

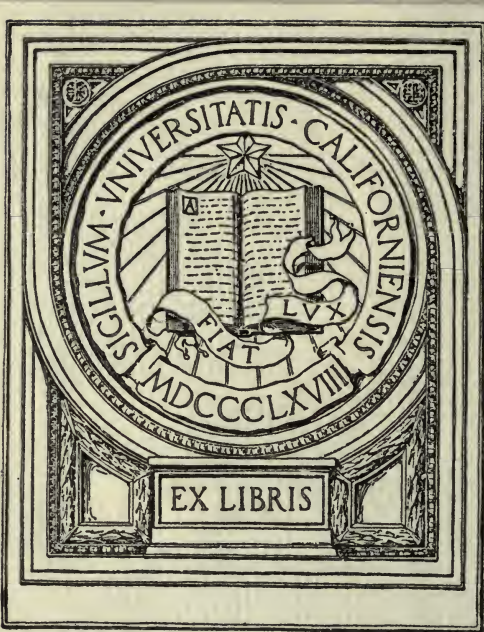


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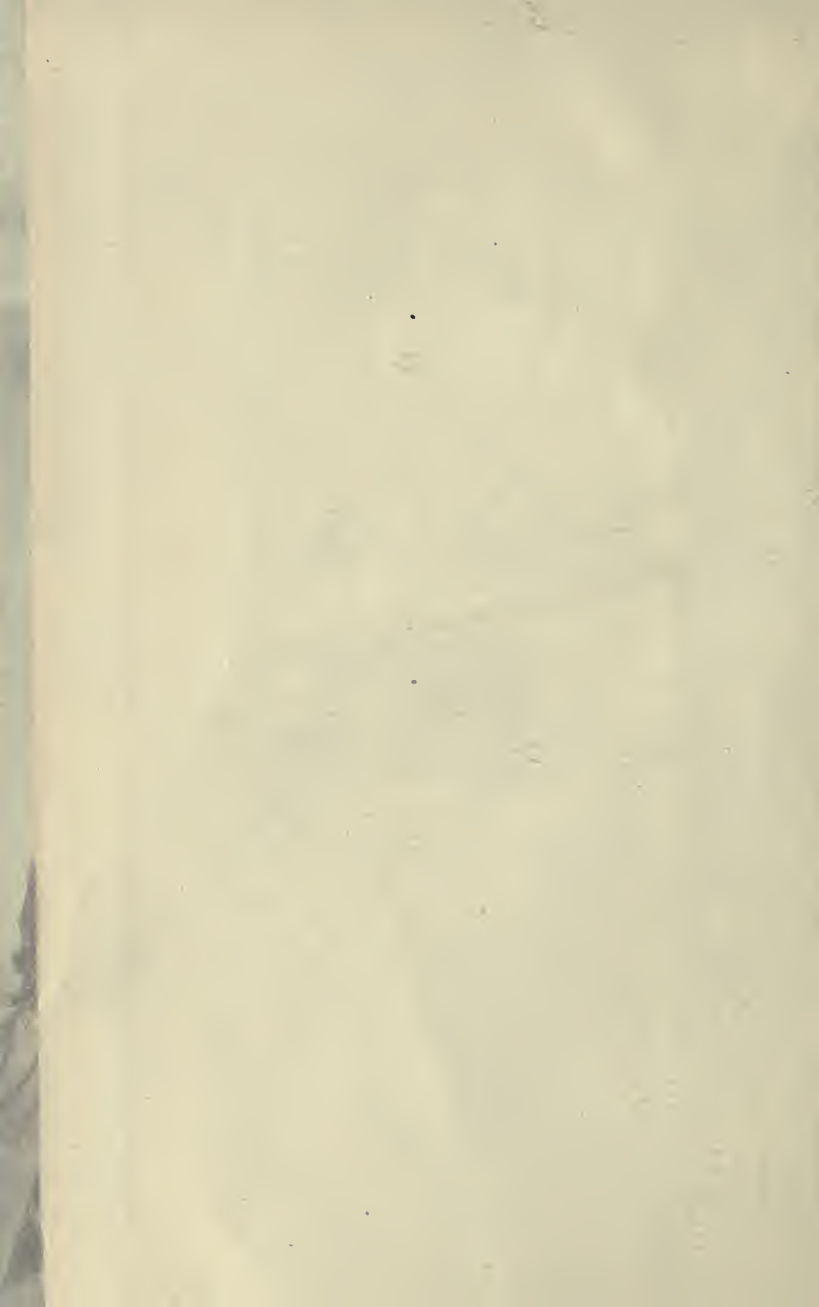




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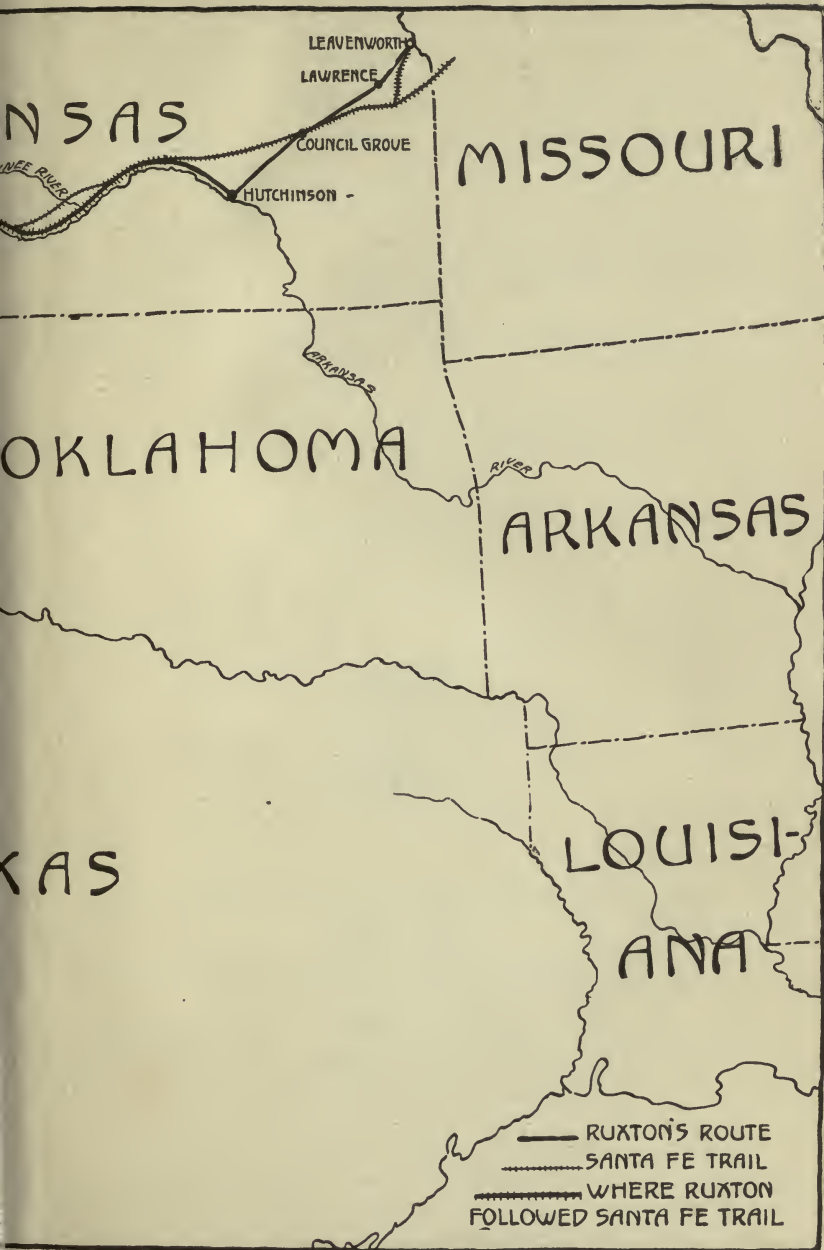
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WILD LIFE IN THE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS

By GEORGE FREDERICK RUXTON

A True Tale of Rough Adventure
in the Days of the Mexican War

EDITED BY
HORACE KEPHART



NEW YORK
OUTING PUBLISHING COMPANY
MCMXVI

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INTRODUCTION

The present volume is a continuation of "Adventures in Mexico," by Lieutenant Ruxton which precedes it in this Library of Adventure.

Here we take up the story of our author's journey northward from Chihuahua to the Rocky Mountains. Passing through treeless deserts, where he and his animals suffered much from lack of water, he arrived at Valverde, and there met the advanced post of the American army, which had invaded Mexico after the declaration of war in May of this year, 1846. At this place Ruxton's servants left him, and thenceforth he had to shift for himself.

In December he reached Santa Fé. Shortly before New Year's day, after a hard journey, in which he froze one of his feet, and was mistreated by the New Mexicans, he crossed the United States boundary line. Winter travel in the mountains was extremely trying; but he pushed on, and, at the Arkansas River, fell in with typical "mountain men," as the hunters and trappers of the Far West were called. Taking a course up the Fontaine-qui-bouille, he finally gained the famous hunting ground of the Bayou Salado, now known as South Park (Colorado). In this sportsman's paradise he remained for the rest of the winter.

Early in May, 1847, he started, in company of a wagon-train, for Missouri. From Chouteau's Island to Coon Creek the caravan passed, day by day, through countless herds of buffalo, which covered the plains in such incredible numbers that in one place, over a space thirty miles long by sixteen wide, the spectators could not see anywhere an unoccupied patch of grass ten yards square.

At Fort Leavenworth the traveler at last fell in with civilized society, but was mistaken for an Indian chief, owing to his bronzed visage and barbaric dress of fringed buckskins. Here he took passage on a steamboat down the Missouri River to St. Louis. By boat and stage-coach and rail he then proceeded, via Chicago and Detroit, to New York, and then set sail for England, where he arrived in August, 1847, after one of the most venturesome and difficult tours that had been made within his generation.

He tarried in England just long enough to see his books through the press, and then set forth once more for wildest America. Alas! it was not granted that he should camp again in his beloved Bayou Salado. At St. Louis he was stricken with a mortal ailment. He died in the old Planter's House, in September, 1848, at the age of twenty-eight, and was buried near the Father of Waters.

A sketch of the author's life was published in the first volume of this Library (his "In the Old West").

Ruxton was one of those children of nature of whom Parkman wrote:—

"Thus to look back with a fond longing to inhospitable deserts, where man, beasts, and Nature herself, seem arrayed in arms, and where ease, security, and all that civilization reckons among the goods of life, are alike cut off, may appear to argue some strange perversity or moral malformation. Yet such has been the experience of many a sound and healthful mind.

"To him who has once tasted the reckless independence, the haughty self-reliance, the sense of irresponsible freedom; which the forest life engenders, civilization thenceforth seems flat and stale. Its pleasures are insipid, its pursuits wearisome, its conventionalities, duties, and mutual dependence alike tedious and disgusting. The entrapped wanderer grows fierce and restless, and pants for breathing-room. His path, it is true, was choked with difficulties, but his body and soul were hardened to meet them; it was beset with dangers, but these were the very spice of his life, gladdening his heart with exulting self-confidence, and sending the blood through his veins with a livelier current. The wilderness, rough, harsh, and inexorable,

has charms more potent in their seductive influence than all the lures of luxury and sloth; and often he upon whom it has cast its magic finds no heart to dissolve the spell, and remains a wanderer and an Ishmaelite to the hour of his death."

Ruxton's short life was so crowded with activities in the field that he had little time for composition or revision, and his writings have needed careful editing. This has been given to them in the Outing Adventure Library, but it has been limited to translations, footnotes, and corrections of errors.

HORACE KEPHART.

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WILD LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER I

OUT OF OLD MEXICO

ON the 10th of November [1846] I left Chihuahua, bound for the capital of New Mexico. Passing the Rancho del Sacramento, where a few months after the Missouriians slaughtered a host of Mexicans, we entered a large plain well covered with grass, on which were immense flocks of sheep. A coyote lazily crossed the road, and, stopping within a few yards, sat down upon its haunches, and coolly regarded us as we passed. Panchito had had a four days' rest, and was in fine condition and spirits, and I determined to try the mettle of the wolf; the level plain, with its springy turf, offering a fine field for a course.

Cantering gently at first, the coyote allowed me to approach within a hundred yards before he loped lazily away; but finding I was on his traces, he looked round, and, gathering himself up, bowled away at full speed. Then I gave Panchito the spur, and, answering it with a bound, we were soon at the stern of the wolf.

Then, for the first time, the animal saw we were in earnest, and, with a sweep of his bushy tail, pushed for his life across the plain.

At the distance of two or three miles a rocky ridge was in sight, where he evidently thought to secure a retreat, but Panchito bounded along like the wind itself, and soon proved to the wolf that his race was run. After trying in vain to double, he made one desperate rush, upon which, lifting Panchito with rein and leg, came up and passed the panting beast, when, seeing that escape was impossible, he lay down, and with sullen and cowardly resignation, curled up for the expected blow, as, pistol in hand, I reined up Panchito at his side. However, I was merciful, and allowed the animal to escape.

At ten at night I arrived at the hacienda of El Sauz, belonging to the Governor of Chihuahua, Don Angel Trias. It was enclosed with a high wall, as a protection from the Indians, who, a short time before, had destroyed the cattle of the hacienda, filling a well in the middle of the corral with the carcasses of slaughtered sheep and oxen. It was still bricked up.

The next day we proceeded to another hacienda, likewise called after the willows, Los Sauzillos. Passing a large plain, in the midst of which stood a lone poplar, wolves were continually crossing the road, both the coyote and the large grey variety. I was this day mounted

upon the *alazan* [roan] which I had purchased at Guajoquilla. We were within sight of our halting-place for the night, when the horse, which had carried me all day without my having had recourse to whip or spur, suddenly began to flag, and I noticed that a profuse perspiration had broken out on its ears and neck. I instantly dismounted, and perceived a quivering in the flank and a swelling of the belly. Before I could remove the saddle the poor beast fell down, and, although I opened a vein and made every attempt to relieve it, it once more rose to its legs, and, spinning round in the greatest apparent agony, fell dead to the ground.

The cause of its death was, that my servant, contrary to my orders, had given the animals young corn the night before, which food is often fatal to horses not accustomed to feed on grain.

This rancho is situated on the margin of a lake of brackish water, and we found the people actual prisoners within its walls, the gates being closed, and a man stationed on the *azotea* with a large wall-piece, looking out for Indians. At night a large fire was kindled on the roof, the blaze of which illuminated the country far and near. Not a soul would venture after sunset outside the gate, which the majordomo, a Gachupin, refused to open to allow my servant to procure some wood for a fire to cook my

supper, and we had to content ourselves with one of corncobs, which lay scattered about the corral.

On the 12th, passing Encinillas, a large hacienda belonging to Don Angel Trias, we encamped on the banks of an arroyo, running through the middle of a plain, walled by sierras, where the Apaches had several villages. This being very dangerous ground, we put out the fire at sunset, and took all precautions against surprise. The animals fared badly, the grass being thin and burned up by the sun, and what little there was being of bad quality.

The next day we reached the small village of El Carmen, and, camping by a little thread of a rivulet outside of the town, were surrounded by all the loafers of the village. The night was very cold, and our fire, the fuel for which we purchased, was completely surrounded by these idle vagabonds. At last, my temper being frozen out of me, I went up to the fire, and said, "Señores, allow me to present you with three rials, which will enable you to purchase wood for two fires; this fire I will be obliged to you if you will allow myself and fellow-travellers to warm ourselves by, as we are very cold; and also, with your kind permission, wish to cook our suppers by it." This was enough for them: a Mexican, like a Spaniard, is very sensitive, and the hint went through them. They immediate-

ly dispersed, and I saw no more of them the remainder of the evening.

Near El Carmen is a pretty little stream, fringed with alamos, which runs through a wild and broken country of sierras. The plains, generally about ten to twenty miles in length, are divided from each other by an elevated ridge, but there is no perceptible difference in the elevation of them from Chihuahua to El Paso. The road is level excepting in crossing these ridges, and hard everywhere except on the marshy plain of Encinillas, which is often inundated. This lake has no outlet, and is fed by numerous small streams from the sierras; its length is ten miles, by three in breadth. The marshy ground around the lake is covered with an alkaline efflorescence called tezquite, a substance of considerable value. The water, impregnated with salts, is brackish and unpleasant to the taste, but in the rainy season loses its disagreeable properties.

On the 14th we travelled sixty miles, and camped on a bare plain without wood or water, the night being so dark that we were unable to reach Carrizal, although it was but a few miles distant from our encampment. The next morning we reached the village, where I stopped the whole day, during an extraordinary hurricane of wind, which rendered travelling impossible. We had been on short commons for

two days, as the hungry escort had devoured my provisions, but here I resolved to have a feast, and, setting all hands to forage, on return we found our combined efforts had produced an imposing pile of several yards of beef (for here the meat is cut into long strips and dried), onions, chiles, frijoles, sweet corn, eggs, &c. An enormous *olla* [earthen pot] was procured, and everything was bundled pell-mell into it, seasoned with pepper and salt and chile.

To protect the fire from the hurricane that was blowing, all the packs and saddles were piled round it, and my servant and the soldiers relieved each other in their vigilant watch of the precious compound, myself superintending the process of cooking. Our appetites, ravenous with a fast of twenty-four hours, were in first-rate order, but we determined that the pot should be left on the fire until the savory mess was perfectly cooked. It was within an hour or two of sunset, and we had not yet broken our fast. The *olla* simmered, and a savory steam pervaded the air. The dragoons licked their lips, and their eyes watered—never had they had such a feast in perspective; for myself, I never removed my eyes from the pot, and had just resolved that, when the *puro* in my mouth was smoked out, the *puchero** would have attained perfection. At length the moment

* A Spanish dish made from meat and vegetables. (Ed.)

arrived: my mozo, with a blazing smile, approached the fire, and with guarded hands seized the top of the *olla*, and lifted it from the ashes.

“*Ave Maria Purissima! Santissima Virgen!*” broke from the lips of the dragoons; “*Mil carajos!*” burst from the *heart* of the mozo; and I sank almost senseless to the ground. On lifting the pot the bottom fell out, and splash went everything into the blazing fire. *Valgame Dios!* what a moment was that! Stupefied, and hardly crediting our senses, we gazed at the burning, frizzling, hissing remnants, as they were consuming before our eyes. Nothing was rescued, and our elaborate feast was simplified into a supper of frijoles and chile colorado, which, after some difficulty, we procured from the village.

The next morning we started before daylight, and at sunrise watered our animals at the little lake called Laguna de Patos, from the ducks which frequent it; and at midday we halted at another spring, the Ojo de la Estrella—star spring—where we again watered them, as we should be obliged to camp that night without water. We chose a camping-ground in a large plain covered with mezquit, which afforded us a little fuel—now become very necessary, as the nights were piercingly cold. As we had been unable to procure provisions in Carrizal, we

went to bed supperless, which was now a very usual occurrence. My animals suffered from the cold, which, coming as they did from the *tierra caliente*, they felt excessively, particularly a little blood horse with an exceedingly fine coat. I was obliged to share my blankets with this poor animal, or I believe it would have died in the night.

Just at daybreak the next morning I was riding in advance of the party, when I met a cavalcade of horsemen whose wild costume, painted faces, and arms consisting of bows and arrows, made me think at first that they were Indians. On their part, they evidently did not know what to make of me, and halted while two of them rode forward to reconnoitre. I quickly slipped the cover off my rifle, and advanced. Seeing my escort following, they saw we were *amigos*; but the nearer they approached me, the more certain was I that they were Apaches for they were all in Indian dress, and frightfully painted. I was as nearly as possible shooting the foremost, when he exclaimed in Spanish, "*Adios, amigo! que novedades hay?*"—and I then saw a number of mules, packed with bales and barrels, behind him. They were *Paseños*, on their way to Chihuahua, with *aguardiente*, raisins, and fruit; and shortly after passing them, I found in the road a large bag of *pazas* or raisins, which I pounced upon as a

great prize, and, waiting until the escort came up, we dismounted, and, sitting at the roadside, devoured the fruit with great gusto, as this was our second day of banyan. This bag lasted for many days. I found the raisins a great improvement to stews, &c., and we popped a handful or two into every dish.

At ten o'clock we reached a muddy hole of water, entirely frozen—my animals refusing to drink, being afraid of the ice after we had broken it. The water was as thick as pea-soup; nevertheless we filled our *huages* with it, as we should probably meet with none so good that day. Towards sunset we passed a most extraordinary mountain of loose shifting sand, three miles in breadth, and, according to the *Paseños*, sixty in length. The huge rolling mass of sand is nearly destitute of vegetation, save here and there a bunch of greasewood half-buried in the sand. Road there is none, but a track across is marked by the skeletons and dead bodies of oxen, and of mules and horses, which everywhere meet the eye. On one ridge the upper half of a human skeleton protruded from the sand, and bones of animals and carcasses in every stage of decay. The sand is knee-deep, and constantly shifting, and pack-animals have great difficulty in passing.

After sunset we reached a dirty, stagnant pool, known as the *Ojo de Malayuca*; but, as

there was not a blade of grass in the vicinity, we were compelled to turn out of the road and search over the arid plain for a patch to camp in. At last we succeeded in finding a spot, and encamped, without wood, water, or supper, being the second day's fast. The next day, passing a broken country, perfectly barren, we struck into the valley of El Paso, and for the first time I saw the well-timbered bottom of the Rio Bravo del Norte. Descending a ridge covered with greasewood and mezquit, we entered the little village of El Paso, with its vineyards and orchards and well-cultivated gardens lying along the right bank of the river.

On entering the plaza I was immediately surrounded by a crowd, for my escort had ridden before me and mystified them with wonderful accounts of my importance. However, as I did not choose to enlighten them as to my destination or the object of my journey, they were fain to rest satisfied with the egregious lies of the *dragones*. In the plaza was a little guard-house, where a ferocious captain was in command of a dirty dozen or two of *soldados*. This worthy, to show his importance, sent a sergeant to order my instant attendance at the guard-room. In as many words I told the astonished messenger to tell his officer "to go to the devil;" to his horror, and the delight of the surrounding crowd. The answer was delivered word for

word, but I heard no more from the military hero. My next visitor was the *prefecto*, who is an important personage in a small place. That worthy, with a dignified air, asked in a determined tone, as much as to say to the crowd "See how soon I will learn his business"—

"*Por onde pasa usted, caballero?*—Where are you bound?"

"*Por Santa Fé y Nuevo Mejico,*" I answered.

"No, señor," he immediately rejoined, "this cannot be permitted: by the order of the Governor no one is allowed to go to the north; and I must request, moreover, that you exhibit your passport and other *documentos*."

"*Hi lo tiene usted*—here you have it"—I answered, producing a credential which at once caused the hat to fly from his head, and an offer of himself, "*su casa, y todo lo que tiene, a mi disposicion*—his house, and all in it, at my disposal." However, all his munificent offers were declined, as I had letters to the *cura*, a young priest named Ortiz, whose unbounded hospitality I enjoyed during my stay.

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY OF THE DEAD

EL PASO DEL NORTE, so called from the ford of that river, which is here first struck and crossed on the way to New Mexico, is the oldest settlement in Northern Mexico, a mission having been established there by *el padre* Fray Augustine Ruiz, one of the Franciscan monks who first visited New Mexico, as early as the close of the sixteenth century (about the year 1585). Fray Ruiz, in company with two others, named Venabides and Marcos, discovering in the natives a laudable disposition to receive the word of God and embrace "*la santa fé Catolica,*" remained here a considerable time, preaching by signs to the Indians, and making many miraculous conversions. Eventually, Venabides having returned to Spain and given a glowing account of the riches of the country, and the *muy buen indole*—the very proper disposition of the aborigines—Don Juan Oñate was despatched to conquer, take possession of, and govern the remote colony, and on his way to Santa Fé established a permanent settlement at El Paso. Twelve families from

Old Castile accompanied Oñate to Nuevo Mejico to form a colony, and their descendants still remain scattered over the province.

Several years after, when the Spanish colonists were driven out of New Mexico, they retreated to El Paso, where they erected a fortification, and maintained themselves until the arrival of reinforcements from Mexico. The present settlement is scattered for about fifteen miles along the right bank of the Del Norte, and contains five or six thousand inhabitants. The plaza, or village, of El Paso, is situated at the head of the valley, and at the other extremity is the presidio of San Eleazario. Between the two is a continued line of adobe houses, with their plots of garden and vineyard.

The farms seldom contain more than twenty acres, each family having a separate house and plot of land.

The Del Norte is dammed about a mile above the ford, and water is conveyed by an *acequia madre*—main canal—to irrigate the valley. From this *acequia*, other smaller ones branch out in every direction, until the land is intersected in every part with dykes, and is thus rendered fertile and productive.

The soil produces wheat, maize, and other grains, and is admirably adapted to the growth of the vine, which is cultivated here, and yields abundantly; and a wine of excellent flavor is

made from the grapes. Brandy of a tolerable quality is also manufactured, and, under the name of *aguardiente del Paso*, is highly esteemed in Durango and Chihuahua. Under proper management wine-making here might become a very profitable branch of trade, as the interior of Mexico is now supplied with French wines, the cost of which, owing to the long land-carriage from the seaports, is enormous, and wine might be made from the Paso grape equal to the best growths of France or Spain. Fruits of all kinds, common to temperate regions, and vegetables, are abundant and of good quality.

The river bottom is timbered with cottonwoods, which extend a few hundred yards on each side the banks. The river itself is here a small turbid stream, with water of a muddy red, but in the season of the rains it is swollen to six times its present breadth, and frequently overflows the banks. It is of fordable depth in almost any part; but, from the constantly shifting quicksands and bars, is always difficult, and often dangerous, to cross with loaded wagons. It abounds with fish and eels of large size. The houses of the Paseños are built of the adobe, and are small but clean and neatly kept. Here, as everywhere else in Northern Mexico, the people are in constant fear of Indian attacks, and, from the frequent devastations of the

Apaches, the valley has been almost swept of horses, mules, and cattle. The New Mexicans too, disguised as Indians, often plunder these settlements (as occurred during my visit, when two were captured), and frequently accompany the Apaches in their raids on the state of Chihuahua.—*Cosas de Mejico!*

At this time the Paseños had enrolled themselves into a body of troops termed *auxiliares*, 700 strong; but in spite of them the Apaches attacked a *mulada* at the outskirts of the town, and, but for the bravery of two negroes, runaway slaves from the Cherokee nation, would have succeeded in carrying off the whole herd; this was during my stay in this part of the country. One of the herders was killed, but the negroes, when the animals were already in the hands of the Indians, seized their rifles and came to the rescue, succeeding in recapturing the *mulada*.

At El Paso I found four Americans, prisoners at large. They had arrived here on their way to California, with a mountain trapper as their guide, who, from some disagreement respecting the amount of pay he was to receive, thought proper to revenge himself by denouncing them as spies, and they were consequently thrown into prison. It being subsequently discovered that the informer had committed the most barefaced perjury, these men were released, and the denouncer confined in their stead—quite an

un-Mexican act of justice. However, as they had arrived unprovided with passports, they were detained as prisoners, although permitted to go at large about the place, living, or rather existing, on charity. Their baggage had been taken from them, their animals sold, and they were left to shift for themselves. I endeavored to procure their liberty, by offering to take them with me, and guarantee their good conduct while in the country, and also that they would not take up arms against the Mexicans; but this having no effect, and as the poor fellows were in a wretched condition, I advised them to run for it, promising to pick them up on the road and supply them with the necessary provision, and cautioning them at the same time to conceal themselves in the daytime, travelling at night, and on no account to enter the settlements. They disappeared from El Paso the same night, and what became of them will be presently shown.

On the 19th I left the Paso with an escort of fifteen *auxiliares*, a ragged troop, with whom to have marched through Coventry would have broken the heart of Sir John Falstaff. Armed with bows and arrows, lances, and old rusty *escopetas* [muskets] and mounted on miserable horses, their appearance was anything but warlike, and far from formidable. I did my best to escape the honor, knowing that they would

only be in my way, and of not the slightest use in case of Indian attack; but all my protestations were attributed to modesty, and were overruled, and I was fain to put myself at the head of the band of valiant Paseños, who were to escort me to the borders of the state of Chihuahua. One of them, a very old man, with a long lance which he carried across his saddle-bow, and an old rusty bell-mouthed *escopeta*, attached himself particularly to me, riding by my side, and pointing out the bad points—the *mal puntos*—whence the Apaches usually made their attacks. He had, he told me, served all through the War of Independence, “*y por el Rey—for the king*”—he added, reverently doffing his hat at the mention of the king. He was a loyalist heart and soul. “*Ojalá por los dias felices del reyno!*—alas for the happy time when Mexico was ruled by a king!”—was his constant sighing exclamation. A *doblon*, with the head of Carlos Tercero, hung round his neck, and was ever in his hand, being reverently kissed every few miles. He was, he said, “*medio tonto—half-crazy*”—and made verses, very sorry ones, but he would repeat them to me when we arrived in camp.

Leaving El Paso, we travelled along the rugged precipitous bank of the river, crossing it about three miles above the village, and, striking into a wild barren-looking country,

again made the river about sunset, and encamped in the bottom, under some very large cottonwoods, at a point called Los Alamitos—the little poplars—although they are enormous trees. We had here a very picturesque camp. Several fires gleamed under the trees, and round them lay the savage-looking Pasaños, whilst the animals were picketed round about. Several deer jumped out of the bottom when we entered, and on the banks of the river I saw some fresh beaver “sign.”

The next day, halting an hour at the Brazitos, an encamping-ground so called, and a short time afterwards passing the battle-ground where Doniphan’s Missourians routed the Mexicans, we saw Indian sign on the banks of the river, where a considerable body had just crossed. A little farther on we met a party of seven soldiers returning from a successful hunt after the Americans who had escaped from the Paso. These unfortunates were sitting quietly behind their captors, who had overtaken them at the little settlement of Doñana, which they foolishly entered to obtain provisions.

Doñana is a very recent settlement of ten or fifteen families, who, tempted by the richness of the soil, abandoned their farms in the valley of El Paso, and have here attempted to cultivate a small tract in the very midst of the Apaches, who have already paid them several visits and

carried off or destroyed their stock of cattle. The huts are built of logs and mud, and situated on the top of a tabular bluff which looks down upon the river-bottom.

The soil along this bottom, from El Paso to the settlements of New Mexico, is amazingly rich, and admirably adapted for the growth of all kinds of grain. The timber upon it is cottonwood, dwarf oak, and mezquit, under which is a thick undergrowth of bushes. Several attempts have been made to settle this productive tract, but have all of them failed from the hostility of the Apaches. Should this department fall into the hands of the Americans, it will soon become a thriving settlement; for the hardy backwoodsman, with his axe on one shoulder and rifle on the other, will not be deterred by the savage, like the present pusillanimous owners of the soil, from turning it to account.

The next day we encamped at San Diego, the point where the traveller leaves the river and enters upon the dreaded *Jornada del Muerto*—the journey of the dead man. All the camping and watering places on the river are named, but there are no settlements, with the exception of Doñana, between El Paso and Socorro, the first settlement in New Mexico, a distance of 250 miles.

At San Diego we saw more Indian signs, the

consequence of which was, that my escort reported their horses to be exhausted and unable to proceed; so, nothing loth, I gave them their congé, and the next morning they retraced their steps to El Paso, leaving me with my two servants to pass the *jornada*. I was now at the edge of this formidable desert, where along the road the bleaching bones of mules and horses testify to the dangers to be apprehended from the want of water and pasture, and many human bones likewise tell their tale of Indian slaughter and assault.

I remained in camp until noon, when for the last time we led the animals to the water and allowed them to drink their fill: we then mounted, and at a sharp pace struck at once into the *jornada*. The road is perfectly level and hard, and over plains bounded by sierras. Palmillas and bushes of sage (*artemisia*) are scattered here and there, but the mezquit is now becoming scarce, the tornilla or screw-wood taking its place; farther on this wood ceases, and there is then no fuel to be met with of any description. Large herds of antelope bounded past, and coyotes skulked along on their trail, and prairie-dog towns were met every few miles, but their inmates were snug in their winter-quarters, and only made their appearance to bask in the meridian sun.

Shortly after leaving San Diego we found

water in a little hole called El Perillo (the little dog), but our animals, having so lately drunk, would not profit by the discovery, and we hurried on, keeping the pack-animals in a sharp trot. Near the Perillo is a point of rocks which abuts upon the road, and from which a large body of Apaches a few years since pounced upon a band of American trappers and entirely defeated them, killing several and carrying off all their animals. Behind these rocks they frequently lie in ambush, shooting down the unwary traveller, whose first intimation of their presence is the puff of smoke from the rocks, or the whiz of an arrow through the air. One of my mozos, who was a New Mexican and knew the country well, warned me of the dangers of this spot, and before passing it I halted the mules and rode on to reconnoitre; but no Apache lurked behind it, and we passed unmolested.

About midnight we stopped at the Laguna del Muerto—the dead man's lake—a depression in the plain, which in the rainy season is covered with water, but was now hard and dry. We rested the animals here for half an hour, and, collecting a few armfuls of artemisia, attempted to make a fire, for we were all benumbed with cold; but the dry twigs blazed brightly for a minute, and were instantly consumed. By the temporary light it afforded us we discovered that a large party of Indians had passed the

very spot but a few hours, and were probably not far off at that moment, and, if so, they would certainly be attracted by our fire, so we desisted in our attempts. The mules and horses, which had travelled at a very quick pace, were suffering, even thus early, from want of water, and my horse bit off the neck of a huage, or gourd, which I had placed on the ground, and which the poor beast by his nose knew to contain water. However, as there was not a vestige of grass on the spot, after a halt of half an hour, we again mounted and proceeded on our journey, continuing at a rapid pace all night. At sunrise we halted for a couple of hours on a patch of grass which afforded a bite to the tired animals, and about three in the afternoon had the satisfaction of reaching the river at the watering-place called Fray Cristoval, having performed the whole distance of the *jornada*, of ninety-five, or, as some say, one hundred miles, in little more than twenty hours.

The plain through which the dead man's journey passes is one of a system, or series, which stretch along the table-land between the Sierra Madre, or main chain of the Cordillera, on the west, and the small mountain-chain of the Sierra Blanca and the Organos, which form the dividing ridge between the waters of the Del Norte and the Rio Pecos. Through this valley,

fed by but few streams, runs the Del Norte. Its water, from the constant abrasion of the banks of alluvial soil, is very muddy and discolored, but nevertheless of excellent quality, and has the reputation at El Paso of possessing chemical properties which prevent diseases of the kidneys, stone, &c. &c.

The White Mountain and the Organos are singularly destitute of streams, but on the latter is said to be a small lake, in the waters of which may be seen the phenomenon of a daily rise and fall similar to a tide. They are also reported to abound in minerals, but, from the fact of these sierras being the hiding-places of Apaches, they are never visited excepting during a hostile expedition against these Indians, and consequently in these excursions but little opportunity is afforded for an examination of the country. The sierras are also celebrated for medicinal herbs of great value, which the Apaches, when at peace with the Paseños, sometimes bring in for sale.

Indeed, from the accounts which I received from the people of these mountains, I should judge them to be well worthy of a visit, which however would be extremely hazardous on account of the hostility of the Indians and the scarcity of water. Their formation is apparently volcanic, and, judging from the nature of the plains, which in many places are strewed with

volcanic substances, and exhibit the bluffs of tabular form, composed of basaltic lava, known by the name of mesas (tables), the valley must at one time have been subjected to volcanic agency.

Staying at Fray Cristoval but one night, I pushed on to the ruins of Valverde, a long-deserted rancheria, a few miles beyond which was the advanced post of the American troops. Here, encamped on the banks of the river in the heavy timber, I found a great portion of the caravan which I have before mentioned as being en route to Chihuahua, and also a surveying party under the command of Lieut. Abert, of the United States Topographical Engineers.

Being entirely out of provisions, and my camp hungry, the next morning I mounted my hunting-mule, and crossed the river, which was partially frozen, to look for deer in the bottom. Thanks to my mule, as I was passing through a thicket I saw her prick her ears and look on one side, and, following her gaze, descried three deer standing under a tree with their heads turned towards me. My rifle was quickly up to my shoulder, and a fine large doe dropped to the report, shot through the heart. Being in a hurry, I did not wait to cut it up, but threw it on to my mule, which I drove before me to the river. Large blocks of ice were floating down, which rendered the passage difficult, but I

mounted behind the deer and pushed the mule into the stream. Just as we had got into the middle of the current a large piece of ice struck her, and, to prevent herself being carried down the stream, she threw herself on her haunches, and I slipped over the tail, and head over ears into the water. Rid of the extra load, the mule carried the deer safely over and trotted off to camp, where she quietly stood to be unpacked, leaving me, drenched to the skin, to follow after her.

The traders had been lying here many weeks, and the bottom where they were encamped presented quite a picturesque appearance. The timber extends half a mile from the river, and the cottonwood trees are of large size, without any undergrowth of bushes. Amongst the trees, in open spaces, were drawn up the wagons, formed into a corral or square, and close together, so that the whole made a most formidable fort, and, when filled with some hundred rifles, could defy the attacks of Indians or Mexicans. Scattered about were tents and shanties of logs and branches of every conceivable form, round which lounged wild-looking Missourians, some cooking at the camp-fires, some cleaning their rifles or firing at targets—blazes cut in the trees, with a bull's-eye made with wet powder on the white bark. From morning till night the camp resounded with the popping of rifles,

firing at marks for prizes of tobacco, or at any living creature which presented itself.

The oxen, horses, and mules were sent out at daylight to pasture on the grass of the prairie, and at sunset made their appearance, driven in by the Mexican herders, and were secured for the night in the corrals. My own animals roamed at will, but every evening came to the river to drink, and made their way to my camp, where they would frequently stay round the fire all night. They never required herding, for they made their appearance as regularly as the day closed, and would come to my whistle whenever I required my hunting-mule. The poor beasts were getting very poor, not having had corn since leaving El Paso, and having subsisted during the journey from that place on very little of the coarsest kind of grass. They felt it the more as they were all accustomed to be fed on grain; and the severe cold was very trying to them, coming, as they did, from a tropical climate. My favorite horse, Panchito, had lost all his good looks; his once full and arched neck was now a perfect "ewe," and his ribs and hip-bones were almost protruding through the skin; but he was as game as ever, and had never once flinched in his work.

