quickly restored, and the remainder of the morning was properly enjoyed.

We were to pass Laynesville, ford just beyond at the mouth of Mud, and take a section. It soon became evident that no one had heard of Laynesville, but Mud Creek was well known, and we reached it without having seen the suggestion of a village anywhere. Evidently Laynesville was a myth or a memory, or perhaps an anticipation.

Just below the mouth of Mud was "Hatcher's," a goodly group of buildings, including a prosperous store, in charge of a round-faced and energetic young man, who sent the nags to the stable and promised us dinner with a cheerful vim which suggested Yankee alertness rather than southern indolence. Two or three idlers in the store were discussing the big rise in the river (some two feet overnight) wondering what steamers would be coming up, and whether so-and-so would get his raft of railroad ties down to Whitehouse.

The Captain's object was to record low-water, and this rise made the measurement purposeless, but once started he must proceed, and we made the section. It was somewhat more

exciting than usual. A cold and turbid flood sped downstream, in some places nearly up to the shoulders, and the effort to keep a footing was complicated by the necessity of holding note-book, watch, tape, etc, well above the water. The cool bath was refreshing, however, and we emerged for dinner in pretty good shape but for the Captain's headache,--result of two short nights and long days.

At the table was a goodly company and a noble dinner, concluded by really acceptable pastry. For once we paid the inevitable quarters with a mind at ease. It seemed fairly certain now that town prices would exhaust the cash, but for such meals it would be worth while to send for more. Just how money could be sent up here was not apparent, but that was a detail unworthy post-prandial consideration. A long ride and a good meal rather dull the reasoning powers, and there was comfortable shade on the front porch, overlooking the river, and silence, but for the murmur of the water some thirty feet below. There were gorgeous silver maples on the edge of the bluff, overhanging both house and river, and towering high into the still air. We tipped our chairs against the wall and absorbed wisdom from Mr. Waldeck of Lousia, waiting here to see if this "swell" in the river was large enough to start some lumber rafts down. He was a goodly person of some two hundred pounds, with a broad and flowing beard, and mind and sympathies to match. "I always give my mare twelve years of cohn--she earns it," glancing down at his ample frame. "And I always see her fed myself, too. You can't trust any of 'em. Go out after dinner and find a few dry cobs in the feed-

box, and your horse whickering-- you know he hasn't been fed, but what can you do? Just pay up and get out. Going to Pikeville to-night, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you go to Williamson's Hotel. They've got a Virginia darcy for hostler there, and he'll treat 'em right; I've watched him."

He quite enjoyed the tale of our visitors the night before. "Yes, you'll find 'em, every now and then. I'll never forget one night I spent up Mud Creek here. Bill Garnet was with me, and we got in late. They gave us one of the beds in the spare-room, and everybody being asleep, we slipped in quite-like. By George, suh, we hadn't any mo' than pulled up the quilt when they began. You know, it's a fact they're terrible bad in spare beds, I reckon because they have to wait so long between meals they get almighty hungry, and that time they were certainly awful. There seemed to be just plumb thousands of them, all over you at once. Bill, he thought maybe they were fleas, never having seen so many at once, but I says, 'No, they don't ever jump, they just crawl; I know 'em.' Well, I stood it all I could, not wishing to make any disturbance, 'count of the folks being asleep in the other bed, but in about ten minutes it got too much. I struck a match and threw back the quilt, and that bed was just black with 'em, scuttling off to get away from the light! Bill didn't say anything, but when I got up, he did too, and we got dressed and slipped down the road about a mile to a house I knew and knocked 'em up. They asked what was the matter, it being so late, and I said that we

had stopped farther up, but it was so crowded with company that everybody was uncomfortable and we came away. They didn't say anything more, but I reckon they knew what the company was." he chuckled.

The sun beat fiercely down, the wilting maple-leaves hung motionless, and the shady porch was very comfortable, but we pulled ourselves together and started. "Better stay on the west side," said Waldeck. "That road's not used much, but it's shady, and the stage-road just catches the afternoon sun." This sounded very pleasant, and the facts proved even pleasanter. It was an ideal horse-back road, winding about among steep, high hills, through the cool shade that nothing but fine old timber can give. There were deep ravines, and slopes so steep as scarcely to hold timber, with the road skirting the ledges or cut into the hillsides. Sometimes a stirrup fairly overhung depths that were startling, and through all the tumbled roughness the road held its even grade up to the head of Hurricane Creek and down a brooklet to the river a mile or so below Pikeville. It was very shady and pretty and interesting.

One more section here completed the work on the Levisa Fork, and we rode into Pikeville with a buoyant sense of duty done, mountains near, and fun commencing. Pikeville was a sort of jumping-off place, beyond which route and schedule were to be governed by photographs and circumstances up to the Breaks, across the mountains, and down the Tug to Williamson, a station on the Norfolk & Western Ry., where the next river measurement was scheduled.

It was rather an attractive town, of a

thousand or more, with busy stores and several hotels. At Williamson's were the trusty Virginia hostler, an effusive welcome from a somewhat tipsy manager, and a sumptuous beef-steak supper, served with napkins and silver-plated ware! The Captain was ^{not} enthusiastic about the latter, but it was undeniable beef-and the only beef in prospect for some time to come. What if it was of that ragged class whose tenderness is due to unlimited pounding? I ate a week's supply.

Pikeville's outlet to the world is through Williamson, whither runs a daily stage and a sort of messenger express service, whereby I expressed the current-meter to the Captain's name in care of the N. & W. express agent, there to await our arrival from the woods. It would never do to take that mysterious canvas case into the mountain cabins.

The Captain found Lousia acquaintances, and we gleaned much contradictory information about the mountains. The general opinion rather verged towards the possibility of crossing them, one man even roundly declaring that he had been across, but no one was particularly encouraging about getting down the Tug to Williamson. We were content if it was possible to cross the mountains. So long as a horse could pass, the rougher the better for interest and novelty, and we turned in well satisfied with the prospects. There was a gorgeous and comfortable brass bed; the Captain's sinister suggestions about the populous condition of hotel furniture proved unwarranted; and early breakfast time arrived almost before we knew it.

TO THE BREAKS.

CHAPTER V.

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 26th.,
1900.

PIKEVILLE
TO
MULLINS'
NEAR
THE BREAKS
IN
VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
30 MILES.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER V.

It proved a fine sunny morning, and seven o'clock found us fording again to the east bank, on well-rested and well-groomed horses, and with delightfully uncertain plans. "Elk-horn City" was twenty miles away, less than a day's journey. Beyond were the Breaks and the wilderness of trackless mountains. From now on it was to be "go as far as possible and stop at the first house," and this Wednesday night we resolved to spend within reach of the Breaks.

The hills rose higher and steeper on every hand; the road was good; we were well-rested and beef-fed for the first time in several days; and there was but one fault to find with the universe. The over-zealous hostler had re-opened a partly healed scratch on Frank's side, and no combination of lashings would keep the girth from rubbing it. After several futile attempts and vexatious delays we changed horses, the girth of the Colonel's saddle being somewhat different from the Captain's, and the arrangement proved quite satisfactory.

For three miles the road ran through the woods along small streams, and then followed the east bank of the river to the Breaks. It was a well-used highway, at least on that day. Pike County Court was opened, and a stream of people passed townwards in pairs and groups,



— PICTURESQUE BIT OF ROAD ABOVE PIKEVILLE

eagerly discussing the pending cases, but none so absorbed as to omit the universal greeting, "Good morning, gentlemen," (never "Howdy,") Some walked, but most were mounted, if even on a gray and tottering mule, while there was no lack of fairly decent horses. There was a sprinkling of women, usually decked in calico and often on a gated mule (much in favor for toughness and agility) and once or twice, a rickety carryall rattled by crowded to the steps with women and children. It seemed as if the whole population of the county must be on the road, hurrying through the dust and heat to the incomparable bliss of seeing and perhaps helping in the settlement of the neighbors' quarrels, and incidentally collecting a stock of gossip for the winter.

After a few miles we paused to rest and unlimber the camera for a picturesque bit of road, and were overtaken by a seedy hack which proved to be the Elkhorn stage from Pikeville. The two passengers were in no hurry, so the driver, sociable soul, drew up and talked over the entire trip with us.

"Well now," said he, finally, "it's plumb lucky I met you--all here. Now, I'll just tell you. You'd better push right on tonight to Brown's, up Goose Creek. He's a cousin of mine; just you tell him my name, and he'll look after you, and you won't be but about four miles from the Breaks in the morning. Or-- I d'know-- maybe you'd better get a little nearer. You might go to Jim Johnson's, he's a right clever fellow, and you could get one of his boys to go along and show you the way tomorrow. Oh yes, you'll be glad you went. It suah is a plumb sight up around the

Breaks."

He continued to ramble on quite aimlessly about people and places until our indifference and the impatience of his passengers grew too great to ignore, whereupon he gathered up his reins with a cheery "Good-bye, gentlemen, and a pleasant ride," and rattled off.

The river was growing narrower and livelier up here, and the road ran close above the high steep bank, looking down on beautiful stretches of water with wooded shores, and occasionally a great raft of three-foot poplar logs in a quiet pool, waiting for a swell sufficient to carry it downstream. About ten o'clock the mouth of Russell Fork appeared, whence the Levisa trended eastward, forded by the Elkhorn road. On the bank was a bashful pair who might almost have been suspected of eloping. The man held a mule, and stopped the Captain with a confused request to "lead him back across."

"How's that? Where do you want him to go?"

"Why, suh, he belongs to that lady yondeh. She loaned him to us to git oveh the fo'd and now we'd like you to take him back to her."

"Oh, I see, certainly," and the mule was soon restored to a brown and wiry little old woman. Refusing help, she led him reluctantly within two or three feet of a low bank, made a spring, and landed with admirable balance on her saddle-- the ordinary "Kentucky spring," with one stirrup shortened, the pommel serving for a horn. The mule pattered off briskly; we kept alongside and talked. She was from Elkhorn, but knew nothing beyond, and it was nearing noon, so the discussion turned mainly

on possible places for dinner. Even here she was somewhat vague, and we finally stopped at a little vine-covered house by the roadside to try our luck, while she pushed on.

The man who answered our knock was in a curious state of indecision. "No," said he, "I reckon we couldn't hardly get you no dinner-- my wife's right sick."

"Oh, that's too bad. Do you know anybody along here that could?"

"No, I reckon theah ain't anybody right along heah." We were about to ride on, but he called, "Just wait a minute, gentlemen," and disappeared. After a little he came back and asked us in. My wife says she reckons maybe she can get you up something, if you'll take a share with us." It was either a scheme to make a poor meal acceptable, or an imposition on a sick woman, and we rode on.

Soon after, a wayfarer directed us to Coleman's at the mouth of Marrowbone, where we dismounted about twelve, to find their dinner a thing of the past. But Mrs. Coleman, round and cheery soul, volunteered to get us something, so we gladly unsaddled and led the warm and weary beasts to comfortable quarters and a good feed in the well-kept log barn. One of the sons went to the field for corn (the crop was still seasoning on the stripped stalks) saying we would find "plenty of roughness" in the first stall, and thus at last that mystery was solved. Roughness was the carefully cured blades of corn-fodder made into bundles. The tops are stacked in the field as coarse fodder.

On the front porch children were shelling beans and sorting vegetables for drying and pickling, and a stubbly-bearded man leaned

against the wall and discouraged conversation. At least that was the impression he gave, so we sat silently observing the neat and comfortable house, and the unkempt and foot-worn dooryard which was only redeemed from slovenliness by great bunches of flaming coxcombs.

It became a peaceful, almost drowsy wait, broken by one exciting incident-- the escape of an enormous sow from the barnyard, and wild efforts to chase her back. Finally a talented young man went into the barn and impersonated (vocally) a hungry pig eating dinner, with interludes of weird falsetto cries which seemed to be alluring, for the sow trotted quietly back to prison. Then the family court held a fruitless investigation into the problem "Who left the gate open?" and dinner was announced.

There were delicious remnants of stewed chicken, with thick cream gravy, and everything to match. To be sure, the large piece I picked out, shrouded in gravy, proved to be a claw, but perhaps there is some special virtue in claws. I did not investigate, quite content with the familiar charm of sidebones, sweet potatoes and delicious biscuits. The service was remarkable for silver-plate and napkins, and Mrs. Coleman sat with us in the intervals of bringing fresh biscuits, fanning away the flies and talking. She had evidently been a belle not many years before, and was still handsome in a comfortable way, and vivaciously interested. She discoursed of her housekeeping, the pickling and preserving that had kept her busy for weeks, and of the neighbors, and our trip, and the Breaks.

"Oh yes, you will surely be interested

there. I went once, and had dinner on top of the Towers. There was a split in the rocks up there about three feet across that went down to the bottom-- yes sir, it was that deep you couldn't bear to look down-- and what did I do but jump over it! Well, I was an active young thing, reckon I wouldn't do it now."

"Where would be a good place to stop over a day or two?"

"Well, there's a sight of right pleasant folks up on Grassy; I used to live there, and it was surely a pleasant neighborhood. I'd like to go back there again. Now there's Bob Cantrell-- he's a cousin of mine-- you tell him I sent you, and he'll take you in and treat you right-- you and your horses. You want to get a good place to stop; they're all nice people, but the fare! Oh, parties come back here from the Breaks, and says, 'Mrs. Coleman, we want you to give us something to eat; we are so hungry!' Used to be, too, not so long ago, it wasn't right safe to stop in any house you came to up there; it was a rough country, sure. And it is yet, back into the mountains a little way, and over on Tug Fork, mighty rough country. But you go to Bob Cantrell's, and he'll make you comfortable."