Provisions of all kinds were very scarce in the camp, and the game, being constantly hunted, soon disappeared. Having been invited to join

the hospitable mess of the officers of the Engineers, I fortunately did not suffer, although even they were living on their rations, and on the produce of our guns. The traders, mostly young men from the eastern cities, were fine hearty fellows, who employ their capital in this trade because it combines pleasure with profit, and the excitement and danger of the journey through the Indian country are more agreeable than the monotonous life of a city merchant. The volunteers' camp was some three miles up the river on the other side. Colonel Doniphan, who commanded, had just returned from an expedition into the Navajo country for the purpose of making a treaty with the chiefs of that nation, who have hitherto been bitter enemies of the New Mexicans. From appearances no one would have imagined this to be a military encampment. The tents were in a line, but there all uniformity ceased. There were no regulations in force with regard to cleanliness. The camp was strewed with the bones and offal of the cattle slaughtered for its supply, and not the slightest attention was paid to keeping it clear from other accumulations of filth.

The men, unwashed and unshaven, were ragged and dirty, without uniforms, and dressed as, and how, they pleased. They wandered about, listless and sickly-looking, or were sitting in groups playing at cards, and swearing and

cursing, even at the officers if they interfered to stop it (as I witnessed). The greatest irregularities constantly took place. Sentries, or a guard, although in an enemy's country, were voted unnecessary; and one fine day, during the time I was here, three Navajo Indians ran off with a flock of eight hundred sheep belonging to the camp, killing the two volunteers in charge of them, and reaching the mountains in safety with their booty. Their mules and horses were straying over the country; in fact, the most total want of discipline was apparent in everything. These very men, however, were as full of fight as game cocks, and shortly after defeated four times their number of Mexicans at Sacramento, near Chihuahua.

The American can never be made a soldier; his constitution will not bear the restraint of discipline, neither will his very mistaken notions about liberty allow him to subject himself to its necessary control. In a country abounding with all the necessaries of life, and where any one of physical ability is at no loss for profitable employment—moreover, where, from the nature of the country, the lower classes lead a life free from all the restraint of society, and almost its conventional laws—it is easy to conceive that it would require great inducements for a man to enter the army and subject himself to discipline for the sake of the

trifling remuneration, when so many other sources of profitable employment are open to him. For these reasons the service is unpopular, and only resorted to by men who are either too indolent to work, or whose bad characters prevent them seeking other employment.

The volunteering service on the other hand is eagerly sought, on occasions such as the present war with Mexico affords, by young men even of the most respectable classes, as, in this, discipline exists but in name, and they have privileges and rights, such as electing their own officers, &c., which they consider to be more consonant to their ideas of liberty and equality. The system is palpably bad, as they have sufficiently proved in this war. The election of officers is made entirely a political question, and quite irrespective of their military qualities, and, knowing the footing on which they stand with the men, they, if even they know how, are afraid to exact of them either order or discipline. Of drill or manœuvring the volunteers have little or no idea. "Every man on his own hook" is their system in action; and trusting to, and confident in, their undeniable bravery, they "go ahead," and overcome all obstacles. No people know better the advantages of discipline than do the officers of the regular service; and it is greatly to their credit that they can keep the standing army in the state it is. As

it is mostly composed of foreigners—Germans, English, and Irish, and deserters from the British army—they might be brought to as perfect a state of discipline as any of the armies of Europe; but the feeling of the people will not permit it; the public would at once cry out against it as contrary to republican notions and the liberty of the citizen.

There is a vast disparity between the officers of the regular army and the men they command. Receiving at West Point (an admirable institution) a military education by which they acquire a practical as well as theoretical knowledge of the science of war, as a class they are probably more distinguished for military knowledge than the officers of any European army. Uniting with this a high chivalrous feeling and most conspicuous gallantry, they have all the essentials of the officer and soldier. Notwithstanding this, they have been hitherto an unpopular class in the United States, being accused of having a tendency to aristocratic feeling; but rather, I do believe, from the marked distinction in education and character which divides them from the mass, than any other reason. However, the late operations in Mexico have sufficiently proved that to their regular officers alone, and more particularly to those who have been educated at the much-decried West Point, are to be attributed the successes which have every-

where attended the American arms; and it is notorious that on more than one occasion the steadiness of the small regular force, and particularly of the artillery, under their command, has saved the army from most serious disasters.

I remained at Valverde encampment several days in order to recruit my animals before proceeding farther to the north, passing the time in hunting; game, although driven from the vicinity of the camp, being still plentiful at a little distance. Besides deer and antelope, turkeys were very abundant in the river bottom; and, of lesser game, hares, rabbits, and quail were met with on the plain, and geese and ducks in the river.

One day I got a shot at a panther (painter), but did not kill it, as my old mule was so disturbed at the sight of the beast, that she refused to remain quiet. The prairie between the Del Norte and the mountain, a distance of twelve or fourteen miles, is broken into gulleys and ravines, which intersect it in every direction. At the bottom of these is a thick growth of coarse grass and grease-bushes, where the deer love to resort in the middle of the day. I was riding slowly up one of these cañons, with my rifle across the saddle-bow, and the reins thrown on the mule's neck, being at that moment engaged in lighting my pipe, when the mule pricked her ears and turned her head to one

side very suddenly, giving a cant round at the same time. I looked to the right, and saw a large panther, with his tail sweeping the ground, trotting leisurely up the side of the ravine, which rose abruptly from the dry bed of a water-course, up which I was proceeding. The animal, when it had reached the top, turned round and looked at me, its tiger-like ears erect, and its tail quivering with anger. The mule snorted and backed, but, fearing to dismount, lest the animal should run off, I raised my rifle and fired both barrels at the beast, which, giving a hissing growl, bounded away unhurt.

It was, however, dangerous to go far from the camp, as Apaches and Navajos were continually prowling round, and, as I have mentioned, had killed two of the volunteers, and stolen 800 sheep. One day, while hunting, I came upon a fire which they had just left, and, as several oxen were lost that night, this party, which, from the tracks, consisted of a man, woman, and boy, had doubtless run them off. I was that day hunting in company with a French Canadian and an American, both trappers and old mountain-men, when, at sundown, just as we had built a fire and were cooking our suppers under some trees near the river, we heard the gobble-gobble of an old turkey-cock, as he called his flock to roost. Lying motionless on the ground, we watched

the whole flock, one after another, fly up to the trees over our heads, to the number of upwards of thirty. There was still light enough to shoot, and the whole flock was within reach of our rifles, but, as we judged that we could not hope for more than one shot apiece, which would only give three birds, we agreed to wait until the moon rose, when we might bag the whole family.

Hardly daring to move, we remained quiet for several hours, as the moon rose late, consoling ourselves with our anticipations of a triumphal entry into camp, on the morrow, with twenty or thirty fine turkeys for a Christmas feast.

At length the moon rose, but unfortunately clouded: nevertheless we thought there was sufficient light for our purpose, and, rifle in hand, approached the trees where the unconscious birds were roosting. Creeping close along the ground, we stopped under the first tree we came to, and, looking up, on one of the topmost naked limbs was a round black object. The *pas* was given to me, and, raising my rifle, I endeavored to obtain a sight, but the light was too obscure to draw "a bead," although there appeared no difficulty in getting a level. I fired, expecting to hear the crash of the falling bird follow the report, but the black object on the tree never moved. My companions chuckled,

and I fired my second barrel with similar result, the bird still remaining perfectly quiet. The Canadian then stepped forth, and, taking a deliberate aim, bang he went.

“*Sacré enfant de Gârce!*” he exclaimed, finding he too had missed the bird; “I aim straight, mais light très bad, sacré!”

Bang went the other's rifle, and bang-bang went my two barrels immediately after, cutting the branch in two on which the bird was sitting, who, thinking this a hint to be off, and that he had sufficiently amused us, flew screaming away. The same compliments were paid to every individual, one bird standing nine shots before it flew off: and, to end the story, we fired away every ball in our pouches without as much as touching a feather; the fact of the matter being, that the light was not sufficient to see an object through the fine sight of the rifles.

At Valverde my Mexican servant deserted, why or wherefore I could not understand, as he did not even wait for his pay, and carried off no equivalent. I also left here the Mexico-Irishman who had accompanied me from Mapimi. He was already suffering from the severities of the climate, and, being very delicate, I did not think him able to stand a winter journey over the Rocky Mountains. He therefore returned to Chihuahua with one of the traders. From this point to my winter quarters

in the mountains I was entirely on my own resources, being unable to hire a servant in whom I could place the least confidence, and preferring to shift for myself, rather than be harassed with being always on the watch to prevent my *fidus Achates* from robbing or murdering me. My animals gave me little or no trouble, and I had now reduced my *requa* to five, having left at El Paso the *tierra caliente* [lowland] horse, another having died on the road, and a mule having been lost or strayed on the Del Norte. In travelling I had no difficulty with the pack and loose mules. I rode in front on Panchito, and the mules followed like dogs, never giving me occasion even to turn round to see if they were there; for if, by any accident, they lost sight of the horse, and other animals were near, they would gallop about smelling at each, and often, starting off to horses or mules feeding at a distance, would return at full gallop, crying with terror until they found their old friend. Panchito, on his part, showed equal signs of perturbation if they remained too far behind, as sometimes they would stop for a mouthful of grass, and, turning his head, would recall them by a loud neigh, which invariably had the effect of bringing them up at a hand-gallop.

The greatest difficulty I experienced was in packing the mules, which operation, when on an

aparejo, or Mexican pack-saddle, is the work of two men, and I may as well describe the process.

The equipment of a pack-mule—*mula de carga*—consists first and foremost of the *aparejo*, which is a square pad of stuffed leather. An idea of the shape may be formed by taking a book and placing it saddle-fashion on any object, the leaves being equally divided, and each half forming a flap of the saddle. This is placed on the mule's back on a *xerga*, or saddle-cloth, which had under it a *salea*, raw sheep-skin softened by the hand, which prevents the saddle chafing the back. The *aparejo* is then secured by a broad grass-band, which is drawn so tight, that the animal appears cut in two, and groans and grunts most awfully under the operation, which to a greenhorn seems most unnecessary and cruel. It is in this, however, that the secret of packing a mule consists; the firmer the pack-saddle, the more comfortably the mule travels, and with less risk of being "*matada*," literally killed, but meaning chafed and cut.

The *carga* is then placed on the top, if a single pack; or if two of equal size and weight one on each side, being coupled together by a rope, which balances them on the mule's back: a stout pack-rope is then thrown over all, drawn as tight as possible under the belly, and laced

round the packs, securing the load firmly in its place. A square piece of matting—*petate*—is then thrown over the pack to protect it from rain, the *tapojos* is removed from the mule's eyes, and the operation is complete. The *tapojos*—blinker—is a piece of thin embroidered leather, which is placed over the mule's eyes before being packed, and, thus blinded, the animal remains perfectly quiet. The *cargador* [packer] stands on the near side of the pack, his assistant on the other, hauling on the slack of the rope, with his knee against the side of the mule for a purchase; when the rope is taut, he cries "*Adios!*" and the packer, rejoicing "*Vaya!*" makes fast the rope on the top of the *carga*, sings out "*Anda!*" and the mule trots off to her companions, who feed round until all the mules of the *atajo* are packed.

Muleteering is the natural occupation of the Mexican. He is in all his glory when travelling as one of the *mozos* of a large *atajo*—a caravan of pack mules; but the height of his ambition is to attain the rank of *mayor-domo* or *capitan*—(the *brigadero* of Castile). The *atajos*, numbering from fifty to two hundred mules, travel a daily distance—*jornada*—of twelve or fifteen miles, each mule carrying a pack weighing from two to four hundred pounds. To a large *atajo* eight or ten muleteers are attached, and the dexterity and quickness with which they will saddle and

pack an *atajo* of a hundred mules is surprising. The animals being driven to the spot, the lasso whirls round the head of the muleteer, and falls over the head of a particular mule. The *tapojos* is placed over the eyes, the heavy *aparejo* adjusted, and the pack secured, in three minutes. On reaching the place where they purpose to encamp, the pack saddles are all ranged in regular order, with the packs between, and covered with the *petates*, a trench being cut round them in wet weather to carry off the rain. One mule is always packed with the *metate*—the stone block upon which the maize is ground to make tortillas, and the office of cook is undertaken in turn by each of the muleteers. Frijoles and chile colorado comprise their daily bill of fare, with a drink of pulque when passing through the land of the maguey.

CHAPTER III

TRAVELLING WITH THE ENGINEERS

ON the 14th of December the camp was broken up, the traders proceeding to Fray Cristoval, at the entrance of the *jornada*, to wait the arrival of the troops, which were about to advance on Chihuahua; and myself, in company with Lieutenant Abert's party, en route to Santa Fé. Crossing the Del Norte, we proceeded on its right bank ten or twelve miles, encamping in the bottom near the new settlement of San Antonio, a little hamlet of ten or twelve log-huts, inhabited by *pastores* and *vaqueros*—shepherds and cattle-herders. The river is but thinly timbered here, the soil being arid and sterile; on the bluffs, however, the grass is very good, being the *gramma* or feather-grass, and numerous flocks of sheep are sent hither to pasture from the settlements higher up the stream.

The next day we passed through Socorro, a small, wretched place, the first settlement of New Mexico on the river. The houses are all of adobe, inside and out, one story high, and with the usual *azotea* or flat roof. They have generally

a small window, with thin sheets of talc (which here abounds) as a substitute for glass. They are, however, kept clean inside, the mud-floors being watered and swept many times during the day. The faces of the women were all stained with the fiery red juice of a plant called *alegria*, from the forehead to the chin. This is for the purpose of protecting their skin from the effects of the sun, and preserving them in untanned beauty to be exposed in the fandangos. Of all people in the world the Mexicans have the greatest antipathy to water, hot or cold, for ablutionary purposes. The men never touch their faces with that element, except in their bi-monthly shave; and the women besmear themselves with fresh coats of *alegria* when their faces become dirty: thus their countenances are covered with alternate strata of paint and dirt, caked, and cracked in fissures. My first impressions of New Mexico were anything but favorable, either to the country or the people. The population of Socorro was wretched looking, and every countenance seemed marked by vice and debauchery. The men appear to have no other employment than smoking and basking in the sun, wrapped in their *sarapes*; the women in dancing and intrigue. The appearance of Socorro is that of a dilapidated brick-kiln, or a prairie-dog town; indeed, from these animals the New Mexicans appear to have

derived their style of architecture. In every village we entered, the women flocked round us begging for tobacco or money, the men loafing about, pilfering everything they could lay their hands on. As in other parts of Mexico, the women wore the *enagua*, or red petticoat, and *reboso*, and were all bare-legged. The men were some of them clad in buckskin shirts, made by the Indians. Near Socorro is a mining sierra, where gold and silver have been extracted in small quantities. All along the road we met straggling parties of the volunteers, on horse or mule-back, and on foot. In every camp they usually lost some of their animals, one or two of which our party secured. The five hundred men who were on the march covered an extent of road of more than a hundred miles—the ammunition and provision wagons travelling through an enemy's country without escort!

On the 16th we passed through Limitar, another wretched village, and a sandy, desert country, quite uninhabited, camping again on the Del Norte; and next day, stopping an hour or two at Sabanal, we reached Bosque Redondo, the hacienda of one of the Chaves family, and one of the *ricos* (rich) of New Mexico.

The churches in the villages of New Mexico are quaint little buildings, looking, with their adobe-walls, like turf-stacks. At each corner of the façade half a dozen bricks are erected

in the form of a tower, and a centre ornament of the same kind supports a wooden cross. They are really the most extraordinary and primitive specimens of architecture I ever met with, and the decorations of the interior are equal to the promises held out by the imposing outside.

The houses are entered by doors which barely admit a full-grown man; and the largest of New Mexican windows is but little bigger than the ventilator of a summer hat. However, in his rabbit-burrow, and with his tortillas and his chile, his *ponche** and cigar of *hoja*†, the New Mexican is content; and with an occasional traveller to pilfer, or the excitement of a stray Texan or two to massacre now and then, is tolerably happy; his only care being, that the river rise high enough to fill his *acequia*, or irrigating ditch, that sufficient maize may grow to furnish him tortillas for the winter, and shucks for his half-starved horse or mule, which the Navajos have left, out of charity, after killing half his sons and daughters, and bearing into captivity the wife of his bosom.

We encamped behind the house at Bosque Redondo, for which privilege I asked permission of the proprietor; who doled us out six pennyworth of wood for our fires, never inviting us into his house, or offering the slightest civility.

Cosas de Mejico!

* A pungent tobacco grown in New Mexico.

† *Hoja*, corn-shuck, leaves of Indian corn.

On the 17th we reached Albuquerque, next to Santa Fé the most important town in the province, and the residence of the ex-Governor Armijo. We found here a squadron of the 1st United States dragoons, the remainder of the regiment having accompanied General Kearney to California. We encamped near a large building where the men were quartered; and in the evening a number of them came round the fire, asking the news from the lower country. I saw that some of them had once worn a different-colored uniform from the sky-blue of the United States army; and in the evening, as I was walking with some of the officers of the regiment, I was accosted by one, whom I immediately recognized as a man named Herbert, a deserter from the regiment to which I had once belonged. He had imagined that, as several years had elapsed since I had seen him, his face would not have been familiar to me, and inquired for a brother of his who was still in the regiment, denying at first that he had been in the British service.

The settled portion of the province of New Mexico is divided into two sections, which, from their being situated on the Rio del Norte, are designated Rio Arriba and Rio Abajo, or up the river and down the river. Albuquerque is the chief town of the latter, as Santa Fé is of the former as well as the capital of the province.

The town and the estates in the neighbourhood belong to the Armijo family; and the General of that name and ex-Governor, has here a *palacio*; and has also built a barrack, in which to accommodate the numerous escort which always attends him in his progresses to and from his country-seat.

The families of Armijo, Chaves, Perêa, and Ortiz are *par excellence* the *ricos* of New Mexico—indeed, all the wealth of the province is concentrated in their hands; and a more grasping set of people, and more hard-hearted oppressors of the poor, it would be difficult to find in any other part of Mexico, where the rights or condition of the lower classes are no more considered, than in civilized countries is the welfare of dogs and pigs.

I had letters to the Señora Armijo, the wife of the runaway Governor; but, as it was late at night when we arrived, and as I intended to leave the next morning, I did not think it worth while to present them, merely delivering to the mayor-domo some private letters which had been intrusted to my care from Chihuahua. However, as I passed the windows of the sala, I had a good view of the lady, who was once celebrated as the belle of New Mexico. She is now a fat, comely dame of forty, with the remains of considerable beauty, but quite *passée*.

Our halting-place next day was at Bernalillo,

a more miserable place than usual; but as I had brought letters to a wealthy hacendado, one Julian Peréa, I anticipated an unusual degree of hospitality. On presenting the letter, everything Don Julian possessed was instantly thrown at my feet; but out of the magnificent gift I only selected an armful of wood, from a large yardful, for our fire, and for which he charged me three rials, as well as three more for the use of an empty corral for the animals; we ourselves encamping outside his gate on the damp thawing snow, without receiving the ghost of an invitation to enter his house.

We this day got a first glimpse of one of the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, appearing, far in the distance, white with snow.

On the 20th we encamped in a pretty valley on the Rio Grande, under a high tabular bluff which overhangs the river on the western bank; and on the summit of which are the ruins of an old Indian village. About two miles from our camp was the Pueblo of San Felipe, a village of the tribe of Indians known as Pueblos, or Indios Manzos—half-civilized Indians.

During the night our *mulada*, which was grazing at large in the prairie, was stampeded by the Indians. I was lying out some distance from the fire, when the noise of their thundering tread roused me, and, as they passed the fire at full gallop, I at once divined the cause.

Luckily for me, Panchito, my horse, wheeled out of the crowd, and, followed by his mules, galloped up to the fire, and came to me when I whistled; the remainder of the *mulada* continuing their flight. The next morning, two fine horses and three mules were missing, and, of course, were not recovered.

The next day we encamped on Galistéo, a small stream coming from the mountains. We had now entered a wild broken country, covered with pine and cedar. A curious ridge runs from east to west, broken here and there by abrupt chasms, which exhibit its formation in alternate strata of shale and old red sandstone. There are here indications of coal, which are met along the whole of this ridge. We encamped on a bleak bluff, without timber or grass, which overlooked the stream.

Late in the evening we heard the creaking of a wagon's wheels, and the "wo-ha" of the driver, as he urged his oxen up the sandy bluff. A wagon drawn by six yoke of oxen soon made its appearance, under the charge of a tall raw-boned Yankee. As soon as he had unyoked his cattle, he approached our fire, and, seating himself almost in the blaze, stretching his long legs at the same time into the ashes, he broke out with, "Cuss sich a darned country, I say! Wall, strangers, an ugly camp this, I swar; and what my cattle ull do I don't know, for they

have not eat since we put out of Santa Fé, and are darned near giv out, that's a fact; and thar's nothin' here for 'em to eat, surely. Wall, they must just hold on till to-morrow, for I have only got a pint of corn apiece for 'em to-night anyhow, so there's no two ways about that. Strangers, I guess now you'll have a skillet among ye; if yer a mind to trade, I'll just have it right off; anyhow, I'll just borrow it to-night to bake my bread, and, if yer wish to trade, name your price. Cuss sich a darned country, say I! Jist look at them oxen, wull ye!—they've nigh upon two hundred miles to go; for I'm bound to catch up the sogers afore they reach the Pass, and there's not a go in 'em."

"Well," I ventured to put in, feeling for the poor beasts, which were still yoked and standing in the river completely done up, "would it not be as well for you to feed them at once and let them rest?"

"Wall, I guess if you'll some of you lend me a hand, I'll fix 'em right off; tho', darn em' they've giv me a pretty darned lot of trouble, they have, darn em! but the critters will have to eat, I b'lieve."

I willingly lent him the aid he required, and also added to their rations some corn which my animals, already full, were turning up their noses at, and which the oxen greedily devoured. This done he returned to the fire and baked his cake, fried his bacon, and made his coffee, his tongue all the while keeping up an incessant

clack. This man was by himself, having a journey of two hundred miles before him, and twelve oxen and his wagon to look after: but dollars, dollars, dollars was all he thought of. Everything he saw lying about he instantly seized, wondered what it cost, what it was worth, offered to trade for it or anything else by which he might turn a penny, never waiting for an answer, and rattling on, eating, drinking, and talking without intermission; and at last, gathering himself up, said, "Wall, I guess I'll turn into my wagon now, and some of you will, may be, give a look round at the cattle every now and then, and I'll thank you:" and saying this, with a hop, step, and a jump, was inside his wagon and snoring in a couple of minutes.

We broke up our camp at daybreak, leaving our friend "wo-ha-ing" his cattle through the sandy bottom, and "cussing the darned country" at every step. We crossed several ridges clothed with cedars, but destitute of grass or other vegetation; and passing over a dismal plain descended into a hollow, where lay, at the bottom of a pine-covered mountain, the miserable mud-built Santa Fé; and shortly after, wayworn and travel-stained, and my poor animals in a condition which plainly showed that they had seen some hard service, we entered the city, after a journey of not much less than two thousand miles.

CHAPTER IV

LAND OF THE PUEBLOS

SANTA FÉ, the capital of the province of Nuevo Mejico, contains about three thousand inhabitants, and is situated about fourteen miles from the left bank of the Del Norte, at the foot of a mountain forming one of the eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains. The town is a wretched collection of mud-houses, without a single building of stone, although it boasts a *palacio*—as the adobe residence of the Governor is called—a long low building, taking up the greater part of one side of the plaza or public square, round which runs a portal or colonnade supported by pillars of rough pine. The appearance of the town defies description, and I can compare it to nothing but a dilapidated brick-kiln or a prairie-dog town. The inhabitants are worthy of their city, and a more miserable, vicious-looking population it would be impossible to imagine. Neither was the town improved, at the time of my visit, by the addition to the population of some three thousand Americans, the dirtiest, rowdiest crew I have ever seen collected together.

Crowds of drunken volunteers filled the streets, brawling and boasting, but never fighting; Mexicans, wrapped in *sarape*, scowled upon them as they passed; donkey-loads of *hoja*—corn-shucks—were hawking about for sale; and Pueblo Indians and priests jostled the rude crowds of brawlers at every step. Under the *portales* were numerous *monté-tables*, surrounded by Mexicans and Americans. Every other house was a grocery, as they call a gin or whisky shop, continually disgorging reeling drunken men, and everywhere filth and dirt reigned triumphant.

The extent of the province of New Mexico is difficult to define, as the survey of the northern sections of the republic has never been undertaken,* and a great portion of the country is still in the hands of the aborigines, who are at constant war with the Mexicans. It has been roughly estimated at 6,000 square miles, with a population of 70,000, including the three castes of descendants of the original settlers, Mestizos, and Indios Manzos or Pueblos; the Mestizos, as is the case throughout the country, bearing a large proportion to the Mexico-Spanish portion of the population—in this case as 50 to 1.

The Pueblos, who are the original inhabitants

* Lieutenant Abert, of the U. S. T. Engineers, surveyed the greater portion of New Mexico in 1846.

of New Mexico, and, living in villages, are partially civilized, are the most industrious portion of the population, and cultivate the soil in a higher degree than the New Mexicans themselves. In these Indians, in their dwellings, their manners, customs, and physical character, may be traced a striking analogy to the Aztecs or ancient Mexicans. Their houses and villages are constructed in the same manner as, from existing ruins, we may infer that the Aztecs constructed theirs. These buildings are of two, three, and even five stories, without doors or any external communication, the entrance being at the top by means of ladders through a trap-door in the *azotea* or flat roof. The population of the different Pueblos scattered along the Del Norte and to the westward of it is estimated at 12,000, without including the Moquis, who have preserved their independence since the year 1680.

The general character of the department is extreme aridity of soil, and the consequent deficiency of water, which must ever prevent its being thickly settled. The valley of the Del Norte is fertile, but of very limited extent; and other portions of the province are utterly valueless in an agricultural point of view, and their metallic wealth is greatly exaggerated. From association with the hardy trappers and pioneers of the far west, the New Mexicans have

in some degree imbibed a portion of their enterprise and hardihood; for settlements have been pushed far into the Rocky Mountains, whose inhabitants are many of them expert buffalo-hunters and successful trappers of beaver. The most northern of these is on the Rio Colorado, or Red River Creek, an affluent of the Del Norte, rising in the eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains, one hundred miles north of Santa Fé.

Of the many so-called gold-mines in New Mexico there is but one which has in any degree repaid the labor of working. This is El Real de Dolores, more commonly known as El Placer, situated eight leagues from Santa Fé, on the ridge of the Sierra Obscura. The gold is mostly found in what is technically called "dust," in very small quantities and with considerable labor. It has perhaps produced, since its discovery in 1828, 200,000 dollars, but it is very doubtful if any of these placers would repay the working on a large scale.

It is a favorite idea with the New Mexicans that the Pueblo Indians are acquainted with the existence and localities of some prodigiously rich mines, which in the early times of the conquest were worked by the Spaniards, at the expense of infinite toil and slavery on the part of the Indians; and that, fearing that such tyranny would be repeated if they were to dis-

close their secret, they have ever since steadily refused to point them out.

It is remarkable that, although existing, from the earliest times of the colonization of New Mexico, a period of two centuries, in a state of continual hostility with the numerous savage tribes of Indians who surround their territory, and in constant insecurity of life and property from their attacks—being also far removed from the enervating influences of large cities, and, in their isolated situation, entirely dependent upon their own resources—the inhabitants are totally destitute of those qualities which, for the above reasons, we might naturally have expected to distinguish them, and are as deficient in energy of character and physical courage, as they are in all the moral and intellectual qualities. In their social state but one degree removed from the veriest savages, they might take a lesson even from these in morality and the conventional decencies of life. Imposing no restraint on their passions, a shameless and universal concubinage exists, and a total disregard of moral laws, to which it would be impossible to find a parallel in any country calling itself civilized. A want of honorable principle, and consummate duplicity and treachery, characterize all their dealings. Liars by nature, they are treacherous and faithless to their friends, cowardly and cringing to their enemies; cruel

as all cowards are, they unite savage ferocity with their want of animal courage; as an example of which, their recent massacre of Governor Bent and other Americans may be given—one of a hundred instances.

I have before observed that a portion of the population of New Mexico consists of Indians, called Pueblos, from the fact of their living in towns, who are in a semi-civilized state, and in whose condition may be traced an analogy to the much exaggerated civilization of the ancient Mexicans. It is well known that, in the traditions of that people, the Aztecs migrated from the north, from regions beyond the Gila, where they made the first of their three great halts; but it is generally supposed that no traces of their course, or former habitation, existed to the northward of this river. In the country of the Navajos, as well as in the territories of the independent Moqui, are still discoverable traces of their residence, and, as I have before remarked, the Pueblo Indians construct and inhabit houses and villages of the same form and material as the *casas grandes* [great houses] of the ancient Mexicans; retain many of their customs and domestic arts, as they have been handed down to us, and numerous traces of a common origin.

Amongst many of the religious forms still retained by these people, perhaps the most

interesting is the perpetuation of the holy fire, by the side of which the Aztecs kept a continual watch for the return to earth of Quetzalcoatl—the god of air—who, according to their tradition, visited the earth, and instructed the inhabitants in agriculture and other useful arts. During his sojourn he caused the earth to yield tenfold productions, without the necessity of human labor: everywhere corn, fruit and flowers delighted the eye; the cotton-plant produced its woof already dyed by nature with various hues; aromatic odors pervaded the air; and on all sides resounded the melodious notes of singing-birds. The lazy Mexican naturally looks back to this period as the “golden age”; and as this popular and beneficent deity, on his departure from earth, promised faithfully to return and revisit the people he loved so well, this event is confidently expected to the present day. Quetzalcoatl embarked, in his boat of rattlesnake-skins, on the Gulf of Mexico; and as he was seen to steer to the eastward, his arrival is consequently looked for from that quarter. When the Spaniards arrived from the east, as they resembled the god in the color of their skin, they were at first generally supposed to be messengers from, or descendants of, the god of air.

This tradition is common to the nations even of the far-off north, and in New Mexico the

belief is still clung to by the Pueblo Indians, who in a solitary cave of the mountains have for centuries continued their patient vigils by the undying fire; and its dim light may still be seen by the wandering hunter glimmering from the recesses of a cave, when, led by the chase, he passes in the vicinity of this humble and lonely temple.

Far to the north, in the country of the Moquis, the hunters have passed, wonderingly, ruins of large cities, and towns inhabited by Indians, of the same construction as those of the Pueblos, and identical with the *casas grandes* on the Gila and elsewhere.

In the absence of any evidence, traditionary or otherwise, on which to found an hypothesis as to the probable cause of the migration of the Mexicans from the north, I have surmised that it is just possible that they may have abandoned that region on account of the violent volcanic convulsions which, from the testimony of people who have visited these regions, I have no doubt have at a comparatively recent period agitated that portion of the country; and from my own knowledge the volcanic formations become gradually more recent as they advance to the north along the whole table-land from Mexico to Santa Fé. These disturbances may have led to their frequent changes of residence, and ultimate arrival in the south. If their object

was to fly from such constantly recurring commotions, their course would naturally be to the south, where they might expect a genial soil and climate, in a direction in which they might also avoid the numerous and warlike nations who inhabited the regions south of their abandoned country. Thus we find the remains of the towns built in the course of their migration, generally in insulated spots of fertility, oases in the vast and barren tracts they were obliged to traverse, which spread from the shores of the great salt-lake of the north towards the valley of the Gila, and still southward along the ridges of the Cordillera, which, a continuation of the Andes chain, stretch far away to the southern portion of the country.

The Indians of Northern Mexico, including the Pueblos, belong to the same family—the Apache; from which branch the Navajos, Apaches Coyoteros, Mescaleros, Moquis, Yubipias, Maricopas, Chiricaquis, Chemeguabas, Yumayas (the last two tribes of the Moqui), and the Nijoras, a small tribe on the Gila. All these speak dialects of the same language, more or less approximating to the Apache, and of all of which the idiomatic structure is the same. They likewise all understand each other's tongue. What relation this language bears to the Mexican is unknown, but my impression is that it will be found to assimilate greatly, if not to be identical.

The Pueblo Indians of Taos, Pecuris, and Acoma speak a language of which a dialect is used by those of the Rio Abajo, including the Pueblos of San Felipe, Sandia, Ysleta, and Xeméz. They are eminently distinguished from the New Mexicans in their social and moral character, being industrious, sober, honest, brave, and at the same time peaceably inclined if their rights are not infringed. Although the Pueblos are nominally *Cristianos*, and have embraced the outward forms of *la santa fé Catolica*, they yet, in fact, still cling to the belief of their fathers, and celebrate in secret the ancient rites of their religion. The aged and devout of both sexes may still be often seen on their flat house-tops, with their faces turned to the rising sun, and their gaze fixed in that direction from whence they expect, sooner or later, the god of air will make his appearance. They are careful, however, not to practise any of their rites before strangers, and ostensibly conform to the ceremonies of the Roman Church.

In the country of the Moquis are the remains of five cities of considerable extent, the foundations and some of the walls of which (of stone) are still standing, and on the sites of some they still inhabit villages, the houses of which are frequently built of the materials found amongst the ruins. A great quantity of broken pottery is found wherever these remains exist, the same

in form and material as the relics of the same kind preserved in the city of Mexico. The ruins on the Gila, in particular, abound in these remains, and I have been assured that for many miles the plain is strewn with them. There are also remains of acequias, or irrigating canals, of great length and depth.

The five pueblos in the Moqui are Orayxa, Masanais, Jongoapi, Gualpi, and another, the name of which is not known. This tribe is, curiously enough, known to the trappers and hunters of the mountains as the Welsh Indians. They are, they say, much fairer in complexion than other tribes, and have several individuals amongst them perfectly white, with light hair. The latter circumstance is accounted for by the frequent occurrence amongst the Navajos, and probably the Moquis also, of albinos, with the Indian feature, but light complexions, eyes, and hair.

In connection with this, I may mention a curious circumstance which happened to me, and tends to show that there is some little foundation for the belief of the trappers, that the Moqui Indians are descendants of the followers of Prince Madoc.

I happened on my arrival at the frontier of the United States (at Fort Leavenworth) to enter the log hut of an old negro woman, being at the time in my mountain attire of

buckskins, over which was thrown a Moqui or Navajo blanket, as it was wet weather. The old dame's attention was called to it by its varied and gaudy colors, and, examining it carefully for some time, she exclaimed, "That's a Welsh blanket; I know it by the woof!" She had, she told me, in her youth, lived for many years in a Welsh family and in a Welsh settlement in Virginia, or one of the southern States, and had learned their method of working, which was the same as that displayed in my blanket. The blankets and *tilmas* manufactured by the Navajos, Moquis, and the Pueblos are of excellent quality, and dyed in durable and bright colors: the warp is of cotton filled with wool, the texture close and impervious to rain. Their pottery is, as I have before remarked, the same as that manufactured by the Aztecs, painted in bright patterns by colored earths and the juice of several plants. The dress of the Pueblos is a mixture of their ancient costume with that introduced by the Spaniards. A *tilma*, or small blanket without sleeves, is worn over the shoulder, and their legs and feet are protected by moccasins and leggings of deerskin or woollen stuff. Their heads are uncovered, and their hair long and unconfined, save the centre or scalp lock, which is usually bound with gay-colored ribbon. The women's dress is the same as that of the squaws of the wild Indians of the

prairies, generally covered with a bright-colored blanket, or a mantle of cloth.

The Pueblo Indians have been more than once the chief actors in the many insurrections which have disturbed this remote province. In 1837 they overturned the government, killing the incapable man at the head of it, as they had done his predecessor, and placing one of their own party at the head of affairs. Recently they rose upon the Americans, who have taken possession of the country, and, in conjunction with the Mexicans, massacred Governor Bent and many others. They were defeated by the American troops in a pitched battle at La Cañada, but defended most gallantly their chief pueblo (of Taos), which was taken and destroyed after a desperate resistance.

Although I had determined to remain some time in Santa Fé to recruit my animals, I was so disgusted with the filth of the town, and the disreputable society a stranger was forced into, that in a very few days I once more packed my mules, and proceeded to the north, through the valley of Taos.

It was a cold, snowy day on which I left Santa Fé, and the mountain, although here of inconsiderable elevation, was difficult to cross on account of the drifts. My mules, too, were for the first time introduced to snow on a large scale, and, by their careful, mincing steps and

cautious movements, testified their doubts as to the security of such a road. The mountain is covered with pine and cedar, and the road winds through the bed of an arroyo, between high banks now buried in the snow. Not a living thing was visible, but once a large grey wolf was surprised on our turning a corner of rock, and in his hurry to escape plunged into a snowdrift, where I could easily have despatched the animal with a pistol, but Panchito was in such a state of affright that nothing would induce him to stand still or approach the spot.

Over ridges and through mountain-gorges we passed into a small valley, where the pueblo of Ohuaqui afforded me shelter for the night, and a warm stable with plenty of corn for my animals, a luxury they had long been unaccustomed to.

I was here made welcome by the Indian family, who prepared my supper of frijoles and atole, the last *the* dish of New Mexico. It is made of the Indian meal, mixed with water into a thick gruel, and thus eaten—an insipid compound. Far more agreeable is the pinole of the *tierra afuera* [countryside], which is the meal of parched maize, mixed with sugar and spices, and of which a handful in a pint of water makes a most cooling and agreeable drink, and is the great standby of the arrieros and road-travellers in that starving country.

The patrona of the family seemed rather shy of me at first, until, in the course of conversation, she discovered that I was an Englishman. "*Gracias a Dios,*" she exclaimed, "a Christian will sleep with us to-night, and not an American!"

I found over all New Mexico that the most bitter feeling and most determined hostility existed against the Americans, who certainly in Santa Fé and elsewhere have not been very anxious to conciliate the people, but by their bullying and overbearing demeanor towards them, have in a great measure been the cause of this hatred, which shortly after broke out in an organized rising of the northern part of the province, and occasioned great loss of life to both parties.

After supper the women of the family spread the floor with blankets, and every one, myself included, cigar in mouth, lay down—to the number of fifteen—in a space of less than that number of square feet; men, women, and children, all smoking and chattering. Just over my head were roosting several fowls; and one venerable cock every five minutes saluted us with a shrill crow, to the infinite satisfaction of the old Indian, who at every fresh one exclaimed, "*Ay, como canta mi gallo, tan claro!*—how clear sings my cock, the fine fellow!"

“*Valgame Dios! que paxarito tan hermoso!*— what a lovely little bird is this!”

The next day, passing the miserable village of La Cañada, and the Indian pueblo of San Juan, both situated in a wretched, sterile-looking country, we reached El Embudo—the funnel—where I put up in the house of an old Canadian trapper, who had taken to himself a Mexican wife, and was ending his days as a quiet ranchero. He appeared to have forgotten the plenty of the mountains, for his pretty daughter set before us for supper a plate containing six small pieces of fat pork, like dice, floating in a sea of grease, hot and red with chile colorado.

We crossed, next day, a range of mountains covered with pine and cedar: on the latter grew great quantities of mistletoe, and the contrast of its bright green and the sombre hue of the cedars was very striking. The snow was melting on the ascent, which was exposed to the sun, and made the road exceedingly slippery and tiring to the animals. On reaching the summit a fine prospect presented itself. The Rocky Mountains, stretching away on each side of me, here divided into several branches, whose isolated peaks stood out in bold relief against the clear, cold sky. Valleys and plains lay between them, through which the river wound its way in deep cañons. In the distance was

the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada, bright with the rays of the setting sun, and at my feet lay the smiling vale of Taos, with its numerous villages and the curiously constructed pueblos of the Indians. Snow-covered mountains surrounded it, whose ridges were flooded with light, while the valley was almost shrouded in gloom and darkness.

On descending I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse, whose feet, balled with snow, were continually slipping from under him. After sunset the cold was intense, and, wading through the snow, my moccasins became frozen, so that I was obliged to travel quickly to prevent my feet from being frost-bitten. It was quite dark when I reached the plain, and the night was so obscure that the track was perfectly hidden, and my only guide was the distant lights of the villages. Coming to a frozen brook, the mules refused to cross the ice, and I spent an hour in fruitless attempts to induce them. I could find nothing at hand with which to break the ice, and at length, half frozen, was obliged to turn back and retrace my steps to a rancho, which the Indian boy who was my guide said was about a mile distant. This I at length reached, though not before one of my feet was frost-bitten, and my hands so completely numbed by the excessive cold that I was unable to unpack the mules when I got

in. To protect the poor animals from the cold, as there was no stable to place them in, I devoted the whole of my bedding to cover them, reserving to myself only a sarape, which, however, by the side of a blazing wood fire, was sufficient to keep me warm. The good lady of the house sent me a huge bowl of atole as I was engaged in clothing the animals, which I offered to Panchito as soon as the messenger's back was turned, and he swallowed it, boiling hot as it was, with great gusto.

The next morning, with the assistance of some rancheros, I crossed the stream, and arrived at Fernandez, which is the most considerable village in the valley.

CHAPTER V

MEXICAN GRATITUDE

EL VALLE DE TAOS is situated about eighty miles to the northward of Santa Fé, on the eastern side of the Del Norte. It contains several villages or rancherias, the largest of which are Fernandez and El Rancho. The population of the valley may be estimated at eight thousand, including the Pueblo Indians. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and produces excellent wheat and other grain. The climate being rigorous, and the summers short, fruit does not ripen to perfection, but vegetables of all kinds are good and abundant, onions in particular growing to great size and of excellent flavor. The climate is colder than at Santa Fé, the thermometer sometimes falling to zero in winter, and seldom rising above 75° in summer; the nights in summer being delightfully cool, but in winter piercingly cold. Although generally healthy, infectious disorders are sometimes prevalent and fatal; and periodical epidemics have on several occasions nearly decimated the inhabitants.

In all maps the valley of Taos is confounded

with a city which under that name appears in them, but which does not exist, Fernandez being the chief town of the valley, and no such town as *Taos* to be found. The valley derives its name from the Taoses, a tribe of Indians who once inhabited it, and the remains of which inhabit a pueblo under the mountain about seven miles from Fernandez. Humboldt mentions *Taos* as a city containing 8,900 inhabitants. Its latitude is about $36^{\circ} 30'$, longitude between $105^{\circ} 30'$ and 106° west of Greenwich, but its exact position has never been accurately determined. The extent of the valley from El Rancho to Arroyo Hondo is seventeen miles, the breadth from the Del Norte to the mountains about the same.

Several distilleries are worked both at Fernandez and El Rancho, the latter better known to Americans as The Ranch. Most of them belong to Americans, who are generally trappers and hunters, who having married *Taos* women have settled here. The *Taos* whisky, a raw fiery spirit which they manufacture, has a ready market in the mountains amongst the trappers and hunters, and the Indian traders, who find the "fire-water" the most profitable article of trade with the aborigines, who exchange for it their buffalo robes and other peltries at a "tremendous sacrifice."

In Fernandez I was hospitably entertained

in the house of an American named Lee, who had for many years traded and trapped in the mountains, but who now, having married a Mexican woman, had set up a distillery and was amassing a considerable fortune. He gave me a pressing invitation to stop the winter with him, which I was well inclined to accept, if I could have obtained good pasture for my animals; that, however, was not to be had, and I continued my journey. A few days after my departure, Lee's house was attacked by the Mexicans, at the time when they massacred Governor Bent in the same village, and himself killed, with every foreigner in the place excepting the brother of Lee, who was protected by the priest and saved by him from the savage fury of the mob.

Bent, as well as Lee, had resided many years in New Mexico, both having wives and children in the country, and were supposed to have been much esteemed by the people. The former was an old trader amongst the Indians, and the owner of Bent's Fort, or Fort William, a trading-post on the Arkansa, well known for its hospitality to travellers in the far west. From his knowledge of the country and the Mexican character, Mr. Bent had been appointed Governor of New Mexico by General Kearney, and it was during a temporary visit to his family at Fernandez that he was killed in their

presence, and scalped and mutilated, by a mob of Pueblos and the people of Taos.*

William Bent was one of those hardy sons of enterprise with whom America abounds, who, from love of dangerous adventure, forsake the quiet monotonous life of the civilized world for the excitement of a sojourn in the far west. For many years he traded with Indians on the Platte and Arkansa, winning golden opinions from the poor Indians for his honesty and fair dealing, and the greatest popularity from the hardy trappers and mountaineers for his firmness of character and personal bravery.

Notwithstanding the advice I received not to attempt such a journey at this season, I determined to cross the mountains and winter on the otherside, either at the head of Arkansa or Platte, or in some of the mountain valleys, which are the wintering places of many of the trappers and mountain-men. I therefore hired a half-breed Pueblo as a guide, who, by the by, was one of the most rascally-looking of rascally Mexicans, and on the 1st of January was once more on my way.

* Charles Bent went to the Far West in 1828, over the Santa Fé trail. He entered into a business partnership with Col. Céran St. Vrain which developed into one of the most important firms engaged in the fur trade. He was appointed Governor of New Mexico in September, 1846. On the early morning of January 19, 1847, while visiting at Taos, he was attacked in his residence by a party of insurrectionists. While parleying with the mob, he was wounded and scalped alive. Covering his bleeding head with both hands, he tried to escape, but was shot dead at the feet of his wife and children. (*Ed.*)

I left Fernandez late in the day, as I intended to proceed only twelve miles to Arroyo Hondo, and there remain for the night. After proceeding a mile or two we came to a stream about thirty feet in breadth and completely frozen. Here the mules came to a stop, and nothing would induce them to attempt to cross. Even the last resource, that of crossing myself on Panchito, and pretending to ride away with their favorite, entirely failed, although they ran up and down the bank bellowing with affright, smelling the ice, feeling it with their fore feet and, throwing up their heads, would gallop to another point, and up and down, in great commotion. At length I had to take a pole, which was opportunely lying near, and break the ice away, having to remove the broken blocks entirely before they would attempt it. With all this, however, my old hunting-mule still refused; but, as I knew she would not be left behind, I proceeded on with the rest. At this she became frantic, galloped away from the river, returned, bellowed and cried, and at last, driven to desperation, she made a jump right into the air, but not near the broken place, and came down like a lump of lead on the top of the ice, which, of course, smashed under her weight, and down she went into a deep hole, her head just appearing out of the water, which was "mush" with ice. In this "fix" she remained

perfectly still, apparently conscious that her own exertions would be unavailing; and I therefore had to return, and, up to my middle in water, break her out of the ice, expecting every moment to see her drop frozen to death. At last, and with great labor, I extricated her, when she at once ran up to the horse and whinnied her delight at the meeting.

By this time it was pitchy dark, and the cold had become intense; my moccasins and deer-skin leggings were frozen hard and stiff, and my feet and legs in a fair way of becoming in the same state. There was no road or track, the snow everywhere covering the country, and my guide had evidently lost his way. However, I asked him in which direction he thought Arroyo Hondo to be, and pushed straight on for it, floundering through the snow, and falling into holes and ravines, and at length was brought to a dead halt, my horse throwing himself on his haunches, and just saving his master and himself a fall down a precipice some 500 feet in depth, which formed one side of the Arroyo Hondo.

The lights of the rancho to which we were bound twinkled at the bottom, but to attempt to reach it, without knowing the road down the ravine, was like jumping from the top of the Monument. However, as I felt I was on the point of freezing to death, I became desperate

and charged the precipice, intending to roll down with Panchito, if we could not do better; but the horse refused to move, and presently, starting to one side as I spurred him, fell headlong into a snow-drift some twenty feet in depth, where I lay under him; and, satisfied in my mind that I was "in extremis," wished myself further from Arroyo Hondo and deplored my evil destiny. Panchito, however, managed to kick himself out; and I, half smothered and with one of my ribs disabled, soon followed his example, and again mounted. We presently came to a little adobe house, and a man, hearing our cries to each other in the dark, came out with a light. To my request for a night's lodging he replied, "*No se puede, no habia mas que un quartito*"—that there was no room, but one little chamber, but that at the rancho I would be well accommodated. With this hint I moved on, freezing in my saddle, and again attempted to descend, but the darkness was pitchy, and the road a wall. Whilst attempting the descent once more, a light appeared on the bank above us, and a female voice cried out, "*Veulvase amigo, por Dios! que no se baja*—return, friend, for God's sake! and don't attempt to go down." "*Que vengan, pobrecitos, para calentarse*—come, poor fellows, and warm yourselves." "*Por hi se sube, por hi*—this way, this is the way up"—she

cried to us, holding up the light to direct our steps. "*Ay de mi, como suffren los pobres viageros!*—alas, what poor travellers suffer!"—she exclaimed, eyeing our frozen appearance, and clothes white with snow; and, still holding up the light, she led the way to her house. where now, lectured by his wife for his inhospitality, the man who had sent us away from his door bestirred himself to unpack the mules, which, with our numbed hands, it was impossible for us to do.

A little shed full of corn-shucks (the leaf of the maize, of which animals are very fond) provided a warm shelter for the shivering beasts; and having attended to their wants, and piled before them enough *hoja* for a regiment of cavalry, I entered the house, where half a dozen women were soon rubbing life into my hands and feet, which were badly frost-bitten, whilst others were busy preparing atole and chile, and making tortillas on the hearth.

A white stone marks this day of my journey, when, for the first time, I met with native hospitality on Arroyo Hondo. In this family, which consisted of about fifteen souls, six were on their beds, suffering from *sarampion*—the measles—which was at the time of my journey carrying off many victims in Santa Fé and Taos Valley. An old crone was busy decocting simples in a large olla over the fire. She asked

me to taste it, giving it the name of *aceite de vivoras*—rattlesnake-oil; and as I expressed my disgust by word and deed at the intimation, which just saved my taking a gulp, the old lady was convulsed with laughter, giving me to understand that it was not really viper-oil, but was so called—*no mas*. This pot, when cooked, was set on one side, and all the patients, one after the other, crawled from their blankets and imbibed the decoction from a gourd. One of the sick was the mother of the family, who had run after us to bring us back when her husband had told her of our situation—one instance of the many which I have met of the kindness of heart of Mexican women.

The next morning we descended into the Arroyo. Even in daylight the track down was exceedingly dangerous, and to have attempted it in the dark would have been an act of no little temerity. On the other bank of the stream was situated a mill and distillery belonging to an American by the name of Turley, who had quite a thriving establishment. Sheep and goats, and innumerable hogs, ran about the corral; his barns were filled with grain of all kinds, his mill with flour, and his cellars with whisky "in galore." Everything about the place betokened prosperity. Rosy children, uniting the fair complexions of the Anglo-Saxon with the dark tint of the Mexican, gambolled before

the door. The Mexicans and Indians at work in the yard were stout, well-fed fellows, looking happy and contented; as well they might, for no one in the country paid so well, and fed so well, as Turley, who bore the reputation, far and near, of being as generous and kind-hearted as he was reported to be rich. In times of scarcity no Mexican ever besought his assistance and went away empty-handed. His granaries were always open to the hungry, and his purse to the poor.

Three days after I was there they attacked his house, burned his mill, destroyed his grain and his live stock, and inhumanly butchered himself and the foreigners with him, after a gallant defence of twenty-four hours—nine men against five hundred. Such is Mexican gratitude.

I here laid in a small supply of provisions, flour and dried buffalo-meat, and got besides a good breakfast—rather a memorable occurrence. Just as I arrived, a party of Mormons, who had left Colonel Cooke's command on their way to California, and were now about to cross the mountains to join a large body of their people who were wintering on the Arkansa, intending to proceed to California in the ensuing spring, were on the point of starting. There were some twelve or fifteen of them, raw-boned fanatics, with four or five pack-mules carrying their

provisions, themselves on foot. They started several hours before me; but I overtook them before they crossed the mountain, straggling along, some seated on the top of the mules' packs, some sitting down every few hundred yards, and all looking tired and miserable. One of the party was an Englishman, from Biddenden, in Kent, and an old Peninsular soldier. I asked what could have induced him to have undertaken such an expedition. He looked at me, and, without answering the question, said, "Dang it, if I only once get hoam!"

Arroyo Hondo runs along the base of a ridge of mountain of moderate elevation, which divides the valley of Taos from that of Rio Colorado, or Red River, both running into the Del Norte. The trail from one to the other runs through and over the mountain, a distance of about twelve miles. It is covered with pine and cedar and a species of dwarf oak; and numerous small streamlets run through the cañons and gorges. Near these grows plentifully a shrub which produces a fruit called by the mountaineers service-berry, of a dark blue, the size of a small grape, and of very pleasant flavor.

My animals, unused to mountain travelling, proceeded very slowly. Every little stream of frozen water was the cause of delay. The mules, on reaching the brink, always held a council of

war, smelt and tried it with their fore feet, and bellowed forth their dislike of the slippery bridge. Coronela, my hunting-mule, since her mishap at Fernandez, was always the first to cross, but I had first to strew the ice with branches, or throw a blanket over it, before I could induce them to pass; and at last, tired of the delays thus occasioned, I passed with the horse, and left the mules to use their own discretion, although not unfrequently half an hour or more would elapse before they overtook me.

All this day I marched on foot through the snow, as Panchito made sad work of ascending and descending the mountain, and it was several hours after sunset when I arrived at Rio Colorado, with one of my feet badly frozen. In the settlement, which boasted about twenty houses, on inquiry as to where I could procure a corral and *hoja* for the animals, I was directed to the house of a French Canadian—an old trapper named Laforey—one of the many who are found in these remote settlements, with Mexican wives, and passing the close of their adventurous lives in what to them is a state of ease and plenty; that is, they grow sufficient maize to support them, their faithful and well-tried rifles furnishing them with meat in abundance, to be had in all the mountains for the labor of hunting.

I was obliged to remain here two days, for my foot was so badly frozen that I was quite unable to put it to the ground. In this place I found that the Americans were in bad odor; and as I was equipped as a mountaineer, I came in for a tolerable share of abuse whenever I limped through the village. As my lameness prevented me from pursuing my tormentors, they were unusually daring, saluting me, every time I passed to the shed where my animals were corralled, with cries of "*Burro, burro, ven a comer hoja*—Jackass, jackass, come here and eat shucks," "*Anda coxo, a ver los burros, sus hermanos*—Hallo, game-leg, go and see your brothers, the donkeys;" and at last, words not being found heavy enough, pieces of adobe rattled at my ears. This, however, was a joke rather too practical to be pleasant; so, the next time I limped to the stable, I carried my rifle on my shoulder, which was a hint never to be mistaken by a Mexican, and hereafter I passed with impunity. However, I was obliged to watch my animals day and night, for, as soon as I fed them, either the corn was bodily stolen, or a herd of hogs was driven in to feed at my expense. The latter aggression I put a stop to by administering to one persevering porker a pill from my rifle, and promised the threatening crowd that I would have as little compunction in letting the same amount of daylight into

them if I caught them thieving the provender; and they seemed to think me in earnest, for I missed no more corn or shucks. I saw plainly enough, however, that my remaining here, with such a perfectly lawless and ruffianly crew, was likely to lead me into some trouble, if, indeed, my life was not in absolute danger, which, from what occurred shortly after, I have now no doubt it was; and therefore I only waited until my foot was sufficiently recovered to enable me to resume my journey across the mountains.

The fare in Laforey's house was what might be expected in a hunter's establishment: venison, antelope, and the meat of the *carnero cimarron*—the Rocky Mountain sheep—furnished his larder; and such meat (poor and tough at this season of the year), with cakes of Indian meal, either tortillas or gorditas,* furnished the daily bill of fare. The absence of coffee he made the theme of regret at every meal, bewailing his misfortune in not having at that particular moment a supply of this article, which he never before was without, and which I may here observe, amongst the hunters and trappers, when in camp or rendezvous, is considered as an indispensable necessary. Coffee, being very cheap in the States, is the universal beverage of the western people, and finds its way to the

* The *tortilla* is a round flat pancake, made of the Indian corn-meal; the *gordita* is of the same material, but thicker.

mountains in the packs of the Indian traders, who retail it to the mountain-men at the moderate price of from two to six dollars the half-pint cup. However, my friend Laforey was never known to possess any, and his lamentations were only intended to soften my heart, as he thought (erroneously) that I must certainly carry a supply with me.

“Sacré enfant de Gârce,” he would exclaim, mixing English, French, and Spanish into a puchero-like jumble, “voyez-vous dat I vas nevare tan pauvre as dis time; mais before I vas siempre avec plenty cafe, plenty sucre; mais now, God dam, I not go à Santa Fé, God dam, and mountain-men dey come aqui from autre côte, drink all my café. Sacré enfant de Gârce, nevare I vas tan pauvre as dis time, God dam. I not care comer meat, ni frijole, ni corn, mais widout cafe I no live. I hunt may be two, three day, may be one week, mais I eat notin’; mais sin café, enfant de Gârce, I no live, parceque me not sacré Espagnôl, mais one Frenchman.”

Rio Colorado is the last and most northern settlement of Mexico, and is distant from Vera Cruz 2000 miles. It contains perhaps fifteen families, or a population of fifty souls, including one or two Yuta Indians, by sufferance of whom the New Mexicans have settled this valley, thus ensuring to the politic savages a supply of

corn or cattle without the necessity of undertaking a raid on Taos or Santa Fé whenever they require a remount. This was the reason given me by a Yuta for allowing the encroachment on their territory.

The soil of the valley is fertile, the little strip of land which comprises it yielding grain in abundance, and being easily irrigated from the stream, the banks of which are low. The plain abounds with *alegria*, the plant from which the juice is extracted with which the belles of Nuevo Mejico cosmetically preserve their complexions. The neighboring mountains afford plenty of large game—deer, bears, mountain-sheep, and elk; and the plains are covered with countless herds of antelope, which, in the winter, hang about the foot of the sierras, which shield them from the icy winds.

No state of society can be more wretched or degrading than the social and moral condition of the inhabitants of New Mexico: but in this remote settlement, anything I had formerly imagined to be the *ne plus ultra* of misery, fell far short of the reality:—such is the degradation of the people of the Rio Colorado. Growing a bare sufficiency for their own support, they hold the little land they cultivate, and their wretched hovels, on sufferance from the barbarous Yutas, who actually tolerate their presence in their country for the sole purpose of having

at their command a stock of grain and a herd of mules and horses, which they make no scruple of helping themselves to, whenever they require a remount or a supply of farinaceous food. Moreover, when a war expedition against a hostile tribe has failed, and no scalps have been secured to ensure the returning warriors a welcome to their village, the Rio Colorado is a kind of game-preserve, where the Yutas have a certainty of filling their bag if their other covers draw blank. Here they can always depend upon procuring a few brace of Mexican scalps, when such trophies are required for a war-dance or other festivity, without danger to themselves, and merely for the trouble of fetching them.

Thus, half the year, the settlers fear to leave their houses, and their corn and grain often remain uncut, the Indians being near: thus the valiant Mexicans refuse to leave the shelter of their burrows even to secure their only food. At these times their sufferings are extreme, they being reduced to the verge of starvation; and the old Canadian hunter told me that he and his son entirely supported the people on several occasions by the produce of their rifles, while the maize was lying rotting in the fields. There are sufficient men in the settlement to exterminate the Yutas, were they not entirely devoid of courage; but, as it is, they allow

themselves to be bullied and ill-treated with the most perfect impunity.

Against these same Indians a party of a dozen Shawnee and Delaware trappers waged a long and most destructive war, until at last the Yutas were fain to beg for peace, after losing many of their most famous warriors and chiefs. The cowardly Mexicans, however, have seldom summoned courage to strike a blow in their own defence, and their savage enemies so thoroughly despise them that they never scruple to attack them, however large the party, or in spite of the greatest disparity in numbers between them.

On the third day, the inflammation in my frost-bitten foot having in some measure subsided, I again packed my mules, and, under a fusillade of very hard names from the pelados, turned my back on Mexico and the Mexicans.

Laforey escorted me out of the settlement to point out the trail (for roads now had long ceased), and bewailing his hard fate in not having "plenty café, avec sucre, God dam," with a concluding enfant de Gârce, he bid me good bye, and recommended me to mind my hair—in other words, look out for my scalp. Cresting a bluff which rose from the valley, I turned in my saddle, took a last look of the adobes, and, without one regret, cried "Adios, Mejico!"

I had now turned my back on the last settlement, and felt a thrill of pleasure as I looked at the wild expanse of snow which lay before me, and the towering mountains which frowned on all sides, and knew that now I had seen the last (for some time at least) of civilized man under the garb of a Mexican sarape.

CHAPTER VI

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

OUR course on leaving Red River was due north, my object being to strike the Arkansa near its head-waters on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and follow as near as possible the Yuta trail, which these Indians use in passing from the Del Norte to the Bayou Salado,* on their annual buffalo-hunts to that elevated valley.

Skirting a low range of mountains, the trail passes a valley upwards of fifty miles in length, intersected by numerous streams (called creeks by the mountain-men), which rise in the neighboring highlands, and fall into the Del Norte, near its upper waters. Our first day's journey, of about twenty-five miles, led through the uplands at the southern extremity of the valley. These are covered with pine and cedar, and the more open plains with bushes of wild sage, which is the characteristic plant in all the elevated plains of the Rocky Mountains. On emerging from the uplands, we entered a level prairie, covered with innumerable herds of antelope.

* Now known as the South Park, Colorado. (*Ed.*)

These graceful animals, in bands containing several thousands, trotted up to us, and, with pointed ears and their beautiful eyes staring with eager curiosity, accompanied us for miles, running parallel to our trail within fifty or sixty yards.

The cold of these regions is more intense than I ever remember to have experienced, not excepting even in Lower Canada; and when a northerly wind sweeps over the bleak and barren plains, charged as it is with its icy reinforcements from the snow-clad mountains, it assails the unfortunate traveller, exposed to all its violence, with blood-freezing blasts, piercing to his very heart and bones.

Such was the state of congelation I was in, on this day, that even the shot-tempting antelope bounded past unscathed. My hands, with fingers of stone, refused even to hold the reins of my horse, who travelled as he pleased, sometimes slueing round his stern to wind, which was "dead ahead." Mattias, the half-breed who was my guide, enveloped from head to foot in blanket, occasionally cast a longing glance from out its folds at the provoking venison as it galloped past, muttering at intervals, "*Jesus, Jesus, que carne*—what meat we're losing!" At length, as a band of some three thousand almost ran over us, human nature, although at freezing-point, could no longer stand it. I jumped off

Panchito, and, kneeling down, sent a ball from my rifle right into the "thick" of the band. At the report two antelopes sprang into the air, their forms being distinct against the horizon above the backs of the rest; and when the herd had passed, they were lying kicking in the dust, one shot in the neck, through which the ball had passed into the body of another.

We packed a mule with the choice pieces of the meat, which was a great addition to our slender stock of dried provisions. As I was butchering the antelope, half a dozen wolves hung round the spot, attracted by the smell of blood; they were so tame, and hungry at the same time, that I thought they would actually have torn the meat from under my knife. Two of them loped round and round, gradually decreasing their distance, occasionally squatting on their haunches, and licking their impatient lips, in anxious expectation of a coming feast. I threw a large piece of meat towards them, when the whole gang jumped upon it, fighting and growling, and tearing each other in the furious melee. I am sure I might have approached near enough to have seized one by the tail, so entirely regardless of my vicinity did they appear. They were doubtless rendered more ravenous than usual by the uncommon severity of the weather, and, from the fact of the antelope congregating in large bands, were

unable to prey upon these animals, which are their favorite food. Although rarely attacking a man, yet in such seasons as the present I have no doubt that they would not hesitate to charge upon a solitary traveller in the night, particularly as in winter they congregate in troops of from ten to fifty. They are so abundant in the mountains, that the hunter takes no notice of them, and seldom throws away upon the skulking beasts a charge of powder and lead.

This night we camped on Rib Creek, the Costilla of the New-Mexican hunters, where there was no grass for our poor animals, and the creek was frozen to such a depth, that, after the greatest exertions in breaking a hole through the ice, which was nearly a foot thick, they were unable to reach the water.

It is a singular fact that during intense cold horses and mules suffer more from want of water than in the hottest weather, and often perish in the mountains when unable to procure it for two or three days in the frozen creeks. Although they made every attempt to drink, the mules actually kneeling in their endeavors to reach the water, I was obliged to give it them, one after the other, from a small tin cup which held half a pint, and from which the thirsty animals greedily drank.

This tedious process occupied me more than an hour, after which there was another hour's

work in hunting for wood, and packing it on our backs into camp. Before we had a fire going it was late in the night, and almost midnight before we had found a little grass and picketed the animals; all of which duties at last being effected, we cooked our collops of antelope-meat, smoked a pipe, and rolled ourselves in our blankets before the fire. All night long the camp was surrounded by wolves, which approached within a few feet of the fire, and their eyes shone like coals as they hovered in the bushes, attracted by the savory smell of the roasting venison.

The next day we struck La Culebra, or Snake Creek, where we saw that the party of Mormons had encamped, and apparently halted a day, for more than ordinary pains had been taken to make their camp comfortable, and several piles of twigs, of the sage-bush and rushes, remained, of which they had made beds. However, we were obliged to go farther down the creek, as there was no firewood near the point where the trail crosses it, and there found a sheltered place with tolerable grass, and near an air-hole in the ice where the animals could drink. I remarked that in the vicinity of the Mormon camp no watering-place had been made for their animals, and, as we had seen no holes broken in the ice of the creeks we had passed, I concluded that these people had allowed their animals to shift

for themselves, the consequences of which negligence were soon apparent in our farther advance.

The cold was so intense that I blanketed all my animals, and even then expected that some of the mules would have perished; for it snowed heavily during the night, and the storm ended in a watery sleet, which froze as soon as it fell, and in the morning the animals were covered with a sheet of ice. We ourselves suffered extremely, turning constantly, and rolling almost into the embers of the scanty fire; and towards daybreak I really thought I should have frozen bodily. My bedding consisted of two blankets—one of them a very thin one, which was all I had between my body and the snow; and the other, first soaked with the sleet and afterwards frozen stiff and hard, was more like a board than a blanket, and was in that state no protection against the cold. It is well known that the coldest period of the twenty-four hours is that immediately preceding the dawn of day. At this time one is generally awakened by the sensation of death-like chill, which penetrates into the very bones; and as the fire is by this time usually extinguished, or merely smouldering in the ashes, the duty of replenishing is a very trying process. To creep out of the blanket and face the cutting blast requires no little resolution; and, if there be more than one

person in the camp, the horrible moment is put off by the first roused, in hopes that someone else will awaken and perform the duty. However, should the coughs and hems succeed in rousing all, it is ten to one but that all, with a blank look at the cheerless prospect, cover their heads with the blanket, and with a groan, cuddling into a ball, resettle themselves to sleep, leaving the most chilly victim to perform the office.

The half-frozen animals, standing over their picket-pins and collapsed with cold, seem almost drawn within themselves, and occasionally approach the fire as close as their lariats will allow, bending down their noses to the feeble warmth, the breath in steaming volumes of cloud issuing from their nostrils, whilst their bodies are thickly clad with a coat of frozen snow or sleet.

Our next camp was on La Trinchera, or Bowl Creek. The country was barren and desolate, covered with sage, and with here and there a prairie with tolerable pasture. Antelope were abundant, and deer and turkeys were to be seen on the creeks. The trail passed, to the westward, a lofty peak, resembling in outline that one known as James's or Pike's Peak, which is some two hundred and fifty miles to the north. The former is not laid down in any of the maps, although it is a well-known landmark to the Indians.

The creeks are timbered with cottonwoods, quaking-asp, dwarf-oak, cedar, and wild cherry, all of small growth and stunted, while the uplands are covered with a dwarfish growth of pines. From Rio Colorado we had been constantly followed by a large grey wolf. Every evening, as soon as we got into camp, he made his appearance, squatting quietly down at a little distance, and after we had turned in for the night helping himself to anything lying about. Our first acquaintance commenced on the prairie where I had killed the two antelope, and the excellent dinner he then made, on the remains of the two carcasses, had evidently attached him to our society. In the morning, as soon as we left the camp, he took possession, and quickly ate up the remnants of our supper and some little extras I always took care to leave for him. Shortly after he would trot after us, and, if we halted for a short time to adjust the mule-packs or water the animals, he sat down quietly until we resumed our march. But when I killed an antelope, and was in the act of butchering it, he gravely looked on, or loped round and round, licking his jaws, and in a state of evident self-gratulation. I had him twenty times a day within reach of my rifle, but he became such an old friend that I never dreamed of molesting him.

Our day's travel was usually from twenty to

thirty miles, for the days were very short, and we were obliged to be in camp an hour before sunset, in order to procure wood, and water the animals before dark. Before arriving at the creek where we purposed to camp, I rode ahead, and selected a spot where was good grass and convenient water. We then unpacked the mules and horses, and immediately watered them, after which we allowed them to feed at large until dark. In the mean time we hunted for fire-wood, having sometimes to go half a mile from camp, packing it on our shoulders to the spot we intended for our fire, the mule-packs and saddles, &c., being placed to windward of it as a protection from the cold blasts. We then cooked supper, and at dark picketed the animals round the camp, their lariats (or skin-ropes) being attached to pegs driven in the ground. After a smoke, we spread our blankets before the fire and turned in, rising once or twice in the night to see that all was safe, and remove the animals to fresh grass when they had cleared the circle round their pickets. Guard or watch we kept none, for after a long day's travel it was too much for two of us to take alternate sentry, thus having but half the night for sleep.

We were now approaching a part of the journey much dreaded by the Indians and New-Mexican buffalo-hunters, and which is quite

another "*Jornada del Muerto*," or dead man's journey. A creek called Sangre Cristo—blood of Christ—winds through a deep cañon, which opens out at one point into a small circular basin called El Vallecito—the little valley. It is quite embosomed in the mountains; and down their rugged sides, and through the deep gorges, the wind rushes with tremendous fury, filling the valley with drifted snow, and depositing it in the numerous hollows with which it is intersected. This renders the passage of the Vallecito exceedingly difficult and dangerous, as animals are frequently buried in the snow, which is sometimes fifteen or twenty feet deep in the hollows, and four or five on the level.

This valley is also called by the mountaineers the "Wind-trap;" a very appropriate name, as the wind seems to be caught and pent up here the year round, and, mad with the confinement, blows round and round, seeking for an escape.

Wishing to have my animals fresh for the passage of this dreaded spot, I this day made a short journey of fifteen miles, and camped in the cañon about three miles from the mouth of the Wind-trap. The cañon was so precipitous that the only place I could find for our camp was on the side of the mountain, where was tolerably good gramma-grass, but a wretched place for ourselves; and we had to burrow out a level

spot in the snow before we could place the packs in a position where they would not roll down the hill. The cedars were few and far between, and the snow covered everything in the shape of wood; and as in our last camp my tomahawk had been lost in the snow, I was unable to procure a log, and was fain to set fire to a cedar near which we had laid our packs. The flame, licking the stringy and dry bark, quickly ran up the tree, blazed along the branches in a roar of fire, illuminating the rugged mountain, and throwing its light upon the thread of timber skirting the creek which wound along the bottom far beneath.

All night long the wind roared through the cañon, and at times swept the blankets from our chilled bodies with the force of a giant. The mules and horses after dark refused to feed, and, as there was no spot near where we could picket them, the poor beasts sought shelter from the cruel blasts in the belt of dwarf oak which fringed the creek.

We passed a miserable night, perched upon the mountain-side in our lonely camp, and without a fire, for the tree was soon consumed. Our old friend the wolf, however, was still a companion, and sat all night within sight of the fire, howling piteously from cold and hunger. The next morning I allowed the animals a couple of hours after sunrise to feed and fill

themselves; and then, descending from our camp, we entered at once the pass into the dreaded Vallecito. A few hundred yards from the entrance lay a frozen mule, half-buried in the snow; and a little farther on another, close to the creek where the Mormons had evidently encamped not two days before.

The Vallecito was covered with snow to the depth of three feet, to all appearance perfectly level, but in fact full of hollows, with fifteen or twenty feet of snow in them. With the greatest difficulty and labor we succeeded in crossing, having to dismount and beat a path through the drifts with our bodies. The pack-mules were continually falling, and were always obliged to be unpacked before they could rise. As this happened every score yards, more than half the day was consumed in traversing the valley, which cannot exceed four miles in length.

The mountain rises directly from the north end of the Vallecito, and is the dividing ridge between the waters of the Del Norte and the Arkansa or Rio Napeste of the Mexicans. The ascent to the summit, from the western side, is short, but very steep; and the snow was of such a depth that the mules could hardly make their way to the top. Leading my horse by the bridle, I led the way, and at length, numbed with cold, I reached the summit, where is a

level plateau of about a hundred square yards. Attaining this, and exposed to the full sweep of the wind, a blast struck me, carrying with it a perfect avalanche of snow and sleet, full in my front, and knocked me as clean off my legs as I could have been floored by a twenty-four pound shot.

The view from this point was wild and dismal in the extreme. Looking back, the whole country was covered with a thick carpet of snow, but eastward it was seen in patches only here and there. Before me lay the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, Pike's Peak lifting its snowy head far above the rest; and to the southeast the Spanish Peaks (*Cumbres Españolas*) towered like twin giants over the plains. Beneath the mountain on which I stood was a narrow valley, through which ran a streamlet bordered with dwarf oak and pine, and looking like a thread of silver as it wound through the plain. Rugged peaks and ridges, snow-clad and covered with pine, and deep gorges filled with broken rocks, everywhere met the eye. To the eastward the mountains gradually smoothed away into detached spurs and broken ground, until they met the vast prairies, which stretched far as the eye could reach, and hundreds of miles beyond—a sea of seeming barrenness, vast and dismal. A hurricane of wind was blowing at the time, and clouds of dust swept along the

sandy prairies, like the smoke of a million bonfires. On the mountain-top it roared and raved through the pines, filling the air with snow and broken branches, and piling it in huge drifts against the trees.

The perfect solitude of this vast wildness was almost appalling. From my position on the summit of the dividing ridge I had a bird's-eye view, as it were, over the rugged and chaotic masses of the stupendous chain of the Rocky Mountains, and the vast deserts which stretched away from their eastern bases; while, on all sides of me, broken ridges, and chasms and ravines, with masses of piled-up rocks and uprooted trees, with clouds of drifting snow flying through the air, and the hurricane's roar battling through the forest at my feet, added to the wildness of the scene, which was unrelieved by the slightest vestige of animal or human life. Not a sound either of bird or beast was heard—indeed, the hoarse and stunning rattle of the wind would have drowned them, so loud it roared and raved through the trees.

The animals strove in vain to face the storm, and, turning their sterns to the wind, shrank into themselves, trembling with cold. Panchito, whom I was leading by the bridle, followed me to the edge of the plateau, but drew back, trembling, from the dismal scene which lay stretched below. With a neigh of fear he laid

his cold nose against my cheek, seeming to say, "Come back, master: what can take you to such a wretched place as that, where not even a blade of grass meets the eye?"

The descent on the eastern side is steep and sudden, and through a thick forest of pines, to the valley beneath. Trail there was none to direct us, and my half-breed knew nothing of the road, having passed but once before, and many years ago, but said it went somewhere down the pines. The evening was fast closing round us, and to remain where we were was certain death to our animals, if not to ourselves: I therefore determined to push for the valley, and accordingly struck at once down the pines.

Once amongst the trees there was nothing to do but reach the bottom as fast as possible, as it was nearly dark, and nothing was to be seen at the distance of a dozen yards, so dense was the forest. Before we had proceeded as many paces from the edge of the plateau, and almost before I knew where I was, horses, mules, &c., were rolling down the mountain all together, and were at last brought up in a snow-drift some twelve feet deep. There they all lay in a heap, the half-breed under one of the pack-mules, and his swarthy face just peering out of the snow. Before a mule would stir every pack had to be removed; and this, with a temperature some ten degrees below zero, was trying to the fingers,

as may be imagined. As it was impossible to reach the bottom from this point, we struggled once more to the top through six feet of snow and an almost perpendicular ascent. I had to beat a road for the animals, by throwing myself bodily on the snow, and pounding it down with all my weight. We were nearly frozen by this time, and my hands were perfectly useless—so much so that, when a large bird of the grouse species* flew up into a pine above my head, I was unable to cock my rifle to shoot at it. The mules were plunging into the snow at every step, and their packs were hanging under their bellies, but to attempt to adjust them was out of the question. It was nearly dark too, which made our situation anything but pleasant, and the mules were quite exhausted.

At last, however, we reached the top and struck down the mountain at another point, but it was with the greatest toil and difficulty that we reached the bottom long after dark, and camped shortly after near the creek which wound through the valley, or rather in its very bed. One of the mules had slipped its pack completely under the belly, and, the girth pinching her, she started off just before reaching the creek at full gallop, kicking everything the pack contained to the four winds of heaven. This

* Called by the hunters *le coq des bois*. It resembles the Scotch capercaillie.

pack happened to contain all the provisions, and, as the search for them in the dark would have been useless, we this night had no supper. To shelter ourselves from the wind we camped in the bed of the creek, which was without water, but the wind howled down it as if it were a funnel, scattering our fire in every direction as soon as it was lighted, and tearing the blankets from our very bodies. The animals never moved from the spot where they had been unpacked; even if there had been grass, they were too exhausted to feed, but stood shivering in the wind, collapsed with cold, and almost dead. Such a night I never passed, and hope never to pass again. The hurricane never lulled for a single instant; all our efforts to build a fire were unavailing; and it was with no small delight that I hailed the break of day, when we immediately packed the mules and started on our journey.