We paid seventy-five cents; "Because I didn't rightly get no dinner for you, and I'm afraid you didn't get much to eat." By the time the horses were saddled she had primed her husband with all sorts of additional information about stopping places. Our heads were fairly swimming with pointers, but we took it all in with decent gravity, and were about to escape when the good soul called us back again. "Jim says he really don't rightly know whether Swinney lives where I told now



RUSSELL FORK ABOVE MRS COLEMAN'S

or not-- he may have moved-- but Ben Jordan up the road there, he'll tell you. See him, building a pig-pen? Say, Jim, you run along with 'em and tell Ben what they want, hurry now! Goodbye, gentlemen, you'll enjoy the Breaks, I know, and I hope you'll get a comfortable place to stop,"

Ben Jordan didn't seem to know much after all, but he was glad of an excuse to knock off work and started a most animated discussion about anything and everything with Jim. We withdrew as soon as decency permitted, and were rather glad to find ourselves still untrammelled by a fixed destination. It seemed certain that every family within five miles of the Breaks had by now been recommended, and almost every one had been the subject of a warning against "rough people," "wild lot," and so forth. Evidently family connection counted for everything, and as we could quote the instructions of anyone's relatives, "just tell 'em I sent you," it seemed that the whole country was ready to welcome us with open arms. And it was a fertile and pleasant land. Mrs. Coleman's word and personality vouched for that. What could be more comfortably pastoral than "Grassy Creek?"

Our road that afternoon was a path of pleasantness. Close above the swift little Russell Fork it ran, often closely shaded, with the most charming vistas of woods and hills-- far blue crests against the sky that suggested mountains. In the distance one long straight line rose gradually from the mass and stretched away south-west with a clean bold front like a mighty billow about to break. It was Pine Mountain, of the Cumberland range, which is the state boundary,

reaching sixty miles from the Breaks to Tennessee. Our goal was in sight.

It was a lonely, almost solemn ride-- a quiet progress between silent hills up a deserted road. The afternoon was clear as a bell, and so breathlessly still that when the horses were stopped the ear was oppressed by the weight of silence, and welcomed the distant murmur of running water, or the faint creak of a saddle-girth or the twitter of a forest bird. Once a squirrel suddenly chattered from a tree beside the road, and the horses fairly jumped.

One couple only passed along the road, an odd pair. A man went ahead on a hurrying mountain horse, bearded, unkempt and strangely taciturn, offering no greeting. Behind hurried a woman, a stalwart slattern, astride a barebacked mule, her hair streaming, her limbs swinging bare and mud-splashed beneath a scant calico skirt. Without a glance they went their way in hasty silence, leaving the day more quiet and solemn than before.

We pushed on steadily toward our indeterminate goal, the great Cumberland range rising ever higher in the landscape. At last we rounded a curve and it lay fair before us, a mighty snow-drift of rock with clifflike crest, sweeping gracefully down to the "bot-toms" of the Elkhorn Creek. This flows eastward along the mountain to meet the westward current of Russell Fork at Elkhorn City whence the two turbulent mountain torrents flow northward as one peaceful commerce-bearing stream. We took a photo here in the light of the setting sun, throwing purple shadows on the Cumberland Foot-Hills, in the valley of the Elkhorn. On our right lay Elkhorn City



FOOT HILLS OF THE CUMBERLAND RANGE BELOW ELKHORN

but the few dingy huts are hidden by the providential foliage of some fine old beeches.

Elkhorn City offered no inducements to linger-- a bare half dozen little houses scattered about the creek. After a few minutes' debate we decided on Noah Mullins' house as nearest to the goal of those recommended, and gladly turned up the fair road to the Breaks. It rose rapidly to keep on top of the bluffs, which promised soon to be cliffs, and after a half-mile commanded a beautiful view down the Russell, and up the Elkhorn. The winding streams, with their placid pools and great boulders made a fitting center to a sort of antiphonal chorus of tree-clad hills, swelling and sinking, now on this side, now on that, until they faded away in the haze of the approaching sunset. If photographs could record the quality of light, one could forgive the lack of color! A picture which would recall the clear sky, the cool deep shadows, and the ineffable subdued clarity of that still afternoon light, would be worth a fortune.

However, time pressed, so with an inadequate impression in the camera, and a sadly fallible if vivid one in mind, we followed the road to the Breaks. Higher and higher it rose, now perched on a sheer rocky cliff, now on a still more nerve-trying slope of seemingly impossible steepness, never fenced, narrow and sharply curving. Hardly the road for strangers after dark, and the sun was just setting! Still higher climbed the way, still steeper the cliffs, and narrower the bed of the boulder-fretted stream out of sight below. Suddenly the meaning of a mysterious phrase struck me; everyone had been talking of the "High Narrs--" of course this was the



THE VALLEY OF ELKHORN "IN THE LIGHT OF THE SETTING SUN"

place, the High Narrows! Good name, and a soul-stirring scene, by all we could see in the dusk.

But the pressing need was shelter. We looked for Grassy Creek in vain, likewise for inhabitants to question. The country was as innocent of houses or clearings as the wastes of the sea, and with the fading daylight the road also petered out. Wheel tracks had long since disappeared, and the barely traceable path seemed about to do likewise when we found ourselves in a bit of a tributary valley, down from the heights, and approaching a saw-mill and house. The road was plainer once more; this must be Grassy Creek, said our hopes, possibly this may even be Mullins' house.

No one appeared at the mill, which stood near the road, and the house was isolated by fences. We yelled inquiries for Mullins. No answer, but the house was unmistakably occupied, and we kept on. At last a man stuck his head out of a window and vouchsafed a sort of grumble about "school-house-- big and white-- you can't miss it-- next house," so we followed the shadowy road looking for the white school-house behind every tree, confident that it was not more than a quarter-mile at farthest.

But the quarter-mile passed; two of them; a mile, and the darkness was complete, and still no structure of any kind. But there had been only one road, and our informant, if terse, had been fairly definite. The tired and disgusted horses were induced to proceed. We crossed a stream and a foot-path leading up it to a gloomy shanty which might have been Mullins', but we trusted to the school-



NEAR THE MOUTH OF ELKHORN

house, and went on. The road, badly gullied, turned up a hill-side, and after fifteen minutes' scramble, leading the weary beasts, (it was too dark and rough to stay in the saddle) it finally broke up and disappeared. The Captain turned up one branch, I another, but both were vague and threatened to go out of existence. It seemed folly to go on. The little footpath might lead to information or shelter, so we turned the horses downward again and struggled back over the gullies. I ran up to the shanty and found a large party stuffed into a little one-roomed log shack. There was no stable, nor sign of provender-- indeed, it would have been impossible to get a horse up the washed-out path. But they were courteous as usual, quieted the vociferous dogs, and regretted their inability to do more than tell us the way, which was straight onward, by the school-house. Questioned as to the forks of the road, they assured me they knew of no forks-- the way was just straight ahead, uphill all the way, by the school-house, and that was the last word, except that if we could not get in at Mullins' they would be glad to do what they could for our comfort.

So back once more the poor horses plodded, now not only doubly weary and disgusted, but evidently convinced we were crazy. At the forks we took the one which led most nearly straight on, and some ten minutes later emerged in a dim clearing, with another plain fork in the road. On closer scrutiny a house appeared to the right, and we concluded that branch was a lane, but shouted to make sure.

There was no light nor sound, so, concluding everybody was in bed, we made the woods

resound with the wildest chorus we could command. Again and again we whooped and yelled, convinced the people must now be awake, and angrily wondering why they would not answer. We were hardly prepared for the voice that finally spoke from the shadows of the porch, quite in an undertone.

"Well, what do you-all want?" It was the contemptuous calmness of a dignified old gentleman rebuking a boisterous child; we were properly squelched, and meekly asked the way. "Straight on," he answered, and retired, shutting the door behind him.

One fork was as little straight on as the other, so we reverted to the lane theory, and turned to the left. It was a dim and crooked way, which after a quarter of a mile turned resolutely back into the valley of the little shack. This could not be right, so back we turned to the forks and commenced to yell once more at the unresponsive house, this time in genuine anger. After fully as much noise as before, a woman appeared, and deigned to tell us that the right hand road was the one we wanted; to "foller that about a mile to the school-house, and then it's the fust house to the left."

A mile more! Indignation at the stupid indifference which could see us turn up the wrong road and say nothing was overwhelmed by wonder at the calm confidence of the man at the saw-mill, who had directed us with a wave of the hand to that mystery-girt, will-of-the-wisp school-house, protected by three good miles of forking road-ways! It is only charitable to suppose that none of them wished us to reach Mullins', on the theory that we must be government officers, and were to be

hindered by every means.

The top of the hill was achieved, at any rate, and the woods for the time were gone, so we jogged on much more freely. Even the horses seemed cheered by the more definite information, and in time a cornfield appeared, then a house, from which a few lusty yells brought the directions, "a little way farther, and turn to the left." A few steps more brought the school-house, and then a fork in the road, with the left branch leading over a bridge.

Fortunately, we stopped in time, for the bridge was unplanked, and did not show it in the darkness, a detail quite unregarded by the last informant. The ford was near, and just beyond a square bare house stood out against the sky. We wallowed into a marshy stream, and were barred by a worm fence, so the Captain held the horses while I proceeded against the house.

It was the picture of lonely desertion, but the dogs betrayed the occupants, a great flood of them charging from both sides. They seemed not inclined to go farther than the preliminary rush and half-hearted yelps and sniffings, but I kept a bold front and an eye to the rear, and pounded at the door. Nothing happened in response to blows and shouts, so I tried the back door, followed by the canine army, now growing bolder. Back door proving equally fruitless, I returned to the front, and "put in my best licks," with blood-curdling yells, and long pauses in which I wondered what the Captain thought of the delay. No one had the foresight to time this operation, but it seemed like an hour before there was a sign of life; then a furtive step

sounded softly in one of the side-rooms. More yells and fist-work which threatened the door finally produced a voice, ludicrously faint, but satisfactory.

"What do you want?" it piped from the far interior, and I was really puzzled to answer. After this gigantic effort to rouse the unseen forces it seemed tame to ask mere food and lodging-- we should have been on some more romantic and spirited errand-- but it was necessary to make it plain that our business was entirely commonplace and peaceful, and I managed to state enough of our plight to start a window open and bring a woman's head to the crack. She asked our names; much good they did her! But they were at least not those of sherriffs, and gradually my reiterated story began to tell. She closed the window, seemingly satisfied, and I waited for admission.

Alas! The minutes passed, and no sign nor sound from within. I concluded we must have been turned down, and commenced pounding again for one more chance, when the door unlatched, and through the crack a dim wrapper-clad figure appeared in the flickering glare of an oil lamp with no chimney. Then a dubious voice again asked who we were and what we wanted, and all the rest of the long catalog of questions. I answered as reassuringly as possible, if somewhat wearily, and the ultimate result was a request to come in and see Mullins, who was sick in bed, quite too sick to get up and wait on us.

I was taken to a big room, unceiled, furnished with two beds and a large safe, and I settled on a stool before a heavily mustached face muffled up in quilts. Another

lamp was brought and the light concentrated on me, and another catechism gone through, accompanied by rigid scrutiny. Until now the delay had been merely stupid, but I began to realize that we were objects of suspicion, and that Mullins was afraid of attack or arrest. He did not look very sick, certainly, but acted it out most circumstantially, even routing out a small boy to send to his coat for medicine. He told me all about his interview with the doctor, and then branched off on the story of his traveling adventures-- he had once been on the cars to Catlettsburg. Mrs. Mullins roused a baby from a seemingly sound sleep and jogged it into a nervous wail, telling me it was "pow'ful sick, so sick it can't hardly suck-- po' li'l thing." And the Captain waited.

Mullins worried through with his travels, and reverted with a wrench to the subject in hand. "Mandy, you go wake up Tom, will you, and he'll show the gentlemen the stable. I'm pow'ful sorry I can't wait on you, suh,-- I'm too sick to get up, suah."

"Why certainly, that's all right, and we're awfully sorry to bother you so late at night. But can't we find the stable ourselves?"

"No suh, Tom'll be here in a little. Mandy, you wake him, won't you?"

"Yes, suah, in a minute." She nursed the baby, sang it a nasal lullaby, and stowed it away in bed. Then she retired to the mysterious depths of the house, whence came muffled sounds of discord, then a call of "Florence, Florence!" with whispering and laughter, then what seemed to be a pillow-fight, and Mrs. Mullins returned, promising Tom in a minute.

The minute was considerably stretched, but after two or three more parental calls Tom appeared. The elaborate toilet which alone could excuse his delay consisted of a ragged shirt and weary trousers, in which he had probably been sleeping. He was told to light the torch.

"Wheah is it?"

"Right theah, by the fiah; was theah, anyhow."

"Don't see none now, must have been burnt up fer kinlins." He searched the room in vain.

"Well, you go up and make anotheh. And hurry up, Tom, the gentleman's waiting."

He climbed the ladder to the loft, and after a decent interval returned with a little fagot of fat-pine splinters, lit it, and led the way to the stables.

The Captain was still there, a revelation of patience. The fence which had checked us was the regular entrance, where each comer unlaid and relaid a panel. And so instead of building a gate, some of these families will generation after generation take down the heavy snake fence everytime they or others have occasion to enter their door-yard or their stables. The stable was one square room, tenanted by two mules. They were turned out, the doorways blocked with slabs, (no doors) and stakes driven in opposite corners to tether the horses. Roughness was stowed overhead, and we made a little excursion down the road to the cornfield for grain. Then back to the house, quite ready for the bed which must now be waiting.

But another inspection was necessary--Mullins had not yet seen the Captain, and we

were seated, scrutinized and questioned, while the long-suffering baby was nursed again, and Tommy fussed about the fire. Finally Noah must have expressed approval, for Mrs. Mullins rose, tucked away the baby between two young girls in an adjoining bed and departed, remarking that supper would be ready in a short time. Supper was somewhat unexpected in this "dead waste and middle of the night," (now about half past nine o'clock) but it was a welcome suggestion, even if it did involve more waiting.

Noah chattered on cheerfully, by the hour, it seemed, while dishes clattered and the frying-pan sizzled to the subdued murmur of excited children's voices. It was a great event to the family.

By the time supper was cooked, suspicion had been pretty well dissipated, and only native slowness remained, but that was sufficient to keep everybody astir for some time yet. A long dinner-table was crowded with various dishes, all mysteriously vague in the smoky light of a bare kerosene flame. We picked our way about with little enlightenment as to the items of the bill-of-fare, but much inward satisfaction. I drew only one notable blank, a large raw onion which looked like a potato. I particularly despise onions, but fearing to offend the mysterious sensibilities of the hostess, ate it and nearly enjoyed it, which speaks volumes for my hunger.

We rose with a contented sigh of anticipation of bed, but were led, alas! back to Mullins' room, to engage in twenty minutes of attempted conversation, while the children ate up what was left, and all hands washed the dishes.

Finally, in the end, Mrs. Mullins led the way to an adjoining room, where two boys were asleep in one bed and some more children in another (the house was alive with children.) The latter were sent up to the attic, and the bed turned over to us, with an invitation to help ourselves to the spare quilts piled up near by. One minute later we were sinking to sleep as comfortably as possible. No sheets, long-used pillows, unwashed quilts, a sprinkling of unwelcome insects, no ventilation save through cracks in the weatherboarding-- all these were trifles after a week's experience and a hard day's work. Surely, the deepest prejudices are but a thin veneer!

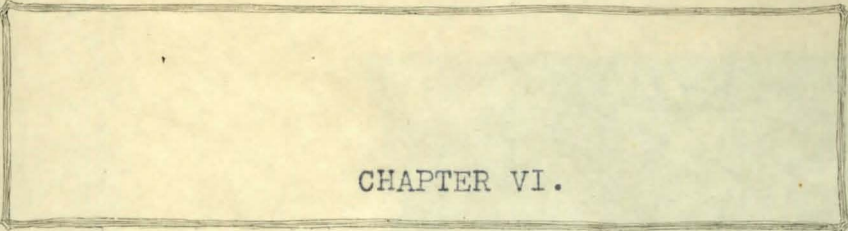
THE TOWERS.

THURSDAY
AUGUST 27th.,
1900.

MULLINS
TO
THE TOWERS
AND RETURN.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
5 MILES.

CHAPTER VI.



CHAPTER VI.

Morning brought a more cheerful aspect. Noah had recovered from his "illness" surprisingly. Breakfast was a feast (a Kentucky mountain feast, that is) at which Mrs. Mullins bloomed into pleasant converse and apologies for her hasty supper, and we responded with apologies for knocking up the family so late at night.

Outside, Noah bargained with a cadaverous gentleman whose family and worldly goods were piled on a mule-wagon in the road, and who wanted to rent a house. The importance of Mullins became apparent; he seemed to own half the houses in the county, and the uses of the enormous safe became evident. He was a bargainer, too, and though the stranger claimed connection on the ground that his wife had been a Taylor, third cousin of the Taylors in the next cove and second cousin to Governor Taylor, Noah held him to a good price, though the discussion was marked by elaborate courtesy on both sides.

We skipped the end of it, and tended the horses, which enjoyed the late rest, and extraordinary currying and brushing that we gave them.

Plate holders were nearly exhausted, so the Captain retired to the dark seclusion of half-a-dozen quilts (spread over him as he sat on the floor) and refilled them, nearly



THE TOWERS CAME INTO VIEW

dying of heat and suffocation. Camera, plates and a modicum of oatmeal, sugar and chocolate went conveniently in one pair of saddle-pockets, and we were off for the Breaks on foot, adroitly dodging the offer of a guide. The resulting suspicions that we wanted a chance to hunt illicit stills were well compensated for by a day of liberty.

A mile down the road (it seemed a much more respectable highway by daylight) the "Towers" came into view. In a long loop of the stream is an abrupt hill of some eight hundred feet, and from its top a double-faced cliff rises about five hundred feet farther, a mere knife-edge of rock, looking down on the stream on both sides. This was the focus of interest at the Breaks, and was said to be surmountable by one path only, which could not be found without a guide. But what was mere achievement to freedom and exploration?

It was only a mile or so to the Towers, but between, and a thousand feet or so below, was Russell Fork. The first stage of the journey was down a log-slide, straight, smooth, and precipitously steep. Half way down were some large boulders which occasionally checked a log, and a tangle of sticks had collected, great three-foot poplar trunks, sixteen feet long, barked and smoothed. They were deeply gouged and torn, and one could vividly imagine how they hurled themselves down, rolling, twisting and leaping end over end. Some of them were freshly cut, and it suddenly became evident that if the woodmen should resume work, there was a painful dearth of shelter from those ungovernable missiles. We hurried down, with one eye on the slope behind, the other on such large rocks and logs ahead



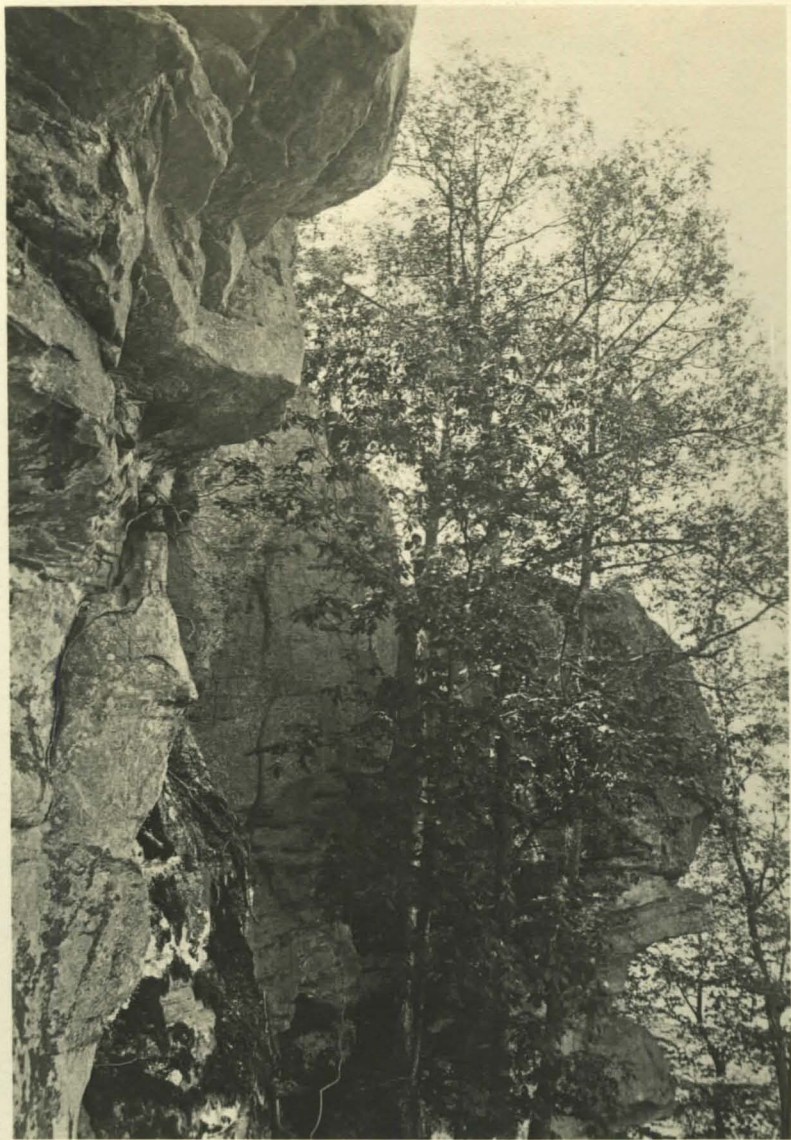
"HERE A SMALL STREAM"

as might make a refuge. It was not the smoothest going imaginable, but we made the river in record time, got out of the line of fire, and sat on a rock to recover.

Russell Fork is here a pretty little river murmuring through its stones, a sprinkling of huge sawlogs stranded here and there, though occasional great scarred boulders and high rock-strewn banks bore witness to its violence in proper season. We hunted stepping-stones, but found the volume of water considerable, even now. It was hardly possible to wade across, but we finally got there safely with the saddle-bags, and the day was hot enough to make the cool water feel quite delightful.

The hill beyond looked easy, but the sun beat in between the trees unmercifully, and after one unsuccessful attempt, we "stripped for action," leaving superfluous clothes, saddle-bags, etc. among the rocks, and struck uphill, burdened only by a camera and one plate-holder. To the base of the Towers was a rough steep climb (the country consists of piles of broken rocks) but nothing impossible appeared until we reached the base of the cliff. Here for a starter was a ledge about thirty feet high, with no break apparent in either direction but one impossibly steep gully, which was finally surmounted by the help of a fallen tree-trunk. Then the fun was strenuous. Ledge followed ledge so closely as to have the general effect of a perpendicular cliff, but trees grew here and there in the cracks, underbrush made hand-holds, and progress was steady, if slow, the main danger being that of dislodging a boulder to roll down on the man below.

But at last came what seemed like a final



" AN UNCOMMONLY SMOOTH BIT OF CLIFF "

check, a sheer cliff of forty or fifty feet, unbroken except by cracks between the strata, which ran diagonally upward. We cast about both ways for some distance without finding a chance to ascend, but were loath to give up, as there were glimpses of hill and river through the scattered trees which promised a gorgeous view. We sat and studied the face of the rock, and looked in vain for possible ladders among fallen trees near by. Suddenly the Captain jumped up.

"Well, there's no other way. I'm going up that ledge."

"Ledge! That's no ledge! It's only a crack! There isn't room for a rabbit to go up there."

"Yes there is, too. It's wider than it looks. Come on."

It was actually about six inches wide. There were occasional handholds above, all liable to give way without notice, as the cliff was smooth except where broken by the frost. It seemed absurd, but the Captain was halfway up, and I had to follow. While the ground was within jumping distance, it was possible to get on with comparative comfort, keeping one eye on a soft spot to light on. But as the ledge rose, progress became more ticklish and exciting. Six inches makes a commodious footpath on open ground, but when one side is defined by a nice smooth cliff, and the other reveals a goodly bunch of jagged rocks twenty or thirty feet below, one's attention must be kept strictly on business. I came to an unusually narrow place, with an uncommonly smooth bit of cliff above it, and protested.

"Say, look here, what's the use of all



" AMONG THE SHRUBBERY AT THE TOP "

this, anyway ? We don't have to go up here, and I think it's just rank foolishness. Even if we don't lose our nerve there's no telling when this whole ledge'll peel off with us." The Captain only grunted. "Besides, you know you're not under orders to go up the Towers, and if you have to stop and gather up my fragments it'll delay that survey, and you'll get into trouble."

But it was no use. He only shifted the camera further towards the cliff to balance, and we went on. Face to the wall, hands searching out the slightest projections and testing them well before depending on them, progress of a sort was possible. The ledge became broken and irregular after a time, leaving most unattractive gaps to straddle across. Handholds failed frequently, leaving precious little but faith to balance by, and while faith may be comforting, it's a mighty poor prop. But still, we worked along, till the ledge finally petered out altogether within reach of the shrubbery on top of the cliff.

The rest was easy, though it included some of the steepest and roughest climbing imaginable. Some fifteen minutes later we emerged on top, hot, breathless, thirsty and badly disheveled, but triumphant. It was said to be entirely impossible to climb the Towers except by the regular path, which we certainly had not found; therefore we had accomplished an impossibility, and were proportionately elated. And this sensation was decidedly encouraged by the view.

There are many higher mountains with wider prospects, but none I know of gives a more striking outlook. It is only about a



THE BIG SANDY TO THE NORTH FROM TOWERS

thousand feet from the water, but it falls almost straight to the river on both sides. The crest is a long curving "hog-back" reaching north-east into a deep fold of the river. At that end it fines down to a mere double-faced cliff, twenty or thirty feet across, and falling on either side sheer to the tree-tops on the hill-side several hundred feet below. It was uncommonly effective-- it felt so much like tight-rope walking, and we moved quietly, for fear the whole thing might topple over. It stood firm, however, and after a few minutes we stopped balancing, and looked about.

To the north a little brook trickled off around a corner, and it took five minutes to realize that it was really a mile or more of the Big Sandy, that the pebbles were as big as houses, and the handful of jackstraws where it went out of sight was a jam of huge poplar saw-logs. To the south we looked upstream past the face of the cliff; and eastward across the river men had begun to tumble great sticks of timber down the log-slide. Everything was faint and faraway in the still hazy air. The voice of the river was inaudible; the lumbermen hustling the logs into the chute with oxen and cant-hooks seemed as little and silent and busy as ants, - and only a muffled roar, like a faint suggestion of distant thunder accompanied the passage of a log down the incline. They went at first very slowly, then gathered speed, but never exceeded what at that distance seemed a dignified progress. Even when great boulders were dislodged, or trees knocked down, or the descending log rebounded from the solid rock with a sullen but not unmusical boom like a great muffled bell, - it all seemed done with

a sort of dignity, or even gentleness. But it was comfortable not to be in the way of that kind of gentleness.