The trail now led along the creek and through small broken prairies, with bluffs exhibiting a very curious formation of shale and sandstone. At one point the cañon opens out into a pretty open glade or park, in the middle of which is a large rock resembling a ruined castle: the little prairie is covered with fine grass, and a large herd of black-tailed deer were feeding in it. A little farther on we descried the timber on the Huerfano or Orphan Creek, so called from a

remarkable isolated rock of sandstone which stands in a small prairie on its left bank, and is a well-known landmark to the Indians. We camped on the Huerfano under some high cottonwoods, the wind blowing with unabated violence. The next morning all the animals were missing, and, following their trail, we found them on the other side of the creek, five or six miles from the camp, in a little prairie full of buffalo-grass. As it was late in the day when we returned to camp, we did not leave till next morning, when we crossed on to the Cuernaverte or Greenhorn Creek.

On a bluff overlooking the stream I had the satisfaction of seeing two or three Indian lodges and one adobe hovel of a more aspiring order. As we crossed the creek a mountaineer on an active horse galloped up to us, his rifle over the horn of the saddle, and clad in hunting-shirt and pantaloons of deer-skin, with long fringes hanging down the arms and legs. As this was the first soul we had met since leaving Red River, we were as delighted to meet a white man (and him an American) as he was to learn the news from the Mexican settlements. We found here two or three hunters, French Canadians, with their Assinniboin and Sioux squaws, who have made the Greenhorn their head-quarters; and game being abundant and the rich soil of the valley affording them a sufficiency of Indian

corn, they lead a tolerably easy life, and certainly a lazy one, with no cares whatever to annoy them. This valley will, I have no doubt, become one day a thriving settlement, the soil being exceedingly rich and admirably adapted to the growth of all kinds of grain. The prairies afford abundant pasture of excellent quality, and stock might be raised upon them in any numbers.

The depreciation in the value of beaver-skins has thrown the great body of trappers out of employment, and there is a general tendency amongst the mountain-men to settle in the fruitful valleys of the Rocky Mountains. Already the plough has turned up the soil within sight of Pike's Peak, and a hardy pioneer, an Englishman, has led the way to the Great Salt Lake, where a settlement of mountaineers has even now been formed, a thousand miles from the frontier of the United States.

From the Greenhorn an easy day's travel brought us to the banks of the San Carlos, which, receiving the former creek, falls into the Arkansa about two hundred and fifty miles from its source. The San Carlos is well timbered with cottonwood, cherry, quaking-asp, box-alder, and many varieties of shrubs, and many spots in the valley are admirably adapted for cultivation, with a rich loamy soil, and so situated as to be irrigated with great facility from the creek. Irrigation is indispensable over the whole of

this region, rain seldom falling in the spring and summer, which is one of the greatest drawbacks to the settlement of this country, the labor of irrigation being very great. The San Carlos heads in a lofty range of mountains about forty miles from its junction with the Arkansa. Near its upper waters is a circular valley enclosed by rugged highlands, through which the stream forces its way in a cañon whose precipitous sides overhang it to the height of three hundred feet. The face of the rock (of a dark limestone) is in many places perfectly vertical, and rises from the water's edge to a great elevation, piñons and small cedars growing out of crevices in the sides.

After leaving this creek we passed a barren rolling prairie with scanty herbage and covered with the palmilla* or soap-plant. A few antelope were its only tenants, and these so shy that I was unable to approach them. Fourteen miles from the San Carlos we struck the Arkansa at the little Indian trading-fort of the "Pueblo," which is situated on the left bank, a few hundred yards above the mouth of the Fontaine-qui-bouille, or Boiling Spring River, so called from two springs of mineral water near its headwaters under Pike's Peak, about sixty miles

* The palmilla or soap-plant is a species of cactus, the fibrous root of which the New Mexicans use as a substitute for soap. An abundant lather is obtained from it.

from its mouth. Here I was hospitably entertained in the lodge of one John Hawkens, an ex-trapper and well-known mountaineer. I turned my animals loose, and allowed them to seek for themselves the best pastures, as in the vicinity of the fort the prairies were perfectly bare of grass, and it was only near the mountain that any of a good quality was to be found.

CHAPTER VII

BLIZZARD IN SOUTH PARK

THE Arkansa is here a clear, rapid river about a hundred yards in width. The bottom, which is enclosed on each side by high bluffs, is about a quarter of a mile across, and timbered with a heavy growth of cottonwood, some of the trees being of great size. On each side vast rolling prairies stretch away for hundreds of miles, gradually ascending on the side towards the mountains, and the highlands are there sparsely covered with pinon and cedar. The high banks through which the river occasionally passes are of shale and sandstone, and rise precipitously from the water. Ascending the river the country is wild and broken until it enters the mountains, when the scenery is grand and imposing; but the prairies around it are arid and sterile, producing but little vegetation, and the grass, though of good quality, is thin and scarce.

The Pueblo is a small square fort of adobe with circular bastions at the corners, no part of the walls being more than eight feet high, and round the inside of the yard or corral are built

some half-dozen little rooms inhabited by as many Indian traders, *coureurs des bois*, and mountain-men. They live entirely upon game, and the greater part of the year without even bread, since but little maize is cultivated. As soon as their supply of meat is exhausted they start to the mountains with two or three pack-animals, and bring them back in two or three days loaded with buffalo or venison. In the immediate vicinity of the fort game is very scarce, and the buffalo have within a few years deserted the neighboring prairies, but they are always found in the mountain-valleys, particularly in one called Bayou Salado, which abounds in every species of game, including elk, bears, deer, bighorn or Rocky Mountain sheep, buffalo, antelope, &c.

Hunting in the mountains round the head of Fontaine-qui-bouille and Bayou Salado I remained for the rest of the winter, which was unusually severe—so much so, that the hunters were not unfrequently afraid to venture with their animals into the mountains. Shortly after my arrival on Arkansa, and during a spell of fine sunny weather, I started with a Pueblo hunter for a load or two of buffalo-meat, intending to hunt on the waters of the Platte and the Bayou, where bulls remain in good condition during the winter months, feeding on the rich grass of the mountain valleys. I took with me

my horse and three pack-mules, as it was our intention to return with a good supply of meat.

Our course lay up the Fontaine-qui-bouille, and on the third day we entered the pine-covered uplands at the foot of the mountain. Here we found deer so abundant that we determined to hunt here, rather than proceed across the ridge on to the waters of the Platte. We camped on a little mountain stream running into the creek an hour or two before sunset, and, as we had no provisions, we sallied out to hunt as soon as we had unpacked the mules. We killed two deer almost immediately, and, returning to camp, made a good supper off some of the tidbits.

The next morning at daybreak, as soon as I had risen from my blanket, I saw a herd of deer feeding within a few hundred yards of camp, and seizing my rifle I immediately took advantage of some broken ground to approach them. Before, however, I could get within shot they ascended the bluffs and moved across a prairie, feeding as they went. I took a long circuit to get the wind of them, and, following a ravine, at length brought my rifle to bear, and knocked over a fine buck, the others running two or three hundred yards and then stopping to look round for their missing comrade. As I ran up to the dead one, and took out my knife to cut the throat, another deer ran past and stopped

between me and the herd, and, taking a long shot, I dropped the animal, which, however, rose again and limped slowly away. Leaving the dead one and my ramrod on its body, I followed the wounded deer, and, about half a mile from where I fired, found it lying dead. The process of butchering occupied about twenty minutes, and, packing the hams and shoulders on my back, I trudged back to my first victim. As I was crossing a ravine and ascending the opposite bluff, I saw the figure of a man crawling along the bottom, evidently with the intention of approaching me. A close inspection assured me that it was an Indian; and as none but Arapahos were likely to be in the vicinity, and as these are the Indians most hostile to the white hunters, killing them whenever an opportunity offers, I made up my mind that a war-party was about, and that I and my companion stood a very good chance of "losing our hair." As the Indian cautiously advanced, I perceived another was running round the prairie to cut me off from camp, and consequently I determined to make good my ground where I was, throwing down the meat and getting my rifle in readiness for work.

The only tribes of Indians who frequent this part of the mountains are the Yutas (or Utahs) and the Arapahos, who are hereditary enemies, and constantly at deadly war with each

other. A large band of the Yutas had been wintering in the Bayou Salado, to which one trail leads by the Boiling Spring River (where I was hunting), and another by the Arkansa. The former is the trail followed by the Arapaho war-parties when on an expedition against the Yutas in the Bayou, and therefore I felt certain that none but the former Indians would be met with in this vicinity. However, as the Yutas are a very friendly tribe, I was loth to be the first to commence hostilities in case my antagonist might prove to belong to that nation, and therefore I awaited his approach, which he made stealthily, until he saw that I had discovered him, when, throwing himself erect, and gun in hand, he made directly towards me. With rifle cocked I watched his eye until he came within fifty yards, when suddenly, seeing my hostile appearance, he stopped, and, striking his hand thrice on his brawny chest, exclaimed, in a loud voice—

“Arapaho, Arapaho!” and stood erect and still. This announcement was very near being fatal to him, for, on hearing him proclaim himself one of that hostile nation, my rifle was up to my shoulder in an instant, and covering his heart. As my finger was on the trigger, it flashed across my mind that I had heard that two Arapahos were amongst the hunters on the Arkansa, their sister being married to a moun-

taineer, and that probably the dusky gentleman at the end of my rifle was one of these, as indeed he proved to be. I accordingly made signals of peace, and he approached and shook me by the hand. That his intentions were not altogether honest I have no doubt, but, finding me prepared, he thought it more advisable to remain *en paz*—at peace. What strengthened me in this belief was the fact, which I shortly after discovered, that a war-party of his nation were at that moment camped within a few hundred yards of us, whose vicinity he never apprised me of, and who, if they had seen us, would not have hesitated an instant to secure our scalps and animals.

When I returned to the spot where I had left the first deer, not a particle was visible except some hair scattered on the ground, but a few hundred yards from the spot a dozen wolves were engaged in dining off a lump of something, which, on approach, I found to be the remains of my deer, leaving behind them, when dispersed, a handful of hair.

The sagacity of wolves is almost incredible. They will remain round a hunting-camp and follow the hunters the whole day, in bands of three and four, at less than a hundred yards' distance, stopping when they stop, and sitting down quietly when game is killed, rushing to devour the offal when the hunter retires, and

then following until another feed is offered them. If a deer or antelope is wounded, they immediately pursue it, and not unfrequently pull the animal down in time for the hunter to come up and secure it from their ravenous clutches. However, they appear to know at once the nature of the wound, for if but slightly touched they never exert themselves to follow a deer, chasing those only which have received a mortal blow.

I one day killed an old buck which was so poor that I left the carcass on the ground untouched. Six coyotes, or small prairie wolves, were my attendants that day, and of course, before I had left the deer twenty paces, had commenced their work of destruction. Certainly not ten minutes after I looked back and saw the same six loping after me, one of them not twenty yards behind me, with his nose and face all besmeared with blood, and his belly swelled almost to bursting. Thinking it scarcely possible that they could have devoured the whole deer in so short a space, I had the curiosity to return, and, to my astonishment, found actually nothing left but a pile of bones and hair, the flesh being stripped from them as clean as if scraped with a knife. Half an hour after I killed a large black-tail deer, and, as it was also in miserable condition, I took merely the fleeces (as the meat on the back and ribs is

called), leaving four-fifths of the animal untouched. I then retired a short distance, and, sitting down on a rock, lighted my pipe, and watched the operations of the wolves. They sat perfectly still until I had withdrawn some threescore yards, when they scampered, with a flourish of their tails, straight to the deer. Then commenced such a tugging and snarling and biting, all squeaking and swallowing at the same moment. A skirmish of tails and flying hair was seen for five minutes, when the last of them, with slouching tail and evidently ashamed of himself, withdrew, and nothing remained on the ground but a well-picked skeleton. By sunset, when I returned to camp, they had swallowed as much as three entire deer.

We remained hunting in the mountains some days, and left the Boiling Spring River with our mules loaded with meat, having, almost by a miracle, been unmolested by the Arapaho war-party, some of whom I saw hunting nearly every day, without being myself discovered. Nothing occurred on our return until the night of the second day, when we camped on the creek in a spot destitute of grass, and our animals took themselves off in search of food during the night, *where* we knew not.

The next morning my companion, thinking to find them close at hand, left me in camp cooking the breakfast while he went to bring

in the animals, but presently returned, saying that he could find neither them nor their track, but had discovered fresh Indian sign in the bottom, where several Indians had been but a few hours before, and that, doubtless, they had made "*a raise*." I instantly seized my rifle, and, taking a circuit round the camp, came presently upon the track of horses and mules, and struck at once after them, thinking that, of course, they were those made by our animals, as they tallied with the number, being two horses and three mules. I had followed up the track for ten miles, when, in crossing a piece of hard prairie which scarcely yielded to the impression of the hoofs, I, for the first time, observed that not one of the animals I was following was shod, and, knowing that most of my own were so, I began to think, and soon satisfied myself of the fact, that they were not those I was in search of. As soon as I had made up my mind to this I retraced my steps to camp, and immediately started again with my companion in another direction. This time we came upon the right track, and found that it took an easterly direction and that the animals were not in the possession of the Indians, as their ropes still dragged along the ground, making a broad trail. Finding this, we returned to camp and "*cached*" our meat and packs in the forks of a cottonwood tree, out of reach of wolves; and without thinking of

cooking anything, so anxious were we to find our animals, we started off at once in pursuit, carrying a lariat and saddle-blanket to ride back on in case we found the mules.

We followed the trail until midnight, by which time I felt not a little tired, as I had been on my legs since daybreak, and had not broken my fast since the preceding day. We therefore turned into the bottom, floundering through the bushes, and impaling ourselves at every step on the prickly pears which covered the ground, and made a fire near the stream, in a thicket which in some degree sheltered us from the cold. We had scarcely however lighted the fire when a gale of wind burst upon us, and, scattering the burning brands in every direction, quickly set fire to the dry grass and bushes to leeward of the fire. All our efforts to prevent this were unavailing, and we were necessitated to put out our fire to prevent the whole bottom from being burned. As the cold was intense, and I had no covering but a paltry saddle-blanket about four feet square, sleep was out of the question if I wished to keep unfrozen, so that, after an hour or two's rest and a good smoke, we again turned out, and by the light of the moon pursued the trail. As it passed over prairies entirely destitute of grass, the animals had never once stopped, but continued a straight course, without turning to the right or left, in search

of pasture. We travelled on all night, and, halting for an hour's rest in the morning, about noon, looking ahead, I descried four objects feeding in the plain. I called out to my companion, who was a little in rear, that there they were.

"Elk," he answered, after a long look, "or Injuns. They're no mules, I'll lay a dollar: Arapahos, or I never see a redskin."

However, at that distance I recognized my mules, and, pushing on, I found them quietly feeding with Panchito, my companion's horse being alone missing, and they suffered me to catch them without difficulty. As we were now within twenty miles of the fort, Morgan, who had had enough of it, determined to return, and I agreed to go back with the animals to the *cache*, and bring in the meat and packs. I accordingly tied the blanket on a mule's back, and, leading the horse, trotted back at once to the grove of cottonwoods where we had before encamped. The sky had been gradually overcast with leaden-colored clouds, until, when near sunset, it was one huge inky mass of rolling darkness: the wind had suddenly lulled, and an unnatural calm, which so surely heralds a storm in these tempestuous regions, succeeded. The ravens were winging their way towards the shelter of the timber, and the coyote was seen trotting quickly to cover, conscious of the coming storm.

The black threatening clouds seemed gradually to descend until they kissed the earth, and already the distant mountains were hidden to their very bases. A hollow murmuring swept through the bottom, but as yet not a branch was stirred by wind; and the huge cottonwoods, with their leafless limbs, loomed like a line of ghosts through the heavy gloom. Knowing but too well what was coming, I turned my animals towards the timber, which was about two miles distant. With pointed ears, and actually trembling with fright, they were as eager as myself to reach the shelter; but, before we had proceeded a third of the distance, with a deafening roar the tempest broke upon us. The clouds opened and drove right in our faces a storm of freezing sleet, which froze upon us as it fell. The first squall of wind carried away my cap, and the enormous hailstones, beating on my unprotected head and face, almost stunned me. In an instant my hunting-shirt was soaked, and as instantly frozen hard; and my horse was a mass of icicles. Jumping off my mule—for to ride was impossible—I tore off the saddle-blanket and covered my head. The animals, blinded with the sleet, and their eyes actually coated with ice, turned their sterns to the storm, and, blown before it, made for the open prairie. All my exertions to drive them to the shelter of the timber was useless. It was impossible to face

the hurricane, which now brought with it clouds of driving snow; and perfect darkness soon set in.

Still the animals kept on, and I determined not to leave them, following, or rather being blown after them. My blanket, frozen stiff like a board, required all the strength of my numbed fingers to prevent it being blown away, and, although it was no protection against the intense cold, I knew it would in some degree shelter me at night from the snow. In half an hour the ground was covered on the bare prairie to the depth of two feet, and through this I floundered for a long time before the animals stopped. The prairie was as bare as a lake; but one little tuft of greasewood bushes presented itself, and here, turning from the storm, they suddenly stopped and remained perfectly still. In vain I again attempted to turn them towards the direction of the timber; huddled together, they would not move an inch; and, exhausted myself, and seeing nothing before me but, as I thought, certain death, I sank down immediately behind them, and, covering my head with the blanket, crouched like a ball in the snow.

I would have started myself for the timber, but it was pitchy dark, the wind drove clouds of frozen snow into my face, and the animals had so turned about in the prairie that it was impossible to know the direction to take; and although I had a compass with me, my hands

were so frozen that I was perfectly unable, after repeated attempts, to unscrew the box and consult it. Even had I reached the timber, my situation would have been scarcely improved, for the trees were scattered wide about over a narrow space, and, consequently, afforded but little shelter; and if even I had succeeded in getting firewood—by no means an easy matter at any time, and still more difficult now that the ground was covered with three feet of snow—I was utterly unable to use my flint and steel to procure a light, since my fingers were like pieces of stone, and entirely without feeling.

The way the wind roared over the prairie that night—how the snow drove before it, covering me and the poor animals partly—and how I lay there, feeling the very blood freezing in my veins, and my bones petrifying with the icy blasts which seemed to penetrate them—how for hours I remained with my head on my knees, and the snow pressing it down like a weight of lead, expecting every instant to drop into a sleep from which I knew it was impossible I should ever awake—how every now and then the mules would groan aloud and fall down upon the snow, and then again struggle on their legs—how all night long the piercing howl of wolves was borne upon the wind, which never for an instant abated its violence during the night,—I would not attempt to describe. I

have passed many nights alone in the wilderness, and in a solitary camp have listened to the roarings of the wind and the howling of wolves, and felt the rain or snow beating upon me, with perfect unconcern: but this night threw all my former experiences into the shade, and is marked with the blackest of stones in the memoranda of my journeyings.

Once, late in the night, by keeping my hands buried in the breast of my hunting-shirt, I succeeded in restoring sufficient feeling into them to enable me to strike a light. Luckily my pipe, which was made out of a huge piece of cottonwood bark, and capable of containing at least twelve ordinary pipefuls, was filled with tobacco to the brim; and this I do believe kept me alive during the night, for I smoked and smoked until the pipe itself caught fire, and burned completely to the stem.

I was just sinking into a dreamy stupor, when the mules began to shake themselves, and sneeze and snort; which hailing as a good sign, and that they were still alive, I attempted to lift my head and take a view of the weather. When with great difficulty I raised my head, all appeared dark as pitch, and it did not at first occur to me that I was buried deep in snow; but when I thrust my arm above me, a hole was thus made, through which I saw the stars shining in the sky and the clouds fast clearing

away. Making a sudden attempt to straighten my almost petrified back and limbs, I rose, but, unable to stand, fell forward in the snow, frightening the animals, which immediately started away. When I gained my legs I found that day was just breaking, a long grey line of light appearing over the belt of timber on the creek, and the clouds gradually rising from the east, and allowing the stars to peep from patches of blue sky. Following the animals as soon as I gained the use of my limbs, and taking a last look at the perfect cave from which I had just risen, I found them in the timber, and, singular enough, under the very tree where we had *cached* our meat. However, I was unable to ascend the tree in my present state, and my frost-bitten fingers refused to perform their offices; so that I jumped upon my horse, and, followed by the mules, galloped back to the Arkansa, which I reached in the evening, half dead with hunger and cold.

The hunters had given me up for lost, as such a night even the "oldest inhabitant" had never witnessed. My late companion had reached the Arkansa, and was safely housed before it broke, blessing his lucky stars that he had not gone back with me. The next morning he returned and brought in the meat; while I spent two days in nursing my frozen fingers and feet,

and making up, in feasting mountain fashion, for the banyans I had suffered.

The morning after my arrival on Arkansa, two men, named Harwood and Markhead—the latter one of the most daring and successful trappers that ever followed this adventurous mountain life, and whom I had intended to have hired as a guide to the valley of the Columbia the ensuing spring—started off to the settlement of New Mexico, with some packs of peltries, intending to bring back Taos whisky (a very profitable article of trade amongst the mountaineers) and some bags of flour and Indian meal.

I found on returning from my hunt that a man named John Albert had brought intelligence that the New Mexicans and Pueblo Indians had risen in the Valley of Taos, and, as I have before mentioned, massacred Governor Bent and other Americans, and had also attacked and destroyed Turley's ranch on the Arroyo Hondo, killing him and most of his men. Albert had escaped from the house, and, charging through the assailants, made for the mountains, and, travelling night and day, and without food, had reached the Greenhorn with the news, and after recruiting for a couple of days had come on to the Arkansa with the intelligence, which threw the fierce mountaineers into a perfect frenzy.

As Markhead and Harwood would have

arrived in the settlements about the time of the rising, little doubt remained as to their fate, but it was not until nearly two months after that any intelligence was brought concerning them. It seemed that they arrived at the Rio Colorado, the first New Mexican settlement, on the seventh or eighth day, when the people had just received news of the massacre in Taos. These savages, after stripping them of their goods, and securing, by treachery, their arms, made them mount their mules under the pretence of conducting them to Taos, there to be given up to the chief of the insurrection. They had hardly, however, left the village when a Mexican, riding behind Harwood, discharged his gun into his back: Harwood, calling to Markhead that he was "finished," fell dead to the ground. Markhead, seeing that his own fate was sealed, made no struggle, and was likewise shot in the back by several balls. They were then stripped and scalped and shockingly mutilated, and their bodies thrown into the bush by the side of the creek to be devoured by the wolves. They were both remarkably fine young men.

Markhead was celebrated in the mountains for his courage and reckless daring, having had many almost miraculous escapes when in the very hands of hostile Indians. He had a few years ago accompanied Sir W. Drummond

Stewart in one of his expeditions across the mountains. It happened that a half-breed of the company absconded one night with some animals belonging to Sir William, who, being annoyed at the circumstance, said hastily, and never dreaming that his offer would be taken up, that he would give five hundred dollars for the scalp of the thief. The next day Markhead rode into camp with the scalp of the unfortunate horse-thief hanging at the end of his rifle, and I believe received the reward, at least so he himself declared to me, for this act of mountain law. On one occasion, whilst trapping on the waters of the Yellowstone, in the midst of the Black-foot country, he came suddenly upon two or three lodges, from which the Indians happened to be absent. There was no doubt, from signs which he had previously discovered, that they were lying in wait for him somewhere on the stream to attack him when examining his traps, the Blackfeet, moreover, being most bitterly hostile to the white trappers, and killing them without mercy whenever an occasion offered. Notwithstanding the almost certainty that some of the Indians were close at hand, probably gone out for a supply of wood and would very soon return, Markhead resolved to visit the lodges and help himself to anything worth taking that he might find there. The fire was burning, and meat was actually cooking in a

pot over it. To this he did ample justice, emptying the pot in a very satisfactory manner, after which he tied all the blankets, dressed skins, moccasins, &c., into a bundle, and, mounting his horse, got safely off with his prize.

It was not always, however, that he escaped scatheless, for his body was riddled with balls received in many a bloody affray with Blackfeet and other Indians.

Laforey, the old Canadian trapper, with whom I stayed at Red River, was accused of having possessed himself of the property found on the two mountaineers, and afterwards of having instigated the Mexicans to the barbarous murder. The hunters on Arkansa vowed vengeance against him, and swore to have his hair some day, as well as similar love-locks from the people of Red River: A war-expedition was also talked of to that settlement, to avenge the murder of their comrades, and ease the Mexicans of their mules and horses.

The massacre of Turley and his people, and the destruction of his mill, were not consummated without considerable loss to the barbarous and cowardly assailants. There were in the house, at the time of the attack, eight white men, including Americans, French Canadians, and one or two Englishmen, with plenty of arms and ammunition. Turley had been warned of the

intended insurrection, but had treated the report with indifference and neglect, until one morning a man named Otterbees, in the employ of Turley, and who had been despatched to Sante Fé with several mule-loads of whisky a few days before, made his appearance at the gate on horseback, and, hastily informing the inmates of the mill that the New Mexicans had risen and massacred Governor Bent and other Americans, galloped off. Even then Turley felt assured that he would not be molested, but, at the solicitations of his men, agreed to close the gate of the yard round which were the buildings of a mill and distillery, and make preparations for defence.

A few hours after a large crowd of Mexicans and Pueblo Indians made their appearance, all armed with guns and bows and arrows, and, advancing with a white flag, summoned Turley to surrender his house and the Americans in it, guaranteeing that his own life should be saved, but that every other American in the valley of Taos had to be destroyed; that the Governor and all the Americans at Fernandez and the rancho had been killed, and that not one was to be left alive in all New Mexico.

To this summons Turley answered that he would never surrender his house nor his men, and that, if they wanted it or them, "they must take them."

The enemy then drew off, and, after a short consultation commenced the attack. The first day they numbered about five hundred, but the crowd was hourly augmented by the arrival of parties of Indians from the more distant pueblos, and of New Mexicans from Fernandez, La Canada, and other places.

The building lay at the foot of a gradual slope in the sierra, which was covered with cedar-bushes. In front ran the stream of the Arroyo Hondo, about twenty yards from one side of the square, and on the other side was broken ground, which rose abruptly and formed the bank of the ravine. In rear, and behind the still-house, was some garden-ground enclosed by a small fence, and into which a small wicket-gate opened from the corral.

As soon as the attack was determined upon, the assailants broke, and, scattering, concealed themselves under the cover of the rocks and bushes which surrounded the house.

From these they kept up an incessant fire upon every exposed portion of the building where they saw the Americans preparing for defence.

They, on their part, were not idle; not a man but was an old mountaineer, and each had his trusty rifle, with good store of ammunition. Wherever one of the assailants exposed a hand's-breadth of his person, there whistled a ball from an unerring barrel. The windows had been

blockaded, loop-holes being left to fire through, and through these a lively fire was maintained. Already several of the enemy had bitten the dust, and parties were constantly seen bearing off the wounded up the banks of the Canada. Darkness came on, and during the night a continual fire was kept up on the mill, whilst its defenders, reserving their ammunition, kept their posts with stern and silent determination. The night was spent in running balls, cutting patches, and completing the defences of the building. In the morning the fight was renewed, and it was found that the Mexicans had effected a lodgment in a part of the stables, which were separated from the other portions of the building, and between which was an open space of a few feet. The assailants, during the night, had sought to break down the wall, and thus enter the main building, but the strength of the adobes and logs of which it was composed resisted effectually all their attempts.

Those in the stable seemed anxious to regain the outside, for their position was unavailable as a means of annoyance to the besieged, and several had darted across the narrow space which divided it from the other part of the building, and which slightly projected, and behind which they were out of the line of fire. As soon, however, as the attention of the defenders was called to this point, the first man

who attempted to cross, and who happened to be a Pueblo chief, was dropped on the instant, and fell dead in the centre of the intervening space. It appeared an object to recover the body, for an Indian immediately dashed out to the fallen chief, and attempted to drag him within the cover of the wall. The rifle which covered the spot again poured forth its deadly contents, and the Indian springing into the air, fell over the body of his chief, struck to the heart. Another and another met with a similar fate, and at last three rushed at once to the spot, and, seizing the body by the legs and head, had already lifted it from the ground, when three puffs of smoke blew from the barricaded window, followed by the sharp cracks of as many rifles, and the three daring Indians added their number to the pile of corpses which now covered the body of the dead chief.

As yet the besieged had met with no casualties; but after the fall of the seven Indians, in the manner above described, the whole body of assailants, with a shout of rage, poured in a rattling volley, and two of the defenders of the mill fell mortally wounded. One, shot through the loins, suffered great agony, and was removed to the still-house, where he was laid upon a large pile of grain, as being the softest bed to be found. In the middle of the day the assailants renewed the attack more fiercely than before,

their baffled attempts adding to their furious rage. The little garrison bravely stood to the defence of the mill, never throwing away a shot, but firing coolly, and only when a fair mark was presented to their unerring aim. Their ammunition, however, was fast failing, and, to add to the danger of their situation, the enemy set fire to the mill, which blazed fiercely, and threatened destruction to the whole building. Twice they succeeded in overcoming the flames, and, taking advantage of their being thus occupied, the Mexicans and Indians charged into the corral, which was full of hogs and sheep, and vented their cowardly rage upon the animals, spearing and shooting all that came in their way. No sooner, however, were the flames extinguished in one place, than they broke out more fiercely in another; and as a successful defence was perfectly hopeless, and the numbers of the assailants increased every moment, a council of war was held by the survivors of the little garrison, when it was determined, as soon as night approached, that every one should attempt to escape as best he might, and in the mean time the defence of the mill was to be continued.

Just at dusk, Albert and another man ran to the wicket-gate which opened into a kind of enclosed space, and in which was a number of armed Mexicans. They both rushed out at

the same moment, discharging their rifles full in the faces of the crowd. Albert, in the confusion, threw himself under the fence, whence he saw his companion shot down immediately, and heard his cries for mercy, mingled with shrieks of pain and anguish, as the cowards pierced him with knives and lances. Lying without motion under the fence, as soon as it was quite dark he crept over the logs and ran up the mountain, travelled day and night, and, scarcely stopping or resting, reached the Greenhorn, almost dead with hunger and fatigue. Turley himself succeeded in escaping from the mill and in reaching the mountain unseen. Here he met a Mexican, mounted on a horse, who had been a most intimate friend of the unfortunate man for many years. To this man Turley offered his watch (which was treble the value) for the use of his horse, but was refused. The inhuman wretch, however, affected pity and commiseration for the fugitive, and advised him to go to a certain place, where he would bring or send him assistance; but on reaching the mill, which was now a mass of fire, he immediately informed the Mexicans of his place of concealment, whither a large party instantly proceeded and shot him to death.

Two others escaped and reached Santa Fé in safety. The mill and Turley's house were sacked and gutted, and all his hard-earned

savings, which were considerable, and concealed in gold about the house, were discovered, and of course seized upon, by the victorious Mexicans.

The Indians, however, met a few days after with a severe retribution. The troops marched out of Santa Fé, attacked their pueblo, and levelled it to the ground, killing many hundreds of its defenders, and taking many prisoners, most of whom were hanged.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEAVER AND HIS TRAPPER

BEAVER has so depreciated in value within the last few years, that trapping has been almost abandoned; the price paid for the skin of this valuable animal having fallen from six and eight dollars per pound to one dollar, which hardly pays the expenses of traps, animals, and equipment for the hunt, and is certainly no adequate remuneration for the incredible hardships, toil, and danger, which are undergone by the hardy trappers in the course of their adventurous expeditions. The cause of the great decrease in value of beaver-fur is the substitute which has been found for it in the skins of the fur-seal and nutria—the improved preparation of other skins of little value, such as the hare and rabbit—and, more than all, in the use of silk in the manufacture of hats, which has in a great measure superseded that of beaver. Thus the curse of the trapper is levelled against all the new-fashioned materials of Paris hats; and the light and (h)airy gossamer of twelve-and-six is anathematized in the mountains in a way which would be highly dis-

tressing to the feelings of Messrs. Jupp and Johnson, and other artists in the ventilating-gossamer line.

Thanks to the innovation, however, a little breathing-time has been allowed the persecuted castor; and this valuable fur-bearing animal, which otherwise would, in the course of a few years, have become extinct, has now a chance of multiplying, and will in a short time again become abundant; for, although not a very prolific animal, the beaver has perhaps fewer natural enemies than any other of the *feræ naturæ*, and being at the same time a wise and careful one, provides against all contingencies of cold and hunger, which in northern climates carry off so large a proportion of his brother beasts.

The beaver was once found in every part of North America from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, but has now gradually retired from the encroachments and the persecutions of civilized man, and is met with only in the far, far west, on the tributaries of the great rivers, and the streams which water the mountain valleys in the great chain of the Rocky Mountains. On the waters of the Platte and Arkansa they are still numerous, and within the last two years have increased considerably in numbers; but the best trapping-ground now is on the streams running through the Bayou Salado, and the Old and New Parks, all of which are elevated mountain valleys.

The habits of the beaver present quite a study to the naturalist, and they are certainly the most sagaciously instinctive of all quadrupeds. Their dams afford a lesson to the engineer, their houses a study to the architect of comfortable abodes, while their unremitting labor and indefatigable industry are models to be followed by the working-man. The lodge of the beaver is generally excavated in the bank of the stream, the entrance being invariably under water; but not unfrequently, where the banks are flat, the animals construct lodges in the stream itself, of a conical form, of limbs and branches of trees woven together and cemented with mud. For the purpose of forming dams, for the necessary timber for their lodges, or for the bark which they store for their winter's supply of food, the beaver often fells a tree eight or ten inches in diameter, throwing it, with the skill of an expert woodsman, in any direction he pleases, always selecting a tree above the stream, in order that the logs may be carried down with it to their destination. The log is then chopped into small lengths, and, pushing them into the water, the beaver steers them to the lodge or dam. These trees are as cleanly cut as they could be by a sharp axe, the gouging furrows made by the animal's strong teeth cutting into the very centre of the trunk, the notch being smooth as sawed wood.

With his broad tail, which is twelve or fourteen inches long, and about four in breadth, and covered with a thick scaly skin, the beaver plasters his lodge, thus making it perform all the offices of a hand. They say that, when the beaver's tail becomes dry, the animal dies, but, whether this is the case or not, I have myself seen the beaver when at work return to the water and plunge his tail into the stream, and then resume his labor with renewed vigor; and I have also seen them, with their bodies on the bank, thumping the water with their tails with a most comical perseverance.

The female seldom produces more than three kittens at a birth, but I know an instance where one was killed with young, having no less than eleven in her. They live to a considerable age, and I once ate the tail of an old "man" beaver whose head was perfectly grey with age, and his beard was of the same venerable hue, notwithstanding which his tail was tender as a young raccoon. The kittens are as playful as their namesakes of the feline race, and it is highly amusing to see an old one with grotesque gravity inciting her young to gambol about her, whilst she herself is engaged about some household work.

The *nutrias* of Mexico are identical with the beavers of the more northern parts of America; but in South America, and on some parts of the

western coast of North America, a species of seal, or, as I have heard it described, a hybrid between the seal and the beaver, is called *nutria*—quite a distinct animal, however, from the Mexican *nutria*.

The trappers of the Rocky Mountains belong to a "genus" more approximating to the primitive savage than perhaps any other class of civilized man. Their lives being spent in the remote wilderness of the mountains, with no other companion than Nature herself, their habits and character assume a most singular cast of simplicity mingled with ferocity, appearing to take their coloring from the scenes and objects which surround them. Knowing no wants save those of nature, their sole care is to procure sufficient food to support life, and the necessary clothing to protect them from the rigorous climate. This with the assistance of their trusty rifles, they are generally able to effect, but sometimes at the expense of great peril and hardship. When engaged in their avocation, the natural instinct of primitive man is ever alive, for the purpose of guarding against danger and the provision of necessary food.

Keen observers of nature, they rival the beasts of prey in discovering the haunts and habits of game, and in their skill and cunning in capturing it. Constantly exposed to perils of

all kinds, they become callous to any feeling of danger, and destroy human as well as animal life with as little scruple and as freely as they expose their own. Of laws, human or divine, they neither know nor care to know. Their wish is their law, and to attain it they do not scruple as to ways and means. Firm friends and bitter enemies, with them it is "a word and a blow," and the blow often first. They may have good qualities, but they are those of the animal; and people fond of giving hard names call them revengeful, bloodthirsty, drunkards (when the wherewithal is to be had), gamblers, regardless of the laws of *meum* and *tuum*—in fact, "White Indians."

However, there are exceptions, and I *have* met honest mountain men. Their animal qualities, however, are undeniable. Strong, active, hardy as bears, daring, expert in the use of their weapons, they are just what uncivilized white man might be supposed to be in a brute state, depending upon his instinct for the support of life. Not a hole or corner in the vast wilderness of the "Far West" but has been ransacked by these hardy men. From the Mississippi to the mouth of the Colorado of the West, from the frozen regions of the North to the Gila in Mexico, the beaver-hunter has set his traps in every creek and stream. All this vast country, but for the daring enterprise of

these men, would be even now a *terra incognita* to geographers, as indeed a great portion still is; but there is not an acre that has not been passed and repassed by the trappers in their perilous excursions. The mountains and streams still retain the names assigned to them by the rude hunters; and these alone are the hardy pioneers who have paved the way for the settlement of the western country.

Trappers are of two kinds, the "hired hand" and the "free trapper:" the former hired for the hunt by the fur companies; the latter, supplied with animals and traps by the company, is paid a certain price for his furs and peltries.

There is also the trapper "on his own hook;" but this class is very small. He has his own animals and traps, hunts where he chooses, and sells his peltries to whom he pleases.