It was beautiful and interesting, but scenery will not long take the place of food and drink, and when the two plates were exposed, the descent commenced. It is often harder to climb down than up, but in this case the menace seemed to be not to life and limb, but to the "records." Just above the fifty foot cliff the camera parted its carrying strap and started down alone. It made a package about a foot square and four inches thick, which struck a slope on its edge and began to spin like a wheel, whizzing down the smooth parts, and leaping obstructions like a greyhound. One last bound took it high over the fringing bushes, over the edge of the cliff, and down among the trees so far below that not a sound of its fall reached us.

"Everything smashed" was the only thought possible, and dismay banished caution in the descent. Lack of a camera would destroy the usefulness of the trip, to say nothing of the loss of our own souvenirs. I made some remonstrance to the Captain to the effect that breaking his neck wouldn't mend the camera, but he got down that cliff in no time, and I wasn't long behind. A rush down the hill and an eager search revealed the camera unscathed lying on a mass of dead leaves between two rocks. We could scarcely believe our eyes, but a minute examination revealed not even a broken plate in the plate-holder on the back of the camera.

We went on our way rejoicing down to the river, hunted up the saddle-bags, clothes, etc, and sat down to a delicious dinner of raw

oatmeal and sugar stirred in cold water, with a desert of sweet chocolate. Perhaps it doesn't sound good-- even the Captain shied a little beforehand, but it was delicious, all the same, especially after our previous meals of "fall-beans and grease." The scanty rations were made to last as long as possible, and then we lay back on the dead leaves in the checkered sunlight for a most acceptable rest. The log-rolling had ceased, and there was not a sound but the gentle gurgle and rush of the shrunken river. In the north-west the great Cumberland range showed blue and shimmering in the still warm air, and roused the Captain's light-sleeping ambition.

"Too bad we can't climb that-- certainly is too bad," said he meditatively. "Just think of the view."

"Oh, I don't know, it's only about three thousand feet high-- wouldn't be so very much."

"Yes it would too," he answered, rising on one elbow, "it's unique, it's all by itself, there are no hills north of it anything like that height, and when you can look down on a big stretch of picturesque country, what's the difference how far above the sea you are? I believe we'd better do it tomorrow!"

"No, sir, we've got to see the High Narrs tomorrow and take some pictures, and we can't take a day more time. We're considerably behind schedule now."

"By gum, that's so, but it certainly is a shame-- we ought to have gone today. Had a good climb, though, and we must get across country tomorrow sure."

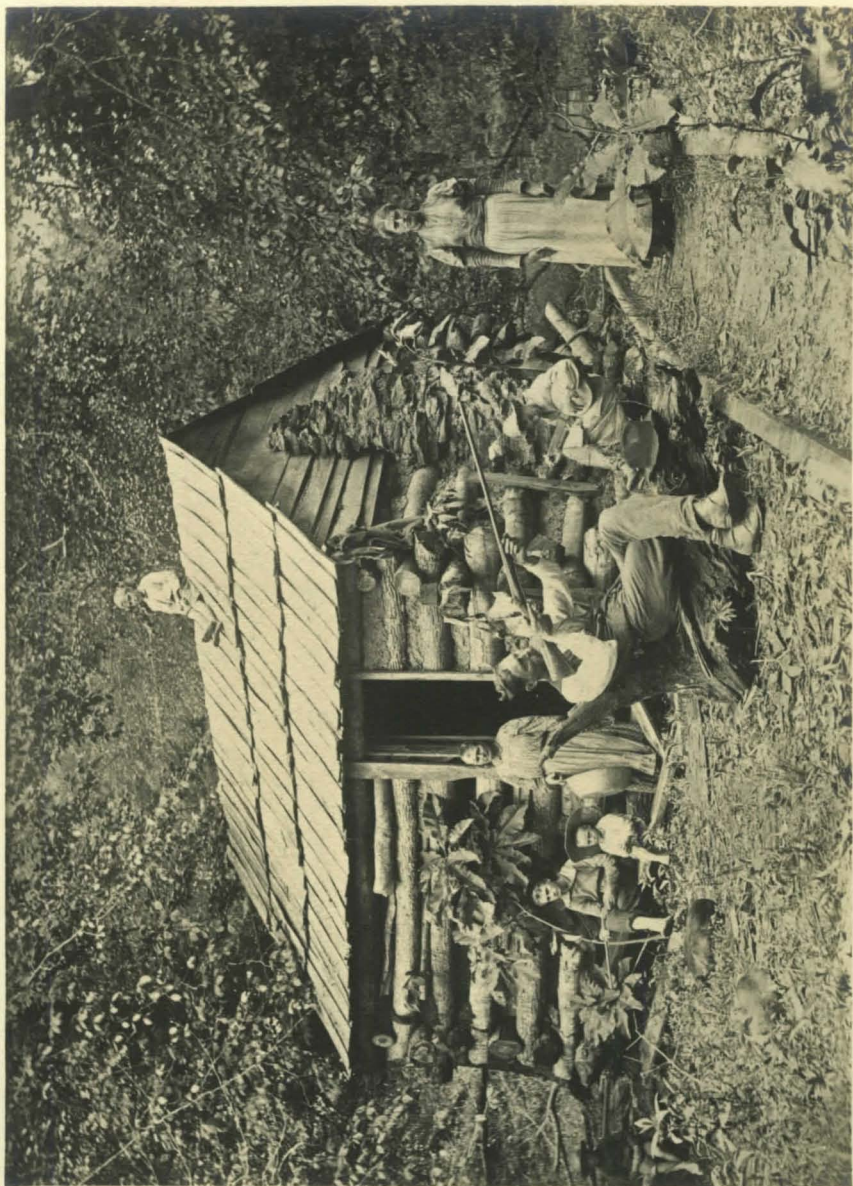
It was a hot scramble up that log-slide. The little gully in the center, facing the

declining sun, was a perfect hothouse, and we kept briskly on the move because log-rolling might be resumed. At the top there was a flicker of breeze from the east, and we sat down with great satisfaction, to cool, rest and take a final survey of the Breaks.

Supper was cooking when we reached the house, and the horses were eager for a bit of a turn. We afterwards fed them and sat down to a very decent meal. We sat on low benches that brought the edge of the table close to our chins; quite handy for scooping in the food, so that few vegetables not easily handled on the two tined forks were allowed to roll from our well greased knives. "Jes' help yo selves" said Mullins with a sweeping wave of his hand, "we done stan' on no ceremony heah, will yo have some of these sorg (sorgum) on yo beans? Help yo self to the cohn bread," and he illustrated how to do it by thrusting his hand down into the deep dish and hauling out a fist-full of the doughy stuff by the roots. It seemed that Noah and the house-hunting stranger had compromised their business by going on a squirrel-hunt together for the day, and the results were on the table, stewed tender, with cream gravy. Everyone enjoyed the novelty of fresh meat, even the baby, who had a whole head to himself, which he couldn't manage until his father offered to "bust" it for him!

Squirrels were usually scarce, he said, but about this season they began to scour the high ridges for beech nuts, travelling in immense droves, and sweeping the woods clean of food for another year.

The family appeared in force at supper, and with it the school-master, a young figure



THE PRESTON FAMILY, A MOUNTAIN HOME NEAR THE BREAKS.

of^a certain melancholy interest. In him we saw the first sign of the traditional southern mountaineer, sad-eyed and dreamy, secretly ambitious but unenergetic. He talked freely and intelligently, was interested in cameras, and pathetically proud that he knew a little about them. He and Noah's oldest daughter sang "mountain songs" for us. They were hymns that our grandmothers remember and sometimes sing as an echo of the long-ago, hymns still current, one may say fashionable, in these Kentucky woods. The execution was indeed remarkable. They each sang the air, an octave apart, with voices strained to the limit of pitch and volume. The higher and louder they could go the better, and the result was a quavering and doubtful concord of piercing nasal sounds, which constantly threatened to collapse, and which were raised to the high notes only by indomitable will.

"I reckon you-all neveh did heah any mountain singin' befo', did you?" asked Noah, in some doubt as to the effect on us. We hastened to compliment. "Oh yes, he responded more cheerfully, "yes, Florrie, she's 'counted a right sweet singer."

Concerning routes; at this short distance it seemed there was no difficulty in finding roads across the mountains as far as the Tug, but down that stream Noah didn't believe there were any roads to speak of,-- awful rough country, anyway. But distance, it seemed always lent a savage touch to the landscape, and untold difficulties to the way, and we had come to discount reports of anything over ten miles away. So after the Captain, by an hour's shuffling in the dark, had refilled all the plate-holders and stowed the precious

exposures securely, we turned in, content to know that there was at least a way across the mountains.

FRIDAY
AUGUST 25th.
1906.

WENT TO

THE HIGH MOUNTAINS

THROUGH TO

THE CHALK

TO

BIG ROCK.

VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE

TRAVELLED OF

15 MILES.

CHAPTER VII

THE "HIGH NARRS"
THE FOREST.

FRIDAY
AUGUST 28th.,
1900.

MULLINS'
TO
THE HIGH NARROWS,
THENCE TO
GREEN CHARLES
NEAR
BIG ROCK,
VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
19 MILES.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VII.

Next morning, Mullins, though as polite as possible, was not sufficiently anxious for custom to advise our return that night, but outlined a route to Big Rock on Levisa Fork, - a short day's journey, which would give good time to inspect the "Narrs." His bill for the two nights was hard to determine. After a good deal of polite deference on both sides I named three dollars as being somewhat above the usual twelve and a half cents a meal, in consideration of coming in so late. Mullins demurred, and finally on the Captain's suggesting that we had not taken dinner at the house on Thursday, we compromised on two dollars and a half, and departed amid mutual protestations of goodwill.

Back to the "High Narrs" the road seemed of course more open and passable by daylight, but even so it was quite sufficiently rough and unused. Down Grassy to the river we picked a way carefully through rivulets and among boulders, and then forgot the roadway in the scenery. Two hundred feet below, the river fretted its way through great piles of rocks and tangles of logs, its roar rising to us in a subdued and musical undertone. From it the sides of the valley rose abruptly, sometimes a very steep tree-clad slope, sometimes a bare slide of gravel and stones, often a rough cliff, so stratified and frost-broken

as to suggest mouldering masonry, and add a touch of old-world romance to the unkempt scene.

The road wound its way unfenced with the greatest nonchalance along the face of the cliff, and even the natives were forced to admit that it was "kinder mean." But the splendid glimpses of wooded mountain and rocky stream amply compensated. The fringing trees opened naturally into perfect picture frames, each enclosing a specially beautiful combination, and had not both plates and time been limited, we would have spent the day with the camera. As it was, we reached the "High Narrs" proper about ten o'clock, and hitched the horses for such a detailed examination as became a government exploring expedition.

The road here so far forgot itself as to run along a cliff which overhung the middle of the river. We crept fearfully down to the edge, and guessed the height to be three or four hundred feet. But the Captain possessed a watch and a calculating mind. He made me drop several stones over while he timed and calculated, and arrived at the disillusioning conclusion that one hundred and seventy-five feet was a good conservative estimate. It was a broken and picturesque spot, evidently much visited, for paths were worn to various prominent points of rock. Two hundred feet is no great height for a hill, or even for an isolated rock, but when you can crawl to the edge and see that you are actually overhanging space some distance outside the base of the cliff, you are open to quite respectable thrills.