On starting for a hunt, the trapper fits himself out with the necessary equipment, either from the Indian trading-forts, or from some of the petty traders—*coureurs des bois*—who frequent the western country. This equipment consists usually of two or three horses or mules—one for saddle, the others for packs—and six traps, which are carried in a bag of leather called a trap-sack. Ammunition, a few pounds of tobacco, dressed deer-skins for moccasins, &c., are carried in a wallet of dressed buffalo-skin called a possible-sack. His "possibles" and

“trap-sack” are generally carried on the saddle-mule when hunting, the others being packed with the furs. The costume of the trapper is a hunting-shirt of dressed buckskin, ornamented with long fringes*; pantaloons of the same material, and decorated with porcupine-quills and long fringes down the outside of the leg. a flexible felt hat and moccasins clothe his extremities. Over his left shoulder and under his right arm hang his powder-horn and bullet-pouch, in which he carries his balls, flint and steel, and odds and ends of all kinds. Round the waist is a belt, in which is stuck a large butcher-knife in a sheath of buffalo-hide, made fast to the belt by a chain or guard of steel; which also supports a little buckskin case containing a whetstone. A tomahawk is also often added; and, of course, a long heavy rifle is part and parcel of his equipment. I had nearly forgotten the pipe-holder, which hangs round his neck, and is generally a *gage d’amour*, and a triumph of squaw workmanship, in shape of a heart, garnished with beads and porcupine-quills.

Thus provided, and having determined the locality of his trapping-ground, he starts to the mountains, sometimes alone, sometimes with three or four in company, as soon as the breaking up of the ice allows him to commence

* These fringes were not merely ornamental; they supplied “whangs” in lack of string. (*Ed.*)

operations. Arrived on his hunting-grounds, he follows the creeks and streams, keeping a sharp look-out for "sign." If he sees a prostrate cottonwood tree, he examines it to discover if it be the work of beaver—whether "thrown" for the purpose of food, or to dam the stream. The track of the beaver on the mud or sand under the bank is also examined; and if the "sign" be fresh, he sets his trap in the run of the animal, hiding it under water, and attaching it by a stout chain to a picket driven in the bank, or to a bush or tree. A "float-stick" is made fast to the trap by a cord a few feet long, which, if the animal carry away the trap, floats on the water and points out its position. The trap is baited with the "medicine," an oily substance obtained from a gland in the scrotum of the beaver, but distinct from the testes. A stick is dipped into this and planted over the trap; and the beaver, attracted by the smell, and wishing a close inspection, very foolishly puts his leg into the trap, and is a "gone beaver."

When a lodge is discovered, the trap is set at the edge of the dam, at the point where the animal passes from deep to shoal water, and always under water. Early in the morning the hunter mounts his mule and examines the traps. The captured animals are skinned, and the tails, which are a great dainty, carefully packed into camp. The skin is then stretched over a hoop or

framework of osier-twigs, and is allowed to dry, the flesh and fatty substance being carefully scraped (grained). When dry, it is folded into a square sheet, the fur turned inwards, and the bundle, containing about ten to twenty skins, tightly pressed and corded, and is ready for transportation.

During the hunt, regardless of Indian vicinity, the fearless trapper wanders far and near in search of "sign." His nerves must ever be in a state of tension, and his mind ever present at his call. His eagle eye sweeps round the country, and in an instant detects any foreign appearance. A turned leaf, a blade of grass pressed down, the uneasiness of the wild animals, the flight of birds, are all paragraphs to him written in nature's legible hand and plainest language. All the wits of the subtle savage are called into play to gain an advantage over the wily woodsman; but with the natural instinct of primitive man, the white hunter has the advantages of a civilized mind, and, thus provided, seldom fails to outwit, under equal advantages, the cunning savage.

Sometimes, following on his trail, the Indian watches him set his traps on a shrub-belted stream, and, passing up the bed, like Bruce of old, so that he may leave no track, he lies in wait in the bushes until the hunter comes to examine his carefully-set traps. Then, waiting

until he approaches his ambushment within a few feet, whiz flies the home-drawn arrow, never failing at such close quarters to bring the victim to the ground. For one white scalp, however, that dangles in the smoke of an Indian's lodge, a dozen red ones, at the end of the hunt, ornament the camp-fires of the rendezvous.

At a certain time, when the hunt is over, or they have loaded their pack-animals, the trappers proceed to the "rendezvous," the locality of which has been previously agreed upon; and here the traders and agents of the fur companies await them, with such assortment of goods as their hardy customers may require, including generally a fair supply of alcohol. The trappers drop in singly and in small bands, bringing their packs of beaver to this mountain market, not unfrequently to the value of a thousand dollars each, the produce of one hunt. The dissipation of the "rendezvous," however, soon turns the trapper's pocket inside out. The goods brought by the traders, although of the most inferior quality, are sold at enormous prices:—Coffee, twenty and thirty shillings a pint-cup, which is the usual measure; tobacco fetches ten and fifteen shillings a plug; alcohol, from twenty to fifty shillings a pint; gunpowder, sixteen shillings a pint-cup; and all other articles at proportionally exorbitant prices.

The "beaver" is purchased at from two to eight

dollars per pound; the Hudson's Bay Company alone buying it by the *pluie*, or "plew," that is, the whole skin, giving a certain price for skins, whether of old beaver or "kittens."

The rendezvous is one continued scene of drunkenness, gambling, and brawling and fighting, as long as the money and credit of the trappers last. Seated, Indian fashion, round the fires, with a blanket spread before them, groups are seen with their decks of cards, playing at euchre, poker, and seven-up, the regular mountain-games. The stakes are "beaver," which here is current coin; and when the fur is gone, their horses, mules, rifles, and shirts, hunting-packs, and *breeches*, are staked. Daring gamblers make the rounds of the camp, challenging each other to play for the trapper's highest stake,—his horse, his squaw, (if he have one) and, as once happened, his scalp. "There goes hoss and beaver!" is the mountain expression when any great loss is sustained; and, sooner or later, "hoss and beaver" invariably find their way into the insatiable pockets of the traders. A trapper often squanders the produce of his hunt, amounting to hundreds of dollars, in a couple of hours; and, supplied on credit with another equipment, leaves the rendezvous for another expedition, which has the same result time after time; although one tolerably successful hunt would enable him to

return to the settlements and civilized life, with an ample sum to purchase and stock a farm, and enjoy himself in ease and comfort the remainder of his days.

An old trapper, a French Canadian, assured me that he had received fifteen thousand dollars for beaver during a sojourn of twenty years in the mountains. Every year he resolved in his mind to return to Canada, and, with this object, always converted his fur into cash; but a fortnight at the "rendezvous" always cleaned him out, and, at the end of twenty years, he had not even credit sufficient to buy a pound of powder.

These annual gatherings are often the scene of bloody duels, for over their cups and cards no men are more quarrelsome than your mountaineers. Rifles, at twenty paces, settle all differences, and, as may be imagined, the fall of one or other of the combatants is certain, or, as sometimes happens, both fall to the word "fire."

A day or two after my return from the mountain, I was out in search of my animals along the river-bottom, when I met a war-party of Arapahos loping along on foot in Indian file. It was the same party who had been in the vicinity of our camp on Fontaine-qui-bouille, and was led by a chief called Coxo, "the Game Leg." They were all painted and

armed for war, carrying bows and well-filled quivers, war-clubs and lances, and some had guns in deerskin covers. They were all naked to the waist, a single buffalo robe being thrown over them, and from his belt each one had a lariat or rope of hide to secure the animals stolen in the expedition. They were returning without a scalp, having found the Yutas "not at home;" and this was considered a sign by the hunters that they would not be scrupulous in "raising some hair," if they caught a straggler far from camp. However their present visit was for the purpose of procuring some meat, of which they stood in need, as to reach their village they had to cross a country destitute of game. They were all remarkably fine young men, and perfectly cleanly in their persons; indeed, when on the war-path, more than ordinary care is taken to adorn the body, and the process of painting occupies considerable time and attention. The Arapahos do not shave their heads, as do the Pawnees, Caws, and Osages, merely braiding the center or scalp lock, and decorating it with a gay ribbon or feather of the war-eagle.

This war-party was twenty-one in number, the oldest, with the exception of the chief, being under thirty, and not one of them was less than five feet eight inches in height. In this they differ from their neighbors the Yutas

and Comanches, who are of small stature; the latter especially, when off their horses, presenting small ungainly figures, with legs crooked by constant riding, and limbs exhibiting but little muscular development. Not one of this Arapaho band but could have sat as a model for an Apollo. During their stay the animals were all collected and corralled, as their penchant for horse-flesh, it was thought likely, might lead some of the young men to appropriate a horse or mule.

Each tribe of Prairie Indians has a different method of making moccasins, so that any one, acquainted with the various fashions, is at no loss to know the nation to which any particular one belongs whom he may happen to meet. The Arapahos and Cheyennes use a "shoe" moccasin, that is, one which reaches no higher than the instep, and wants the upper side-flaps which moccasins usually have. I always used Chippewa moccasins, which differ from those of the Prairie make, by the seam being made up the center of the foot to the leg, and puckered into plaits. This, which is the true fashion of the "Forest Indian," (who, by the by, is as distinct in character and appearance from him of the "plains" as a bear from a bluebottle) attracted the attention of the Arapaho warriors, and caused a lively discussion amongst themselves, owing to the novelty

of the manufacture. They all surrounded me, and each examined and felt carefully the unusual *chaussure*.

Ti-yah! was the universal exclamation of astonishment. The old chief was the last to approach, and, after a minute examination, he drew himself up, and explained to them, as I perfectly understood by his gestures, that the people who made those moccasins lived far, far away from the sun, where the snow lay deep on the ground, and where the night was illuminated by the mystery fire (the aurora borealis), which he had seen, years ago, far to the north.

The vicinity of the "pueblo" affording no pasture, my *cavallada* had undertaken a voyage of discovery in search of grass, and had found a small valley up the bed of a dry creek, in which grew an abundance of bunch-grass. As, however, the river was fast frozen, they were unable to find a watering-place themselves, and one day made their appearance in camp, evidently for the purpose of being conducted to water; I therefore led them to the river and broke a large hole, which they invariably resorted to every morning and evening at the same hour, although it was three or four miles from their feeding-place. This enabled me to catch them whenever I required, for at a certain time I had only to go to this hole, and I never failed to see

them approaching leisurely, the mules following the horse in Indian file, and always along the same trail which they had made in the snow.

The grass, although to all appearance perfectly withered, still retained considerable nourishment, and the mules improved fast in flesh. Panchito, however, fell off in condition as the others improved, more, I think, from the severity of the winter than the scarcity of grass. When they had cleared the valley they sought a pasture still farther off, and, after losing sight of them for fifteen days, I found them fifteen miles from the river, at the foot of the mountain, in a prairie in which was a pool of water (which prevented their having recourse to the water-hole I had made for them), and where was plenty of buffalo-grass.

It was now always a day's work for me to catch my hunting-mule, and the animals were becoming so wild that I often returned without effecting the capture at all, my only chance being to chase them on horseback and lasso the horse, when they all followed as quiet as lambs, never caring to forsake their old companion.

The weather in January, February, and March [1847] was exceedingly severe. Storms of sleet and snow, invariably accompanied by hurricanes of wind, were of daily occurrence, but the snow rarely remained more than thirty hours on the ground, an hour or two of the

meridian sun being sufficient to cause it to disappear. On the 17th of March the ice in the Arkansa "moved" for the first time, and the next day it was entirely broken up, and the arrival of spring-weather was confidently expected. However, it froze once more in a few days as firm as ever, and the weather became colder than before, with heavy snow-storms and hard gales of wind. After this succeeded a spell of fine weather, and about the 24th the ice moved bodily away, and the river was clear from that date, the edges of the water only being frozen in the morning. Geese now made their appearance in considerable numbers, and afforded an agreeable variety to our perpetual venison and tough bull-meat, as well as good sport in shooting them with rifles. The "blue bird" followed the goose; and when the first robin was seen, the hunters pronounced the winter at an end.

When the river was clear of ice I tried my luck with the fish, and in ten minutes pulled out as many trout, hickory shad, and suckers, but from that time never succeeded in getting a nibble. The hunters accounted for this by saying that the fish migrate up the stream as soon as the ice breaks, seeking the deep holes and bends of its upper waters, and that my first piscatory attempt was in the very nick of time, when a shoal was passing up for the first time after the thaw.

Towards the latter end of March I removed my animals from their pasture, which was getting dry and rotten, and took them up Fontaine-qui-bouille into the mountains, where the grass is of better quality and more abundant. On the Arkansa and the neighboring prairies not a vestige of spring vegetation yet presented itself, but nearer the mountains the grass was beginning to shoot. It is a curious fact that the young blade of the buffalo and bunch grass pierces its way through the old one, which completely envelops and protects the tender blade from the nipping frosts of spring, and thus also the weakening effects of feeding on the young grass are rendered less injurious to horses and mules, since they are obliged to eat the old together with the young shoots.

The farther I advanced up the creek, and the nearer the mountains, the more forward was the vegetation, although even here in its earliest stage. The bunch-grass was getting green at the roots, and the absinthe and greasewood were throwing out their buds. As yet, however, the cottonwoods and the larger trees in the bottom showed no signs of leaf, and the currant and cherry bushes still looked dry and sapless. The thickets, however, were filled with birds, and resounded with their songs, and the plains were alive with the prairie-dogs, busy in repairing their houses and barking lustily as I rode

through their towns. Turkeys, too, were calling in the timber, and the boom of the prairie-fowl, at rise and set of sun, was heard on every side. The snow had entirely disappeared from the plains, but Pike's Peak and the mountains were still clad in white; the latter, being sometimes clear of snow and looking dark and sombre, would for an hour or two be hidden by a curtain of clouds, which rising displayed the mountains, before black and furrowed, now white and smooth with their snowy mantle.

On my way I met a band of hunters who had been driven in by a war-party of Arapahos, who were encamped on the eastern fork of the Fontaine-qui-bouille. They strongly urged me to return, as, being alone, I could not fail to be robbed of my animals, if not killed myself. However, in pursuance of my fixed rule, never to stop on account of Indians, I proceeded up the river, and about fifty miles from the mouth encamped on the first fork, where was an abundance of deer and antelope. In the timber on the banks of the creek I erected a little shanty, covering it with the bark of the prostrate trees which strewed the ground, and picketing my animals at night in a little prairie within sight, where they luxuriated on plenty of buffalo-grass. Here I remained for a day or two hunting in the mountain, leaving my *cavallada* to take care of themselves, and at the

mercy of the Arapahos should they discover them. At night I returned to camp, made a fire, and cooked an *appola** of antelope-meat, and enjoyed my solitary pipe after supper with as much relish as if I was in a divan, and lay down on my blanket, serenaded by packs of hungry wolves, and sleeping as soundly as if there were no such people in existence as Arapahoes, merely waking now and then and raising my hand to the top of my head, to assure myself that my top-knot was in its place.

The next day I moved up the main fork, on which I had been directed by the hunters to proceed, in order to visit the far-famed springs from which the creek takes its name. The valley of the upper waters is very picturesque: many mountain-streams course through it, a narrow line of timber skirting their banks. On the western side the rugged mountains frown overhead, and rugged cañons filled with pine and cedar gape into the plain. At the head of the valley, the ground is much broken up into gullies and ravines where it enters the mountain-spurs, with topes [groves] of pine and cedar scattered here and there, and masses of rock tossed about in wild confusion. On entering the broken ground the creek turns more to the westward, and passes by two

* Alternate strips of fat and lean meat roasted on a sharpened stick before the fire. (*Ed.*)

remarkable *buttes** of a red conglomerate, which appear at a distance like tablets cut in the mountain-side. The eastern fork skirts the base of the range, coming from the ridge called "The Divide," which separates the waters of the Platte and Arkansa; and between the main stream and this branch, running north and south, is a limestone ledge which forms the western wall of the lateral valley running at right angles from that of the Fontaine-qui-bouille. The uplands are clothed with cedar and dwarf oak, the bottoms of the river with cottonwood, quaking-asp, oak, ash, and box-alder, and a thick undergrowth of cherry and currant bushes.

I followed a very good lodge pole-trail, which struck the creek before entering the broken ground, being that used by the Yutas and Arapahos on their way to the Bayou Salado. Here the valley narrowed considerably, and, turning an angle with the creek, I was at once shut in by mountains and elevated ridges, which rose on each side the stream. This was now a rapid torrent, tumbling over rocks and stones, and fringed with oak and a shrubbery of brush. A few miles on, the cañon opened out into a little shelving glade; and on the right bank of the stream, and raised several feet

* Any prominent rock or bluff is called a *butte* (pronounced biute) by the hunters and trappers.

above it, was a flat white rock in which was a round hole, where one of the celebrated springs hissed and bubbled with its escaping gas. I had been cautioned against drinking this, being directed to follow the stream a few yards to another, which is the true soda-spring.

Before doing this, however, I unpacked the mule and took the saddle from Panchito, piling my saddle and meat on the rock. The animals, as soon as I left them free, smelt the white rock, and instantly commenced licking and scraping with their teeth with the greatest eagerness. At last the horse approached the spring, and, burying his nose deep in the clear water, drank greedily. The mules appeared at first to fear the bubbling of the gas, and smelt and retreated two or three times before they mustered courage to take a draught; but when they had once tasted the water I thought they would have burst themselves. For hours they paid no attention to the grass, continuing to lick the rock and constantly returning to the spring to drink. For myself, I had not only abstained from drinking that day, but, with the aid of a handful of salt which I had brought with me for the purpose, had so highly seasoned my breakfast of venison, that I was in a most satisfactory state of thirst. I therefore at once proceeded to the other spring, and found it about forty yards from the first, but im-

mediately above the river, issuing from a little basin in the flat white rock, and trickling over the edge into the stream. The escape of gas in this was much stronger than in the other, and was similar to water boiling smartly.

I had provided myself with a tin cup holding about a pint; but, before dipping it in, I divested myself of my pouch and belt, and sat down in order to enjoy the draught at my leisure. I was half dead with thirst; and, tucking up the sleeves of my hunting-shirt, I dipped the cup into the midst of the bubbles, and raised it hissing and sparkling to my lips. Such a draught! Three times, without drawing a breath, was it replenished and emptied, almost blowing up the roof of my mouth with its effervescence. It was equal to the very best soda-water, but possesses that fresh, natural flavor, which manufactured water cannot impart.

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG THE SPRINGS

THE Indians regard with awe the "medicine" waters of these fountains, as being the abode of a spirit who breathes through the transparent water, and thus, by his exhalations, causes the perturbation of its surface. The Arapahos, especially, attribute to this water-god the power of ordaining the success or mis-carriage of their war-expeditions; and as their braves pass often by the mysterious springs, when in search of their hereditary enemies the Yutas, in the "Valley of Salt," they never fail to bestow their votive offerings upon the water-sprite, in order to propitiate the "Manitou" of the fountain, and ensure a fortunate issue to their "path of war."

Thus at the time of my visit the basin of the spring was filled with beads and wampum, and pieces of red cloth and knives, whilst the surrounding trees were hung with strips of deer-skin, cloth, and mocassins, to which, had they been serviceable, I would most sacrilegiously have helped myself. The "sign," too, round the spring, plainly showed that here a war-dance

had been executed by the braves; and I was not a little pleased to find that they had already been here, and were not likely to return the same way; but in this supposition I was quite astray.

This country was once possessed by the Shos-shone or Snake Indians, of whom the Comanches of the plains are a branch; and although many hundred miles now divide their hunting-grounds, they were once, if not the same people, tribes of the same grand nation. They still, however, retain a common language; and there is great analogy in many of their religious rites and legendary tales, which proves that at least a very close alliance must at one period have bound the two tribes together. They are even now the two most powerful nations, in point of numbers, of all the tribes of western Indians; the Comanche ruling supreme on the eastern plains, as the Shos-shones are the dominant power in the country west of the Rocky Mountains, and in the mountains themselves. A branch of the latter is the tribe of Tlamath Indians, the most warlike of the western tribes; as also the Yutas, who may be said to connect them with the nation of Comanche.

Numerically, the Snakes are supposed to be the most powerful of any Indian nation in existence.

The Snakes, who, in common with all Indians, possess hereditary legends to account for all natural phenomena, or any extraordinary occurrences which are beyond their ken or comprehension, have of course their legendary version of the causes which created, in the midst of their hunting-grounds, these two springs of sweet and bitter water; which are also intimately connected with the cause of separation between the tribes of "Comanche" and the "Snake." Thus runs the legend:—

Many hundreds of winters ago, when the cottonwoods on the Big River were no higher than an arrow, and the red men, who hunted the buffalo on the plains, all spoke the same language, and the pipe of peace breathed its social cloud of kinnik-kinnek whenever two parties of hunters met on the boundless plains—when, with hunting-grounds and game of every kind in the greatest abundance, no nation dug up the hatchet with another because one of its hunters followed the game into their bounds, but, on the contrary, loaded for him his back with choice and fattest meat, and ever proffered the soothing pipe before the stranger, with well-filled belly, left the village,—it happened that two hunters of different nations met one day on a small rivulet, where both had repaired to quench their thirst. A little stream of water, rising from a spring on a rock within a few feet

of the bank, trickled over it, and fell splashing into the river. To this the hunters repaired; and whilst one sought the spring itself, where the water, cold and clear, reflected on its surface the image of the surrounding scenery, the other, tired by his exertions in the chase, threw himself at once to the ground, and plunged his face into the running stream.

The latter had been unsuccessful in the chase, and perhaps his bad fortune, and the sight of the fat deer which the other hunter threw from his back before he drank at the crystal spring, caused a feeling of jealousy and ill-humor to take possession of his mind. The other, on the contrary, before he satisfied his thirst, raised in the hollow of his hand a portion of the water, and, lifting it towards the sun, reversed his hand, and allowed it to fall upon the ground,—a libation to the Great Spirit who had vouchsafed him a successful hunt, and the blessing of the refreshing water with which he was about to quench his thirst.

Seeing this, and being reminded that he had neglected the usual offering, only increased the feeling of envy and annoyance which the unsuccessful hunter permitted to get the mastery of his heart; and the Evil Spirit at that moment entering his body, his temper fairly flew away, and he sought some pretence by which to provoke a quarrel with the stranger Indian at the spring.

"Why does a stranger," he asked, rising from the stream at the same time, "drink at the spring-head, when one to whom the fountain belongs contents himself with the water that runs from it?"

"The Great Spirit places the cool water at the spring," answered the other hunter, "that his children may drink it pure and undefiled. The running water is for the beasts which scour the plains. Au-sa-qua is a chief of the Shos-shone: he drinks at the head-water."

"The Shos-shone is but a tribe of the Comanche," returned the other: "Waco-mish leads the grand nation. Why does a Shos-shone dare to drink above him?"

"He has said it. The Shos-shone drinks at the spring-head; other nations of the stream which runs into the fields. Au-sa-qua is chief of his nation. The Comanche are brothers. Let them both drink of the same water."

"The Shos-shone pays tribute to the Comanche. Waco-mish leads that nation to war. Waco-mish is chief of the Shos-shone, as he is of his own people."

"Waco-mish lies; his tongue is forked like the rattlesnake's; his heart is black as the Misho-tunga (bad spirit). When the Manitou made his children, whether Shos-shone or Comanche, Arapaho, Shi-an, or Pā-né, he gave them buffalo to eat, and the pure water of the

fountain to quench their thirst. He said not to one, Drink here, and to another, Drink there; but gave the crystal spring to all, that all might drink."

Waco-mish almost burst with rage as the other spoke; but his coward heart alone prevented him from provoking an encounter with the calm Shos-shone. *He*, made thirsty by the words he had spoken—for the red man is ever sparing of his tongue—again stooped down to the spring to quench his thirst, when the subtle warrior of the Comanche suddenly threw himself upon the kneeling hunter, and, forcing his head into the bubbling water, held him down with all his strength, until his victim no longer struggled, his stiffened limbs relaxed, and he fell forward over the spring, drowned and dead.

Over the body stood the murderer, and no sooner was the deed of blood consummated than bitter remorse took possession of his mind, where before had reigned the fiercest passion and vindictive hate. With hands clasped to his forehead, he stood transfixed with horror, intently gazing on his victim, whose head still remained immersed in the fountain. Mechanically he dragged the body a few paces from the water, which, as soon as the head of the dead Indian was withdrawn, the Comanche saw suddenly and strangely disturbed. Bubbles sprang up from the bottom, and, rising to the

surface, escaped in hissing gas. A thin vapory cloud arose, and, gradually dissolving, displayed to the eyes of the trembling murderer the figure of an aged Indian, whose long snowy hair and venerable beard, blown aside by a gentle air from his breast, discovered the well-known totem of the great Wan-kan-aga, the father of the Comanche and Sho-shone nation, whom the tradition of the tribe, handed down by skilfull hieroglyphics, almost deified for the good actions and deeds of bravery this famous warrior had performed when on earth.

Stretching out a war-club towards the affrighted murderer, the figure thus addressed him:

“Accursed of my tribe! this day thou hast severed the link between the mightiest nations of the world, while the blood of the brave Shos-shone cries to the Manitou for vengeance. May the water of thy tribe be rank and bitter in their throats!” Thus saying, and swinging his ponderous war-club (made from the elk’s horn) round his head, he dashed out the brains of the Comanche, who fell headlong into the spring, which, from that day to the present moment, remains rank and nauseous, so that not even when half dead with thirst, can one drink the foul water of that spring.

The good Wan-kan-aga, however, to perpetuate the memory of the Shos-shone warrior, who was renowned in his tribe for valor and

nobleness of heart, struck with the same avenging club a hard flat rock, which overhung the rivulet, just out of sight of this scene of blood; and forthwith the rock opened into a round clear basin, which instantly filled with bubbling sparkling water, than which no thirsty hunter ever drank a sweeter or a cooler draught.

Thus the two springs remain, an everlasting memento of the foul murder of the brave Shos-shone, and the stern justice of the good Wan-kan-aga; and from that day the two mighty tribes of the Shos-shone and Comanche have remained severed and apart; although a long and bloody war followed the treacherous murder of the Shos-shone chief, and many a scalp torn from the head of the Comanche paid the penalty of his death.

The American and Canadian trappers assert that the numerous springs which, under the head of Beer, Soda, Steam-boat springs, &c., abound in the Rocky Mountains, are the spots where his satanic majesty comes up from his kitchen to breathe the sweet fresh air, which must doubtless be refreshing to his worship after a few hours spent in superintending the culinary process going on below.

Never was there such a paradise for hunters as this lone and solitary spot. The shelving prairie, at the bottom of which the springs are

situated, is entirely surrounded by rugged mountains, and, containing perhaps two or three acres of excellent grass, affords a safe pasture to their animals, which would hardly care to wander from such feeding and the salitrose rocks they love so well to lick. Immediately overhead Pike's Peak, at an elevation of 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, towers high into the clouds; whilst from the fountain, like a granitic amphitheatre, ridge after ridge, clothed with pine and cedar, rises and meets the stupendous mass of mountains, well called "Rocky," which stretches far away north and southward, their gigantic peaks being visible above the strata of clouds which hide their rugged bases.

This first day the sun shone out bright and warm, and not a breath of wind ruffled the evergreen foliage of the cedar-groves. Gay-plumaged birds were twittering in the shrubs, and ravens and magpies were chattering overhead, attracted by the meat I had hung upon a tree; the mules, having quickly filled themselves, were lying round the spring, basking lazily in the sun; and myself, seated on a pack, and pipe in mouth, with rifle ready at my side, indolently enjoyed the rays which, reflected from the white rock on which I was lying, were deliciously warm and soothing. A piece of rock, detached from the mountain-side and

tumbling noisily down, caused me to look up in the direction whence it came. Half a dozen big-horns, or Rocky Mountain sheep, perched on the pinnacle of a rock, were gazing wonderingly upon the prairie, where the mules were rolling enveloped in clouds of dust. The enormous horns of the mountain sheep appeared so disproportionately heavy, that I every moment expected to see them lose their balance and topple over the giddy height. My motions frightened them, and, jumping from rock to rock, they quickly disappeared up the steepest part of the mountain. At the same moment a herd of black-tail deer crossed the corner of the glade within rifle-shot of me, but, fearing the vicinity of Indians, I refrained from firing before I had reconnoitred the vicinity for signs of their recent presence.

Immediately over me, on the left bank of the stream, and high above the springs, was a small plateau, one of many which are seen on the mountain-sides. Three buffalo-bulls were here quietly feeding, and remained the whole afternoon undisturbed. I saw from the sign that they had very recently drunk at the springs, and that the little prairie where my animals were feeding was a frequent resort of solitary bulls.

Perceiving that the game, which was in sight on every side of me, was unwarily tame, I

judged from this fact that no Indians were in the immediate vicinity, and therefore I resolved to camp where I was. Ascending a bluff where had been an old Indian camp, I found a number of old lodge-poles, and packed them down to the springs, near which I made my fire, but out of arrow-shot of the shrubbery which lines the stream. Instead of permitting the animals to run loose, I picketed them close to and round the camp, in order that they might act as sentinels during the night, for no man or dog can so soon discover the presence or approach of an Indian as a mule. The organ and sense of smelling in these animals are so acute that they at once detect the scent peculiar to the natives, and, snorting loud with fear, and by turning their heads with ears pointed to the spot whence the danger is approaching, wake, and warn at the same moment, their sleeping masters of the impending peril.

However, this night I was undisturbed, and slept soundly until the chattering of a magpie overhead awoke me, just as Pike's Peak was being tinged with the first grey streak of dawn.

Daybreak in this wild spot was beautiful in the extreme. While the deep gorge in which I lay was still buried in perfect gloom, the mountain-tops loomed grey and indistinct from out the morning mist. A faint glow of light broke over the ridge which shut out the valley from

the east, and, spreading over the sky, first displayed the snow-covered peak, a wreath of vapory mist encircling it, which gradually rose and disappeared. Suddenly the dull white of its summit glowed with light like burnished silver; and at the same moment the whole eastern sky blazed, as it were, in gold, and ridge and peak, catching the refulgence, glittered with the beams of the rising sun, which at length, peeping over the crest, flooded at once the valley with its dazzling light.

Blowing the ashes of the slumbering fire, I placed upon it the little pot containing a piece of venison for my breakfast, and, relieving my four-footed sentries from their picket-guard, sallied down to the stream, the edges of which were still thickly crusted with ice, for the purpose of taking a luxuriously cold bath; and cold enough it was in all conscience. After my frugal breakfast, unseasoned by bread or salt, or by any other beverage than the refreshing soda-water, I took my rifle and sallied up the mountain to hunt, consigning my faithful animals to the protection of the Dryad of the fountain, offering to that potent sprite the never-failing "medicine" of the first whiff of my pipe before starting from the spot.

Climbing up the mountain-side, I reached a level plateau, interspersed with clumps of pine and cedar, where a herd of black-tail deer were

quietly feeding. As I had the "wind" I approached under cover of a cedar whose branches feathered to the ground, and, resting my rifle in a forked limb, I selected the plumpest-looking of the band, a young buck, and "let him have it," as the hunters say. Struck through the heart, the deer for an instant stretched out its limbs convulsively, and then bounded away with the band, but in a zig-zag course; and unlike the rest, whose tails were lifted high, his black tufted appendage was fast "shut up." Whilst I, certain of his speedy fall, reloaded my rifle, the band, seeing their comrade staggering behind, suddenly stopped. The wounded animal with outstretched neck ran round and round for a few seconds in a giddy circle, and dropped dead within sixty yards of where I stood. The others, like sheep, walked slowly up to the dead animal, and again my rifle gave out its sharp crack from the screen of branches, and another of the band, jumping high in air, bit the dust. They were both miserably poor, so much so that I left all but the hind quarters and fleece, and hanging them upon a tree I returned to camp for a mule to pack in the meat.

The mountains are full of grizzly bears, but, whether they had not yet left their winter-quarters thus early in the season, I saw but one or two tracks, one of which I followed un-

successfully for many miles over the wildest part of the mountains, into the Bayou Salado. Whilst intent upon the trail, a clattering as of a regiment of cavalry immediately behind me made me bring my rifle to the ready, thinking that a whole nation of mounted Indians were upon me; but, looking back, a band of upwards of a hundred elk were dashing past, looking like a herd of mules, and in their passage down the mountain carrying with them a perfect avalanche of rocks and stones. I killed another deer on my return close to camp, which I reached, packing in the meat on my back, long after dark, and found the animals, which received me with loud neighs of recognition and welcome, with well-filled bellies, taking their evening drink at the springs.

I spent here a very pleasant time, and my animals began soon to improve upon the mountain-grass. Game was very abundant; indeed, I had far more meat than I possibly required; but the surplus I hung up to jerk, as now the sun was getting powerful enough for that process.

I explored all the valleys and cañons of the mountains, and even meditated an expedition to the summit of Pike's Peak, where mortal foot has never yet trod. No dread of Indians crossed my mind, probably because I had remained so long unmolested; and I was so per-

fectly contented that I had even selected a camping-ground where I intended to remain two or three months, and probably should be at the present moment, if I had not got into a "scrape."

The bears latterly began to move, and their tracks became more frequent. One day I was hunting just at the foot of the Peak, when a large she-bear jumped out of a patch of cedars where she had been lying, and with a loud grunt charged up the mountain, and, dodging amongst the rocks, prevented my getting a crack at her. She was very old, and the grizzliest of the grizzly. She was within a few feet of me when I first saw her. It was unluckily nearly dark, or I should have followed and probably killed her, for they seldom run far, particularly at this season, when they are lank and weak.

One day as I was following a band of deer over the broken ground to the eastward of the mountain, I came suddenly upon an Indian camp, with the fire still smouldering, and dried meat hanging on the trees. Robinson Crusoe could not have been more thoroughly disgusted at the sight of the "footprint in the sand," than was I at this inopportune discovery. I had anticipated a month or two's undisturbed hunting in this remote spot, and now it was out of the question to imagine that the Indians would leave me unmolested. I presently

saw two Indians, carrying a deer between them, emerge from the timber bordering the creek, whom I knew at once by their dress to be Arapahos. As, however, my camp was several miles distant, I still hoped that they had not yet discovered its locality, and continued my hunt that day, returning late in the evening to my solitary encampment.

The next morning I removed the animals and packs to a prairie a little lower down the stream, which, although nearer the Indian camp, was almost hidden from view, being enclosed by pine-ridges and ragged buttes, and entered by a narrow gap filled with a dense growth of brush. When I had placed them in security, and taken the precaution to fasten them all to strong picket-pins, with a sufficient length of rope to enable them to feed at ease, and at the same time prevent them straying back to the springs, I again sallied out to hunt.

A little before sunrise I descended the mountain to the springs, and, being very tired, after taking a refreshing draught of the cold water, I lay down on the rock by the side of the water and fell fast asleep. When I awoke the sun had already set; but although darkness was fast gathering over the mountain, I was surprised to see a bright light flickering against its sides. A glance assured me that the mountain was

on fire, and, starting up, I saw at once the danger of my position. The bottom had been fired about a mile below the springs, and but a short distance from where I had secured my animals. A dense cloud of smoke was hanging over the gorge, and presently, a light air springing up from the east, a mass of flame shot up into the sky and rolled fiercely up the stream, the belt of dry brush on its banks catching fire and burning like tinder. The mountain was already invaded by the devouring element, and two wings of flame spread out from the main stream, which roaring along the bottom with the speed of a racehorse, licked the mountain-side, extending its long line as it advanced. The dry pines and cedars hissed and cracked, as the flame, reaching them, ran up their trunks, and spread amongst the limbs, whilst the long waving grass underneath was a sea of fire. From the rapidity with which the fire advanced I feared that it would already have reached my animals, and hurried at once to the spot as fast as I could run. The prairie itself was as yet untouched, but the surrounding ridges were clothed in fire, and the mules, with stretched ropes, were trembling with fear. Throwing the saddle on my horse, and the pack on the steadiest mule, I quickly mounted, leaving on the ground a pile of meat, which I had not time to carry with me.

The fire had already gained the prairie, and its long, dry grass was soon a sheet of flame, but, worse than all, the gap through which I had to retreat was burning. Setting spurs into Panchito's sides, I dashed him at the burning bush, and, though his mane and tail were singed in the attempt, he gallantly charged through it. Looking back, I saw the mules huddled together on the other side, and evidently fearing to pass the blazing barrier. As, however, to stop would have been fatal, I dashed on, but before I had proceeded twenty yards my old hunting mule, singed and smoking, was at my side, and the others close behind her.

On all sides I was surrounded by fire. The whole scenery was illuminated, the peaks and distant ridges being as plainly visible as at noonday. The bottom was a roaring mass of flame, but on the other side, the prairie being more bare of cedar-bushes, the fire was less fierce and presented the only way of escape. To reach it, however, the creek had to be crossed, and the bushes on the banks were burning fiercely, which rendered it no easy matter; moreover, the edges were coated above the water with thick ice, which rendered it still more difficult. I succeeded in pushing Panchito into the stream, but, in attempting to climb the opposite bank, a blaze of fire was puffed into his face, which caused him to rear on end, and,

his hind feet flying away from him at the same moment on the ice, he fell backwards into the middle of the stream, and rolled over me in the deepest water. Panchito rose on his legs and stood trembling with affright in the middle of the stream, whilst I dived and groped for my rifle, which had slipped from my hands, and of course had sunk to the bottom. After a search of some minutes I found it, and, again mounting, made another attempt to cross a little farther down, in which I succeeded, and, followed by the mules, dashed through the fire and got safely through the line of blazing brush.

Once in safety, I turned in my saddle and had leisure to survey the magnificent spectacle. The fire had extended at least three miles on each side the stream, and the mountain was one sheet of flame. A comparatively thin line marked the progress of the devouring element, which, as there was no wind to direct its course, burned on all sides, actually roaring as it went.

I had from the first no doubt but that the fire was caused by the Indians, who had probably discovered my animals, but, thinking that a large party of hunters might be out, had taken advantage of a favorable wind to set fire to the bottom, hoping to secure the horse and mules in the confusion, without the risk of attacking the camp. Once or twice I felt sure that I saw dark figures running about near

where I had seen the Indian camp the previous day, and just as I had charged through the gap I heard a loud yell, which was answered by another at a little distance.

Singularly enough, just as I had got through the blazing line, a breeze sprang up from the westward and drove the fire after me, and I had again to beat a hasty retreat before it.*

I encamped six or seven miles from the springs, and, whilst proceeding down the creek, deer and antelope continually crossed and recrossed the trail, some in their affright running back into the very jaws of the fire. As soon as I had secured the animals I endeavored to get my rifle into shooting order, but the water had so thoroughly penetrated and swelled the patching round the balls, that it was a long time before I succeeded in cleaning one barrel, the other defying all my attempts. This was a serious accident, as I could not but anticipate a visit from the Indians if they discovered the camp.

All this time the fire was spreading out into the prairies, and, creeping up the "divide," was already advancing upon me. It extended at least five miles on the left bank of the creek, and on the right was more slowly creeping up the

* This fire extended into the prairie, towards the waters of the Platte, upwards of forty miles, and for fourteen days its glare was visible on the Arkansa, fifty miles distant.

mountain-side; while the brush and timber in the bottom was one body of flame. Besides the long sweeping line of the advancing flame, the plateaus on the mountain-side, and within the line, were burning in every direction, as the squalls and eddies down the gullies drove the fire to all points.

The mountains themselves being invisible, the air, from the low ground where I then was, appeared a mass of fire, and huge crescents of flame danced as it were in the very sky, until a mass of timber blazing at once exhibited the sombre background of the stupendous mountains.

I had scarcely slept an hour when huge clouds of smoke rolling down the bottom frightened the animals, whose loud whinnying awoke me, and, half suffocated by the dense smoke which hung heavily in the atmosphere, I again retreated before the fire, which was rapidly advancing: and this time I did not stop until I had placed thirty or forty miles between me and the enemy. I then encamped in a thickly-timbered bottom on the Fontaine-qui-bouille, where the ground, which had been burned by the hunters in the winter, was studded like a wheat-field with green grass. On this the animals fared sumptuously for several days—better, indeed, than I did myself, for game was very scarce, and in such poor condition as to

be almost uneatable. While encamped on this stream, the wolves infested the camp to that degree, that I could scarcely leave my saddles for a few minutes on the ground without finding the straps of rawhide gnawed to pieces; and one night the hungry brutes ate up all the ropes which were tied on the necks of the animals and trailed along the ground: they were actually devoured to within a yard of the mules' throats.

One evening a wolf came into camp as I was engaged cleaning my rifle, one barrel of which was still unserviceable, and a long hickory wiping-stick in it at the time. As I was hidden by a tree, the wolf approached the fire within a few feet, and was soon tugging away at an apishamore or saddle-cloth of buffalo calfskin which lay on the ground. Without dreaming that the rifle would go off, I put a cap on the useless barrel, and, holding it out across my knee in a line with the wolf, snap—ph-i-zz—bang—went the charge of damp powder, much to my astonishment, igniting the stick which remained in the barrel, and driving it like a fiery comet against the ribs of the beast, who, yelling with pain, darted into the prairie at the top of his speed, his singed hair smoking as he ran.

CHAPTER X

PASSING OF THE BUFFALO

IT is a singular fact that within the last two years the prairies, extending from the mountains to a hundred miles or more down the Arkansa, have been entirely abandoned by the buffalo. Indeed, in crossing from the settlements of New Mexico, the boundary of their former range is marked by skulls and bones, which appear fresher as the traveller advances westward and towards the waters of the Platte. As the skulls are said to last only three years on the surface of the ground, that period has consequently seen the gradual disappearance of the buffalo from their former haunts.

With the exception of the Bayou Salado, one of their favorite pastures, they are now rarely met with in large bands on the upper waters of the Arkansa; but straggling bulls pass occasionally the foot of the mountain, seeking wintering-places on the elevated plateaus, which are generally more free from snow than the lowland prairies, by reason of the high winds. The bulls separate from the cows about the month of September, and scatter over the

prairies and into the mountains, where they recruit themselves during the winter. A few males, however, always accompany the cows, to act as guides and defenders of the herd, on the outskirts of which they are always stationed. The countless bands which are seen together at all seasons are generally composed of cows alone; the bulls congregating in smaller herds, and on the flanks of the main body.

The meat of the cow is infinitely preferable to that of the male buffalo; but that of the bull, particularly if killed in the mountains, is in better condition during the winter months. From the end of June to September bull-meat is rank and tough, and almost uneatable; while the cows are in perfection, and as fat as stalled oxen, the *depoville*, or fleece, exhibiting frequently four inches and more of solid fat.

Whether it is that the meat itself (which, by the way, is certainly the most delicious of flesh) is most easy of digestion, or whether the digestive organs of hunters are "ostrichified" by the severity of exercise, and the bracing, wholesome climate of the mountains and plains, it is a fact that most prodigious quantities of "fat cow" may be swallowed with the greatest impunity, and not the slightest inconvenience ever follows the mammoth feasts of the gourmands of the far west. The powers of the Canadian voyageurs and hunters in the con-

sumption of meat strike the greenhorn with wonder and astonishment; and are only equalled by the gastronomical capabilities exhibited by Indian dogs, both following the same plan in their epicurean gorgings.

On slaughtering a fat cow, the hunter carefully lays by, as a tit-bit for himself, the *boudins* and medullary intestine, which are prepared by being inverted and partially cleaned (this, however, is not thought indispensable). The *depouille* or fleece, the short and delicious hump-rib and tenderloin, are then carefully stowed away, and with these the rough edge of the appetite is removed. But *the* course is, *par excellence*, the sundry yards of *boudin*, which, lightly browned over the embers of the fire, slide down the well-lubricated throat of the hungry mountaineer, yard after yard disappearing in quick succession.

No animal requires so much killing as a buffalo. Unless shot through the lungs or spine, they invariably escape; and, even when thus mortally wounded, or even struck through the very heart, they will frequently run a considerable distance before falling to the ground, particularly if they see the hunter after the wound is given. If, however, he keeps himself concealed after firing, the animal will remain still, if it does not immediately fall. It is a most painful sight to witness the dying struggles

of the huge beast. The buffalo invariably evinces the greatest repugnance to lie down when mortally wounded, apparently conscious that, when once touching mother earth, there is no hope left him. A bull, shot through the heart or lungs, with blood streaming from his mouth, and protruding tongue, his eyes rolling, bloodshot, and glazed with death, braces himself on his legs, swaying from side to side, stamps impatiently at his growing weakness, or lifts his rugged and matted head and helplessly bellows out his conscious impotence. To the last, however, he endeavors to stand upright, and plants his limbs farther apart, but to no purpose. As the body rolls like a ship at sea, his head slowly turns from side to side, looking about, as it were, for the unseen and treacherous enemy who has brought him, the lord of the plains, to such a pass. Gouts of purple blood spurt from his mouth and nostrils, and gradually the failing limbs refuse longer to support the ponderous carcass; more heavily rolls the body from side to side, until suddenly, for a brief instant, it becomes rigid and still; a convulsive tremor seizes it, and, with a low sobbing gasp, the huge animal falls over on his side, the limbs extended stark and stiff, and the mountain of flesh without life or motion.

The first attempts of a "greenhorn" to kill a buffalo are invariably unsuccessful. He sees

before him a mass of flesh, nearly five feet in depth from the top of the hump to the brisket, and consequently imagines that, by planting his ball midway between these points, it must surely reach the vitals. Nothing, however, is more erroneous than the impression; for to "throw a buffalo in his tracks," which is the phrase for making a clean shot, he must be struck but a few inches above the brisket, behind the shoulder, where alone, unless the spine be divided, a death-shot will reach the vitals. I once shot a bull, the ball passing directly through the very centre of the heart and tearing a hole sufficiently large to insert the finger, which ran upwards of half a mile before it fell, and yet the ball had passed completely through the animal, cutting its heart almost in two. I also saw eighteen shots, the half of them muskets, deliberately fired into an old bull, at six paces, and some of them passing through the body, the poor animal standing the whole time, and making feeble attempts to charge. The nineteenth shot, with the muzzle touching his body, brought him to the ground. The head of the buffalo-bull is so thickly covered with coarse matted hair, that a ball fired at half a dozen paces will not penetrate the skull through the shaggy frontlock. I have frequently attempted this with a rifle

carrying twenty-five balls to the pound, but never once succeeded.

Notwithstanding the great and wanton destruction of the buffalo, many years must elapse before this lordly animal becomes extinct. In spite of their numerous enemies, they still exist in countless numbers, and, could any steps be taken to protect them, as is done in respect of other game, they would ever remain the life and ornament of the boundless prairies, and afford ample and never-failing provision to the travellers over these otherwise desert plains. Some idea of the prodigious slaughter of these animals may be formed, by mentioning the fact that upwards of one hundred thousand buffalo robes find their way annually into the United States and Canada; and these are the skins of *cows* alone, the bull's hide being so thick that it is never dressed. Besides this, the Indians kill a certain number for their own use, exclusive of those whose meat they require; and the reckless slaughter of buffalo by parties of white men, emigrants to the Columbia, California, and elsewhere, leaving, as they proceed on their journey, thousands of untouched carcasses on the trail, swells the aggregate of this wholesale destruction to an enormous amount.

CHAPTER XI

BIG GAME OF THE MOUNTAINS

THE grizzly bear is the fiercest of the *ferae naturae* of the mountains. His great strength and wonderful tenacity of life render an encounter with him anything but desirable, and therefore it is a rule with the Indians and white hunters never to attack him unless backed by a strong party. Although, like every other wild animal, he usually flees from man, yet at certain seasons, when maddened by love or hunger, he not unfrequently charges at first sight of a foe; when, unless killed dead, a hug at close quarters is anything but a pleasant embrace, his strong hooked claws stripping the flesh from the bones as easily as a cook peels an onion. Many are the tales of bloody encounters with these animals which the trappers delight to recount to the "greenhorn," to enforce their caution as to the fool-hardiness of ever attacking the grizzly bear.

Some years ago a trapping party was on their way to the mountains, led, I believe, by old Sublette, a well-known captain of the West.

Amongst the band was one John Glass,* a trapper who had been all his life in the mountains, and had seen, probably, more exciting adventures, and had had more wonderful and hairbreadth escapes, than any of the rough and hardy fellows who make the West their home, and whose lives are spent in a succession of perils and privations. On one of the streams running from the "Black Hills," a range of mountains northward of the Platte, Glass and a companion were one day setting their traps, when, on passing through a cherry-thicket which skirted the stream, the former, who was in advance, descried a large grizzly bear quietly turning up the turf with his nose, searching for yampa-roots or pig-nuts, which there abounded. Glass immediately called his companion, and both, proceeding cautiously, crept to the skirt of the thicket, and, taking steady aim at the animal, whose broadside was fairly exposed at the distance of twenty yards, discharged their rifles at the same instant, both balls taking effect, but not inflicting a mortal wound. The bear, giving a groan of pain, jumped with all four legs from the ground, and, seeing the wreaths of smoke hanging at the edge of the brush, charged at once in that direction, snorting with pain and fury.

"Hurraw, Bill!" roared out Glass, as he saw

* Hugh Glass. (*Ed.*).

the animal rushing towards them, "we'll be made 'meat' of as sure as shootin'!" and, leaving the tree behind which he had concealed himself, he bolted through the thicket, followed closely by his companion. The brush was so thick, that they could scarcely make their way through, whereas the weight and strength of the bear carried him through all obstructions, and he was soon close upon them.

About a hundred yards from the thicket was a steep bluff, and between these points was a level piece of prairie; Glass saw that his only chance was to reach this bluff, and, shouting to his companion to make for it, they both broke from the cover and flew like lightning across the open space. When more than half way across, the bear being about fifty yards behind them, Glass, who was leading, tripped over a stone, and fell to the ground, and just as he rose to his feet, the beast, rising on his hind feet, confronted him. As he closed, Glass, never losing his presence of mind, cried to his companion to load up quickly, and discharged his pistol full into the body of the animal, at the same moment that the bear, with blood streaming from its nose and mouth, knocked the pistol from his hand with one blow of its paw, and, fixing its claws deep into his flesh, rolled with him to the ground.

The hunter, notwithstanding his hopeless

situation, struggled manfully, drawing his knife and plunging it several times into the body of the beast, which, furious with pain, tore with tooth and claw the body of the wretched victim, actually baring the ribs of flesh, and exposing the very bones. Weak with loss of blood, and with eyes blinded with the blood which streamed from his lacerated scalp, the knife at length fell from his hand, and Glass sank down insensible, and to all appearance dead.

His companion, who, up to this moment, had watched the conflict, which, however, lasted but a few seconds, thinking that his turn would come next, and not having had presence of mind even to load his rifle, fled with might and main back to camp, where he narrated the miserable fate of poor Glass. The captain of the band of trappers, however, despatched the man with a companion back to the spot where he lay, with instructions to remain by him if still alive, or to bury him if, as all supposed he was, defunct, promising them at the same time a sum of money for so doing.

On reaching the spot, which was red with blood, they found Glass still breathing, and the bear, dead and stiff, actually lying upon his body. Poor Glass presented a horrifying spectacle: the flesh was torn in strips from his chest and limbs, and large flaps strewed the

ground; his scalp hung bleeding over his face, which was also lacerated in a shocking manner.

The bear, besides the three bullets which had pierced its body, bore the marks of the fierce nature of Glass's final struggle, no less than twenty gaping wounds in the breast and belly testifying to the gallant defence of the mountaineer.

Imagining that, if not already dead, the poor fellow could not possibly survive more than a few moments, the men collected his arms, stripped him even of his hunting-shirt and moccasins, and, merely putting the dead bear off the body, mounted their horses, and slowly followed the remainder of the party, saying, when they reached it, that Glass was dead, as probably they thought, and that they had buried him.

In a few days the gloom which pervaded the trappers' camp, occasioned by the loss of a favorite companion, disappeared, and Glass's misfortune, although frequently mentioned over the camp-fire, at length was almost entirely forgotten in the excitement of the hunt and Indian perils which surrounded them.

Months elapsed, the hunt was over, and the party of trappers were on their way to the trading-fort with their packs of beaver. It was nearly sundown, and the round adobe bastions of the mud-built fort were just in

sight, when a horseman was seen slowly approaching them along the banks of the river. When near enough to discern his figure, they saw a lank cadaverous form with a face so scarred and disfigured that scarcely a feature was discernible. Approaching the leading horsemen, one of whom happened to be the companion of the defunct Glass in his memorable bear scrape, the stranger, in a hollow voice, reining in his horse before them, exclaimed, "Hurraw, Bill, my boy! you thought I was 'gone under' that time, did you? but hand me over my horse and gun, my lad; I ain't dead yet by a dam sight!"

What was the astonishment of the whole party, and the genuine horror of Bill and his worthy companion in the burial story, to hear the well-known, though now much altered, voice of John Glass, who had been killed by a grizzly bear months before, and comfortably interred, as the two men had reported, and all had believed!

There he was, however, and no mistake about it; and all crowded round to hear from his lips, how, after the lapse of he knew not how long, he had gradually recovered, and being without arms, or even a butcher-knife, he had fed upon the almost putrid carcase of the bear for several days, until he had regained sufficient strength to crawl, when, tearing off as much of

the bear's meat as he could carry in his enfeebled state, he crept down the river; and suffering excessive torture from his wounds, and hunger, and cold, he made the best of his way to the fort, which was some eighty or ninety miles from the place of his encounter with the bear, and, living the greater part of the way upon roots and berries, he after many, many days, arrived in a pitiable state, from which he had now recovered, and was, to use his own expression, "as slick as a peeled onion." *

A trapper on Arkansa, named Valentine Herring, but better known as "Old Rube," told me that once, when visiting his traps one morning on a stream beyond the mountains, he found one missing, at the same time that he discovered fresh bear "sign" about the banks. Proceeding down the river in search of the lost trap, he heard the noise of some large body breaking through the thicket of plum bushes which belted the stream. Ensconcing himself behind a rock, he presently observed a huge grizzly bear emerge from the bush and limp on three legs to a flat rock, which he mounted, and then, quietly seating himself, he raised one of his fore paws, on which Rube, to his amazement, discovered his trap tight and fast.

* For other accounts of this episode see Chittenden's "American Fur Trade," chapter VIII. (*Ed.*)

The bear, lifting his iron-gloved foot close to his face, gravely examined it, turning his paw round and round, and quaintly bending his head from side to side, looking at the trap from the corners of his eyes, and with an air of mystery and puzzled curiosity, for he evidently could not make out what the novel and painful appendage could be; and every now and then smelt it and tapped it lightly on the rock. This, however, only paining the animal the more, he would lick the trap, as if deprecating its anger, and wishing to conciliate it.

After watching these curious antics for some time, as the bear seemed inclined to resume his travels, Rube, to regain his trap, was necessitated to bring the bear's cogitations to a close, and, levelling his rifle, shot him dead, cutting off his paw and returning with it to camp, where the trappers were highly amused at the idea of "trapping a b'ar."

Near the same spot where Glass encountered his "scrape," some score of Sioux squaws were one day engaged in gathering cherries in a thicket near their village, and had already nearly filled their baskets, when a bear suddenly appeared in the midst, and, with a savage growl, charged amongst them. Away ran the terrified squaws, yelling and shrieking, out of the shrubbery, nor stopped until safely ensconced within their lodges. Bruin, however,

preferring fruit to meat, albeit of tender squaws, after routing the petticoats, betook himself to the baskets, which he quickly emptied, and then quietly retired.

Bears are exceedingly fond of plums and cherries, and a thicket of this fruit in the vicinity of the mountains is, at the season when they are ripe, a sure "find" for Mr. Bruin. When they can get fruit they prefer such food to meat, but are, nevertheless, carnivorous animals.

The game, *par excellence*, of the Rocky Mountains, and that which takes precedence in a comestible point of view, is the *carnero cimmaron* of the Mexicans, the Bighorn or Mountain sheep of the Canadian hunters. This animal, which partakes of the nature of both the deer and the goat, resembles the latter more particularly in its habits, and its characteristic liking for lofty, inaccessible points of the mountains, whence it seldom descends to the upland valleys excepting in very severe weather. In size the mountain-sheep is between the domestic animal and the common red deer of America, but more strongly made than the latter. Its color is a brownish dun (the hair being tipped with a darker tinge as the animal's age increases), with a whitish streak on the hind quarters, the tail being shorter than a deer's, and tipped with black. The horns of the male are enormous, curved backwards, and often

three feet in length with a circumference of twenty inches near the head. The hunters assert that, in descending the precipitous sides of the mountains, the sheep frequently leap from a height of twenty or thirty feet, invariably alighting on their horns, and thereby saving their bones from certain dislocation.*

They are even more acute in the organs of sight and smell than the deer; and as they love to resort to the highest and most inaccessible spots, whence a view can readily be had of approaching danger, and particularly as one of the band is always stationed on the most commanding pinnacle of rock as sentinel, whilst the others are feeding, it is no easy matter to get within rifle-shot of the cautious animals. When alarmed they ascend still higher up the mountain: halting now and then on some overhanging crag, and looking down at the object which may have frightened them, they again commence their ascent, leaping from point to point, and throwing down an avalanche of rocks and stones as they bound up the steep sides of the mountain. They are generally very abundant in all parts of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, but particularly so in the vicinity of the "Parks" and the Bayou Salado, as well as in the range between the upper waters of the Del Norte and Arkansa, called the

* This fable is also told of the European ibex. (*Ed.*)

“Wet Mountain” by the trappers. On the Sierra Madre, or Cordillera of New Mexico and Chihuahua, they are also numerous.

The first mountain-sheep I killed, I got within shot of in rather a curious manner. I had undertaken several unsuccessful hunts for the purpose of procuring a pair of horns of this animal, as well as some skins, which are of excellent quality when dressed, but had almost given up any hope of approaching them, when one day, having killed and butchered a black-tail deer in the mountains, I sat down with my back to a small rock and fell asleep. On awakening, feeling inclined for a smoke, I drew from my pouch a pipe, and flint and steel, and began leisurely to cut a charge of tobacco. Whilst thus engaged I became sensible of a peculiar odor which was wafted right into my face by the breeze, and which, on snuffing it once or twice, I immediately recognized as that which emanates from sheep and goats. Still I never thought that one of the former animals could be in the neighborhood, for my mule was picketed on the little plateau where I sat, and was leisurely cropping the buffalo-grass which thickly covered it.

Looking up carelessly from my work, as a whiff stronger than before reached my nose, what was my astonishment at seeing five mountain-sheep within ten paces, and regarding

me with a curious and astonished gaze! Without drawing a breath, I put out my hand and grasped the rifle, which was lying within reach; but the motion, slight as it was, sufficed to alarm them, and with a loud bleat the old ram bounded up the mountain, followed by the band and at so rapid a pace that all my attempts to "draw a bead" upon them were ineffectual. When, however, they reached a little plateau about one hundred and fifty yards from where I stood, they suddenly stopped, and, approaching the edge, looked down at me, shaking their heads, and bleating their displeasure at the intrusion. No sooner did I see them stop than my rifle was at my shoulder, and covering the broad side of the one nearest to me. An instant after and I pulled the trigger, and at the report the sheep jumped convulsively from the rock, and made one attempt to follow its flying companions; but its strength failed, and, circling round once or twice at the edge of the plateau, it fell over on its side, and, rolling down the steep rock, tumbled dead very near me. My prize proved a very fine young male, but had not a large pair of horns. It was, however, "seal" fat, and afforded me a choice supply of meat, which was certainly the best I had eaten in the mountains, being fat and juicy, and in flavor somewhat partaking both of the domestic sheep and buffalo.

Several attempts have been made to secure the young of these animals and transport them to the States; and, for this purpose, an old mountaineer, one Billy Williams, took with him a troop of milch-goats, by which to bring up the young sheep; but although he managed to take several fine lambs, I believe that he did not succeed in reaching the frontier with one living specimen out of some half-score. The hunters frequently rear them in the mountains; and they become greatly attached to their masters, enlivening the camp with their merry gambols.

The elk, in point of size, ranks next to the buffalo. It is found in all parts of the mountains, and descends not unfrequently far down into the plains in the vicinity of the larger streams. A full-grown elk is as large as a mule, with rather a heavy neck and body, and stout limbs, its feet leaving a track as large as that of a two-year-old steer. They are dull, sluggish animals, at least in comparison with others of the deer tribe, and are easily approached and killed. In winter they congregate in large herds, often numbering several hundreds; and at that season are fond of travelling, their track through the snow having the appearance of a broad beaten road. The elk requires less killing than any other of the deer tribe (whose tenacity of life is remarkable); a shot anywhere in the fore

part of the animal brings it to the ground. On one occasion I killed two with one ball, which passed through the neck of the first, and struck the second, which was standing a few paces distant, through the heart: both fell dead. A deer, on the contrary, often runs a considerable distance, strike it where you will. The meat of the elk is strong flavored, and more like "poor bull" than venison: it is only eatable when the animal is fat and in good condition; at other times it is strong tasted and stringy.

The antelope, the smallest of the deer tribe, affords the hunter a sweet and nutritious meat, when that of nearly every other description of game, from the poorness and scarcity of the grass during the winter, is barely eatable. They are seldom seen now in very large bands on the grand prairies, having been driven from their old pastures by the Indians and white hunters. The former, by means of "surrounds," an enclosed space formed in one of the passes used by these animals, very often drive into the toils an entire band of antelope of several hundreds, when not one escapes slaughter.

I have seen them on the western sides of the mountains, and in the mountain valleys, in herds of several thousands. They are exceedingly timid animals, but at the same time wonderfully curious; and their curiosity very often proves their death, for the hunter, taking

advantage of this weakness, plants his wiping-stick in the ground, with a cap or red handkerchief on the point, and, concealing himself in the long grass, waits, rifle in hand, the approach of the inquisitive antelope, who, seeing an unusual object in the plain, trots up to it, and, coming within range of the deadly tube, pays dearly for his temerity. An antelope, when alone, is one of the stupidest of beasts, and becomes so confused and frightened at sight of a travelling party, that it frequently runs right into the midst of the danger it seeks to avoid.

I had heard most wonderful accounts from the trappers of an animal, the existence of which was beyond all doubt, which, although exceedingly rare, was occasionally met with in the mountains, but, from its supposed dangerous ferocity, and the fact of its being a cross between the devil and a bear, was never molested by the Indians or white hunters, and a wide berth given whenever the animal made its dreaded appearance. Most wonderful stories were told of its audacity and fearlessness; how it sometimes jumps from an overhanging rock on a deer or buffalo, and, fastening on its neck, soon brings it to the ground; how it has been known to leap upon a hunter when passing near its place of concealment, and devour him in a twinkling—often charging furiously into a

camp, and playing all sorts of pranks on the goods and chattels of the mountaineers. The general belief was that the animal owes its paternity to the Old Gentleman himself; but the most reasonable declare it to be a cross between the bear and wolf.

Hunting one day with an old Canadian trapper, he told me that, in a part of the mountains which we were about to visit on the morrow, he once had a battle with a "cargagieu," which lasted upwards of two hours, during which he fired a pouchful of balls into the animal's body, which spat them out as fast as they were shot in. To the truth of this probable story he called all the saints to bear witness.

Two days after, as we were toiling up a steep ridge after a band of mountain-sheep, my companion, who was in advance, suddenly threw himself flat behind a rock, and exclaimed in a smothered tone, signalling me with his hand to keep down and conceal myself, "Sacré enfant de Gârce, mais here's von dam cargagieu!"

I immediately cocked my rifle, and, advancing to the rock, and peeping over it, saw an animal, about the size of a large badger, engaged in scraping up the earth about a dozen paces from where we were concealed. Its color was dark, almost black; its body long, and apparently

tailless; and I at once recognized the mysterious beast to be a "glutton." After I had sufficiently examined the animal, I raised my rifle to shoot, when a louder than common "Enfant de Gârce" from my companion alarmed the animal, and it immediately ran off, when I stood up and fired both barrels after it, but without effect; the attempt exciting a derisive laugh from the Canadian, who exclaimed, "Pe gar, may be you got fifty balls; vel, shoot 'em all at de dam carcagieu, and he not care a dam!"

The skins of these animals are considered "great medicine" by the Indians, and will fetch almost any price. They are very rarely met with on the plains, preferring the upland valleys and broken ground of the mountains, which afford them a better field for their method of securing game, which is by lying in wait behind a rock, or on the steep bank of a ravine, concealed by a tree or shrub, until a deer or antelope passes underneath, when they spring upon the animal's back, and, holding on with their strong and sharp claws, which they bury in the flesh, soon bring it bleeding to the ground. The Indians say they are purely carnivorous; but I imagine that, like the bear, they not unfrequently eat fruit and roots, when animal food is not to be had.

I have said that the mountain wolves, and, still more so, the coyote of the plains, are less

frightened at the sight of man than any other beast. One night, when encamped on an affluent of the Platte, a heavy snow-storm falling at the time, I lay down in my blanket, after first heaping on the fire a vast pile of wood, to burn till morning. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the excessive cold, and, turning towards the fire, which was burning bright and cheerfully, what was my astonishment to see a large grey wolf sitting quietly before it, his eyes closed, and his head nodding in sheer drowsiness! Although I had frequently seen wolves evince their disregard to fires, by coming within a few feet of them to seize upon any scraps of meat which might be left exposed, I had never seen or heard of one approaching so close as to warm his body, and for that purpose alone. However, I looked at him for some moments without disturbing the beast, and closed my eyes and went to sleep, leaving him to the quiet enjoyment of the blaze.

This is not very wonderful when I mention that it is a very common thing for these animals to gnaw the straps of a saddle on which your head is reposing for a pillow.

When I turned my horse's head from Pike's Peak I quite regretted the abandonment of my mountain life, solitary as it was, and more than once thought of again taking the trail to the Bayou Salado, where I had enjoyed such good sport.

Apart from the feeling of loneliness which any one in my situation must naturally have experienced, surrounded by stupendous works of nature, which in all their solitary grandeur frowned upon me, and sinking into utter insignificance the miserable mortal who crept beneath their shadow; still there was something inexpressibly exhilarating in the sensation of positive freedom from all worldly care, and a consequent expansion of the sinews, as it were, of mind and body, which made me feel elastic as a ball of Indian rubber, and in a state of such perfect *insouciance* that no more dread of scalping Indians entered my mind than if I had been sitting in Broadway, in one of the windows of Astor House. A citizen of the world, I never found any difficulty in investing my resting-place, wherever it might be, with all the attributes of a home; and hailed, with delight equal to that which the artificial comforts of a civilized home would have caused, the, to me, domestic appearance of my hobbled animals, as they grazed around the camp, when I returned after a hard day's hunt. By the way, I may here remark that my *sporting* feelings underwent a great change when I was necessitated to follow and kill game for the support of life, and as a means of subsistence; and the slaughter of deer and buffalo no longer became *sport* when the object was to fill the larder, and

the excitement of the hunt was occasioned by the alternative of a plentiful feast or a banyan; and, although ranking under the head of the most redhot of sportsmen, I can safely acquit myself of ever wantonly destroying a deer or buffalo unless I was in need of meat; and such consideration for the *ferae naturae* is common to all the mountaineers who look to game alone for their support

Although liable to an accusation of barbarism, I must confess that the very happiest moments of my life have been spent in the wilderness of the Far West; and I never recall but with pleasure the remembrance of my solitary camp in the Bayou Salado, with no friend near me more faithful than my rifle, and no companions more sociable than my good horse and mules, or the attendant coyote which nightly serenaded us. With a plentiful supply of dry pine-logs on the fire, and its cheerful blaze streaming far up into the sky, illuminating the valley far and near, and exhibiting the animals, with well-filled bellies, standing contentedly at rest over their picket-pins, I would sit cross-legged enjoying the genial warmth, and, pipe in mouth, watch the blue smoke as it curled upwards, building castles in its vapory wreaths, and, in the fantastic shapes it assumed, peopling the solitude with figures of those far away. Scarcely however, did I ever wish to change such hours

of freedom for all the luxuries of civilized life, and, unnatural and extraordinary as it may appear, yet such is the fascination of the life of the mountain hunter, that I believe not one instance could be adduced of even the most polished and civilized of men, who had once tasted the sweets of its attendant liberty and freedom from every worldly care, not regretting the moment when he exchanged it for the monotonous life of the settlements, nor sighing, and sighing again, once more to partake of its pleasures and allurements.

Nothing can be more social and cheering than the welcome blaze of the camp fire on a cold winter's night, and nothing more amusing or entertaining, if not instructive, than the rough conversation of the single-minded mountaineers, whose simple daily talk is all of exciting adventure, since their whole existence is spent in scenes of peril and privation; and consequently the narration of their every-day life is a tale of thrilling accidents and hair-breadth 'scapes, which, though simple matter-of-fact to them, appear a startling romance to those who are not acquainted with the nature of the lives led by these men, who, with the sky for a roof and their rifles to supply them with food and clothing, call no man lord or master, and are free as the game they follow.

A hunter's camp in the Rocky Mountains is

quite a picture. He does not always take the trouble to build any shelter unless it is in the snow season, when a couple of deerskins stretched over a willow frame shelter him from the storm. At other seasons he is content with a mere breakwind. Near at hand are two upright poles, with another supported on the top of these, on which is displayed, out of reach of hungry wolf or coyote, meat of every variety the mountains afford. Buffalo *depouilles*, hams of deer and mountain-sheep, beaver-tails, &c., stock the larder. Under the shelter of the skins hang his powder-horn and bullet-pouch; while his rifle, carefully defended from the damp, is always within reach of his arm. Round the blazing fire the hunters congregate at night, and whilst cleaning their rifles, making or mending mocassins, or running bullets, spin long yarns of their hunting exploits, &c.

Some hunters, who have married Indian squaws, carry about with them the Indian lodge of buffalo-skins, which are stretched in a conical form round a frame of poles. Near the camp is always seen the "graining-block," a log of wood with the bark stripped and perfectly smooth, which is planted obliquely in the ground, and on which the hair is removed from the skins to prepare them for being dressed. There are also "stretching-frames," on which the skins are placed to undergo the process of

dubbing, which is the removal of the flesh and fatty particles adhering to the skin, by means of the "dubber," an instrument made of the stock of an elk's horn. The last process is the "smoking," which is effected by digging a round hole in the ground and lighting in it an armful of rotten wood or punk. Three sticks are then planted round the hole, and their tops brought together and tied. The skin is then placed on this frame, and all the holes by which the smoke might escape carefully stopped: in ten or twelve hours the skin is thoroughly smoked and ready for immediate use.

The camp is invariably made in a picturesque locality, for like the Indian, the white hunter has ever an eye to the beautiful. The broken ground of the mountains, with their numerous tumbling and babbling rivulets, and groves and thickets of shrubs and timber, always afford shelter from the boisterous winds of winter, and abundance of fuel and water. Facing the rising sun the hunter invariably erects his shanty, with a wall of precipitous rock in rear to defend it from the gusts which often sweep down the gorges of the mountains. Round the camp his animals, well hobbled at night, feed within sight, for nothing does a hunter dread more than a visit from the horse-stealing Indians; and to be "afoot" is the acme of his misery.

CHAPTER XII

BIRDS OF PASSAGE AT BENT'S FORT

WHEN I returned to the Arkansa I found a small party were making preparations to cross the grand prairie to the United States, intending to start on the 1st of May, before which time there would not be a sufficiency of grass to support the animals on the way. With these men I determined to travel, and in the mean time employed myself in hunting on the "Wet Mountain," and Fisher's Hole, a valley at the head of St. Charles, as well as up the Arkansa itself. I observed in these excursions that vegetation was in a much more forward state in the mountain valleys and the prairies contiguous to their bases than on the open plains, and that in the vicinity of the "pueblo" it was still more backward than in any other spot; on the 15th of April not a blade of green grass having as yet made its appearance round the fort. This was not from the effects of drought, for several refreshing showers had fallen since the disappearance of the snow; neither was there any apparent difference in the soil, which is a rich loam, and

in the river-bottom, an equally rich vegetable mould. At this time, when the young grass had not yet appeared here, it was several inches high on the mountains and upland prairies, and the cherry and currant bushes on the creeks were bursting into leaf.

Amongst the wives of the mountaineers in the fort was one Mexican woman from the state of Durango, who had been carried off by the Comanches in one of their raids into that department. Remaining with them several years, she eventually accompanied a party of Kioways (allies of the Comanche) to Bent's Fort on the Arkansa. Here she was purchased from them and became the wife of Hawkens, who afterwards removed from Bent's and took up his abode at the "pueblo," and was my hospitable host while on the Arkansa. It appeared that her Mexican husband, by some means or another, heard that she had reached Bent's Fort, and, impelled by affection, undertook the long journey of upwards of fifteen hundred miles to recover his lost wife. In the meantime, however, she had borne her American husband a daughter, and when her first spouse claimed her as his own, and wished her to accompany him back to her own country, she only consented on condition that she might carry with her the child, from which she steadily refused to be separated. The father,

however, turned a deaf ear to this request, and eventually the poor Durangueno returned to his home alone, his spouse preferring to share the buffalo-rib and venison with her mountaineer before the frijole and chile colorado of the bereaved ranchero.

Three or four Taos women, and as many squaws of every nation, comprised the "female society" on the Upper Arkansa, giving good promise of peopling the river with a sturdy race of half-breeds, if all the little dusky buffalo-fed urchins who played about the corral of the fort arrived scathless at maturity.

Amongst the hunters on the Upper Arkansa were four Delaware Indians, the remnant of a band who had been trapping for several years in the mountains, and many of whom had been killed by hostile Indians, or in warfare with the Apaches while in the employ of the states of New Mexico and Chihuahua. Their names were Jim Dicky, Jim Swannick, Little Beaver, and Big Nigger. The last had married a squaw from the Taos pueblo, and, happening to be in New Mexico with his spouse at the time of the late rising against the Americans, he very naturally took part with the people by whom he had been adopted.

In the attack on the Indian pueblo it was said that Big Nigger particularly distinguished himself, calling by name to several of the

mountain-men who were amongst the attacking party, and inviting them to come near enough for him, the Big Nigger, to "throw them in their tracks." And this feat he effected more than once, to the cost of the assailants, for it was said that the Delaware killed nearly all who fell on the side of the Americans, his squaw loading his rifle and encouraging him in the fight.

By some means or another he escaped after the capture of the pueblo, and made his way to the mountains on the Arkansa; but as it was reported that a price was put upon his head, he retired in company with the other Delawares to the mountains, where they all lay *perdu* for a time; and it was pretty well understood that any one feeling inclined to reap the reward by the capture of Big Nigger, would be under the necessity of "taking him," and with every probability of catching a Tartar at the same time, the three other Delawares having taken the delinquent under the protection of their rifles. Although companions of the American and Canadian hunters for many years, anything but an *entente cordiale* existed towards their white *confrères* on the part of the Delawares, who knew very well that anything in the shape of Indian blood is looked upon with distrust and contempt by the white hunters.

Tharpe, an Indian trader, who had just returned from the Cheyenne village at the

“Big Timber” on the Arkansa, had purchased from some Kioways two prisoners, a Mexican and an American negro. The former had been carried off by the Comanches from Durango when about seven years old, had almost entirely forgotten his own tongue, and neither knew his own age nor what length of time he had been a captive amongst the Indians. The degraded and miserable existence led by this poor creature had almost obliterated all traces of humanity from his character and appearance. Probably not more than twenty-five years of age, he was already wrinkled and haggard in his face, which was that of a man of threescore years. Wrapped in a dirty blanket, with his long hair streaming over his shoulders, he skulked, like some savage animal, in holes and corners of the fort, seeming to shun his fellow-men, in a consciousness of his abject and degraded condition. At night he would be seen with his face close to the rough doors of the rooms, peering through the cracks, and envying the (to him) unusual luxury within. When he observed anyone approach the door, he instantly withdrew and concealed himself in the darkness until he passed. A present of tobacco, now and then, won for me the confidence of the poor fellow, and I gathered from him, in broken Spanish mixed with Indian, an account of his miseries.

I sat with him one night on a log in the corral, as he strove to make me understand that once, long, long ago, he had been "*muy rico*—very rich"; that he lived in a house where was always a fire like that burning within, and where he used to sit on his mother's lap; and this fact he repeated over and over again, thinking that to show that once affectionate regard had been bestowed upon him, was to prove that he had been at one time an important personage. "*Me quiso mucho, mucho*," he said, speaking of his mother—"she loved me very, very much; and I had good clothes and plenty to eat; but that was many, many moons ago."

"*Mire*," he continued, "from this size," putting his hand out about three feet from the ground—"ni padre, ni madre, ni amigos he tenido yo,"—neither father, mother, nor friends have I had; "*pero patadas, bastante*—but plenty of kicks," "*y poca carne*—and very little meat."

I asked him if he had no wish to return to his own country. His haggard face lighted up for an instant, as the dim memory of his childhood's home returned to his callous mind. "*Ay, Dios mio!*" he exclaimed, "*si fuera posible*—Ah, my God, if it were possible!" "But no," he continued after a pause, "*estoy ahora muy bruto, y asi no me quadrara a ver mi madre*—I am now no more than a brute, and in this

state would not like to see my mother. *Y de mas*—and moreover—my *compadre*,” as he called the man who had purchased him, “is going to give me a shirt and a sombrero; what can I want more? *Vaya, es mejor asi*—it is better as it is.” One night he accosted me in the corral in an unusual degree of excitement.