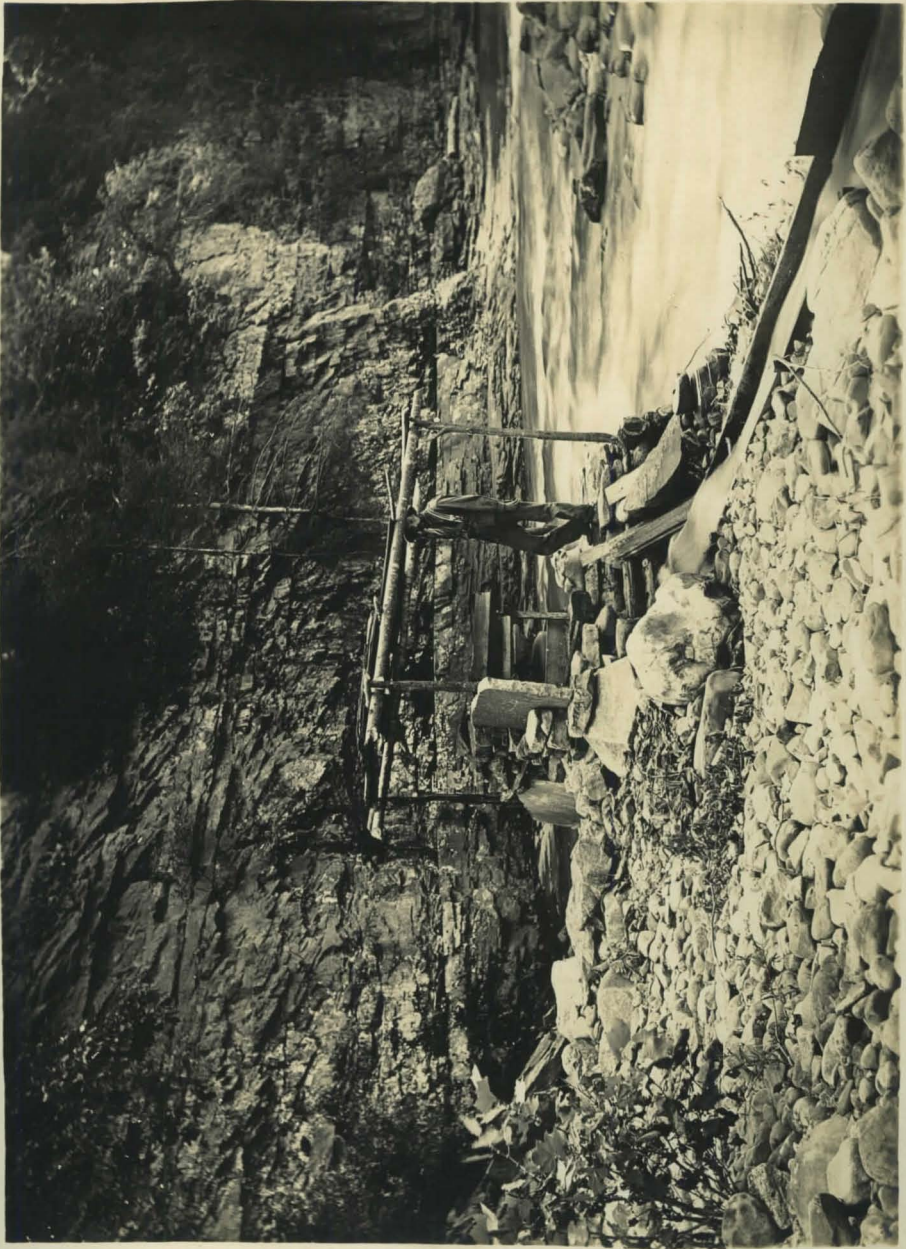
We scrambled about for some time, hunting a way to the base for a photo of this section



POTTER'S 'STILL POOL AND OVERHANGING ROCKS'

of the river, but finding none, remounted and pushed on down the road, to descend at a more practicable place and walk back. Within a short distance a foot-path appeared, down which, although it was steep and rough, we found it possible to lead the horses. The path very opportunely led upstream as it descended, and ended at a little one-roomed log cabin almost directly under the projecting rocks. There seemed to be a sort of ford here, and we tried to take the horses across, but, used to rough going as they were, they could not make it. The bed of the stream was simply a mass of rounded boulders, from a few inches to many feet in diameter, all confused or hidden by the rushing water. We couldn't afford to break the horses' legs, and turned back, thankful to get safely out again.

Then from the farther shore appeared an uncouth figure, of slouchy dress and cadaverous, ragged-bearded face, poling a nondescript flat-boat across the still pool above the ford. He proved to be Potter, recommended by several as an excellent man to stop with, -- branded by others as unreliable, unscrupulous, even blood-thirsty. Certainly a more harmless creature would be hard to imagine. He somewhat timidly offered to set us over, and seemed gratified and complimented when we accepted. He hung about the camera with a childish delight while the Captain got a very fair picture of the overhanging rocks. Near the ford, using the power of the rapids, was Potter's mill, in which he was much pleased to be asked to pose. It was an interesting structure, of poles cut in the woods and odd bits of sawed lumber, enclosing a simple hopper and stones. The shaft of the upper



POTTER AND HIS MILL

stone ran down through the lower, and formed the axis of the water wheel, a small affair with a few narrow blades. The water was led by a chute against one side of the wheel, thus driving it by impetus rather than weight. The whole thing must have been washed away with every flood, but the stones could easily be recovered, and a new frame thrown together around them.

On inquiry as to dinner Potter's face lit up; then he hesitated, and finally said he "reckoned maybe, if we would be willing to take what we would find, he could get us some dinner over at his house yonder." We gladly assented, and helped him to give the horses a generous feed of corn and fodder direct from the field, which filled a little stony slope pressed against the cliff by a curve in the river. Then everybody joined in a chicken hunt. The final hen of the establishment was to be immolated, and did not wish to be caught but was finally penned under the house and captured from above by removing a loose board from the hewn floor.

Mrs. Potter, slight, pale and silent, made up the open fire and set the table. A limp and ragged colored cloth was laid, and on it a few unmated plates and cups and two or three worn and battered knives and two-tined forks. A chair, a couple of stools and a box were drawn up. Two dingy beds appeared in the background, and a few shelves and pegs held all their household goods. A little girl of five or six years sat on the step with a patent-medicine calendar, upside-down in her hands, and after several timid glances to attract attention, announced in a thin little voice, "I dot a book." The Captain asked some

questions, but her vocabulary was exhausted, and she sat busily turning the pages and gravely scanning the inverted lines. From one of the beds came a very tiny wail, and Potter looked up with a glad face.

"Thar," said he, waving his wife back to her cooking, as he lifted a wee little baby from the quilt, "thar, that's the very fust time I eveh heard him cry, and he's two months old. I suah neveh did think he'd have the stren'th. That was suttinly fine, boy. Do it some mo'. Squeal, you little rat, squeal, that's what you need. I suttinly am glad to heah 'im, suh," and he puffed out his cheeks and nursed the baby with a glowing face until dinner was ready.

The fried chicken was excellent, with delicious sweet potatoes and white corn-bread and only the wistful face of the little girl, who wanted "anotheh piece o' chickie," prevented us from clearing the board. An old baking-powder can was produced with the recommendation, "Try them sorgh'. They're black, but they tastes right good." It was last year's sorghum, which had fermented down to a thin black liquor, sweet but pungent, and far more acceptable than the tasteless new product. Everything was lovely, and the Captain even ventured to put some questions as to the possibility of finding some "mountain-dew" before we left the country.

"Why yes, I reckon you-all might get some, maybe. I d'know-- say Annie, ain't theah just about one dram of it in the house right now?" She went to look, and he turned to the Captain. "Wheah did you say you-all stayed last night, Mullins's up yondeh? Why, if you had just asked him, he could have got you all you



POTTER'S SUN-LIT CORNFIELD

want. Oh, theah's lots of it goes through his hands, yes, suh. Why, you-all must have seen all them shingles nailed up along the road tellin' about it, didn't ye?"

"No, saw a lot of shingles, but they had nothing on 'em but 'Ginseng, \$4.'" "

"Well, suah," nodding vigorously, "that's what they call it, and it's four dollahs a gallon. And heah's a taste of it now," as his wife handed him, of all imaginable vessels a hair-oil bottle, with a roll of newspaper for a cork. There was an inch or so of colorless liquid in the bottom, which he measured with his eye before passing it around.

The Captain poured out a taste and took it "straight." I watered mine, and could hardly taste it at all. Potter again measured the liquid somewhat regretfully, raised the bottle to his lips, set it down empty, and looked up dramatically for a verdict, which could not conscientiously be made very enthusiastic, but seemed to satisfy him.

After our repast, we rested a few minutes on his hard clay front door-yard watching the sun play among the cornstalks in the adjacent field, and listening to the murmur of the river as it flowed down into the blue shadows of the forest. What a restful, careless, happy life! -- But we must be on our way.

Potter's bill was remarkable; thirty-five cents, ten cents for our meals, and seven and a half for the horses. I live in hopes of seeing his cabin again.

Once more past the "High Narrs" we rode, leaving their startling abysses and picturesque glimpses regretfully but swiftly, for Big Rock was a long half-day's journey away, over doubtful roads. The route was "up the

north fork of Grassy and down Conway," and when we had identified Conway with Carraway on the map, the latter proved plain enough. The north branch of Grassy left the road to Mullins' at our last wrong turn of two nights before, and proved the worst possible apology for a road, a mere path through the woods, sometimes hard to trace. Within a mile it ended at a little mountain home, but the inhabitants sent us on through their barnyard and pasture and out a back gate into the woods again. Four gates to open and close were no annoyance to the few neighbors who passed that way. The road remained narrow and almost unused, but there were occasional evidences that it had once been an important highway. In several cases along side-hills there were substantial stone retaining walls, laid without mortar, but still supporting a full width of road, of which the greater part was washed into huge gullies, or overgrown by good-sized trees. It must have been thirty or forty years since a wagon could have passed. This crumbling remnant of a former prosperity had much the same effect as a splendid ruin in a desert, accentuating the almost weird loneliness of the ride. On the whole length of Grassy Creek were but a house or two, mean little shanties, furtively tucked away in a hollow, surrounded by a little patch of corn. Desolate and lonely as the lives of the inhabitants must have been, suspicion of strangers was too strong for their curiosity, and as we clattered by there was never a sign of life save the thin white smoke rising from the mud chimneys.

What were such lives for, one could not but think, -- what was the use? Yet to many

thousands of families, just such a house in such a valley, hopelessly lost in the tangle of the hills, is all the world, save vague and untrustworthy rumors from great travellers, bolder and more fortunate men than they hope or even wish to be. Firm in their pioneer forefathers' traditions of a vast unknown continent, with which their only concern was to wring a living from one small section, they raise a few pigs and a patch of corn, ignore the world, and devote their energies to whisky and feuds.

And ignoring, they wish to be ignored. "Whisky? Of course; it's my corn, I'll do what I please with it. Fight? Why certainly; must I stand and let a fellow hit me and not hit back? Well, I reckon not. Taxes? Well, now, see here, stranger, what in blazes does the government do for me except poke into my private quarrels and destroy my stills? No sir, this is a good country, and I'll fight for it against any nation on earth, but pay money to a dirty hound of a tax-collector? No sir! I have no money, and I wouldn't pay it if I had!"

They think this and act on it, but they don't say it, because government raids are inconvenient, and in spite of his fire-eating propensities, discretion has a place in the mountaineer's economy.

One cheerless feature of the ride added much to our satisfaction; a lonely clearing, with charred remnants of a house, and a tumble-down bit of barn. Grass grew over the stones, and bushes were starting up in the midst of the ruins; it was the picture of desolation. But in the background was an apple-tree, and under it the fruit lay thick



OVER THE DIVIDE INTO THE VALLEY OF CONWAY

on the grass, golden globes of richness, a delight to the eye, and a consolation to the palate. Being the first apples we had seen, I filled my coat pockets and stuffed the breast of my shirt full. They were delicious, crisp, rich and spicy, and as they rapidly disappeared, the melancholy lifted from the face of the country, the somber woods seemed imbued with a new spirit of good cheer, and even the horses, regaled with the cores, for which they eagerly reached back, seemed refreshed and enlivened.

By the time the fruit was almost gone, we had passed over a steep and stony divide to the head of Conway, and almost at once came upon evidences of having entered a different section of country. There were houses of sawed lumber, with cut-stone chimneys, well fenced and tended, and a surprising air of alertness and material prosperity hung about the valley. These farms were a great contrast to Potter's slovenly establishment, but their owners' gruff and surly aloofness was equally different from his anxiously deprecating hospitality. Neat and prosperous though they seemed, it was very depressing. Perhaps the road had something to do with it, here running through, or rather consisting of the unspeakably rough bed of Conway Creek. No need of floods to make washouts on such a road; it was itself one continuous washout, a constant menace to the horses.

Frank and Molly stood the racket, however, and inspired by their rest of the day before, and the cool shade, were almost too eager for comfort. The Captain even insisted on taking Molly in hand at one time, and after ten minutes' training guaranteed her to "stop when

she was told." But nothing has ever been invented to keep a hungry saddle-horse from trying to eat grass, and when we stopped late in the afternoon, for a picture characteristic of the road and the country, it was a nerve-racking task to get those two beasts to stand for their portraits. This was finally accomplished, showing Frank, Mollie, and myself and also four remaining apples in my shirt-front. But the declining sun warned us to push on, and not long after, we turned up the well-traveled road that leads up Levisa Fork to Grundy.

The valley was open, cleared, and seemingly fertile. Houses were to be seen here and there, and the whole effect was of a prosperous contrast to the woods and hills behind. At Big Rock postoffice, however, hospitality seemed to be at a low ebb. One man to whom we were directed, for some time refused to answer, then sulkily admitted his name, and finally came glumly out to talk, revealing that he was woefully drunk. After questioning several unwilling informants, we arrived about dusk at the house of Greene Charles, a little way up Rock Lick Creek.

A shaggy face with a forbidding glare answered the Captain's knock, and a gruff voice shouted peremptorily, "What do you want?"

The Captain mildly explained, asking for lodging.

Ignoring the question, the voice bellowed again, "Who are ye?" with an insolent rising inflection.

The Captain told him. "Well, I d'know. What are ye out this late fur, anyhow?"

The Captain waxed wroth. "Now Mr. Charles,

I've told you what we want. They told us down in the valley that you took folks in. If you don't want us, say so. If you're willing, we'd be glad to get in for the night."

The shaggy head disappeared with an ungracious permission to ride around to the stable. We rode around, and found one of the most prosperous establishments in the mountains, and strange to say, one of the warmest welcomes. Well-conditioned farm implements were stowed in sheds, stabling was large and well-kept, and an ample corn-crop was housed in granaries. The house was plastered inside, papered in some rooms, and excellently furnished, even to roller shades, and in the kitchen Mrs. Charles was bestirring herself heartily over an excellent extra supper. After carefully seeing to the horses, Mr. Charles sat with us at table, and apologized for offering such a poor meal, their own supper being so long past!