“*Mire!*” he exclaimed, seizing me by the arm, “look here! *estoy boracho*—I am drunk! *Me dio mi compadre un pedazo de aguardiente*—my godfather has given me a bit of brandy. *Y estoy tan feliz, y ligero! como paxaro, como pa-x-ar-o*”—he hiccuped—“and I am as happy and as light as a bird. *Me vuelo*—I am flying. *Me dicen que estoy boracho: ay que palabra bonita!*—they tell me I am drunk: *drunk*—what a beautiful word is this! *En mi vida, nunca he sentido como ahora*—never in my life have I felt as I do now.” And the poor wretch covered his head with a blanket, and laughed long and loud at the trick he had played his old friend misery.

The negro, on the contrary, was a characteristic specimen of his race, always laughing, singing, and dancing, and cutting uncouth capers. He had been a slave in the semi-civilized Cherokee nation, and had been captured by the Comanches, as he himself declared, but most probably had run away from his master, and joined them voluntarily. He was a

musician, and of course could play the fiddle; and having discovered an old weather-beaten instrument in the fort, Lucy Neal, Old Dan Tucker, and Buffalo Gals, were heard at all hours of the day and night; and he was, moreover, installed into the Weippert of the fandangos which frequently took place in the fort, when the hunters with their squaws were at the rendezvous.

Towards the latter end of April green grass began to show itself in the bottoms, and myself and two others, who had been wintering in the mountains for the benefit of their health, made preparations for our departure to the United States. Pack-saddles were inspected and repaired, apishamores made, lariats and lassos greased and stretched, mules and horses collected from their feeding-grounds, and their fore feet shod. A small supply of meat was "made" (*i. e.* cut into thin flaps and dried in the sun), to last until we reached the buffalo-range; rifles put in order, and balls run; hobbles cut out of rawhide, *parfleche* moccasins* cobbled up, deerskin hunting-shirts and pantaloons patched, and all our very primitive "kit" overhauled to render it serviceable for the journey across the grand prairies, while the "possible-sack" was lightened of all superfluities—an easy task by the way. When everything was ready I was

* Moccasins soled with rawhide. (*Ed.*)

delayed several days in hunting up my animals. The Indian traders having arrived, bringing with them large herds of mules and horses, my mules had become separated from the horse and from one another, and it was with no small difficulty that I succeeded in finding and securing them. Having once tasted the green grass, they became so wild, that, at my appearance, lasso in hand, the cunning animals, knowing full well what was in store for them, threw up their heels and scampered away, defying for a long time all my efforts to catch them.

My two companions had left the United States the preceding year, having been recommended to try the effect of change of climate on a severe pulmonary disease under which both labored. Indeed, they were both apparently in a rapid consumption, and their medical advisers had given up any hope of seeing them restored to health. They had remained in the mountains during one of the severest winters ever known, had lived upon game, and frequently suffered the privations attendant upon a mountain life, and now were returning perfectly restored, and in robust health and spirits.

It is an extraordinary fact that the air of the mountains has a wonderfully restorative effect upon constitutions enfeebled by pulmonary disease; and of my own knowledge I could

mention a hundred instances where persons, whose cases have been pronounced by eminent practitioners as perfectly hopeless, have been restored to comparatively sound health by a sojourn in the pure and bracing air of the Rocky Mountains, and are now alive to testify to the effects of the revigorating climate.

That the lungs are most powerfully acted upon by the rarified air of these elevated regions, I myself, in common with the acclimated hunters, who experience the same effects, can bear witness, as it is almost impossible to take violent exercise on foot, the lungs feeling as if they were bursting in the act of breathing, and consequently the hunters invariably follow game on horseback, although, from being inured to the climate, they might be supposed to experience these symptoms in a lesser degree.

Whatever may be urged against such a climate, the *fact* nevertheless remains, that the lungs are thus powerfully affected and that the violent action has a most beneficial effect upon these organs when in a highly diseased state.

The elevation above the level of the sea, of the plains at the foot of the mountains, is about four thousand feet, while the mountain valley of the Bayou Salado must reach an elevation of at least eight or nine thousand, and Pike's Peak has been estimated to exceed twelve thousand.*

* Elevation of Pike's Peak, 14,108 feet. (Ed.)

CHAPTER XIII.

HEADING FOR HOME

ON the 30th of April [1847], having the day before succeeded in collecting my truant *mulada*, I proceeded alone to the forks of the Arkansa and St. Charles, where I had observed, when hunting, that the grass was in better condition than near the pueblo, and here I remained two or three days, the animals faring well on the young grass, waiting for my two companions, who were to proceed with me across the grand prairies. As, however, the trail was infested by the Pawnees and Comanche, who had attacked every party which had attempted to cross from Santa Fé during the last six months, and carried off all their animals, it was deemed prudent to wait for the escort of Tharpe, the Indian trader, who was about to proceed to St. Louis with the peltries, the produce of his winter trade; and as he would be accompanied by a large escort of mountain-men, we resolved to remain and accompany his party for the security it afforded.

The night I encamped on the St. Charles the rain poured down in torrents, accompanied by a

storm of thunder and lightning, and the next morning I was comfortably lying in a pool of water, having been exposed to the full force of the storm. This was, however, merely a breaking in for a continuation of wet weather, which lasted fifteen days without intermission, and at short intervals followed us to the Missouri, during which time I had the pleasure of diurnal and nocturnal shower-baths, and was for thirty days undergoing a natural hydropathic course of wet clothes and blankets, my bed being the bare prairie, and nothing between me and the reservoir above but a single sarape.

On the 2nd of May my two fellow-travellers arrived with the intelligence that Tharpe could not leave until a trading-party from the north fork of the Platte came in to Arkansa, and consequently we started the next day alone. I may here mention that Tharpe started two days after us, and was killed on Walnut Creek by the Pawnees, while hunting buffalo at a little distance from camp. He was scalped and horribly mutilated.

The night before our departure the wolves ate up all the riatas by which our mules and horses were picketed; and in the morning all the animals had disappeared but one. We saw by the tracks that they had been stampeded; and, as a very suspicious moccasin-track was discovered near the river, we feared that the

Arapahos had paid a visit to the *mulada*. One of my mules, however, was picketed very near the camp, and was safe; and, mounting her, I followed the track of the others across the river, and had the good fortune to find them all quietly feeding in the prairie, with the ropes eaten off to their very throats. This day we proceeded about twenty-five miles down the river, camping in the bottom in a tope of cottonwoods, the rain pouring upon us all night.

The next day we still followed the stream, and encamped about four miles above Bent's Fort,* which we reached the next morning, and most opportunely, as a company of wagons belonging to the United States commissariat were at the very moment getting under way for the Missouri. They had brought out provisions for the troops forming the Santa Fé division of the army of invasion, and were now on their return, empty, to Fort Leavenworth, under the charge of Captain —, of the Quartermaster-General's department, who at once gave us permission to join his company, which consisted of twenty wagons, and as many teamsters, well armed. A government train of wagons had been attacked, on their way to Santa Fé, the preceding winter, by the Pawnees, and the whole party—men, mules, and wagons—cap-

* Bent's Fort was on the north bank of the Arkansas, 650 miles west of Fort Leavenworth. (*Ed.*)

tured; the men, however, being allowed to continue their journey, without wagons or animals. They had likewise lately attacked a party under Kit Carson, the celebrated mountaineer, who was carrying despatches from Colonel Fremont, in California, to the government of the United States, and in fact every party who had passed the plains; therefore, as a large number of loose stock was also to be carried in with the wagons, an attack was more than probable during the journey to the frontier.

Bent's Fort is a square building of adobe, flanked by circular bastions loopholed for musketry, and entered by a large gateway leading into the corral or yard. Round this are the rooms inhabited by the people engaged in the Indian trade; but at this time the Messrs. Bent themselves were absent in Santa Fé, the eldest brother, as I have before mentioned, having been killed in Taos during the insurrection of the Pueblo Indians. We here procured a small supply of dried buffalo-meat, which would suffice until we came to the buffalo-range, when sufficient meat might be procured to carry us into the States.

We started about noon, proceeding the first day about ten miles, and camped at sundown opposite the mouth of the Purgatoire—the Pickatwaire of the mountaineers, and *Las Animas* of the New Mexicans—an affluent of

the Arkansa, rising in the mountains in the vicinity of the Spanish Peaks. The timber on the Arkansa becomes scarcer as we proceed down the river, the cottonwood groves being scattered wide apart at some distance from each other; and the stream itself widens out into sandy shallows, dotted with small islands covered with brush. At this camp we were joined by six or seven of Fremont's men, who had accompanied Kit Carson from California; but, their animals "giving out" here, they had remained behind to recruit them. They were all fine, hardy-looking young fellows, with their faces browned by two years' constant exposure to the sun and wind, and were fine specimens of mountaineers. They were accompanied by a Californian Indian, a young centaur, who handled his lasso with a dexterity which threw all the Mexican exploits I had previously seen into the shade, and was the means of bereaving several cows of their calves when we were in the buffalo-range.

Our next camping-place was the "Big Timber," a large grove of cottonwoods on the left bank of the river, and a favorite wintering-place of the Cheyennes. Their camp was now broken up, and the village had removed to the Platte for their summer hunt. The debris of their fires and lodges were plentifully scattered about, and some stray horses were running

about the bottom. On the 5th and 6th we moved leisurely down the river, camping at Sandy Creek, and in the "Salt Bottom," a large plain covered with salitrose efflorescences. Here we proceeded more cautiously, as we were now in the outskirts of the Pawnee and Comanche country. The wagons at night were drawn up into a square, and the mules enclosed after sunset within the corral. Mine, however, took their chance outside, being always picketed near my sleeping-place, which I invariably selected in the middle of a good patch of grass, in order that they might feed well during the night. A guard was also placed over the corral, and everyone slept with his rifle at his side.

Near the Salt Bottom, but on the opposite side of the river, I this day saw seven bulls, the advance party of the innumerable bands of buffalo we shortly passed through.

On the 7th, as I rode two or three miles in advance of the party, followed by my mules, I came upon fresh Indian sign, where a village had just passed, with their lodge-poles trailing on the ground; and presently, in a level bottom on the river, the white conical lodges of the village presented themselves a short distance on the right of the trail. I at once struck off and entered it, and was soon surrounded by the idlers of the place. It was a Cheyenne village; and the young men were out, an old chief

informed me, after buffalo, and that they would return an hour before sunset, measuring the hour with his hand on the western horizon. He also pointed out a place a little below for the wagons to encamp, where he said was plenty of wood and grass. The lodges, about fifty in number, were all regularly planted in rows of ten; the chief's lodge being in the centre, and the skins of it being dyed a conspicuous red. Before the lodges of each of the principal chiefs and warriors was a stack of spears, from which hung his shield and arms; whilst the skins of the lodge itself were covered with devices and hieroglyphics, describing his warlike achievements. Before one was a painted pole supporting several smoke-dried scalps, which dangled in the wind, rattling against the pole like bags of peas.

The language of signs is so perfectly understood in the western country, and the Indians themselves are such admirable pantomimists, that, after a little use, no difficulty whatever exists in carrying on a conversation by such a channel; and there are few mountain-men who are at a loss in thoroughly understanding and making themselves intelligible by signs alone, although they neither speak nor understand a word of the Indian tongue.

The wagons shortly after coming up, we proceeded to the spot indicated by the chief, which

is a camping-place well known to the Santa Fé traders by the name of the Pretty Encampment. Here we were soon surrounded by men, women, and children from the village, who arrived in horse-loads of five or six mounted on the same animal, and, begging and stealing everything they could lay their hands upon, soon became a perfect nuisance. An hour before sundown the hunting party came in, their animals tottering under heavy loads of buffalo-meat. Twenty-one had gone out, and in the chase had killed twenty-one bulls, which were portioned out, half the animal to each lodge. During the night a huge cottonwood, which had been thoughtlessly set on fire, fell, a towering mass of flame, to the ground, and nearly into the midst of my animals, who, frightened by the thundering crash, and the showers of sparks and fire, broke their ropes and ran off. In the morning, however, they returned to camp at daybreak, and allowed me to catch them without difficulty.

The next night we encamped on a bare prairie without wood, having recourse to the *bois de vâches*, or buffalo-chips, which strewed the ground, to make a fire. This fuel was so wet, that nothing but a stifling smoke rewarded our attempts. During the day an invalid died in one of the wagons, in which upwards of twenty poor wretches were being conveyed, all suffering from most malignant scurvy. The

first wagon which arrived in camp sent a man to dig a hole in the prairie; and on the wagon containing the dead man coming up, it stopped a minute to throw the body into the hole, where, lightly covered with earth, it was left, without a prayer, to the mercies of the wolves and birds of prey.

Bent's Fort had been made a depot of provisions for the supply of the government trains passing the grand prairies on their way to New Mexico, and the wagons now returning were filled with sick men suffering from attacks of scurvy.* The want of fresh provisions and neglect of personal cleanliness, together with the effects of the rigorous climate, and the intemperate and indolent habits of the men, rendered them proper subjects for this horrible scourge. In Santa Fe, and wherever the volunteer troops were congregated, the disease made rapid progress, and proved fatal in an extraordinary number of cases.

As I was riding with some of the Californians in advance of the train, a large white wolf limped out of the bottom, and, giving chase, we soon came up to the beast, which on our approach crouched to the ground and awaited its death-stroke with cowardly sullenness. It was miserably poor, with its bones almost protruding from the skin, and one of its fore

* Called "Black Leg" in Missouri.

legs had been broken, probably by a buffalo, and trailed along the ground as it ran snarling and chopping its jaws with its sharp teeth.

On the 9th, as I rode along ahead, I perceived some dark objects in the prairie, which, refracted by the sun striking the sandy ground, appeared enormous masses, without form, moving slowly along. Riding towards them on my mule, I soon made them out to be buffalo, seventeen bulls, which were coming towards me. Jumping off the mule, I thrust the picket at the end of her lariat into the ground, and, advancing cautiously a few paces, as the prairie was entirely bare, and afforded not even the cover of a prairie-dog mound to approach under, I lay down on the ground to await their coming. As they drew near, the huge beasts, unconscious of danger, picked a bunch of grass here and there, sometimes kicking up the dust with their fore feet, and, moving at the slowest walk, seemed in no hurry to offer me a shot. Just however as they were within a hundred paces, and I was already squinting along the barrel of my rifle, a greenhorn from the wagons, who had caught a glimpse of the game, galloped headlong down the bluff, and before the wind. He was a quarter of a mile off when the leading bull, raising his head, snuffed the tainted air, and with tail erect scampered off with his companions, leaving me showering imprecations

on the head of the "muff" who had spoiled my sport and supper.

Whilst I was lying on the ground three wolves, which were following the buffalo, caught sight of me, and seemed instantly to divine my intentions, for they drew near, and, sitting within a few yards of me, anxiously gazed upon me and the approaching bulls, thinking, no doubt, that their persevering attendance upon them was now about to be rewarded. They were doubtless disgusted when, as soon as I perceived the bulls disappear, I turned my rifle upon one cur which sat licking his chops, and knocked him over, giving the others the benefit of the remaining barrel as they scampered away from their fallen comrade. I now rode on far ahead, determined not to be disturbed; and by the time the wagons came into camp I had already arrived there with the choice portions of two bulls which I killed near the river. We encamped on the 9th at Chouteau's Island, called after an Indian trader named Chouteau, who was here beleagured by the Pawnees for several weeks, but eventually made his escape in safety. Every mile we advanced the buffalo became more plentiful, and the camp was soon overflowing with fresh meat.

The country was literally black with immense herds, and they were continually crossing and recrossing the trail during the day, giving us

great trouble to prevent the loose animals from breaking away and following the bands.

On the 12th a man was found dead in one of the wagons on arriving in camp, and was buried in the same unceremonious style as the other.

In the evening I left the camp for a load of meat, and approached an immense herd of buffalo under cover of a prairie-dog town, much to the indignation of the villagers, who resented the intrusion with an incessant chattering. The buffalo passed right through the town, and at one time I am sure that I could have touched many with the end of my rifle, and thousands were passing almost over me; but, as I lay perfectly still, they only looked at me from under their shaggy brows, and passed on. One huge bull, and the most ferocious-looking animal I ever encountered, came to a dead stop within a yard of my head, and steadily examined me with his glaring eyes, snorting loudly his ignorance of what the curious object could be which riveted his attention. Once he approached so close that I actually felt his breath on my face, and, smelling me, he retreated a pace or two, and dashed up the sand furiously with his feet, lashing his tail at the same time about his dun sides with the noise of a carter's whip, throwing down his ponderous head, and shaking his horns angrily at me. This old fellow was

shedding his hair, and his sleek skin, now bare as one's hand in many parts, was here and there dotted with tufts of his long winter-coat. From the shoulder backwards the body was, with these exceptions, perfectly smooth, but his head, neck, and breast were covered with long shaggy hair, his glowing eyes being almost hidden in a matted mass, while his coal-black beard swept his knees. His whole appearance reminded me strongly of a lion, and the motion of the buffalo when running exactly resembles the canter of the king of beasts. At last my friend began to work himself up into such a fury that I began to feel rather uncomfortable at my position, and, as he backed himself and bent his head for a rush, I cocked my rifle, and rose partly from the ground to take a surer aim, when the cowardly old rascal, with a roar of affright, took to his heels, followed by the whole band; but as one sleek, well-conditioned bull passed me within half a dozen yards, I took a flying shot, and rolled him over and over in a cloud of dust, levelling to the ground, as he fell, a well-built dog-house.

No animals in these western regions interested me so much as the prairie dogs. These lively little fellows select for the site of their towns a level piece of prairie with a sandy or gravelly soil, out of which they can excavate their dwellings with great facility. Being of a merry,

sociable disposition, they, unlike the bear or wolf, choose to live in a large community, where laws exist for the public good, and there is less danger to be apprehended from the attacks of their numerous and crafty enemies. Their towns equal in extent and population the largest cities of Europe, some extending many miles in length, with considerable regularity in their streets, and the houses of a uniform style of architecture. Although their form of government may be styled republican, yet great respect is paid to their chief magistrate, who, generally a dog of large dimensions and imposing appearance, resides in a house conspicuous for size in the centre of the town, where he may always be seen on his housetop, regarding with dignified complacency the various occupations of the busy population—some industriously bearing to the granaries the winter supply of roots, others building or repairing their houses; while many, their work being over, sit chatting on their housetops, watching the gambols of the juveniles as they play around them. Their hospitality to strangers is unbounded. The owl, who on the bare prairie is unable to find a tree or rock in which to build her nest, is provided with a comfortable lodging, where she may in security rear her round-eyed progeny; and the rattlesnake, in spite of his bad character, is likewise entertained with similar hospitality

although it is very doubtful if it is not sometimes grossly abused; and many a childless dog may perhaps justly attribute his calamity to the partiality of the epicurean snake for the tender meat of the delicate prairie-pup. However, it is certain that the snake is a constant guest; and, whether admitted into the domestic circle of the dog family, or living in separate apartments, or in copartnership with the owl, is an acknowledged member of the community at large.

The prairie-dog (a species of marmot) is somewhat longer than a guinea-pig, of a light brown or sandy color, and with a head resembling that of a young terrier pup. It is also furnished with a little stumpy tail, which, when its owner is excited, is in a perpetual jerk and flutter. Frequently, when hunting, I have amused myself for hours in watching their frolicsome motions, lying concealed behind one of their conical houses. These are raised in the form of a cone, two or three feet above the ground, and at the apex is a hole, vertical to the depth of three feet, and then descending obliquely into the interior. Of course, on the first approach of such a monster as man, all the dogs which have been scattered over the town scamper to their holes as fast as their little legs will admit, and, concealing all but their heads and tails, bark lustily their displeasure at the intrusion. When

they have sufficiently exhibited their daring, every dog dives into his burrow, but two or three who remain as sentinels, chattering in high dudgeon, until the enemy is within a few paces of them, when they take the usual somersault, and the town is silent and deserted. Lying perfectly still for several minutes, I could observe an old fellow raise his head cautiously above his hole, and reconnoitre; and if satisfied that the coast was clear, he would commence a short bark. This bark, by the way, from its resemblance to that of a dog, has given that name to this little animal, but it is more like that of a wooden toy-dog, which is made to bark by raising and depressing the bellows under the figure. When this warning has been given, others are soon seen to emerge from their houses, and, assured of their security, play and frisk about.

After a longer delay, rattlesnakes issue from the holes, and coil themselves on the sunny side of the hillock, erecting their treacherous heads, and rattling an angry note of warning if, in his play, a thoughtless pup approaches too near; and, lastly, a sober owl appears, and, if the sun be low, hops through the town, picking up the lizards and chameleons which everywhere abound. At the first intimation of danger given by the sentinels, all the stragglers hasten to their holes, tumbling over owls and rattlesnakes, who

hiss and rattle angrily at being disturbed. Everyone scrambles off to his own domicile, and if, in his hurry, he should mistake his dwelling, or rush for safety into any other than his own, he is quickly made sensible of his error, and, without ceremony, ejected. Then, every house occupied, commences such a volley of barking, and such a twinkling of little heads and tails, which alone appear above the holes, as to defy description. The lazy snakes, regardless of danger, remain coiled up, and only evince their consciousness by an occasional rattle; while the owls, in the hurry and confusion, betake themselves, with sluggish wing to wherever a bush of sage or grease wood affords them temporary concealment.

The prairie-dog leads a life of constant alarm, and numerous enemies are ever on the watch to surprise him. The hawk and the eagle, hovering high in air, watch their towns, and pounce suddenly upon them, never failing to carry off in their cruel talons some unhappy member of the community. The coyote, too, an hereditary foe, lurks behind a hillock, watching patiently for hours until an unlucky straggler approaches within reach of his murderous spring. In the winter, when the prairie-dog, snug in his subterranean abode, and with granaries well filled, never cares to expose his little nose to the icy blasts which sweep across

the plains, but, between eating and sleeping, passes merrily the long, frozen winter, he is often roused from his warm bed, and almost congealed with terror, by hearing the snorting yelp of the half-famished wolf, who, mad with hunger, assaults, with tooth and claw, the frost-bound roof of his house, and, with almost superlupine strength, hurls down the well-cemented walls, tears up the passages, plunges his cold nose into the very chambers, snorting into them with his earth-stuffed nose, in ravenous anxiety, and drives the poor little trembling inmate into the most remote corners, too often to be dragged forth, and unhesitatingly devoured. The rattlesnake, too, I fear, is not the welcome guest he reports himself to be; for often I have slain the wily serpent, with a belly too much protuberant to be either healthy or natural, and bearing, in its outline, a very strong resemblance to the figure of a prairie-dog.

A few miles beyond a point on the river known as the Catches, and so called from the fact that a party of traders, having lost their animals, had here *câched*, or concealed, their packs, we passed a little log fort, built by the government employes, for the purpose of erecting here a forge to repair the commissariat wagons on their way to Santa Fé. We found the fort beleagured by the Pawnees, who killed

every one who showed his nose outside the gate. They had carried off all their stock of mules and oxen, and in the vicinity had, two or three days before, attacked a company under an officer of the United States Engineers, running off with all the mules belonging to it. We were now, day after day, passing through countless herds of buffalo. I could scarcely form an estimate of the numbers within the range of sight at the same instant, but some idea may be formed of them by mentioning, that one day, passing along a ridge of upland prairie at least thirty miles in length, and from which a view extended about eight miles on each side of a slightly rolling plain, not a patch of grass ten yards square could be seen, so dense was the living mass that covered the country in every direction.

On leaving the Catches, the trail, to avoid a bend in the Arkansa, strikes to the north-east over a tract of rolling prairie, intersected by many ravines, full of water at certain seasons, known as the Coon Creeks. On this route there is no other fuel than *bois de vaches*, and the camps are made on naked bluffs, exposed, without the slightest shelter, to the chilling winds that sweep continually over the bare plains. I scarcely remember to have suffered more from cold than in passing these abominable Coon Creeks. With hunting-shirt saturated with the rain, the icy blast penetrated to my

very bones, and, night after night, lying on the wet ground and in wet clothes, after successive days of pouring rain I felt my very blood running cold in my veins, and as if I never could again imbibe heat sufficient to warm me thoroughly.

One night, while standing guard round the camp, which was about two miles from the river, I heard an inexplicable noise, like distant thunder, but too continuous to proceed from that source, which gradually increased, and drew nearer to the camp. Placing my ear to the ground, I distinguished the roaring tramp of buffalo thundering on the plain; and as the moon for a moment burst from a cloud, I saw the prairie was covered by a dark mass, which undulated, in the uncertain light, like the waves of the sea. I at once became sensible of the imminent danger we were in; for when thousands and hundreds of thousands of these animals are pouring in a resistless torrent over the plains, it is almost impossible to change their course, particularly at night, the myriads in the rear pushing on those in front, who, spite of themselves, continue on their course, trampling down all opposition to their advance. Even if we ourselves were not crushed by the mass of beasts, our animals would most certainly be borne away bodily with the herd, and irrecoverably lost.

I at once alarmed the camp, and all hands turned out, and, advancing towards the buffalo, which were coming straight upon us, by shouting and continued firing of guns we succeeded in turning them, the wind being, luckily, in our favor; and the main body branching in two, one division made off into the prairie, while the other crossed the river, where for hours we heard their splashing, sounding like the noise of a thousand cataracts. In the daytime even our *cavallada* was in continual danger, for immense bands of buffalo dashed repeatedly through the wagons, scarcely giving us time to secure the animals before they were upon us; and on one occasion, when I very foolishly dismounted from Panchito to fire at a band passing within a few yards, the horse, becoming alarmed, started off into the herd, and, followed by the mules, was soon lost to sight amongst the buffalo, and it was some time before I succeeded in recovering them.

As might be inferred, such gigantic sporting soon degenerates into mere butchery. Indeed, setting aside the excitement of a chase on horseback, buffalo-hunting is too wholesale a business to afford much sport—that is, on the prairies; but in the mountains, where they are met with in small bands, and require no little trouble and expertness to find and kill, and where one may hunt for days without discover-

ing more than one band of half a dozen, it is then an exciting and noble sport.

There are two methods of hunting buffalo—one on horseback, by chasing them at full speed, and shooting when alongside; the other by “still hunting,” that is, approaching, or stalking, by taking advantage of the wind and any cover the ground affords, and crawling to within distance of the feeding herd. The latter method exhibits in a higher degree the qualities of the hunter, the former those of the horseman. The buffalo’s head is so thickly thatched with long shaggy hair that the animal is almost precluded from seeing an object directly in its front; and if the wind be against the hunter he can approach, with a little caution, a buffalo feeding on a prairie as level and bare as a billiard-table. Their sense of smelling, however, is so acute, that it is impossible to get within shot when to windward, as, at the distance of nearly half a mile, the animal will be seen to snuff the tainted air, and quickly satisfy himself of the vicinity of danger. At any other than the season of gallantry, when the males are, like all other animals, disposed to be pugnacious, the buffalo is a quiet, harmless animal, and will never attack unless goaded to madness by wounds, or, if a cow, in sometimes defending its calf when pursued by a horseman; but even then it is seldom that they make any strong effort to protect their young.

When gorged with water, after a long fast, they become so lethargic that they sometimes are too careless to run and avoid danger. One evening, just before camping, I was, as usual, in advance of the train, when I saw three bulls come out of the river and walk leisurely across the trail, stopping occasionally, and one, more indolent than the rest, lying down whenever the others halted. Being on my hunting-mule, I rode slowly after them, the lazy one stopping behind the others, and allowing me to ride within a dozen paces, when he would slowly follow the rest. Wishing to see how near I could get, I dismounted, and, rifle in hand, approached the bull, who at last stopped short, and never even looked round, so that I walked up to the animal and placed my hand on his quarter. Taking no notice of me, the huge beast lay down, and while on the ground I shot him dead. On butchering the carcass I found the stomach so greatly distended, that (it seemed) another pint would have burst it. In other respects the animal was perfectly healthy and in good condition.

One of the greatest enemies to the buffalo is the white wolf. These perservering brutes follow the herds from pasture to pasture, preying upon the bulls enfeebled by wounds, the cows when weak at the time of calving, and the young calves whenever they straggle from

the mothers. In bands of twenty and thirty they attack a wounded bull, separate him from the herd, and worry the poor animal until, weak with loss of blood and the ceaseless assaults of his active foes, he falls hamstrung, a victim to their ravenous hunger.

On one of the Coon Creeks I was witness to an attack of this kind by three wolves on a cow and calf, or rather on the latter alone, which by some accident had got separated from the herd. My attention was first called to the extraordinary motions of the cow (for I could neither see the calf nor the wolves on account of the high grass), which was running here and there, jumping high in air and bellowing lustily. On approaching the spot I saw that she was accompanied by a calf about a month old, and all the efforts of three wolves were directed to get between it and the cow, who, on her part, used all her generalship to prevent it. Whilst one executed a diversion in the shape of a false attack on the cow, the others ran at the calf, which sought shelter under the very belly of its mother. She, poor animal! regardless of the wounds inflicted on herself, sought only to face the more open attack; and the wolf in rear, taking advantage of this, made a bolder onslaught, and fastened upon her hams, getting however for his pains such a well-delivered kick in his stomach as threw him a somersault in

the air. The poor cow was getting the worst of it; and the calf would certainly have fallen a victim to the ravenous beasts, if I had not most opportunely come to the rescue; and, waiting until the battle rolled near the place of my concealment, I took advantage of a temporary pause in the combat, when two of the wolves were sitting in a line, with their tongues out and panting for breath, to level my rifle at them, knocking over one dead as a stone, and giving the other a pill to be carried with him to the day of his death, which, if I am any judge of gun-shot wounds, would not be very distant. The third took the hint and scampered off, a ball from my second barrel whistling after him as he ran; and I had the satisfaction of seeing the cow cross the river with her calf, and join in safety the herd, which was feeding on the other side.

CHAPTER XIV

A BUFFALO LANDSCAPE

WE reached Pawnee Fork of the Arkansa without any *novedad* [accident], but found this creek so swollen with the rains that we feared we should experience no little trouble in crossing. We here met a train of wagons detained by the above cause on their way to Santa Fé, and we learned from them that a party of Mexican traders had been attacked by the Pawnees at this very spot a few days before, losing one hundred and fifty mules, one Indian having been killed in the fight, whose well-picked skeleton lay a few yards from our camp. Pawnee Fork being considered the most dangerous spot on the trail, extraordinary precautions were taken in guarding against surprise, and the animals belonging to the train were safely corralled before sundown, and a strong guard posted round them. Mine, however, were picketed as usual round my sleeping-place, which was on a bare prairie at some distance from the timber of the creek.

Such a storm as poured upon our devoted heads that night I have seldom had the mis-

fortune to be exposed to. The rain, in bucketsful, Niagara'd down as if a twenty-years' supply was being emptied from the heavens on that one night; vivid forked lightning, in continuous flashes, lit up the flooded prairie with its glare; and the thunder, which on these plains *is* thunder indeed, kept up an incessant and mammoth cannonade. My frightened mules crept as near my bed as their lariats would allow them, and, with water streaming from every extremity, trembled with the chilling rain.

In the early part of the night, when the storm was at its height, I was attracted to a fire at the edge of the encampment by the sound of a man's voice perpetrating a song. Drawing near, I found a fire, or rather a few embers and an extinguished log, over which cowered a man sitting cross-legged in Indian fashion, holding his attenuated hands over the expiring ashes. His features, pinched with the cold, and lank and thin with disease, wore a comically serious expression, as the lightning lit them up, the rain streaming off his nose and prominent chin, and his hunting-shirt hanging about him in a flabby and soaking embrace. He was quite alone, and sat watching a little pot, doubtless containing his supper, which refused to boil on the miserable fire. Spite of such a situation, which could be termed anything but cheering, he, like

Mark Tapley, evidently thought that now was the very moment to be jolly, and was rapping out at the top of his voice a ditty, the chorus of which was,—and which he gave with peculiar emphasis,—

“How happy am I!
From care I'm free:
Oh, why are not all
Contented like me?”—

not for an instant intending it as a satire upon himself, but singing away with perfect seriousness, raising his voice at the third line, “Oh, why are not all,” particularly at the “Oh,” in a most serio-comical manner. During the night I occasionally shook the water out of my blanket, and raised my head to assure myself that the animals were safe, lying down to sleep again, perfectly satisfied that not even a Pawnee would face such a storm, even to steal horses. But I did that celebrated thieving nation gross injustice; for they, on that very night, carried off several mules belonging to the other train of wagons, notwithstanding that a strict guard was kept up all the night.

The next day, as there was no probability of the creek subsiding, it was determined to cross the wagons at any risk; and they were accordingly, one after the other, let down the steep bank of the stream, and, several yokes of oxen (which had first been swum over) being attached

were hauled bodily through the water, some swimming, and others, if heavily laden, diving across. I myself crossed on Panchito, whose natatory attempt, probably his first, was anything but first-rate; for on plunging in, and at once, into deep water, instead of settling himself down to a quiet swim, he jumped up into the air, and, sinking to the bottom, and thus gaining a fresh impetus, away he went again, carrying me, rifle, and ammunition under water at every plunge, as I held on by his neck like grim death. All my kit was contained in a pair of mule-packs, which I had had made of water-proof material. Unfortunately one had a hole in the top, which had escaped my notice. This admitted the water, which remained in the pack, several inches deep, for a fortnight. This pack contained all my papers, notes, and several manuscripts and documents relative to the history of New Mexico and its Indian tribes, which I had collected with considerable trouble and expense. On opening the trunk, I found all the papers completely destroyed, and the old manuscripts, written on bad paper, and with worse ink, reduced to a pulpy mass; every scrap of writing being perfectly illegible.

At length all the wagons were got safely over, with the exception of having everything well soaked; and as the process had occupied the whole day, we camped on the other side of the

creek. Every day we found greater difficulty in procuring fuel; for, as we were now on the regular Santa Fé trail, the creeks had been almost entirely stripped of firewood, and it was the work of hours to collect a sufficiency of brush to make a small fire to boil a pot of water. On arriving at camp, and having unpacked the mules, the first thing was to sally forth in quest of wood; an expedition of no little danger, for it was always more than probable that Indians were lurking in the neighborhood, and therefore the rifle always accompanied the fuel-hunter.

Between Pawnee Fork and Cow Creek all our former experiences of buffalo-seeing were thrown into the shade, for here they literally formed the whole scenery, and nothing but dense masses of these animals was to be seen in every direction, covering valley and bluff, and actually blocking up the trail. Nothing was heard along the line of march but pop—bang—pop—bang every minute; and the Californian Indian lassoed the calves and brought them in in such numbers, that many were again set free. I had hitherto refrained from "chasing," in order to save my poor horse; but this day, a fine band of cows crossing the trail on a splendid piece of level prairie, I determined to try Panchito's mettle. Cantering up to the herd, I singled out a wiry-looking cow (which sex is the fleetest), and, dashing at her, soon succeeded in separat-

ing her from the rest. As I steered Panchito right into the midst of a thousand of these animals, he became half mad with terror, plunging and snorting and kicking right and left; but he soon became tamer and more reconciled when the chase was a trial of speed between him and the flying cow, and he then was as much excited as his rider. The cow held her ground wonderfully well, and for a quarter of a mile kept us a couple of lengths astern, which distance my horse seemed hardly to wish to decrease. As he became warm, however, I pushed him up to her just as she entered a large band, where she doubtless thought to have found refuge; but, running through it, she again made for the open prairie and here, after a burst of a few hundred yards, I again came up with her; but Panchito refused to lay me alongside, darting wildly on one side if I attempted to pass the animal. At last, pushing him with spur and leg, I brought him to the top of his speed, and, shooting past the flying cow in his stride, and with too much headway on him to swerve, I brushed the ribs of the buffalo with my moccasin, and, edging off a little to avoid her horns, discharged my rifle into her side, behind the shoulder. Carried forward a few paces in her onward course, she fell headlong to the ground, burying her horns deep into the soil, and, turning over on her side, was dead. She was

so poor that I contented myself with the tongue, leaving the remainder of the carcass to the wolves and ravens.

We continued to find the buffalo in similar abundance as far as Cow Creek; a little beyond which we saw the last band; and on Turkey Creek the last straggler, an old grizzly bull, which I killed for a last supply of meat.

After passing the Little Arkansa, the prairie began to change its character; the surface became more broken, the streams more frequent, and fringed with better timber, and of a greater variety; the eternal cottonwood now giving place to aspen, walnut, and hickory, and the short curly buffalo-grass to a more luxuriant growth of a coarser quality, interspersed with numerous plants and gay flowers. The dog-towns, too, disappeared; and, in lieu of these little animals, the prairie-hen boomed at rise and set of sun, and, running through the high grass, furnished ample work for the rifle. Large game was becoming scarcer; and but few antelope were now to be seen, and still fewer deer.

No scenery in nature is more dreary and monotonous than the aspect of the "grand prairies" through which we had been passing. Nothing meets the eye but a vast undulating expanse of arid waste; for the buffalo-grass, although excellent in quality, never grows higher than two or three inches, and is seldom

green in color; and, being but thinly planted, the prairie never looks green and turf-like. Not a tree or shrub is to be seen, except on the creeks, where a narrow strip of unpicturesque cottonwood only occasionally relieves the eye with its verdant foliage. The sky, too, is generally overcast, and storms sweep incessantly over the bare plains during all seasons of the year; boisterous winds prevailing at all times, carrying with them a chilling sleet or clouds of driving snow. It was therefore a great relief to look upon the long green waving grass, and the pretty groves on the streams; although our animals soon exhibited the consequences of the change of diet, between the rich and fattening buffalo-grass, and the rank, although more luxuriant, herbage they now fed upon.

On approaching Council Grove the scenery became very picturesque; the prairie lost its flat and monotonous character, and was broken into hills and valleys, with well-timbered knolls scattered here and there, intersected by clear and babbling streams, and covered with gaudy flowers, whose bright colors contrasted with the vivid green of the luxuriant grass. My eye, so long accustomed to the burnt and withered vegetation of the mountains, revelled in this refreshing scenery, and never tired of gazing upon the novel view. Council Grove is one of the most beautiful spots in the western

country. A clear rapid stream runs through the valley, bordered by a broad belt of timber, which embraces all the varieties of forest-trees common to the west. Oak, beech, elm, maple, hickory, ash, walnut, &c., here presented themselves like old friends; squirrels jumped from branch to branch, the hum of the honey-bee sounded sweet and homelike, the well-known chatter of the blue jay and catbird resounded through the grove; and in the evening the whip-poor-will serenaded us with its familiar tongue, and the drumming of the ruffed grouse boomed through the grove. The delight of the teamsters on first hearing these well-known sounds knew no bounds whatever. They danced, and sang, and hurraed, as, one after the other, some familiar note caught their ear. Poor fellows! they had been suffering a severe time of it, and many hardships and privations, and doubtless snuffed in the air the johnny-cakes and hominy of their Missouri homes.

“Wagh!” exclaimed one raw-boned young giant, as a bee flew past; “this feels like the old ’ooman, and mush and molasses at that! If it don’t, I’ll be dog-gone!”

“Hurroo for old Missouri!” roared another; “h’yar’s a hoss as will knock the hind sights off the corn-doin’s. Darn my old heart if thar arn’t a reg’lar-built hickory—makes my eyes sweat to look at it! This child will have no

more 'mountains;' hurroo for old Missouri! Wagh!"

A trader amongst the Caw Indians had erected himself a log house at the grove, which appeared to us a magnificent palace. Himself, his cows and horses, looked so fat and sleek, that we really thought them unnaturally so; and so long had I been used to see the rawboned animals of Mexico and the mountains, that I gravely asked him what he gave them, and why he made them so unwieldy. When he told me that his stock were all very poor, and nothing to what they were when they left the States a month before, I thought the man was taking a "rise" out of me; and when I showed him my travel-worn animals, and bragged of their, to me, plump condition, he told me that where he came from it would be thought cruel to work such starved-looking beasts. There was one lodge of Caw Indians at the grove, the big village being out on the prairie, hunting buffalo. On the opposite side of the stream was a party of Americans from Louisiana, who had been out for the purpose of catching calves; and round their camp some thirty were feeding, all they had been able to keep alive out of upwards of a hundred.

From Council Grove to Caw, or Kansas, River, the country increases in beauty, and presents many most admirable spots for a

settlement; but as it is guaranteed by treaty to the Caw and Osage Indians, no white man is allowed by the United States government to settle on their lands.

The night before reaching Caw River we encamped on a bare prairie, through which ran a small creek, fringed with timber. At sundown the wind, which had blown smartly the whole day, suddenly fell, and one of those unnatural calms succeeded, which so surely herald a storm in these regions. The sky became overcast with heavy inky clouds, and an intolerably sultry and oppressive heat pervaded the atmosphere. Myriads of fire-flies darted about, and legions of bugs and beetles, and invading hosts of sandflies and mosquitos droned and hummed in the air, swooping like charging Cossacks on my unfortunate body. Beetles and bugs of easy squeezability, brobdignag proportions, and intolerable odor, darted into my mouth as I gasped for breath; while sandflies with their atomic stings probed my nose and ears, and mosquitoes thrust their poisoned lances into every part of my body.

Hoping for the coming storm, I lay without covering, exposed to all their attacks; but the agony of this merciless persecution was nothing to the thrill of horror which pervaded my very bones when a cold clammy rattlesnake crawled over my naked ankles; a flash of lightning at

the moment revealing to me the reptile, as with raised head it dragged its scaly belly across my skin, during which time, to me an age, I feared to draw breath lest the snake should strike me. Presently the storm broke upon us; a hurricane of wind squalled over the prairie, a flash of vivid lightning, followed by a clap of deafening thunder, and then down came the rain in torrents. I actually revelled in the shower-bath; for away on the instant were washed bugs and beetles; mosquitos were drowned in millions; and the rattlesnakes I knew would now retire to their holes, and leave me in peace and quiet for the remainder of the night.

We now passed through a fine country, partially cultivated by the Caw Indians, whose log shanties were seen scattered amongst the timbered knolls. Caw River itself is the headquarters of the nation, and we halted that night in the village, where, in the house of a white farmer, I ate the first civilized meal I had tasted for many months, and enjoyed the unusual luxury of eating at a table with knife and fork; moreover sitting on a chair, which however I would gladly have dispensed with, for I had so long been accustomed to sit Indian fashion on the ground that a chair was at first both unpleasant and awkward. The meal consisted of hot cakes and honey, delicious butter, and lettuce and radishes. My animals

fared well too, on Indian corn, and oats in the straw; and the whole expense, eleven horses and mules having been fed the better part of a day and one night, amounted to one dollar and a half, or six shillings sterling.

A troop of dragoons from St. Louis to Fort Leavenworth met us on the road on their way to the latter station, from whence they were about to escort a train of wagons, containing specie, to Santa Fè. They were superbly mounted: the horses, uniting plenty of blood with bone, so great a desideratum for cavalry, were about fifteen hands high, and in excellent condition. The dragoons themselves were all recruits, and soldierlike neither in dress nor appearance.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE END OF THE TRAIL

WE passed the Kansas or Caw River by a ferry worked by Indians, and, striking into a most picturesque country of hill and dale, well timbered and watered, entered the valley of the great Missouri. A short distance from the river, on the left of the trail, is a tabular bluff of most extraordinary formation, being the exact and accurately outlined figure of a large fortification, with escarpments, counterscarps, glacis, and all details, perfectly delineated.

A little farther on we came in sight of the garrison of Fort Leavenworth, the most western military station of the United States, and situated on the right bank of the Missouri in the Indian territory. The fort is built on an eminence overhanging the river, but, although called a fort, has no pretensions to be a military work, the only defence to the garrison being four wooden block-houses, loopholed for musketry, placed at each corner of the square of buildings. The barracks, stables, and officers' quarters surrounded this square, which is

planted with trees and covered with luxuriant grass. The accommodation for the men and officers is excellent; the houses of the latter being large and commodious, and quite unlike the dirty pigsties which are thought good enough for the accommodation of British officers. The soldiers' barrack-rooms are large and airy, but no attention appears to be paid to cleanliness, and the floors, walls, and windows were dirty in the extreme. The beds are all double, or rather the bedsteads, for the bedding is separate, but in close contact. What struck me more than anything was the admirable condition of the horses, and their serviceable appearance: I did not see a single troop-horse in the squadron which would not have sold in England for eighty guineas; the price paid for them here, that is, the government contract price, being from fifty to eighty dollars, or from ten to sixteen pounds.

The garrison constitutes the whole population of the place. With the exception of the sutler's store for the use of the soldiers, there are neither shops, taverns, nor private buildings of any description; and I should have fared but badly if it had not been for the hospitality of Captain Enos, of the quartermaster-general's department, who most kindly assigned to me a room in his own quarters in the garrison, and made me a member of his mess.

The officers of the dragoons, who may be said to be buried for life in this wilderness, are mostly married, and their families constitute the only society the place affords. I remember to have been not a little struck at the first sight of many very pretty well-dressed ladies, who, after my long sojourn amongst the dusky squaws, appeared to me like the houris of paradise; and I have no doubt that I myself came in for a share of staring, for I was dressed in complete mountain costume, with my mahogany-colored face shaded by a crimson turban *à la Indien*, and in all the pride of fringed deerskin and porcupine-quills; and I was paid the compliment of being more than once mistaken for an Indian chief; and on one occasion I was appealed to by two of the dragoons to decide a bet as to whether I was a white man or a redskin. One day I was passing through the dragoons' stables when the men were cleaning their horses, and my appearance created no little difference of opinion amongst the troopers as to what tribe of Indians I belonged to.

"That's a Pottowatomie," said one, "by his red turban."

"How long have you been in the west," cried another, "not to know a Kickapoo when you see him?"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed a third; "that's a white

trapper from the mountains. A regular mountain-boy that, I'll bet a dollar!"

One smart-looking dragoon, however, looked into my face, and, turning round to his comrades, said, "Well, boys, I'll just bet you a dollar all round that that Injun's no other than a British officer. Wagh! And what's more, I can tell you his name."—And, sure enough, my acquaintance proved to be one of the many deserters from the British army belonging to the dragoons, and one who had known me when in the service myself.

After a few day's stay at Fort Leavenworth, I made preparations for my departure to St. Louis, getting rid of my mountain-traps, and, what caused me no little sorrow, parting with my faithful animals, who had been my companions in a long and wearisome journey of more than three thousand miles, during the greater part of which they had been almost my only friends and companions. I had, however, the satisfaction of knowing that whilst with me they had never experienced a blow or an angry word from me, and had always fared of the very best—when procurable; and many a mile I had trudged on foot to save them the labor of carrying me. For Panchito I found a kind master—exact, in return for the present, a promise that he should not be worked for the next three months; and, before leaving, I had the satisfac-

tion of knowing that, in company with three old acquaintances who had pastured with him in the mountains, he was enjoying himself in veritable "clover," and corn unlimited, where, I doubt not, he soon regained his quondam beauty and condition.

The disposal of the mules gave me greater anxiety, as there was such a demand for these animals at the moment to send with the government trains to New Mexico, that I knew to give them away would only be to put their value in the pocket of a stranger, and the animals themselves into the first wagon which crossed the plains. I therefore sold them to the commissary at the fort, and paid them daily visits in the government stables, where they revelled in the good things of this life, and had, moreover, a kind-hearted master in the shape of the Missourian teamster who had the charge of them, and who, on my giving him a history of their adventures, and a good and true account of their dispositions and qualities, promised to take every care of the poor beasts; and, indeed, was quite proud of having under his charge such a travelled team. The parting between Panchito and the mules was heartrending, and for two or three days they all refused to eat and be comforted; but at the end of that time their violent grief softened down into a chastened melancholy, which gradually merged into a

steady appetite for the "corn-doin's" of the liberal master of the mules; and before leaving I felt assured, from their sleek and well-filled appearance, that they were quite able to start on another expedition across the plains.

A steamboat touching at the fort, bound for the Mississippi and St. Louis, I availed myself of the opportunity, and secured myself a berth for the latter city. After running upon sand-bars every half-hour, about thirty miles below Independence we at last stuck hard and fast, and, spite of the panting efforts of the engine, there we remained during the night, and until noon the next day. A steamboat then made its appearance, bound, like ourselves, down the river, and, coming up alongside, the two captains held a consultation, which ended in *our's* recommending his passengers to "make tracks" into the other boat, as he did not expect to get off; which interchange being effected, and our fares paid to the other boat, a hawser was attached to the one aground, and she was readily hauled off—we, the passengers, having been done pretty considerably brown in the transaction. However, such rascalities as these, on the western waters, are considered no more than "smart," and are taken quite as a matter of course by the free and enlightened citizens of the model republic.

I must say that since a former visit to the

States, made three years ago, I perceived a decided improvement, thanks to the Trollope and Boz castigations, in the manners and conduct of steamboat travellers, and in the accommodations of the boats themselves. With the exception of the expectorating nuisance, which still flourishes in all its disgusting "monstrosity," a stranger's sense of decency and decorum is not more shocked than it would be in travelling down the Thames in a Gravesend or Herne Bay steamer. There is even quite an arbitrary censorship established on the subject of dress and dirty linen, which is, since it is passively submitted to by the citizens, an unmistakable sign of the times. As a proof of this, one evening, as I sat outside the cabin, reading, a young man, slightly "corned," or overtaken in his drink, accosted me abruptly:—

"Stranger, you haven't ary clean shirt to part with, have you? The darned [hiccup] capen says I must go ashore bekase my 'tarnal shirt ain't clean."

And this I found to be the fact, for the man was actually ejected from the saloon at dinner-time, on his attempting to take his seat at the table in a shirt which bore the stains of julep and cocktail.

The miserable scenery of the muddy Missouri has been too often described to require any additional remarks. The steamboat touched

occasionally at a wood-pile, to take in fuel; and sallow, aguish faces peered from the log shanties as we passed. We had the usual amount of groundings on sand-bars, and thumping against snags and sawyers; passed the muddy line of demarcation between the waters of the Missouri and the "Father of Streams," and, in due course, on the fourth day ran alongside the outer edge of three tiers of huge steam-boats which lined the wharf at St. Louis.

We had but one exciting episode during the voyage, in the shape of a combat between one of the "hands" of the boat (a diabolical-looking Mexican) and the mate. The latter, at a wooding station, thinking that the man was not sufficiently "spry," administered a palthogue, which not meeting the approbation of the Mejicano, that worthy immediately drew his knife and challenged the aggressor. The mate, seizing a log from the pile, advanced towards him, and the Mexican, likewise, dropping his knife, took up a similar weapon, and rushed to the attack. After a return of blows they came to close quarters, hugged, and fell, the Yankee uppermost, whose every energy was now directed to gouge out the eye of his prostrate foe, while he on his part, seizing the eye-scooper by his long hair, tugged, with might and main, to pull him to the ground. With a commendable spirit of fair play, the

other "hands" danced round the combatants, administering well-directed kicks on the unfortunate Mexican's head and body, in all the excitement of unrestrainable valor. The captain, however, interfered, and secured a fair field for the gallant pair; but at length, tired of the bungling attempts of his mate to screw his antagonist's eye out of its socket, pulled him off, and, giving the Mexican a friendly kick in the ribs, desired him to get up. That worthy rose undismayed, and, ramming the end of his thumb into his eye, to drive that organ into its proper place, exclaimed, "*Que carajo es este, qui no sabe pelear!*—what a cur is this, who does not know how to fight!" and, shaking himself, sat upon a log, and proceeded coolly to make himself a shuck-cigar.

A negro came up to me at Fort Leavenworth, and asked me to allow him to accompany me down to St. Louis. On my saying that I did not require a servant for so short a distance, he told me that, although himself a free negro, yet no black was allowed to travel without a master, and that if he attempted it he would, in all probability, be seized and imprisoned as a runaway slave.

This reminded me that I was in that transcendently free country, ever boasting of its liberty and equality, which possesses, in a population of some eighteen millions, upwards

of three millions of fellow-men in most abject yet lawful slavery;—a foul blot upon humanity, which has every appearance of being perpetuated until the evil grows to such a height as will end in curing itself.

This subject, which necessarily forces itself upon the mind of all travellers in the *Slave States*, is one which, having received the attention of the most enlightened philanthropists of both hemispheres, it would scarcely become me to dilate upon, or even notice, did I not feel that every one, however humble, should raise his voice in condemnation of that disgraceful and inhuman INSTITUTION, which, in a civilized country and an enlightened age, condemns to a social *death*, and degrades (by law) to the level of the beasts of the field, our fellow-men; subjecting them to a moral as well as physical slavery, and removing from them every possible advantage of intellectual culture or education, by which they might attain any position a grade higher than they now possess—the human beasts of burden of inhuman masters.

It is adduced as an argument against the abolition of slavery—of course by those whose interest it is to uphold the evil—that the emancipation of the slaves would, in the present state of feeling against the negro race, be productive of effects which would convulse the whole social state of the country, or, in other

words, that the whites would never rest until the whole race was exterminated in the United States. That there is a physical impossibility to any amalgamation in the southern States is as certain as that, year by year, the difficulty of removing the evil is surely increasing; and its very magnitude and the moral cowardice of the American people prevent this evil being grappled with at once, and some steps taken to oppose its perpetuation.

The three arguments brought forward by those who endeavor to palliate or uphold slavery, in feeble sophistry, plainly exhibit the weakness of the cause. First, they say, We admit the evil, but the cure will be worse than the disease. We have inherited it: the blame rests not upon us, but our fathers. If the negroes are emancipated, what is to become of them? They cannot, and *shall not*, remain in our community, on an equality with us and our children, and enjoying the privileges of white men. This *cannot* be. Moreover, the burden of supporting them will fall upon us, for they will not work unless compelled.

Secondly: We deny the sinfulness of the institution. Negroes are *not men*, but were sent into the world to be slaves to the white man. To support this they are ready with quotations from Scripture, and I blush to say that I have heard well-educated and liberal-minded men

take no other ground than this to support the cause.

And, thirdly, they say no legislation can reach the evil. Law cannot deprive a citizen of his property: if so, away with liberty at once, if one act confirms rights and another removes them.

The abolitionist of the North raves at the slave-owner of the South; but let a foreigner converse with the former, and he will at once turn round and take the part of the slave-owner. It is like a third person interfering in quarrels of man and wife. "No, no, my good sir," they say, "let us settle this question amongst ourselves; this is a family affair." No one could deny the justice of this, if they really made a *bona fide* attempt to grapple the evil; but I must confess that abolitionism in the United States appears to me to be anything but genuine and honest, and that, if left to themselves, the question is very, very far from any chance of settlement, unless, as I believe will be the result, the slaves themselves cut the Gordian knot.

The great difficulty to be combated in America, in freeing the country from the curse of slavery, is prejudice. The negro is not recognized (startling as this assertion may be) as a fellow-creature—I mean by the mass of the people. This anomaly, in a country where the

very first principle of their social organism is the axiom, the incontrovertible truth, that "all men are born equal," is the more palpable, since the popular and universal outcry is, and ever has been, the same sentiment which animated the Fathers of the Revolution, when they offered to the world, as a palliation for the crime of rebellion, the same watchword which is now so prodigally used by every American tongue, and so basely and universally prostituted. "All men are born equal. Liberty, therefore, and equal rights to all"—except to those whose skins are black!

I have heard clergymen of the American church affirm their belief that the negro was placed on earth by God to be the white man's slave. I have heard many educated, and in every other respect moral and conscientious, Americans assert that negroes were not made in God's image, but were created as a link between man and the beast, to minister to the former's wants, and to support him by the toil of their hands and the sweat of their brows.

And when I add that by law it is felony to teach a negro to read or write, what argument can be offered to combat such unnatural prejudices? I believe that slaves are *generally* well treated in the United States, although many instances could be adduced where the very reverse is the fact, particularly on the western

frontier. But this good treatment is on the same grounds that we take care of our horses and cows and pigs, because it is the owner's interest to do so; and the well-being—that is, the physical healthiness—of slaves is attended to in the same degree that we feed and clothe our horses, in order that they may be in condition to work for us, and thereby bring in a return for the care we have bestowed upon them.

That this question will one day shake to its very centre, if it does not completely annihilate, the union of the American States, is as palpable as the result is certain. This belief is very generally entertained by both parties, and yet in spite of it the evil is allowed to increase, although its removal or cure thereby becomes hourly more difficult.

Hundreds of plans have been suggested for the abolition of slavery, but all have been found to be impracticable, if not impossible to be carried out. Perhaps the most feasible and practicable was that proposed by the late Mr. King many years ago, and which at the time met with the fate of every other suggestion on the same subject. Mr. King, as sound and practical a statesman as the country ever produced, proposed that a certain yearly sum should be laid aside out of the revenue derived from the sale of the public lands, to be devoted

to the emancipation of slaves by the purchase of their freedom. This process, however slow, at the same time that it would effect the gradual abolition of slavery, and at all events effectually prevent its increase and perpetuation, and offer a final, although distant termination to the evil, was at the same time less calculated to alarm the interested minds of the slave-owners; since, as the emancipation would be gradual, and the compensation proportional to the loss sustained, their interests were not so materially affected as they would be by the entire removal, at one swoop, of their vested rights of property and possession. As it is, however, there is no evidence of any positive action being taken by the legislature to effect the removal of this disgraceful stain on the national character. So rabid and intolerant is the temper of the southern people when this question is mooted, and so fraught with danger to the union is the agitation even of the subject, that all discussion is shunned and avoided, and the evil hour protracted and put off, which will, as surely as that the sun shines in the heavens, one day plunge the country into a convulsion dreadful to think of or anticipate. Meanwhile the plague-spot remains: the foul cancer is eating its way; and only by its extirpation can the body it disfigures regain its healthfulness and beauty, and take its place in the scale of humanity and

civilization, from which the loathsome pestilence has outpaled it.

As I have said, I notice the subject merely to add my humble voice to the cry for humanity's sake, which should never cease to stun the ears of the unholy men who, in spite of every law both human and divine, use their talents, and the intellect which God has given them, to uphold and perpetuate the curse of slavery.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MEXICAN WAR

PROCEEDING, on my arrival at St. Louis, to an excellent hotel called the Planter's House, I that night, for the first time in nearly ten months, slept upon a bed, much to the astonishment of my limbs and body, which long accustomed to no softer mattress than mother earth, tossed about all night, unable to appreciate the unusual luxury. I found chairs a positive nuisance, and in my own room caught myself in the act more than once of squatting cross-legged on the floor. The greatest treat to me was bread: I thought it the best part of the profuse dinners of the Planter's House, and consumed prodigious quantities of the staff of life, to the astonishment of the waiters. Forks too I thought were most useless superfluities, and more than once I found myself on the point of grabbing a tempting leg of mutton mountain fashion, and butchering off a hunter's mouthful. But what words can describe the agony of squeezing my feet into boots, after nearly a year of moccasins, or discarding my turban for a great boardy hat,

which seemed to crush my temples? The miseries of getting into a horrible coat—of braces, waistcoats, gloves, and all such implements of torture—were too acute to be described and therefore I draw a veil over them.

Apart from the bustle attendant upon loading and unloading thousands and thousands of barrels of grain upon the wharf, St. Louis appeared to me one of the dullest and most commonplace cities of the Union. A great proportion of the population consists of French and Germans; the former congregating in a suburb called Vide Pôche,* where they retain a few of the characteristics of their lighthearted nation, and the sounds of the fiddle and tambourine may be nightly heard, making the old fashioned, tumble-down tenements shake with the tread of the merry dancers. The Dutch and Germans have their beer-gardens, where they imbibe huge quantities of malt and honeydew tobacco; and the Irish their shebeen-shops, where Monongahela is quaffed in lieu of the "rale crather."

The town was full of returned volunteers from the wars. The twelvemonth's campaign they had been engaged in, and the brilliant victories achieved by them, which, according to the American newspapers, are unparalleled in the annals of the world's history, have con-

*The modern Carondelet (Ed.)

verted these rowdy and vermin-covered veterans into perfect heroes; and every batch on arriving is feasted by the public, addresses are offered to them, the officers presented with swords and snuff-boxes, and honors of all kinds lavished upon them in every direction.

The intense glorifications at St. Louis, and in every other part of the United States, on the recent successes of their troops over the miserable Mexicans, which were so absurd as to cause a broad grin on the face of an unexcited neutral, make me recur to the subject of this war, which hitherto I have avoided mentioning in the body of this little narrative.

It is scarcely necessary to trace the causes of the war at present raging between the two republics of North America. The fable of the wolf and lamb drinking at the same stream may be quoted, to explain to the world the reason why the *soi-disant* champion of liberty has quarrelled with its sister state "for muddying the water" which the model republic uses to quench its thirst.

A lesson has been read to the citizens of the United States which ought to open their eyes to the palpable dishonesty of their government, their unblushing selfishness, and total disregard to the interests of the country, when those of themselves or of their party are at stake; and although in the present instance President Polk

has overreached himself, and raised a storm which he would be only too glad to lay at any cost, yet, in the whole history of the Mexican war, the violence of party and political feeling is evident, from the 9th of May, 1846, when the first shot was fired at Palo Alto, to the date of the last half-score despatches which inform the world that General Scott "still remained at Puebla," waiting reinforcements.

It is enough to observe that the immediate cause of hostilities was the unjustifiable invasion of Mexican territory by the army of the United States to take possession of a tract of country of which the boundary-line had been disputed between the Mexican government and one of its revolted states, which had been annexed to the American Union before its recognition as an independent state by the country from which it had seceded.

There can be no question but that the United States had deep cause of complaint against Mexico, in the total disregard evinced by the latter to the spirit of international treaties, and the injuries inflicted upon the persons and property of American citizens; all redress of which grievances was either totally refused, or procrastinated until the parties gave up every hope of ultimate compensation. The acquisition of Texas, however, was in any case a balancing injustice, and should have

wiped out all old grievances, at least those of a pecuniary nature; while, if a proper spirit of conciliation had been evinced on the part of the Americans, at the period when the question of annexation was being mooted, all danger of a rupture would have been removed; and Mexico would have yielded her claims to Texas with a better grace, if taken as a receipt in full for all obligations, than in suffering a large portion of her territory to be torn from her, against all laws held sacred by civilized nations.

It is certain that such consequences, as have resulted from the advance of the American troops from the Nueces to the Rio Grande, were never anticipated by the President of the United States, whose policy in bringing on a quasi crisis of the state affairs on the Mexican frontier, and provoking the Mexicans to overt acts which could at any moment be converted into a *casus belli*, was not for the sake of territorial aggrandizement, but for a purpose which, it is known to those in the secret of his policy, had an object more remote, and infinitely more important, than a rupture with the Mexican government.

At that time the position taken up by Mr. Polk and his party with regard to the Oregon question involved, as a natural consequence, the probability of a war with England; nay, more, if such position were persisted in, the

certainty of a war with that power. That a majority of the people, and all the right-thinking and influential classes, were opposed to such measures as would hazard or produce such a rupture, was so palpable that the government was conscious that any proposal for making preparations for a war with England (which they knew a perseverance in their policy would assuredly bring about) would not be favorably received, or even tolerated, and therefore they looked about them for a means of attaining their object, by blinding the eyes of the people as to their ulterior designs. Mexico was made the scapegoat. A war with that powerless state would be popular, since its duration, it was supposed, could be but for a very brief period, the government having no resources whatever, and being sadly deficient in any of the sinews of war; and, moreover, such a war would be likely to flatter the national pride and conceit of the American people.

To bring, therefore, affairs to such a critical position on the Texan frontier, that a state of war could at any moment be assumed, and its imminence be actually very apparent, was the stroke of policy by which Polk and his party hoped to blind the people, and, profiting by it, make such preparations as would enable them to carry out their plans in connection with the Oregon question and the probable war with

England. They thought that, even if hostilities broke out with Mexico, that power would at once succumb; and, in the meantime, that the war-fever in the United States would spread, and that the people would sanction an increase in the army and navy in such a case, which could at any time be made available for another purpose.

The first shot fired on the Rio Grande changed their views. Until then the Americans were in utter ignorance of the state of Mexico and the Mexicans. They never anticipated such resistance as they have met with; but, judging from the moral and physical inferiority of the people, at once concluded that all they had to do was *venire, videre, et vincere*. Children in the art of war, they imagined that personal bravery and physical strength were the only requisites for a military people; and that, possessing these qualities in as great a degree as the Mexicans were deficient in them, the operations in Mexico would amount to nothing more arduous than a promenade through the table-lands of Anahuac—the “Halls of Montezuma,” in which it was the popular belief that they were destined “to revel,” being the goal of their military *paseo* of six weeks.

As soon, however, as the list of killed and wounded on the fields of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma reached Washington, President

Polk saw the error into which he had fallen. It became evident to him that all the resources of the country would be required to carry on the war with one of the most feeble powers in the world, and that the sooner he pulled his foot out of the hot water, which at the temperature of $54^{\circ} 40'$ was likely to scald him, the better for him and his country; for it naturally occurred to him that, if such a *scrimmage* as the Mexican war gave him considerable trouble, an affair with such a respectable enemy as England was likely to prove anything but an agreeable pastime: and hence the very speedy acceptance of Lord Aberdeen's ultimatum, and the sudden settlement of the Oregon question.

As affairs now stand, and unless the United States very materially modify the conditions under which they signify their willingness to withdraw from the Mexican territory, and notwithstanding the avowedly pacific proposals of Commissioner Trist, it is difficult to assign any probable period for the termination of the war; and it is certain that, as the Mexican armies, one after the other, dissolve before the American attacks, the farther the latter penetrate into the country, the greater are the difficulties which they will have to surmount. Harassed by hordes of guerrillas, with a long line of country in their rear admirably adapted by nature for the system of warfare pursued by

irregular troops, and through which all supplies have to pass, to defeat an army is but to increase the conqueror's difficulties, since, while before they had one tangible enemy in their front, now they are surrounded by swarms of hornets, who never run the risk of defeat by standing the brunt of a regular engagement.

Neither have the invariable and signal defeats the Mexicans have met with the same moral effect which such reverses have amongst more civilized nations. They take them as matters of course, and are not dispirited; while, on the other hand, the slightest success instils new life and energy into their hearts. Until the whole country is occupied by American troops, the war, unless immediately concluded, will be carried on, and will eventually become one of conquest. But, in the meantime, the expenses it entails upon the treasury of the United States are enormous, and hourly increasing; and it would seem that the amount of compensation for the expenses of the war, which, in money or territory, is a *sine quâ non* in the peace proposals of the American commissioner, is consequently increasing *pari passu*, and therefore the settlement of the question becomes more difficult and uncertain.

It is extremely doubtful if the Mexican people will consent to a surrender of nearly one-third of their territory, which will most probably be

required as compensation for the expenses of the war, or, what is the same thing, be demanded as a security for the payment of a certain sum of money; and whether they will not rather prefer war to the knife to the alternative of losing their nationality. In reality, this war does them little harm. They were in such a state of misery and anarchy before it commenced, and have been for so long a period tyrannized over by the *republican* despots who have respectively held the reins of power, that no change could possibly make their condition more degraded; and the state of confusion and misrule attendant upon the war in such a country as Mexico is so congenial to the people, that, from my own observations, I believe them to be adverse, even on this account alone, to the termination of hostilities. Moreover, the feeling against the Americans, which was at first mere apathy, has increased to the bitterest hatred and animosity, and is sufficient in itself to secure the popular support to the energetic prosecution of the war: and the consciousness of the justice of their cause, and the injustice of the unprovoked aggression on the part of the United States, ought, and I have no doubt will, keep alive *one* spark of that honor which prompts a people to resent and oppose a wilful and wanton attack on their liberties and nationality.

CHAPTER XVII

MEN AND MANNERS

AFTER a stay of a few days in St. Louis, in order to rig myself out in civilized attire, I went on board a steamboat bound for the Illinois River and Peoria, intending to cross the prairies of Illinois to Chicago, and thence down the Canadian lakes to New York.

This river is more picturesque than the Missouri or Mississippi; the banks higher, the water clearer, and the channel dotted with pretty islands, between which the steamboat passes, almost brushing the timber on the banks. At Peoria we were transferred to stage-coaches, and, suffering a martyrdom of shaking and bad living on the road—if road it can be called—we arrived at last at Chicago—the city, that is to be, of the Lakes, and which may be termed the City of Magnificent Intentions.

Chigago, or Chicago, is situated at the southwestern corner of Lake Michigan, and on the lake-shore. In spite of the pasteboard appearance of its houses, churches, and public edifices, all of wood, it is a remarkably pretty

town, its streets wide and well laid out; and it will, doubtless, after it has been burned down once or twice, and rebuilt of stone or brick, be one of the finest of the western cities. It has several excellent hotels, some of which are of gigantic dimensions, a theatre, court-house, and an artificial harbor, constructed at the expense of the city.

An American stage-coach has often been described: it is a huge lumbering affair with leathern springs, and it creaks and groans over the corduroy roads and unmacadamized causeways, thumping, bumping, and dislocating the limbs of its "insides," whose smothered shrieks and exclamations of despair often cause the woodsman to pause from his work, and, leaning upon his axe, listen with astonishment to the din which proceeds from its convulsed interior.

The coach contains three seats, each of which accommodates three passengers; those on the centre, and the three with their backs to the horses, face each other, and, from the confined space, the arrangement and mutual convenience of leg-placing not infrequently leads to fierce outbreaks of ire. A fat old lady got into the coach at Peoria, whose uncompromising rotundity and snappishness of temper, combined with a most unaccommodating pair of "limbs" (legs, on this side the Atlantic), rendered her the most undesirable vis-à-vis a traveler could

possibly be inflicted with. The victim happened to be an exceedingly mild Hoosier, whose modest bashfulness prevented his remonstrating against the injustice of the proceeding: but, after unmitigated sufferings for fifty miles, borne with Christian resignation, he disappeared from the scene of his martyrdom, and his place was occupied by a hard-featured New-Yorker, the captain of one of the Lake steam-boats, whose sternness of feature and apparent determination of purpose assured us that he had been warned of the purgatory in store for him, and was resolved to grapple gallantly with the difficulty. As he took his seat, and bent his head to the right and left over his knees, looking, as it were, for some place to bestow his legs, an ominous silence prevailed in the rocking coach, and we all anxiously awaited the result of the attack which this bold man was evidently meditating; the speculations being as to whether the assault would be made in the shape of a mild rebuke, or a softly-spoken remonstrance and request for a change of posture. Bancroft Library

Our skipper evidently imagined that his pantomimic indications of discomfort would have had a slight effect, but when the contrary was the result, and the uncompromising knees wedged him into the corner, his face turned purple with emotion, and, bending towards his tormentor, he solemnly exclaimed—"I guess, marm, it's

got to be done anyhow sooner or later, so you and I, marm, must jist 'dovetail.' ”

The lady bounded from her seat, aghast at the mysterious proposal.

“Must what, sir—r?”

“Dovetail, marm; you and I have got to dovetail, and no two ways about it.”

“Dovetail me, you inhuman savage!” she roared out, shaking her fist in the face of the skipper, who shrank, alarmed, into his corner; “dovetail a lone woman in a Christian country! if thar’s law on airth, sir-r, and in the state of Illinoy, I’ll have you hanged!

“Driver, stop the coach,” she shrieked from the window; “I go no farther with this man. I believe I ar’ a free ’ooman, and my name is Peck. Young man,” she pathetically exclaimed to the driver, who sought to explain matters, whilst we, inside, were literally convulsed with laughter, “my husband shall larn of this, as shiure as shiooting. Open the door, I say, and let me out!” And, spite of all our expostulations, she actually left the coach and sought shelter in a house at the road-side; and we heard her, as we drove off, muttering “Dovetail me, will they? the Injine savages! if ther’s law in Illinoy, I’ll have him hanged!”

It is unnecessary to say that “dovetailing” is the process of mutually accommodating each other’s legs followed by stage-coach and

omnibus passengers; but the term—certainly the first time I had ever heard it used in that sense—shocked and alarmed the modesty of the worthy Mrs. Peck of *Illinoy*.

A canal is in course of construction in the State of Illinois, to connect the waters of the lakes with the Mississippi—a gigantic undertaking, but one which will be of the greatest benefit to the western country. When this canal is completed, the waters of Lake Superior will, therefore, communicate with the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi, as they do already with the North Atlantic by means of the Welland and Rideau canals, which pass through Canada; and, even already, vessels have been spoken in mid-ocean, built on Lakes Michigan and Huron, cleared from Chicago, and bound for England, passing an inland navigation of upwards of three thousand miles.

Leaving Chicago, I crossed the lake to Kalamazoo, whence I “railed” across the Michigan peninsula to Detroit, the chief city of the State of Michigan. This railroad was a very primitive affair, with but one line of rails, which, in very many places, were entirely divested of the iron, and in these spots the passengers were requested to “assist” the locomotive over the “bad places.” However, after killing several hogs and cows, we arrived safe enough at Detroit.

I remarked that, since a former visit to the United States, three or four years ago, there had been a very palpable increase in the feeling of jealousy and dislike to England and everything British which has very generally characterized the free and enlightened citizens from the affair of Lexington to the present time. I must, however, do them the justice to declare, that in no one instance have I ever perceived that feeling evinced towards an individual; but it exists most assuredly as a national feeling, and is exhibited in the bitterest and most uncompromising spirit in all their journals, and the sayings and doings of their public men. Thus, in travelling through the United States, an Englishman is perpetually hearing his country and its institutions abused. Everything he admires is at once seized upon, to be tortured into a comparison with the same thing in England. But what is more amusing is, that it is a very general belief that, from the Queen down to the gruel-stirrer in Marylebone workhouse, everybody's time is occupied with the affairs of the United States, and all their pleasures turned to gall and wormwood by the bitter envy they feel at her well-being and prosperity.

In passing down the lakes, I took a passage from Detroit to Buffalo in a Canadian steamer, which, by-the-by, was the most tastefully

decorated and best-managed boat on the lake. As we passed through the Detroit River, which connects Lakes Erie and St. Clair, we had a fine view of the Canadian as well as the American shore; and the contrast between the flourishing settlements and busy cities of the latter, and the quaint, old-fashioned villages of the French Canadians, was certainly sufficiently striking. As the boat passed Malden, celebrated as being the scene of stirring events in the Indian wars, and the more recent one of 1812, I ascended, spite of the burning sun, to the upper deck, in order to obtain a view of the shore, which at this point, where the river enters the lake, is very picturesque and beautiful. I found a solitary passenger seated on the roof, which was red hot with the burning rays of the sun, squirting his tobacco-juice fast and furiously, and with his eyes bent on the shore, and a facetious and self-satisfied grin on his lank, sallow countenance. His broad-brimmed brown beaver hat, with dishevelled nap, suit of glossy black, including a shining black satin waistcoat, of course proclaimed him to be a citizen. Waving his hand towards the Canada shore, he asked me in a severe tone,—

“What do you call this, sir? Is this the land of the Queen of England, sir?”

“Well, I guess it ain’t nothin’ else,” answered, for me, the pilot of the boat. “But,” he con-

tinued, "it ain't a going to be so much longer."

"Longer, sir!" quoth my severe interrogator; "too long by half has that unfortunate country been oppressed by British tyrants. Look thar, sir," waving his arm towards the opposite shore; "thar's a sight, sir, where a man can look up to G— A'mighty's heavens, and bless him for having made him a citizen of the *United States!*"

"A fine country," I observed; "there's no doubt of it."

"A fine country, sir! the first country in the world, sir; and feeds the starving English with what it can't consume itself, sir. The philanthropy of our country" (he took me for a citizen) "flies on the wings of the wind, sir, and bears to the hungry slaves of the Queen of England, corn, sir, and bread-doin's of every description. Yes, sir! and to show them, sir, that we can feed 'em with one hand and whip 'em with the other, we send it over in a ship of war, which once carried their flag, until it was lowered to the flag of freedom. I allude, sir" (turning to me), "to the frigate 'Macedonian,' and the stars and stripes of our national banner."

This speech, delivered in the most pompous manner, and with exuberant gesture, was too much for my gravity, and I exploded in an immoderate fit of laughter.

"Laugh, sir," he resumed, "pray laugh. I

perceive you are not a *native*, and your countrymen had ort to laugh without loss of time; for soon, sir, will their smile of triumph be turned to a howl of despair, when Liberty treads to the earth your aristocracy—your titled lords, and the star-spangled banner waves over Windsor Palace.” Saying which, and squirting over the deck a shower of tobacco-spray, he turned magnificently away.

“A smart man that, stranger,” said the pilot to me, giving the wheel a spoke to port—“one of the smartest men in these parts.” This I easily believed.

We had the misfortune to damage a part of the machinery just after entering Lake Erie, and were compelled to wait until another steamboat made her appearance, and towed us back to Detroit, where it took twenty-four hours to repair damages.

From Buffalo I travelled by railroad to Albany, on the Hudson, and, descending that magnificent river, reached New York early in July, in eight travelling days from St. Louis, a distance of—I am afraid to say how many thousand miles.

From New York the good ship *New World* carried me and a dozen fellow-passengers, spite of contrary winds, in thirty days to Liverpool, where I arrived, *sin novedad*, some time in the middle of August, 1847.

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