The young men gathered after supper for a talk with the strangers, and seemed a decent enough sort, yet with a touch of sophistication which was somehow unattractive. The neighborhood felt itself an up-to-date community, and thereon based its self-respect, casting aside the primitive virtues of the region for a rather cheap and nasty varnish. While the world had worked on Mullins only so far as to change the outside of his house, leaving a mountain household within, here ambition had penetrated to the furniture and the occupants, yet without going far enough in either case to justify itself. We were rejoiced to find that it had at least extended to the beds, which were sweet and clean, and deliciously comfortable, being supplied with

two fresh sheets; we turned in early.

SATURDAY
MAY 21 1850

GREEN SPRING
WYOMING

A DISTANCE }
TRAVELLED }
OF MILES }

CHAPTER VIII.

TO THE TUG.

SATURDAY
AUGUST 29th.,
1900.

GREENE CHARLES
TO
WYOMING.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
25 MILES.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Charles' cordial salutations on Saturday morning, and his full and cheerful instructions about the road could not quite make up for the coarse and surly insolence of his original greeting, and it was a pleasure to see his house disappear around a bend of the road. The route was a bewildering succession of creeks, beginning with Rock Lick, up which led a road occasionally traversed by wagons, though it seemed a marvel that they could hold together. For horses, however, the going was excellent, and we pressed on rapidly under a threatening sky which pleasantly tempered the sun.

The futile veneer of civilization soon disappeared as we left the river, and within a few miles the country was as wild as Grassy Creek, save for the almost total absence of woods, and all the more desolate on that account. Gaunt and arid hillsides were parched by the sun and seamed by rain-washed gullies. The wood was taken, and nothing planted on the land, which showed only half-rotten stumps, and straggling patches of brush-wood. Houses were few and unattractive and it was a relief to cross the divide to the head of Pawpaw. Here the woods were once more overhead, and the houses once more true mountain cabins, tucked away in the forest with a patch of corn-- the one crop capable

of giving its owner all three necessities, pork, bread, and whisky.

Down the bed of the stream we went to its mouth at Knox Creek, and there stopped to see the excitement. A motley crowd of men, women and children were gathered about a tent. Babies were being soothed and petted on all sides, newcomers greeted, and notes exchanged in the most animated style. A little old man greeted us with warmth of curiosity, eying the big saddle-pockets.

"Good mo'nin' to you, gentlemen."

"Good morning."

"It suah is a fine day, now, ain't it?"

"Certainly is." We started on, but he waved a hand as if asking permission for a question.

"Gentlemen,^{if so} be as it's not a secret, what air you a follerin'?"

It seemed obvious that we were trying to follow the road, but he really wanted to know our business, and the Captain answered that we were going about to see the country and take pictures.

"Oh, takin' pictures? Well now, you just come the right time here, I tell you; there's a plumb sight of folks come here this mawnin' to git some picturs from that feller yondeh, and then afteh he's got 'em heah, he goes to work and robs 'em. Now if you-all 'll take us fer a reas'nable price, we'll give you all you can do, now I tell you."

We explained hastily and rode on, leaving a very disgusted little man, who muttered, "Well now, who evah heard of such a thing, takin' pictures of hills and such like, and won't take no folks, not fer good money!"

The way turned up Knox Creek, a good-sized

stream, pleasantly wooded. This road was worse than indifferent, but seemed to lead somewhere, as a telephone line was strung along the trees-- doubtless to a coal-mine. After a mile, a poor little trail led up Guess Fork, and we began a rather discouraging search for dinner.

It was a sordid neighborhood. The woods were straggling, and the barren hills redeemed from repelling gauntness only by soft mist-wreaths from the trailing edges of the clouds. The air was cool and damp, and an occasional dash of cold rain urged us to shelter. But hospitality was not the strong point thereabout. One poor woman looked up heavily from her log doorstep and said her dinner was over and cleared away (it was not yet noon) and she was "that plumb tired out she didn't think she could git up anotheh." The next house, a one-roomed log-cabin, had a willing housewife, but "You see, suh, we-all ain't got no stove, and it'd take a pow'ful long time to git you-all a dinneh oveh the fish."

Shortly after, the rain came on in very businesslike fashion, and at the next house we turned into the door-yard and rode into the stable-shedding without a question. A group of tow-heads played there, two small girls, and two smaller boys. One ragged garment served each for dress, the boys being content with an absurdly inadequate shirt. They were highly excited at having visitors, and gathered about with the greatest curiosity as to the horses and the saddle-bags and the camera and the Captain's poncho. They reported that "Paw went down the creek, and Maw's oveh in the gully," and the latter soon returned, hurrying out of the rain with an armful of

dead wood. She, like the others, excused herself almost nervously from getting dinner, but gave us permission to feed the horses, retiring precipitately to the house.

The tow-heads were more natural, however, helping with the beasts, and sitting about in an awed circle as we lunched once more on oatmeal, sugar and chocolate. They brought apples, and wondered greatly to see me peel one before eating it. The Captain explained that I was a queer sort of chap, who didn't mean any harm, giving the general impression that it was a joke, and they giggled, and looked with increased interest for further amiable eccentricities. They tasted the chocolate doubtfully, and gave no great evidence of pleasure, though they stoutly declared they "liked it all right." The Captain drew pictures for them, and distributed pennies. There was something very pathetic in those bright little things, as quick and ready as any children I ever saw, thus bounded by the "creek and the gully." School was away and away, an unheard of mystery. There might be strange things in the world, strange people came along the road sometimes, but the only certainties in life were that Paw went down the creek, (probably to get drunk) and Maw had to go to the gully to gather firewood. It is probable that they had never been half a mile from the cabin, and that when they grow up, they will know nothing outside of the county. And, "knowing nothing" means literally never dreaming of the existence of any of the great features of the outside world-- it is looking on the universe as an absolute blank, save for the distorted stories of a few passers by, which, vague and contradictory, only make the



" NEVER DREAMING OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD "

unseen world more hazy and mysterious; more likely to be all a fairy-tale.

When the horses had finished eating, the clouds had broken. We paid for the grain, packed the raincoats, and proceeded into a pleasanter wooded country. The road, though little used, was fair, leading to the head of Guess Fork, and thence down Road Fork to the forks of Bull, which we reached by four o'clock.

Here Jack Stacey, recommended for tonight's lodging, sat on a rather attractive little porch, with his feet on the railing, and lazily informed us that "he could not take us in, but that Mr. Bailey, near the mouth of Bull would likely be able to entertain us." There were no evidences of "company" about, but if he didn't want us he needn't take us, and it was as well to go farther before dark in any case.

These last few miles of Bull had an indefinable sense of being in touch, however distant. It showed most, perhaps, in the comparative profusion and variety of farming implements, and a somewhat restless quickness in the workers which suggested railroads. The mouth of Bull was at "Wyoming City" on the N. & W., in the state of West Virginia. At the Breaks we had entered Virginia, and at Wyoming were to have the strange experience of riding eastward from Virginia into West Virginia.

About five we came upon an unusually bustling scene, the grinding of sorghum. Every house hereabout had its patch of cane, and usually a regular mountain oven for boiling out the sap-- that is, an iron pan about two by six feet, supported by a stone wall down each side, with a hearth at one end and a

chimney at the other, so that flames and smoke are drawn along the bottom of the pan. But the establishment which now appeared had a great assortment of new and efficient machinery, including an iron furnace, and a brilliantly painted roller-mill for pressing out the sap. A mule hitched to the latter was kept in motion by a parcel of active youngsters with switches, while several more carried the cane from the cutters to the feeder, and a goodly crowd looked on and gave advice. It seemed oddly animated, and we looked on for several minutes, attributing the energy indirectly to the railroad, here only a mile away.

A little way downstream was a house which seemed to answer to the description of Bailey's. No one was about, but a passer-by told us Mrs. Bailey was directing the sorghum-making, so we returned and got permission to stop over with her, "if we could put up with the fare," the usual deprecatory phrase. The horses were soon comfortably housed, with the help of a couple of bright boys, and we settled down on the little vineshaded porch to enjoy the lazy wait for supper-time.

The side of the house was directly on the road, which was also the channel for a part of Bull Creek. Across the way a diminutive and rather unstable black-smith shop bore the legend: CITYUR HOSE SHOD. Unaccustomed bits of cast-iron machinery and farm implements lay about, and despite the stillness of the afternoon sunlight, and the momentary quiet prevailing, there was somewhere an unreposeful element of progress and activity which forced itself on the attention. Perhaps it came from the busy sorghum-makers;

perhaps from the mere consciousness of the near-by railroad station.

About six Mrs. Bailey returned and bustled about in great style, driving away the chickens, and kindling a fire in the kitchen, which was in a separate building. Soon after a man came in with three squirrels, and seemed to take possession as the head of the house, but when addressed as Bailey, said his name was Justice, and as no one was communicative, we were unable to place him.

The supper was excellent, and accompanied by some very interesting information on sorghum. From half an acre of cane they usually get a hundred and twenty gallons of sap, which is boiled down to thirty gallons of thick syrup. The cost is about ten cents a gallon to the producer, and the selling price about fifty cents, but nobody seems to make a business of it, probably because almost every one makes his own.

There was only one drawback to our complete satisfaction, that they could say nothing in favor of the roads down the river. For once, close proximity failed to develop a passable highway. The old stage-road was taken up by the railway, and since people could now get about on the train, no new one had been made. There was said to be a remote possibility of scrambling along, but the prospect was hazy. So while Mrs. Bailey read the Bible to the children in her dimly lighted best room, papered with leaves from a Montgomery Ward and Co.'s catalog, we turned into our garret bunks with a vague sense of dissatisfaction at returning to the evils of civilization.

THE ROUGHS

SUNDAY
AUGUST 30th.,
1900.

WYOMING
TO
WIDOW HATFIELD'S
ON
BEN CREEK,
WEST VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
22 MILES.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER IX.

Sunday morning brought a series of petty annoyances. A calf was found at the stable, chewing my bridle into pulp, and some minutes' examination was needed to learn that it could still be used. Breakfast was satisfactory, and charges minimum, so that we left Mrs. Bailey on excellent terms; but half a mile down, at Wyoming City, a damper was cast on our spirits. There was a large floating population of loafers, none of whom had ever heard of any road down the river except the railroad. The Captain made a detailed examination, and we arrived at the painful conclusion that it was necessary to go back to the Forks of Bull and thence around the Roughts by backwoods trails.

Sadly we scrambled back to Stacey's at the Forks, and asking him the way, were assured that there was a road, of a kind, down the river. "Why, them fellers don't know nothing about it, down theah," said he. "None of 'em ain't neveh seen a hoss, sca'cely, and they don't know about the road, but I been oveh it frequent. Co'se, it ain't what you call a good road, and some o' them fords is pow'ful rough, but you suah can go down, right along the bank, and it's the shortest way, too."

That settled it. About face once more, and down to the river. Better four miles lost



THE HIGHWAY BELOW THE ROUGHS

and a late start than to lose the Roughs if it was a possible thing to see them. This time we asked no useless questions, but struck down the river-bank, following something which might have been a horse-track or a cow-path, and had been recently traversed by a mule. Within a halfmile it took us to three fords, positively the worst I can imagine. To the natural uncertainties of a turbulent stream filled with boulders of all sizes were added numerous chunks of rock blasted from the nearby railroad grade— great snags and flakes with jagged edges as sharp as knives, piled up in unstable confusion. The poor horses did not in the least know what to make of it, but pushed on slowly, and were fortunate enough to get through the day without accident, though there were more than even chances of serious injury. After the first half-hour the fords were less frequent, but no better, and the Captain finally dismounted and waded ahead of Frank to pick a way. Nine of those horrible affairs had to be risked before one o'clock, when we reached Wharnecliff, thoroughly disgusted with travel along a railroad wrecked stream.

Nor was there anything startling in the scenery to make up for the difficulties. The country was somewhat rough and broken, and there were occasional strikingly handsome stretches of river, but in comparison with the Breaks, and in consideration of those fords, we felt cheated.

Dinner was over at Wharnecliff, of course, but we found a blacksmith loafing about in Sunday idleness, who consented to supply horse-feed. We counted on oatmeal for lunch, but when the horses were attended to he call-

ed us to a very fair meal, resurrected from the remains of dinner. His wife seemed rather pleased at the interruption to the monotony, fanning the flies off with a buxom cheerfulness, and gossiping away with a right good will. But it cost us a dollar, which changed our host's aspect from that of an obliging householder to that of a beetle-browed highwayman. We even argued, unsuccessfully, but the proximity of the railroad should have warned us.

It was rather a relief to turn eastward into the hills again, up Ben Creek. The morning's experience on the river was enough, and we were glad to learn a back-country route to Thacker (a coal-town of which photos were desired) with a point of considerable interest half-way-- the Widow Hatfield's. Everybody was talking about the great Hatfield-McCoy feud, started ten years before by the frolic of a drunken man, and still pursued with intermittent but undiminished vigor. Statistics are hard to get at, but the stories current in the country-side are sufficient to prove remarkable ferocity and tenacity of purpose, and every now and then the papers note another death from the strange quarrel. We were repeatedly warned against the Hatfields and their country, although the feud was temporarily quiescent. The best that any tough old mountaineer could say was that it was a "pow'ful rough country, and them Hatfields air suttinly a wild lot." Somehow this invariable warning against the next neighborhood had lost its effect, and we were very glad to have a peep in passing at some of the celebrities.

About half past four we turned a corner

and came in sight of the Widow's place, constituting, to our surprise, the most prosperous and peaceful farm landscape in the mountains. A cove of fertile and well-tilled land was picturesquely set in the wooded hills, and divided by excellent fences. There were corn and oats, and-- most remarkable-- hay, a well grown crop of clover, just being harvested. At our feet was a beautiful boiling spring of soft water, which the horses revelled in, taking their first full drink since leaving Louisa. Beyond the fields, against the woods at the head of the valley, clustered a group of buildings, half-hidden by fine old shade and fruit trees.

As we approached, the house developed into a very creditable two-story structure, fresh-painted and trimly kept, and the whole establishment had an air of competent and long-accustomed prosperity which was most attractive. An elderly woman in a tidy black gown was driving fowls into a yard for the night, and told us we were on the right road for Thacker, and then volunteered that the Widow would not turn us away if we were looking for lodging. It seemed too early to stop, and we passed on, but after a few minutes decided that we oughtn't to miss the chance of sleeping in a Hatfield's house, and turned back. The woman we had seen, who proved to be the Widow's sister, stood in the neat little dooryard as though expecting us, and we were soon introduced to Mrs. Hatfield.

Of elderly middle age, somewhat spare, with vivacious face and eyes twinkling with an intelligent humor, she was an amazing contrast to anything that we had seen in the mountains. Her old-fashioned black gown and

quaint yet delicate slippers were a revelation of neat appropriateness, and she greeted us with the manner and voice of the provincial gentlewoman she was. No one was at hand to attend to the horses, so we housed and fed them ourselves under her friendly direction. She was pleased to see the "critters" in such good condition, and commended the time spent on currying and brushing. The Captain related Frank's troubles, and she not only sympathized but produced medicine for a possible recurrence. She showed entire familiarity with the work of the farm, and half apologetically owned to doing it all herself at times, but was glad to accept my offer to go for the cow. "There aren't any men-folks about now," said she, "but if you'll just turn her in there, Jim'll be home later, and he'll milk her."

At supper-time we gathered in the separate dining-room, and for the first time since leaving Louisa sat at a table presided over by the hostess, while an old negress waited. Table-cloth, napkins and abundant china enhanced the effect of good cookery, and though there was nothing on the table but what is produced universally through the mountains, the meal seemed a product of another land. The relays of hot biscuits were especially fine, but our compliments were not enthusiastically received. There seemed to be some thing suspicious about praise of anything so common.

"Well," she said, dubiously, "some of the foreigners that come here do tell me that they don't have hot bread where they live."

The "foreigners" (for dwellers in other states) was a natural localism, yet it had on her lips all the effect of the conscious use

of a cant phrase. When she owned to the personal supervision of the field-work against her sister's protests, and said that her presence was worth "the work of any three men" (and it was, I am sure) the twinkle in her eye and the dry smile seemed to put the phrase in quotation marks.

The comfortable air of good-will was somewhat marred toward the close of the meal by the arrival of a silent and unbending youth, who nodded a suspicious greeting and turned to the business of feeding with a gravity which cast a pall over the table. At the end of the meal it was a relief to see him depart, still in haste and silence. He was a ward or distant relative of the Widow, and helped her on the farm in return for a home.

We retired to the parlor (the only one in the mountains) while the Widow had a room made ready for us. On her return the Captain commented on the parlor-organ, and asked her to play. She said she could not, but urged him to "give us a tune." The Captain perforce responded, but as his playing consists of improvisations which, though they delight the soul, can scarcely be classed as "tunes," the Widow was distinctly disappointed. She talked of her husband, about whom we had an unholy curiosity that was doomed to disappointment. He had not been killed by a McCoy, but died an entirely legitimate though untimely death in bed, many years before, and was deeply revered and mourned by his survivor. She showed his picture, a strong and handsome face.

There was something nearer to the pathos of the mountains than the country had yet

shown us, in the thought of this lonely old woman trudging her fields and urging on the lazy hands to preserve a spot of hard-earned prosperity amid the wilderness of barren hills, and keeping yet a twinkle in her clear old eyes while her heart dwelt on the faraway past.

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A DISTANCE
TRAVELLER OF
HILLS.

CHAPTER X.

A LONG RIDE.

MONDAY
AUGUST 31st.,
1900.

WIDOW HATFIELD
TO
WILLIAMSON,
WEST VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
28 MILES.

CHAPTER X.



THE MORNING MISTS HUNG OVER WIDOW HATFIELD'S

CHAPTER X.

The mists hung heavily about the house in the chilly stillness of the morning as we left the Widow Hatfield's. Paying her bill had been somewhat embarrassing, for her code, permitting her to take money for entertainment, forbade her to fix the sum, and we compromised between mountain rates and the superior accommodations. She took it as full price for the horses and half for the meals, meekly accepting the rebuke to her hospitality. I wish we might make her a more creditable return.

The way was a horse-trail by a little stream, and for a wonder, very passable. Tall weeds stood guant and gray, scattering their seeds as the horses brushed past. Here and there the leaves had turned to enlivening patches of gold and crimson, and a few of the earliest to fade were floating peacefully to the ground. The sun soon broke through the mists, and the Captain unlimbered his camera. The scene was not spectacular, but its quiet serenity in the midst of the rugged hills, its air of gracefully subsiding into an attractive old age, seemed very expressive of the Widow Hatfield's life.

The trail led through a wild and somewhat uninteresting country over a divide and down a long branch of Beech Creek, and then up another branch on its northern side. Near

the head of this the trail ended at a small group of cabins where a gaunt old woman gave us directions in a hoarse and guttural voice.

"Yas indeed. You jest go right on, 'crost the pastur, and then you'll see some hoss-sign. Well, you jest foller that hoss-sign, and you'll be right-- hit 'll take you right theah. Jim, he went that-a-way yest'dy, and you jest foller his hoss-sign." As we passed on she called after, "All you got to do is jest to foller that hoss-sign!" I still think of her as the "hoss-sign woman."

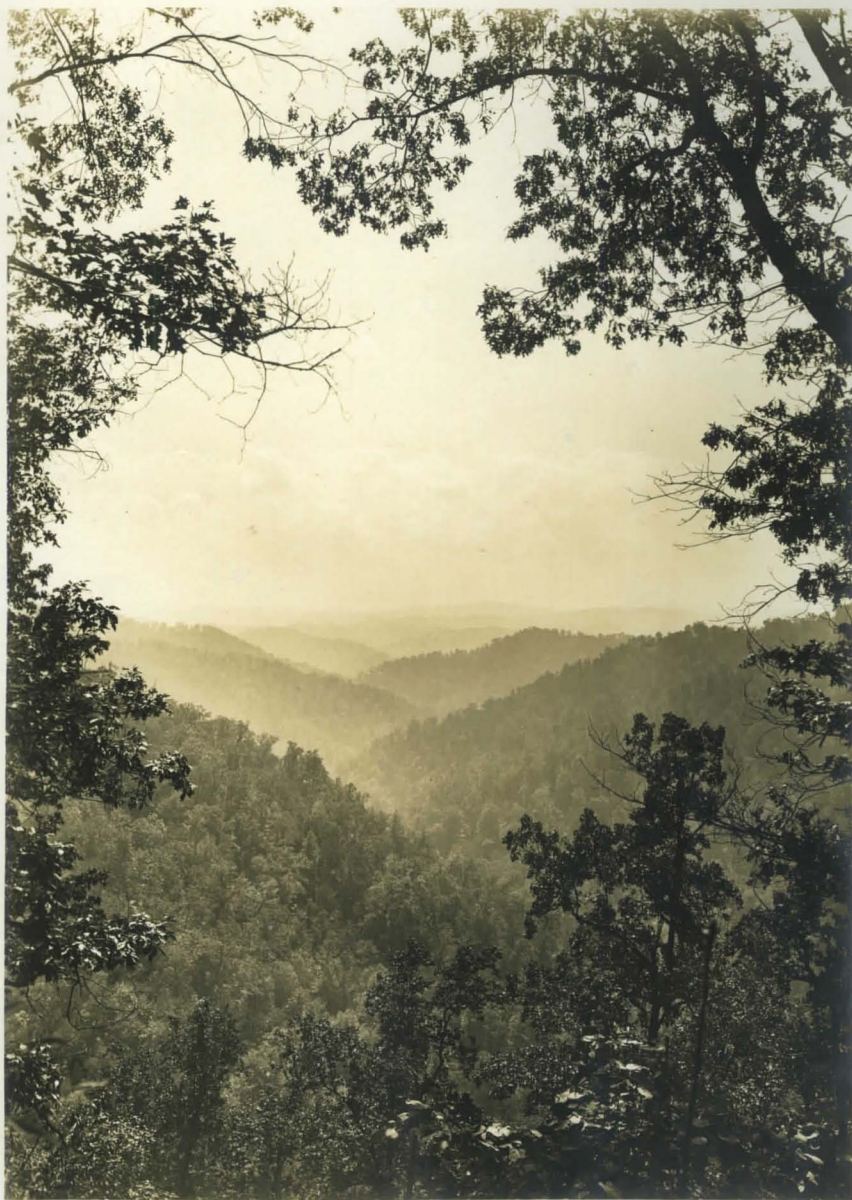
At a cabin near-by, surrounded with loaded apple-trees I asked to buy some fruit. The woman looked doubtful, and asked how many I wanted.

"Oh, just what I can carry, about a dozen."

"Oh yas suh, that's all right, just he'p yuse'f," and she held out the panful she was peeling. I took some and asked the price, but she resolutely refused to take anything.

"No suh, I don't want no pay fer just what you can eat yourse'f, I thought maybe you wanted to buy the crop, suh.-- Well, if you like, the baby theah'd be pleased to take it, I reckon.-- Now, say thank you to the gentleman. Good day, suh, you're quite welcome."

For the next half-mile the trail became a very steep and rugged mountain path, following not the hollows as is usual when crossing to the valley of another stream, but the rough shoulder of a projecting ridge. We dismounted, and had some scrambling to get up on foot, but the horses seemed to find fair foothold, and we shortly emerged on a long curving hilltop. For nearly a mile it continued nearly level, roughly encircling the headwaters of Grapevine Creek, down the valley of



GRAPEVINE VALLEY

which appeared a strikingly beautiful and impressive series of mountain ranges, each paler and bluer than the last, till faint and dim against the sky stood the bulk of Pine Mountain at the Breaks. It was strange to think that we could thus turn in the saddle and look back over three days' travel.

And stranger yet to think that this beautiful valley was shortly before the scene of the greatest battle ever held between the Hatfields and the McCoys. And at the end of that dark day, while pleading on their knees for the lives of their brothers and husbands, even the women were murdered: Their breast bones crushed in by the butts of Hatfield guns. Not a McCoy was left alive. By a fence near at hand a stranger, accidentally shot, lay gasping "Oh give me a drink of water; for God's sake a drink of water."

"Yaas, I'll give ye a drink ye dam fool" said a Hatfield buck: and thrusting the muzzle of his shot gun in the man's mouth he blew his brains out against the fence and into the adjoining field.

But thinking only of the scenery, that was a pleasant mile, and the contrast was severe when we scrambled down the end of the ridge into the sordid valley of Thacker Creek. At its head stood a deserted cabin, its fruit-trees broken, its garden overgrown with weeds and partially washed away by the unruly stream. The simple mountain life was no longer possible so near the great coal mines with their noisy blasting and machinery, and the hoard of half-savage and wholly disreputable ruffians which worked them. We hurried down the road, which was here a long main street for the stragging miners' village.



MINER'S SHANTIES AT THACKER

Shanties of all imaginable degrees of ugliness and discomfort crowded each other into the stream or road, woebegone women gossiped or quarreled, and draggled children played in the foul water. The Captain took some pictures according to instructions, but it was an unlovely neighborhood, and we hurried down to Thacker on the river. Even here civilization had destroyed hospitality, and we could find no dinner. One man finally volunteered horse-feed, and we made a comfortable lunch on oatmeal and chocolate.

From Thacker to Williamson the country was less broken and more thickly settled, and the old stage-road down the river was reported to be still in use. No further duty of probable interest lay between us and Williamson, and we made a prompt start, resolved if possible to cover the distance that day.

One of Frank's shoes came loose, and threatened to detain us, for both Molly's and his were worn down to a mere remnant. At Maitland, however, two miles down stream, a blacksmith's apprentice was discovered, after considerable searching, and set a nail or two, which might serve to Louisa. The old stage road proved very decent, running for the most part high above the railroad grade on top of the bluffs, and though it was often entirely unused by wheels, there was always a firm and level path.

A mile more and a ford to the west bank brought the village of Hatfield, and, walking through its single street, a stout old chap in a state of drunken affability. He announced with overwhelming condescension, "I'm old Bill Hatfield, gentlemen; just thought you might like to know." We assured him we were



BELOW THE STEEL RAILS SHONE IN THE SUNLIGHT

delighted to make his acquaintance, and he continued for some ten minutes to recount a hazy string of commonplace personal characteristics and reminiscences.

Just below Hatfield the river makes a long loop to the eastward, which the railroad cuts off by tunneling through the neck, while the horse-track scrambles over the ridge, which is five hundred feet high, and but little more than a quarter mile broad. The hillside is so steep that the path must ascend in long and tedious diagonals, and when we reached the top the sun was setting over the hills to the northwest.

Below, the steel rails, shining with reflected golden light, shot across the river and away to the north. Beyond the stream was also a prosperous village on a comfortable high-road, which promised a nearer and surer shelter for the night than Williamson, if we could cross the stream. An effort for a photograph consumed much of the brighter afterglow, however, and when we started on, it was to stumble down an equally dubious and endless path in rapidly gathering darkness.

Instead of zigzagging directly to the river, the road shelved slowly downwards along the hillside, finally reaching the water a mile or so from the tunnel. Even then there were no signs of a ford, the water flowing deep and still and ominous in the darkness. A sort of trail continued along the river-bank, and we turned back to it, scrambling along through rocks and bushes, and trying the water for any possibility of crossing whenever the trail approached the bank.

After another mile the trail seemed to end, and though there was no sign of a ford,

we determined to cross that stream, if we had to swim. The horses didn't like it, but they were as anxious to get somewhere as we, and with a little urging they pressed on. As the depth threatened the Captain's precious saddle-pockets packed with plates, he paused to see Molly's fate. The water was as still as a mill-pond, and might be of any depth, but once started she seemed willing to proceed, and the water rose slowly to her shoulders while I gathered up my feet and hoisted my baggage as high as possible. Just at the critical moment, as I was about to turn her back, she struck a gravel-bank, and in three strides was splashing through the shallows to the bank. Frank was soon after her, and we scrambled up the steep bank together. There must have been a ford there somewhere, but it is a poor business hunting them at night.

Beyond the bank appeared a small log cabin still showing a light, at which we shouted for information. They were hardly to be blamed for slowness in responding to such a call, coming from their own back yard on the river, where no sane traveler had a right to be at any time, far less after night. But at last a sturdy old fellow appeared in the door and asked our names, giving his as Hatfield. On explanation he gave most courteous directions to Williamson, now only about five miles away, but urged us to stop over night with him. With thanks, we went on, as it would be much more convenient to start next day from Williamson, which was a railroad town, and would not hesitate to receive guests even as late as ten o'clock. The moon was now up, and the road reported good.

It was a strange ride, but a very pleasant

one. The road ran on the bluffs high above the stream, and was so good that the horses could be left to their own guidance. We sat drowsily enjoying the cool fresh air and the moonlit panorama of river and hills. The heights seem so much higher and the depths so much deeper by that illusive light that the scenery was distinctly impressive; and it was a return to unpleasant realities to round the shoulder of a hill and see below the twinkle of many arc-lights, and the smoke and confusion of a large and active freight-yard and round-house. Half an hour later the horses were comfortably stabled, and we had turned into our second-floor-fronts in the spick and span new brick Hotel Esther Arms.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
12 MILES.

CHAPTER XI.

HOMEWARDS.

TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 1st.,
1900.

WILLIAMSON
TO
EVANS'
NEAR
PIGEON,
WEST VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
18 MILES.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XI.

Beds were tempting next morning, and it was ten before we started. The Express Office threatened annoyance by absolutely declaring that the current-meter (shipped a week before from Pikeville) had not arrived. The Captain insisted on searching the building, and found it in a corner, properly packed and labeled, and the agent calmly said "oh yes, that come a long while ago,-- why, it must have been a week!"

The Captain mildly responded "I believe that's what I told you."

South of the town a ford made a convenient place to section, and it seemed quite a home-like, old-time occupation to wade and measure and take notes, though it was a melancholy assurance that the mountain end of the trip was finished, and that Louisa was but a scant three days' ride away.

A horse-track followed the west bank of the river, not interfered with by the railroad on the east, and gave us good going all day through a comfortable though sparsely settled country. About noon a woman of stout and generous aspect provided a good dinner. Her house stood directly on the road, and sticks in memory chiefly from the children-- six bright and lively little girls and one boy-- who flooded the place with rosycheeked activity. During the afternoon the road crossed

to the east bank, but shortly after, at "Pigeon," the railroad goes eastward between the hills, and it was a satisfaction to be finally out of its baneful influence.

A mile or so below Pigeon, as sunset was approaching, appeared the house of one Evans-- a poor enough affair, but said to be the only shelter for some distance-- and we had had enough of late riding the night before. They seemed a shiftless lot, supper being a poor snack of rancid bacon, impossible stuff called coffee, and soggy biscuit, baked in one sheet and broken into chunks. Mrs. Evans was one of the most discouraged figures imaginable, clad in a draggled Mother Hubbard wrapper, bare-footed, with straggling gray hair. She admitted that 'she really didn't feel right peart,' "The water was low in all the wells, and there was lots of sickness all around," she said.

Our bedroom was pathetic. The loose and creaking bare floor sagged in the corners. The equally uneven walls, and the ceiling, within reach of one's hand, were roughly planked and papered with newspapers. Some small rag-carpet rugs, two or three heavy pressed-glass vases and a silent clock were all well enough in keeping, but it was startling to see in those surroundings a full set of marble-topped walnut furniture! What comforts they must have foregone to provide this useless, even uncomfortable bit of grandeur! Perhaps it was more commendable than to spend the money on whisky, but under the circumstances it seemed hardly more civilized. The bed proved, as might be expected, to have more carving than springs, but we had a very comfortable night.

SOME VARIABLE STARS.

WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 2nd.,
1900.

EVAN'S
TO
BILL BARTRAMS
NEAR
THE FALLS OF TUG,
WEST VIRGINIA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
27 MILES.

CHAPTER XII.



WOLF SHOAL

CHAPTER XII.

A short day and a long night tempted us out of bed earlier than usual on Wednesday morning. It was my turn to tend the horses (which we did alternately) and the fresh breath of the sunrise was delightful. Mist rose slowly from the river, writhing and twisting oddly in the still air, and a swarm of red-birds on all sides greeted the daylight with eager song. There had been red-birds piping up here and there through the hills, but no such outburst as this, which took my thoughts wandering far into other times and places. A little pleasant reminiscence does wonders to lighten labor, and the horses were soon curried and brushed and working away at their breakfasts. Our own followed, and by eight we were off.

Some two miles below Evan's was Wolf Shoal, the speed of which the Captain was to gauge. While we were at work a most energetic person appeared on a pattering mule, at once identifying the Captain with the damming of the river, and flung us a volley of intelligent and eager questions on the subject. From Pigeon to Louisa the country is dependent entirely upon the fickle stream for bulky freight, and everyone was anxious to see navigation made permanent.

A mile or two farther on Warfield hove in sight. We hunted up the local Government



"HERE COME TWO OF THOSE D—JEW PEDDLERS"

weather and river observer, a Mr. Barret from Ohio, whose main function is to telegraph warnings of floods to those in charge of the Louisa dam. He cordially asked us to a family dinner when once he realized who we were. Beards had by this time become a disgraceful scrub, shirts were draggled and dirty, boots mud-stained and disreputable, and the good man's first thought on noting the saddle-pockets and meter-case was "Here come two of those d-- Jew peddlers!" His little daughter, just then deep in the Arabian Nights, quite capped the climax by saying she thought we must be Ali Baba and a servant with laden mules! We were introduced to the family, and everybody let into the joke, which all appreciated. The horses were housed, and we went to section the stream. A small audience, hastily collected by Mr. Barret, tailed after and asked questions in the intervals of laughing at his seemingly inexhaustible fund of stories.

By the time we had finished, and made ourselves as presentable as possible, dinner was announced; such a dinner as we had not dreamed of seeing before reaching home. There were a clean table-cloth and napkins, bright silver and cheerful conversation. It was strange to see the women sit down with the men and join in the talk, but strangest of all was the food. Deliciously stewed squirrels, rich and sweet vegetables in great variety, delicate apple-butter, flaky corn-bread and all the accessories. It was a pleasant visit.

By Mr. Barret's direction we forded to the west bank and rode up Buck Creek to its head through far the finest beech timber in the hills. It was dense and high, the stems often

seeming as long and straight and bare as those of a pine forest. I had no idea that beech grew of such character or size. The owner evidently appreciated it, for a saw-mill was at work, promising to clear the little valley in no time.

Over a divide the path led to the head of Elk, and the latter made a beautiful ride of three or four miles back to the river through woods; part beech, part mixed, but all dense and cool, and very sparsely settled. Thence for an hour we followed a most disheartening horse-track along the bluff clay banks. Rain had washed out a succession of steep gullies, and every passer on the well-used road had to scramble up and down semiperpendicular clay banks continuously for several miles. It was most uncomfortable, but the horses soon learned to rush down, and use the momentum to carry them up the other side, and got on with fair comfort.

At last the end came, at a couple of mean little cottages marked on the map as Calf Creek. Here the way turned up a run called Lick Branch, and across to the head of Buffalo Horn, a branch of Rockcastle Creek, which latter led back to the river at Clifford, the Falls of Tug. There the last river measurement was to be made, and there lived "Old Bill Bartram," whose hospitality Mr. Barret had strongly recommended. "You want to push on there even if it's by moonlight, for there ain't any good place to stop this side."

Certainly it was a mean country. Lick Branch and Buffalo Horn together were, if not the wildest, certainly the most desolate-looking, country I ever saw. Only one or two quaint cabins were to be seen, and they were

deserted. Fences were falling to pieces, fields growing up in weeds, and the tumble-down chimneys were smokeless. The dusk fell as we approached the valley of Rockcastle Creek, and not a sound of life was audible; not a light twinkled up or down the hollow, and not a single wayfarer showed himself upon the road.

Rockcastle seemed a considerable stream, its banks quite as wide as those of the Tug, and made still more impressive by the vague light of the rising moon on floating clouds of night mist. This fog sometimes quite concealed the opposite bank, and as the creek was much longer than we expected and at times trended southward for some distance, we were several times in doubt whether we had not come back to the Tug and unconsciously turned south on it. A scramble to the edge of the current to note its size and direction settled the question, but each investigation took time, and it grew uncomfortably late.

The night was very cool, and wonderfully clear overhead, so that the stars shone out sharply in spite of the bright moon, and there was one peculiarity in the air that I never saw anywhere else. The larger stars hanging low over the woods in the north flashed in changing colors, the same star showing now deep crimson, now vivid green, now bright yellow, as though someone were experimenting with a prism. There are often slight tinges of color in stars thus twinkling near the horizon, but I never heard of such a succession of deep contrasting colors, and found myself wondering how the portent would have been interpreted in old times. For us it foretold nothing worse than a hard-won and

supperless bed.

For at Bartram's the house was dark, save a living room, where an old woman was clearing up. We had some trouble in getting her attention, and more in getting into the house, but finally she gruffly intimated that "maybe we might stop, but supper was all over." We gladly acceded, and were pleasantly surprised when a boy came out to stable the horses. A room was ready upstairs (it was a large frame house) and we turned in at once, staying the more immediate pressure of hunger with a remnant of oatmeal and sugar.

THE END.

THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 3rd.,
1900.

FALLS OF TUG
TO
LOUISA.

A DISTANCE
TRAVELLED OF
9 MILES.

CHAPTER XIII.



CHARACTERISTIC CABIN BELOW FALLS OF TUG

CHAPTER XIII.

A brilliantly clear morning on Thursday, the last day, brought a more cheerful aspect to the scene. The "Falls" indeed, were a sad disappointment, as the river where they were supposed to be showed not the remotest suggestion of a ripple. Even the natives felt called upon to apologize, and asserted that at certain stages of water the fall was quite perceptible, and the current very swift. As we had certainly felt justified in looking for something more than the rifts commonly called shoals-- which were common, and never dignified by the name "fall,"-- it was a sad come-down.

Breakfast, however, was cheering, being excellent, and accompanied by voluble apologies for sending us to bed supperless, and some interesting table-talk. One old fellow from Kenova particularly impressed himself. His eyes twinkled with enthusiasm, his short gray mustache bristled earnestly, and his whole person helped to express his emotion as he wound up nearly every story or assertion with a high-keyed, long-drawn "Y-e-e-s-s-s!" more completely expressive of surprised conviction than anything I ever heard.

After breakfast the current-meter was called forth once more. Finding a beautiful sandy bottom, we took the horses along, and when the work was done, all hands had a mag-

nificent bath. The horses, perhaps, didn't enjoy it as much as we, but when they were rubbed dry and well brushed, they showed the effects to a satisfactory degree. As the sun rose in the brilliantly clear morning air, it grew amazingly hot, and we were glad to have several sets of measurements to work out and record indoors in the hour or so left before dinner.

The afternoon was uneventful. The sun was blistering hot, the air still, and the road good, following close to the west bank of the Tug. From Clifford down there was deep slack-water from the dam at Louisa. Half way down huge quarries were to be seen on the desolate hills of the east bank, whence had come the stonework for the dam.

The first passer-by was induced to help the Captain get a picture of the expedition, and then we proceeded with the sole idea of keeping as cool as possible until, about mid-afternoon, we emerged upon the "Point" opposite the upper end of Louisa. An owl-hoot from the Captain drew into sight a couple of the girls, who waved a greeting while the lumbering flat-boat ferry crawled across the stream. Salutations were cordial and numerous as we passed through the town, and comment on our dress and appearance mirthful and unrestrained. At the office the entire force turned out to welcome and chaff. Mrs. Hazleton rushed orders up-town for a feast, and it would be hard to find a jollier crowd than gathered around that festive suppertable.

But for the strangeness in the sensation of being decently clean, fresh-shaven and linen clad, it was hard to realize that twenty-four hours before, we had been riding

down the desolate Buffalo Horn. Already the two weeks in the hills were as mere a memory as they are now-- a memory of green hills and rocky streams, of strange people and customs, of a life physically and mentally inert, choked by impossible roadways, inhumanly bad food and medieval customs and ideals, yet flowering into a simple courtesy and, on the whole, a fundamental honesty, which are to me the most remarkable things in that country.